

proposed project for the purpose of carrying on its mining operations. I ask and invite the minister to indicate to the House his attitude in connection with this important matter, a matter not only of great importance to the city from which I come, but also of great importance to many municipalities of the province, and to the future development of the various sections of the province.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We discussed this matter at some length on the last occasion the estimates for the Department of the Interior were before the committee, and it is a very difficult matter indeed. We have set apart our parks as a great national playground and there is no doubt that nationally they are a great asset to us. It is estimated that by the development of the parks a great deal of money is brought into the country and naturally people will not visit them unless the parks are pretty much in the state in which nature has left them. For that reason there has been considerable reluctance on the part of the park authorities to consider any application that would interfere with the scenic beauties of these places or transfigure them in any way. A great many protests have been lodged in the department from all parts of Canada, from Canadian clubs in some instances and from boards of trade, Kiwanis clubs, the Alpine club and a large number of other organizations, against the application that was first made by the Calgary Power Company for the development of the Spray lakes site. The hon. gentleman has asked me to express an opinion but I have an open mind on the matter. There is not very much water-power development possible in Alberta. This is one of the big projects that would supply the city of Calgary and possibly intervening towns as far north as Edmonton with power if development took place. After the Calgary Power Company had had its application before us for a year and a half the government of Alberta made an application in its own behalf. That application we have treated with priority believing that the government of the province considered hydro development.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Has the Calgary Power Company no rights there now?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): On lake Minnewanka.

Mr. MEIGHEN: None on Spray lakes.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No; it has no rights there. In view of the fact that there has been so much protest against this development I have hesitated considering the

[Mr. Shaw.]

application. I believe a development of this character is somewhat premature but if people want to invest money I do not know that it is any great concern of ours. In the second place, there is no other large development of this character in the province which would yield the same amount of power for the expenditure to be made. I had hoped that the member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens) would be here to-night. The hon. member takes a vital interest in this question and he is on record in Hansard as registering a mild protest against the exploitation of the parks for any purpose whatever. I should like to know what the feeling of parliament is on this matter. I intend next session if I am still Minister of the Interior to bring down an amendment to the Parks Act putting the natural resources of the parks under the control of parliament, so that applications of this kind would have to come before parliament in the shape of a bill and be passed upon. There is a very strong feeling abroad that we should not interfere with the natural beauty of the parks and for that reason I think it would be well to place the natural resources of these areas under the control of parliament itself. On the other hand, this application has been pending for three years and I am informed that the provincial government is anxious to go ahead with the development. The Prime Minister so informed me the other day and I assured him that the matter would be discussed shortly in the House when the estimate was under consideration and when I should have some idea as to how parliament felt about it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I remember the subject being before me but very briefly some years ago. I have read the remarks of the minister in a previous debate and, as well, the address of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre. I would gather indisputably from his words that he is strongly opposed to anything being done that would mar the natural beauty of this park by any power development at the Spray lakes. I am informed also that there has been considerable protest from other parts of Canada against the general principle of commercializing the parks, and possibly some of these protests have special reference to this site and this projected exploitation. Another factor that weighs with me is the fact, or so I am informed, that the head of the Parks branch, Mr. Harkin, has set his face against the utilization of these falls. On that account it is with some hesitancy that I venture to express an opinion. But finding the government in the position of having no policy it would be a shame not to assist them in any way that one could. I want to