

years, go out and face the people. You will be defeated just as surely as any other government was defeated that imposed closure so clumsily without giving parliament a chance to express itself.

I believe that my time has expired and rather than have you call me to time I will conclude my remarks.

Mr. Byrne: Mr. Chairman, I do not propose to match my lungs against those of the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe, nor do I intend to match my lungs against the noise in the chamber. I shall hesitate when that is required. Hon. members of the Conservative party have said that this filibuster began only an hour before this motion was moved. Filibuster on pipe lines began in this house in 1949 and it was begun by members of the Conservative opposition. Never since that time has actual common sense been spoken when gas transmission has been discussed except on occasions when hon. members such as the hon. member for Calgary South or hon. members on this side of the house have spoken, particularly the right hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce.

When the filibuster began as it did in 1949 the chosen instrument for gas transmission at that time—it was the chosen instrument of the Conservative opposition—was Westcoast Transmission. What has been the result? An hon. member says "rubbish". I can quote speaker after speaker from *Hansard* saying that the Westcoast Transmission Company Limited has been the only company prepared to build the pipe line entirely in Canada. It was an uneconomic route, but, notwithstanding that, it was a company that at all times was prepared to build an all-Canadian line.

That was the story of the official opposition. Nevertheless the actual facts were that two or three of the companies applied for charters, and at least two received charters, who were prepared to do basically the same thing, but they were prepared to build a pipe line to British Columbia where it would serve the people of British Columbia. The present pipe line has been brought to fruition because of this silly outlook with respect to the transmission of natural gas. Half of the consumption of gas in British Columbia will be lost. The east and west Kootenays in British Columbia would have consumed as much natural gas as the greater Vancouver area. Those were facts brought out in committee.

Nevertheless, a gas line is going to the west coast and, as the hon. member for Vancouver South has shown here tonight, the gas bills for those people will be cut in half. The gas bills for those people would have been cut another 20 per cent if the gas line

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had followed an economic route. Certainly the gas bills and the fuel bills of the people of Trail, Kimberley and the Crownsnest area would have been equally well served. However, that became the basic policy for all parties, and the Westcoast Transmission Company received its charter on the basis that it was going to serve all-Canadian consumers first. But the result is that natural gas will go to the west coast and serve a small number of consumers, and about 90 per cent of the gas will be exported to the United States. This is against the policy of the all-Canadian consumers being served first.

As I have said, that was the chosen instrument of the Conservative party, and that was the policy which was to be undertaken by the president of Westcoast Transmission. Now what do we find? This great exponent of the policy of serving Canadian consumers first, last and foremost comes out with a proposal to transport natural gas to eastern Canada when it has already been shown that another company has the plans ready, the supplies at hand and the sale spoken for. But, as has been shown, unless a large proportion of that natural gas is sold in the United States, they are not able to finance it at the moment.

Mr. McMahon, president of Westcoast Transmission and the new proponent of a gas line to eastern Canada, makes a proposal and promises us in a confidential letter that he will personally post with the government \$500,000 cash to complete the project by 1958, subject only to being able to obtain the necessary materials. You might note that he was not too sure of being able to obtain the materials, although he had said in other letters that he would obtain them. Half a million dollars is not a very great deal of money to this gentleman, as many of you may know. But what is the crux of the plan that this great exponent of the policy of serving Canadian users first proposes? A volume of 400 million cubic feet is to be exported into the United States, four-fifths of the total amount of natural gas that the provincial government of Alberta has authorized for export. If that is the understanding on which Mr. McMahon was prepared to go ahead, is it any wonder that he has been asked to pay up or shut up? It seems to me that that is what should have been done with a person who has made such a spurious offer.

Mr. Fleming: Has the hon. member ever heard the Minister of Trade and Commerce say that was a spurious offer?

Mr. Byrne: I certainly heard the Minister of Trade and Commerce say that it was not, in his opinion, a firm offer.