

National Parks Act

That was not the attitude of another minister occupying that portfolio, who is the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing) today. When he, with his knowledge of Parliament and his appreciation of equities, was in the position of the minister there was none of that type of thing in dealing with fellow Canadians—"If you don't like it, get out." I presume that is the reason the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development got out today, because he did not like the possibility of hearing any criticism.

If what the government is doing, through that minister, to the Eskimos were done anywhere else in the world there would be marches in Canada. They are only a few, so they get stepped on and treated in the most egregious and contemptuous manner in the same way as these people in the parks. That is why I rise, Sir, to ask, is there any possibility of any change in this bill? Will there be alterations made as a result of discussions? Only if the government agrees. If the committee dares bring in any recommendations that have not been accepted by the minister, what will happen to them? You and I know they will receive that cavalier treatment which was so brilliantly enunciated, and in such eloquent language, by the hon. member for York West (Mr. Givens) who referred to members of the House of Commons in terms of bovine anatomy by saying, we are just as useful as an udder on a bull. I must say that never has this Parliament received a more cryptic and correct description than the hon. member's words the other day. I am not acquainted with bovine peculiarities but taken at face value, what he said indicated that, even though he is a citizen of the city of Toronto, he knows his bull.

● (4:30 p.m.)

To sum up, as far as those two parks are concerned there has been a scandalous, inexcusable disrespect shown and a contempt of Parliament. The people living in these parks are entitled to be treated as human beings. What business is it of any minister to say, "If you don't like it there, get out." All I can say is that if he continues to treat other Canadians in the way he is treating the people in those two parks, and the Eskimos, possibly he has a solution for himself in those words.

Seriously speaking sir, is this Parliament to be treated as though it belonged to the government of Canada and to a minister? The Eskimos write, but they are not heard. They are being denied their constitutional rights as the people in those two parks are being

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

denied their contractual rights. It does not matter how they object, what is stated will be carried out.

We have not heard the last of what is being perpetrated on those Eskimos. I want to hear that discussed. I want to find out why, under the Bill of Rights which is now in effect and superior to any statute passed since 1867, human beings belonging to a primitive race with unusual abilities, who are Canadians equal to the rest of us, are to be stepped on, sneered at and given no equity or justice. They are going to be consulted but they do not have to approve.

In other words, the minister or those who are sent up there will say to the Eskimos, "This is what we are going to give you. Do you like it?" If the answer is no, then they will be told, "Well, you can get out". That is what he said to the people of Banff and that is what he said to the people of Jasper.

I recall the words of a great parliamentarian, Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest that ever was in this chamber. I heard him speak when I first came and I quote his words:

It is the will of Parliament, not that of the government that is the will of the nation. When the Prime Minister says that he speaks for the whole of the country, he is mistaking the echo of his words for the voice of the Canadian people. It is Parliament which is and must remain the authorized exponent of public opinion and of the public will.

Sir, Parliament is being treated as a puppet by this minister. The people who will come under the control of this Crown corporation will have lost their rights. Just imagine a soulless corporation giving any consideration to those moral and emotional things, to legal rights, when the minister says, "Whatever your legal rights may be you are not going to be able to assert them." This bill constitutes, as the attitude of the minister shows, a further example of what I have contended is taking place. Parliament is being downgraded, undermined; its basic mission of freedom is being subverted. It is time we in this House realized what is taking place as day by day and week by week members are treated with a disregard not in keeping with the words of the Right Honourable Ernest Lapointe which I just quoted which, in epitome, represents the actuality of Parliamentary responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Honey: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the right hon. gentleman would permit a question?