

Our difficulties of course, are that we cannot get all the equipment we need; that labour is very difficult to get, with the government rates of wages, which are supposed to be the prevailing rates, but which are never adjusted until the people concerned have been attracted to other enterprises. Consequently we find that although we do get the equipment we sometimes lack skilled operators. We are trying to adjust that through the Labour Department.

Hon. Mr. DAVIES: What kind of equipment?

Mr. GIBSON: Such as road grading equipment, road maintainers and road tractors and bulldozers and the like. As you know, that has become a pretty skilled occupation. Large investments are made in this type of equipment, and you have to pay big wages to get the proper kind of operators. If you do pay big wages, you get the right kind of operators and it pays you to pay the higher rates. Sometimes it is difficult to sell that idea to those who fix these rates, but we are making some progress.

During the war the number of people in the parks was surprisingly large; they stayed for a long period, but of course never approached the million mark which we had before the war. This year, however, we expect to have a million visitors, and would have more if we had accommodation for them.

The CHAIRMAN: What did you have last year?

Mr. GIBSON: Nine hundred and some odd. It is right here in our statement.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: Nine hundred thousand?

Mr. GIBSON: Yes. It is on page 12 of the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

Mr. GIBSON: As the time of your Committee is exceedingly limited this morning, I should probably confine my statements largely to the chief needs of the national parks, which you will find referred to in this statement.

(The statement presented by Mr. Gibson included the following information and suggestions):

One of the chief problems facing National Parks Administration during the reconstruction period has been the improvement and extension of facilities for comfortable travel and accommodation. We are firmly convinced that this is the testing period. On the favourable reactions of this wave of post-war visitors will rest in large measure the future growth of international tourist travel to the Dominion. Consequently every effort has been directed towards providing the most complete satisfaction for our visitors in the matter of good roads, comfortable accommodation, and enjoyable catering and other services. The rates charged are considered fair for the wide range of accommodation available. In addition to hotel and bungalow camp facilities, prominence has been given to the increasingly popular camp-grounds. Those who have been unable to arrange in advance for accommodation at hotels and bungalow camps are being urged to take along their own camping equipment or cabin trailers or to get in touch with those who supply such equipment in the parks. Camp-grounds in the National Parks have been located in the most inspiring surroundings and are equipped with kitchen shelters, camp stoves, tables and fuel. Progress has been made in adding many modern conveniences to these camp-grounds and in some of the larger camps, electricity, running water, and community refrigerators with individual lockers are provided.

A movement that is gaining in popularity throughout the country is the holding of conventions in the National Parks. This season various associations and organizations are holding their annual get-together in Banff, Jasper, and Waterton Lakes National Parks in Alberta; Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan; Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, and Cape Breton Highlands National Park in Nova Scotia. This field is being constantly studied with a view to its further expansion.