

Supply—Northern Affairs

knowledge of topics that would be of interest to northerners and readers of the magazine. Representatives of the church in the north have from time to time made outstanding contributions to the magazine. I would also like to suggest that if there is any member of parliament who feels he would like to contribute to the magazine such contributions would be greatly appreciated.

An hon. Member: There is a volunteer.

Mr. Dinsdale: The hon. member for Port Arthur has written on various subjects from time to time and I assure him we would be happy to have anything from his pen which would be regarded as suitable. I am informed there is a very lenient editorial policy and that any such articles would be subjected to a minimum of editing.

As to the other matter, I do not think I can carry the subject further than the hon. member for Yukon, who represents the north, who lives in the north, who has travelled extensively in the north and who is intimately associated with the social life and the social problems north of the 60th parallel.

Articles are written on the north from time to time, and I think the hon. member would be the first to agree that some people look at the subject through jaundiced eyes. I am a newcomer as far as personal contact with our northern communities is concerned, but I have visited each of the areas—the west, the centre and the east. I have been in isolated communities such as Cambridge bay, Frobisher and Aklavik. The thing which has impressed me is the high quality of community life in these places.

Take Whitehorse, for example, which is a typical northern community. That city is as modern as, or even more modern than, communities of a similar size in the prairie regions of Canada. It has all the amenities such as paved roads, hospitals and schools; all the facilities which are required in order to live a healthy normal life by modern standards. The old town of Aklavik, when I visited it during the Easter recess, struck me as being the home of a most happy group of citizens. I think the reason for this social well being lies in the hands of the dedicated civil servants, teachers and welfare workers who are devoting their time to work in this part of Canada. The principal of the school there, for example, is a trained anthropologist, a man with a distinguished war record who has spent his entire teaching career up to the present time in the north. He has obviously set his stamp upon the community at Aklavik.

I could go to the other extreme of the Arctic, to Frobisher. The administrator there is well known to a good many members of

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

this house because two or three years ago, I think, he was on the personal staff of the Governor General. He decided he would like to make his contribution to the program of northern development and he is there now doing an outstanding job on behalf of the people of the north.

It was my privilege to visit Frobisher on a Sunday afternoon and the entire population had gathered together in the community hall, a hall which, incidentally, has been sponsored by the ladies of the I.O.D.E. It is a substantial building equipped for community purposes and there the entire Eskimo population of Frobisher Bay had gathered. The impression I received from talking to many of them was that they were enjoying a happy community life in this Arctic outpost. On that occasion, too, we made history by presenting a 25 year service certificate and button to Mr. Frank Delaute who is the administrator to whom I referred. The presentation was greeted with great acclaim by all the residents of Frobisher.

On the basis, then, of personal experience and also on the basis of extensive reading on the subject I would say that any report which suggests that the communities of the north are beset with difficult social problems as described in the report read by the hon. member must be the result of viewing the subject with limited knowledge or from a biased viewpoint.

Mr. Fisher: There is one question which occurs to me now and it relates to the unique position which Mr. Robertson has as a deputy minister of the department and also in his relationship with the council. This is a unique situation, as far as I know, in government.

There are a number of senior civil servants, including deputy ministers, who are directors of crown corporations and similar organizations but I do not know of any other senior civil servant who has this particular role of being a focal point in what might possibly be a developing desire for autonomy, certainly in a political atmosphere.

I just wonder whether consideration has been given to how long this situation is likely to continue before there may be rifts or the possibility of an attack upon the council which, since some of the members are elected, might place Mr. Robertson as a civil servant in an invidious position. I am not suggesting this has happened. It is hypothetical. Nevertheless it seems to me something which could possibly happen and I should like to hear the minister's comments on whether any consideration has been given to altering the balance of the representation so that we should not have a senior civil servant in such a central position.