

National Parks Act

some of these leases were drafted comes pretty close to being the equivalent of title in fee simple as we ordinarily understand it in other parts of the country outside of park boundaries.

I went on to suggest that we should in effect, approach this matter in the spirit of what would normally be considered to be an expropriation proceeding. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic that we should be discussing this matter when the House has just given third reading to a bill dealing with procedures of federal expropriation, which one of my colleagues referred to as having brought the matter of expropriation into the 20th century. It is ironic that we should now be dealing with a proposal relating to leases in the parks, and in particular the perpetual leases, which will leave those leases forever within the ambit of the concepts of the 19th century. This, so far as I am concerned, is a third ground for opposing the passage of the bill.

● (4:00 p.m.)

The fourth reason why I think we should oppose this bill, and in particular in the context of the current situation, is somewhat related to the third. It relates particularly to Banff and Jasper and the question of perpetual leases. The fourth reason is that if this bill is passed it will perpetuate, as long it remains on the statute books, the existing colonialism in the towns of Banff and Jasper. They will become to an even greater degree than they are now, company towns. At least now, the citizens in those communities have some form of appeal directly up through the political process which we pride ourselves is a democratic one in Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, once the property within the townsites of Banff and Jasper is put in the hands of this corporation, as I understand it this corporation will be the end-all and the be-all of law so far as property holding in Banff and Jasper is concerned, and that is a situation which I say is simply not good enough. I have made it clear before and I make it clear again that I do not believe private property should be held within the parks; that property, if it is going to be used by individuals, must be held under some form of lease.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in this Parliament long ago we should have come to grips with the question and should have dealt with it in the manner the people of Banff and Jasper asked us to deal with it, that is, in Parliament. Having done that, we would have paved the way to take the step that I suggested in this House on June 9, 1967. On that

[Mr. Barnett.]

occasion, I suggested that we pass legislation granting to Banff and Jasper the status of towns under special federal charter so that they might have dealings in a normal way under agreement between the federal and provincial governments for the municipal services available to other communities in the province of Alberta. It is because these towns are within the parks that there would have to be special charters. I suggested then that there are anomalies within the parks, but there they are and we must recognize the fact. The people living in those communities are citizens of Canada and should have the same rights as other citizens for democratic self-employment in their own communities which they do not have now. Had Parliament taken the step at that time, there would now be some local authority with rights under the law to deal with an agency such as this, if it is to be set up as custodian of land within the boundaries of the communities.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, the proposal before us would make the people of Banff and Jasper forever the prisoners of this corporation. Many of the people who have grown up in the province from which I come know what is meant by the term "company town". I suggest that in the 20th century the Parliament of Canada should not be moving to create company towns anywhere in this country, but rather in the reverse direction. The proposal to add this provision under the National Parks Act will, in my view, do exactly that as far as the communities of Banff and Jasper are concerned. That, Mr. Speaker, is the fourth reason why I feel that I cannot support the bill.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and as far as my party is concerned, we do not want to become involved in the kind of argument that has gone on in this chamber and in committee as to which administration was responsible for what in respect of leasing policies.

Mr. Woolliams: I know we were not.

Mr. Barnett: I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the present government were to agree to withdraw this bill, and to take a fair look at the point of view expressed to the standing committee of this House by the citizens of Banff and Jasper, and was prepared to recognize by the introduction of appropriate legislation that Parliament wished to undo some of the mistakes of the past in the matter of parks policy in such a way as to deal fairly and equitably with the individuals involved, we might then be well on the way toward a