

Supply—Northern Affairs

good. My point is that the department has a responsibility to the visitors to that national park whose numbers are in excess of 400,000, many hundreds of whom enter that park by bus. How the department discharges that responsibility is in the lap of the minister.

Mr. Knowles: What a lap!

Mr. Churchill: When the hon. member for Portage-Neepawa was speaking he suggested that he was confident that the minister would give his usual careful consideration to the point that the hon. member was raising. I have not the least confidence that the minister will give careful consideration—

Mr. Lesage: If the hon. member keeps on like that there will be a good chance that I will not.

Mr. Churchill: —or that he has given careful consideration to this point. There is nothing usual about what he has been doing that has any relation to careful consideration. But there is a responsibility on the part of the department to people who visit our national parks. We provide many other things for them in the national parks. As my colleague from Winnipeg mentioned, a road system is provided in the national parks. Golf courses, swimming facilities, bath houses, tennis courts, bowling greens and all sorts of things are provided. In Riding Mountain national park there is a museum and beautiful flower gardens to interest those who go there.

National parks exist for the pleasure, enjoyment and recreation of the people of Canada. A bus depot at Riding Mountain national park would simply be proper accommodation for those who enter that park by bus. We have suggested to the minister ways and means of getting that accommodation provided. I feel he has brushed us aside a little bit when we have asked that he correspond with the bus company, take up the matter with the superintendent of the park, investigate the various angles and find out for himself the number of people who go there by bus. I do not have accurate figures, but I have been there when three buses fully loaded have arrived at the same time, followed in the afternoon by others. That goes on during the summer season day after day with, of course, the main emphasis on the week ends. I have arrived there with over one hundred people coming there at one time by bus just on one day. Therefore I feel safe in saying that hundreds of people enter the park by bus, and they have no suitable accommodation when they debus or when they assemble to catch the bus for the return journey.

[Mr. Churchill.]

In my opinion the minister must apprise himself of the facts and discharge his responsibility to those who visit Riding Mountain national park. I would stop at this point and wait for a reply from the minister but I feel that he will make some noncommittal remark. Therefore, having now interested him in Riding Mountain national park, I will go on and suggest certain other things that might be done there for the convenience of the visitors and for the protection of the park.

Mr. Knowles: I suggest that he go there, and that he go by bus.

Mr. Churchill: I hope he will. I would be very happy to travel with him by bus. We might have an interesting conversation en route and when we got to our destination. I have been familiar with Riding Mountain national park from its inception and have resided there in tents and cottages since 1930 with the exception of the war years. Therefore I know something about the place. My impression is that just prior to the war it was in better condition than it has been since, although the last two years have seen considerable improvements made in the road conditions and so on.

I was very much concerned to note that some time during the war years certain facilities disappeared from the bathing beaches at the park. There used to be a high diving board on which the young people enjoyed themselves. That disappeared in the interval and so far as I know has not been re-established. I would point out to the minister that it is rather important to check the small piers that are dotted along the shore of the lake in the settled area. There are quite a number of them and he should check them to see if suitable repairs cannot be made. A few years ago they were damaged considerably by ice and high water. As a result they have become shortened leaving at the end of them, submerged under water, rocks and shortened piles. This creates an extremely dangerous condition for people who want to dive off these piers. The small piers are used by people for bathing and diving purposes.

We know that every year at some summer resort someone dives into shallow water or into a place where there are rocks and suffers serious injuries. Two years ago I drew this matter to the attention of the department by letter and some adjustments were made. The piers were repaired to a certain extent, although not necessarily as the result of my letter. Small signs were placed at the end of the piers saying "danger" but I think that is not sufficient. I think the piers should be