

Northwest Territories

of reindeer herding as a means of livelihood. Eskimos have been employed by the government as reindeer herders, and every effort has been made to induce them to substitute for their precarious hunting economy the more stable economy of reindeer herding. Over the years a considerable number have been trained in appropriate techniques for herding and caring for these animals, and have grown to rely in an increasing measure upon reindeer meat as an article of diet and reindeer hides for the manufacture of clothing and tents.

At the present time there are 7,731 animals in the herds owned and operated by the government. The main herd, comprising 2,685 head, is managed by government employees under the direction of the superintendent of the reindeer station. Three other herds have been placed in the sole custody of Eskimos, subject of course to supervision and advice by government officers. Legal ownership of all the reindeer is still vested in the crown, but the Eskimo herd managers have acquired an interest in their herds under agreements which it is intended will lead to private ownership. That is the reason for the regulations.

The Chairman: Shall the resolution carry?

Mr. Green: The minister is not through yet.

Mr. Lesage: I will talk about the meat and the skins.

Mr. Green: I think it is highly important. I would ask the minister to continue.

The Chairman: I understood the minister was taking his seat.

Mr. Lesage: I can give more details about reindeer.

Mr. Macdonnell: We want a great many more.

Mr. Lesage: To continue, hon. members will be interested to learn that substantial quantities of meat from the reindeer herds are used in the Mackenzie valley. In addition, considerable use is made of the skins of the animals slaughtered, most of which are dried and shipped to Eskimos in the eastern Arctic where depletion in the last half century of the caribou herds has made the demand for skins for the manufacture of clothing greater than the available supply. The shipment to the eastern Arctic in 1952-53 comprised 550 skins.

Adaptation of the Eskimos concerned to the herder's life has now progressed to such an extent that it is considered desirable to place still more reindeer under Eskimo

management, and to pass title to their animals to herders who have proved their fitness and reliability. It is therefore necessary to add to the existing Northwest Territories Act authority for the governor in council to make regulations for the management of reindeer in the territories and for the transfer to Eskimos and Indians of title to reindeer.

The officers of the department of whom I inquired before coming into the house at noon tell me that they are now working on regulations which will permit that.

Mr. Green: Has anything been done about the musk-ox?

Mr. Lesage: Not in the same sense. We propose to preserve them as much as possible.

Mr. Green: No steps have been taken to build up a herd of musk-ox?

Mr. Lesage: If my hon. friend allows me to do so, I will answer his question in committee on second reading. I will certainly do that.

Mr. Macdonnell: Mr. Chairman, I did not know I was so greatly interested in reindeer, but the minister has interested me very much.

Mr. Lesage: I talk too much.

Mr. Macdonnell: No, not enough.

Mr. Knowles: It is the Christmas season so we are all interested in reindeer.

Mr. Macdonnell: If I understand the net result of what the minister said, then if we discount liberally those astronomical figures which appeared in the article in *Maclean's* and come back to the numbers which were actually successfully transported or taken from Alaska to their present homes, instead of having these what I call astronomical figures it would look to me as if we have a very small enterprise. They seem to me to have been looked after almost like domestic animals.

That is one thing I want to find out. The minister used the word "tended". I want to know if there is anything to indicate that if they are left in their native state there they are going to multiply so that, if we live even for a thousand years, we will have those figures or anything like them; or in other words, to come back to the point, is there any evidence that this is developing in such a way as to warrant, even to a modest extent, the hopes which we had when we started?

Mr. Lesage: I am no expert on reindeer and I do not believe the hon. member for Greenwood is either, but my guess is as good as his. According to what I have read about