

Public Works Act

be an improvement to have them run by private enterprise, but the fact is that the parks belong to Canadians.

As evidence to show just how much even the provinces need more money, it costs more to go to a provincial park than to any privately-owned park in the United States. Therefore, it is my hope that the government does not use this legislation in the way I can see it being used, which would be to bail themselves out of the forthcoming economic disaster, unless the United States bails them out.

The government keeps saying that the United States has caused all our economic problems. However, when the United States interest rates go down the minister will not say that our interest rates will go down as well. The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) has used other people as scapegoats when he needs to, but he is not consistent.

I would like to make a couple of suggestions to the minister at this time. I realize that I could also make them to him in committee; however, I would like to relate them now for his consideration.

I originally made a suggestion in a letter to him and his department co-operated. There was a consensus on the suggestion that no services or work may be performed in relation to properties not belonging to Canada without the consent of the owner thereof. I can accept that and he accepted it, and he indicated that if he has a one-day debate he will put it through.

I have a second amendment which I would like to introduce to Clauses 2 and 3, but I will not move it right now. I am simply proposing it to the minister in the hope that he will deal with it in the proper vein. I would accept his choice as set out in what would be Section 39(a), that it be referred to the public works committee—and not to the House. The same clause under Section 4(1)(a) could be an extension of that, that it be referred to the Public Works committee. We are not being unreasonable. We are being reasonable in this instance. That is only one suggestion. I may come up with other ideas, but I would like the minister to consider this one as it is very important.

● (1450)

I have one other question to address to the minister. The minister's predecessor, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), almost had in place an arrangement whereby the Department of Public Works could be turned into a profit centre. Isn't that exciting? It would no longer be a drag on the Canadian public. The Department of Public Works would assess rent to all other departments for the cost of service. It would have a zero budget.

A lot of the load in the budget and the cost of this government is landed on this minister's head when he is really only a maintenance manager. Therefore, I believe he should proceed with this proposal. The expenses should be charged to other departments and the Department of Public Works should have a zero budget.

The department could make a profit by charging a little more than the actual cost. This minister could say to other ministers that if he can show a profit, why can't they? Canadians would be very proud of him. We would finally have a department making money.

I would appreciate if the minister would consider and follow through what was started. Many members of the Department of Public Works are very positive toward this as they are always being criticized for being big spenders. Therefore, they would accept this proposal.

I could continue talking; I understand my time is unlimited. I think I have tried to stay with the subject, as I always do when you are in the Chair, Mr. Speaker. I think I have done an excellent job. I thank you very much for this opportunity.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words on this bill. I am not the Public Works critic for the party; our critic, the hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish), had to be in his constituency today. I just want to flag one or two of the concerns we have about the legislation before us.

Before doing so, I cannot help but respond to my congenial friend from Ontario (Mr. Fennell). A number of the ideas he put forward in his remarks were not that bad, but he hurt his argument by using some very extreme rhetoric. He said that with the bill before us today, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove) would have the authority to sell the Parliament Buildings to Russia and then lease them back and we would all end up working in a communist hall. That kind of rhetoric is very damaging to all of us as parliamentarians and to our type of political system.

Mr. Cosgrove: It makes him look like a clown.

Mr. Nystrom: The minister said it makes him look like a clown. My principal concern is that these kinds of extreme arguments do not do any good at all to help win a case, to endear people to this institution, to get people to put more faith and trust in the political process and Parliament as an institution.

The other argument that concerned me was the whole connection of the purpose of the bill being tied to the property rights in the Constitution of Canada and that it is one of the big, sinister plots. I remind the hon. member for Ontario that I was on the Constitution committee. I was there for the property rights hearings and heard the arguments of the provinces. I saw very clearly in the Constitution of Canada that property rights are under the authority and jurisdiction of the provinces.

It was the provinces, led by Premier Lougheed, as well as the Conservative Premier of Prince Edward Island and Allan Blakeney of Saskatchewan, who wanted to maintain property rights under provincial jurisdiction in the Constitution of Canada. It has nothing to do with the crap he is trying to spread about this being a sinister plot.

If the hon. member wants to look at some authority, he should look to Premier Lougheed. Mr. Lougheed is now going around Alberta saying that kind of thing in response to the