

National Parks Act

Mr. Honey: Well, Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. If I might just clarify my understanding of the situation, the document the right hon. gentleman is referring to is not a public document. He is not obliged, as I understand it, to go beyond what he has done. It might be a question of courtesy, but that is a matter of judgment for hon. members. I am certainly not in a position, if I correctly interpret our practices, to require the right hon. gentleman to name the person who has written the private letter.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If the hon. gentleman wants it on *Hansard*, I will have the whole letter put on, since it sets out clearly and definitely the arbitrary injustice and tyranny which is being perpetrated. Does he want the whole letter on *Hansard*?

Mr. Honey: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea of the contents of the document or letter from which the right hon. gentleman is quoting. He quoted parts of it, and I think it would be reasonable for the right hon. gentleman to identify it. That is all I ask.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh, yes, running away, because the hon. gentleman knows that what I have before me is a document that sets forth in clear and definite words the situation whereby an agreement entered into solemnly, a contract, is to be set aside by the government of Canada, and in order to get the government off the hook a Crown corporation is being set up. The hon. gentleman is very anxious for me to read from this and I would be glad at any time to place it on the record, perhaps on the next interruption.

It deals in particular with the amount that national park residents pay on their leaseholds, as distinct from freehold.

National park residents pay on their leaseholds (as distinct from freehold) the annual rentals set by the department responsible. From inception 1914 or thereabouts, the annual rentals for all lots were \$10.00 and \$8.00 per annum for corner and inside lots respectively. There is a clause in the lease which calls for a revision every ten (10) years starting in 1920...No increase in annual rental was suggested or made in 1930 nor in 1940. However, in 1950, when the affluent society began to appear the rentals were raised 50 per cent and no one protested. This brought the annual rental to \$15.00 and \$12.00 respectively for corner and inside lots. 1960 saw no increase in the older leases—

And they continued at that rent.

Now, this bill provides:

National Parks Leasehold Corporation—to develop, manage and maintain property in the parks, the

direction of the administration, management and control of which is entrusted to it—

The land rentals on the older leases, some of which have been renewed for a further period of 42 years and paying an annual rental of \$12.00 or \$15.00, or proportionately higher should two lots or a portion of a lot be included in the lease, now find themselves saddled with varying amounts from \$81.00 to \$2,880.00. The lot assessed at a fee of \$81.00 is located between the Post Office and the Athabasca Hotel...The \$2,880.00 lot and one half (1½) lots) was originally leased as a residential lot and is used as a residence by an elderly retired banker who has resided for the greater part of his life here. This lot is now zoned commercial.

Not a few lots have been elevated to \$225.00 mostly occupied by elderly or retired citizens or people of the labouring class—people on fixed incomes, verging on the poor bracket. The percentage increase in the case of the last mentioned is 1,900 per cent if you please.

The letter goes on to deal with this.

Contracts that are made and solemnly entered into ought not to be broken by the government of Canada. There is no doubt, as the hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Bigg) said, arrangements could have been made to bring about some agreement, but nothing of that kind was done.

Let me read now from the *Calgary Herald*, of January 16, 1970:

If residents of the townsite of Banff don't like living under federal administration, they can leave, Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said Thursday.

Mr. Chrétien said in an interview nobody is obliged to live in the park and if they don't like the situation "they can drive east or west and they won't have to live in the park."

Wasn't that the height of courtesy? What colossal impudence and arrogance, only exceeded by the fact that when his bill is before the House the Minister stays away. This is the kind of treatment that the Eskimos are getting up north in Ungava. They are being pushed around by this minister as though they were cattle. Their constitutional rights are stepped on. This is the minister who no doubt says to those poor Eskimos up there, "If you don't like it, get out." And that is what some of them are doing. They are trying to keep their constitutional rights by living in the territories. Mr. Speaker, I read on:

Residents of Banff, who have to lease their land from the government, have complained that the cost of leases has risen and, in some cases, leases have not been renewed. They are also complaining about a tax increase.

Mr. Chrétien said they had no right to complain, because they haven't invested money in the land anyway since they haven't had to buy it.