

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

I speak out against commercial logging operations in any of our national parks. In a few short years in Canada we have virtually eliminated a number of our renewable natural resources, through stupidity with regard to conservation. Surely some remnants of our original Canadian heritage should be allowed to remain unspoiled for future generations?

On occasions it might be necessary to remove some timber from national park areas because fire or disease has destroyed certain stands. It might be necessary to do so for our own protection. In these instances removal should be carried out under the strictest park supervision possible; the logging methods involved should relate to a conservation policy, and in no circumstances should commercial logging enterprises be allowed in our parks. Reforestation should immediately follow the removal of material damaged by fire or disease.

With these thoughts in mind I ask the minister to give the house an explanation why any logging should be allowed in Glacier National Park. I ask him to tell us the acreage and approximate volume involved. Will the timber be put up for public auction? What is the estimated revenue to be returned to the parks branch? Have any contracts been let to date? What safeguards have been provided to ensure maximum protection for the park area?

We should be given this information. However, I serve notice that all my life I have fought for sound conservation policies in relation to all our natural resources. Parks are of special interest to me, and I have no intention of remaining silent if there is any move to liquidate these resources which have been set aside as national park areas for all time for Canadians to enjoy. Under no circumstances must we ever relax our guard as far as these parks are concerned. We have a solemn duty to preserve these areas for future generations, to pass them on as unimpaired as possible, and I urge the minister to give us as much information as he can this evening, trusting he can announce that a decision has been taken against logging operations in this particular national park.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I should like to make just one point, first of all. The hon. member spoke at length about Algonquin Park. I must tell him immediately we have nothing to do with this—it is a provincial park, not a federal park. There is no
[Mr. Harding.]

cutting operation in any of the national parks of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I welcome the hon. member's lecture on conservation, but there is no one who is more interested than I am in preserving the natural beauty of our land in the national parks. The department has a policy under which permits may not be given to anyone to cut timber in our national parks, or try to exploit any of the natural resources there. This is because we believe the parks should be preserved in their present state for people to enjoy, both now and in days to come.

As far as Glacier park is concerned, I am well aware of the problem to which the hon. member has referred. I must inform him that I have looked into this matter, because only a few weeks ago the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Stewart) wrote me a letter saying he was very much concerned about these problems because there are four national parks in his riding. I found that these companies have long standing rights to conduct certain operations there. I took steps to permit the federal government, through my department, to buy these rights back because I would not like these companies to cut any wood in the Glacier National Park.

• (10:10 p.m.)

I am convinced that this is the right policy for us to follow. We are conducting negotiations right now and we are hopeful we will reach an agreement with them. If we do not arrive at an agreement with them, we will use other powers that exist under our jurisdiction.

[*Translation*]

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING—
REPORTED REGIONAL LIMITATIONS
ON NUMBERS ACCEPTED

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, the question I raised has a great importance for those who wish to take advantage of the retraining, and they are numerous in my riding.

An early winter has put a stop to some building operations before the expected date and, as a result, the number of the unemployed has increased. Moreover, the fact that the government has abandoned the winter works program is not likely to remedy the situation.

Another reason why more people want to take advantage of retraining is the fact that