

Government Property Traffic Act

I do not know whether we ought to have underground parking here but there are some banks into which we might burrow, or we might have put up some of those artistic greenhouses to cover our cars. That is just a thought, but certainly things are not good now.

I know that the minister will agree with me that it is quite a problem to keep up with snow removal in the winter, having to remove cars which have been stalled there all night. I would think that in the long run we could make a good many improvements if the minister would give the problem some thought.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): May I put the hon. gentleman right? Maintenance of the grounds around parliament hill is under the control of the federal district commission. Circulation of traffic on the hill has always been handled by the mounted police. The points brought out this morning, although they interest me as an individual, do not interest me very much as Minister of Public Works. I have tried, in the last few weeks, to divest myself of the authority because I have no personnel to look after the welfare of ministers and members. Now that the Minister of Justice is handling this question, and with the mounted police under his jurisdiction, I think everything will be fine after this bill goes through.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lennard: Might I remind the member for Comox-Alberni that if some of the members living in Ottawa would not leave their cars here overnight it might relieve the congestion.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I wonder if the Minister of Justice has taken a survey of the number of cars owned by members who must park on parliament hill? If traffic continues to be as great as it is now I suggest that he put in parking meters.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mr. Johnston: We cannot hear very well up in this corner so I did not get what the minister was saying. This bill is an act to control traffic on government property and I presume it will cover parking on the hill. It has seemed strange to me that if the government has not got any power to control traffic on the hill—and I understand that is the case—parking lots for ministers can be very effectively controlled and are being controlled. I am not objecting, and I think it is the proper thing, but it does seem rather queer to me that there is authority for the mounted police to control certain sections while they have no power to control other sections of the hill.

Parking has been very, very bad here on the hill. One day last week I came in and drove around the building three times to see if I could find a parking spot. I could not and when I asked the policeman where I could go he said that I should take my car away down below the buildings and I would find a place to park. I know of another person who came here at nine o'clock in the morning the other day and could not find a place to park. He had to take his car away down behind the justice building.

I am sure that there are a great many cars parked on parliament hill which are not owned by people who are employed here. Even if those cars were prohibited I do not think that would solve the question, and I do think the member for Comox-Alberni had a good suggestion. I have often wondered why there could not be underground parking. As you come up to the entrance of this building there is quite a hill and I cannot see why there could not be very effective parking under the driveway. It would be quite an undertaking but it would to a great extent solve the parking problem. It might be necessary to take some of the space now covered by grass and convert it into parking areas.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Johnston: The situation is such now that those who are compelled to use cars to get here every day—and I am in that group—just cannot find a parking spot. I do not know where to put my car if I cannot put it up here. I cannot park it on the city streets because the police will soon notify me about that. The question has become a very serious one and I hope this bill is wide enough in its terms to allow for some form of parking regulation on the hill, and that the Minister of Public Works, if he has the authority, will make further parking arrangements.

Mr. Fulton: There is just one point I want to raise. It is not very often that an opposition member comes or attempts to come to the relief of the government but I do raise the question now whether it is wise to provide that the governor in council shall make these regulations. We are not dealing here with something that affects the country generally. Certainly if that were the case I would not be one to suggest reducing the number of those who assume executive responsibility; but we are dealing with regulations affecting something that is already the property of the government of Canada. I suppose the minister has considered this, but I am wondering whether