

National Parks Act

the situation; he should not be deluded with political considerations, but should only be concerned with practical purposes. Quebec should accept the establishment of national parks on its territory. It has already recognized that principle.

I have always felt, however, it was unfortunate that for many years Quebec should have suffered a loss of money because of a misunderstanding with the central government. It would have been better I think to give the Quebec government the means to establish its own provincial parks while waiting for other agreements to be reached. Knowing how the Quebec government proceeds as a rule, it is better to take all that we can now although we might have, however, to preserve the major principle of the territorial sovereignty of the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely believe that the main purpose of this bill, as can be seen when we read between the lines, is to settle the conflict with regard to the stand taken by the responsible department and the Quebec government in that respect. If a change were made to the existing legislation and if the leases already signed were to be recognized by Quebec, this would preserve its territorial sovereignty. Thus, there would be no reluctance to promote the establishment of national parks in Quebec territory, particularly in an area such as the St. Maurice valley, where there is not a sufficient variety of industries. The establishment of such a park could greatly promote the economy of the area.

Before closing, I will then repeat that I am in favour of the principle of this bill. I hope that the minister will not get over concerned with minor issues when the time comes to select a site for a national park in the St. Maurice valley.

• (4:00 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Grant Deachman (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, since the rules of the House were amended we approach a bill on second reading a little differently than we did a year or so ago. Now, we approach a bill like C-152 to amend the National Parks Act with the knowledge that we are sending the bill to a committee where it will be examined clause by clause. We know that the members of the committee from both sides of the House will have an opportunity to call in experts to ensure they send back to the House a bill that has been amended and which can perhaps be improved at the report stage. So, it is in this

[Mr. Matte.]

spirit I approach the few remarks I wish to make in respect of this bill today; that is, with the idea of introducing perhaps a new suggestion into our consideration of national parks in Canada.

Only a few days ago the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) made the suggestion that the Strait of Georgia, the waters enclosed by the west coast of Canada and Vancouver Island, be made Canada's first national water park and that the waters of the Strait of Georgia, the land under the strait, the fish which swim in that strait and the marine life be protected under our National Parks Act. The people on the west coast have been very troubled about the possibility that the Strait of Georgia would be drilled for oil and that this enclosed body of water might become subject to the type of tragedy which has recently taken place in the Maritimes. The same type of tragedy has taken place off the coast of California where ruptures in the seabed at the site of offshore drilling have caused oil spills which have endangered marine life and destroyed valuable beach lands along the California coast. With this in mind, the minister made the bold suggestion that we might look further afield in respect of the establishment of parks in Canada and that these waters which now are vested in the federal government might indeed be transferred for purposes of a national park. In this manner, we could protect this great marine area.

This is a time when we are very concerned about the pollution of our environment, with the ecology of the lands around us and with the ability of the land to support life as well as the ability of the waters to support marine life. It is with this in mind that perhaps we should be approaching the matter of our national parks, I believe, with the idea of advancing a step further to a national marine park of the nature I have described and which has already been described by the Minister of Fisheries. So, I simply wish to add to the discussion this afternoon by leaving with those who will be examining the bill in the committee this idea; that they look at Bill C-152 in an effort to make sure that it is broad enough to embrace a concept of this kind. When they call the expert witnesses from the department, I hope they will obtain sufficient information about such an idea to make sure we are not, in this bill, restricting the right of the government of Canada to create marine parks for the enjoyment of Canadians. I leave that idea with the House