

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Why? I would like the minister to tell me why tonight.

The idea of establishing federal parks, that is maintaining large areas in their natural state for the benefit and the enjoyment of the public, originated in North America, and Canada now ranks second in the world for the number of parks.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that could be said about that, but I must restrict my remarks because of the little time I am allowed.

• (10:00 p.m.)

Those federal parks are administered in Ottawa by the Natural Resources Branch. Under the law, namely chapter 189 of the 1952 Revised Statutes of Canada, those parks are, and I quote:

—dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment...and shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, those tracts of land are intended to preserve picturesque sites in Canada or in Québec and to protect forests and various species of plants and animals. To allow the public to make use of that inheritance, the National Parks Branch has created camping grounds, roads, tracks, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the fiscal year 1967-68, the federal government had spent for those national parks, as I said earlier, over \$262 million. The province of Quebec did not get anything out of that sum, since it has no national park. I am almost sure that the majority of the Quebec members are not aware of that fact. Why does the province of Quebec not have a national park? This question has already been answered by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and I quote:

The addition to the national parks system of one or more outstanding examples of Quebec landscape would indeed be welcomed by my department. However, the establishment of new national parks is dependent upon the province concerned taking the initiative. Customarily the province invites the federal government to participate in a joint survey of potential park lands, followed by mutual agreement on a satisfactory area and subsequent action to transfer title to the lands, free of all encumbrances, from the provincial to the federal government. To date, no such invitation has been received from the Quebec provincial government.

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Such a statement was made on September 25, 1967, that is, more than a year ago. What is the situation now? Since then, the federal government has spent more than \$20 million and Quebec has received nothing. On September 18, 1968, the Minister of Tourism of Quebec met the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in Ottawa to discuss that problem. Since then, officials of both governments have been studying the question and doing nothing. What will come out of those negotiations? A statement should be made in a near future in this connection.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the minister not to be afraid to compromise himself, to lead the way if need be and to ask Quebec to go ahead and finally assume its responsibilities.

According to geographic and demographic criteria, we feel that Quebec should get over \$60 million as recovery payment. It should already have received this amount which it has failed to collect. Ottawa should then spend approximately \$6 million a year in Quebec.

These millions of dollars spent in Quebec could certainly be used effectively to eliminate some of the unemployment in the province and would no doubt favour the existence of a better balanced federalism. Mr. Speaker, I hope that our governments will soon turn in that direction.

I sincerely believe, on that score, that the Quebec government deserves a major share of the blame since it proved careless and irresponsible in not replying to the invitations of the federal government. On the other hand, I have to criticize the federal government, and especially the minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who is content with making offers, without holding real discussions and bringing forward definite measures which would allow the province of Quebec to cease having a special status—a special status in reverse—that of an underprivileged province.

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is unable to be present to reply personally to the hon. member for Lotbinière, because in fact this is a very important question.

I think the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has already told the