

Estimates

ment of lower Lake Louise. I had already arranged for complete public hearings on the development of Banff National Park, but I introduced arrangements to provide a special hearing in order to give an opportunity to the people of Canada to look into that project.

● (1700)

And, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that after the representations I received from people everywhere in Canada I decided not to give the O.K. to the development of that \$30 million project. Some people were opposed to it because it was too big. Some people were opposed because it would be used in the main by Americans, employees of Imperial Oil and so on. I said no to that project because I listened to the people. Now, the hon. member for Rocky Mountain gets up today and accuses me of not listening to the people. What else am I to do?

An hon. Member: Let the people vote.

Mr. Chrétien: The vote should be on whether it was the right decision or the wrong decision. That is the only question you should ask, and I know that a lot of members agree with me that it was the right decision.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Really, the hon. member's remarks were so irresponsible that I do not know what to say. He referred to new national parks. Of course there are problems in the creation of new national parks. The hon. member said that all the parks we have created were in the backwoods. Mr. Speaker, one or two hundred years from now I would not be ashamed when people will be going to the Yukon to see the most beautiful mountains in Canada in the Kluane area that we have made a national park. I will not be ashamed that we decided to take the last wild river in Canada, the Nahanni river, and make it a national park.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: I will never be ashamed that we took the best part of the northern tip of Baffinland and created a national park that will preserve one of the most beautiful parts of Canada, not for a hundred years but for hundreds of years.

Not only have we created new parks in the north but we have done so closer to the centres of population. La Mauricie National Park is only 90 miles away from Montreal. I am not ashamed that we have taken the most beautiful part of the Gaspé Peninsula and made it a national park. It is true that we have had some problems, and still have some problems. I am not perfect, Mr. Speaker, but I am not shy when I have to backtrack a bit. We had some problem when we were establishing Ship Harbour National Park, which is only about 40 miles away from the city of Halifax. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should know exactly how far away it is from the city.

Of course it is more difficult to develop national parks close to cities because over the years that land has been taken up by the private sector. But we have done a lot to improve the situation. The hon. member from Vancouver Island, who is presently in the chamber, can tell you that

[Mr. Chrétien.]

we have taken one of the best beaches in Canada and included it in the Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island. The hon. member is quite happy about the fact that we have taken the last good forest available on the Pacific shore to protect it for the enjoyment of the people of Canada for generations to come. Certainly, I would like to have more national parks closer to the cities. I have talked to the Quebec government and to the Ontario government. I would like to have a national park not too far away in the Chippawa area on the borders of Ontario and Quebec. I may say that Quebec is more or less willing, but I think the hon. member for Rocky Mountain should talk to his friends in Ontario and get their assistance, because such a park would be only 200 miles away from Toronto and Ottawa. I can only try to persuade those people, but I need the help of everyone.

I would like to have more land for a national park on Georgian Bay. I have talked to the Ontario government for years, because at present we only have a small national park there. But we cannot come to terms. We offered Ontario the same check-off terms that we offered to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Of course, we have problems, Mr. Speaker, but I do think we have made a lot of progress.

At the beginning of his remarks the hon. member for Rocky Mountain said there was a bright side to the problem. I thank him for that. Now, I would like to deal with the situation in Banff and Jasper. It is difficult because in a sense we are stuck in a situation simply because of our success. We have to live with the problem of our success. Last summer almost three million people visited Banff. When I first became minister five years ago, only half that number visited the park.

It must be remembered, Mr. Speaker, that I have a double mandate. One is to make some accommodation available to the public and the other is to preserve the area. There is a difficulty, because if you open up more lots for development you are destroying the environment, and of course like citizens elsewhere in Canada people in the area would like to have their own little lots. I point out that some people who live both in Alberta and elsewhere have summer residences in Banff. This is something I do not like very much. That is why we decided to tackle that problem right from scratch in Nova Scotia. There was a problem at Ship Harbour, but I think that problem can be ameliorated. In effect, there are two situations. First, there is the situation concerning the people who have been fishermen. Most of them live in three little enclaves which have been excluded from the park. Then, there are about 150 people in Halifax who have summer homes in the area. So, we have decided to exclude these three little enclaves, because they are right in the middle of the park, and the summer residents.

Of course, the summer residents made representations, first using the case of the 25 fishermen who are involved. I have talked to the Nova Scotia government, Mr. Speaker, and I think we have found a formula, with which the hon. member from Newfoundland who is presently in the chamber is familiar, with respect to Gros Morne National Park. As I say, we have found a formula that could be acceptable, under which the fishermen who are in the park will stay there until they stop fishing operations, but if