

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of the latest report on the feasibility of establishing a Crown corporation or other body to carry out forestry research.

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me an opportunity to say a few additional words in response to the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) for the production of papers concerning the intention to establish a Crown corporation or, in his words, some other body that would in the interests of all Canadians establish some kind of an effort toward the research and development of technology and techniques which could be brought in to manage our national forests.

In his opening remarks the hon. member spoke of the previous government's efforts to establish a national forests policy. I have followed these efforts with keen interest over quite a number of years now, and I cannot share the enthusiasm the hon. member brought to the House since I have never been much impressed with the efforts which were made. Indeed, since 1963, over the last decade, the efforts of the Canadian forest service have been cut in half. There is roughly about half the manpower in the Canadian forest service today as there was ten years ago. Of course, many of the scientists who carried out the research and development upon which the industry relied so heavily have left the department and what we find here today are administrators and bureaucrats. There is really no major effort at all being carried on in the area of research and development in this important industry.

The results of this kind of deterioration are very noticeable. Our world position, shown by the percentage of world markets which we once enjoyed, has declined by over 20 per cent in the last ten years and the United States' share of the world market has increased by almost the same percentage.

There are very good reasons for this. One American company alone—the Warehouse Company in the United States—spends more money annually in research and development than does the entire Canadian forest service. This has to be a matter of concern to us, particularly when one considers the crucial importance of the forest industry in our economy and its effect on the well-being of the country in general.

The forests generate more income than gas and oil, agriculture, fisheries and mining combined. Forest companies shipped last year \$13 billion worth of goods; \$8 billion went to export earnings and contributed to our balance of trade. Every man, woman and child in this country shares or owns the equivalent of about 20 acres of productive forest land. We have about 800 million acres of productive forest lands in Canada. Unfortunately, over that ten year period of which I spoke earlier, 60 million acres of this vital resource, this productive forest land, have been left idle. There has not been a sufficient effort to regenerate these important lands and put them back into operation.

There were some efforts made by the former government; the latest took place just before Parliament dissolved. The one we are well aware of, because the subject was raised in this House on many occasions, was the effort to privatize a very

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important portion of the federal research effort, namely that of the forest products lab here in Ottawa and on the west coast in Vancouver. It was proposed to turn these efforts over to private companies.

The question has to be asked: To what extent can we expect private industry to take over these efforts? I am talking about research and development which needs to be carried out to protect all our forests, to carry on the kind of husbandry which will preserve our forests in perpetuity for future generations. One is faced with this question when one takes into account the fact that last year the federal government took in \$1 billion from the forest economy. In the same period of time, on an annual basis, all provinces combined take in about an equal amount, namely \$1 billion. This accrues to governments in the form of revenue from taxes, leases, royalties and so on. It makes up a total of \$2 billion. And now governments are telling the industry that it will have to carry on its own research and development efforts.

The industry is always prepared to assume these responsibilities providing that governments reciprocate. What the industry would want, in return, is some kind of security of tenure. It would need assurances that if the industry does the research, the regenerating, fertilizing and replanting, the results of such activities would accrue to their benefit in the future. In other words, they would seek longer tenures, ownership of forest lands and so on. It has been the policy of most of the provinces and the federal government not to give industry that kind of control over this vital resource. It is my opinion, therefore, that we should not expect the industry to carry on the research and development that is required to preserve this vital resource in perpetuity.

On this side of the House we are asking ourselves what the former government has done, how far it got in developing a national forest policy. Sadly, sir, we must report that there has really been no advance in the development of such a policy.

What needs to be done, then? Well, the present minister has already taken some important initiatives. There is presently a major review in the terms of reference given to departmental officials. There has to be a concentration and a centralization of the various jurisdictions responsible on behalf of the federal government in the forest policy area. No fewer than 26 different departments of the federal government are in some way responsible for forests. There is the Department of the Environment, DREE, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce—I could not begin to name them all. The idea is, as a result of this review, to bring back and re-establish a component of a Canadian forest service which will once again assume the responsibility for a co-ordinating role with the provinces to preserve this vital resource. That may well mean a structural change in the make up of the committees.

I have just come from the committee and I am half out of breath. Even as I speak here the minister is answering a question I posed to him in that committee. Unfortunately forestry is tied in with the important committee on the environment and fisheries and members of this House are having a difficult time running back and forth trying to determine on