

National Parks Act

One of the most beneficial experiences that society can have, and which is becoming more and more urbanized, more and more polluted with pollutants and noise, is that of isolation or to be able to go where one can obtain peace, quiet and solitude. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that solitude not only heals the body but heals the mind. It is essential that people experience it periodically if they are to have recreation in the true sense of the word.

Therefore, I recommend strongly that the government consider carefully the provision of not less but more area for national parks, even if these areas cannot be developed at the present time. Land costs will increase and the longer this program is delayed, the harder it will be to accomplish. There will be developments of various kinds, and the environment will be destroyed. It will then be too late to take advantage of these areas. I would urge the minister, if he were here, to consider the necessity of taking action now to protect the future of Canadians yet unborn.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on Bill C-152, titled "an Act to amend the National Parks Act". I read the bill with interest and taken as a whole, I find it deserves our close attention since it deals with an important subject, that is the expansion and operation of resort areas, the preservation of our wildlife and the development of our natural resources.

I would like to consider the problem mostly from the point of view of Quebec. The previous speaker noted that Quebec may not be a province like the others, that it does not benefit from national parks and that, in comparison with other provinces, its natural resources remain undeveloped.

In that regard, I wish to recall the problem about the famous Forillon Park in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The federal government has been taking steps recently to set up a national park in that area. On the other hand, the Quebec government is also taking steps, having studies made with a view to having a park in the same area which, however, is not intended to be "national". Although it is quite willing to accept the funds required from the federal government.

That is what could be called a constitutional quarrel between the Quebec government

[Mr. MacLean.]

and the federal government. In the meantime, Quebec has yet to have a national park.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time we put an end to our constitutional quarrels, specially when dealing with the development of part of our country, with the development of its natural resources, as in the case of a national park in the Gaspé peninsula which is an underdeveloped area where tourism alone guarantees a certain income, admittedly quite modest, to its people.

On the one hand, the Quebec government tells the people that the government in Ottawa is to blame, that it refuses to negotiate; neither does Ottawa want to negotiate with a view to reaching a reasonable compromise. On the other hand, the federal minister says: We cannot accede fully to the request of the provincial government, because of such and such a section in the constitution, because it could lead to this or that inconvenience, because of such and such a precedent.

Obviously, as a result Quebec has no federal parks. Now, over \$335 million were spent in other provinces for national parks, while not a single penny has been spent in Quebec.

• (9:30 p.m.)

It seems to me that if the provincial government is not reasonable in this particular matter, the federal government for his part, lies low and does not react in any way to the problems and injustices thereby created.

It is high time to wake up and to say, once and for all, that in Quebec as well as in the other provinces, our natural resources must be developed and made profitable, so as to give reasonable impetus to our tourist industry.

It is high time that we should stop playing politics, and passing the buck. Indeed, we have wealth, such as forests, animal life and lakes, but all those things are wasted because no one is concerned about developing them.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. members who spoke before me on the subject were partly right but I do not agree with them when they put the blame for it mainly on the provincial government for his attitude. It is all too easy for the federal government to say that the provincial government is the only one at fault. However, if one gives a close look at the matter, one realizes, that the problem lies on both sides of the fence.

Whenever an interesting bill like Bill C-152 comes up for consideration before the House, there are of course points on which we do not