

*National Parks Act*

There are in Jasper 9.4 per cent of the people who are widows or retired citizens. They are not people who have moved in from the outside; they have lived there and their homes are there. Are they to be denied the right to remain where they have lived and served during their lifetime? Only 16.2 per cent of the people living in Jasper derive their income from tourism or commercial services rendered to people who visit or who are living in the parks, such as government employees, railway employees, and so on. In Banff the figure is a little higher; 26.6 per cent of the people—definitely a small minority—gain their livelihood from services provided in the park for tourism as it relates to the commercial life of Banff.

These people give their lives to the area and serve their fellow citizens. It is wrong to place them in the classification of exploiters and greedy capitalists. I believe the most important point is the denial of self-government to these people. Are we to deny to a portion of our citizens the rights defined in the Canadian Bill of Rights? Are we to deny them the right to govern themselves so far as local government is concerned? Why should it not be possible for the people living in the townsites within the national parks to administer their own local affairs, as do people living in any other town or village in Canada? I do not think there is any argument to refute that right. These are not irresponsible people; they are as responsible as any of us in this House or people in any other community in the country. Is it not possible to have clear regulations established basically by the national parks administration under which these people would be able to carry out their responsibilities as citizens of our country under Canadian democracy? It is wrong to relegate these people to the faceless bureaucracy of a Crown corporation?

I hope the government will realize these things before it is too late. In my opinion, rather than having a Crown corporation the parks administration should be divorced from the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It would be advisable that the person responsible be either a minister without portfolio or someone more closely associated with the problem, so far as concentration of time and responsibility is concerned. I am told the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development devotes less than 5 per cent of his time and responsibility to the over-all, important projects related to the national parks. One cannot expect

him to give the necessary time to the different aspects in respect of the parks. I suggest that one reason park policies have been evolved and thought out by bureaucrats living in Ottawa who are not associated with the parks is that ministers have not had time to devote to the responsibility which the parks entail.

I think the hon. member who represents the three major national parks in Canada—Waterton, Banff and Jasper—made some very timely comments. He is a member of the government, and I believe he should be commended for having had the courage to stand up and express the opinions many of us have been trying to express in this debate and in debates of previous years. The hon. member emphasized that the key issues are communication and the community accepting responsibility for its own welfare. The lack of communication is not something which has arisen in the last year and a half or in the last six, seven or ten years. It has been a characteristic of the communities of Banff and Jasper almost since their inception. I could refer to other timely and relevant points which the hon. member outlined in the problem as he sees it. One would hope the government would listen to this voice of logic and reason from among its backbenchers, especially when it belongs to one who is the representative of the people in the area. He is one person who ought to know the situation.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Again, in this area we should make sure that the rights of the people who live in the parks are protected and that the principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights are extended to them as they are to the rest of us, so that they are not considered second-class citizens. I agree with the hon. member for Northwest Territories that more parks should be established in that part of Canada.

As I look at this vast and beautiful province of Ontario and the beautiful province of Quebec across the river, it seems to me there should be more national parks in these provinces. But the administrations of these two provinces have resented the federal government coming in and setting up national parks, and I believe they have a very good reason for taking that attitude. If this bill should become law, I am afraid we will forever block further areas of Canada, in so far as the organized provinces are concerned, coming within the national parks administration. The fears of the provinces have stemmed from the fact that they object to assigning any of their