

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Fisher: May I just ask the minister a question at this point? He is not suggesting that my remarks were made in a spirit of criticism, I hope. I was just asking for information. I felt that one could really not criticize until one knew more about the project.

Mr. Dinsdale: When I referred to criticism I think perhaps I should have directed my remarks more to the hon. member for Welland and the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate; excuse me, I mean the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. The organization behind this imaginative program is the Canadian Theatre Exchange Limited, which is known for its outstanding capacity in promotional efforts of this kind. In association with the Canadian Theatre Exchange a local organization, namely the Dawson city gold rush festival foundation, which is made up of citizens in Dawson city, is sponsoring the local arrangements.

Reference has been made to the appeal for funds in order to make this project a success. The membership of this fund raising committee includes men who have had faith in the north. That is more than our friends in the Liberal party have ever had.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dinsdale: Anything that has taken place in terms of northern development in recent years has been described as jumping "from igloo to igloo". That is a direct quotation from the Leader of the Opposition. More recently a Liberal senator has referred to Canadians in the north as ignorant Eskimos. I merely point this out this afternoon as an indication—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Let us not get political.

Mr. Dinsdale:—that they have a completely biased and twisted viewpoint toward the possibilities of the development of Canada's north. The men who are sponsoring this project are hard headed business men who have gone into the Yukon territory and developed the mining activities which during recent years resulted in an upsurge of development in all parts of northern Canada.

However, what has occurred here this afternoon I feel will be of immense benefit to the festival. The one quantity that it has lacked was sufficient publicity. I am sure the remarks of the hon. members will have drawn attention to the significance of this project. Having listened to the hon. members on the subject I am quite convinced that, along with the 40,000 other people who it is anticipated will visit the festival between July 1 and the middle of August, we shall find the hon. member for Port Arthur, the

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

hon. member for Welland and even the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate wending their way down the Alaska highway into the north in order to come into contact with the realities of the north for the first time.

Mr. McMillan: I do not think the minister answered too many of the questions I asked him. What is the total cost of this project?

Mr. Dinsdale: This question had already been submitted by the hon. member for Port Arthur some weeks ago and, while I have not the figure before me, I think it was around \$200,000.

May I say that this is an historic restoration, as a result of which this gold rush festival has already developed. This is the sort of activity that has put our Canadian tourist industry in the front rank as a dollar earner in Canada. I am sure the hon. member for Welland is aware of the impact on the economy of the Upper Canada Village development. This is a project of similar proportion. I think the hon. member would be better advised to be promoting some of the historic restorations that are being undertaken in his part of the country, such as the Welland canal project, rather than criticizing an imaginative project of this kind.

Mr. McMillan: I was just asking for information, I was not criticizing. It was \$200,000, was it?

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I recognize the hon. member for Grey North.

Mr. Noble: I am going to make a few observations, but I assure the minister that I am not going to take too much of his time. In listening to the discussion that has taken place and the remarks made by members of the opposition, I felt that Erik Nielsen and Dawson city are going to be grateful for the publicity given them in kicking off this project. I feel it is going to mean many thousands of tourist dollars for this area.

We have in Grey county the highest point of land in Ontario. It is 1,735 feet above sea level. This is the great watershed of a vast territory of western Ontario. This great ridge, which embraces approximately 40,000 acres, should be completely reforested. Much of the territory adjacent to this natural divide and fountainhead of many Ontario rivers is not suitable for economically sound agriculture, and many of the farms are now vacated. In my opinion this whole area should become a national park.

If the plan I have in mind were carried out it would assure the restoration of all the rivers stemming from this part of the province to their natural flow. This would embrace the Grand, the Humber and the Credit rivers, which flow south; the Saugeen, which flows