

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Lesage: This is not a national park. As I have already explained, this is the same as private property. It is being kept in order to have a place for these horses to graze. We need a place and that is the place that is used. It has been used for years, and there is nothing I can add.

Mr. Shaw: I have no argument with the minister's declaration that they require an area for grazing purposes, but I cannot understand why we should have an 18-section area like that from which the people are barred. As I say, people may desire to go there to spend a Sunday afternoon. Secondly, I should like to know how many horses are owned by the federal parks branch that are pastured in the area?

Mr. Lesage: The number of horses, I am informed, is approximately 150.

Mr. Shaw: May I just pursue the one aspect further, and that is with respect to this no trespassing sign. It is very prominent on the gate. The road comes right up to the gate, and that is the end of it. It is a good road. Why should the public be prohibited from entering? I am not suggesting there should not be any rules or regulations. We have these rules and regulations governing the actions of people who go into the parks. I should like to know why the citizens of my community cannot go into that area on a Sunday afternoon and have a picnic lunch. It is a strange situation that has caused a great deal of criticism. In fact, the people call it the iron curtain area; that is what the people of my area call it. They say this is extraordinary. It is different from anything else of which we are aware in any other part of the country.

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Chairman, as I said a few moments ago, this is a ranch area and is only about a mile and a half from Banff national park. I believe that Banff national park is an area sufficiently large to accommodate the people from my hon. friend's riding. The no trespass sign is there because it is an area that is mainly grass but has some wood. We have to be very careful about fire and also careful, as my hon. friend was asking us to be, to do everything we can to prevent illegal hunting. That is one of the ways.

Mr. Shaw: If that is the only effective method of preventing illegal hunting we may just as well bar people from the parks. Let me point out to the minister that while it can be said Banff is a large area not too far away from this area, let us not forget that the way one has to travel to get from the area in which these people live it is 150 to 175 miles, whereas many of them live

[Mr. Shaw.]

only five, ten, or fifteen miles from this beautiful spot in the prohibited area. It is true there is grassland there. There is grassland very much like our prairie wool. The minister should not be led to believe it is a section similar to areas in the southern section of Saskatchewan. There are some beautiful spots in that area.

There is always the danger of fire. Certainly there is the same danger on provincial crown lands in the areas surrounding this ranch. If a fire started in the provincial crown lands area, the Ya-Ha-Tinda area would go up in smoke, too. I do not believe that is a good argument. I do not believe our people are going to be satisfied or remain quiet until they know exactly why they, the citizens of Canada, are barred from going into an area which, in theory if not in fact, they the people of Canada own.

I should like to ask one other question. Am I to be barred, as a member of parliament, if I want to go into that area as soon as I go home? The no trespass sign I suppose refers to me as well as to any person. All I am going to suggest to the minister is—I make no threat at all—that I am likely to make a test case out of that because I am going in there. I have been asked to go in there, and I am going in. Possibly in that way we will find out who will institute the prosecution, and I believe we shall have a most interesting court case.

Mr. Knowles: It has been nice knowing the hon. member.

Mr. Shaw: After all, it may be a pleasant way to retire, if that is to be the end result. Can the minister indicate to me, in advance, so I shall know what preparations to make, if they are going to prosecute me if I go through that gate and into the area which I feel, as a citizen of Canada, belongs to me as well as to everyone else?

In the absence of an answer, I am going to serve notice now that I am going to make a test case out of it. Shortly after I get home I am going through the gate and we shall see what follows. All I can say is, if I am not back here again it has been nice knowing all of you.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): I should like to ask a question about these 150 horses. Are they used by the rangers for patrols?

Mr. Lesage: Yes, they are for the wardens, for patrols and for the forest fire patrols.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): The Minister mentioned that during the hunting season pack trains and hunters were allowed to go through the ranch to the hunting ground. Are