

*Historic Sites*

with Louisburg where there were less than half a million visitors. Even Citadel Hill had less visitors.

The restoration of the fortress of Louisburg is something in which all Canadians can take pride. Indeed, at the time the decision was made to restore Louisburg, it was done as an act of great humanity because of the terrible economic conditions that prevailed at the time on Cape Breton Island. The restoration of Citadel Hill can equally be applauded as a very wise and progressive move. However, I say to the government, why not get on with the development of Signal Hill historic park in St. John's? This is one of the most beautiful historic sites in Canada, and certainly one of the most neglected historic sites in the country.

I appeal to the minister to visit the site. He will see, in a very dramatic way, exactly what I am talking about. All that has been accomplished since the designation of the site as a national historic park is a certain amount of landscaping—not a great deal. Less than \$3 million has been spent there, since 1963, on everything. A very unattractive, badly designed visitors' centre was built. It does not lend itself to the area, the park or the surrounding environment of the old city of St. John's. However, at least they built that. Work then stopped. They seemed to have drawn a blank. Signal Hill seems to have been declared a non-entity in terms of receiving the attention of the planners and the department and in terms of expenditure on the development of that site.

● (1600)

The people of my province, more particularly the people of my city, take a great deal of pride in Signal Hill park. It is one of the advantages we have, living in the beautiful old city of St. John's, that we are able to go to the top of the hill and look out over the vast expanse of the North Atlantic, knowing we are standing on the most easterly site of the North American continent. We take pride in it and we are concerned about the government's attitude toward it. I can assure the minister that the sentiments I have put forward today would be echoed by all the people of St. John's—by the daily newspapers, the television stations, the municipal government, the government of Newfoundland and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have taken the opportunity to visit this beautiful park.

I urge the government to discharge its responsibility to this most ancient of historic sites by getting along with the development of the area and carrying out badly needed restoration work on the old buildings. By all means develop Louisburg; but let us not forget Signal Hill.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to prolong the debate to any great extent. We are, of course, delighted that the government has finally consented to appoint some representatives on the board and concern itself with the national historic sites and monuments in our country, particularly in that great part of our country which is north of the sixtieth parallel. I want to say a few words about another great region of Canada. It should be no

surprise—it has never been any surprise to me or to those of my colleagues who represent the vast areas of northern and central British Columbia—that as far as historic sites and monuments are concerned we should get no better consideration in this respect than is given in other directions such as transportation, communication facilities and public services of all kinds. People up in that country have always been second-class citizens. We have never considered ourselves as part of Canada. As a matter of fact, I sometimes wonder when British Columbia ever did become part of Canada. When I look at historic sites and monuments, I find myself asking how many of my colleagues here or, indeed, how many citizens of eastern Canada, know anything at all about those brave explorers who opened the road to the west, the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company, and so on.

One has to stand on the bank of the mighty Peace River to get the feeling which must have inspired those early explorers who wrote in their diaries about the splendour and the natural beauty of the scenes they witnessed, the abundance of wildlife, the friendliness of the native population they encountered in the search for access to the Pacific Ocean. One has to travel the trails which go from Dawson Creek to Fort McLeod, from Fort Saint John to Fort Nelson, or take a canoe to travel the lake district of Central British Columbia, where the natives have carved out an existence since time immemorial, to appreciate what must have been in their minds. Yet there are no historic sites or monuments of any significance in that part of the country. Those of my colleagues who have read the logs of Fraser and McKenzie, who know the great rivers, the Columbia, the McKenzie and the Fraser as well as the fast-flowing coastal rivers, the Skeena and the Stikine, will realize that this is an omission for which there can be no excuse.

I have spoken about this often in committee. I have had private conversations with the minister asking him to encourage the board which reviews applications made to it and considers plans to preserve historic sites. My heart bleeds when I look at the old fort at Fort Saint John and see another log carried away, another log floating down the river having been torn away by pranksters. I wonder whether people in the east are interested at all in this great chapter of Canadian history. I have worked with citizens groups, particularly in the Fort Saint John and Fort McLeod area. We have spent hours and hours, days and days, years and years, trying to persuade someone, either in the provincial or in the federal government, to establish some kind of point of recognition for the benefit of people who traverse that great highway to the north known as the Alaska or the Alcan Highway, 1500 miles of wilderness road. Yet there is no indication of any kind that the national government is interested in explaining or documenting the history of this spectacular region.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that I have gone somewhat beyond the scope of the bill. But let me say this. If the people who are to be appointed from the territories and who will, I suppose, make recommendations about commemorating the history of the territories, the history of the Arctic Ocean, are not able to make a contribution any greater than that of the person who