MEMORANDUM

PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION

to

A JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE

SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

SET UP TO CONSIDER

“the financial and other relationships of

the Government and the Federal District

Commission with the City of Ottawa

and neighbouring municipalities”

(Speech from the Throne January 7, 1955)

By

R. P. Sparks

Formerly President of

The Federal Woodlands Preservation League

and

From 1947 to 1954 Chairman of the Advisory

Committee on Gatineau Park.

**LAND POLICY IN GATINEAU PARK**

For the past 20 years during which I have been interested in the Gatineau Park, the Federal District Commission has never had a land policy in respect to this project. I am convinced that the reason for this is that certain influential people, owning property in the area covered by Gatineau Park, have objected to its development in a manner which will make it, what it should be – “the show place of Canada.” Mr. Gréber, the creator of the National Capital Plan, in a report to the F.D.C. described Gatineau Park as “really the essential feature of the whole plan for the National Capital of Canada.”

The development of the Gatineau hills adjacent to Ottawa as a park has been the subject of consideration for more than 50 years. The history of this project is traced very briefly in the introduction to a report made by the Advisory Committee on Gatineau Park, submitted to the Federal District Commission in 1952, a copy of which is attached hereto. (Exhibit A).

Previous to 1934 nothing had been done to implement previous recommendations, but in that year a group of private citizens banded together as the ‘Federal Woodlands Preservation League’ to urge the preservation of these beautiful wooded hills as park land.

In 1937 the Federal District Commission was authorized by the Federal Government to commence buying land in this area for park purposes. By the outbreak of war in 1939 they had acquired about 16,000 acres, but this consisted of many separate purchases having little relationship to each other. The average cost had been less than $10.00 per acre. Some of this land was cut over bush and was unsuitable for a public park in the condition as purchased.

Sometimes a substantial area of privately owned land would be surrounded wholly or partly by land owned by the Commission. In other cases, the Commission would own a section of the area which was partly or wholly surrounded by private land. The area owned by the Federal District Commission at the beginning of the war could hardly be described as a public park, because privately and publicly owned land was hopelessly mixed.

During the war period no purchases of land were made. In July 1947, the Federal Woodlands Preservation League submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Federal District Commission dealing in part with land policy [editor’s note: the report mentioned is actually dated October 9, 1945]. At that time the F.D.C. had announced that they would increase their holdings to 25,000 acres. The League, in their memorandum, suggested that this acreage should be increased to 50,000 acres, and said in part, as follows:

“The possibilities of this area present an opportunity for developing one of the finest scenic natural Parks in the world. Few, if any, capitals of the world have at their very doorstep an undeveloped area of such large proportions, possessing so many natural advantages. We are convinced that unless a broad comprehensive plan is now adopted, looking forward to say the next 50 years, that the opportunity will be missed forever.

If piecemeal additions are made to the Park, from time to time, we are convinced that the cost would be far greater than if a scheme of purchase and development were undertaken now. Land values have now been established by the purchases already made by your Commission. If the areas which are contiguous to the present Park are left in private hands for a period of years, not only will the cost increase, but as a result of unsuitable development by private interests, much might be done to spoil the natural beauty of the Park area.”

This brought no results. The Federal District Commission continued in their haphazard methods without any basic plan or policy. Although this report was written in 1947 [see editor’s note above], exactly the same conditions exist today. True cost of land has increased tremendously. Ugly and unsuitable buildings continue to be built. The natural beauty of the area is being spoiled, and still there is no definite land policy.

In 1945 the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Mackenzie King submitted to Parliament a broad plan for the development of a new National Capital Plan as a memorial to the soldiers of World War 1 and 2, and Mr. Jacques Gréber was retained to undertake this work. Gatineau Park has always had an important place in Mr. Gréber’s plans.

It was obviously even more necessary than ever that some definite coordinated plan should be worked out in respect to the purchase of land in this area. There is no evidence however that the F.D.C. realized the importance which now is attached to the Gatineau Park development.

The representations of the Woodlands League apparently had some effect, as on March 25th, 1947, the following Order in Council was passed.

**P.C. 1093**

**March 25, 1947**

“His Excellency the Governor General in Council on the recommendation of the President of the Privy Council and under the authority of Section 13 of the Federal District Commission Act is pleased to consent and does hereby consent to the acquisition by the Federal District Commission by direct negotiation or if necessary by expropriation, of certain properties between the Mountain and Mine Roads south of the Gatineau Park, outlined in red on the attached plan and comprising approximately sixty-five hundred acres.”

As will be noted this Order in Council provided for the purchase of 6,500 acres of land in regard to which the Commission was authorized to proceed by way of expropriation, if necessary. However the Commission expropriated no land, but continued to purchase odd parcels of land scattered throughout the Park. In February 1954, there was about 4,000 acres of this land, the purchase of which had been authorized by Order in Council 7 years earlier which was still in private hands.

In March, 1947, the F.D.C. set up an Advisory Committee of which the undersigned was an original member, and was elected Chairman by the Committee. In our letter of appointment the F.D.C. said that the functions of the Committee would be to tender advice in regard to the formation of basic policies. It had no executive or administrative power, and was to be purely advisory. From time to time its advice was asked by the Commission and at times the Committee volunteered advice on matters which came under their observation. We kept urging that a definite land policy should be adopted, but nothing was done.

The Committee had been appointed for a one year period, subject to renewal each year. In 1950 the appointment of the Committee was not renewed, and I wrote a letter to the Chairman of the F.D.C., Mr. F. E. Bronson, pointing out that the Committee’s tenure of office had expired, and expressing the view that this was probably just as well, as I felt that the Committee was serving no useful purpose. In my letter I reviewed briefly what had transpired, and indicated that I no longer wished to be associated with the Committee even if it was reappointed. At that time I said in part:

“The handling of this project in my own opinion has been inefficient, lacking both in vision and in vigour. Apparently the F.D.C. has no plan or policy with regard to this project. You have several times told me that all you intend to do at the present time is buy land, but a look at the map, and a visit to the area will demonstrate clearly that you have no co-ordinated plan even of buying property. Dozens of cottages, shacks, etc., have been built on property which surely will be required for park purposes. This is still going on. The Kingsmere Road is being turned into a slum. Your failure to anticipate the needs of this project has already cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Land values are being established by the building of a few shacks and cottages in vacant areas which will require not only that you buy the buildings but you have permitted higher land values to be established.”

At the urgent request of the Chairman of the F.D.C. I reluctantly agreed to remain a member of the Advisory Committee and continued to press for some clear cut policy.

From the very commencement of the operations of the Advisory Committee there was much discussion as to whether any privately owned land should be permitted within the area designated as park land. Up to the time the Advisory Committee was appointed, the F.D.C. had acquired a total of about 21,000 acres, and the letter of appointment to the Committee said:

“It is the desire of the F.D.C. to extend this area to embrace some fifty to sixty thousand acres at least, and the F.D.C. now has funds available for this purpose.”

It was the opinion of the majority of the Advisory Committee from the very start that there should be no privately owned land within the Park area. While the F.D.C. had never asked the Advisory Committee to present a master plan, we decided to make a report on such a plan. (See Exhibit A). We added an appendix to the report of May 1952, presenting the arguments both for and against the permission of privately owned land in the park area. The principal statement opposing the inclusion of privately owned land was made by the undersigned, and the principal statement made in favour of inclusion of privately owned land was made by Mr. J. J. Connolly, (now Senator), who was a land owner at Meach Lake.

My general recommendations in regard to privately owned land were summed up in 5 short paragraphs as follows:

1. Ultimately all private property within Gatineau Park should be taken over by the Commission for the reasons set out below. (Page 21 Exhibit A).

2. Some date should be fixed by which time all property would be taken over. I would suggest ten years with the possibility of extension but that the principle be now established that ultimately all property will be taken over and that present owners should be notified to that effect.

3. No additional building should be permitted within the park boundaries and owners of land should be so advised immediately.

4. The Commission should be prepared to purchase any property within the park area which is offered for sale at a reasonable price.

5. To carry out this project the Commission should use their powers of expropriation. If there is any legal obstacles to using such powers the Act should be amended.

Senator Connolly’s recommendations were summed up as follows: (page 23 Exhibit A)

1. The owners of property should be encouraged to build and maintain up to a standard set by the Commission and in any event to a high standard.

2. The Commission could encourage beautification through the Community Associations established or to be established.

3. If the Commission thinks it necessary, as properties come on the market, the Commission might acquire them.

4. The Commission might take some positive steps to strengthen and enforce building by-laws in the area.

Senator Connolly makes no reference whatever to the fact that this park is to form a very important part of a broad National Capital Plan. He admits that there are many ugly structures within the area, but still objects to their purchase by the Commission. In speaking of the buildings in the area he says, in part:

“It is true that some are unattractive and noticeable, some have poor lines, some are poorly constructed and badly maintained. In some cases there has been excessive tree cutting.”

It was suggested by everyone that there were many buildings in that area which should be removed, but Senator Connolly made no suggestions for their removal.

