

The Address—Mr. St. Germain

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order! The speech of the Hon. Member will be followed by a 10-minute period for questions and comments.

[English]

Mr. Kristiansen: Mr. Speaker, to begin with I should like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) on a maiden speech, which, in spite of some differences in philosophy, proposals and analysis, was a pleasure to listen to. It was well delivered, apart from matters of political philosophy. I appreciate his kind remarks with respect to his predecessor, in this House, Mr. Mark Rose, and the acknowledgement that the area he serves, as did Mr. Rose, is in great need of solutions from the Government and other agencies across the country.

● (1700)

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I do have one question in particular. I agree with much of what the Hon. Member said, and with many of his criticisms and descriptions of the problems with which his community as well as my own is faced with respect to the forest products industry. However, I found it somewhat odd for one with a professed Conservative philosophy to almost suggest by his criticism that we need overt government action in order to have the private sector, which certainly dominates in the forest products industry, convert to manufacturing such products as waferboard, particleboard, chipboard, and so on. These technologies are in place in many parts of North America. They have been singularly absent from the forest products industry in British Columbia. Is the Hon. Member suggesting that it requires government intervention or particular government assistance in order to get the private sector to do what the marketplace, as well as our changing resource base which was brought about by years of mismanagement, has been demanding of it? Is the Hon. Member suggesting that it is up to the Government to solve this problem when the private sector which he glorifies, and which, certainly, has a role to play, has been so unable or unwilling to build the kind of manufacturing plants which both the market and the resource so badly need?

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, when I speak of the progress which is being made in these particular areas, the knowledge which I gained was through the private sector, from visiting all the various industries within that particular area, the chemical plants, and so on. What I am saying is that, like most of my compatriots here in the Official Opposition, I do not advocate government intervention. However, what we do advocate is special incentives for research and development. That is happening in other parts of North America. That is why research is taking place there. All we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we want the incentives in place so that we can develop our own technologies and not have to rely on others.

We are working with the mills in my area, Mr. Speaker, the ones I had contact with, to make sure the research and development, as far as fire-retardant shingles, for example, are

concerned is proceeding, but these are not necessarily all major mill operations. These are small operators, Mr. Speaker, who are struggling to survive, given the last two years of recession. All I am advocating is that we create incentives so that these people can defer some of their taxes, take some of their dollars and use them as a form of incentive to go into research and development. That is really what we are asking for. None of the business people in Mission-Port Moody, Mr. Speaker, want any handouts or bailouts. All we want is a chance to operate.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the address of the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain). I congratulate him on his address. I would like to make a comment and then have the Hon. Member comment on what I have to say. I believe there is a place for Government, and free enterprise believes that also. One place is research and development and another is to assist in the location of markets. If the Government would expend its energies in locating markets and in research and development, the industry would follow through, at least that has been my experience. I wonder if that fits in with the philosophy of the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody?

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank both Hon. Members for their compliments and for giving me the opportunity to reply to their questions. Logically, without research and development and without new technology we are going nowhere in this country. This is why our economy is where it is today. Definitely we must assist the small organizations in pursuing and acquiring other markets because, Mr. Speaker, if we do not, they will surely die. Given the recession which has taken place in the last two years in the lumber industry, it is amazing how they have maintained the life they have left in them. Government benefits greatly from the taxes which are generated from these industries when they are buoyant. However, when they are oppressed as they are now, and suffering from the recession which has just recently taken place, it is highly unlikely that, without some form of assistance which would benefit all Canadians, they would be able to survive.

[Translation]

Mr. Tousignant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, before putting my two questions to the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) I would like to express my deep disappointment. I have kept an eye on the Hon. Member since he came into this House over four months ago and he seemed to me to be a rather likeable fellow. Now I have to realize that he has immediately acquired the conservative tendency to negative criticism. I am rather disappointed with his attitude throughout his speech. He waited four months before giving his maiden speech and from now on he will probably remain silent. Still, I am rather disappointed.

I would like to ask him, for example, when he refers to tax incentives, how he thinks he could convince some companies to undertake new projects through tax incentives. Indeed, I do