

Ways and Means

surely this is expenditure on the basis of political expediency. Simply because more votes exist in the south is no reason to ignore the potential that the north has to offer in assisting our over-all national development. The north does have a good deal to offer and I am sure that if the present government were to follow the long range and visionary policies established by the Conservative government under the leadership of the present Leader of the Opposition they would be doing a service to Canada.

There are many matters I could mention that might be of small import to this committee which is waiting to finish its business at this late hour but I think they are very important to the people who live in the north. One of the more recent rumours, and I have received correspondence in this regard from the civil service association, is that the isolated post allowances are being cut again. I certainly hope that the minister will take another look at that decision because it may well be that a reconsideration would lead the government to decide that any such cut would not be justified.

I should like to say one last thing about these estimates. The people of the Yukon, and I am sure the same is true of the Northwest Territories, often felt themselves to be isolated in the years prior to 1957. The five years, 1957 to 1962, brought about a new feeling of permanence in the north because the government of that day paid more attention to their problems and to the belief that the resources of the north were capable of development. There were also many other factors which tended to change the feeling of the people who lived there from one of isolation to one of feeling that attention was being paid to them.

I would hope that the government will continue to send officials from the various departments into the north to find out about conditions first hand. One simply cannot appreciate the problems that exist there 4,000 miles away otherwise. People cannot make decisions sitting behind their desks in Ottawa and accepting certain things as facts, no matter how expert the officials believe themselves to be who tender that advice.

At this point I want to compliment the officials of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, most of whom I know personally and very well. I know they perform a very conscientious and dedicated job in the department. As far as I am concerned, it is a department which exists to eliminate itself at the earliest possible moment, and this can only be done by gradually transferring jurisdiction to responsible government bodies which are encouraged to grow in the northern areas. Incidentally, it

is my personal opinion that this is not going to be abetted by dividing the Northwest Territories and duplicating services in the area. There are many arguments that can be put forward against such a division.

I do want to make a plea that more attention be paid to the proceedings of the Yukon legislative council. These governmental bodies should be encouraged to flourish and grow and take on more responsibilities and they will not if there is bureaucratic oppression from Ottawa. They will not do so unless there is an eager desire on the part of officials in the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and in the government generally to transfer the jurisdiction they now have in order to encourage the growth of those representative government institutions which will result finally in provincial autonomy. The government should not be encouraging the stifling of this growth but rather should be encouraging a strong, viable, representative form of government until the day arrives when these areas can become fully responsible.

I will not hold up the committee any longer. I want to say I am very grateful that this item was held over so that I could make these few remarks, which I hope the minister will read when he returns. I wish him well in his portfolio and urge him to continue to make visits to the north similar to the one he made last summer with several of his staff in order to learn our problems at first hand.

The Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Chairman, may I simply say that this is the last item of northern affairs and although I am only the acting minister I want to assure the hon. member for Yukon that his remarks will be brought to the attention of the minister. It is a unique distinction to have the opportunity to end the discussion of estimates. I simply wish to say that while we have our quarrels I believe that we want to wish each other a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Item agreed to.

The Chairman: This concludes the estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and also the estimates for this session.

Resolutions adopted in committee of supply this day reported and concurred in.

WAYS AND MEANS

The house in committee of ways and means, Mr. Lamoureux in the chair.

Mr. Sharp (for Mr. Gordon) moved:

Resolved, that toward making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year