

National Parks Act

something that will last for all time. That is why I feel so strongly about this important issue. We have an opportunity to preserve a living forest, with the largest Sitka spruce not only in Canada but possibly in the world. As our world becomes increasingly urbanized, it is so important that we preserve places and spaces such as this that can still move us to a sense of awe and wonder and enchantment.

It is important to note that the motion specifies the region "commonly known as the Carmanah watershed". We are talking about the entire valley, 7,000 hectares, more or less. We are not just talking about a couple of groves of big trees on the valley floor.

The large spruce are found on the valley floor, while on the hillsides you will find decent sized hemlocks and some old large-sized cedars. It is important that we preserve the hillsides and not just the valley floor. This is not only for aesthetic purposes. To preserve the spruce on the valley floor, we have to preserve the hillsides as well.

Anybody who has driven through British Columbia's backwoods of Vancouver Islands will know that in some places we have clear-cut areas that should have never been clear-cut. I am not completely opposed to all clear-cutting, but in some places we have clear-cut very sensitive areas, very steep hillsides, so that, afterwards, there is nothing to hold the very thin layer of soil that is on those hills. Then the rains come and the thin layer of soil is washed away and, when further rains come, there is nothing to retain the water so that it can be gradually released to the valley floor. Instead of a gradual release of water, there is a flash flood which, in turn, creates even more erosion, and a beginning of the eroding of the river banks as well.

● (1320)

Each large spruce on the floor of the Carmanah Valley uses hundreds of gallons of water every day. If the rains come down and get washed away immediately, there will not be that gradual release of water for the dry period which occurs even on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Some people say we already have Cathedral Grove so why do we need something like Carmanah Valley. First, Cathedral Grove is fairly small. Second, it is composed of fir trees. I do not think there is anything more magnificent in the world than fir trees. I think they are even more magnificent than spruce. But fir trees are shade intolerant. They do not grow in the shade. They only grow in an area that has been cleared. That is why on Vancouver Island you can trace the growth of fir from the time of large fires. In Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island the fir trees will eventually die. When they do, they will fall and that will be the end of Cathedral Grove as we know it. But spruce are more tolerant of shade. They will grow as part of a climax forest. That means self-perpetuating.

In the Carmanah we can see spruce in all stages of growth, seedlings taking root in old logs, young saplings, mature trees and old trees ready to die that will soon fall, and the cycle

continues. Trees die but the forest lives. If we saved only a few groves of particularly big trees on the valley floor, when they died—this would only be a matter of time—that would be it. We know comparatively little about forests and how trees reproduce themselves. It is important that we preserve a valley like this so we can study how the genetic imprint of trees is passed from one generation to another.

It will take much hard work and much co-operation by all parties affected, by members of all political Parties in this House, both the federal and provincial Governments, MacMillan Bloedel, the IWA, environmental groups and not least by the aboriginal people. I was pleased to see in the motion moved it says that this will be:

—pending the disposition of any claim by aboriginal peoples of British Columbia to any right, title or interest in or to the lands comprised in the reserve and the establishment of a National Park therein.

It is very important that the aboriginal people, in this case the Nitinaht people, be included. Carmanah, of course, is derived from a Nitinaht word. It is urgent that we take action because logging plans are moving. Logging roads have come right to the head of the valley. And there is an issue of jobs here. People are worried about the loss of jobs in the forest industry. This emphasizes the need for intensive forestry in the areas to be logged so there is a rapid turnover. There are jobs also in the tourist industry.

In conclusion, let me stress the need for the House to move today on this issue and to continue to move. Passing this motion is only the beginning of a negotiation process. We should see the importance of this issue not only to this generation, not only to the people of Vancouver Island but to future generations and to our world. We talk about the destruction of rain forests in other parts of the world. We also have a responsibility to preserve something of our own forests so that future generations can be moved, as the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) was, and as I was when I was able to visit the area. This is one of the heritages given to us by the Creator. We should not allow it to be despoiled.

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I would like for a moment to comment on this matter. We have seen a number of projects come forward. In early times we saw the Tsitika watershed, the Tahsish watershed, Meares Island, Moresby Island and the Carmanah Valley. It is critical to remember that the people who will be displaced out of the logging operations in the Carmanah Valley live in Port Alberni. They are people who will be unable to put food on their tables or pay their mortgages. Compensation is a critical factor to the people who live there.

When the Moresby Island issue went through, loggers were to be compensated, but my understanding is they never got so much as a plane ticket home. Many of those affected are in Port Alice and other areas that I represent. When Meares Island was put into limbo, the Ucleulet operations, the Port Alberni operations were again suspended and there was a