My comment on the removal of only ugly buildings is contained in the following extract from my statement in the appendix:

“It is a fact, however, that the type and condition of these buildings in a general way would reflect the income groups to which they belong. I do not think it is possible or desirable to remove only the buildings owned by people in the lower income group and leave the property of the well-to-do where they are. The removal of the poorer type of building would greatly enhance the value of the few buildings of the better type which would remain and I do not think that the Commission can be a party to windfall profits of this character for a select few.”

The above facts briefly state the conditions as they were in May 1952. The question of whether privately owned land would be included in the park area was still unsettled.

**PRESENT LAND POLICY**

I would now like to submit some recent correspondence in regard to the policy of the F.D.C. in respect to land ownership which reveals the present policy, or lack of policy, of the Commission.

There was a lengthy article in the Ottawa evening papers of October 20th, 1953, including a statement by Major General Kennedy, Chairman of the F.D.C ., in respect to expropriation of land in Gatineau Park. I think this statement was the result of the public activities of Mr. Redmond Quain, a land owner at Kingsmere, who had been addressing meetings in the Gatineau area opposing expropriation. On reading this article I wrote to the Secretary of the Federal District Commission, Mr, H.R. Cram, as follows:

“Oct. 21, 1953

Mr. H.R. Cram, Secretary,

Federal District Commission,

OTTAWA

Dear Mr. Cram:

I notice in both of last evening’s papers a statement of policy by the Commission in respect to Gatineau Park. Sometimes these newspaper reports are somewhat garbled or condensed and sometimes they do not give a clear picture of what is proposed.

This raises a couple of questions in my mind. The Commission apparently are only going to buy properties which are offered for sale. Did they discuss the question of more building in the area by owners of property who decide not to sell to the Commission?

There is a rather cryptic reference to the shorelines of Meach Lake and Kingsmere. Does this mean that regardless of the appearance of structures near these two lakes they are not to be touched and that more of the same type can be built?

Finally, is this a permanent policy for all time, or a tentative policy subject to change if expropriation proceedings are facilitated?

If you could give me this information I would be very grateful.

Your s very truly,

(sgd.) R.P. Sparks”

I received no reply to this letter but did receive from Mr. Cram a copy of a statement issued by the Commission on which the newspaper story was based, which read as follows:

“**POLICY ON LAND OWNERSHIP WITHIN GATINEAU PARK**

(Suggested statement for Publication)

The Federal District Commission realizing that there is some uncertainty in the minds of property owner s within the Gatineau Park area as to the attitude of the Commission toward purchase of private property, wishes to place on record its policy toward acquirement of land within the area. No effort has been made or will be made to expropriate property in Gatineau Park except in cases where such property is required to facilitate the construction of driveways or other essential works, There is no intention of altering this practice,

On the other hand the Commission has purchased and will continue to purchase any property within the Park area which is available at a price which it considers reasonable. Municipalities will be adequately compensated for loss of tax revenue because of acquirement of property by the Commission.

In view of the fact that the shoreline of a number of the lakes, such as Meach Lake and Kingsmere, within the Park area is privately owned, it is proposed to maintain Harrington Lake, the shoreline of which is wholly owned by the Commission, in its natural state.”

I spoke to Major General Kennedy about this matter and he said he had received from Mr. Cram a copy of my letter of October 31st, and would reply to it. However he never did so.

There are two important errors of fact in this statement; the first of these is the statement that “no effort has been made, or will be made to expropriate property in Gatineau Park, except in cases where such property is required to facilitate the construction of driveways or other essential works.” The first error is in stating that “no effort has been made” to expropriate property.

**EARL Y POLICY ON EXPROPRIATION**

When the F.D.C. began the purchase of land in 1937 they were able to reach agreement with most owners on a price they were willing to pay without resorting to expropriation. There were some cases however in which owners asked exorbitant prices, and in these cases the Commission gave notice of expropriation. When these cases came before the Exchequer Court, the Commission were able to establish proper land values as a result of the fact that they had purchased thousands of acres on a freely negotiated basis. As a consequence the Court fixed values generally in line with what the Commission had been paying.

After the war, building continued in the three areas which were established as summer resorts, i.e., Kingsmere, Meach Lake and Phillips Lake. From time to time the Advisory Committee urged the F.D.C. to take action to prevent new buildings in areas which certainly should be included in the Park. As it was known that plans were afoot to erect more undesirable buildings in the Phillips Lake area, the F.D.C. sent notice s of expropriation to all the owner s of property at that settlement, of which there were about 40.

No such action was taken in regard to the Kingsmere and Meach Lake settlements, although both of these areas are much more important than the Phillips Lake area from the standpoint of park development.

Some of the people at Phillips Lake felt at the time, and still feel, that they were discriminated against, and that the reason why properties at Kingsmere and Meach Lake were not expropriated at that time was that there were people living in these localities who had great influence with the F.D.C. I am inclined to agree that they were right.

As conclusive proof of the error in Major General Kennedy’s statement in regard to expropriation is the Order in Council, previously quoted, providing for the expropriation of 6,500 acres of the most critical land in the whole park area.

**MACKENZIE KING ESTATE**

The other error is in stating that the “shoreline ... of Kingsmere Lake ... within the park area is privately owned.” Possibly the largest section of the lake shore, in the hands of any single owner, forms a part of the estate of the late Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King. The whole of Mr. King’s property at Kingsmere amounts to about 500 acres.

Under Mr. King’s will he said in part, referring to his Kingsmere properties:

“The cherished objective of being able to present my Kingsmere properties as a thank-offering for what has come to me in the way of opportunities of public service I believe I have been able to realize, and I hereby bequeath to the Government of Canada as a public park in trust for the citizens of Canada, subject to certain reservations hereinafter referred to, my several properties of Kingsmere.”

This reference is interesting in view of the attitude of the Commission towards Mr. King’s fine act.

On August 21st, 1952, the Commission sent a letter to the Gatineau Park Advisory Committee reading as follows:

“At the meeting of the Federal District Commission held on the 18th instant the matter of making necessary repairs at Moorside was given consideration. It appears that the foundations and other parts of the structure are in poor repair and it will cost at least $5,000.00 to carry out necessary works if the building is to be fully restored for use.

Before coming to a decision in this matter, the Commission would be desirable of having the views of your Committee as to the future of Moorside ... that is, whether it should be fully restored and repaired for some suitable use or whether or not it should-be removed, having regard to the cost of putting it in first class shape.”

It should be mentioned at this time that Mr. King was the owner of four houses at Kingsmere. His summer house, known as Moorside, winter house, known as the Farm House, both of which are set well back from the lake, and two cottages close to the lake, one of which he had occupied when he first moved to Kingsmere many years ago, and another house close to this cottage which had been occupied by friends of his.

The Committee obtained a copy of Mr. King’s will with a view to ascertaining whether Mr. King had indicated in any way his wishes in regard to these buildings after his passing. We also discussed the matter with friends of Mr. King, and on September 10th, 1952, wrote the Commission suggesting that instead of considering the Moorside property alone, consideration should be given to the future of the whole Mackenzie King property. In our letter we dealt with Moorside and the Farm House, and strongly urged that both of them be maintained, and made suggestions as to their use. We pointed out that if it was later decided to use either of these houses as a summer residence for a future Prime Minister, which Mr. King had mentioned in his will, the use which we suggested would require no structural changes and either one of the houses could be renovated for this purpose.

As far as I know, no action of any kind was taken in regard to these two houses, but the interesting thing is what happened to the other two houses on the lake shore. The F.D.C. has spent many thousands of dollars in practically rebuilding them for rental purposes. There is no indication that Mr. King intended his property to be turned into a real estate proposition, but the statement that the shore of Kingsmere Lake is all “privately owned,” gives a lead to what the Commission had in mind. They wanted to keep the public from the lake shore which would please other owners of lake shore property. On the gate leading to these rented houses a large sign reads: “NO PICNICS PLEASE,” which, in effect, means “no admittance,” thus shutting off from public use what is definitely the most attractive part of the King estate. This is quite contrary to Mr. King’s clear intention.

In January, 1954, Major General Kennedy made another lengthy statement to the press in which he made the unequivocal statement that “We don’t intend to expropriate land in the Gatineau.”

On February 5th, 1954, I wrote Major General Kennedy in part, as follows:

“February 5, 1954.

Major General G. Howard Kennedy,

Chairman, Federal District Commission,

OTTAWA,

Dear General Kennedy:

[…]

I was disappointed to see that you again stated that there would be no more expropriation. I wonder if the Commission, when they made this decision, were aware that in the lower end of the park, that is, from the Mountain Road to the upper end of Meach Lake, there is about four thousand acres of unoccupied land still in private hands. This is in blocks of from fifty to three hundred acres scattered through the whole area and does not include the land connected with the summer cottages which will add hundreds of acres more.

