

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

tries, for France is of course not alone in selling arms to South Africa. And it seems curious to me that the hon. member casts the blame only on France this evening and that he does not ask us why we did not also make direct representations to other countries and why we made some only to Great Britain. Of course, we made some to Great Britain, because the Commonwealth conference was to be held and we feared that the course that the British government was about to follow would blow up the Commonwealth.

INDIAN AFFAIRS—NATIONAL PARKS—QUEBEC—DEVELOPMENT OF PARK IN ST. MAURICE VALLEY—CONSTRUCTION OF SKI CENTRE IN SAINT GÉRARD

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, the question directed to the hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on January 20, 1971, challenges the responsibility of the minister with respect to the decision made by government experts concerning the access road to the national park in the St. Maurice Valley.

Therefore, it is important and indeed urgent that this matter be cleared up and that the minister dispel our doubts.

The Mauricie daily, *Le Nouvelliste*, suggested a fortnight ago that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and member for Saint-Maurice, could well be more or less directly involved in a conflict of interests in connection with the access road to the Mauricie national park and to a proposed ski centre.

The minister was roused to indignation and claimed that there were no grounds for these "charges or innuendoes". We take his word for it, but so as to remove any doubt as to his integrity, I think he should give straight answers to the following questions:

Can we establish a relation between the trip to Hawaii, the ski resort in St. Gérard and the entrance to the national park?

Did the minister actually go to Hawaii? Why did he come back. Did he know that two businessmen from the St. Maurice valley were there?

Can the minister say whether he knew about the ski centre in St. Gérard and did he take part in any way in this scheme?

Has the minister frequent contacts with these businessmen?

How can the minister explain that these businessmen are taking options on land in St. Gérard when it is a well-known fact on the one hand that the entrance to the national park could be of benefit to their enterprise and on the other hand that the location of this entrance is not yet publicly known?

Can the minister say whether he knew about the ties between these businessmen who are investing large amounts of money there and the possibility that they may benefit from the location selected for the park entrance location?

[Mr. Ouellet.]

Has the minister discussed with Mr. Matteau, for instance, the possibilities as to the location of the national park's entrance?

Has the minister heard of a brief suggesting that the park's entrance be at St. Gérard? Is it true that a departmental officer said to the person who submitted the brief: "Forget it, everything is settled?"

Is the minister in touch with Mr. Guy Suzor?

Finally, which is the most likely entrance location for that national park?

Mr. Speaker, the St. Maurice valley people would like answers to all these questions.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend read *Le Nouvelliste* a little late, because if he had read it last Tuesday, he would have found out that *Le Nouvelliste*, in which the same questions were asked, was satisfied with the answers I gave that, first of all, the entrance to the park was not known and would not be for some time, that the ski centre in question is far from the park and, secondly, that the people who wanted to invest money in the St. Maurice Valley had asked me whether the federal government would help them. And I told them that the federal government did not have any program to do so.

But if investors in that project had been Americans, they would have been invited to City Hall for a cocktail and to sign the Golden Book. But since those people were French Canadians who wanted to risk a few dollars for the welfare of the population and to create a few winter jobs, questions were raised.

Mr. Speaker, I answered the following day, in its editorial page, *Le Nouvelliste* stated in an article entitled:

NO REASON TO DOUBT MR. CHRÉTIEN

Mr. Chrétien was not long in reacting when he stated that the "charges or innuendoes" contained in the said articles were baseless. The member for Saint-Maurice specified "that no decision had been taken concerning the establishment of a national park in the St. Maurice Valley. Nobody has privileged information in that connection. The decision should be taken by the planners of the National Parks Branch and based on technical considerations."

In addition, the Minister stated that "there was no relation and there will never be any choice made between the establishment of the park and the project of a ski centre in the Saint-Gérard-des-Laurentides area."

That restatement should put an end to the debate. We have no valid and serious reason to question the word of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice. A doubt has been raised and Mr. Chrétien answered in all honesty.

Besides, Mr. Jean Chrétien has been in politics for about ten years and never have his honesty and integrity been questioned once. Prime Minister Pearson had recognized the qualities and qualifications of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice by appointing him Minister without Portfolio in 1967.

He eventually became Minister of National Revenue.

—The next year, Mr. Trudeau appointed him Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

We must also add that Mr. Jean Chrétien has always been dedicated to his constituency and the Mauricie region.