

Federal District Commission

or not that is the amount, but it has been suggested. I oppose the scheme at present because I believe that first things come first. In Canada to-day we have certain vital projects which are needed for the actual well-being of the Canadian people. For example, water is one of the necessities of life. On the prairie provinces there are thousands of square miles which have not enough water. Surely an irrigation project for western Canada is more important than a beautification scheme for Ottawa. If we can have both, that is fine; but while the beautifying of Ottawa and Hull can be classed in the category of a luxury, irrigation in western Canada cannot. Therefore I say that first things must come first. It is ill-advised to spend an amount such as this on beautifying Ottawa at the present time with so much other more important work yet to be done.

Mr. J. M. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I wish to make one or two general comments on the bill. I do that, having in mind the question which the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) asked the other day. He asked whether, when the bill came up for second reading, a statement would be made by the acting minister as to the scope of the expenditures.

But I wish to raise another question. As I read the bill, it provides not only \$300,000 a year but that the commission may on its own authority raise an additional \$3 million. So far as I have read the bill, it seems to me that it leaves the door wide open as to how this money is to be spent. What I am not clear on is whether we may wake up and find a federal expenditure of this \$300,000 a year and this sum of \$3 million has been used as the entrance fee, the money paid to get in to see the game. We may find projects have been started which may involve us in vast expenditures. In this I have the same fear as the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher).

There is one other point I wish to raise, and it has to do with another question asked by my leader. I assume that the minister will answer these questions, because to me they are important. As I understood the words used last September in the speech from the throne, it was proposed that there should be a national war memorial the scope of which staggered me. My leader asked the other evening whether the Acting Prime Minister would state just where this memorial fitted into the proposals in this bill, and it is in that connection that I wish to make this remark.

[Mr. Thatcher.]

In my opinion there are two proper kinds of national war memorials. One is the shrine that they have, let us say at Edinburgh, or here in the Peace Tower, and the other is something in the way of a social amenity, a park or a playground or something of that kind. We have a war memorial here which I term the shrine type, and I do not think we need another. Quite properly, in my opinion, that is at the national capital. I strongly suggest that the other type of war memorial, the type which usually takes the form of a park, a playground, or something else should not be put in the national capital, but should be spread all through the country. There should be one in each province because they are for the use of the people as a whole.

What I fear about this bill is that we might find ourselves embarking on a plan which has no limitation to it, and which may involve us in spending hundreds of millions of dollars for the beautification of this area. There is no one prouder of the national capital than I am; there is no one more ready to give credit to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), and I think we should. I believe that he is the man who has given more thought to it than anyone. There is no one more ready to see appropriate amounts spent for that proper purpose, but I am absolutely opposed to a bill which may involve us in the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars in Ottawa under the guise of a national war memorial.

I am therefore anxious that, before the principle of the bill is approved, we have our minds cleared on this point which seems to me to be so vital. If we were merely voting \$300,000 a year and \$3 million—that is a lot of money—I would feel somewhat differently about the matter. If I felt, as I do not feel, that these expenditures were likely to be the end I would look at it in a different way. But we may wake up one day to find that this money has been spent in such a way as to commit us to the expenditure of further amounts, part of which, if they are for a national war memorial, are in my opinion not properly expendable under this heading.

Mr. J. W. BURTON (Humboldt): In rising to take part in this debate on the second reading of the bill in support of the objections raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher), I wish to say that I am prepared to go farther than he did. I am opposed to the principle of the bill. When I say that I wish to make it plain that I am not pretending to speak on behalf of anyone other than the people of the constituency which I have the honour to represent.