

*National Parks Act*

provision apparently does not apply to the president or vice-president. It seems to me that the retirement ages of officials staffing this new Crown corporation should be the same as that for civil servants. I do not see why someone should hold a position in a corporation until he is 70 years old or older. This is something the committee might well look into.

Another real danger that could arise from the proposed change in jurisdiction is that an increasing degree of commercialization of our national parks could well take place. The corporation's need for funds with which to cover operating expenses could lead to its granting commercial concessions not in keeping with the aims and objectives set out in our National Parks Act. Once we lose the power of scrutiny in the House of Commons, we shall no longer be able to fulfill our role as watchdogs over our national parks development. We are creating a Crown corporation which we shall have little power to scrutinize. I view this development with a great deal of apprehension. It seems that perhaps members of this House will lose a rather precious right, the right to criticize and direct policy so far as our national parks development is concerned.

I am of the opinion that the House of Commons is gradually exercising less and less responsibility over many fields of public endeavour. I regret this trend in government because we are reaching the point of losing control over the public contact with another of the key organizations in our society. In this case, the new Crown corporation will not be answerable to the House for its actions with regard to park development. None of the Crown corporations are. We might be able to criticize development, but the Crown corporations are not answerable to us for the policies and programs which they are going to carry out. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that very capable individuals will serve as directors of the corporation, but I personally feel the move is fraught with many dangers as far as our future park policy is concerned.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I feel this is the time to speak out and let my views be known. I have always been interested in conservation. Over the years I have seen some extremely short-sighted moves in relation to our provincial and federal parks. On the whole, our national parks have, in my opinion, been much better managed than the provincial parks. There might be some dispute on this score with

those in the provincial field, but I believe that our national park service has been run much better than its provincial counterpart.

Canadians must at all times be constantly on guard to ensure that commercial interests do not pressure the politicians at all levels of government to give up some of our present park reserves or try to stop other reserves from being set aside. This has happened in the past and is happening in Canada today. I have seen large logging and mining interests persuade provincial governments to change the boundaries of some of our parks so that some mineral or forest wealth could be available to them for exploitation.

Pressure has already been put upon those in the federal jurisdiction with regard to potential reserves being put aside for park purposes. Unless we are strong and determined enough to resist this commercial pressure, and in many cases government apathy, Canadians will find in a very few years that our park reserves and resources are insufficient to meet our needs. I feel that full and adequate plans for park reserves must be made now. These plans must be made in relation to Canada's expected growth over the coming generations and our ever-increasing need for recreational areas.

I wish to deal with several specific aspects of park development which are related to this bill. I believe they should be raised at this time. There is a great need in Canada today to set aside additional areas for park purposes. There are different classes of parks and I believe we should add substantially to each class. However, I wish to mention specifically one class of park which has been sadly neglected by all levels of government. I refer to the wilderness parks which should be preserved in their natural state for all time.

There is an urgent need in Canada today for more of these wilderness areas to be set apart in every Province of Canada. It is essential that an undisturbed area of our Canadian heritage be preserved if we are to be able in the future to really see what Canada was like in the early days. These areas would serve as sources of study for our scientists and naturalists in the years to come. They will perhaps be the last refuge of many of our present forms of wildlife and plant life.

The national parks which I envisage, Mr. Speaker, would include the best terrain possible for this type of park. I should include those areas which have unique Canadian flora and fauna. If there should be conflicting