

National Parks Act

porters of the Liberal party in the Prairies who would be reluctant to open any federal seat there.

I will not dilate, as did many members of the House, on the general question of the establishment of Crown corporations. I do not have a rigid view on this question in an academic way. I think that in this country we have varied experience. Some Crown corporations have been extremely successful in administering a portion of the public service and others have not been so successful. It would not be helpful for me to dilate on the general question.

● (8:20 p.m.)

I would think, however, Mr. Speaker, that the insulation of this particular area of administration from public opinion is a strange move and a surprising one, because it strikes me that much of the trouble—especially, but not exclusively, in reference to western parks—is the lack of sensitivity to the needs, the interests and the wishes of the Canadian people for whom, after all, the parks were created and maintained. I always think that the preamble to the National Parks Act is something we should recall and remember:

The parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment . . . and such parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

I know, and I think all hon. members know, that this must never be lost sight of. But we have to recognize that the national parks service is facing great problems. A recent article in the *Canadian Geographic* indicates these problems, perhaps in an oversimplification, as cars, crowds and crime in some of the parks, if not in most of them. Much more attention must be given to programming, developing and choosing the best form of utilization in the parks because they have tremendous variety and diversity. Some are natural, in the early concept of that expression and in the narrow sense of the word: they were designed to retain the beauties of nature in and for a society which, alas, has too often been wasteful of our rich natural heritage. Other parks are recreational centres.

I am particularly concerned about the Prince Edward Island National Park which year after year is up at the very summit among those with the largest number of visitors. My colleague from Edmonton West spoke about a diadem that seemed to have three gems in it, and they were all western

parks. But the second largest gem, if you look upon attendance from the point of view of measuring gems, would be the P.E.I. National Park. Only one park has more visitors year after year than the Prince Edward Island park, and it is one of the delightful western parks. But as my hon. friend pointed out this afternoon, that western park straddles a highway and visitors travelling to and from B.C. have to pass through it. If we had some way of analysing these figures more precisely, I believe our national park would in fact be the most popular in Canada. I shall try to get the Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) to produce some sort of computer that would project this result in an uncontroversial fashion.

An hon. Member: Be careful there.

Mr. Macquarrie: My colleague thinks this might be the path of danger. Our park is extremely popular. Hundreds of thousands of people return to it to enjoy its beautiful beaches, red cliffs and clear water along some of the finest natural shore line scenery in North America. I wish the minister were in the chamber to pass this on to his officials, because this park has a good reputation as to the care and maintenance which is carried out in it from day to day in a very busy summer season.

It would appear from the schedule of this bill that there is an intention to reduce the size of the national park in Prince Edward Island, which attracts over one million visitors in the season. This is a thoroughly wrong-headed, short-sighted and utterly regrettable situation. Before this bill reaches its final destination I hope that someone will tell us why a park already small, narrow along the coast line, with a growing visitor rate, should be diminished rather than enlarged. It is clear that more land, not less land, is needed. The eastern portion of the park, the one not yet developed and the one I assume is going to be cast back to private hands, is a place of great beauty and tremendous natural attractions. I know it very well. It should be developed rather than refunded, if I may use that expression.

While I have had some complimentary things to say about the park, Mr. Speaker, one great blunder has been made which should cause anyone connected with the department to feel somewhat ashamed. Some time ago a great project was on to connect, to link together this narrow park on the north shore of our province by the construction of a