I believe that nearly all the owners of this land have been approached and have refused the offers to purchase by the Commission. Now that you are building a five million dollar parkway through the most of their properties this will have the effect of tremendously increasing the value of this land. There is little hope of now purchasing it by private arrangement at a fair price. Let me repeat that the question of summer cottages is a different one.

There is another question on which the Commission may not have been fully informed when they took action, that is in regard to the building of the parkway from Taché Boulevard to the Mountain Road as an entrance to the park. Were the Commission fully informed as to how much of the proposed right of way through the park the Commission owned? While the precise route is not settled I believe that the parkway from the Mountain Road to the upper end of Meach Lake will be about thirteen miles long. Of this thirteen miles the parkway will cross land owned by the Commission for about five miles. The other eight miles will be through land privately owned. All the land owners having observed the entrance to the parkway on which hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent, realize that their property will be tremendously increased in value as a result of the parkway and will be in a position to ask what they please.

The w whole lower end of the park has been turned into a paradise for land speculators. Did the Commission realize that this would be the obvious result of building this elaborate entrance? It seems to me that the proper course would have been to secure the right of way before building the entrance to the park.

I am convinced that this whole park scheme will be wrecked unless you obtain powers of expropriation and exercise these powers. The other alternative is tremendous expenditure of money for the benefit of a few land owners, some of whose property is almost worthless without the parkway. It should be noted that most of this property is in the hands of people who can afford to wait when they see fortunes in sight as a result of F.D.C. policy.

I would like an opportunity to go over the map with you and I think you will be convinced that what I have said above is correct.

Yours very truly,

(sgd.)

R. P. Sparks.”

I should mention that this letter had been addressed to Major General Kennedy at his private office, and as you will note, I had suggested an opportunity to go over the map with him, I thought he would have done so before submitting it to the Commission, but he did not follow this course, but submitted the letter to the Commission, to which I have no objection. Indeed I can see reasons why he might submit it to the Commission first. I have read this letter over many times since and I can see no reason why I should not have written it. As a matter of fact I am convinced that the Commission were not aware of the facts to which I called the Chairman’s attention. There are a number of very able businessmen on the F.D.C. and I am loathe to believe that if the maps and other information referred to in my letter had been properly placed before the F.D.C. at the time I that they would not have built this useless piece of road, nor would they have issued their statement in regard to the purchase of the adjacent land.

In his reply the Chairman made no mention of the facts set out in my letter but wrote me as follows:

“February 18, 1954

Mr. R.P. Sparks,

Victoria Building,

140 Wellington Street,

Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Mr. Sparks:

I want to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of the 5th instant following mine of the 1st, and referring to the press articles concerning the Gatineau. I have delayed a reply until the Commission met on the 15th when I could again test the feelings of the members as to their attitude on expropriations.

With thirteen members present, (a fully representative gathering) the feeling was unanimously in favour of a continuance of the present policy of non-expropriation except as a last resort in eliminating missing links in the chain of properties necessary for the Parkway system. The Commission is still firmly convinced that the vast bulk of the property required for the Parkway may be obtained without resorting to expropriation, a practice which has been, and is, bitterly assailed by an extremely vocal group of residents of the Gatineau area. It is felt that the evil result on public relations would much overbalance any gain which would accrue from a programme of expropriation.

Some distress was evident that you, as Chairman of the Gatineau Park Advisory Committee, should continue to advocate expropriation on a considerable scale despite the policy of the Commission as expressed to the public.

It has proved embarrassing to several members of the Federal District Commission, including myself, quoting the policy of the Commission to critics like Redmond Quain, to have their reply that it is hard to accept our statements that no expropriations are contemplated in the face of the views that you, as Chairman of our Advisory Committee, continue to express.

The Commission has asked me to convey to you its feelings in the matter and to ask you, in discussing the matter with the public, to make it clear that your views on expropriation are diametrically opposed to the unanimous views of the members of the Commission. I am sure that, despite the obvious gap which exists between your thoughts concerning expropriation and those of the Commission members, you will see the necessity for its request.

The members also wished me to express to you their appreciation of the tremendous service that you have rendered to the Commission in connection with the Gatineau Park, as well as their regrets that you do not agree with them in matter s of expropriation.

Yours very truly,

(sgd.) Howard Kennedy.”

Mr. Kennedy refers to the question of public relations. This has frequently been mentioned as a reason for not taking over private property in Gatineau Park. I suggest that there is no question of public relations involved. The only relationship between the owners of land within the Park area and the Commission is a business relationship which covers such questions as: Does the F.D.C. propose to take over this land? If so when, and at what price, and under what conditions?

Thousands of maps have been issued by the F.D.C. showing that all these properties at Kingsmere and Meach Lake are within the designated boundaries of Gatineau Park. All of the property owners in that area have a direct financial interest in the plans of the Commission and under no circumstances should their situation be regarded as a matter of public relations. In fact it is no reflection on them to say that their interest may be in direct conflict with the public interest.

There is, however, a very important question of public relations in respect to the rest of the people of Canada. If the F.D.C. decides to allow privately owned land within the park area, the consequences of which would undoubtedly be to largely destroy the esthetic values of this project, and result in something second rate – although millions of dollars has been spent on it, then I think the public relations of the F.D.C. will be something for them to really worry about.

I replied as follows:

“March 1, 1954

Major General Howard Kennedy,

Chairman, Federal District Commission,

OTTAWA

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of February 18th. There is one paragraph in your letter which you may have written under misapprehension, which reads as follows:

“The Commission has asked me to convey to you its feelings in the matter and to ask you, in discussing the matter with the public, to make it clear that your views on expropriation are diametrically opposed to the unanimous views of the members of the Commission.”

Let me say that never since I have been appointed as a member of this Committee have I made any public statement of any kind in regard to policy or plans for Gatineau Park. The reason was that our letter of appointment dated March 21, 1947, provided that

“any statements to the public in regard to park development or policy would in accordance with past practice be issued by the Secretary of the Commission.”

This was a perfectly proper condition to impose and I have lived up to it.

There is another paragraph on which I would like to comment:

“It has proved embarrassing to several members of the Federal District Commission, including myself, quoting the policy of the Commission to critics like Redmond Quain, to have their reply that it is hard to accept our statements that no expropriations are contemplated in the face of the views that you, as Chairman of our Advisory Committee, continue to express.”

This might mean that I am forbidden to express my opinion privately on Commission policy and there is a suggestion that I may have said something to Mr. Redmond Quain which embarrassed you or others. I discussed the matter of Gatineau Park with Mr. Quain on only one occasion some months ago and I think it was before you had declared your policy on expropriation, and it was when by chance I sat beside him at lunch at the Rideau Club. He started the conversation on this subject and I did express my own personal view that there should be no privately owned land in Gatineau Park. While it is quite a long time ago I am quite sure that I said nothing that should embarrass you or any other member of the Commission.

My own views are well known to hundreds of people as a result of our Report of May, 1952. About two hundred copies were printed. Most of them went to the Federal District Commission for distribution. I sent out a few to friends and others to people who had assisted in working out the Report, many of whose names are mentioned in the Report. I thought they were entitled to a copy of it.

In an appendix to that Report I expressed the opinion under my own name that:

“to carry out this project the Commission should use their powers of expropriation. If there is any legal obstacle to using such powers the Act should be amended.”

I also expressed my own opinion at considerable length on the question of private property within the park area. I will, however, be most happy “to make it clear that (my) views on expropriation are diametrically opposed to the unanimous views of the Commission” as you suggest in your letter.

It is unlikely that I will have occasion to discuss the matter except with people who might be interested in the park. Most of them know my views already. I consider the question of expropriation and privately owned land within Gatineau Park is so closely related that they constitute one problem. The more I think of the matter the more I am convinced that the opinions which I expressed in our Report of May 1952 are still valid but I have no desire to embarrass the Commission in connection with the controversy which is now being carried on, on expropriation.

Yours very truly,

(sgd.) R. P. Sparks”

General Kennedy replied as follows:

“March 12, 1954

Mr. R.P. Sparks,

140 Wellington St.

OTTAWA

Dear Mr. Sparks:

On my return from Newfoundland I find your letters of March 1 and March 8 which I shall acknowledge in one letter at this time.

First, I shall make it a point to get together with you for a worthwhile discussion as soon as I return from a trip to western Canada which commences on Wednesday 17th and will end around the 24th or 25th.

Second, as to the mention in my letter of February 18th about your public utterances concerning expropriations in Gatineau Park area. It would have been more accurate for me to have said “to private citizens,” rather than, “to the public,” as I am well aware that you have not spoken to groups on the matter.

However, the facts are that property owners in the Kingsmere and Meach Lake areas are worried about the possibility of F.D.C. expropriation, and when confronted with our published public statements in the matter and when it is pointed out that no expropriations have occurred in recent years, they come back with the question, “How are we to take that when the Chairman of your Gatineau Park Committee is advocating it?”

I am convinced that in the recent stir caused by Aimé Guertin’s presentation to the Tremblay Commission we would have been involved in a losing battle with the municipalities and associations involved, as well as with the Quebec Government, if we had not been able to come back with a complete rebuttal of his charges concerning expropriation.

