

### *Historic Sites*

historical society requesting that they be allowed to keep the plaque.

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments while we are discussing Bill C-13, to amend the National Historic Sites and Monuments Act, to make a representation to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Allmand), who is responsible for Parks Canada, about a matter which is of concern to many of my constituents in Sault Ste. Marie. I corresponded with the previous minister about this issue, and he showed his concern as well.

Many citizens of Sault Ste. Marie, myself included, want to declare what is left of the St. Mary's River rapids and Whitefish Island, which is located in the rapids, an historic park site. The Great Lakes Power Company of Sault Ste. Marie has announced plans to expand its hydro generating facilities into the St. Mary's River rapids, and also to construct some facilities on Whitefish Island. If this were to go through it would mean the end of one of the great historic sites in Canada and Northern Ontario, the St. Mary's River rapids, because a concrete raceway would have to be constructed. This would destroy the scenic beauty of the rapids, and also the sports fishing which is enjoyed by many residents of Sault Ste. Marie. This beautiful site is right along the downtown waterfront in the city.

I need not remind the hon. parliamentary secretary and other members of the House of the historic significance of the St. Mary's River rapids or, as the French explorers called them when they first saw them, *où les eaux de la rivière Sainte-Marie se déversent*—"where the waters of the St. Mary's River jump". The city of Sault Ste. Marie, of course takes its name from this beautiful, important and historic site which is synonymous with the identity of the city. The rapids of the St. Mary's River appeared on the first map of the Great Lakes which was made in 1632 by the explorer Champlain. They were discovered 245 years before Confederation, in 1622, by Étienne Brûlé, the early French explorer associated with Champlain.

Brûlé found the rapids and Whitefish Island in St. Mary's River to be the centre of activity for the Indian tribes. It was a great fishing ground and meeting place for many tribes. Preliminary archaeological digs on Whitefish Island have found it to be a treasure house of Indian artifacts and an important archaeological site as well as an historic one. In a dig last summer archaeologists discovered some 3,000 artifacts, mostly fragments, some dating back 2,000 years, so they consider this an important site that should not be ruined by commercial development.

Tourists who come to our part of the country remarks on the natural beauty of these rapids in the heart of the city, the beautiful water and parkland surrounding them. Whitefish Island could provide a recreational facility for visitors as well as the many residents of the Sault who fish in the rapids. The rapids are still a good fishing ground and should be preserved. The area is adjacent to the world famous shipping locks that carry ships from the upper levels of Lake Superior to the lower

levels of Lake Huron. What I am trying to convey to the government is that this is not only a place of natural beauty but a place of historic significance as well which must be preserved.

● (2040)

The Great Lakes Power Co. stunned the citizenry of Sault Ste. Marie by announcing plans to expand the existing power plant. The reaction to that proposal was one of alarm. Many citizens of Sault Ste. Marie began to organize, and founded the Sault Rapids Society, under the leadership of Mr. Harry Graham. The society obtained thousands of signatures to a petition asking that the power plant should not go ahead, and that the area be preserved as an historic parkland site. Indeed the city council of Sault Ste. Marie went on record as supporting the concept that the area should be preserved as an historic park site and that the rapids should not be endangered.

I fully agree with the objects of many of the citizens of Sault Ste. Marie, particularly those of the Sault Rapids Society, for making this area into a heritage park. It is important to preserve this last bit of the history of Sault Ste. Marie and the natural beauty of the area. I urge the Canadian government to follow the example of the American government which has declared its portion of the rapids a national historic site. It is important for Parks Canada to become involved in this development, to ensure that commercial exploitation of the area is not permitted and that the present residents of Sault Ste. Marie, as well as future generations, may enjoy the natural beauty and historic significance of that important area of the St. Mary's River rapids. I hope the government will consider the matter sympathetically and examine favourably the representations I have made this evening.

**Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in debate on Bill C-13, the bill to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. Debates of this kind allow one to talk of various areas in one's constituency and neighbouring constituencies, to determine if they should be remembered. In some cases I suppose it would be best if they were forgotten.

As I listened this evening to hon. members speaking of various historic sites in their areas, it came to me that the history of the west coast of Canada is entirely different from the history of central or eastern Canada. Until less than 100 years ago, that is, until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, there was really no communication between the two parts of the country now called Canada, that is, between British Columbia and the central heartland. The settlement of central Canada took place along the St. Lawrence River. St. Lawrence River communities sprang up. It also took place in Quebec, where French communities settled. The English communities went farther up-river and located in places like Kingston, Toronto, and Niagara. But this part of the country grew older, and political events took place which had no effect on the people living on the west coast of Canada. The people in British Columbia at the time were entirely isolated from