

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

I must admit that negotiations may not be going as fast as the hon. member would wish, but in 1967 or 1968 I think my predecessor informed the government of Alberta that he was considering the possibility of some exchanges that might solve the problems now existing in the Wood Buffalo Park, which would enable us to complete our national parks network in Alberta by acquiring the undeveloped lands in the south of the province. However, the negotiations are still going on.

As for the problem of the road, I must say that it is a huge park and almost intact which constitutes one of the rare areas in Canada and even in America where such a large stretch of land has been reserved for the conservation of wild life. We have had some success with the conservation of the western buffaloes which represent a very important part of our national heritage.

I know that within 10, 15 or 20 years the people of Alberta like the other Canadians will be grateful to us for having taken the necessary measures to maintain this park in the best possible condition.

As for the question of building the road, it is connected with the importance of the park and with the activity that can be found there.

I know that the province is interested in building a road near the park and that some

border adjustments would perhaps be necessary so as to allow for its construction. I am prepared to discuss the matter with the government of Alberta in order to find a solution to this problem.

But I doubt that we have the necessary funds to build a road—unless the Alberta government wants to do it at its own expense—seeing the province can afford it; if it were to decide to do so, an agreement could certainly be reached—from the southern tip of the park to the Northwest Territories. Later on, it might be possible, but according to me, we would be unable to build it across the park within the next few years.

I can assure the hon. member that I take a personal interest in the problem, and that I shall take all the necessary steps to meet the demands of the people who live in the park, the Indians and, at the same time, to find an equitable solution not only for the citizens of Alberta but also for all those Canadians who are interested in conserving that land for future generations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This house now stands adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.24 p.m.