

## BANFF NATIONAL PARK.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell) moved second reading of Bill (No. 16) respecting the Banff National Park.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I think it is only proper that the Minister should explain in some detail, not merely the object, which we can gather from the title of the Bill, but what it is in reality that the Government propose to do, and also what the probable cost is likely to be. The Bill, which I have only had time to glance at, appears to propose to take charge of several hundred square miles of land in the North-West for the purpose of preserving it as a national park. Now, if I am correctly informed, in that two or three hundred square miles there are a considerable number of special grants made to several parties, some of whom, in former days, have been members of this House, and it does appear to me that it is a questionable thing that these parties should be left in possession of these properties there. If we are going to have a national park, I think we ought to own everything that is included within its circuit. If it cannot be possible for the Government to recover possession of these without very considerable expense, we ought to know, before we commit ourselves to this project absolutely and definitely, what the views of the Government are with respect to the cost, and with respect to these private properties, which are, apparently, included within the boundaries of the park. I see that the area covered is 200 square miles, more or less, and all that portion is to be withdrawn from sale and settlement. A number of regulations are made with respect to the control of the streams, the working of mines, &c. If I am not misinformed, some large hotels have already been erected in this district, and the leases of some of the hot springs have been given to gentlemen, many of whom were formerly members of this House. Altogether, I believe the Bill requires a good deal of discussion and consideration before we proceed to pass it.

Mr. EDGAR. This area is about equal to the extent of an ordinary county in this part of the world, and we should like to know from the Minister as to the agricultural quality of this large section of land which he proposes to treat in this very peculiar way. The action is entirely unprecedented in this country. We have heard of a government taking a quantity of land around Niagara Falls for a specific and clearly defined purpose; but here it is proposed to take into special charge a principality almost, and to take power to work mines and develop mining interest in that district, to lease the land for all such purposes, to carry on trade and commerce, and to grant permits for the grazing of cattle. Moreover, all regulations passed by the Minister of Interior will, after publication for four weeks in the *Canada Gazette*, have all the force and effect of law. So the Minister of the Interior can, when seated in his office, legislate for that whole principality by a stroke of his pen, and legislate with reference to every individual and interest in that large district. Those powers are entirely unprecedented, and I am sure the House should not be asked to grant them without very full explanations from the Government. No such powers have been asked within my knowledge previous to this time by any government or corporation in British America. No doubt we have large quantities of land, but there must be some particular and special value in this area or it would not be proposed to set it apart. The hot springs are, no doubt, very valuable, but we hear that they have been claimed by many parties. The Government should inform the House as to the nature of the claims, and state in a general way how they propose to adjudicate and legislate upon them. All these explanations should be given before the Bill is allowed to pass.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). Most of the hon. members of this House, or, at all events, a very large number of them, Mr. MITCHELL.

have already visited the springs. The hon. member for South Perth (Mr. Trow) was one of the first to call my attention to the importance of the Government reserving them, after having had an opportunity of visiting them and ascertaining something of their value. The springs are said to be of exceptional value from their curative properties. The scenery about the springs is exceedingly beautiful, and the area which is reserved, although it is large, is not agricultural land in the ordinary acceptation of that term, but a very considerable part of the area is water. For instance, this particular reservation includes Devil's Lake, which is a very beautiful sheet of water some fifteen miles in length.

An hon. MEMBER. Is it hot water?

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). It is hot enough, no doubt, for the hon. gentlemen opposite; they can go up there and bathe in it. The object of making so large a reservation is, that all experience proves it is a matter of great consequence to have very strict regulations. As to what those regulations may be, as to the character of them, it would be almost impossible to embody all of them in an Act of Parliament. With regard to the statement made by the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) as to certain persons having already possession of leases of the springs, I may say that the hon. gentleman is misinformed, if he means by that remark that parties have any exclusive possession of the springs. It is quite true that Dr. Brett and other gentlemen associated with him have put up an hotel there, and it is already becoming a very important resort. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company are erecting another hotel, the foundation of which is completed, and for the purpose they have appropriated \$100,000; and they propose within the area leased to them for that purpose—for we propose to lease the land to persons who put up hotels—to make it as attractive as possible, and in that way secure a large number of patrons for the springs. There is no exclusive property in the springs given to any one. On the other side of Bow River there is a town site. The Government have already surveyed it and laid it out, and are selling lots; and I am told by the Secretary of the Department, who has recently been up there with a view to making a report as to the progress of matters, and to determine the conditions on which sales should be made, that \$15,000 worth of lots have already been applied for. The intention is, of course, to frame such regulations as will make the springs a respectable resort, as well as an attractive one in all respects. Those who know anything of the hot springs of Arkansas are aware that this is one of the great difficulties. It is not a resort to which people will care to go if they can possibly avoid it. They go there for health purposes and for nothing else. If we can make this particular reserve a really attractive resort, I believe great advantage will accrue to the country at large. My own impression is, that the revenue we shall obtain from the town site, from the lease of the privileges at the springs, that is from the water of the springs, will almost recoup the Government for the amount that will have to be expended in connection with the undertaking. Even if the amount is not quite adequate, still in the interests of the country it is well worth while reserving the springs in the way proposed by this Bill. Of course the area seems a very large one, twenty-six miles long by ten miles wide; but when it is remembered that one lake in that area is fifteen miles long—and it will prove very attractive, and efforts are being put forth to make it a good place for sport—I am inclined to think that the House will agree, that the action of the Government in this regard has been well taken. I am not aware of any reservations there. Of course, there were some grants in this area before it was reserved; they are private properties in the meantime and will have to be protected. If we can get them back into the hands of the