

Indeed, the agreements reached between Quebec and Ottawa should not give rise to new sterile conflicts. Quebec is and must remain absolute master within its territory. Any beating around the bush designed to decrease the authority of the provinces within their respective territories would only be due to the ill will of the federal government for, in the final analysis, whether the money comes from Ottawa, the provinces or Quebec in particular, it always comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers. It is therefore unjust and inadmissible that a sector of the population should suffer from the consequences of constitutional disputes. For too long now Quebecers have suffered losses of money, prestige and progress because of the stupid stubbornness of the successive provincial governments whose verbal quarrels have engendered all the evils from which Quebec now suffers.

I should not like to blame exclusively the provincial governments. The whole ambiguous situation is caused by the federal government. The centralizing thrusts of the government, and more particularly of the Liberal governments, gave rise to all those difficulties. The offending paternalism of the federal government towards the provinces does not help matters either. The insatiable appetite of the federal Liberal government is only equalled by its cheekiness in offering or refusing the money required for the development of the provinces.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Such a childish game must stop. If the bill before us now sets clear relations between the parties concerned, upon the signing of the lease, strained relations such as the ones prevailing now with regard to Forillon park will be avoided.

We must avoid facing the same problems while preparing the plans of the future national park of the St. Maurice valley. For more than a year now, I have concerned myself greatly with that project, I have even made interventions in the House to that effect. Up to now, there was relative satisfaction as to the progress of that project. However, it seems that quarrels will break out as to the site of this national park.

An unbiased and very active committee, known as the committee of the future Mekinac national park, was set up.

I have received representations from almost everywhere and there is general agreement as to the site proposed by that committee. The

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National Parks Act

St. Maurice valley wants its national park for it would be an economic incentive for the area.

We congratulate the Shawinigan committee especially, for their wonderful publicity. Moreover, the committee of the future Mekinac national park has become known through its studies, its briefs and its plans which they submitted to all concerned. The most important of those studies led to the selection of a remarkable site, which will be in the interest of the higher and the lower St. Maurice valley. The fact that forest workers had to be protected was taken into account. The economic survival of the eastern shore of the St. Maurice depends directly upon the forest. It is thus logical to propose a site where no important forest development is foreseen for the next 50 years. We can thus protect an important and essential industry of the area.

When choosing a site, it is necessary not to take into account the selfish interests of some individuals. The federal government will have to consider objectively all the projects that will be presented. The St. Maurice Valley will reject every biased argument, for instance, avoid choosing the eastern shore of the St. Maurice on the ground that it is part of the constituency of a Cr ditiste or the western shore because it is part of the constituency of the minister in charge of national parks, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chr tien) or because the Quebec Minister of Labour owns a cottage there. No. Let us be serious and realistic.

A national park must serve the people. The cost, the profit-earning capacity, public opinion are factors that are too important to be considered lightly and, consequently, the minister will have to take them into account.

In my humble opinion, the project that has been presented by the committee of St. Tite and of Ste. Th cle with regard to the choice of a site must be studied carefully and accepted. And especially, the minister must be very careful not to flounder in the meanders of the party in office in Quebec.

If one had to deal with one government only, there would probably be no difficulty. But since two levels of government are involved and bearing in mind that Quebec will soon call an election, any patronage or any undue influence that might prevail in such an important choice as that of the site for a national park should be viewed with suspicion.

Before talks go any further, I would like the responsible minister to be duly warned of