

National Parks Act

recognized by the real estate people in Toronto to be one of the best commissions functioning in the field of land rental and land development. No one has a complaint. This commission has been praised from time to time as being a well administered body, a perfect example and one of the best in North America. This is not a Crown corporation. Rather it is a board formed on the corporate scale which I think does an excellent job. The purpose of this bill is to establish such a body.

With a corporation such as would be established by this bill, I cannot see that there should be any confusion in respect of the rights of individual citizens. It is true that the bill deals with more than just the administration of leases. It also deals with the development of land and other things. It cannot be expected by anyone that the Crown should give up any right in respect of the development of a park to a group of people who live in these places without some sort of a national control. But the main thrust of this corporation is to deal with leases in a businesslike way.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I agree that there is another problem involving the right of the residents of Banff and Jasper to administer their own affairs. But nothing ties this right to land ownership. Indeed, great parts of New York, Toronto, Montreal and many other places are owned by people other than those who reside there, yet the latter administer their own affairs and do whatever they think is for the good of the community. The same right exists in this case. If the provincial legislation requires this tie, let it be so, but let us not tie that right to ownership of land. This bill has only one purpose, that is to form a body of which we can be proud and which will be just, fair and businesslike. I have not heard one argument to indicate why this plan should not work, nor has another scheme been advanced which would solve the complaints that we have been hearing from the other side for years. What other scheme can they propose that will achieve this?

Then, there is the argument that the minister is shedding his responsibility. The corporation has to answer to someone. There will be just as many complaints or questions from the other side in connection with this corporation, and I dare say we will have the same number of complaints from residents of the parks. All these will sift through here and the minister will have to be responsible for them.

To say that the minister is abandoning his responsibility is nonsense. There is only one purpose for this bill; that is to establish a system by which land in the national parks will be administered, leased and negotiated on a businesslike basis under the control of the Crown.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): I do not wish to delay the passage of this bill too long. I have listened with interest to the debate and to the comment about the lack of alternative suggestions from our side. The fact is that there is no alternative. The only thing that can be done is to make the minister and his department responsible for administering the parks. It is as simple as that. The minister and the department should answer complaints in the House.

We know that when one tries to obtain information regarding, for example, the CBC or any other Crown corporation, the ministers responsible for them always say they will pass the inquiry along and see what the Crown corporations have to say. But the minister responsible does not exercise his power by making whatever changes are necessary in these corporations. I have never seen that happen in the two years I have been here, though I know that my experience is rather limited. For example, I have never seen a decision taken by the CBC on a matter that affected the CBC reversed by the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier).

That is why I object to the principle of Crown corporations I object to the requirement in the bill before us that the land should be turned over to a Crown corporation by the residents or even by the provincial governments. I am sure the people will object to it and will think twice about putting their land into non-political hands, if I may use this term rather loosely to refer to people who have no real interest in the matter and who are not really concerned about the problems of the people on these lands.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to know that one of the purposes of this bill is to protect three parks, two of which are located in my constituency, that is Fort Beausejour, Fort Anne and Kejimikujik parks. I am most happy that two of these parks, Fort Beausejour and Fort Anne, will not be affected—at least, this is the way I interpret this legislation—by the creation of such a corporation.

If I well understand the relevant clauses of the bill, these two parks will come under the