

Proposed National Park

area (a) all correspondence between the government of Canada and the government of Saskatchewan on this park since January 1, 1964 (b) all correspondence between the government of Canada and other interested persons and organizations since January 1, 1964, concerning the proposed park (c) an outline of plans for development of this park.

I obtained that information in October or November, 1971, when it was tabled in this House. The correspondence and documents make a volume two inches thick. Later, I pointed out to the then parliamentary secretary that some of the information requested and ordered by the House was not there, namely, an outline of plans for the development of this park. That information is still outstanding.

Looking through the documents, I was interested in one in particular so, on October 27, 1971, I moved:

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of a report prepared for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development by Kaplan Consulting Associates Limited, entitled "Economic Impact Study of Alternative National Park Proposals at Val Marie, Saskatchewan.

That was tabled on December 16, 1971 approximately and is a fairly substantial document as well. A note added to the text of this document reads:

This report was prepared by Kaplan Consulting Associates Limited of Montreal in 1968 to provide further background data regarding the economic impact of establishing a national park near Val Marie, Saskatchewan. The report does not represent the current situation with respect to boundary alternatives or discussions with the present government of Saskatchewan. Further, the economic circumstances in the area may have changed since the report was commissioned.

Now, the fact that boundary alternatives are mentioned confirms that one or more set of boundaries for the park are being considered. What I have attempted to obtain during the last session and by this motion is:

—a copy of a description of the area which the federal government would like to see incorporated in the proposed second national park in Saskatchewan to be situated in the Val Marie-Killdeer area.

I deliberately worded the motion in this way, recognizing that the matter is still under negotiation and that any proposals the federal government may have at the present time are not necessarily final. Of course, the Saskatchewan government may have views on this matter as well. However, the note appended to the motion for papers tabled last November indicates that there is at least one boundary alternative and probably another indicated at the present time. I submit that the government should make available all the information it has on this subject at the present time because of the widespread interest in the matter. There is no reason for the information not being available. There is considerable interest and discussion amongst the local residents in the area between Val Marie and Killdeer, Saskatchewan. They have a pretty good idea of what the government has in mind, though some of the rumours are not too well founded I am sure but others are probably based on good information.

What the government is trying to do has a good deal of merit if certain problems can be worked out but we, as Members of Parliament, do not have access to this information. We do not know what the federal government is discussing with the government of Saskatchewan and with some of the local residents. This illustrates this gov-

[Mr. Burton.]

ernment's penchant for secrecy. If pressed on the point, I believe that the minister and the parliamentary secretary would say that there is no reason for this information not being made available in a general way. Probably they were told by some of the bureaucrats in their department that it should not be made available. Some of the bureaucrats probably feel that they would have a little less control or power if the information were released. I submit that this has to come to an end, Mr. Speaker. It is about time that the people of Canada and their representatives had access to this type of information.

As I indicated earlier, I deliberately worded my motion in a way that would take into account the fact that there has been no final decision on this matter. It provides scope for the government to qualify any information tabled in the House on the basis that it is a tentative proposal, that there are several proposals under consideration or that this proposal could be amended in the future. I would have no objection to such qualifications. That is the case with the motion for papers that I mentioned earlier, where a qualifying paragraph was necessary at the beginning of the document which was tabled. If there is any particular problem about the wording of the motion, I would be happy to amend it to give consideration to any areas of sensitivity. Basically, I say again that I think this type of information should be made available to members of the House of Commons. I urge the government to make sure that members of the House are not denied rightful access to information respecting public affairs and the expenditure of the public's money. That is money over which we are supposed to be exercising control.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to take part in this debate on the motion of the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton), which reads in part as follows:

for a copy of a description of the area which the federal government would like to see incorporated in the proposed second national park in Saskatchewan to be situated in the Val Marie-Killdeer area.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy for me to speak on this motion, since development of the first national park in Quebec was started in my riding in 1970. We have had all sorts of problems in connection with designation of the area and expropriation of land.

I want to start by giving you the background of the Forillon National Park, and remind hon. members that on May 29, 1963, in the first speech I made in this House, I pointed out the importance of establishing a national park in the Gaspé Peninsula. I had hoped that such a park could be developed as a centennial project.

Having explained my project to the minister and submitted it to the Quebec provincial secretary, I was told that it could not be realized as the province was not at that time prepared to give up land to the Canadian government for the development of such a park.

Still trying to take steps in order to obtain a national park in the Gaspé Peninsula, the Eastern Quebec Planning Bureau recommended in a study on the economic