

Supply—Northern Affairs

Premier Ben-Gurion, not only because of the distinction of his own achievements but because he represents a state which has become a bastion of progressive democracy in the Middle East and which has very close and friendly relationships with our own country and our own people. We hope this visit of Premier Ben-Gurion will make those relationships even stronger.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the announcement of the Prime Minister is most welcome. We are very pleased that the premier of Israel has agreed to come to Canada. We acknowledge his great efforts in building a democracy in Israel. We acknowledge the great social experiment that is being conducted there, and I am sure the ties between Canada and Israel will become even stronger because of this visit.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Flynn in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND
NATIONAL RESOURCES

National parks branch—

290. Canadian wildlife service—wildlife resources conservation and development, including administration of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, \$823,390.

Mr. Pascoe: Mr. Chairman, under this item concerning the Migratory Birds Convention Act I should like to make a few remarks and ask the minister some questions. These questions concern the damage done to farmers' crops each fall by thousands of sandhill cranes in an area in my constituency at the northern end of Last Mountain lake.

I brought this problem of crop damage to the attention of the committee of supply last year. Because the present Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources has assumed his portfolio since consideration of last year's estimates, perhaps I should review the situation briefly.

I should first like to congratulate the minister on the presentation of his first estimates, on the way they are passing through the committee of supply and on his direct and straightforward answers. I also wish to congratulate him on the fine work he is doing in guiding the operations of a department which covers so many fields of activity that the items of expenditure require five pages in the blue book. As well as being very large, the minister's department is very important in the government's national development program.

I imagine the minister has heard of the problem of the sandhill cranes in the Nokomis district and other areas around Last Mountain

lake. I know the files in his department contain resolutions and suggestions in the matter, including appeals for an open season on the birds when they land in thousands in grain fields to feed before continuing on their way south for the winter.

I agree with the department's policy of protecting the birds from open season shooting because of the danger of killing one or more of the nearly-extinct whooping cranes which sometimes accompany flocks of sandhill cranes on their flight south. Last August the minister's department conducted a three-week survey of the sandhill cranes and their feeding habits around Last Mountain lake. A news report in the *Nokomis Times* provides some interesting details, and perhaps I may just refer to it:

The study was concentrated in an area of some 400 square miles bounded by highway 2 on the west, an east-west line through Lockwood on the north, highway 20 on the east and a line from Govan to Stalwart on the south.

Several methods and techniques were used to gather information on crane habits and movements and to explore the possibilities of controlling those movements.

Information on the numbers of cranes and their distribution in the area was obtained from both ground and aerial observations. The crane population was estimated to number some 1,000 birds when the survey was initiated. It increased to some 5,000 birds at the end of the second week and by the end of the third week, had reached at least 15,000 birds.

An 80 mile survey of some 285 seeded fields on August 31—

That is when the test was under way:

—showed 24 per cent standing crop, 7 per cent swathed and 69 per cent harvested.

Acetylene exploders were used on several crane roosting areas to try to restrict roosting and thus feeding activity to the area adjacent to a small sanctuary.

Attempts were made to herd cranes by the use of a single aircraft, also by two and by three aircraft. The experiments were planned to test the effectiveness of aerial herding of feeding cranes from crop areas to adjacent water-roosting grounds and also to see if the cranes could be pushed southward along their migration route.

I might point out for the information of the minister and his officials that although there is complaint in the district because of the damage done by these sandhill cranes, there are also many people who wish to see that the birds are given all the protection possible. I have seen the losses to crops when the cranes land for a few days' feeding on their way south, and I do not wish to minimize this loss in any way.

I think some action should be taken to reduce this destruction. I am passing on a suggestion made to me by some residents of the district, that the bird sanctuary already established near Last Mountain lake be extended. Incidentally, I have a letter from Mrs. J. M. Rutherford of Govan in which