

National Parks Act

Mr. Horner: There would be no patronage involved, and each resident in a national park would have to some extent a voice in the management, maintenance and development of the area in which he lives and the industry that he is trying to service. I observe the Parliamentary Secretary giving thoughtful consideration to that suggestion. I hope he will sleep on it now that I have convinced him that he should take a look at this idea.

It is a shame that a country as old as ours, as steeped in parliamentary tradition as ours, neglects so many people. To say that these people do not need representation in the conduct of their affairs, that if they do not like living in the parks they can move out, is not to be responsible to one of the largest industries in Canada, an industry that needs flexibility and which will certainly need additional financial assistance. With those thoughts I will close my remarks.

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, prior to the adjournment on February 17 I was attempting to deal with some of the many features of this bill which are totally unacceptable to the Canadian taxpayers who are most intimately concerned, namely, those who live in or adjacent to the great national parks of Alberta.

The bill itself is objectionable enough; the behaviour of its chief sponsor, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), is even more so. Why should any member of the House bother supporting a measure that the minister is so obviously unconcerned about? In the four days that this House has devoted to the legislation so far, the minister has been in attendance—while the House has been debating his own legislation—for about 15 minutes. As soon as the bill comes before the House, he scuttles out. It could be a case of guilty conscience, a case of his knowing that the bill is a bad measure. Perhaps he has been instructed by departmental officials to stay out of the House in order to avoid any chance that he will put his foot in his mouth, as he has done both in the national parks and elsewhere.

● (9:50 p.m.)

As far as this bill is concerned, it is a matter of little import whether or not the minister is here. It will stand or fall, not on its own merits but on the importance the government assigns to its passage. The point which I object to most about this proposed legislation is that it carries a step further this

government's philosophy of bypassing parliamentary control, harrassing individuals and small business people and playing ball only with the big companies, with the ultimate threat of a complete government takeover of a large portion of a major national interest, that is, tourism. It is another giant stride toward control of everything by the federal government and its huge, parasitic army of civil servants, only now to be disguised as employees of a Crown corporation.

On February 17 I spoke briefly about the government's sustained drive to isolate and control the national parks by reducing the area's representation in Parliament. Thanks to the active work of the legislative assistant to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), parliamentary representation for the Rocky Mountain Park area has been cut from three ridings to one. But the dedicated collectivists in the departmental bureaucracy were not satisfied with even that measure of domination. They want complete and unquestioned control, with power to drive private initiative and ownership from the parks, free of any possibility of parliamentary control. They have demanded a Crown corporation. Every member in this chamber knows at first-hand how little control can be exerted by Parliament on a Crown corporation. Look at the CBC, which is an emanation of government! That Crown corporation, in my view, is totally unresponsive to the wishes of the general public and is beyond the control of Parliament. Putting the national parks under another bastard creation similar to the CBC serves only to take the heat off the minister and the government and to give free rein to permanent officials, many of whom have never been farther west than Carp, let alone in a national park.

No matter what the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) said in his diversionary and apologetic speech on this bill, it removes the practical administration of park affairs still further from the people. I realize that control is more apparent than real now, but this bill will to a large extent legalize what the hon. member for Rocky Mountain was complaining about in his speech, by providing for cabinet rather than parliamentary control. This is the "in" thing in government today. They want to build a little bureaucratic empire, free of the prying eyes of taxpayers and the nasty questions of private members of the House of Commons, be they government or opposition members. Their answer is simple—just create a Crown