

*Supply—Indian Affairs*

his major areas of responsibility could in itself provide a stimulating enough challenge and one to which the minister might well devote his whole time.

I got the impression from minister's remarks that when he was asked to become superintendent general of Indian affairs he experienced a sinking feeling. This I can well understand because the decisions to be taken as superintendent general touch deeply and intimately the lives of more than 200,000 residents of this country. His position is in many ways unique and without parallel in Canada.

Indeed, his responsibilities in this area might be compared in certain respects, though not all, with those undertaken in trying to solve the problem of the Arab refugees in the Gaza strip, and I say this having listened to some of the discussions which have taken place here in recent days. I will not press this comparison too far, but one might argue that there is a certain relationship inasmuch as the lives of individual human beings are directly involved in each case.

I realize one cannot hope in a single effort to deal in depth with all the matters which were raised by the minister in his speech to the committee. So far as the operations of the Indian affairs branch are concerned I think it would be advisable to discuss them under item 5 where we can go into the subject more thoroughly. I hope to do so if I find some time on my hands.

• (2:40 p.m.)

The minister spent the major portion of his remarks dealing with national parks and the ever-increasing need for wilderness and recreational areas. At the outset I should like to say that many members of this house have been devoting a considerable amount of their time and attention to the whole question of parks. To the best of my knowledge the members of the committee on northern affairs and national resources, and I think probably all hon. members who have given the matter any thought at all, will agree with the minister when he says that as we look ahead we recognize that with our growing population and with the growing number of visitors to our country there is a need for various forms of recreational areas and that this need will increase by leaps and bounds. When the minister suggested that we should now be looking forward 10, 20 or 30 years into the future in respect of these needs, I think he was perhaps being quite conservative in that connection. I would be inclined to say that we should be looking forward 100 or 200 years while we

still have, as we all know, great areas of open space in our country.

Small though our population is we recognize that with the encroachments which can be made through the use of modern technology many inroads are being made at a terrific pace into what until quite recently was completely virgin wilderness. I think of this when I have the opportunity to visit my community where I see what has happened during the last 20 or 25 years to the whole area of Vancouver Island which is part of the constituency of Comox-Alberni. When I see the vast inroads that have been made by the forestry and pulp and paper industry, by means of the modern techniques at their disposal, into an area which until a few years ago was completely virgin territory I appreciate what has happened.

In a discussion we had in the house yesterday I believe reference was made by the hon. member for the Northwest Territories to the fact that one could see the results of seismic surveys stretching through great areas of that part of Canada. This again is visible evidence of how quickly and vastly the inroads of man can alter the wilderness in a very short time.

I believe one of the difficulties at the present time with regard to parks and wilderness areas is that we use the word "park" to encompass such a wide variety of areas. In the term we include everything from a small plot with maybe two or three trees on it in the middle of a town or city to such areas as the great Rocky Mountain wilderness park or Wood Buffalo park in the northern area of Alberta.

I must say I was pleased that when the committee on northern affairs and national resources presented its report to this house at the last session it laid emphasis on the need for recognition that the national parks system is only a segment of the total requirement for recreational and park areas in this country. I think this is a point of view which the minister has enunciated a good many times. I am glad that increasingly reference is being made at the various levels of government to the fact that it is recognized that there must be a joint effort on the part of all levels of government to meet the future recreational needs of the people of Canada and their visitors.

On the question of the desirability of acquiring new national parks in various parts of the country I should like to say that I share completely the views the minister has expressed today and on many other occasions. With particular reference to the province