

Proposed National Park

The particular land involved in the area of Killdeer-Val Marie is Crown owned land. I suspect there is no room for any type of speculation in that area. I point out to the hon. member for Gaspé that there is quite a difference between drawing up a park for the area of Killdeer-Val Marie and drawing up one for any particular area of the Gaspé. It was a nice treat to hear a description of his park. Some day I would like to visit it. However, I question the value of such a description in relation to the matter at hand. The question is a simple matter of asking the government to disclose the suggested boundaries for the area of a park in southern Saskatchewan.

During the recent by-election, I travelled in that part of the country. There was a considerable amount of concern as to the nature of this park and how it would affect the livelihood of such areas as Mankota, which is dependent upon the cattle raised on the grazing land around the proposed park. The government has been good enough, and I say this with some hesitation, to give copies of reports to the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) concerning this park. It does not seem inclined to give a description of the park in terms of the boundaries involved.

Although this may seem minor in many ways, a question does arise. I think it is an important matter when members of the House of Commons, who are directly involved in the problem of the creation of a national park in their area, are not informed as to the suggested boundaries of that park and are not informed of the other proposals in relation to that park or how it will affect the people involved. I can go along with the statement that this is a unique area of grazing land and a unique area of Canada in terms of its beauty. There is no question about that. However, there are questions as to how to keep the grazing land in that area trimmed. If it gets too long, it can be easily swallowed up by prairie fires. Some academic in a department drawing up plans for a park does not realize that most of this grazing land must be utilized to avoid prairie fires, since this is one of the most dried out parts of Saskatchewan.

The suggested boundaries for the park do not take into consideration the uniqueness of the particular area. It is a cattle producing area, and the lifestyle of the people is inclined toward being adventuresome; it is unique in comparison to the lifestyle of other Canadians. It is important to keep in mind that this is a part of their heritage. It was they who originally pioneered and developed the area in terms of its use in the cattle industry. If these people are removed from that area, what will be the economic effect on the town of Mankota which receives the benefit from something in the neighbourhood of \$1 million in cattle sales each year?

One does not want to get excited about the government's proposal, or become involved in a long and lengthy discussion of it, without knowing some particulars of this suggested park, such as the boundaries. These boundaries should be made known to the public and, in particular, members of parliament. This information would allow the member for Assiniboia, myself at the moment, to meet with these people and discuss these matters. If such information were available, a considerable amount of the hearsay and misunderstanding in connection with setting up a

[Mr. Knight.]

second national park in this area, or the question of setting one up at all would be eliminated. There are many questions involved.

I hope the government will listen to the legitimate requests of the hon. member for Regina East and myself for a description of the boundaries of this proposed national park.

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this subject. Perhaps it might be a worthwhile exercise to go into some of the history of our parklands. If one wants to make a good assessment, he would probably have to go back many years. In fact, it was three centuries ago when our forefathers inherited the forest, lakes and rivers which are today within the boundaries of our national parks. For many years these elements were often regarded as enemies to be overcome before the country could be developed.

We are strongly marked by the fact that for many years our history was influenced by the fight against the domination of nature. At some stage in the development of our nation, a problem of considerable import forced itself on our conscience. We became aware that misuse, together with a lack of foresight and planning, caused considerable and perhaps irreparable damage to beautiful regions of our country. This becomes a serious matter when a striking and unique example of our natural national heritage is destroyed. Decisions are needed. Definite measures are necessary to correct this situation. Every community must decide upon the format for its economic, social and cultural development and the use of its land. Conservation is an essential element in a comprehensive policy of land development. At every level of political and governmental structure, conservation must be given due consideration each time the fate of any park or other land is decided upon. This is true of the municipal, the provincial and federal levels.

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More precisely, all governments must assume a policy of conservation for the purpose of providing green areas and reserving natural beauty spots where the balance of nature, wildlife and other elements may be maintained and may evolve freely. At the national level our conservation policy has taken concrete form in the creation of 19 national parks, covering an area of 30,000 square miles or more.

The first of these parks, Banff National Park in the Rocky mountains, dates from the last century when those holding political office had the necessary foresight to reserve under state protection a tract of land, including sulphurous waters and springs, in a magnificent mountain setting bearing traces of the passage of glaciers that centuries ago chiselled out the features of our country. All types of flora and fauna abounded in this area. Alpine meadows covered with delicate growth, animals such as the dangerous cougar and the great grizzly bear, and less terrifying species such as herd elk, deer and moose, wild sheep and goats, made the mountain slopes their home.

Mr. Skoberg: Hear, hear!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I am glad someone is listening.