I believe you are aware that M. Duplessis as Attorney-General of the Province challenges the right of F.D.C. to expropriate property, particularly for Park purposes [...]. Under the circumstances, it cannot help being an embarrassment to the Commission to have you, the Chairman of our Park Committee, advocating expropriation, even privately.

While I and, I believe, no member of the Commission, challenges your right to speak freely in the matter, we cannot help pointing out that, because of your Chairmanship of the Gatineau Park Advisory Committee, you may be construed as a spokesman for the Commission in advocating a course of action which is contrary to its expressed policy.

I shall be glad to discuss the whole matter at length upon my return, but whatever the trend of the discussion, I want to pay tribute to the thought, effort and valuable service you have rendered the Commission.

Yours very truly,

(sgd.) Howard Kennedy

Chairman

On Major General Kennedy’s return we did arrange a meeting and for about two hours and we discussed not only the question of expropriation but the whole question of the development of Gatineau Park.

I wrote to the other members of the Committee reviewing my recent correspondence with Major General Kennedy and concluded as follows:

“I explained to General Kennedy that the impression left with me by his letters was that I was ‘persona non grata’ with the Commission on account of my views on expropriation and perhaps my resignation would be welcomed by the Commission. I pointed out to him that this would not be necessary as our Committee were appointed on a yearly basis and our tenure of office expired on March 31st. If the Commission wished to reappoint the Committee they could simply eliminate my name as a member.”

[... ] I told him that I wasn’t prepared to resign voluntarily without an opportunity of placing my views before the Commission. This he said he would arrange at some time in the near future. Whether the whole committee will be invited to meet the Commission again I do not know, although I would prefer it so and will so advise General Kennedy.

My reason for carrying op this correspondence personally is that I certainly cannot speak for the whole committee.

April 23rd, 1954

(sgd.) R. P. Sparks”

In August, 1954, I attended a meeting of the Federal District Commission on the invitation of Major General Kennedy. I went over briefly the whole history of the development of the Gatineau Park, and again expressed the view that the whole project would be wrecked unless privately owned land were eliminated from the Park area.

Major General Kennedy again bitterly opposed expropriation proceedings and said that as a property owner at Kingsmere he would fight in court any attempt to expropriate his property. He repeated this statement 3 or 4 times, that he would take the matter to the courts rather than give up his property.

He was supported in this statement by one member of the F.D.C. The other members present offered no objection to the Chairman’s statement, and from this it might be assumed that they would support him in taking court action to prevent expropriation.

The attitude of the Chairman is remarkable, particularly in view of the fact that he himself had written a letter to the Ottawa Journal on November 16th, 1954, less than 3 months after this meeting, defending expropriation proceedings in connection with the National Capital Plan. At this time the Commission had been criticized publicly by some land owners whose property had been expropriated. The letter was nearly 2 columns long, and reads in part as follows:

“The F.D.C. is the instrument designated by Parliament to carry out this work. In order to carry it out, many private properties must be obtained and it is the duty of the F.D.C. to see that such is done. It is equally the duty of the F.D.C. to assure that funds allotted to it are wisely spent and that reasonable, but only reasonable, prices are paid for the properties purchased.

“In order that the people of Canada, who provide the funds of the F.D.C., as well as the citizens of Ottawa, may enjoy the great natural beauty of the area, it is necessary to have parks and drives located so that these beauty spots may be reached and enjoyed.

“The acquirement of properties is aimed toward that end, and it does seem that the interests of the individual must, in certain cases, be set aside so the interests and enjoyment of Canada’s and particularly Ottawa’s population may be promoted.

“That honest differences in opinion should occur as to sentimental values attached to property is inevitable, but such differences should not be allowed to frustrate the Capital plan.

“From 1947 to November 1 of this year (1954) the F.D.C. has acquired 860 properties, exclusive of Gatineau Park.

“There are still 140 properties included in the 860 mentioned above which are still under negotiations) and contrary to the statement in the letter I some of these are located in Hull.”

Do not the statements made by General Kennedy apply to Gatineau Park in exactly the same way as they apply to the properties in regard to which he was making this statement? I think most people would agree that the Gatineau Park properties are much more important in relationship to the National Capital Plan than are many properties which the Commission has expropriated.

**MR. DUPLESSIS ON EXPROPRIATION**

The question may be asked – why is the Federal District Commission now opposed to expropriation? This brings up a statement made by Mr. Duplessis, Prime Minister of Quebec, four or five years ago. Unfortunately I do not know the exact date of Mr. Duplessis’ statement, nor have I a copy of it I although I recall very well reading it in the newspapers at the time. As I recall it, Mr. Duplessis questioned the power of the Federal District Commission to expropriate land for park purposes, and this is confirmed by Major General Kennedy. I believe his reason for taking that position was based on the following legal aspects of the question.

The powers of the Federal District Commission are set out in “An Act respecting the Federal District Commission, Chapter 112, Revised Statutes of Canada 1952.”

Clause 10(a) provides that:

“The Commission may purchase, acquire and hold real property within the National Capital District for the purpose of public parks or squares, streets, avenues, drives, thoroughfares, bridges or other structures;”

and further provides in Clause 16(3):

“The compensation payable in respect of the taking of any lands so vested in the Commission, or of any interest therein or of lands injuriously affected by the construction of the undertaking or works shall be ascertained in accordance with the provisions of the Expropriation Act.”

It will be noted that expropriation must be made within the provision of the Expropriation Act, the relevant portion of which reads as follows:

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1. (g) “public work” or “public works” means and includes the dams, hydraulic works, hydraulic privileges, harbours, wharfs, piers, docks and works for improving the navigation of any water, the lighthouses and beacons, the slides, dams piers, booms and other works for facilitating the transmission of timber, the telegraph lines, Government railways, canals, locks, dry-docks, fortifications and all other property, which now belong to Canada and also the works and properties acquired, constructed, extended, enlarged, repaired or improved at the expense of Canada, or for the acquisition, construction, repairing, extending, enlarging or improving of which any public moneys are voted and appropriated by Parliament, and every work required for any such purpose, but not any work for which the money is appropriated as a subsidy only.”

My recollection of Mr. Duplessis’ statement was that it was questionable whether park lands were “a public work” within the meaning of the Expropriation Act. I am not a lawyer and will not attempt to deal with this point of law. I might point out, however, that in my statement in 1952 in regard to private ownership, after suggesting that all privately owned property within Gatineau Park should be taken by the Commission and added – “to carry out this project the Commission should use their power of expropriation and if there is any legal objection to using these powers, the Act should be amended.”

In connection with the attitude of Mr. Duplessis it is most unfortunate that he was never consulted in respect to the National Capital Plan, although probably 2/3 of the 900 sq. miles included in the National Capital area are in the Province of Quebec. My information is that Mr. Duplessis is not opposed to the establishment of this Park in his Province. As a matter of courtesy the Prime Minister of Quebec should have been approached in the very earliest stages of the plan, and I think the fact that he was completely ignored may have influenced his attitude towards the Federal District Commission.

In so far as the legal aspects of the problem are concerned a reference to the Supreme Court would settle the argument as to whether or not the Federal Government has authority to expropriate land for park purposes. If the Supreme Court decides that the Federal Government had no such authority, Parliament might amend the legislation.

Mr. Duplessis’ statement of course was welcomed by the property owners in Gatineau Park. Mr. Redmond Quain, the spokesman for the Kingsmere group, in a public statement, reported in the Ottawa Journal, October 24, 1953, said:

“although he had been a supporter of the Liberal Government and still professed to be a Liberal, there seems no way of getting protection except by going to Mr. Duplessis.”

It is most unfortunate that the Gatineau Park project has become mixed up in politics. When the General Report on the National Capital Plan, made by Mr. Gréber, was officially submitted to the Government of Canada by the Federal District Commission in May, 1951, it was done at a private dinner at which I was present. There were present: His Excellency the Governor General, Lord Alexander; the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Louis S. St-Laurent; the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Honourable George Drew; the Leader of the C.C.F., Mr, M.J. Coldwell, and a number of other prominent Canadians. All of the gentlemen mentioned above spoke in approval of the general idea of the development of a National Capital Plan. There was no hint of politics in any of their speeches. I think the Federal District Commission must share the responsibility of bringing politics into the Gatineau Park situation by completely ignoring the Prime Minister of Quebec, Mr. Duplessis, and I do not believe it is the fault of the Federal Government.

