

Supply—Indian Affairs

● (3:40 p.m.)

The first matter is the relationship between the commissioner of the Northwest Territories and the minister. If I might explain under the present legislation the commissioner is responsible to the minister and at the same time he is the head of a partly elected and partly appointed council. As such he is in the rather awkward position of having to keep the minister happy and having to keep the elected representatives happy. He serves two masters, which is awkward. I have no patent solution to the problem and I do not intend to bring one forward today, but I ask the minister to keep in mind what I have said when bringing down his proposals.

The second matter that the minister ought to consider is the amount of indemnity that is to be paid to members of the territorial council. Approximately one year ago we enacted legislation which raised the salaries of the elected members of the council from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a year. We also agreed to pay \$3,500 a year to the appointed members. At that time it was said that these changes were housekeeping amendments. If we expect the elected representatives to bear responsibility in the territorial government I do not think it should be up to this house to set their salaries. We should not say what the elected representatives are to be paid. I sincerely and firmly believe that if the members of the council decide to raise their own salaries beyond what is reasonable they will receive their answer from the electorate. The next time round they may be looking for a new job.

The third point that I hope the minister will take into account when he brings in this legislation has to do with the appointed members of the council. I know there are compelling arguments for having appointed members for the time being on the Northwest Territories council to represent the views of all Canadians, because the federal government itself has a great interest in the north. But what the government seeks to achieve can be achieved as effectively, or possibly more so, by establishing a series of advisory groups or committees which would report to the commissioner with respect to those areas on which the appointed members now report. I suggest that the minister consider my proposals so that when the legislation is brought forward all aspects of it can be examined in a non-partisan manner. This would be in the best interests of the two territories in the northern part of Canada.

I was interested in the reactions of many hon. members who have already spoken on parks. They said nothing new, having repeated their ideas on many occasions and in various committee meetings. The one area I wish to bring to the minister's attention is the Wood Buffalo national park. We have heard the minister acknowledge that if, somehow or other, the federal government and the province of Alberta could get together arrangements might be worked out whereby certain areas of the park would be transferred to the province and be administered by it. These areas include the so-called gypsum deposit which along the Peace river and the timber stands in the same area. The northeastern corner of Alberta, as a result of the tar sands development, has become a centre of new economic activity and resource development. When these arrangements I have spoken of are worked out between the federal and provincial governments I expect that the economic activity will extend virtually to the border of the Northwest Territories.

My point is that there has been much talking about this subject. I do not know at what level that talking has taken place but the newspapers have had much to say about the matter. I do know that it is important to resolve the discussions between the two levels of government as quickly as possible. There seems to be a tendency for each of the governments concerned to say: "Well, if you will come to us with a proposal we will be prepared to listen to you without making any commitment." I am not skilled in the arts of diplomacy and negotiation but I am sure that somehow or other arrangements could be worked out to bring about an agreement to transfer part of Wood Buffalo national park to the Alberta government.

In this our centennial year all Canadians should take great pride in what is happening in the Northwest Territories and in the Yukon Territory. I listened this morning to the remarks of the former minister of this department and to his biased platitudes about what he and his government had done when they were in office. We acknowledge that there was an impetus to do what they did. We also acknowledge that the roads program, for example, in the north was an extension of plans which were already on the drawing board. We are aware that in the years 1962 and 1963, when an austerity program was implemented, that the unfortunate area to be hit first and hardest was northern Canada. Millions of dollars for the construction of roads and schools