

Natural Resources—Development

the government reconsider the matter of having this question studied at this session by a committee, as was recommended the year before last by the committee on privileges and elections?

Hon. Roch Pinard (Secretary of State): I do not know whether this renewed interest to which the hon. member made allusion is his own only, but in any event—

Mr. Knowles: Has the minister not read the newspapers?

Mr. Pinard: I think the interest disclosed there cannot be enough to justify this house considering this problem at this time.

Mr. Knowles: May I ask a supplementary question. Will the minister accept with my compliments copies of maps of the redistribution now being effected in the province of Manitoba, so he might see what can be done by an independent commission?

Mr. Pinard: I shall be pleased to look at these maps, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles: I shall send them over.

SUPPLY

The house resumed, from Monday, February 11, consideration of the motion of Mr. Harris for committee of supply, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Diefenbaker.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Hon. Jean Lesage (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, I wish to deal with some of the points discussed yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. I should like to deal first with his criticism of our policy, or what he calls our absence of policy, toward northern development. It is true that it is only in these last few years that the Canadian people have been in a position to proceed with northern development. Our people in Canada and elsewhere are tempted to make comparison with the kind of development that has occurred in the northern parts of other countries, and particularly in Russia. Well, climatic conditions and conditions in general are different, but there is also this fact that we must not forget. The cities of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk had been well established before Jacques Cartier came up the St. Lawrence river, so that the development there started centuries ago, while ours has just started.

Up to the first world war our forefathers and fathers were busy with the settlement of the west. Then, we had the first world war, followed by a recession and then by a very short period of prosperity. This was

followed by the Conservative administration of the 1930's which was noted for a great depression.

Mr. Fleming: Be fair; a world-wide depression.

Mr. Lesage: Then all our energies were required to fight the second world war. Therefore, it is really since the postwar period that it has been possible to look forward to our northern development. During the last few years there have been each year increased expenditures for the development of the north by a number of departments of this government, the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, public works, national defence, transport and health and welfare, and, of course, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

The year to year increase in the estimates of the northern administration and lands branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources gives an indication of the increased tempo of activities north of the 60th parallel. The expenditures made by the northern administration branch are independent from the large expenditures made by the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, the Department of Transport and the Department of Public Works. In 1953-54 the expenditures of the northern administration branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources were a little over \$3 million; in 1954-55 they were \$4 million; in 1955-56 they were \$6,500,000 and in 1956-57 they were a little over \$11 million. The estimates for the fiscal year commencing the first of April 1957, covering the period 1957 to 1958, are a little over \$17 million which means that in five years the expenditures of the northern administration branch of the department have increased five times. Five times in five years; this is an interesting tempo of development and activity in the north.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the most vital factor in northern development is the provision of adequate means of transportation so that traffic can move in and from the territories as easily and cheaply as possible. Prior to 1953 major highways had been built, leading to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, including the Alaska highway, the Mackenzie highway and the Whitehorse-Mayo highway. Since 1953 the Whitehorse-Mayo highway has been extended 115 miles to Dawson. An extension of the Mackenzie highway to Yellowknife has been started with plans for this road to be extended in time to Great Bear lake. A number of development roads have been constructed from federal funds or federal assistance has been given toward their development. The