

National Parks Act

for a church to attend. In these two communities there is a kind of cultural development that is not often seen in other parts of the country. Their language and religion have been maintained and have survived, and these communities would attract a great deal of attention.

Once you leave this area you travel through some more beautiful country in the constituency of the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. Hamilton), which extends to the Alberta border.

Mr. Fairweather: Are you going to send out 15,000 copies of this speech?

Mr. Knight: Then you can travel across the southern range and up through the provincial Cypress Hills park, a park long established by the provincial government. Parks are established by both levels of government. Furthermore, there are two major highways connecting the area to United States markets. The hon. member says I should send out a lot of copies. I hope that the Conservative member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain and the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek will join me in supporting the principle of park development, because southern Saskatchewan is a very interesting tourist route which in my view shows great promise.

I remember listening to the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) speak about vision. If I may say so, this little project has been one of my personal visions. I do not care who carries out the work, but I do think it has a great deal of merit. I realize a lot of rumours have been circulating about the national government setting up a national park, and this was not all the minister's fault. A lot of political conniving was taking place—but I will not go into that. People were told they would lose their leases. They replied that the land had been in their family for five generations, that they had always preserved it in their own way, and now it was going to be taken over, and so on and so forth.

With the alternative method through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, the whole of southern Saskatchewan can be developed and made attractive to the tourist trade. People who unfortunately are stuck with living in large urban areas, young people who have to look at the concrete world of Toronto and elsewhere, will come to realize there still is beauty in Saskatchewan and in many other areas of the country that have not yet been explored.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I want to join with others who have entered into this debate of a bill that has come to us from the Senate, Bill S-4, which purports to make some minor changes to the existing act. I want to make one or two observations that I trust will be national in scope, as well as some remarks at a later stage that will be directed to what is at the moment a somewhat tentative proposal.

It was only a very short time ago that the present government saw fit to introduce legislation to set up an independent authority which, had the bill passed instead of being withdrawn by the government after debate in the House, would have had the power to expand and contract lands which were believed to be held, for whatever pur-

[Mr. Knight.]

pose, in right of the Crown and in the person of the minister responsible.

It was with some pleasure that I recall we moved from that concept to yet another concept, which I gather the government supports, namely, the principle that the government believes it has jurisdiction to expand or contract public lands held by people in the right of Canada. I welcome this because it seems to me to be an advancement over the concept enunciated in this chamber a couple of years ago. The government does learn; there is no question of that. Unfortunately, it learns slowly and in most instances much too slowly. Nevertheless, it does learn, and hopefully the comments that will be made in the course of this debate will convince the government that it can learn something not only from the people in this chamber but from the people of Canada.

What I am suggesting is that if a government can move within the space of a couple of years from a concept that removes from political control the right to buy and sell, or to expand or contract parklands to a concept of the kind espoused in this bill, which provides that notice of intention to issue a proclamation shall be published in the *Canada Gazette* 90 days prior thereto, together with a description of the lands that it intends to buy or sell—because it is a two-way street—surely it should not be too hard to get the minister, honourable, distinguished Canadian that he is, to consult the people affected.

It does not matter whether the bill provides for 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, or even ten years' notice; let the minister talk to the people of Canada. They will not hurt him. He does not have to be afraid, because they will not bite him. If he feels he can convince them, let him also listen to what they have to say. But do not attempt to legislate control over their land.

As a responsible Canadian viewing national parks policy over recent years, it would be irresponsible of me to conclude other than that the provinces should retain unto themselves, leasing to the federal authority on a short or long term basis, lands for any national park. I suggest this simply because there has been no clear evidence in recent years on which Canadians generally can base their trust or confidence in the federal authority in which they have vested certain lands. These are lands held in trust and which they for legalistic reasons the federal authority takes unto itself to purchase or sell, which in itself, to say the least, is a little presumptuous. This is a magnificently arrogant and presumptuous analysis in the absence of a clearcut national parks policy.

● (2120)

I have just pointed out how the policy of this government moves from one direction in principle very quickly to another direction. I could elaborate in respect of a second reason Canadians do not with alacrity have confidence or trust in this government which has no substantive national parks policy. Let me refer to the method proceeded with in the establishment of the last five national parks in Canada. I have referred to the principle involved in the Gros Morne national park where the government negotiated a 99-year lease with certain riders attached. I will not go into detail, but I am sure hon. members know of the principle involved.