

National Parks Act

it has exhibited a definite tendency toward the development of unwieldy monsters—these Crown corporations gobbling up public funds yet not responsible to the public nor accounting for how the funds are spent.

● (8:40 p.m.)

In this country there has been a tradition of elected representatives setting the policies and looking after expenditures. As a matter of fact, this principle is what brought most new Canadians to Canada—the principle of responsible government. It forms the very core of our society, and we do not want to give it up. We know the tendency is to give these corporations too much independence. Their decisions are not the decisions of those who represent the people, and as I see it, this is just another step towards dictatorship.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yewchuk: I do not want to talk about the CBC in a derogatory way because I know many fine people in the CBC. Often we hear criticisms of this corporation and often, when hon. members direct questions to the minister responsible for the corporation, they are met with a shrug of the shoulders and the explanation that the minister is not responsible for the CBC because it is an independent body and makes its own decisions. I ask, is this what we want for our parks as well?

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Yewchuk: Of course, there may be another explanation for the government's action. Knowing that the policies he is pursuing are unacceptable to the people, the minister does not want to accept responsibility for them. He wants to be able to say, "I was not the one who made this policy; it was the Crown corporation, over which I have no control." Is this what the government wants? Perhaps it is. There is another possibility: perhaps it wants to create another huge pyramid for patronage, another place in which to employ loyal party workers, defeated candidates and that sort of person. I do not think we should pursue the principle of creating too many Crown corporations. It seems that the government wants to create a great many Crown corporations. We have heard about the Department of Public Works, the Department of Transport and the Post Office Department being made Crown corporations. Perhaps the Department of Northern Development is next in line for being turned into a Crown corporation.

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

Mr. Nesbitt: Eventually, we shall not have much of Parliament left.

Mr. Yewchuk: It seems as if the entire government is to be run by Crown corporations. Then they will set up one Crown corporation to run all these others, with the Prime Minister being chairman or president. That is why I say this policy is a step towards dictatorship. I point out that Crown corporations do not represent the people, and the policies they draw up are not those of the representatives of the people. That is wrong in principle. As I said before, the minister may be trying to shed responsibility for policies not acceptable to the Canadian people and this is one of the things he has in mind. He will obtain a certain amount of immunity from public criticism in respect of unacceptable policies. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the policy of setting up this Crown corporation is also not acceptable. I think it is bad for democracy and I object to it on that basis.

My second objection to the bill is that it totally ignores the largest park of the country, Wood Buffalo National Park, situated in northern Alberta and partly in the Northwest Territories. There has been a lot of talk about the provincial and federal governments changing the boundaries of this park, but for some reason the government has chosen to ignore the park completely in this bill. The park is populated primarily by native people, Métis and Indians who are mostly unemployed, living in conditions of severe poverty and without any immediate prospects of better economic circumstances. The provincial government has told the people that if it administered the area it would be quite willing to develop it, build a road to the park, bring on industrial development and try to provide jobs. The provincial government is notable to do these things while the federal government controls the entire territory.

Not long ago I spoke to the Premier of Alberta who said he wanted to talk to the minister responsible for that park. He is willing to talk and has certain proposals, yet for some reason the two ministers have not met to discuss the matter. I spoke to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) about this, and he also indicated he wished to talk with the Premier. So far, however, he has not taken the initiative to meet him and talk to him.

It gives me great pleasure now to mention the former Conservative government, the only government that looked to the north, thought about northern development and established