

the Spray river. Engineers, however, have assured me that it can be filled and you would get a tremendous power development which would serve the existing municipalities of Alberta as far north as Edmonton.

Mr. STEVENS: This is not the only power available for that vast area of Alberta, is it?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Practically, yes. It is the only available source of power for large development. Other possibilities have been surveyed and turned down by the engineers of the company, reinspected by our engineers and turned for the same reasons. No one loves the grandeur of mountain scenery more than I do and I do not want to see it disturbed. I even go almost to the extent of refusing to build automobile roads in order that nature may be seen as nature was intended to be seen from horseback or on foot, and in that way, perhaps, we can save some park expenditure. That is what we are endeavouring to do in the development of Jasper, as the construction of motor roads through the park is sometimes pretty expensive work. But having in mind the cheap power and the distance that this is removed from the centre of the tourist traffic, being eighteen miles from Banff, I have a very mixed opinion about the matter, and now I am in receipt of a request from Alberta on behalf of the province for a license to develop this power. Having in mind the statement I made in the House last session that before any concession was granted this matter would receive very full and frank discussion in the House. I have not considered the granting of this license. The request is in my office awaiting action on the part of the Department of the Interior. Having also in mind the very large coal deposits that we have in Alberta, and wishing, I think, further exploration by our fuel board and by others interested, I believe it will, perhaps, develop that by the cheap, easy methods by which we can produce the fuel, we can burn it at the pit mouth, saving transportation costs, and transport electricity over the wires as is the case in waterpower development. On the other hand, I dislike holding up a request from a province, and I want to say, in fairness to the committee and to parliament, I would rather that parliament would take the responsibility of passing upon this question either by a vote or otherwise and settle the matter. I hesitate to take the responsibility of passing upon a question of this kind without having parliament pass upon it. That is my position.

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

Mr. STEVENS: I am glad to hear the minister give expression to the last few sentences in particular. I would suggest that all national parks be declared as such and that, except for such minor privileges as the freedom to vend ice cream and other refreshments of that kind in these parks, they shall not be alienated nor shall any rights or privileges in any portion of them be conceded except by act of parliament. In other words, there should be declared in Canada a policy in relation to our national parks which will preserve them from any alienation or interference of any sort. If the minister would take that stand now and amend the Dominion Lands Act, or whatever statute deals with the matter, to provide for a policy of this kind, it would be an excellent thing. In that case there would have to be submitted to parliament any application that might be made such as the one now mentioned. Far be it from me to offer any resistance to the reasonable request of any province for any concession in connection with Dominion property. That I would hesitate to do. But on this question I am very much in earnest, because I apprehend that if we give way to the province of Alberta in this particular application we shall simply open the door to all manner of applications that might come from various parts of Canada affecting any of our national parks. A couple of years might go by and the Alberta application be forgotten; and then would come one from British Columbia perhaps, or from Ontario, or perhaps one from some railway or steamship company. We might have innumerable applications from these and other sources for apparently minor privileges or concessions and very soon we should find our national parks broken up under a varied control and invaded by divers interests. That is why we should formulate some definite policy such as I understand prevails in the great national parks to the south of us. In the United States, if my information is correct, a policy is in force under which no concessions are granted at all within national park areas; and they are now enlarging the federal control, limiting in some of their areas the practices of citizens, the prices that may be charged for certain services, and so forth, to prevent the exploitation of the public. All these things are being carefully guarded, as they should be. Our parks are not only great play-grounds, but they may become a splendid revenue producer for the people of Canada. We have no objection to tourists enjoying them; indeed, we welcome them provided the tourists respect our pro-