

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): That is certainly so, because the present government has shown an insistence on secrecy from time to time. In particular, we noticed in the last parliament an emphasis upon making decisions affecting national parks in such a way as to exclude public participation. In committee we shall be asking the minister to tell us why this process should not include a requirement to hold public hearings. We do not propose, either as members of the parliament of Canada or as representatives from Alberta and British Columbia, to allow these boundaries to be changed in secrecy without reference to the legislatures concerned. The parliamentary secretary did refer in his remarks to the consent of the legislatures. In the bill, as I read it, there is no reference to consent on the part of the legislatures. The process is carried out entirely by the lieutenant governors in council and the governor in council.

As I say, we do not wish to take a long time debating this issue, but since the parliamentary secretary made it impossible to proceed with the agreement to allow the measure to go through without discussion, and thus made it necessary for the House to delay its proceedings, I can say there will be other contributions from hon. members on this side. We wish to make the point that there are aspects of the measure which cause us concern and which we shall want to consider at some length in committee.

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to associate myself with the comments made by the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Johnston) and the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Clark) and add some simple thoughts of my own. I am concerned about the effect of clause 4 which deals with the resurveying of that portion called the sinuous boundary. I notice that the last time adequate maps were prepared was in 1950 or 1953. There is no question that a new survey of this boundary is overdue.

The hon. member for Rocky Mountain has covered the ground very well and referred to a number of specific matters. I should like to draw attention to the arrangements for game management and regulation, as well as the management and regulation of fishing streams. I should like to see a member on the government side catch a trout in Alberta and get nailed in British Columbia for violation of the Fish and Game Act.

The bill we are considering might appear to be a very simple bill and one unlikely to create difficulties. Nevertheless, a number of questions arise. In the southern half of British Columbia there are extensive mining operations. Extensive exploration for oil is being conducted and there is also extensive coverage of the area by those doughty souls who are so rarely recognized. I refer to the prospectors. These people need definite guidelines on which to base their references—as, of course, do the mining and oil companies. The suggestion is that no input from the public is required in connection with this measure. What if the community of Fernie should wish to join the province of Alberta, as was suggested at one time?

Alberta-B.C. Boundary Act

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1240)

Mr. Brisco: In any event, I do not wish to detract from what has been said about this bill, but there are problems that must be considered. I also take exception to the "from time to time" review of this sinuous boundary. I am wondering how long this "from time to time" review will be. Will it be for one year, or 20 years? I think a very definite commitment should be established, both with the federal government and with the provinces, to review these boundaries and markers on a regular basis. There is no point in five or ten years hence going through the same argument we are having today. I suggest we establish a firm and definite timetable so this review can be made on a regular, ongoing basis.

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, I realize this is a bill which perhaps under more ordinary circumstances would not seem to be controversial, but I suspect the parliamentary secretary knows that the question of boundary change has been a very hot and lively topic through a good part of the constituency that I represent. It arose in a rather odd way in the southeast corner of my constituency, the area which has in it the city of Fernie. That area had very much hoped to benefit from increased travel and tourism that would follow upon the world's fair at Spokane, but to the amazement and disappointment of the people of the area, when the provincial government published its tourist brochure for distribution at the world's fair at Spokane, the city of Fernie and the related communities of Sparwood and Elko were left off the map.

Local reaction at the time was that if these communities were not to be recognized by their own province of British Columbia, then perhaps they should petition the province of Alberta to accept them as part of that province. Considering the provocation, I thought the reaction was a natural one. It was, of course, picked up by a variety of other communities and became a local cause for some weeks. Just last week when I returned to my constituency I noticed that a community on the boundary between British Columbia and Alaska was petitioning that state. Dissatisfied with conditions in the area, the residents were requesting they be transferred from the provincial and federal jurisdiction of this country to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The feeling that boundaries are flexible is a common one. Although the parliamentary secretary may consider it too widely held, that is not quite the point. The point is that the feeling is there and as disputes arise from time to time I think people feel they can find the answer to their particular dispute in a boundary revision. It is primarily for this reason that I wish to intervene, because I do not want to let the bill go through, following the intervention of the minister, without telling him that this has been an issue in the constituency I represent. There are clauses in the bill which suggest that quite profound changes might be possible. There are no limitations to the "whereases"; for example, the following:

And whereas the legislatures of the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia having consented thereto, it is desirable that provision be made to declare the boundary line to be established from time to time