**PARKWAY COMMITTEE REPORT**

About 3 years ago the Advisory Committee received information that the F.D.C. were ready to consider the building of a Parkway about 50 miles in length throughout the Park. In preliminary discussions with officials (not members) of the F.D.C. it became apparent that their ideas of this Parkway and the ideas of most of the members of the Advisory Committee were vastly different. As the building of a Parkway was an essential feature of any development of Gatineau Park, I asked for an opportunity to discuss this Parkway with the Commission. At a full

meeting of the Commission I revealed the strong differences of opinion between the officials of the Commission and the Advisory Committee and suggested the setting up of a special committee of qualified men, with experience in this sort of thing, and completely impartial so far as this dispute was concerned. The Commission accepted this suggestion and from a number of names suggested both by the Advisory Committee and the F.D.C., a Committee of 5 men were selected. Their report included a recommendation in respect to land ownership. This is such an important statement that I am taking the liberty of quoting it in full:

“While the exact route of the Parkway has not yet been established, its general direction has now been pretty well determined and it is evident that it will cross considerable land now privately owned.

In recommending the route of the Parkway the committee should be governed only by such scenic, engineering, and other considerations as will result in the best possible route without regard to privately owned land and buildings.

When the committee recently visited the United States to study park and parkway development, they discussed the question of privately owned land and buildings in National Parks, not only with officials from the Washington office of the National Parks Service, but also with engineers, landscape architects and park superintendents working in the field.

Opinion was emphatic and unanimous that it had proved to be impossible to properly develop a project of this character unless all privately owned land and buildings within the boundaries of the park, interior or exterior, were acquired.

Some of the reasons follow:

Private ownership will involve: complicated boundaries, making the game warden’s job difficult; increased expenditure for grade separations and access roads; construction of unsightly parallel service roads; unreasonable fencing costs; elimination of some of the finest sites from public use.

Private ownership will bring uncontrolled subdivision of land, with the probability of gerry-built houses, neon signs, plastic palaces, amusement parks, stock car speedways, questionable “Tourist Accommodations.” Subdivision means greatly increased population which leads to organization of pressure groups to request increased services, scheduled bus lines, additional winter ploughing, and many special privileges. Pressure groups inevitably create difficult situations between park authorities and the administrations of the municipalities and the Province. Private ownership will be accompanied by disregard for park laws, and vandalism. Weekend visitors will be frustrated when coming across private holdings. Owners will resent infiltration and will resist the construction of Park developments near their boundaries. Fire hazards and fire protection costs will be greater. Dogs cannot be controlled. Conservation of wild life will be hampered.”

These are only a few of the reasons for the elimination of private ownership.

Newton B. Drury, when director of the National Park Service of the U.S.A. wrote: “Though these in-holdings represent only two and three quarter percent of the gross area of the system, the handicap they impose is out of all proportion to their extent, and the problem they create is one of the most serious facing the National Park Service.”

Probably the greatest hazards are those which we cannot now foresee.

It is axiomatic that a small incongruity can deface a lot of beauty. A classic example is the plate glass auto showroom complete with fluorescent painted paper streamers. This advertising, by its presence adjacent to the Pretoria Bridge, represents a blotch on the entire Ottawa Driveway System which does not go unnoticed or unmentioned by a large percentage of our visitors. Lack of foresight in acquiring or controlling that property should serve as continuing example of what could happen to a disastrous extent if all land within the boundaries of the Park is not acquired and controlled.

Every mile of the Parkway which is built increases the value of the private lands towards which it reaches. Delay can provide no gain.

The Committee strongly recommends that all lands within the general boundaries of Gatineau Park be acquired for public ownership. Properties required for specific, major projects, should be obtained by clear purchase. It is obvious that steps should be taken immediately to prevent further settlement or building development before outright purchase can be made.

Here is the opinion of five competent and experienced men, most of whom have been interested in Parks and Park development for most of their lives, not only in Canada, but also in the United States. In spite of this report the Federal District Commission is following a course which ignores their advice.

**MR. GRÉBER ON LAND POLICY**

When the Advisory Committee’s Report (Exhibit A) was sent to the F.D.C., Mr. Gréber was in Paris, and a copy of this report was sent to him for his comments. Generally speaking Mr. Gréber’s comments were favourable to the Committee’s report. In respect to land policy he had this to say:

“It is true and most desirable that the enjoyment of a public park should not be hampered by private encroachments, and that the ultimate conditions of the ideal achievement of the park is the elimination of all private property within its limits.”

Further:

“It is likely that an invasion of summer cottages and week-end chalets, cabins, noisy refreshment or recreation shelters, conspicuous parking lots and publicity signs would transform lovely and restful scenery into a hellish disorder. This is not an exaggerated prospect, as the case may already be observed on certain parts of Meach Lake and Kingsmere regions.”

“Meach Lake, as very well stated by Mr. Sparks, is the largest and the nearest lake to the Capital and must be gradually freed of all obstacles to a fully organized public enjoyment.”

The importance of this lake was recognized in any development of a National Capital Plan as long as 50 years ago when the report of Mr. Frederick G. Todd specifically recommended that both sides of Meach Lake should be cleared of all buildings.

Our report had referred to the necessity of “Unity” in planning the Park. On this Mr. Gréber said:

“For the sake of keeping the natural beauty, the wild appearance of that part of the Laurentian Hills, the landscape designer and the architect should refrain from any attempt of artificial decoration. Every structure, whatever it be, bridge, fence, sign, teahouse, hotel, cabin refreshment stand, etc., should be harmonized to its natural environment by its simple lines, its blended colours, by the choice of its building materials, taken directly from the ground.

**ALGONQUIN PARK**

Here is an interesting parallel to which reference might be made. An article written by Fred Bodsworth in Maclean’s Magazine of June 1, 1954, under the heading “Can They Save Algonquin Park” indicates that the Ontario Government have at long last recognized their mistake in allowing privately owned land and buildings within the borders of Algonquin Park.

A few quotations from this article would appear to be appropriate. At the very start of the article the author says:

“For wherever accessible wilderness areas remain, there are always persons who see them only as wasted resources to be turned into dollars.”

This is what will happen – in fact what is happening – to Gatineau Park if private owners are allowed to retain their property.

The article continues:

“This spring the park’s administering agency, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, suspended all leasing of land in Algonquin while the policy toward future development is studied. The suspension is temporary but officials say there is a possibility that no more cottages and lodges will be permitted, and that over a period of years those already there will be gradually removed.”

Since this article was written this policy has been adopted.

The article quotes Campbell Dalgleish, Chairman of the Parks Committee of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, an Association which claims that Canada must preserve more wilderness areas before it is too late:

“It is unfortunate that any lodges or private cottages were ever allowed to get established in Algonquin Park. As a public park it belongs equally to every citizen of the province, but cottages and lodges are special privileges for the few who can afford it.”

The whole article emphasizes and supports the opinion of the majority of the Advisory Committee on Gatineau Park.

**EXPROPRIATION OR PRIVATE PURCHASE**

It may be said that it is of no importance whether private property within the Park be taken over by way of expropriation or by way of free bargaining. In so far as Park development is concerned this is quite true, but the Commission have stated that they will “continue to purchase any property within the Park area which is available at a price which it considers reasonable.” I know from private sources sufficient about the asking price of some of the owners to make me feel quite certain that they will have to pay very much more than “reasonable prices.” The result I am convinced will be that thousands of acres of land which should be included in the Park will not be purchased at all on account of the high prices asked. Owners of land realize their position under the present policy and are asking prices which are beyond all reason. Some of the asking prices are, in my opinion, fantastic.

In considering land values in this area the basic fact which should constantly be kept in mind is that the Commission purchased the first 16,000 acres at less than $10.00 an acre. It will be said that this was before the Second World War, and that due to inflation, prices of everything have advanced. This is quite true, but the condition generally is that prices have about doubled, so that $20.00 an acre might be taken as an average present base price.

Consideration should be given to the fact that much of this area is woodland which has been cut over within comparatively recent years. In regard to the most of this land its only value is based upon the amount of fuel wood it will produce. Once it is cut clean, which is the case in many areas, it has absolutely no commercial value until it is reforested by natural process. It will not reach its former value for 50 years or more, so that the ordinary economics of inflation do not operate in the same way as they do in respect to other goods and services. Even taking $20.00 per acre as a base price, the price being asked, and some of the prices now being paid, is many times this figure.

In connection with the value of properties in this area, I would suggest that the Committee ask the Federal District Commission to prepare a map showing by lot number the cost per acre of all lands purchased and the date of purchase, in the park areas close to the City. This should cover all lands purchased in the Townships of Hull West and Hull South insofar as they are included in Gatineau Park. In such a statement it would not be necessary to include small parcels of land which might include summer cottages or other structures. Most of the eighty thousand acres included in the area is bush land and it would be interesting to obtain a comparison of costs of this type of property, in large blocks, over the years during which the Commission has been buying land. There would be a few cases in which a comparatively large block of land, say 100 acres, or more, would include one or more houses, and other structures. In such cases the value of any structures should be deducted from the total price paid, so as to arrive at a price per acre for the land itself. I understand the Commission always separate the value of structures from the value of land in determining the purchase price.

Different colours might be used on this map. For example the 16,000 acres purchased before the war might be shown in one colour. Another colour might be used to show the land purchased after the war and up until the commencement of building the road which ultimately will form the entrance to the Park. Another colour might be used to show the land purchased since the building of this entrance, and up to date.

