

*Supply—Indian Affairs*

already been touched upon this morning by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris and the minister in his question to that hon. member. Let me say immediately that I am not particularly concerned at this time about who did what and when so far as the present and previous administrations are concerned. What we should attempt to do at this time is take a fair and square look at the present situation and then move on to determine what can and should be done in the future.

As a member of that committee I listened to the briefs presented and, as members of the committee will know, when we got back to Ottawa more meetings were arranged in order to provide an opportunity to hear from the minister and certain of his officials in relation to what had been presented by the residents of Banff and Jasper.

After those meetings, when the committee was approaching the time of drafting a report and not until then, having heard what I feel was a full range of expression of views on this whole subject our chairman suggested that we ought to put down in writing some proposals as to what might be contained in the report. Following that suggestion I attempted to do just that. It was obvious from our discussions that there were certain limited areas of differences of opinion, and the proposals that I considered for the consideration of the committee did not touch upon those subject matters in respect of which I felt there was a consensus. I simply tried to work out, to the best of my ability from the facts as I had heard them, some proposals regarding what undoubtedly are very difficult and complicated questions.

At this time I should like to take the opportunity of putting before this committee the proposals I submitted to the other committee. They did not meet with the general approval of that committee and therefore are not part of the committee's report. I shall present them pretty much in the form in which I placed them before that committee. I intend to do so in order that anyone who wants to take the trouble of reading them in the context of the committee's report will understand why I have dealt with these particular topics. These are the proposals I presented:

The committee recognizes the townsites of Banff and Jasper are, in certain respects, anomalies within the national parks system. No like developments should be allowed to take place in the future, either in the Rocky Mountain parks or elsewhere.

The committee suggests their existence as permanent communities be accepted; that given the size of the parks within which they have developed,

the fact they are on the main trans-Canada transportation arteries, and their distance from other centres of population, these communities are and can continue to be an asset rather than a liability to the parks.

The committee approves the general ground rules which have been put into effect to limit their size both as to geographic area and population, and commends the department for its attempts to inaugurate town planning and redevelopment.

The committee suggests that parliament and the government cannot ignore the history of these communities. Their existence in their present form is largely the result of actions taken by previous parliaments and governments, both before and after the establishment of Banff and Jasper parks.

While current and future residential and commercial leasing policies may properly be regarded as matters of administrative responsibility, subject only to normal parliamentary scrutiny and debate, your committee is concerned that no injustice be done residents established in the parks under terms sanctioned by previous parliaments. This concern has reference in particular to the so-called perpetual leases. Your committee is of the view that, without prejudice to any constitutional or legal position, the government should give favourable consideration to the introduction of special legislation to deal with this matter in terms which will make certain that no hardship or disadvantage accrues to persons who in good faith have taken action based on commitments given by governments in times past. Your committee has concluded that such action is a necessary prelude to implementation of policies currently required for preservation and development of the Rocky Mountain national parks.

● (3:00 p.m.)

Having accepted the proposition that Banff and Jasper are permanent communities within the parks, presently and in the future unique in certain respects, your committee is concerned with the future of these towns as functioning entities, and with the opportunities for exercising civic rights and responsibilities which will be available to the Canadian citizens living in them. Your committee recognizes the main economic base of these relatively small communities is and will remain the provision of services to a large and fluctuating transient visitor population, with the servicing of railway operation a lesser but, particularly in Jasper, important activity.

Proposals for dealing with the situation outlined above have run, on the one hand, from the extreme of geographic extraction of Banff and Jasper from the parks and through "corridor" links placing them under normal provincial jurisdiction to, on the other, operating them in perpetuity under the direct "colonial" jurisdiction of a ministry of the federal government, administered through a townsite manager. Your committee rejects both such extremes. It is of the opinion that the first is financially impracticable, and incompatible with the successful maintenance of the national parks trust in the two parks concerned. It is of the opinion that the second is incompatible with the exercise of civic rights and responsibilities which residents of any Canadian community should enjoy.

Your committee therefore recommends that the government give favourable consideration to the introduction of legislation incorporating Banff and Jasper as towns under special federal charter.