

Lands, parks and forests branch.

National parks bureau—

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Mr. CRERAR: Perhaps I could answer now the question raised by the hon. member for Wetaskiwin. As I understand it, his question had reference to the abandonment of the Wainwright buffalo park.

Mr. JAQUES: More to the slaughter of the animals.

Mr. CRERAR: The number of animals in Wainwright buffalo park had increased considerably. This park covers an area of 197½ square miles, and there were in it two or three thousand buffalo as well as a considerable number of deer of various kinds. The net cost of the park since its establishment was in the neighbourhood of \$500,000, and the annual maintenance cost ran from \$45,000 to \$50,000. In order to keep down the animal population, several years ago slaughterings took place at which time it was discovered that some of the buffalo as well as some of the deer were infected with tuberculosis. The Wainwright buffalo park was established to conserve wild life, but after a time the urgency of that need decreased. Elk Island park is located some twenty-five or thirty miles out of Edmonton, and there are over a thousand healthy buffalo in that park where grazing conditions are much better than they were at Wainwright. There are also about seventy-five buffalo in Riding Mountain park in Manitoba, where grazing conditions are also good. More than ten years ago several thousand buffalo were moved to the Wood buffalo park in northern Alberta. It is not known how many buffalo are there at the present time, but we believe the number has been substantially increased. The original purpose for which Wainwright buffalo park was established, that is to preserve buffalo, is amply accomplished.

This park has now been taken over for the duration of the war by the Department of National Defence. Its size enables the manœuvring and training of troops as well as the use of artillery. It is not easy to find a location on the prairies for artillery practice where shells may be thrown from five to seven miles. Then the park is fenced, which gives an additional protection in connection with the training of troops and the use of artillery. These briefly are the reasons why the animals were slaughtered last fall. We realized as much as possible on the meat and the hides of the animals after government inspection.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): What is the cost of the upkeep of that park?

[Mr. Crerar.]

Mr. CRERAR: I said that the annual cost was from \$45,000 to \$50,000 a year.

Mr. BLACKMORE: There seems to be considerable misunderstanding in connection with the fishing licence fee in Waterton lakes park. What is the licence fee in Alberta, entitling a holder to fish anywhere in the province?

Mr. CRERAR: The suggestion was made several months ago that fishing licences should be required in the park. Naturally there was a good deal of criticism of and opposition to this suggestion. I am rather old-fashioned and I hold that there should be a charge for any service rendered. In all provinces a licence is necessary in order to fish in provincial waters, and some of the eastern provinces derive a substantial revenue from these licence fees. It was an anomaly in Alberta that a citizen who wanted to fish outside the park had first to secure a licence costing, I believe, \$2.25, but when he went into the park he felt he was entitled to fish without a licence. It was in order to equalize the privileges in the parks and outside them that the suggestion was made that a licence fee should be charged.

The situation now is this. A person coming into Jasper or Banff park pays an entrance fee of \$2. That fee entitles the person who pays it and the members of his family to fish, subject to the park regulations which, among other matters, govern the number of fish that may be taken. In Waterton lakes park, where, I am told, the fishing is not perhaps as good, the entrance fee is \$1, and it carries the same privilege. Residents living in the park are required to pay the same licence fee as the ordinary resident of Alberta pays to the provincial government for a licence to fish outside the park.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Suppose that a man in charge of a group of girl guides or boy scouts came into the park; would the payment by him of the fee for entering the park entitle the young people with him to fish?

Mr. CRERAR: I am informed that if they are under sixteen years of age they have the privilege of fishing. One of the requests which is being urged upon the department is that we do something more to stock the park streams and lakes with fish. It is obvious that if we permit free fishing in the parks, the fact that it is free attracts a larger number of fishermen and the supply of fish is depleted, so that you have this insistent pressure to do something to provide more fish. We aim to make the requirements as fair and reasonable as possible. For the privilege of playing on parks which have golf courses,