It would also be interesting to know the asking price for land still privately owned in this area. It would perhaps be improper to suggest that asking prices be shown on a map, but the Commission might supply such figures confidentially, making note of the lot numbers, etc., so that the area could be identified on the map.

Over the years I have made a number of suggestions which would have provided for special consideration to the owners of cottages in Gatineau Park which have never been offered to other owners of property whose land has been expropriated for the purpose of the National Capital Plan. However, any policy adopted by the Commission must have as its ultimate objective the elimination of all privately owned land within the park area.

An interesting incident happened recently which reveals the state of mind of the people of Kingsmere. In January 1955, a group of people from Ottawa, and some of the summer residents of Kingsmere, organized what they call the “Kingsmere Festival and School of Arts,” whose object, as stated in the newspapers, was to present plays and to operate ballet dancing and art schools in the Kingsmere area, also to give consideration to band or orchestra concerts.

All of these activities are the sort of thing that might very well be carried on in Gatineau Park as long as they are well done, and the names of many of the people associated with this movement are some guarantee that such will be the case. This however did not appeal to the Kingsmere Property Owners Association who held a protest meeting and passed a resolution opposing the proposal. A spokesman for this Association is quoted in the Ottawa Journal of February 14th, 1955, as saying:

“There has not been one dissenting voice and we have sent copies of this resolution to all cottage owners and steady tenants at Kingsmere. Traffic is bad enough now without our Sunday afternoon privacy being invaded by people coming to listen to band concerts.”

Their report goes on to say that the Association regarded these activities with “deep concern,” and stated that “the lake at Kingsmere is privately owned,” although they must have known that this was not the case.

They complained that some of these activities would undoubtedly be disturbing to the residents, and harmful to their interests as property owners. It should be noted that most of these activities would be carried on at the estate of the late Mr. Mackenzie King, which he donated to the people of Canada as a public park.

This protest is consistent with the attitude of the Federal District Commission almost from its inception nearly 20 years ago [editor’s note: the Federal District Commission was established in 1927].

GENERAL POLICY RE GATINEA PARK

My criticism of the F.D.C is that they have never appreciated the possibilities of the Gatineau Park area, and the part that it should play in the National Capital Plan. They appeared to be like a good many other people who regarded this Park of nearly 80,000 acres as a place to hold picnics in the summer and to ski in the winter, and not very much more than that. Certainly Gatineau Park can be used for both of these purposes, the beneficiaries of which will be pretty well confined to the people of the immediate surrounding district in Ottawa and Hull, but I take the liberty of suggesting that these activities are very secondary considerations, and in the report of the Advisory Committee we endeavoured to present Gatineau Park as something a great deal more than a place of recreation for the people in the immediate vicinity. I doubt if Parliament would have been willing to provide millions of dollars of public money for these purposes only.

In our report of 1952 (Exhibit A) we laid down what we felt were two basic principles which should govern the development of Gatineau Park, as follows:

1. “We must preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Any structures or present developments within the area which conflict with this objective should be removed.

2. If the Park is to achieve its true purpose it must be developed in a manner which will be truly national in spirit. Here we can retain for all time something closely associated with the story of Canada. All developments or points of interest should be truly Canadian in character.”

The Federal District Commission have constantly opposed the suggestion contained in the first paragraph, and have given no evidence that they appreciated the suggestion contained in the second. Their policy will lead to a development which will be shabby and second rate, and I am convinced that this is not the desire of the people of Canada who have endorsed the proposal for the development of a National Capital in keeping with a great and growing nation.

The Federal District Commission has never given any indication that they are interested in creating something truly Canadian in character. Let me quote an example. In perusal of the report of the Advisory Committee (Exhibit A) it will be noted that the Committee had given a good deal of consideration to the idea of recreating in the Park some examples of pioneer life in Canada. Three projects were given consideration by this Committee:

1. “The reconstruction of the original pioneer settlement established by Philemon Wright, the first white settlement in this part of the country, where Hull now stands.

2. The reconstruction of a Fur-trading post. In the early days the Hudson Bay Company, the Northwest Company and John Jacob Astor were active in this area.

3. The reconstruction of an original type lumber camp. The Ottawa and Gatineau area was a centre for the early lumber trade.”

We set up a very able sub-committee whose names are listed on page 20 of the report. After making some reference to the proposal in respect to pioneer life, we said;

“As it is extremely difficult to deal adequately with this proposal in the limited space of this report, perhaps the Commission might be willing to appoint a sub-committee of your Commission which could meet with our special Committee at which time a great deal more information could be given.”

The Commission did not appoint a sub-committee, although I canvassed a number of the individual members to find out if they would act on such a sub-committee, with no success.

But, later, when a couple of promoters approached the F.D.C. with a purely commercial profit-making scheme to develop a large scale skiing centre, which would have ruined the esthetic values in one of the most charming spots in the whole Park, the Commission set up a sub-committee who devoted a great deal of time to this project. Whether it is going ahead or not, I do not know. I mention this fact simply to illustrate the lack of interest by the F.D.C. in a purely Canadian project which could have been made one of the most interesting features of the whole National Capital Plan.

I shall not at this time enlarge on the recommendations made by the Committee, which I now realize could have been much improved, but I do suggest that this report might form the basis of a more complete and detailed outline or plan for the future of this great project.

In our report of 1952 we quoted from a statement by Mr. G.M. Trevelyen, a noted British writer and philosopher, which began with the words which now are engraved in stone over the entrance to our own Parliament Buildings: “Without vision the people perish.”

It seems to me that if there is one particular attribute which is conspicuous by its absence in the operations of the F.D.C. it is “vision.”

There is danger that if the present policy of the F.D.C. is followed, this area will develop into a sort of glorified amusement park with everything from tent shows to souvenir stands selling Canadian souvenirs, made in Japan or Czechoslovakia. If privately owned land is permitted the F.D.C. completely loses control of the area.

My own conception of Gatineau Park has always been that it was much more than a place of recreation for people living in this locality. It should be developed as an outstanding part of a National Capital in which all Canadians would take pride, and in a manner which would impress on visitors from foreign countries that Canada is a great nation, not only because of her great natural resources and industrial achievements but whose people have an appreciation of esthetic and cultural values.

One of the main objectives of the National Capital should be to impress visitors from foreign countries. Mr. Gréber in his report stressed this aspect when he said:

“The task of the National Capital Planning Service, in charge of technical studies, was clear:

To give to the fundamental functions of the Capital elements essential to its expanding activities, parliamentary, governmental, diplomatic, social, and intellectual life, within a frame of dignity and hospitality as hosts to its innumerable guests, official dignitaries, delegations to national and international conventions, and summer or winter tourists.”

The Parkway Committee in their report refer to what in their opinion was “the primary function” of Gatineau Park when they said:

“OBJECT– Gatineau Park is a unique and essential feature of the whole plan for the National Capital of Canada. As such, its primary function is to preserve and present to visitors from other parts of Canada and foreign countries scenery, recreational opportunities, and cultural subjects which are characteristic of the region and which will impart to them a sense of the beauty, wealth, and breadth of territory which our country possesses.”

Both of these quotations emphasize the effect on foreign visitors of the National Capital, and as Gatineau Park can be made the most important esthetic feature of the whole plan, its importance must be recognized.

I recall when on two occasions this was forcibly impressed upon me. A couple of years ago there was a meeting in Ottawa of the Empire Parliamentary Association which brought together delegates from all parts of the Empire, and some from foreign countries. As part of the entertainment they were taken up to Gatineau Park in buses, and I happened to be in Old Chelsea at the entrance to Gatineau Park when the cavalcade passed. They followed a route through the Park cluttered with cottages, shacks, garages, etc., and were taken to the former home of the late Mr. Mackenzie King, which is right beside a number of decrepit old summer houses, etc.

Last year there was a meeting in Ottawa of the nations interested in the Colombo Plan. Again this shabby locality was chosen as their place of entertainment.

This is a pleasant location, but not by any means outstanding. There are dozens of spots in the Park with far better panoramic views of lakes and hills typical of the Canadian scene.

Although the F.D.C. has been working for 20 years on this park area, and have spent millions of dollars, Canadians should not feel that they have to be ashamed of what they have to offer to visitors in this magnificent park land, adjacent to the National Capital. The policy of the F.D.C. is to retain all this ugliness and disorder.

The Committee in its report (see Exhibit A) suggested the building of a special chalet for just such occasions at a beautiful site which the F.D.C. is considering turning over to commercial exploitation, to which reference has already been made.

The point I am stressing is that the use of this magnificent heritage should be planned, keeping in mind its effect on visitors from all parts of the world.

In developing the National Capital area it was inevitable that the funds available would be used mainly for utilitarian projects such as streets, railway removals, bridges, buildings and even sewers, etc., but Gatineau Park should be a demonstration that the esthetic features of the plan were also important. Mr. Gréber had this constantly in mind as his report demonstrates. My complaint is that in dealing with Gatineau Park, which Mr. Gréber said is “really the essential feature of the whole plan for the National Capital of Canada,” the Federal District Commission have allowed the selfishness of a comparatively few land owners to interfere with the proper development of this project.

