

*National Parks Act*

development as a nation—this can be said equally of the United States—people looked upon themselves as striving against an overwhelming wilderness which seemingly they might never overcome. However, people of foresight such as President Roosevelt—I refer to Teddy Roosevelt—recognized that wherever man went, he left the land in ruin; that there was a great necessity for setting land apart as a legacy for future generations. In this way they would be in a position to enjoy nature at its best.

In addition, areas of wilderness should be preserved in their virgin state for historic purposes, using the wider sense of the word, so that Canadians both of this and future generations realize what our early settlers and forefathers had to struggle against in opening up this great North American continent. The foresight exhibited by outstanding men such as Teddy Roosevelt has been an invaluable asset to the United States. He was instrumental in setting aside vast stretches of virgin country as the legacy of future generations. The same thing was done in Canada to a considerable extent and we owe a great deal to those men and governments who had the foresight to take this step.

However, this bill, which is an important one, contains provisions with which I disagree. The bill exhibits a trend that is evident in many federal government activities—removing government further and further from the governed. The government is setting up corporations and other faceless organizations to act as a buffer between government, which is elected to be the people's servant, and the people it is supposed to serve. It is my contention that the more directly the government is responsible to the people, the better it functions, because it is then held directly responsible to the people for its activities.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I note that this bill—and I will not go into this matter at great length now because it can be examined more carefully in committee—changes the description of a number of our national parks. From a quick perusal of the appendices to the bill it would seem that at least four of our parks are to be reduced in size. This reduction may not be significant. The four parks to which I refer are Waterton Lakes, Kootenay, Prince Albert and Prince Edward Island. These may be very minor changes in the boundaries, but this is something we have to find out. In any event, in my judgment this trend is in the wrong direction.

I notice that the Terra Nova National Park in Newfoundland is to be extended in area under the terms of this bill.

There are many reasons for national parks. The most obvious one, which is perhaps readily recognized by urban people, is for vacation purposes. National parks are places for recreation; that is one of their benefits. Facilities should be provided in suitable terrain set aside for various types of recreation. There are other questions involved. National parks, in my judgment, should be established to preserve in each part of our country typical areas in as near a natural, virgin state as possible in order that people will know what the land was like as God made it.

Some areas of our country have special attractions. In the park that is partly in my own constituency, the Prince Edward Island National Park, there exists one of the finest beaches in Canada. There are excellent beaches in the maritime provinces; in Prince Edward Island, parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. More of these beaches should be set aside in the form of parks for public use. In this way everyone, rich or poor, would have access to them and would be able to enjoy their benefits.

Even in Prince Edward Island our beaches are not our only asset. I recommend that a second park be provided in Prince Edward Island. This matter has been under discussion for a long time between the two levels of government. We should set aside additional fine beach areas on the island for national park use. There is also a necessity for setting aside, before it is too late, areas in Prince Edward Island that are as near their virgin state as any to be found, for the preservation of the wildlife which still exists. This would allow the remaining species of wildlife in Prince Edward Island to continue. Perhaps they would not become extinct, as has been the case in respect of too many small animals and birds.

It is too late now to preserve a habitat for many of the small animals that were native to our province. It is not too late to preserve an area which would be a suitable habitat for migratory birds. In Prince Edward Island we have a vast number of migratory birds for which a habitat should be provided in order to preserve their existence. In this way people could enjoy the very relaxing recreation referred to by most people as birdwatching but which I prefer to call communion with nature.