

Government Orders

becoming Minister of State for Indian Affairs and Northern Development my appreciation for the north, in particular for all northerners, has increased tenfold.

At the end of last month, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development embarked on one of the most interesting excursions that he has had to date. During this trip not only did he participate in the historic signing of the eastern Arctic land claim, but he also spent a night in an igloo and experienced first-hand polar science by visiting the Igloolik Research Centre.

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There are many components of northern life that amaze me, but one that is particularly salient is perhaps the environment and, in even broader terms, the science of the north and northern life.

Polar science and the ongoing research happening in this country is for the benefit not only of Canadians but for all people who live in a northern environment. Furthermore, it expands the understanding and respect for the north which all Canadians should share.

Tremendous progress has been made recently in the north. The Council for Yukon Indians and the Dene-Métis have reached the final agreement stage, and the TFN has signed an agreement in principle. I am sure everyone realizes that the environment of political certainty and stability created by these settlements bodes well for the continued economic and political development throughout the north.

However, this economic and political development is not a random occurrence without rhyme or reason. Development has been carefully orchestrated by this government's commitment to a solid policy and program framework in the north. The approval of the *Northern Political and Economic Framework* in 1987 effectively demonstrated this commitment.

This northern framework points our way toward developing the north in a sound and sustainable manner. I believe such development will be further enhanced through increased knowledge that will be provided by the Canadian Polar Commission.

As I mentioned earlier, the Prime Minister has heartily supported the creation of the Canadian Polar Commission, but he is not alone in this support. Two extensive studies commissioned by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have both recommended its creation, but the need for this commis-

sion does not simply respond to my department's point of view. Over the years there has been widespread support for a polar commission that includes territorial governments, aboriginal groups, private enterprise, research institutes, and universities. This bill fulfils that need in an effective manner.

The creation of this commission is an initiative which fulfils an important role in Canada and ultimately among circumpolar nations. The Canadian Polar Commission will promote and disseminate knowledge in and about the polar regions, not only in this country but wherever northern issues are a concern.

The thrust of this commission's activities is to monitor research and information about polar regions in an international capacity. What is more, it will foster the promotion and development of such knowledge through co-operation with organizations, institutions, and associations, private and public, national and international.

In the scientific world it is imperative that professionals and practitioners be kept informed about the extent and nature of our polar science. The Canadian Polar Commission responds to this need.

The commission will also lead to the development of a comprehensive Canadian polar information system. Furthermore, an increase in the field of polar knowledge will in accordance with Canada's foreign policy enhance Canada's international profile as a circumpolar nation by fostering international co-operation and by increasing international attention to Canada's polar regions by addressing such issues as resource development, legal or jurisdictional questions, security concerns, and global environmental problems including the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer, and water and airborne contaminants.

After sitting in on the hearings on *The Green Plan* and the Arctic environmental strategy in both Yellowknife and Iqaluit, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that these issues are of great concern to the people who live in the north, our Inuit, our Dene-Métis, and our other northern Canadians. This commission will answer needs that have been brought forward during these hearings.

The commission will also initiate, sponsor, and support conferences, seminars, and meetings. It will provide support for the publication of studies on polar subjects as well as recognize achievements and contributions in polar matters. In this way it gives prominence to the