

Mr. NIELSEN: In the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, as is well-known, the natural resources and their administration is the responsibility of the federal government partly through the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys.

Under this general item I would like to discuss assay services and prospectors' assistance plans north of the 60th parallel, but I believe they might be discussed more properly under Northern Affairs. So as long as it is understood that we would not be out of order at that time, I would like to raise these issues then because, while these issues have to do directly with geological assays and so on, nevertheless they do come more, I think, under Northern Affairs and National Resources than under a discussion of this item at this time.

Mr. COMTOIS: This comes within the mines branch division. If it is a question of assay offices, we could discuss it when that item comes up.

Mr. NIELSEN: I was going to follow it and say first that I realize the very excellent job that the department has undertaken particularly in the field of geological surveys, mapping, and so on; but I believe the department should be doing more.

I realize the restrictions under which the department is operating, probably because of the limitation of funds available; but if we are to realize an acceleration in development beyond the 60th parallel, we must realize that it rests upon adequate geological surveys and mapping being made available at the time when the companies go into those areas.

I am thinking particularly of the Arctic islands where no maps are available. I am not suggesting that the department has been lax; but they simply have not been able to produce them under the limitations under which they have suffered.

The same thing applies to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories when we consider the plans of assistance that are available on a provincial scale; and when we compare them with what is available in the north, they are almost non-existent.

There are provincial assistance plans whereby the prospectors can be assisted by means of grub staking and other material advantages in the provinces; but these plans are not available in the north at all.

There are plans providing for subsidies and assay services so that prospectors will be encouraged in those areas. These plans are available in the provinces but they are not available in the north.

I wonder if the minister or perhaps the deputy minister might indicate to us—I do not mean in detail, but painting with a very broad brush—what the plans of the department are to be with regard to looking ahead to the establishment of these facilities for the encouragement and for the fostering of the man with the pack on his back who, after all, will be the man who, in the end, goes out to seek these minerals? How is the department planning to assist in such a basic form of development?

Dr. BOYER: I believe the answer to Mr. Nielsen's question had better be given by the Department of Northern Affairs.

Mr. NIELSEN: That is what I thought.

Dr. BOYER: We could be of some assistance. For example if there was a need for it, and if it was proven that it was economical to do it, we could set up an assay office in the Yukon, to improve upon the present assistance that we give in connection with those samples sent by prospectors to Ottawa.

At the present time a prospector in the Yukon has the right, I believe, when he gets his prospector's licence from northern affairs, to have a certain number of free assays, by arrangement between the two departments, northern affairs and ours.