

After Recess.

BANFF NATIONAL PARK.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. MITCHELL. In the debate which took place this afternoon some of my hon. friends on this side of the House appeared to me to mingle in this discussion two questions, which, in my opinion, should be kept entirely apart, that is the financial question and the sanitary question. Now, I have visited a great many of these remedial springs in various parts of the United States. Take, for instance, the hot springs of Arkansas, which are the most noted in the United States. These springs were claimed by three different claimants, each claiming to have a title to them, and for thirty-seven years they litigated about their rights, and for thirty-seven years they were claimed, at the point of the musket, by three different claimants, and the poor unfortunate creatures who went there to get relief were mulcted in heavy charges for the privilege of bathing in these springs. Now, I believe that the hon. gentlemen are entirely wrong when they tell me that a great sanitary establishment like that, one of nature's great remedies, should be left to private enterprise. I may say with regard to the springs at Arkansas that, during those thirty-seven years of litigation, it was discovered and decided by the courts that neither one nor the other of three claimants had a right to the springs, but that the right was vested in the Government; and when that right was recognised the matter was taken in hand and dealt with in such a manner as, I presume, the Minister of the Interior will deal with the Banff Springs. The Government took charge of the whole of them, and let them out to twenty or thirty persons who were prepared to go in and make investments, to build bath-houses, put up hotels, and provide the necessary accommodation. These people were bound to provide a certain size of pipe at a certain fixed rate, and the result is that if to-day they had twenty times the facilities connected with those springs that they now possess they could let them make an enormous sum of money. Within the last few years the United States, knowing the value of these springs, have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in building a hospital on a magnificent site overlooking the springs, which is looked upon as the great sanitary institution by the army and navy of the United States, where soldiers or sailors who have served their country, and have become invalided from one cause or another, can find relief from disease and a comfortable home; and in that way it has been a great benefit to the country. That hospital is maintained at a large expense, and it is universally approved of by the statesmen and people of that great country. What I should like to see would be to have these springs recognised in future as a great sanitary establishment, not only for the disabled, sick or wounded among our soldiers or sailors, but by the whole of the people of this country, who have spent a large amount of money for the construction of a railway through that western country, and for whom every comfort and accommodation of this kind should be provided. These springs should not be under the control of private individuals, who could tax visitors to any extent they liked. In the case of the Arkansas Springs, when the Government laid out these pipes to supply the bath-houses, they made it a condition with the people there that no greater charge should be made than twenty cents a bath to anybody and everybody, and the poorest individual that visits them can get the baths at that rate. What is the state of things in Banff? When I was there I saw a couple of men sitting there with muskets, ready to defend them against the claims of a gentleman who was formerly a member of this House. I say that if these springs had got into the hands of private individuals—and they were very nearly getting into private hands—there would have been a grand monopoly there; they would have been a perfect failure, owing to the want of capital on the

part of the men who would control them, and that would result in extraordinary charges and the lack of proper facilities and accommodation for visitors.

Mr. CASEY. There is nothing in the Bill to regulate the charges.

Mr. MITCHELL. My hon. friend says there is nothing in the Bill to regulate the charges, but the Government of the day is responsible to the people of this country, and I know there is intelligence enough in the Department of the Interior to make such regulations as will commend themselves to the public and lead them to believe that they are reasonable and just. What I would desire to see result from this legislation is not only the establishment of these facilities for the general public, but that in the early future an immense hospital may be established there, on our own soil and reached by our own railway, where the diseased, the sick and the suffering from whatever cause might resort for relief. I am not a scientist myself and cannot tell what the properties of the water are, but I may say that I spent one hour in the springs with my friend Mr. Trow, and spent it so comfortably that I would like to have spent a whole day there. But this I can say, that the springs of Arkansas cannot begin to compare with those of Banff in their strength and power for the relief of the diseased and suffering. My hon. friend from Guysboro' (Mr. Kirk) and the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Jones) spoke about the impropriety of the Government spending any money for parks. Well, that is one of the very things that I approve of in this transaction. The land in that part of the country is valueless for agricultural purposes, but it is immensely valuable in its attractions, its scenery, and the health-giving properties of its atmosphere. I believe the Government have done a wise and a just thing in securing an immense tract of this country, so as to make that park attractive, not only for the people of to-day, but so that those who come after us will find that they are not hampered by limited accommodations, or cumbered by individual or personal rights in spots of the surrounding territory. I believe that future generations will commend the men who have taken on themselves the responsibility of taking the matter up in time and assuming this extent of territory before it was interfered with by personal or individual interests, and who will endeavor to make it as attractive a resort as possible. It is said that private individuals have rights there and are building hotels, but I think it is to the credit of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company that they are willing to spend many thousands of dollars in building a hotel there, and who will find fault with them for doing it? Do they interfere with the rights of the park? I presume that any rights they have will be given to them under proper restrictions; and I say it is a relief to the Government to know that men of that calibre have the enterprise—and I am proud to say they have the capital—to assist in making it a credit not only to Canada, but to the continent of America. I would, therefore, ask our friends on this side to discover from the consideration of this Bill the purely financial question, with regard to the issue of the Governor's warrants, as that is a matter which can be discussed at a subsequent period of the Session, and I ask them to look upon the question in the meantime upon its merits. Let us deal with this question as a sanitary one, and one which is likely to give reputation and character to the public men of Canada, in dealing with the interests of the poorer classes of the community. I think it would not be well to place restrictions upon the Minister of the Interior in providing regulations for the management of the park, because it would be impossible for us to define what those regulations should be, and it would be both impolitic and injudicious to come to Parliament and ask authority for every change that might