

National Parks Act

provision of the legislation? Is it the action of a responsible opposition to misrepresent what seems to be the only contentious provision of this legislation? Is it a pure coincidence that this misrepresentation as well as the distortion of what has become an accepted parliamentary practice in an effort to create a phony issue all emanated from the same general geographic area of this House? Is it coincidental that it was the spent volcanoes in the front bench opposite—as my hon. friend from Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman) referred to them—who have indulged in these discreditable tactics?

Our parliamentary system needs an opposition; it needs a working opposition; it needs an effective opposition; it needs a credible opposition. Canada has a right to look to the official opposition for that. It is looking to the official opposition and it is finding it absolutely lacking. Through you, Mr. Speaker, may I appeal to the hon. leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. Some place over there the talent must be waiting quietly to be discovered. It is obvious it does not rest on his front benches. Parliament needs, and Canada needs, an effective opposition. He has a duty to provide it. For the sake of Parliament, and the sake of Canada, I say that he should put a muzzle on his front bench and give the boys on the back benches a chance. After today's question period one cannot be too sanguine about his chances of success, but some time between now and the next general election the country has to find out whether there is any talent left in the Conservative party.

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, after the last speaker's brief—I am not sure what the second adjective should be and perhaps I will omit it—remarks I must say I am happy to be following him rather than preceding him. What I am about to do I hope is what he was really urging my colleagues on the right to do, namely, provide some kind of constructive proposal.

It seems to me that one of the main purposes at least of our national parks should be to ensure for the present generation of Canadians, and the generations in the future, the possibility of experiencing in a meaningful and enjoyable way our natural resources and of experiencing them in an essentially natural setting. That would be a setting which would involve the minimal inclusion of what may or may not appropriately be called civilization.

[Mr. Mahoney.]

To a considerable extent, both at the national level and I think at the provincial level in respect of a number of our provinces, this has been achieved in respect of our summer parks. Now, in each province, Canadians have the opportunity to enjoy camping, hiking, canoeing and a number of other pleasurable activities. Before I make the suggestion I have in mind I should like to draw to the attention of the House what perhaps is self-evident and widely known already; that is, the fact that all these pleasures can be enjoyed at minimal cost to individuals and their families.

● (4:50 p.m.)

I think in a democratic society it is a point worth emphasizing that, regardless of whether one is rich or poor, our national parks are available equally to all people for their enjoyment. However, I repeat, that those are summertime activities. This is glaringly not the case when we consider the winter season. Perhaps of all athletic activities enjoyed by young and old in the winter, skiing obviously must be singled out as the most important one. But I ask you, who in this country can afford to ski?

Let us take some reasonably accurate estimates of costs for a family of four spending a day skiing in Ontario. I understand that the figures I will suggest are fairly representative of what it would cost anywhere in this country. First of all one has to pay for tows. For adults, this means \$7 for mother and \$7 for father. For children, in the case where there is a reduced rate, this would likely mean \$3.50 each. In addition to the tow cost, the family could be expected to spend a minimum of \$5 altogether for lunch. Then, for the average family going skiing there would be an expense of \$5 for gasoline. The total comes to \$31 for one day spent skiing. I ask you, how many Canadians in this country, above all others perhaps with few exceptions in this world in which skiing should be almost a natural right, can really afford to go skiing? I suggest that very few can afford it.

This suggestion is borne out by statistics that I read about a year ago, but unfortunately do not have available to me now. The statistics that I read at that time indicated that the average skiing individual in Ontario had an income of between \$12,000 and \$15,000 per year. I do not need to point out where that puts him in terms of the distribution of income in this country. It puts him at the top section of the scale.