

*Environmental Council of Canada*

During the past several months a group in the district of Nipissing, and in the county of Timiskaming on the Quebec side of the river, have been working strenuously toward creating Canada's first interprovincial national park. This park would be located between Mattawa, Ontario and Timiskaming, Quebec. Before the national parks people in the department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development can complete this project they must have approval from both the provinces, Quebec and Ontario. We brought this idea into focus for another reason. As Canada's first interprovincial national park, it would be a unifying force between the two most populated regions in Canada. Since the park would be located on both sides of the border between the two provinces, it would automatically attract people from the large urban areas in the southern part of both Quebec and Ontario, as well as other people right across Canada. It would be a mistake to create a park on one side of the river only. I want to see this done on an interprovincial scale.

This park would be the first interprovincial park in Canada where people of various ethnic origins could meet together on camping grounds and recreational sites, thus getting to know one another in an atmosphere of leisure rather than in the atmosphere of confrontation which so frequently appears in newspapers, on television and through other media. A group of people rented a railway passenger car, attached it to the back of a freight train leaving Mattawa and invited both federal and provincial officials as well as people from Quebec to go to the town of Timiskaming. From there they went back by bus to the Ontario side, to Mattawa. This took place on Thursday, May 18. On May 19, we chartered two aircraft from the North Bay airport and gave these people a complete tour of the area on both sides of the Ottawa river where the park is to be located. Everyone agreed that this was an excellent project. Now, I call upon the provinces and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to get together and make this a reality. My remarks on this park project are very closely related to the remarks I was making at the beginning because the Ottawa river, which is one of the river basins listed under the regulations of the Canada Water Act, flows right through this proposed national park.

There is another aspect of this project which we should consider seriously if we are really interested in a good environment for our people, and it does not rest entirely on the shoulders of the federal government any more than does the creation of a national park. I have always felt that we have not made enough use of the ARDA program which involves local, provincial and federal governments. We have large areas of land in this country which are presently being farmed. The farms are marginal or less than marginal. It would be of far greater benefit to the future forest-based resources of this country if we could bring about ARDA agreements between the local, provincial and federal governments to start a massive reforestation program. This would also have an effect on the human environment in that area.

There are idealists who feel that you can take people off farms in this country, enroll them in adult training courses and train them to adapt to a new way of life in an urban, industrial society. I think it has been proven time and time again that this is impractical because it is very

[Mr. Hopkins.]

difficult to convert these people, who are used to the great outdoors and to living in a clean environment, to an urban life and expect them to be contented. If this program were to be pushed to the limit, it would create social problems and injustices rather than be of advantage to these people. However, through ARDA programs we can bring about the rejuvenation of the areas in which these people live. I am referring to people who make perhaps \$1,200 or \$1,500 a year from their farms and barely exist. If we can reforest such areas through ARDA agreements and hire local people to do the work, we will not only be doing them a service but we will be doing the future generations in Canada a service by improving our forest-based resources for which Canada has become so famous.

Recently, I had occasion to visit the Black Forest area in Germany which is about 15 miles wide and 60 miles long. Here is a perfect example of the forest industry and tourist and recreation business living side by side. I do not agree that it is impossible for industry, recreation, tourism and conservation to be tied in together. With good planning this could be done.

• (1730)

We often hear it said that there ought to be no roadways through our parks. Well, there are 1.6 million old age pensioners in this country who have retired and who wish to enjoy their leisure. Is it fair to them to say, "I want to carry my canoe through this territory and I do not want any roads built there"? Is it fair to leave these 1.6 million people standing by, looking at a wonderful tourist area which they cannot enter? We could block out areas suitable for them. We could block out areas suitable for those who want untouched forest territory, completely deserted areas through which they could travel in their canoes if they wished. By approaching the question in a rational rather than an emotional manner we could learn to live together.

I read an interesting article on idealism the other day. It said, among other things, that ideally government exists solely to serve the people, and the civil service exists solely to advise the government. Some people say that basic political intelligence is relayed to the government by representatives of the people who have been elected to this House. It is not new, of course, for mass meetings to be held in constituencies across this country at which public figures, elected representatives, appear.

Moreover, this is a new age in communications and this is where the pressure of opinion originates and strengthens until finally things are done. For example, meetings have been held in both Ontario and Quebec on the interprovincial national park proposal I have discussed. This involves Members of Parliament being absent from the House if they are to contribute in this way to a better environment.

I hope the news media will, in all fairness, recognize that on many occasions such as this it is necessary for Members of Parliament to be absent from the House for legitimate reasons, trying to get programs off the ground in their constituencies, keeping in touch with constituents, and so on. In this way, public servants and Members of Parliament can get together and learn to know one another. It seems to me that discussion is one of the simplest