

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

At the moment we have Indian people canvassing the possibility of building houses and approving work that is being done on various reservations. We are of this opinion, that if we are going to establish these people in the position we hope they will be, they have to start making decisions for themselves. They have to tell us that this is what they want done, and they are prepared to participate either by contributing labour or by contributing money.

I want to thank the hon. member for Skeena for having raised the matter of game. We have had a number of cases lately which bear on protection of the wild game of Canada. This problem comes to me with a double onslaught because I am the minister in charge of Indian affairs, and some of our very wise Indians are trying to have established in the white man's law something that is going to make sense; but at the same time I have the responsibility for the preservation of wildlife in the country. At this time, because there have been a number of cases creating a cloudy situation, but which in the end will result in a full clarification, a committee has been established to study the whole problem. We will be making recommendations shortly because the committee has just about exhausted the whole field. It has had some 10 or 12 meetings.

I think you would be very unfair if you asked me what was going to be done. A great number of people in Canada are of the impression, and I am probably treading on thin ice when I say this, that the traditional rights guaranteed the Indians in respect of taking game must be preserved. At the same time, we have to do our best to encourage the Indian people to respect conservation methods within Canada. There are many Indian people, I believe, who could point to their own conduct as proof that they have been, in the past, amongst the best conservationists in this country. I feel that we may be working toward a situation where we will not be called upon in the years ahead, to proscribe any of these rights that were granted and, at the same time give due attention to preserving the wildlife of this country. This is my hope, and there is much indication of support from a number of sources in the country today.

I agree with hon. members who have spoken about the primacy of housing. I agree with the hon. member for Skeena about the worth of the individual. I want to say something

about treaties Nos. 8 and 11. As the hon. member knows, these were the subject matter of a committee in 1960. I do not want to say more than that this matter is being studied again. I have certain impressions, out of my knowledge of the territory, that the establishment of new reservations in that area would probably be of little value to the Indian people. We are dealing only with the resources that might be attendant upon the alienation of the land to reserves. It seems to me, especially in this day and in that particular area, the proper method for discharging our responsibilities to the Indian people would be by something other than the mere setting aside of lands, because the resources are not on top of the ground as they are in the provinces but are under the ground. However, we will be saying something about that later, because we are going to continue the study to completion.

I do want to thank members for having raised in the committee the matter of visiting Indian reservations. I think one of the unfortunate characteristics of the House of Commons is that many of us are forced to talk upon things about which some of us know very little. I feel there would be a tremendous advantage if members were to see these things about which they propose to speak. While the cost may be considerable, I do not believe a more productive investment could be made on behalf of the people of Canada than to allow as many members of the committee as possible to see the Indian reservations, talk to the Indian leaders and note their responses to what they believe are the intentions of the government of Canada toward them. I have no responsibility in this matter. The committee is its own master. I believe there is a resolution which I hope will be approved on Monday and which will enable a number of subcommittees of the committee on Indian affairs to make visits to different parts of the country to see some of the reservations and have discussions with the Indian leaders.

I am going to warn certain members of the committee that they are going to come away from some Indian reservations distinctly shocked. I am quite certain we will have the odd member of the House of Commons—I will be surprised if this is not the case—saying, "I did not know things like this were going on in this country". I have found the same sort of thing applies to my responsibility in respect of the Northwest Territories. I believe it is imperative that we endeavour to solve