

● (1520)

I am pleased to report to hon. members that the rate of response to the number of questions which have been asked is, in fact, one of the highest rates which has been seen by this parliament. So I will give my hon. friend the undertaking that we will do our best to answer as many questions as possible before the adjournment, which is anticipated soon, but I think it is worthwhile pointing out that the performance in this particular session has been very good indeed.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

AMENDMENT TO INCREASE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF BOARD

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that Bill C-13, to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Mr. Keith B. Penner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to introduce this bill at the second reading debate stage on behalf of my minister, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Allmand) who is also responsible for Parks Canada under the purview of which this particular bill falls.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Act provides that the board, bearing the same name, recommend to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development places, events and persons of historical significance to our country. Established in 1919, the board is composed of 15 members; two representatives each from Ontario and Quebec, one each from the remaining eight provinces, one representative each from the National Museums of Canada and the Dominion Archivist, and an officer from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I understand that the latter position is vacant at the present time. The provincial representatives are usually historians or archivists of great repute. Mr. Marc Laterreur is the chairman of the board, and he is also a member of the Department of History of the Faculté des Lettres of Laval University in Quebec.

In the past 20 years, on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, more than 70 historic parks and major sites have been designated, and almost 700 persons and events of historical significance have been commemorated. National historic parks and sites attracted 4.4 million visitors during 1975-76. The Halifax Citadel and

Historic Sites

Signal Hill in St. John's, Newfoundland, each recorded more than 800,000 visitors. The Fortress of Louisbourg, in Nova Scotia, received nearly 300,000 visitors, and the Alexander Graham Bell Museum, at Baddeck, Nova Scotia, recorded 243,000 visitors. In western Canada, there were 115,000 visitors to Lower Fort Garry, and 101,000 persons visited the RCMP ship *St. Roch* in Vancouver. In the Yukon Territory there were almost 85,000 visitors to the historic buildings and sites in the Dawson City area, including 10,000 visitors to the Palace Grand Theatre and 24,000 visitors to the Robert Service cabin.

In the past, much emphasis has been given to military sites in Parks Canada's presentation of national historic parks and sites. As a result, some provinces with little military history have not been adequately recognized in the present historic parks program. Planning has now been directed to provide a proper balance of thematic and regional factors which will allow Parks Canada to recognize Canada's history in such fields as agriculture, industry and ranching. The departmental estimates which were approved by parliament provide almost \$19 million for capital expenditures by the national historic parks and sites branch of Parks Canada in the current year. In the years to come we will be asking parliament for additional amounts to carry out this program of historical commemoration, preservation and restoration for the benefit of all Canadians.

The purpose of amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act is to have a better representation of two important parts of Canada, namely, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Up until now representatives from these northern regions attended board meetings only as observers without the right to vote. If the amendment to the act today, at second reading, is adopted, the delegates from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada will no longer voice their opinions in merely an advisory capacity. The board would have 17 members instead of 15, and the representatives from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories would have full voting rights which up to the present they have not had.

In the eyes of all the people of Canada, the north, with all its human, cultural and natural resources, is becoming increasingly important. I therefore believe that hon. members of this House will approve a measure which would ensure the participation of these vast regions in that board.

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments with respect to Bill C-13. It is a fairly straightforward bill, and as the parliamentary secretary has said, what it does is increase the representation on the board by two, one representative from the Northwest Territories and one from the Yukon Territory. Quite frankly, this amendment should have been proposed a number of years ago. I was interested to hear the parliamentary secretary say that until now the representatives from the two territories have sat as observers and have not had voting rights. This is the situation with respect to most boards and with respect to conferences