

*Proposed National Park*

detrimental to the efforts of the government to establish at the lowest cost possible to the public purse a national park or a number of national parks.

I wished to refer particularly to the repercussions which the adoption of the motion before us might have on park proposals within my own province of New Brunswick; however, I should like to comply with the request of the parliamentary secretary and close my remarks at this point in order to give him an opportunity to put some facts on the record.

• (1750)

**Mr. Allen B. Sulatycky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) in the course of his remarks pointed out that some time ago he first raised this subject at a time when the seat of Assiniboia was not represented in this House. But in doing so I am sure he did not intend to indicate that was the first time this matter had been raised, because I know many hon. members are aware of the very assiduous efforts made by the former member for Assiniboia, the late Ab Douglas, one of the most respected men who served in this House. He made many efforts to secure this park for that part of Saskatchewan. If the hon. member had diligently studied the documents which were delivered to him some months ago relating to this park, he would have found that the first correspondence from any Member of Parliament was from the late Ab Douglas in relation to a proposed park in southwestern Saskatchewan.

The hon. member for Regina East seems to feel the government is placing a very high priority on the matter of secrecy. Let me assure him that this is not the case. The government does not wish to keep anything secret in so far as the park is concerned: it wishes to create a prairie grasslands park in southern Saskatchewan. It is the stated intention of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) to increase by 60 the number of parks in Canada before the end of this century. In the last four years the minister has done more to preserve the natural features of Canada for future generations than has any minister in the history of this country. One has only to consider the growth of our national parks system to recognize that the minister is not concerned about keeping secret the locations or delineations of national parks but, rather, is concerned about creating more national parks.

In the last four years the government has created 10 parks. Since 1944 it is interesting to note that with the exception of the province of Alberta, which even then had a greater percentage of its lands in national parks than any similar area of the globe, two provinces have not seen fit to transfer to the government the necessary land for parks. These two provinces have Socialist governments.

**Mr. Burton:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. That statement of the parliamentary secretary is irresponsible and inaccurate. It was the Liberal government in Saskatchewan which refused to negotiate in this matter.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Hon. members may not agree with statements of other hon. members, but that is hardly a point of order.

**Mr. Sulatycky:** Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the year 1944 which is a red-letter date for the Socialist movement in Canada, and in Saskatchewan in particular. Let me go back to the history of this park so that the statements of the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) and the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) are not left uncorrected. First, as the hon. member for Assiniboia has said, in order for the land to be used by the federal government it must be Crown land. It may be in fact provincial Crown land. However, it is up to the provincial government to negotiate for the lands which it will be turning over to the federal government for use as national parks.

Therefore the federal government cannot delineate the precise boundaries it intends to set aside for a national park in southwestern Saskatchewan until the provincial government has completed its negotiations with the land holders. There are land holders in fee simple and there are land holders who hold land by virtue of a lease, which gives them as much right to hold the land and demand compensation as if they had it in fee simple. It is up to the provincial government of Saskatchewan to ensure that the land is acquired, that there are no encumbrances on it and that it is transferred to the federal government.

**Mr. Burton:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yes, if the hon. member who has the floor will receive it.

**Mr. Sulatycky:** I do not want to leave the wrong impression. In the last few months there has been more communication on this matter than ever in the past. This has been the situation since the last provincial election in Saskatchewan. The Hon. E. Kramer and our Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have ended an apparent breakdown, so to speak, in communication. Just last week the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development received correspondence from his counterpart in Saskatchewan and is now preparing a reply. So there is very good reason to believe that in due course positive evidence will be seen of the new negotiations which have taken place between the two governments.

I am hopeful that in very short order the minister will be in a position to make a statement to the House on this matter. I point this out in an effort to convince the House, the hon. member for Regina East and the hon. member for Assiniboia that it is not the purpose of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to keep this matter secret. It is not our intention to keep information from these two hon. members. All the documents which can be produced have been produced. We are simply waiting for the provincial government of Saskatchewan to acquire the land in an unencumbered state and transfer it to the federal government so that a second national park may be established in Saskatchewan as part of the effort the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been making in the last ten years to create a fully-rounded national parks system in Canada.