

should be observed. Then, in regard to the granting of power leases in the parks, I again say that the subject should be discussed in parliament before they are granted. In saying this I am not expressing any distrust of the minister and of his officials, because in the ordinary treatment of the applications in other parts of the Dominion lands I have no criticism whatever, and I am making no criticism, of the manner of administration. I am speaking now of the parks set aside and belonging in a peculiar manner to the people at large. They should be kept inviolate and sacred in the interests of the people. I have had a good deal of correspondence on this matter. I am interested myself in the National Parks Association. I attended their annual meeting last January, I think it was, and I have in my hands the reports of this association. It is a highly disinterested body—when I say disinterested I am speaking, of course, from a commercial or personal standpoint—of citizens whose sole object is to conserve to the people their right in these splendid national parks. I do not know of anything that should be more carefully guarded than those great national playgrounds. I think too often the impression is given that these are useful to or used only by wealthy people. That is not the case. They are the natural playgrounds of the poor and the rich and we should be very careful of the rights of all. If the minister would be good enough to give us a frank statement of how the matter stands, I will reserve the right of saying a few words more if the occasion demands it. I want to assure the minister that it is not my desire to delay the passage of his estimates, because I know he has had a very hard day, he has worked hard and he has treated the committee in an exceptionally courteous manner. I do not wish to harass him at all, but this is too important a matter to allow it to pass without very careful consideration.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I confess that I have had some difficulty in my mind with respect to this very important development. I will try to cover it as quickly as I can. In the province of Alberta from which the National Park reserve is taken there is not very much chance for power development. The head waters of the Bow river, the head waters of the Saskatchewan and the head waters of the Smoky are about the only chances for development of that character in the province. Naturally, we have many people who look upon the possibilities of

power development with somewhat envious eyes. Perhaps we have been sinners ourselves to some extent, inasmuch as at Minnewanka permission was given some years ago to the Calgary Power Company to develop power by the creation of a reservoir at Minnewanka lake. We ourselves have developed there a certain percentage of horse power for lighting the municipality of Banff and for our park purposes. Rightly or wrongly, the Calgary Power Company have had a grievance, either supposed or otherwise, that they were not permitted to develop Minnewanka lake to the extent that they thought desirable. That has been opposed by the park authorities and I may say frankly that I have opposed it myself. After visiting the lake and seeing the situation there, the location of the road which is only about six miles from Banff, the very centre of tourist activities, I did not think it wise that that lake should be raised to any higher level which would result in a very large fluctuation of depth in the lake and, perhaps, make it present during the tourist season an unsightly shore line if the water happened to be at a low level. I mention this in order to give the committee a picture of the difficulties of the Spray lakes' situation. The Spray lakes are located about eighteen miles from Banff. They are the headwaters of the Spray river, where there is a tremendously large valley through which the road leads up to Mount Assiniboine and where you can get a splendid view of the mountains and see some very interesting scenery. I visited that area, and the development, if it were granted, would mean that the water level would be raised in those lakes, which are now a series of three rather small lakes as mountain lakes go, but rather picturesque, to 176 feet, the flooding of a valley twelve miles long and cutting through the mountain of a tunnel to bring the water from this huge reservoir into the Bow river where it could be utilized for the second time by the existing power plant of the Calgary Power Company. My opinion is very mixed about the matter. If a reservoir of that kind were created and it were a success, possibly it would not present any serious difficulty from a scenic standpoint, inasmuch as it would be filled up before the tourist season started. But, speaking as a layman, after looking the situation over, I have very grave doubt whether they have water enough to fill the place. There is not a very large stream flowing out of it. It is the head waters of