

National Parks Act

corporation must be a successfully economic operation. There are a few exceptions, notably the CNR. In respect of every other Crown corporation we look at the balance sheet to see whether it is making money. If it is not making money, it must provide a service of the kind that makes it acceptable to everyone.

This is not the role of our national parks. For this reason we should not agree to the establishment of a Crown corporation. We should congratulate the people who have been operating our parks over the years and wish them God-speed in continuing their operations in a similar manner but on an expanded basis.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, if I take the liberty to participate in this debate, it is surely not because we already have national parks in the province of Quebec, but rather because this project has been under study for nearly a year now and I think fit to express an opinion in the matter.

I have been listening to speeches on national parks for a while and it seems that the provinces which are already provided with such parks experience certain difficulties. Far from me the idea of criticizing the way in which these parks are administered, but on the other hand it seems that the creation of a Crown corporation would not settle the problem.

In any case, I feel that it would be desirable for Quebec to have one or two national parks.

Development of national parks in Quebec would tend to promote tourism, which should be encouraged in Quebec as well as in the other provinces. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express the hope that an agreement between the federal government and the government of Quebec be arrived at as soon as possible in order that our province, like the others be given national parks.

Some hon. members are in favour of identical budgets for all the provinces. There are many ways for other provinces to recover funds invested in their national parks, but Quebec receives no subsidies for that purpose.

Of course, Quebec would have many reasons not to participate in this project. At any rate its present government appears willing to co-operate and to take advantage of the funds made available to those provinces for the development of national parks.

It was also stated that such parks should have some historical connotations. That is a very good suggestion.

May I say a few words on the conflict that now exists between Ottawa and Quebec with regard to the development of Forillon park. Let us hope that the St. Maurice valley will also have its national park.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), like the Quebec government, is keenly interested in the establishment of national parks in that province.

I believe it is my duty to make a few comments on these difficulties, for I am convinced that the federal and provincial governments will show good will and good faith in the development of Forillon park.

I think that each provincial government must take great care of its territory, provided the interests of the people are safeguarded.

Discussions have been going on for a year about developing Forillon park. Lately we have heard that, on the one hand, the federal government accuses Quebec of delaying this project and, on the other hand, that the authorities in Quebec blame the federal government for not understanding their position.

● (9:20 p.m.)

In any event, there should be an effort to understand the arguments of both sides. I once said how interested the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development seemed to be in this project. I am also convinced of the concern and the sincerity of the provincial government.

Those explanations having been given, it appears that the Quebec government cannot presently agree to the terms set by the federal government since already a study on the possibility of finding natural resources is under way and a society is said to hold the prospection rights.

Anyhow, the Quebec government seems to be well disposed. Indeed, I feel that if it were given the possibility of developing at any time that land, it would be willing to conclude an agreement with the federal government.

However, the minister alleges that it is impossible to let the provinces, once the contract has been signed, undertake prospection on the land. I am under the impression that he is then referring to a legislation which went into effect many years ago, in short at