

connected with roads, parking areas and picnic areas. But this work is slow in progressing. It has taken more than ten years to develop the beach at the foot of the bluffs. The work could be greatly expedited if the federal government would seize this as an opportunity for the kind of action to which its spokesmen today have paid lip service. Much could be accomplished if the federal government would set aside some of the money it is taking from the Scarborough area and put it into a park development of this kind located where the people live.

● (1750)

I was interested to hear one spokesman on the government side refer to the parklands on Baffin Island and the like. It seems to me that the whole point of this motion is to persuade the government to see the need to develop parks where the people are, to put some of the revenue generated by people back into facilities which people can enjoy. It is one thing to see interesting coloured films produced by the National Film Board about the magnificent parks in the Rockies and elsewhere, and I do not at all question the value of government funding of such projects; but more and more the government should serve people who cannot afford long trips by giving them the opportunity to have parks developed within their own local urban areas.

As I have indicated, in the Toronto harbour park we have a precedent. I am glad that the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery) referred to this matter and I hope he is serious in his reference. The action taken in the heart of Toronto by the government is one that should be an example, hopefully, to its successors in the development of park and conservation facilities in the massive urban areas of this country.

We must recognize that most Canadians today live in big cities. Large numbers of these people do not have the financial means to travel very far. There is no point telling them that foreign tourists have spent so much money in Canada each year and that they should be encouraged to go to the Rocky Mountains or to Baffin Island. These people find it difficult to finance a trip for their families even within their own metropolitan area. This is why we must provide recreational and conservation facilities of the kind to which I have referred.

In times past the federal government might have been justified in saying that this was the responsibility of the municipality alone, or of the province alone. However, increasingly the federal government has accepted the sociological change which has brought with it the situation whereby the majority of Canadians are living in urban areas. Thus, the federal government must play an active part in the lives of people in those communities. Only recently the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) stated that the federal government was going to become actively involved in projects in big cities, that it was not simply going to be a banker for cities or provinces but would be an active participant in such projects. Therefore, I invite all supporters of the government to get behind the resolution and the principle it enunciates, and to recognize that since people live in big cities the government must put its money where the people are and finance recreational facilities to serve them.

Recreation Parks

With particular reference to development of recreational facilities along the shores of Lake Ontario, I should like to cite the judgment of the noted architect and urban developer, Buckminster Fuller, who when he made a study of metropolitan Toronto pointed out the irony by which through the years the majority of people seeking recreation travelled 50 miles, 100 miles, 150 miles north to the lakelands of the north, ignoring this great body of water at their very doorstep. Tens of thousands of people travel our highways at weekends and find themselves victims of traffic congestion, risking their lives and property, while all the time at the doorstep of hundreds of thousands, indeed millions of people there is this enormous recreational opportunity. Buckminster Fuller rightly said to the people of Toronto, "Turn your eyes back to Lake Ontario and develop your own waterfront".

In this regard I should like to say that the federal government has taken the right step in developing the Toronto harbour park. But now it has taken that first step after having been so slow, let it take a second step and become an active participant in the development of Scarborough bluffs and equally active in realizing the recreational and conservational opportunities that exist in other urban areas. We must recognize that more and more the Canadian people are living in urban areas, and where people are, government should go.

Mr. Len Marchand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the motion moved by the hon. member commences with these words:

That this House affirming that parks created are for people and recreation facilities of people—

I should like to indicate that I believe the federal parks that have been established in this country over the course of many years have really been doing just that: they have been serving the people very well. According to the figures that I obtained from the National Parks Service, during the fiscal year 1972-73 14,013,385 people visited the national parks system. There can be added to that figure another four million people who also visited historic sites.

A number of members have referred to the fact that the situation is very complex in that municipal governments, provincial governments and the federal government have all become involved in the provision of various parks facilities. Constitutionally, the provinces have certain responsibilities and so have the municipalities. But beyond that I think all levels of government in Canada are trying very hard to meet the demand for park facilities of various kinds.

Because of this inherent complexity, basic avenues for achieving administrative co-ordination and operational definition of responsibility is being sought through the federal-provincial parks conference. One major objective of this conference is to work toward an integrated system of parks in Canada through information sharing and toward consensus on the nature of a complete parks system and related acquisition and development priorities. The target is to achieve a system in which provision of all recreation and conservation services are complementary to the greatest possible extent. This co-ordination has been supplemented by periodic bilateral discussions.