The 50 mile parkway which is now being planned may be developed as the most interesting and beautiful 50 mile drive in the whole of Canada. In 10 minutes, after leaving the Parliament Buildings, the visitor will cross the Ottawa River close to the exact spot at which Philemon Wright, the first white settler, established his colony in 1801. Here they will plunge into a wildernesss of 80,000 acre s of wooded mountains, lakes and streams, teeming with wild life, and not much different from what it was when Wright first saw it. They will pass through pine woods which will remind the visitor of the early days of Canada when the white pine of the Ottawa Valley laid the foundation of the great lumber industry for which this valley became famous. On the higher slopes the scene will be varied, particularly in the fall, by the foliage of the hard woods, maple predominating, which clothes the hills then, as now. They will travel through these hills and valleys which form part of the Precambrian shield, said to be the oldest exposed rocks on the face of the earth.

The Parkway will take them to many over-looks, providing vast panoramic views of lakes and wooded hills. They will reach the top of an escarpment which falls almost perpendicularly for more than a thousand feet. This escarpment follows the Ottawa River for 15 or 20 miles, and is mentioned by Champlain in the report of his trip up the Ottawa River in 1613.

Below them they will see another aspect of Canadian life. A magnificent pastoral scene on the flat of fine agricultural land, between the escarpment and the river, dotted with farm homesteads and surrounded by fields and wood lots.

On their return to the City, from some of the higher hills, they will see in the distance the smoke stacks of the great pulp and paper mills, and other industries, in Ottawa, Hull and Gatineau Mills, recalling to their minds Canada’s great industrial development.

This Parkway will make it possible to remind the visitor of Canada’s great mining industry. As shown in the report of the Advisory Committee, this area “has long been noted for the variety and beauty of its minerals and rocks.” Samples of more than 20 varieties of minerals have already been collected from the park area. At open cuts along the parkway where any of these minerals occur, signs will be erected telling the story of the particular mineral formation shown and of the Precambrian shield generally.

Throughout the Parkway there will be many points of interest. Although not immediately on it, but accessible by short loop roads, there will be picnic grounds and other places of recreation, houses and other structures showing the life and work of the pioneers. Nature trails and nature museums illustrating the natural phenomena of Gatineau Park in its many aspects. Handicrafts and folk art, and many other points of interest concerning the history, the arts, culture and life in Canada.

Here, in a two hour drive, the visitor can glimpse, in miniature, the whole Canadian scene.

The planning of this Park, and its creation, over the years, should command the services of the most creative minds in Canada so that in future years visitors to Gatineau Park, from other parts of Canada, and from other countries throughout the world, will realize that the Canadian people appreciate the esthetic and the cultural, as well as the utilitarian.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT COMMISSION

One of the reasons that little if any progress has been made in the development of Gatineau Park is the type of organization under which the F.D.C. operates. The F.D.C. is composed of 20 representative Canadian citizens, 10 of them from Ottawa and Hull district, and the other 10 being one from each Province of Canada. They receive no compensation except out of pocket expenses. The members are professional and business people including two women. Many of them are eminent in their own particular field. Nothing in this memorandum is intended to be critical of them individually or collectively. Such an organization is desirable in planning the National Capital, but I recall the comment of one gentleman who was at one time a member of the F.D.C. which, I think, is of some importance. He said that he considered his appointment to the F.D.C. as largely honorary, which it is. He said he attended meetings and took part in the discussions, but had made no close study of the project. He had confidence in the Chairman, whom he felt had opportunities of studying the project and consulting with experts, which were not open to him, or at least which he had no time to undertake. He did not feel, therefore, that he was competent to oppose seriously recommendations made by the Chairman.

He confirmed the opinion I had a1ways held that the F.D.C. was largely a one man show; this is almost bound to be the case in an organization of this type.

The Chairman is also an honorary appointee and is unpaid.

I have been in contact with the F.D.C. for about 20 years and have seen three gentlemen occupy the position as Chairman. The first was the late Mr. F. E. Bronson, a fine public spirited citizen, a friendly and kindly man, with many other interests. The second Chairman was Mr. Duncan MacTavish, a lawyer with a large practice, the Director of many companies, and very actively interested in politics. The third is the present Chairman, Major General Howard Kennedy, a consulting engineer with a large practice.

None of these gentlemen could devote more than a limited amount of time to the business of the F.D.C. Recently, for instance, Mr. Kennedy has been acting in an advisory capacity for two large projects, the first being the conservation of the eastern slopes of the Rocky mountains – the second has to do with the conservation of the timber resources of Newfoundland. He told me himself that he had spent most of last summer commuting between British Columbia and Newfoundland.

Now what is the job of the Chairman of the F.D.C.? In my opinion it is at present one of the most important in Canada. It should not be a part time job. The practical rebuilding of a National Capital is something that has never before been done on this continent. Since the war Europeans are familiar with this type of undertaking. In Great Britain three voluminous reports were made after the war, concerning the re-planning of great cities and land use in less populated areas. Fortunately the need of re-planning the Canadian Capital was not the result of war, but was the result of a decision made by Parliament that the National Capital should be re-planned with a view of making it reflect the great importance of this nation. The supervision of this undertaking was put in the hands of the Federal District Commission. They have the advantage of having a plan worked out by Mr. Gréber. Everyone appears to agree that it is an excellent plan, but the execution of the plan is in the hands of the F.D.C. and owing to the type of organization, the executive direction of this great project is in the hands of the Chairman of that body.

Since the plan was announced changes have been made in it. From time to time other changes may be made. This was expected even by Mr. Gréber, so that the expenditure of many millions on this plan is, in itself, a job which calls for extremely important decisions from day to day. It calls for executive abilities of the highest order. It is largely a creative job even although there is a plan to work to. It should be a highly paid job, and Canada should be searched for the best man to undertake this task. Above all it needs vision and imagination. I am convinced that a paid, full time Chairman would save his salary many times over. The Chairman should be free of all personal or political influences.

In conclusion I respectfully submit that the foregoing statement demonstrates that the public interest has been largely overlooked in respect to the land policy, and in policies generally, of the Federal District Commission, in planning Gatineau Park. I suggest that personal, financial and political interests of land owners in the area exercises undue influence in the making of policy in respect to this great project. I am hopeful that as a result of giving publicity to these facts the Federal District Commission will reconsider their present policies and in future regard the public interest as their only guide.

My association with the F.D.C. has been in respect to only one aspect of the National Capital Plan. There are other Committees, both general and special, dealing with other aspects of the plan, of which I have no knowledge.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

R.P. Sparks.

**THE OTTAWA JOURNAL**

**May 17, 1955**

**GATINEAU PARK POLICY UNCHANGED**

**FDC Reaffirms Stand That There Will be No Expropriations**

The Federal District Commission today reaffirmed its policy that “no effort has been made or will be made to expropriate property in Gatineau Park except in the construction of driveways or other essential works.”

In a statement replying to charges made by R.P. Sparks, former chairman of the one-time Gatineau Park Advisory Committee, the commission said it has acquired 44,000 acres in Gatineau Park by purchase at a total of $2,060,119. This 44,000 acres represents 60 percent of the 75,000 acres required for the ultimate development of the park.

The FDC released the following in reply to Mr. Sparks:

(1) The Federal District Commission recognizes the great services Mr. Sparks had performed in the creation of Gatineau Park and compliments him on his foresight and the continued interest he has taken in the development of Gatineau Park since its inception.

(2) The Commission, however, sincerely regrets the fact that Mr. Sparks apparently has not been able to accept the commission’s viewpoint concerning property expropriations within the park area, and stresses the fact that the FDC is the organization which has to decide policy and accept responsibility for the carrying out of the National Capital Plan.

(3) It is also stressed that Gatineau Park is only one of many projects in the National Capital Plan which have had to be carried out simultaneously and that the funds available have to be divided between the various projects undertaken. For example, the removal of the cross-town tracks and related activities having to do with the construction of the Queensway Limited Access Highway, have to date cost the commission over five million dollars, and upwards of 10 million is committed in the next five or six years to complete the railway revision program foreseen in the immediate future.

Mr. Sparks has not mentioned in his brief the amount of land acquired by the FDC in Gatineau Park over the past four years. Since 1951, by fiscal years, it is as follows:

1951-52 5,717 acres

1952-53 3,608 acres

1953-54 5,343 acres

1954-55 2,629 acres

(4) Payments to the previous owners for the total of 17,297 acres acquired since 1951 totals $1,072,479. The total expenditure on land acquisition in the park up to March 31, 1955, including legal and survey costs, is $2,060,119.

