

the Arctic Seas, Nouveau Quebec, Labrador and certain northern parts of our provinces.

I want to refer briefly to what the mandate of the commission ought to be. The primary functions of the commission should be to monitor continuously the development in Canada and elsewhere of knowledge in and about the polar regions and to report regularly and publicly thereon. It is important we see that the work of the commission will go beyond simply research into Canadian issues.

Also, the mandate should be to promote and encourage the development of polar knowledge in Canada, and to encourage national, public and private institutions and organizations to support the development and dissemination of such knowledge.

I might add that it should advise the Government of Canada when requested, on any matter relating to polar regions, and perhaps from time to time on areas about which the commission is not necessarily requested to do so.

The mandate should also include the commission to act as a source of information about polar research matters for Canadians and Canadian institutions, and to foster contact and co-operation among members of the Canadian polar research community and between that community and the international polar research community.

I do not think we can over-emphasize that in recognition of all the countries that are polar nations involved in the polar community, there is a need to have this type of co-ordination between countries. That is probably as important as the work that we do within our own country.

Obviously the role of the commission in this international research should encourage the commission to devote an appropriate portion of its time and its resources to monitoring, fostering and reporting on Canadian participation in international polar research. The rapidly growing interest in circumpolar co-operation and the general importance of international Arctic affairs demand that Canada have a focal point for knowledge about Arctic research. I believe that the commission would provide that focal point.

It is recommended that the commission be composed of 12 commissioners. I suppose that is arguable. But I

### *Government Orders*

suppose 12 commissioners, as long as they are working commissioners, would be appropriate. Other members have also indicated that we feel very strongly that a significant number must be residents of northern Canada, as well as being knowledgeable about northern Canadian issues.

I do not think there is any question that those who have spent their entire lives, or a major part of their lives, living in the north or working in the north would be appropriate to be named as members of the commission because we see these commissioners as not being a typical board of directors but, in fact, very much working commissioners.

In conclusion, it is important that the commission report to Parliament. If there is one thing that the Parliament of Canada is interested in, and perhaps ought to be much more interested in, it is what is going on in our northern regions. Therefore the suggestion that the commission report directly to a minister and through that minister to Parliament is appropriate. This of course would assume that all of the commission's reports, including an annual report on the state of polar research in Canada and elsewhere, should be made public, tabled in Parliament and then sent to provincial and territorial governments and to other interested institutions and persons.

The budget of the commission needs to be adequate. I know that we have been given a basic budget that outlines what ought to be included. But I must say that in my first examination of this budget I think it is extremely modest. The work required of the commission in the first few months of its existence is critical, especially in terms of its establishing its credibility in the eyes not only of our scientific community but of Canadians generally. Without being specific about areas of the budget which I would like to see increased, and there are two or three which probably could be even decreased, a substantially larger financial commitment would be appropriate. However, I will leave that matter until we get into discussing this legislation at the committee.

We support this bill in principle. We believe it requires a very specific and clear mandate. We believe that it ought not to overlap with work being done presently and that it ought not to involve itself with work that can be better done by others.