

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Mr. Phipps said, further, that blame for unemployment and hiring practices should not be directed chiefly at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development but at other departments. He said other federal departments obviously had not thought about their responsibility to hire local labour. He told the council that unemployment ran as high as 90 per cent in some areas of the High Arctic. He went on to give illustrations. He said he has seen survey crews come through Resolute with every man on the team from southern Canada.

He claimed that the only person who needed special training was the kind of person the minister referred to in his reply to me; this was the instrument man. The others were hired to carry surveyor's rods and pound stakes. Mr. Phipps points out that these people draw big salaries for three or four months and then return to the south. He states that if the money were paid to the Eskimos they would probably earn enough that they would not require support through the provision of welfare. He claims that the territorial government continues to import people from southern Canada for administrative and technical jobs in the settlements when these jobs could be handled by the local population.

Mr. Phipps said that the base at Resolute has a staff of about 60 people, and that of these 60 jobs only four or five are held by Eskimos. These include such positions as janitor, kitchen worker, bartender, clerk, heavy equipment operator and carpenter. Surely these positions are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport. One could blame that department, but I hope and expect that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development would take its responsibility for trying to improve conditions for Eskimo and Indian peoples and keep the pressure on employers, whether they be other government departments or private employers, to fill as many of these positions as possible now, and as quickly as possible in the future, with native people.

• (10:10 p.m.)

I believe Mr. Phipps, a person who lives in the north, who represents a northern area on the Northwest Territories Council, when he berates all government departments for failure to do what I have suggested should be done. I urge the government and the department to redouble and quadruple its efforts to ensure that the native people are given every opportunity to fill the jobs they can handle, so that their lives can be brought up to something like the standard which we are fortunate enough to enjoy in southern Canada.

Mr. Judd Buchanan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, as has been suggested, my minister was asked to investigate a charge contained in a resolution passed by the Northwest Territories Council to the effect that the department is hiring as supervisors bigots who are doing little to ensure that native people are hired for anything but unskilled positions.

The facts have been investigated and it has been found that no such resolution was passed by the Northwest Territories Council. A motion was introduced in the

[Mr. Orlikow.]

council that a brief be prepared and submitted to the Advisory Committee on Northern Development detailing a lack of employment of local labour by federal departments and agencies and recommending steps by which the situation could be improved. An additional motion was to the effect that the possibility of establishing a program to appoint officers to act as liaison between local labour and private business be studied.

I wish to state that it is already the policy of our department to employ northern residents in all northern positions for which they can qualify. In the wider context, an interdepartmental committee is now studying ways of speeding up this process for the employment of northern people in all the other government departments.

Also, the department already has an employment liaison program in operation and is currently recruiting additional staff who will be stationed in the north to act as liaison between local labour and employers with main responsibility for employment of northern residents. This staff will be responsible for ensuring that resource development firms and other companies contemplating activities in the north are aware of the available labour force, their skills and the training programs that exist.

A committee composed of representatives of the federal and territorial governments and the petroleum and related industries has been established to bring about an increase in the training and employment of local workers in the northern operations of the oil and gas industry.

In addition, last August, in a joint statement by the minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) guidelines were set out for the construction and operation of northern oil and gas pipelines. It was noted that many benefits would accrue to northern residents because one condition of approval for a pipeline project is that industry would be required to ensure appropriate training and employment programs for Indian, Eskimo and Métis people in the north. Agreements have been made with some of the major mining companies operating in the north. These agreements guarantee the same rights and privileges to northerners as are enjoyed by the companies' employees elsewhere.

I might mention that last week when I was up in Old Crow we were told, when we were querying the residents on how the muskrat catch was going this year, that virtually none of the Indians in Old Crow were out catching muskrats but in fact all of those who so desired were working on the various seismic crews for the oil companies operating in the Old Crow area.

I can assure the hon. member that we are continuing to seek and to expand employment for northern residents through a continuing review of our existing programs.

AGRICULTURE—FARM MACHINERY—IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION RESPECTING MANUFACTURE IN CANADA—CLARIFICATION OF STATEMENTS ON COMPANY PROFITS

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, today I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) whether