

perty, as most of them do. But this very sacred right of the people in these great national play-grounds, which will become more and more valuable yearly and less capable of being restored if they are destroyed, should be definitely fixed now. I would therefore again appeal to the minister to take action in this matter. I referred to this matter a year ago, and I do think that this invasion of our national parks should be held off until such a policy as I have suggested is definitely decided upon so that parliament may deal with any applications that may be made. I appeal to the minister with confidence, for I think that both his heart and his mind are inclined to respond to the appeal.

Mr. SHAW: With much of what the hon. member (Mr. Stevens) has said, I find no objection. We should inaugurate a definite parks policy for the preservation of our parks and for their maintenance as far as possible in the natural state. But there arises one difficulty which we must not overlook, and that for reasons which have never been satisfactorily explained so far as I know. There is I think something over 9,000 square miles of parks in Alberta, practically all along the eastern fringe of the Rocky mountains, and this national park area was established I believe largely for the purpose of creating a forest reserve. It was not because the scenic beauty of that area was of such great value that it had to be preserved intact for generations to come; the fact is that large portions of it are wholly unfit from this point of view. Now, the first thing that we should do is to make a careful survey and select those portions of the present established park areas which are suitable primarily for parks, and properly safeguard them, so that no disposition shall be made of any concessions therein without the consent of parliament. The request of my hon. friend in this regard is reasonable; I know that is the policy of which the National Parks Association approves. But in this vast area of national parks in western Canada there are at present great coal deposits and perhaps vast mineral deposits as well. Is that entire area to be preserved intact without development of any kind? It seems to me that such a policy is neither wise nor desirable. I think the first thing we should do is to carefully select our park areas and see that they are maintained.

With regard to the Calgary power proposition, one cannot deny that the area, so far as the lakes are concerned, is of considerable scenic value. And I do not think there would be any difficulty in duplicating the Spray

lakes in a dozen different places in Alberta. I have had the privilege of visiting this area two years in succession, last year and the year before; and in order to have my opinion confirmed I had the pleasure of going up with the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Garland) last year. But a large portion of the area has been burned over, and the whole extent of it is a splendid indication of what can be done by irresponsible logging companies. It has all been lumbered and slashed and the whole area has been burned over, so that from the standpoint of attractiveness its value is practically insignificant except for the lakes. I am not so sure that the flooding of a large portion of that area would not make it a great deal more valuable from the scenic standpoint than it is to-day. If there is a possibility of water-power development in this area I see no reason why the province of Alberta should not be given the right, if it so desires, to secure that privilege; but I would first see to it that the park area was selected. This commercial section is not especially valuable for scenic purposes and at least a considerable portion of it could be taken out of the park area. I see no reason why the Spray lakes area should be preserved for its scenic value, because to be frank it has very little apart from the lakes; and I think most people who have been in that area will agree with what I say. I have pleasure in seconding the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens). We should establish a definite park policy at the earliest possible date, under which there would be no encroachment for commercial purposes, save only with the sanction of this parliament.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Chairman, under this item I should like to make a few remarks with regard to the more general question of water-powers. The member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens) has made a plea for the sacred rights of the people in our national playgrounds. I should like to urge the sacred rights of the people in the water-powers of this country. At the present time in Great Britain and throughout a good part of the continent they are taking very great care of their water-powers, they are beginning to realize that in view of the electrical development that is going on these are invaluable and ought to be preserved to the state as a national asset, not to be alienated. In the United States we have learned through other debates in this House that a good deal has been said about the need of a wide policy. Various companies are talking about some super power development. Unfortunately