

National Parks Act

people in Saskatchewan can afford or are fortunate enough to visit Tobago, but many of them could visit and enjoy a park off the coast of British Columbia.

I might mention that in addition to the large population of British Columbia there are many people on the United States west coast fairly close or adjacent to this strait. A park of this kind would appeal to and be used by a great many people. It might also be used by a few people from Saskatchewan. Instead of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) going to the British Honduras for a swim, he might swim off the coast of British Columbia and draw attention to the beauties of bathing in the water there.

Mr. Benjamin: How about the bathing beauties?

Mr. Thomson: I am no authority in that field. I do not think a park of this nature would be too expensive. As the minister suggested, in the national sense we already own the land under the water; therefore, it would not be necessary to lay out a great deal of money. Such a park would bring considerable revenue to tourist operators in the area, mariners and anyone who has business or recreation interest in water sports. I suggest the minister should continue promoting his idea. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman) and others who are interested should also promote this idea. I favour an examination of the idea by the Northern Affairs Committee. I hope the minister will show a little more interest in the idea.

I also wish to comment on the remarks made by the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange). The Crown now owns a great deal of land in the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Before this area is scarred, spoiled or despoiled, I think some of the land should be set apart. This would not cost very much money now or inconvenience us too greatly. If we wait until someone has a vested interest in the area, they will want to be paid for that interest or they will strenuously object to the area being included in a park of this kind.

I do not intend to say where or how large these parks should be, but I ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Northern Affairs Committee to take a good, hard look at this idea to see what we might do to protect the future of northern Canada, whether it be the Arctic, the subArctic or any other part of our north. If this is done now it might save us a lot of trouble

[Mr. Thomson.]

later. Others have dealt with many parts of this bill. I just wanted to pursue these two particular lines of thought.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to participate in this debate. I only do so because of the remarks that have just been made by the member of the New Democratic Party. All the ministers of northern affairs in the previous government and all the ministers of northern affairs in this government, save the existing minister, have given their assurance in writing to the people of the Yukon that there will be no national park established in the Yukon territory until the elected representatives of the people on the Yukon Legislative Council ask for a park and delineate the nature, extent and location of the park.

● (9:50 p.m.)

I, together with all Yukoners, resent the idea that any area in the Yukon territory should be set aside in the absence of consultation and decision on the part of the elected representative of the people in the Yukon. I want to make that quite clear. That is how the majority of people in the Yukon feel about it, and the territorial council is on record as supporting such a view. I understood the hon. member who just resumed his seat to suggest that unilateral action might be taken by this government and a standing committee of Parliament. It might be a useful exercise for the committee, on its next visit to the Yukon, to solicit the opinions of the people on the spot rather than endeavour to make a unilateral decision here.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take more than a couple of minutes. I rise because I was among those who went with the committee to the Yukon on its last visit there. I was, to say the least, disappointed at the feelings expressed not by the elected members of the council but by a number of the members of the Board of Trade with whom we met. I felt they did not want a park to be located in any area where there might be the slightest possibility that at some time in the future a mineral deposit of some value might be found.

If one takes that attitude—and I am not saying the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) takes that attitude; I hope he does not—there will never be a park in the Arctic because, of course, there is always a possibility that at some time, somewhere minerals will be found in circumstances where they