

Government Administrative Policies

odically provide quorums if there is to be a vote. Those members in most cases have not heard one iota of the evidence, nor have they been able to read one word of the evidence because no transcript has been available. Therefore, it has been merely an exercise of political muscle. The press is not in a position to cover all these meetings. The resources are not there and it would be unreasonable to believe they could be there.

Mr. Nesbitt: They were covering the Quebec election.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I recognize the mammoth difficulty in trying to get the transcripts of evidence before members so that the meetings become meaningful. We know that in the past when estimates were discussed in the House and a real problem arose, we could refer to the daily *Hansard* and to comments of all kinds by the press regarding major points of issue that were raised in the committees' studies of the estimates. Now that is all gone. It is almost government by default, government by snuffing out.

I say that the responsibility is that of the government in that the system that was set up was established before there were adequate facilities to deal with the estimates. The net result is that practically nothing, or very little that has been discussed in the estimates has reached the public's ear. Therefore we have to use these few opposition days during the month of June because the estimates are rushed in for completion by the end of May and we do not receive the transcripts until nearly the end of June.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, it is the most frustrating type of operation to be able to discuss the estimates. After all, the job of Parliament is the passing of estimates, the consideration of supply and the granting of supply. Its main job is not to line up and say yea or nay to scores of government bills, many of which are mere housekeeping, albeit important. And as to the legislation, we have the same problems there with the committee system. So I do not apologize for hosting the items I have, in order to draw to the attention of the House the particulars with respect to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Department of Manpower and Immigration that I want to touch on briefly this evening.

I am particularly concerned with the parks branch of the Department of Indian Affairs

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

and Northern Development. This has been a longstanding war, and I say "war" quite advisedly, although it has been rather quiescent of late. I suppose the government was waiting for the Supreme Court decision in the case of the permanent leases, and of course ever since the Supreme Court decided in favour of the leaseholders and not the government, the government has been very quiet about the national parks. We have not heard any more about Bill C-152 and I presume that bill will die where it is. It certainly should.

There has been a long history, going back over many years, of absolute frustration on the part of the people in the two principal national parks, those which have the largest number of residents. For some reason or another there is a conception in the parks branch that people should not be living in the parks and that those already there should be eliminated. This is trying to turn back the calendar, to eliminate thousands of people who reside there. Banff and Jasper are two very particular types of parks. They are the two main parks in this country, and they are mountain parks. But the people in them are regarded as second-class citizens. They cannot have any local organization that is meaningful. They cannot qualify for many of the benefits and the facilities allowed to townspeople in other communities in Alberta. They are not allowed an elective council. There is no local government at all. It is all handled on a long-range basis through Ottawa. There are various layers of officials stretching from here to the parks. There are town managers. But frankly, Mr. Speaker, if you ask the men at the park level what authority they have, you find it almost limited to acting as postmen, passing citizens' requests on to Ottawa. They cannot make meaningful decisions at the local level. It is as frustrating for them as it is for the park residents. This is a situation that has continued for many years.

First there is the question of the parks branch trying to eliminate the bona fide leases held by the park residents. If you are a resident and want to carry out an improvement on your property, because there is a renewal clause in your lease, a permit is required. That is all right; development must be controlled; it is not a Topsy-like operation in the parks. The people accept this. But it should not be used as a blackjack. To get a permit a person now has to turn in his lease and take out a terminable lease. This is what the officials now insist upon. The list of difficulties is long. A committee of this House