

The Address—Ms. Jewett

However, once again, it is a very great and considerable endeavour, but I do understand the issue which you are raising, because it is just as bad to be unemployed in Ottawa as it is to be out of work in St. John's, Newfoundland.

[English]

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I begin by congratulating you on becoming the new Speaker of the House as a result of a democratic election process that we have not known in the House before. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say that we found it to be an extremely rewarding experience that your peers should make the decision as to who should be Speaker of the House. It was one of the most exciting and democratic proposals of the reform committee. While we all agree that a few small procedural changes must be made, the principle is one that I know each Member of the House cherishes.

Let me also say that I thought the speeches by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply were very ably given. I particularly want to mention the speech of the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins) in moving the Address in Reply since in addition to being an extremely able person she is a British Columbian like you and I.

The Hon. Member for Capilano said that 70,000 new jobs had been created in British Columbia since September, 1984. However, she did not mention that thousands upon thousands of jobs have been lost in British Columbia since 1984, particularly in the forest industry. In light of the current situation, it would seem that thousands more jobs will be lost in our key basic industry of forestry. Also, she did not mention that of the 70,000 new jobs that were created, practically all of them are not highly productive jobs but minimum wage jobs in the service industry.

It is widely known that British Columbia has the lowest minimum wage in Canada at \$3.65 an hour, and according to the Premier it will be even less or abolished altogether in some areas of work.

Therefore, I suggest that it is perhaps exercising a bit too much hyperbole to put such stress on the creation of new jobs because they are not in the productive part of the British Columbia economy or in the potentially productive part of the economy. They are certainly not in the key resource industry of our province, the forest industry.

In fact, neither the Throne Speech nor the Member for Capilano indicated very much at all about the forest industry, which was a bit of a surprise to the rest of us from British Columbia and other Members from provinces in which the forest industry is important. It is one of the key export industries of this country, but there was only a fleeting reference made to it by either the Hon. Member or the Speech from the Throne.

This is no doubt because both the federal Government and the provincial Government seem to be in a state of some chaos on the question of the industry. Many of us in the New Democratic Party have said many times in the past year or

more that Canada and the United States should conduct negotiations on the forest industry, including our access to American markets and whether or not stumpage needs improvement. We have often said that the stumpage system needs improvement. We have not suggested, nor do we believe that it is an unfair subsidy. Indeed, the International Trade Commission did not believe it was an unfair subsidy in 1983. However, improvements certainly could be made to the stumpage system and we, as well as the IWA, have been arguing for some time that improvements could and should be made and that direct negotiation should be undertaken with the United States Government and the lumber industry in both countries. This was not done and suddenly we have seen a last minute flurry with a so-called offer to the United States directly relating to stumpage fees, which was inevitably turned down.

I suppose the problem facing the Government is that it was so hung up on free trade and the idea of everything going under a comprehensive trade negotiation—even though we are supposed to have had free trade in the lumber industry for 50 years and President Reagan indicated to Senator Packwood that he would resolve the softwood lumber issue for the American lumber producers—that neither the Canadian Government nor the British Columbia Government realized that they would be outsmarted and that they should have stopped talking about a comprehensive agreement and addressed the immediate issue. Of course, the immediate issue concerned negotiations in the lumber industry itself.

Little has been said about this and we are now in the midst of a very confusing scenario which may yet, and I believe will, lead to satisfactory negotiations. However, that certainly has not been the case up to now.

Another industry of great interest and concern in British Columbia, although not as major as the forest industry, is the shipbuilding industry, which we would like to see enhanced. Indeed, the Hon. Member for Capilano also mentioned that the Polar 8 icebreaker, promised in the Speech from the Throne, will hopefully be built on the West Coast. She suggested it would be desirable that the awarding of the contract be to a firm on the West Coast. That is a most estimable wish but, as the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) pointed out on Friday, the desirability of having the icebreaker built on the West Coast would have been enhanced enormously had invitations to tender been limited to firms on the West Coast.

• (1150)

Indeed, the Hon. Member for Victoria, who is here in the House today, asked in 1983, as he reminded us on Friday in the House of Commons, the then Minister of Supply and Services if the tender for the Polar 8 icebreaker would be limited to the West Coast and he was assured that it would be. However, this Government has not done that. Now we are in a situation where, lacking that kind of action, the Government is going to have to make the decision on political grounds such