

*National Parks Act*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I suggest that possibly what I might do is discuss it with Mr. Speaker, and at that point we will certainly hear arguments on the procedural question.

**Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Calgary South):** Mr. Speaker, my participation in this debate must be akin to the pleasure experienced by a physician who has successfully diagnosed a cancer. Unlike the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), I do not substantially restrict my participation in debate to matters I feel affect the prerogatives of this institution. However, that is fundamentally the reason I am going to speak today.

What I am going to speak of are not imagined slurs or fantastic infringements on the prerogatives of Parliament. Rather, I am going to talk about a gross dereliction of its responsibilities, an almost total abandonment of its functions, by a group whose effective performance is essentially to the operation of Parliament, the official opposition.

The historians or political scientists who, a few decades from now, peruse the *Hansards* of February 4, February 10, February 17, 1970 and today, may very well count themselves fortunate to have discovered in the debate on second reading of this Bill C-152 a capsule example of how a once great Canadian institution, the Progressive Conservative national caucus, loused things up again and thereby hastened its own demise as a meaningful entity in the political life of this nation.

I want to be fair and give credit where credit is due. Some of the hon. members of the official opposition from Alberta who have participated in this debate, specifically those from Pembina (Mr. Bigg), Red Deer (Mr. Thompson), and Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), and I should mention the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), have displayed an understanding for our principal national parks and an understanding of the very real problems of the people living in them. I would be hard pressed to disagree with most of the arguments advanced by those hon. members regarding the treatment of residents of Jasper and Banff Parks, although I might be constrained to dispute that the Waterton situation is comparable because the number of permanent residents at Waterton is simply too few to sustain viable municipal institutions.

Equally, I would be hard pressed to dispute the validity of the arguments advanced by my colleague, the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Sulatycky). His energy and enthusiasm and, I might say, his evident

disregard for the sensibilities of occupants of the treasury benches, when it comes to fighting for what he thinks right for his constituents, can be taken by the residents of those parks as a sure sign that a greater measure of justice will be achieved for them in the near future.

The hon. member for Edmonton West observed that when the committee visited the parks there were no government members knowledgeable in respect of the parks on that committee. That is an omission that the voters of Alberta have since rectified, and most particularly the voters of the Rocky Mountain constituency within which the particular parks lie.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** By 30 per cent.

**Mr. Mahoney:** I will come to that later.

It is often said that Canada's acceptance by the developing world is due largely to the fact that we have never been a colonial nation and that we have no colonial pretensions, if for no other reason than that we have not the might to entertain colonial pretensions. To say that we have never been a colonial nation is not to say we have no colonial past—we do. But we were on the receiving end of colonialism and it is a concept as repugnant to most Canadians as it is to most Africans and Asians. It is a concept that is particularly repugnant to those Canadians—relatively a mere handful perhaps, but nevertheless each one is entitled to the full rights of Canadian citizenship as you and I—who still experience it. It is a concept also particularly repugnant to those Canadians—and these are more than a relative handful—whose experience brings them into more or less regular contact with the colonials.

Banff and Jasper, communities of some 3,500 and 2,800 respectively, are essentially being run as colonies, with vital decisions regarding the elementary aspects of the most primitive municipal government being made in Ottawa, or sometimes in the regional office of the Department of Northern Development in Calgary by officials appointed by Ottawa, or sometimes even by officials of the same department on the site, but appointed in Ottawa. Wherever made, the one thing certain is that the residents have no assurance that their legitimate aspirations and interests have been taken into account. Without that assurance there is an unfortunate but, I think, natural tendency to assume that they have not been taken into account and that the