

With that I want to say this. The Minister made a statement in Calgary a year ago last March, if I recall, that there was to be a decentralization of authority and responsibility, with a view to decisions being made on the spot. I believe, for example, there is substantial organization in the regional office in Calgary, and yet in the Banff National Park particularly, the number of people who are complaining that they cannot get decisions is increasing right along.

In other words, there seems to be, rightly or wrongly, a feeling that everything is being handled from Ottawa, and this is partly confirmed by some parks officials, when they say, "I am just a post office. We have to go to Ottawa." This is fact.

Mr. MACDONALD: Senator Cameron, not only in the Parks Branch, but I think throughout the whole department, we are engaged in a very active program of decentralization. We are one of four departments that have worked out with the Treasury Board, as "pilot" departments, measures to advance the recommendations of the Glassco Commission for new forms of operational patterns in the public service.

We retained a consultant firm, as each of the other departments did. We have had their recommendations and have accepted most of them. The Treasury Board and Civil Service Commission have concurred in them also. We have just completed recruiting our new financial advisory staff, with our new financial and management adviser joining our staff on April 1st. We are pushing forward, I think quite vigorously, in this program.

Not all of these matters are within the control of this department. Some of them are Government wide, and some further delegations of authority are required. But I believe there is unanimity of view as to the direction in which we are going.

Senator CAMERON: May I ask this: Unanimity of view on whose part?

Mr. MACDONALD: Let us say on the part of the officials of the various Government departments responsible for administration, the advisors to the Treasury Board and, I believe as well, the ministers who have responsibility in this matter.

Any program of this kind, I think it will be appreciated, cannot be accomplished overnight. The right people must be put in the right jobs; people who are capable of taking on increased responsibility. We are moving in that direction, trying to recoup the people we have lost. We are short staffed and are still losing staff to better-paid jobs elsewhere.

Our problems in this respect are just like any other employer's: we take one step forward and, as we lose people through one reason or another, we take two steps back; but we are pressing ahead as vigorously as possible. There will always be differences of opinion between the field operators in the line of authority and the higher command, as to whether or not an office is just a post office, or whether we recognize their authority and the degree to which they have flexibility.

We do not visualize anywhere a park superintendent having full authority to do anything he wishes. I don't think this is reasonable or expected. We are trying to find for them the right mixture of operational authority and flexibility to handle what are called "on the spot problems," that is problems which *can* be solved on the spot.

I do not know if that is fully responsive to your question, but it is certainly the policy and the progress we are trying to achieve right now.

Senator CAMERON: Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons I put down the question on salaries was this: I have been aware that there has been quite a substantial turnover in the department, and I was wondering if salaries