

member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) it is necessary to define "recreation" with some precision, or to qualify it in some way, for example as outdoor recreation. Even that qualified expression is capable of covering snowmobiling to wilderness hiking, active team sports to passive enjoyment of the countryside, urban playgrounds to wilderness parks.

Policies exist for federal involvement in many areas of outdoor recreation, but the diverse and often divergent needs of many of the activities which comprise recreation are not amenable to a single policy statement. Recreation does not result in a service whose goals can be specified, except perhaps in the level of personal satisfaction to each participant. All levels of government have a range of responsibilities in the field of recreation. These responsibilities have been developed in tune with the growth in demand for recreation of all kinds during recent years. Many of them are exercised autonomously by municipal and provincial governments without any involvement of the next senior level of government. These responsibilities and powers and their autonomy must be respected in the development of any federal policy.

● (1650)

In order to meet this primary requirement, a comprehensive policy would probably emerge as being so general as to be without a great deal of value. Recreational programming and the determination of land use are very clearly areas of provincial responsibility. Although several federal departments have developed excellent working relationships with the provinces for recreational activities, there is no evidence that such basic matters as these would be willingly modified by the provinces in the interests of a national policy.

The federal government has a number of policies and programs which apply to specific aspects of recreation and which have been tailored to meet the special needs of each activity. Not only are some of these programs federally assisted but many of them are federally administered. National parks, canals, small craft harbours, historic sites, some wildlife refuges and interpretation centres are among this group.

There are two components to recreation—the allocation of space and resources and the participation in recreational activities as part of our social structure. Assuming that participation will follow Parkinson's law and expand to make maximum use of land made available, the real interest of government is one of space and programs to ensure wise and skilled use of the space by a trained or at least an understanding public. In Canada, the consideration is complicated in the case of those recreational activities which attract tourism. The vast market of 200 million mobile citizens of the United States places powerful demands on Canadian resources. In 1973, slightly more than 30 per cent of the visitors to Canada's national parks were not Canadian residents. This larger market may well contribute tourist dollars to Canada but they also make the resources of a system serving 22 million Canadians distinctly scarce.

The implication of the hon. member's motion, that there is a void where there should be a policy, is only valid if we consider the whole unwieldy package of recreation. There

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are a number of policies and agencies of the Government of Canada which have jurisdiction over parts of the proposal. The total of these, properly co-ordinated to have recreation recognized as an integral component of our total land use allocation and social and cultural plans, has the potential for creating a comprehensive response to the variety of recreational demands than a national recreational philosophy requires.

I would like to review the involvement of several federal departments in the development of recreational policies.

Mr. Atkey: You are against progress.

Mr. Buchanan: Never. In each department, the thrust is to develop policies which can be used to handle specific issues and involvement of the federal government while giving full recognition to the autonomous roles of both provincial and municipal governments. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Marchand) pointed out in this House when speaking on second reading of Bill S-4 on November 2, 1973, that the philosophy of the National Parks Act is that of conservation and recreation. Conservation takes priority, as it must if Canada is to have special places to recreate.

A co-operative relationship with the provinces has developed to serve Canada's parks' responsibilities. Last year a new dimension was added to those responsibilities when the government approved the byways and special places program which provides for a number of new federal initiatives in the protection of our natural and cultural heritage while providing a whole new series of themes which will serve recreational needs. The introduction of national marine parks, national landmarks, national wild rivers, national historic land routes, national historic waterways and scenic and historic parkways provides a diversity of federal involvement and offers an encouragement to other levels of government to consider the advantages of an integrated, Canada-wide parks network. In announcing this new direction, the minister laid special stress on the need to develop these initiatives with the provinces as part of a truly Canadian parks system. The department is now preparing to enter discussions with all the provinces to explore the potential of the program.

To an increasing degree, Parks Canada is extending its traditional concerns. Its newly assumed responsibilities for the historic canals has led it into negotiations with Ontario to find a means of co-ordinating federal, provincial and municipal programs to develop the tremendous asset of the Rideau and Trent-Severn waterways so that it meets the many and varied needs of a population searching for more recreational opportunities. As a result of a co-ordinated program of development in the Halifax-Dartmouth waterfront area, several islands which are federally-owned but surplus to current federal needs are to be used for recreational development of benefit to that region.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

Mr. Paproski: Question.

Mr. Buchanan: Appropriate ways are being sought to provide recreational activity in urban population areas.