

scientific research and its applications for Canada's polar regions.

During these times of fiscal responsibility funding for scientific research obviously cannot be lavish. However, the commission will bring greater focus and efficiency to the diverse and dispersed Canadian polar research community and will link research efforts more effectively.

The Canadian Polar Commission will receive core government funding this fiscal year of approximately \$1 million, but it will be encouraged to seek non-government support for its endeavours as well.

The activities of this commission will be managed by a board of directors consisting of up to 12 members, including a chair person and two vice-chairpersons. They will be appointed by Governor in Council on the recommendation of my colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and will serve terms of appointments of three years.

Persons appointed to this board of directors must have knowledge that will assist the commission in the furthering of its purpose. Its membership will reflect the ethnic, linguistic and regional diversities of Canada's polar regions.

Although the commission's principal office will be in the national capital region, regional offices will be established in other locations with at least one such office north of 60. The commission's presence in the north will be appropriately visible and significant with at least half of its meetings being held there. I believe this will challenge the commission to decide priority areas of focus, which will help to establish its national and international credentials.

My colleague, the hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and I plan to ensure that the presence in the north is an effective presence, a presence which seeks input from northerners, particularly those appointed to the commission and those interested in its programs. We will table a report on the commission's activities each year in the House of Commons.

Government Orders

The creation of a polar commission is a great step toward enhancing Canada's future as a leader among the circumpolar communities of nations. It reinforces the commitment made by the Prime Minister in Leningrad last November. This commission is a response to a number of issues and priorities. Therefore I ask the co-operation of all members of the House in ensuring prompt passage of this bill.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Madam Speaker, I commend the minister with whom I came down from Iqaluit yesterday for her appreciation of the north. I invite all ministers and all members of Parliament to come up to the north. If they are from the other party, I will not even take credit for bringing them up there.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the second reading of Bill C-72, also known as the Canadian Polar Commission Act. We in the Official Opposition support this bill in principle because it is a good initiative and is long overdue. For too long, knowledge about the north and knowledge for the north have been at the bottom of the government's priority list.

I would like to relate how we view the fact that there has been a lot of research which has not been co-ordinated. Many people have come up to do research in the north. As a matter of fact during the middle 1970s and late 1960s there was a joke going around that every Inuit family consisted of a father, a mother, some children, and an anthropologist because there were so many of them coming up there. Most times we did not know what they were doing. We knew they were studying, but we did not know what they were studying. It got to a point where we laid down the law and said that we appreciate people coming up to do some studies, but there was some invasion of privacy in some cases. However, I think that good co-ordinated scientific research in the north will alleviate that. Northern science efforts have ebbed and flowed and waxed and waned according to the level of interest in southern Canada at a particular time.

• (1230)

The proposed polar commission has had an exceptionally long gestation. Almost five years have passed since September, 1985, when the then Minister of Indian