

Supply—Indian Affairs

am sure hon. members can visualize the type of riches that lie in that northern country of ours.

We will continue to be as optimistic as possible because we believe that the old time suggestion that we should leave the north in cold storage until we consume everything we produce down south and then go north is not a sound policy for this country. If we are going to build Canada in any depth at all it is imperative that we look now at all of its regions. The challenges in that particular part of Canada are such that if, Canadians do not respond with some of the spirit of the frontier, this will not be a good sign for Canada. We are now finding that young Canadians are showing more interest than has been apparent for many years in going to northern Canada to participate in the magnificent development now taking place.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. members for listening to this very short summary of the position of the department, and should questions arise I shall endeavour to answer them.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, I think hon. members will agree that it was good to have a statement from the minister helping us to pinpoint some of the problems and progress being made in this important Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The minister has been mainly concerned with outlining the progress that has been made through the various activities of his department. Let me assure him that hon. members on this side of the house will fill in the gaps by referring to some of the problems that have developed during the past several years in the various areas of responsibility of the minister's department.

Let me begin by indicating that the old department of northern affairs and national resources was one of the first to come under the scrutiny of the royal commission on government organization, popularly known as the Glassco commission. I imagine that during the past few years the experts have been busily engaged in assessing the functions of the department, and that before too long we will have a report on the operations of those officials and experts who are endeavouring to set up this department to promote greater efficiency having regard to the guide lines laid down by the Glassco report.

The minister made some earlier statements on this subject, indicating that while during

the current year the estimates would not follow the pattern recommended by the Glassco report, he hoped that by next year we would have some evidence of improvement and increased efficiency. As a result we are faced with a discussion of the estimates pretty well on the basis of the traditional pattern. To assist in an orderly discussion we will endeavour to follow the outline laid down by the minister.

In the book of estimates the Indian affairs branch is mentioned first. I think that is the proper place for this important activity. It has been said that the first shall be last and the last shall be first, so perhaps I should leave my comments regarding Indian affairs to the conclusion of my remarks this morning.

A great deal of information on the operations of the department was obtained by hon. members on all sides of the house as a result of committee examination last year into three separate areas. The estimates of the department were very thoroughly considered by the members in committee. Many recommendations were made and many problems were discussed. No doubt the result will be a shortening of the length of time required to consider the estimates today. Several members of the committee on parks spent several days visiting western parks where very real problems have been precipitated by the situation outlined this morning by the minister.

Some members toured the north, and I am sure some of those pilgrims who were privileged to travel north of the 60th parallel for the first time during a period of two weeks will have many points to raise which came to their attention during that time. In addition to the actual confrontation between members of the committee and residents of Banff and Jasper we had many representations from interested groups. Out of these will eventually come a comprehensive policy of park development in Canada, we trust.

• (12:10 p.m.)

Then of course there is our Indian affairs committee, which has planned an extensive itinerary of visits to reservations from east to west but still has to get off the ground in this respect. I am appreciative of the operational difficulties because of the crowded calendar during centennial year, but I hope this committee will be able to continue its proposed itinerary during the current year.

Merely making reference to the multiplicity of the activities of these various committees indicates that we have had a busy year; some of us feel, too busy. I should like to suggest