

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

need for development of the north in a material way. He has mentioned also the human development of that area. He has referred to the development of mines, minerals, oil, gas and all the rest of it, but he always mentions in connection with that the human development of the area.

The other day I asked the minister if he would table the evidence taken at an inquest that was held at Baker Lake in the Northwest Territories in the month of July into the starvation of 14 Eskimo people. Yesterday the minister was good enough to table the evidence taken at the inquest. He was also good enough to give me a copy of the autopsy report made by Dr. Wallace of Winnipeg on the bodies of these Eskimos who died at Garry lake. At that time the minister felt that the autopsy report should not be tabled. I communicated with him by telephone this morning and suggested that the autopsy report had been submitted by the R.C.M.P. officer at Baker Lake as exhibit 1 in the inquest, and for that reason I thought that, although this report had been given to me in confidence, I could not agree that the minister should not table it for the perusal of the members of the house. He agreed at that time to table this document and intimated to me I could use what was in it in this debate.

In 1956, Mr. Chairman, I spoke in this house concerning the serious depletion of caribou in the Northwest Territories. I should like to go back and quote from what I said on February 27, 1956, as it appears in volume 2 of the *Hansard* reports of that session. I was speaking of this serious depletion of the caribou, and I said this, as reported at page 1603 of *Hansard* for that date:

At the rate caribou have been depleting in numbers, six years from now there will not be one living caribou in the Northwest Territories.

I went on to say, on the same page, and I was speaking of conservation at that time, suggesting that conservation measures would have to be adopted by the government in order to save these animals which are the lifeblood of the people who live in that area:

If the natives do not take those caribou—and of course if we are to follow sound conservation policies we shall be obliged to restrict the number of caribou they take—something must be done to feed these people.

I said that something must be done to feed these people if we are to restrict the taking of caribou. These inland Eskimos of the Northwest Territories, as you know, are entirely dependent on caribou. They cannot grow anything in the soil. There are lakes to fish. We do not know how may fish there are. There has never been any survey to ascertain the number of fish. The caribou is

the only—not the only, but the prime source of food for these people, and that is what I said at that time. I said also at page 1604:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say to this house that caribou mean no more to the average person in Canada, and I could talk until I am blue in the face, than the buffalo did before the railroads went west. But in my part of the country they are the very lifeblood. We eat this animal. Something has to be done.

What has been done? You have all read newspaper articles which have appeared during the past winter—these I have are from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and here is one headed "Starvation and Freezing kill Nine Eskimos". There are a number of them, all on the starvation of Eskimos. The government of the day was warned in 1956.

The government of this day has been warned by the reports of the Canadian wildlife service with regard to caribou in that area. A survey has been going on for two years with regard to this serious depletion. When I spoke in 1956 there were 338,000 caribou according to the estimates of the Canadian wildlife service officers in my area, which was 320,000 less than what the population was five years previously. I said at that time—and I repeat it—that in six years, with the way the caribou were being depleted, there will not be a living caribou within the Northwest Territories.

What happened this winter? This winter at Garry lake, at Chantrey inlet and Pelly lake in the Northwest Territories we had, according to newspaper clippings, people dying of starvation. I have had information from Baker Lake indirectly that last August 3 the missionary at Garry lake went into Baker Lake and reported that there were no caribou and very few fish. To most hon. members this probably does not really mean anything. Caribou are taken not only for meat but for clothing. However, it was reported on August 3 that there were no caribou. On August 16 an aircraft went into Pelly and Garry lakes and dropped off food but we do not know what food. I understand it was the family allowance food. With prices at Baker Lake, you know just about how far the family allowance would go. I have no evidence of how much food was left there on August 15.

In December the same report was made: No caribou; very few fish; the people in dire circumstances; near starvation. On December 15 another aircraft went out and dropped off food. I might say that it dropped off food without contacting the Eskimos. It dropped it off on the trail or in some building between Pelly lake and Garry lake, in a cache, in a building, without contacting the Eskimos. What happened? On December 15 they got this food. The newspaper articles, all written