

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member wishes to direct a supplementary question.

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell the House why the government has delayed nine months the establishment of bilingual districts, since they are essential if the Languages Commissioner is to administer the government program, that is the Official Languages Act?

Mr. Pelletier: One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, is that we had committed ourselves to hold consultations with the provinces, and we did so. I could give several other reasons, but it is not a proclamation which can be made lightly. The government wanted to be quite careful in establishing those districts, especially since available figures dated from 1961.

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[English]

NATIONAL PARKS**BANFF—POSSIBLE AGREEMENT WITH IMPERIAL OIL FOR RESORT CENTRE AT LAKE LOUISE**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and concerns the situation at Lake Louise in Banff National Park where a projected \$30 million resort centre is being set up, to be operated by Imperial Oil which is 60 per cent owned by Americans, and Lake Louise Lifts Limited. It encompasses the gradual elimination of facilities near Lake Louise, including the removal of Chateau Lake Louise. I ask the minister whether, technically, any agreement in this regard has been made. Second, since such an agreement, if made, would be detrimental, does he not believe that one of the finest resorts in all the world, in a national park, should not be turned over to a private company?

• (1510)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the matter is under consideration. We have made up plans to hold public hearings on that problem. The public hearings will be held in Calgary next week and all persons concerned may attend. It will be only after those public hearings that a decision will be taken by the government.

[English]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, would the minister say why it was that, with its strong anti-American attitude with respect to investment, the government would even consider permitting Imperial Oil to get so much control over this park? Second, will he not have this matter brought before parliament so that this magnificent park will not be destroyed by bureaucratic considerations?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that the government is not ashamed of its conservation policy. It has created ten new national parks in Canada within four years. When the hon. member was himself Prime Minister, he did not establish a single one—

[Mr. Asselin.]

[English]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: My question was not answered, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that the minister should be given the opportunity to reply to the question. I invite him to do this rather than enter into debate. The minister has the floor. Then, I will recognize the right hon. gentleman for a supplementary.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, this project was allowed to develop after public tenders were called. There were many groups invited to make proposals, but this was the only proposition made when we called for tenders. We are considering it. However, before a decision is made may I point out that public hearings will be held in Alberta and they are starting next week.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I did not ask about tenders. I asked a question about the most beautiful park in Canada, a park which this government is trying to sell out to private interests.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggested a moment ago that there should not be debate between the right hon. gentleman and the minister.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I should not let this thing go too easily. There has been skiing in the lower Lake Louise area for many years. It was begun a long time before this government took over in 1963.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: That does not justify selling out that part of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that is not a question of privilege. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Skeena, who I believe has a supplementary, and then the hon. member for Yukon who also has a supplementary.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, surely we should be permitted to answer the question of privilege raised by the minister. We should be free to do that. He raised a question of privilege relating to the lower Lake Louise area and suggested that there was no free enterprise there. These free enterprises spent \$5 million there, and the government knows it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again I suggest to the minister that he did not have a question of privilege. I was hoping that he would not start a debate, which is obviously what we are doing. I remind hon. members that the question period is quickly running out. If we are to make progress, we should move more quickly and not spend ten minutes on each question. The hon. member for Skeena on a supplementary.