

Historic Sites

has represented central northern British Columbia, we are wasting our time here. I am glad that both my colleagues from central and northern British Columbia are in the chamber this afternoon. I have desperately searched for any contribution to the debate in recent years with regard to this matter, one which has always been of concern to me. I have not discovered that there was any great interest. I merely rise to serve notice on the minister that if the representatives from the northern areas are not allowed greater input into the policy-making of the department in establishing historic sites and monuments, they will be wasting their time and we shall be wasting our time in the House this afternoon.

I regret to take this attitude. I know the minister is interested in the subject and that he is concerned, as many of us are, to preserve a number of the sites which are still in existence. The history of the white settler, of course, is not an ancient one in the region of which I am speaking. I know the minister is concerned about recapturing some of the stories which are documented in archives and libraries and which have been left to us by these great explorers. But he will need better co-operation from his colleagues on the government side. It will take a little encouragement from the government side. This is not a very expensive undertaking. There are a lot of people in the area who would, with a little encouragement, spend countless hours helping to recreate some of the stories which have been almost lost. A book has been published by just such a citizens group of which I speak in the Tayler and Fort Saint John area of my constituency. It is called "The Peace Makers of the Peace." I spent tireless hours trying to get a little help by way of a Canada Council grant. After all, it was a local publisher who printed the book and it was a local citizens group who produced it—senior citizens, mainly, had compiled the information and told the story. But there was no response. It would seem as though the sparsely populated areas of our country have little input into decision-making of the kind we have been discussing.

● (1610)

I hope the minister will take my comments to heart and will be a little more receptive to the ideas I will advance and that have been advanced by my constituents and the residents of the great coastal area of northern British Columbia. I hope he will join with us in our efforts to give greater recognition to that part of our history that I consider to be the most colourful and most significant in the evolution of our national development.

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice the fact that of all of us on this side of the House who have spoken during this debate, three including myself, are from the province of Saskatchewan. That is an indication of the great interest we in Saskatchewan have in this whole topic of historic sites and monuments. We are glad the government has brought forward this bill. Although it has very few provisions, dealing, as it does only with the structure of the National Historic Sites Board, this does give us an opportunity to comment about the constructive sugges-

[Mr. Oberle.]

tions we on this side of the House have made to the government. This is an area in which the government is in need of our assistance to develop policies and ideas relating to all elements of the board's activities.

My colleague, the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) was good enough to mention that in Saskatchewan we have a number of historic sites and areas of great significance to our Canadian history and development. He referred to the historic sites at Duck Lake, at Batoche and at Fort Carlton, all of which are within or immediately adjacent to my own constituency. One part of a proposed redistribution that saddens me very considerably is in respect of this area. It is to be deleted from my constituency. Although it will be well represented in the future, as it will form part of the constituency of Prince Albert, which will continue to be represented by the right hon. member, I must indicate my personal sadness as the result of the deletion of this very historic area from my constituency. I refer to that area which also includes the Fish Creek national historic site, Duck Lake historic park, Nesbit provincial park, the historic towns of Rosthern and Laird, and the Indian reserves lying therein of Beady's, Okemasis and One Arrow.

I know that these names as I recite them will bring forward recollections of a very important part of our history, particularly as it relates to the 1885 northwest rebellion which had such significance in the development politically, and in other ways, of our country.

I have just given an indication of some of the historic sites located within a part of my constituency to show that this bill gives me an opportunity to rise and bring forward representations to the parliamentary secretary, who I am sure will be back in a moment, on behalf of the citizens of the area who have, through their own initiative, developed some very incredible museums and have worked to develop the area on the basis of a neighbourhood concept, linking up these national historic sites with the idea of co-operation among the communities, allowing the people from across the country to visit the area and see the precise locations of some important events and occasions in terms of Canadian history.

Part of the investigation now taking place involves different levels of government. We have a study authorized by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, on the part of the federal government, as well as a study authorized by the appropriate department of the province of Saskatchewan, the department of tourism, I believe, prepared by Mr. N. Dyck, M.A., entitled "Saskatchewan Rivers Heritage Complex: A Preliminary Investigation and Overview for Future Development". There has been a summary of this study, which is at present in the hands of the provincial government, if not the federal government, prepared for distribution to interested people and agencies. It is a very definitive study made of the potential of this area.

The summary leaves out some very important information which has been investigated and developed by Mr. Dyck. I know that if the people of the area involved had access to the entire report they would be better informed and better able to advise different levels of government as to the best possible use