

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

church camps from the park. The government will say "Not to worry" because these closures will not take place before 1975, but everybody knows it is impossible to continue operation of the camps under this guillotine.

Surely the government realizes that one of these camps, the Anglican camp, is established as a memorial to those who gave their lives in World War II. Also, I understand that the churches have been advised that they will receive no reimbursement for their present camps and buildings. This is a most dictatorial attitude.

For several years the government has said that public hearings would be held in Manitoba to discuss national parks' policy. When are these hearings to be held? How much longer do the people have to wait? Let the government get the reaction of the people to the closing of these church camps, the proposed closing of the outdoor roller-rink at Clear Lake, the unbelievable increases in commercial assessments at Clear Lake that, through time, will close many businesses, and the many more controversial decisions being made for Riding Mountain National Park. I ask the government not to delay these public hearings any longer, so that the people will know what its intentions are.

• (10:10 p.m.)

The largest area of Riding Mountain National Park is in the federal riding of Marquette. Mr. Speaker, through you I personally invite the minister to be my guest and visit the park. I will show him the church camps he is forcing to close. Let him see first-hand how idiotic are the government's policies as they pertain to this park. A visit like that would give him a better understanding of the situation. I say to the government, allow these church camps to remain in Riding Mountain National Park. They are used and enjoyed by many western Canadians. If you want to establish new policies for national parks, make them effective when new parks are established but leave the present parks alone.

Finally, I would point out that the closing of these camps is another case of one hand not knowing what the other hand is doing so far as the government is concerned. Other departments of government are spending large amounts of money encouraging our youth to travel and see Canada. Youth hostels are being established all over the country. Yet we have the department responsible for our national parks forcing the closure of six church camps which will give our youth guidance and do more good than any government programs to date.

**Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, six private group camps are

operated by church groups in Riding Mountain National Park. Agreements have been renewed with four of the organizations to continue occupancy of the lands until March 31, 1975, and similar renewals will be granted to the remaining two organizations.

At the present time, a number of organizations operate private group camps in our national parks. These organizations established camps in years when there were comparatively few visitors to our national parks. Due to the substantial increase in park visitation, it is no longer possible for us to accommodate all the demands from new organizations which would like to establish camps within national parks. Also, it has become necessary to plan the long-term recovery of parklands previously reserved for exclusive purposes of various kinds, and to make all facilities within the parks available to the general public with no special privileges and no exclusive use by any group or individual.

We recognize the need for careful testing to establish practical routines, procedures and programs for application in departmentally-controlled group camps. We anticipate, and hope to encourage, the interest of many worthy organizations that will be able to take advantage of public facilities which were previously reserved for exclusive use. The department recognizes a special responsibility on behalf of the young people of Canada. Consequently, we want to be absolutely sure that the resources for this purpose in our parks are adequate, properly administered and will in fact make it possible for many more Canadian youth to enjoy our parks now and in the future.

I would also mention that this summer a former army cadet camp in Riding Mountain National Park will be operated by the national parks service as a group camping facility, available to any organization wishing to take advantage of these resources. This project will be very carefully watched to make sure that this test of the proposed policy is as thorough and as objective as possible. While no assurance can be given that the agreements for the existing camps will be extended beyond 1975, there is no intention on our part to phase-out their operations until we are certain that we have a practical alternative that will serve the purposes we have in mind.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for the kind invitation he extended to the minister and I will transmit the invitation to him.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.