

and social development of the Gaspé Peninsula that, in view of the touristic appeal of the area, a national park be mentioned in the Ottawa-Quebec agreement.

As well as being nature conservation areas, large provincial and federal parks have now become important tourist attractions. The Gaspé Peninsula offers interesting natural sites which have remained untouched and which are being developed in order to give visitors open air recreational facilities.

I congratulate the mover of this motion for having pointed out earlier the importance of national parks, but I think he forgot to mention the wonderful work which the present government is doing towards conservation of our land.

The province of Quebec and the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have agreed in principle on having a national park in the Gaspé Peninsula.

According to the law, the government of the province was then to purchase and lease to the federal government, free of charge, for such time and on such conditions as would be mutually acceptable, the territory designated as the park.

The mover insisted a while ago on the necessity for the province to agree on having the park; it seems Saskatchewan is willing to do so.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it was decided that there would be a park in the Forillon Peninsula, needless to say many tried to speculate on the sale of the land.

A few weeks before the signature of an agreement for the development of the park, even a provincial department took the liberty of granting some prospectors an oil exploratory permit in the Forillon Peninsula where the park was to be located. Far from me, Mr. Speaker, the idea of implicating provincial officials about the grant of an exploratory permit a few weeks before the signature of the agreement, but the newspapers at the time not only suggested that the transaction was questionable, but that it showed lack of communication between two departments within the same government.

In order to prevent speculation in the transaction of land to develop the Forillon National Park, the Quebec government—that is, the National Assembly—introduced in July 1970, Bill 29, an Act concerning the Forillon Park and adjoining areas. The purpose of the bill was to enable the Quebec government to purchase quickly and transfer to the Canadian government the necessary land for the development of the Forillon Park.

The bill was also aimed at preventing, until June 30, 1971, except for agricultural purposes and in certain exceptional cases, any building, rebuilding, transformation, addition or new implantation of buildings as well as drawing up any plans for divisions or subdivisions in this area.

Section 4 of the act is very explicit and provides for deposit of the plan pertaining to the park. It reads as follows:

4. Deposit of the plan mentioned in article 792 of the Code of Civil Procedure carries with it, as of right, rescinding of any grants or licences of occupation or leases granted under the Lands and Forests Act or the Colonization Land Sales Act covering

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public lands included in the Forillon Park area as described in Schedule A. For the sole purpose of compensation payments, the owner of such a right is deemed to have been expropriated.

By way of this legislation, the Quebec National Assembly forestalled all potential speculation in the area. When the government decided to develop an airport at Sainte-Scholastique, the Department of Transport proceeded likewise, depositing all the plans and tenders and stipulating all the lands to be expropriated, in order to avoid speculation.

Last fall, I went to Washington with a group of members of this House to study the operation of national parks. I was therefore able to see that in the United States they also have problems when determining the location of a historical site or a national park.

Mr. Speaker, there are always some citizens who are interested in speculation and this is only human. And when public funds are involved, many are not overly scrupulous.

This government, and in particular the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), wishes to stimulate the tourist industry in this country as well as the development of the national parks system so as to ensure the preservation of immense Canadian stretches of land in their natural state, and this in order that present and future generations may enjoy them. This House must pay tribute to the minister responsible for national parks for his magnificent work and initiatives.

I cannot figure out why a member would want the minister to make public the description of an area that he wishes to include into a park project, even before the end of negotiations with the province.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I must say that the master plan for the development of the Forillon National Park is finished and, after looking at the plans and specifications, it is possible to conclude that this park will become one of the most interesting in Canada as, for the first time, the Park Branch intends to include cultural and human interpretation.

The geological and biological attractions of Forillon are truly extraordinary and, by themselves, they provide very eminent examples of nature's marvels. Recognition will be given to the historical value of the site through conservation and interpretation. Visitors to Gaspé will be able to appreciate Forillon for its natural marvels where man will be seen as part of nature and integrated into a dynamic environment. The whole project will provide a unique example of harmony between man, earth and sea. Forillon Park will be an inspiration to our people in its consideration of man's relation to nature.

• (1720)

[English]

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of interest and anticipation that I involve myself in this debate on the matter of disclosing a description of the boundaries of a park in part of my constituency. The hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) suggested there should be some secrecy within the area of negotiations. I suggest to him this is not the case.