

Supply—Northern Affairs

that I have on my list is that we are moving them into settlements where we can look after them. The newest one is at Tavani on the west coast of Hudson bay. In the first stages it will only look after 100 of these Eskimos but it is a start. The matter of moving buildings in there and of getting people to man the staffs is a problem of the department and we are meeting it.

The second thing is that we have arranged with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the last few weeks to co-ordinate their patrols of the area with our northern service officers. The third thing is that we are trying to arrange at the present time for an extra aircraft which can be devoted to going to the relief of these nomadic bands of a few families who move around looking for the caribou and fish that are available. The fourth thing that we are moving toward is the setting up of caches of food. These will be supervised caches because I think the house will recognize that if we set up unsupervised caches these nomadic people would live on the caches and, of course, that would destroy the very thing we are trying to maintain, namely their traditional independence and their ability to look after themselves. I will come back to the actual details of Garry lake in a moment.

The fifth thing we are doing is a federal responsibility and there is no sidestepping it. At their last meeting the Northwest Territories council did something which I think is commendable. They have taken steps in the Mackenzie river delta area to set up a co-operative program whereby the Indians and Eskimos, traditional enemies of the north, will work together to share trapping areas in the district. The sixth thing on the list is the question of providing people to supervise and look after these vast areas with so few inhabitants.

When the hon. member for Mackenzie River spoke in 1956 and complained about the lack of action of the previous administration there were two northern service officers in this area. Last year we got the number up to three. This year the house will be glad to know that we are getting two more and if we did not get so much opposition at times on the question of a deficit I would hope that we could extend that step by step and make certain that there are trained officials in the area who can handle the problem. The increase in staff I have just mentioned does not include other departments such as the R.C.M.P. which has eight constables in the area. We are hoping with this slight increase in staff, with co-ordination between ourselves and the R.C.M.P. and with the help of local people such as missionaries and fur traders

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle).]

in the area to set up caches in various parts which will be supervised and which the Eskimos will be aware exist. With such caches under the jurisdiction and control of people who will represent us in looking after them we hope that the starvation which occurred in two or three places in the Northwest Territories last winter will not be repeated.

But I should like to tell the house that we have no assurance whatsoever that in an area which the hon. member has described as a thousand miles from nowhere that we can completely prevent the starvation of family groups in that area. Family groups can exist just 20 miles from a cache of food and still starve. The person who has control of that cache, whether it is a Roman Catholic missionary as it was at Garry lake or somebody else, will have no awareness of what is going on just a few miles away if there is not this connection between the two.

I might mention that at the present time the department has no planes of its own. We have to use planes of other departments and we have their co-operation. I might also mention that a northern service officer in this district has provided his own plane to try to serve these people better and I think that demonstrates the dedication of these few, gallant men of our northern service who are trying to meet these tremendous problems. We do pay, of course, a gasoline allowance for the plane.

I think I have given a survey which illustrates very clearly that we are moving to meet the problem raised by the hon. member for Mackenzie River. I should like to repeat that the problem has not been kept secret. When you read the speech of the commissioner of the Northwest Territories to the council meeting here on July 14 and realize that out of 12½ pages over 8 pages deal with the very difficult problem of the Eskimos, for which the Northwest Territories council accepts full responsibility for the handling of this matter on behalf of the federal government, I think you will realize that the department, to the very limit of the human resources of the department, has tried to meet this situation.

It is true that in this vast area, and having regard to the sum of money we are allowed to spend, there have been serious episodes like the one we heard described in such a harrowing fashion. I can only assure the house that the department will do its level best to make sure that this type of thing will not happen in the future.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Chairman, I had the privilege this year of serving on