

*Supply—Indian Affairs*

Alaska highway which was adverted to by the hon. member for Yukon. There must perforce always be land communication between Alaska and the centre of this continent. If that is the case, 40 years from now land communication will still be required. In the name of all that is sensible and reasonable, surely we should give consideration to the fact that the cost of maintaining a gravel highway for a period of 40 years, contrasted with the cost of constructing a paved highway with the suggested improvements referred to by the Sandford research commission, is virtually the same. That report and the report prepared by the Department of Public Works would indicate that there would be virtually no difference in the cost at the expiration of 40 years.

If we maintain the gravel road, at the end of 40 years we will still have a dusty highway which will repel rather than attract people. Yet the cost of maintaining that highway and improving it will be very nearly the same as the cost of paving the highway and maintaining the gravel road during the time the paving is being done. I do not suggest to the minister that the government declare now that it is going to start this improvement right away, but I suggest that the government take that vitally fundamental fact into account, realize that is the sensible course to follow and declare that it intends to follow that course. There is no question whether this is essential; the only question is when it should begin. We must pursue this matter more indefatigably in our discussions with the governments of the United States and British Columbia. I ask the minister to give careful consideration to this suggestion. I have had some discussions with members of the United States government who are concerned about this road and I know of their views. If a categorical statement could be made as to the government's intention, without regard to the timing, it would be very useful.

The same applies to the roads to resources program generally, which the Conservative government so usefully started, and the Mackenzie highway, that great artery into the Northwest Territories. The time has come when we should consider what is happening in the Rainbow Lake area and throughout the north generally. There is an awakening in this great land which I think will provide a stimulant to the federal government to enter into arrangements with the government of Alberta for the joint sharing of the cost of maintaining that part of the highway lying immediately to the south of the Northwest Territories border.

I understand that the government of the province of Alberta has indicated its firm intention to launch a yearly program to lay paving toward the north. I think this is an essential policy.

The northern part of Canada lying north of the 55th parallel is like the upper part of a great bowl. Everything flows down into the centre. Our fiscal laws, our economic policies and our monetary measures are all designed to militate against the growth of these areas. If this country is ever going to amount to anything, surely now is the time for us to concentrate and turn our attention to the development of that part of the country which has been neglected. There are grave problems involved, problems in persuading people to live there and in persuading them of the great economic possibilities which exist.

I left a statement for the minister when he was in Peace River recently. It contained a distillation of the views I have held for many years. These are not only my views but views that have been impressed upon me by other people living in the north, and they represent points of view that the government should consider.

I should now like to deal with national parks. Let me direct the minister's attention, as I am sure he knew I would, to Wood Buffalo park. It is the largest national park in the country, and no one could sensibly suggest at this time that there is any likelihood of tourist development there such as the hon. member for Bow River referred to so eloquently and so forcefully a short time ago. It may well be that in the course of the development of our wildlife policy, and I believe this to be the case, a great area of that park will have to be retained in its natural pristine state. The park includes such areas as that which lies along the Peace River where there are great gypsum deposits. Timber areas in the park have been logged for many years under an agreement made pursuant to the National Parks Act. There is even a farming area in the park. The minister should turn his attention immediately to the suggestion that we should carve out of that park area the land lying along the Peace River where these resources are located. I cannot see how there could be any objection to this by those people who are honestly and anxiously concerned about wildlife and natural development within the country.

Having regard to the rest of the park, I suggest that the minister might well enter into an arrangement with the province of Alberta