

National Parks Act

was introduced about a year and a half ago in its present form has been virtually emasculated by executive control.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: One hon. member present in the House at the moment himself pointed out that a direction was given to the Liberal members of a committee to do that which the government wanted done. We can think of another recommendation which came in from one committee having to do with northern waters and northern sovereignty, and when the government expressed its dislike for it, it died.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. gentleman but I am having great difficulty in reconciling his present line of argument with the subject matter of the bill before the House. It seems to me that one of the difficult tasks which a Speaker has is to try to enforce in some measure the rule of relevancy. The rule is straightforward, that on second reading we should be dealing with the principle of the bill. The hon. member is much better aware of the rules than I am, and I appeal for his co-operation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am building my argument, Mr. Speaker. I am going to point out clearly and definitely that what is being done here, in essence, is to establish a corporation for the purposes set forth in this act to be known as the National Parks Leaseholds Corporation. It is simply a transparent subterfuge to substitute a soulless corporation for those human elements that are necessary in connection with these parks.

I was saying that Parliament is being treated with contempt. If I may ask, with the greatest of deference, since when has it become irrelevant to point out that Parliament is being degraded as a result of the action of the minister, similar as it is to actions taken by other ministers? Surely, may I say with all the deference in the world, we have not yet reached the point in this Parliament that we dare not say of them over there that they are destroying this institution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have mentioned the minister. Let us find out some of the things that he said. I was very much interested in the attitude that he took toward the people of Banff who made representations to him and pointed out the injustice of what was being

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

done. What did he tell them in answer? He told them, in effect, to go to a warmer climate than is to be found in Banff. He told them that he would pay no attention to them. He made it perfectly clear that no matter what their objections were they were going to accept the dose that he and his bureaucrats had concocted and that, regardless of their views or opinions, these measures would be put into effect. He said: "You can either accept or get out". Is it parliamentary practice for a minister of the Crown, a servant of the people to say to the people of Banff: "If you do not like it, get out"? Surely, this can never be described as democracy in action.

What did the minister do at Jasper? What he said in effect was: "If you do not like it, move out". The summary of what he said is as follows:

Chrétien also told us, point blank, that if we aren't prepared to toe the line and evidently accept willy nilly the dictates of the department, of which he is the political head, we can "get out"—

• (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Honey: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder could the right hon. gentleman indicate from what he is reading?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I beg your pardon.

Mr. Honey: Would the right hon. gentleman indicate from what he is reading?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am reading from a complaint from one of those people who has been tragically treated in the town of Jasper.

Mr. Honey: Identify him.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If the parliamentary secretary has not seen the letters from Banff and from Jasper, then I doubt whether he has all the qualifications necessary to pilot a bill through the House of Commons that destroys contractual rights. You see the reason—

Mr. Honey: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, I asked the right hon. gentleman if he would identify the letter from which he was reading—

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have already identified it.

Mr. Honey: —under the rules of this House.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Under the rules of this House? That is only when I quote portions from it. Is the hon. gentleman starting to teach me rules?