

Supply—Northern Affairs

it is very necessary to the satisfactory development of our provinces. First, there should be a policy with respect to principles, and a policy with respect to the development of natural resources as far as conservation is concerned, and then access to these resources.

I rose to mention those two points in the minister's report, in particular. As I said, I have not had the opportunity to read these minutes as they are the sort of thing I pack into my briefcase when I am going home on the train, and read at leisure by way of light reading. I shall not say any more at this time. I shall have something more to say on the water items and on the forestry branch, but I will not detain the committee any longer at this time.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):

Mr. Chairman, unlike some other hon. members who have preceded me in the debate, I do not intend to get into a controversy over the merits or demerits of the present minister of northern affairs compared with the previous minister. In any event, I think it is common knowledge that the present incumbent is the most capable individual who has ever held the portfolio. However, I should like to make some brief observations concerning Cape Breton Highlands national park which is located in my constituency.

I should like to commend the minister and the government on the winter work program which was carried out last year. There was a great amount of excellent work done by the workers who reside in the area, under the capable supervision of Mr. J. H. Atkinson, the superintendent of the park at that time, whom I understand has served many years in the parks service. Unfortunately the department has seen fit to transfer him to Newfoundland, but what has been our loss will undoubtedly be Newfoundland's gain. I have no doubt that the present superintendent will continue to carry on the work here in a very capable manner.

There is one point in the annual report under the national parks branch which says that the increase in the number of visitors to the park is reflected in the increased use of the recreational facilities. That is true, and I fully agree with it. To give the committee an example, in 1955-56 we had 75,310 registered visitors to the Cape Breton Highlands park. In 1956-57, there were 116,556 an increase of 41,246. In the year just ended the number went up to 128,397, another increase, of 11,841, and I have no doubt that a new record will be set in the present year.

As I have already stated, a great amount of proper work—I use that term—was carried out in the park last winter with

regard to camping grounds, and my attention has been drawn to a newspaper item in the Cape Breton *Post* some days ago which stated that at Ingonish more than 1,000 visitors jammed the camping grounds on a week end, and that a total of 600 were registered on another particular day. This will give the committee an idea of the extent to which these camping grounds are being used. The article goes on to say that campers have the use of showers, washing machines, tables and parking facilities, all for 50 cents a night a car, regardless of the number of passengers. This is a very good thing. We are doing something here for the ordinary people of Canada—the workers who wish to take their families and their tents and get out among the beautiful scenery that exists on Cape Breton island. I may say that I doubt that any other scenery in Canada can compare with it.

On this same subject, I hope the minister is listening very intently and that in the coming winter we will see another winter works program along the same lines as last winter, because this park could be developed to a much greater extent than it has been developed so far.

There is one other point I should like to mention at this time. Some days ago when we were discussing a bill to transfer certain land from the park back to the province for hydro development I mentioned that I felt the minister and the department should give consideration to expanding the park boundaries. I do not know if the minister was fully aware of what I meant at that time. I felt quite sure he was, but I noticed an editorial in the local newspaper afterwards which stated that it appeared that the minister and myself were unable to get together on this matter, so I should like at this point to reiterate what I have already said. My idea was that the department should give consideration to the inclusion within the park boundaries of all the northern tip of Cape Breton island. The minister did make a statement concerning the difficulties posed by town sites and so on. Well, we do not have any town sites here, only a few villages which do not extend more than a few hundred yards inland. I have in mind that if and when the park boundaries were extended we could skirt these villages and go up into the north country, as I mentioned some days ago, taking in Inverness county and down that side of the county where there are no villages that I can see on this map. I hope the minister will give every consideration to this suggestion. I can understand that there may be problems when there are town sites