The total land acquired is 44,000 acres. As the planned park area is about 75,000 acres this means that the FDC has now acquired practically 60 percent of the area required for the ultimate development of Gatineau Park. All these later land acquisitions have been carried out without expropriation proceedings. The land is purchased on an appraisal basis, and the FDC offers the same amounts for properties which it considers it would have to pay if expropriation proceedings were undertaken.

(5) Despite the impression created by Mr. Sparks, the commission has a definite policy with regard to land acquisition in Gatineau Park.

This policy, as stated by the commission in 1953 is as follows:

**On the Record**

“The Federal District Commission, realizing that there is some uncertainty in the minds of property owners within the Gatineau Park area as to the attitude of the Commission toward purchase of private property, wishes to place on record its policy toward acquirement of land within the area. No effort has been made or will be made to expropriate property in Gatineau Park except in cases where such property is required to facilitate the construction of driveways or other essential works. There is no intention of altering this practice. On the other hand, the Commission has purchased and will continue to purchase any property within the Park area which is available at a price which it considers reasonable. Municipalities will be adequately compensated for loss of tax revenue because of acquirement of property by the Commission.

“In view of the fact that the shoreline of a number of the lakes, such as Meach Lake and Kingsmere, within the park area is privately owned, it is proposed to maintain Harrington Lake, the shoreline of which is wholly owned by the Commission, in its natural state.

(6) With regard to Mr. Sparks’ contention that the Commission has proceeded with the development of Gatineau Park without any consultation whatsoever with the Government of the Province of Quebec, the commission points out that when the decision to create the park was taken, the commission consulted Mr. Godbout, the then Premier of Quebec [editor’s note: when the park was created on July 1, 1938, the Quebec Premier was Maurice Duplessis], and had extensive and cordial discussions with the premier and the heads of the Quebec Provincial Departments concerned in the project. The Government of the Province of Quebec co-operated to the fullest extent with the commission when the park project was first launched.

Furthermore, the present chairman of the commission has called on Mr. Duplessis twice within the past two years and has had friendly and fruitful discussions with him. Mr. Duplessis gave the chairman no impression whatever that he felt he had been ignored by the Federal District Commission.

(7) Throughout his brief Mr. Sparks creates the impression that members of the Federal District Commission are “yes men” for the chairman. Anyone who knows the commissioners who number 20 and are representative of all the provinces, and who is familiar with the way that business is conducted at commission meetings, could never form such an opinion.

**Denies Charge**

(8) With regard to the statement that FDC policy has led to land speculation in the Gatineau Park area, the Commission is not aware that there has been any rush to speculate in properties within the park area as a result of its activities.

Furthermore, the Commission has not and does not propose to meet exorbitant offer s for properties within the area of its activities. For example, a property which recently changed hands was first offered to the Commission, but the price, including the residence on it, would have placed the Commission in the position of paying at the rate of $30,000 per acre for the land involved. As this did not seem reasonable, the Commission did not purchase the property. The Commission feels that many instances of this kind would occur if a policy of wholesale expropriation had been undertaken.

**Not an Owner**

(9) The Commission’s chairman, Major General Howard Kennedy, does not own and never has owned any properties within the boundaries of Gatineau Park. His wife did inherit a property at Kingsmere which has been in her family for over a half century, and it is this that probably gave rise to the impression that the chairman was a property owner in the park.

(10) The remarks attributed to the chairman by Mr. Sparks which indicate that General Kennedy believes in one policy concerning the property of the general public and a different one for his own property arose because of a previous statement made by Mr. Sparks in which he advocated the possibility of setting up a diplomatic colony in Kingsmere on property expropriated by the Commission from the present owners.

The chairman made and repeated the statement that under such circumstances if he were a property owner he would fight expropriation – in other words, he did not see that the Commission would be justified in expropriating private property for such a purpose.

The above statement has been made for the purpose of awarding to Mr. Sparks the credit which is due him for his splendid efforts in the past and to keep the record straight as his memorandum does not fairly represent the situation. No effort will be made to answer all the points raised by Mr. Sparks in his memorandum and the Commission is content to let the matter stand on the basis of the correspondence with Mr. Sparks, which is contained in his memorandum.

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**Statement by R.P. Sparks in reply**

**to a statement made by the Federal**

**District Commission on Tuesday,**

**May 17, 1955 in respect to the**

**development of Gatineau Park**

I have read with interest the statement issued by the Federal District Commission commenting on a memorandum which I had prepared criticising the Commission for their handling of the development of Gatineau Park. This memorandum had been prepared for submission to a Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, the appointment of which had been forecast in the Speech from the Throne. My original purpose in making this statement public was to bring some public pressure to bear to get this Parliamentary Committee actually in motion.

I do not think the matter will be settled by newspaper controversy but before such a Committee I could be cross-examined on my allegations and the Chairman and officials of the Federal District Commission could be called as witnesses to give evidence and produce documents in defence of their policies.

I would like, however, to make a few comments on the statement just issued by the Commission. At least half of it is entirely irrelevant, a large part of it evasive and much of it confirms the statements which I had made.

I had charged that during the past twenty years land owners in the Gatineau Park had prevented the proper development of the Park. I still believe so and that this can be established. There was no denial of this in the statement of the Federal District Commission.

In my statement I quoted from a letter I had written to the Federal District Commission suggesting that as a result of the Commission’s policy “the whole lower end of the park has been turned into a paradise for land speculators.” The Federal District Commission’s statement proves this is true. They mention one case in which the ownership of property had recently changed hands and that the present owner had asked the Federal District Commission to pay him $30,000 an acre for this property. While this is the worst case I have heard of, there are many other properties for which exorbitant prices are being asked. I had suggested to the Commission that:

“this whole park scheme will be wrecked unless you obtain powers of expropriation and exercise these powers. The other alternative is tremendous expenditure of money for the benefit of a few land owners, some of whose property is almost worthless without the parkway.”

It should be noted that the Commission are now building a five million dollar parkway through thousands of acres which are privately owned.

The Commission say that they are not going to buy this property at $ 30,000 an acre. I do not know just where it is but I presume it must be important in relationship to park development. How are they going to get it and many other pieces of property for which they have been asked ridiculous prices, except by expropriation?

The Commission referred to my statement that the Prime Minister of Quebec, Mr. Duplessis had not been consulted in regard to the National Capital Plan although about two-thirds of the National Capital area was in the Province of Quebec. The Commission in their statement now say that they consulted with Mr. Godbout, a former Prime Minister of Quebec but they could not have consulted Mr. Godbout about the National Capital Plan because he was defeated in 1944 and the National Capital Plan was not proposed until 1945 when Mr. Duplessis was Prime Minister. This is a rather stupid evasion of the facts. The statement goes on to say that the Chairman of the Federal District Commission called on Mr. Duplessis twice within the past two years but this was long after the National Capital Plan was completed. The statement also says that General Kennedy had “friendly and fruitful discussions” with Mr. Duplessis last year. What did he discuss? As a matter of fact General Kennedy told me himself that he went to Quebec in an effort to get Mr. Duplessis to co-operate in making expropriation possible even to the extent of asking Mr. Duplessis to do the expropriating himself and the Federal Government would pay for the lands expropriated but he failed in his mission.

This might have been a satisfactory arrangement but as I responded in my statement, at a meeting of the Federal District Commission last August at which I was present, General Kennedy violently opposed expropriation and said that he would fight in court any effort to expropriate his own property. It would seem to me that holding this view General Kennedy was the wrong man to send down to see Mr. Duplessis. General Kennedy now tries to draw a red herring across the trail by saying that it was on another occasion that he said he would fight expropriation. He may have said it at that time but I have no recollection of it. It does not matter anyway but simply makes the situation worse.

The Federal District Commission say that they have not sufficient money to go ahead and complete the job. This is just what I have been anticipating for years and talking about for years. They have deliberately allowed the price of property to get so high that now they cannot afford to buy it. It was not always that way. In 1947 the Chairman of the Federal District Commission wrote me a letter in which he said:

“It is the desire of the F.D.C. to extend this area to embrace some 50,000 to 60,000 acres at least and the F.D.C. now has funds available for this purpose.”

About the same time the government issued an Order in Council authorizing them to expropriate the very land which is now being held by speculators for exorbitant prices.

The Federal District Commission charges me with creating the impression that members of the Commission are “yes men,” I do not think anyone could take that meaning out of my words, I did suggest that certain information in regard to two of the most critical decisions ever made by the Commission, which should have been before them, was not given to them. I asked the Chairman if they had been given this information and I have never had a reply, although the matter has been discussed for more than a year.

I shall not attempt to analyse the statement of the Commission but I submit that it is no answer at all to the statements I have made.

I would like to thank the Commission for some kind words in regard to my efforts “in the past” in the interests of Gatineau Park and I would like to add that in undertaking the unpleasant task of reviewing the past actions of the Commission I am doing so only in the interests of this project in regard to which I have been active for the past 20 years.

The Federal District should now go to the Prime Minister who is the Minister in charge of their operations and urge him to set up the Parliamentary Committee which the Speech from the Throne indicated would investigate the affairs of the Federal District Commission.

May 18, 1955.