

*Alberta-B.C. Boundary Act*

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** It was the understanding, agreement and disposition on this side of the House that we should not take time in this chamber to discuss the details of this legislation which most of us believe can, and should, be adequately and exhaustively discussed within the committee. However, once the parliamentary secretary broke the agreement that was apparently reached by House leaders on all sides, we certainly were not in a position where we could remain silent in the debate.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Foster:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. There was agreement to bring on this bill last night, but I am aware of no agreement to put the bill through without debate. That just is not the fact. We wanted to deal with the bill.

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take the time of the House on spurious questions of privilege. It is clear from the remarks of the spokesman for this party, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker), that we were prepared to proceed with this bill. There is, obviously, confusion on the government side. It certainly does not constitute a question of privilege in this House to simply note the government is in confusion. Were that the case, we would be engaged in questions of privilege from morning to night.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** Again, I wish to indicate we regret that the agreement reached has been departed from by the actions of the parliamentary secretary. We will not take a great deal of time here, because we think the matter can be dealt with in the standing committee. There are some very important matters in connection with this bill—matters of particular concern to those of us who reside in the provinces involved. There are matters of principle, including the highly important principle of whether public business is going to be discussed in public or whether it is going to be discussed in private as is provided in this bill.

As members of this House who are acquainted with the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia know, there has been a great deal of concern about where the boundary lines will lie, and how firmly they will lie. From time to time there has been conversation about changing the boundaries in a way that would move communities from one side to the other. As one of my colleagues indicated before the debate began, it would be very unfortunate if a piece of legislation were allowed to go through this House which suggested there would be an opportunity, which may not in fact exist, to change the province of residence of certain communities on one side or the other of the present boundary. Therefore, there is now real concern within the provinces affected by this particular boundary.

There is a matter I wish to draw to the attention of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mrs. Campagnolo) and her predecessor. There is a great deal of concern respecting this bill because many of the boundaries being discussed within this legislation lie within or adjacent to part of the

[Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain).]

system of national parks, at least in the area abutting Waterton Lakes national park in the province of Alberta and the adjacent area of British Columbia. There has been concern for some time about the possibility of extending the boundaries of Waterton Lakes national park to portions of British Columbia which contain the kind of interest that should be enclosed within a national park.

● (1230)

This is clearly a matter which might be considered by the commission. We believe that decisions taken with respect to national parks should be taken in public. There is danger that decisions made under the authority of the bill before us could be taken in private, hidden away and ratified by orders in council, without the public being given any opportunity to participate in them or to find out what has been done. This is a situation which we on this side of the House oppose without reservation.

Another matter of great concern is the presence of a variety of proven natural resources within the areas affected by these boundaries. We would not want decisions made in secret to alienate from one province and transfer to another province areas which contain important resource wealth. We hope this concern is not an academic one, although it might be if the intentions of the federal government, approved on second reading last night, are carried forward. For the present, at any rate, the provinces have a primary right to the resources within their boundaries and, as such, natural resources are capable of alienation.

These are some of the matters which will have to be considered. It may be, also, that some citizens desire to shift their province of residence, and this legislation as it stands might cause some of those communities to believe that this kind of transfer will be easier than it is in fact. But the intent of the bill before us which causes most concern is the proposal to establish a boundaries commission consisting of three members, one appointed in secret by the government of British Columbia, one appointed in secret by the province of Alberta—

**Mr. Blais:** In secret? How is that?

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** The hon. member asks what I mean by "in secret". I mean, without reference to the legislatures of the respective jurisdictions. A third member of the commission is to be appointed by the government of Canada. As I say, these commissioners are to be appointed without reference to any legislature, and they will consider these matters in the absence of any reference requiring public hearings to be held or any kind of public participation. They would make recommendations to the governor in council who would then put those recommendations into practice, again without reference to any legislature or to parliament. Thus, highly important matters concerning the provinces and affecting communities, national parks and resource development could be decided in secret. My hon. friends and I believe this to be a dangerous procedure and we want to consider it carefully in the standing committee.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Particularly with this government in office.