

National Parks Act

authorities to seriously consider a dual purpose type of park. I know the minister is sympathetic to this proposal and I urge him to press on with it. It will soon be too late, and it will certainly be too bad if we as a nation allow the unique Prairie grass land to disappear beyond recall.

There are several good prospective sites for such a park in my constituency and in the constituency west of mine, Swift Current-Maple Creek. These sites lie along the United States border. They would attract many tourists from our great neighbour to the south. These sites are not too far from our Trans-Canada highway and would be quite accessible for the people of Saskatchewan and travellers from all parts of Canada. As a national park, this area would contribute significantly to our Canadian economy and would provide for posterity living evidence of the beginning of our western farm economy.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to add my voice to those who have been asking to have the provincial parks that presently exist on both sides of the Alberta-Saskatchewan border in the Cyprus Hills area taken over by the national parks system. This is a very striking and unusual area, completely surrounded by prairie but completely different, and most interesting and restful.

I thank the minister for his evident concern in the welfare and development of our parks system. I intend to support this bill.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) supports the idea of a second national park in Saskatchewan. He is another convert to the cause which I espoused some 12 years ago in this House. At that time I was a member of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I brought the matter to the attention of the then minister. He indicated it was a worthy suggestion, but it would be a matter of priority in relation to the income allocation at that time. A new government was taking over. The minister at that time agreed, although such a park could not be established at once it should be given serious consideration.

• (4:40 p.m.)

I continually emphasized the benefits that would be derived in Saskatchewan from a second national park. On April 22, 1965 the then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the present Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing), announced in this House

[Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia).]

that it was government policy to bring about this development. That was five years ago. I am wondering what has happened. I suggest to the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) that here again is an opportunity to impress on his colleagues the benefits to be derived from such a suggestion as I have made. He would get my support 100 per cent.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without rising to register my strongest objection to the whole concept of Bill C-152. To me, as to many of my hon. friends, the principle of this legislation is extremely repugnant. In fact, it is so undemocratic that I am amazed to see a so-called responsible government, one which from time to time repeats its slogan of a just society, having the temerity to espouse it. Everything in the bill indicates a callous disregard for the democratic principles on which our country and constitution have been founded. The suggestion that we should turn over the administration of our 19 national parks to a Crown corporation is incomprehensible to me. It is another example, among many, of the government ignoring the rights of the common man. Here it is proposing to turn over to the establishment control of the third largest source of income that this country enjoys. From now on, if this bill is passed, we shall have another sacred cow on our hands, and, Lord knows, we have too many of them already.

Many references have been made during this debate to our western national parks and to the serious position in which leaseholders there find themselves. I want to sound a warning to all who are interested in the national parks in other provinces of this great country. If what I believe about this iniquitous piece of legislation is true, the bill before us will affect all the national parks and all those who live within their boundaries.

Instead of the government bringing in Bill C-152 to set up a Crown corporation they ought, in my opinion, to be introducing legislation to establish a federal department of tourism, responsible to the Parliament of Canada, which would take under its wing not only complete responsibility for the national parks, but responsibility for the great industry of tourism and for all matters pertaining to the tourist potential of this beautiful land of ours.

We now have some 30 ministries represented in this House of Commons, and when we consider these portfolios we find there is a great difference between the responsibilities borne by the various ministers and the