

*The Address—Mr. Wise*

**Mr. Wise:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has made an excellent speech or an excellent pitch for the importance of the forest industry in the country. I certainly agree and share most of those concerns. Let me tell the Hon. Member that he can relax because the Government is fully committed to supporting our resource industries.

The Hon. Member referred to the lack of mention of forestry in the Throne Speech. I think we all know which direction the Throne Speech took. It was not a shopping list approach. Rather, it gave some priorities. It gave Canadians some clear indications as to the direction in which we wanted to take the country. I took a great deal of satisfaction from reading in the Throne Speech that a great deal of emphasis by the Government would be placed upon strengthening and revitalizing our natural resource industry—forestry, agriculture, fishery and mining. There was a strong message to the agricultural, mining, fishing and forestry industries—and I know the Hon. Member is extremely interested in the forestry—that those industries are held in high priority.

I am not sure from what the Hon. Member was quoting when he referred to a separate department for forestry. However, one must recognize that we have a financial problem. Perhaps it might take us a little longer to achieve our long-term goals. However, as Minister of Agriculture I was quite happy to see the Ministry of State for Forestry coming over to our Department. I feel very comfortable having that Ministry associated with my Department. I place a great deal of priority on ensuring that the Ministry receives its fair share.

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a few points to the Minister. First, I congratulate the Hon. Member for Elgin (Mr. Wise) on his appointment to Cabinet. Also through him I congratulate his colleague from New Brunswick on his appointment as Minister of State for Forestry.

The previous questioner rose in his place to tell the Minister that he was concerned as are many Members of the House and Canadians across the country, with simply appointing a gentleman to be Minister of State for Forestry. As well intentioned and as knowledgeable as that gentleman may be, that will not come to grips with the current crisis besetting the Canadian forestry industry.

The fact of the matter is that we are losing 500,000 hectares of forest land per year, which is more than is being replanted by forestry companies or by the efforts of federal-provincial management plans. That is just in the commercial cutting exercise. In a year like 1981 when there were forest fires and the blight of spruce budworm, et cetera, the number can rise as high as a million hectares per year. Every study which has been conducted, be it by industry, environmental groups, the Canadian Forestry Service or the Government itself—and this was highlighted in three prime time half-hour documentaries in the last three weeks on CBC alone—indicates that we have to double the amount of land we are planting if we are not to be left behind in 20 years to 40 years in what is Canada's single largest industry. The said fact is that most Canadians do not realize that the forestry sector contributes more to the balance of payments of this country than oil and gas, agricul-

ture, for which the Minister is responsible, mining and fishery combined.

I applaud the Government for naming the Minister. But where is the Deputy Minister? Where is the Department? All we have now is a division of the Department of Agriculture. Where is the legislation setting up the Forestry Department? Where are the dollars and cents to address a problem which is in a stage of crisis now? I would appreciate hearing the Minister's comments.

**Mr. Wise:** Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised at the enthusiasm or the lack of it—and I am not so sure which—on the part of the Hon. Member. He should take a great deal of satisfaction from the formation of a new Department because it makes a tremendous contribution to the state of the general economy within Canada and on the export market. There are some serious problems facing our forestry industry. We recognize the potential and the problems of that industry, and we have done something about them.

**Mr. Tobin:** What?

**Mr. Wise:** The previous government ignored it and would continue to do so. Today we have a Minister.

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is the time for questions and comments. Whether or not the burden has overwhelmed him, he is the Minister and they are the Government. Let us cut the rhetoric. It is cheap. Let us talk about what he will do.

**Mr. Wise:** The Hon. Member is living in fairyland. We want to do something about the future. We just cannot simply forget the past. As I indicated before, we as a government recognize the importance and potential of forestry, and we are doing something about it.

**Mr. Tobin:** When will you bring in legislation?

**Mr. Wise:** The Hon. Member's government did not have a ministry of forestry or a minister of state for forestry. It did not have a deputy minister, an assistant deputy minister or a director general. Today, as a result of the decision of Canadians on September 4, the forestry industry has been recognized by the Government. As a result of the Government and its decision, the forestry industry has a higher priority. It is recognized. We are in a position to do something about it. In fact, it has a Minister of State for Forestry.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The time for questions and comments is now over. We shall resume debate with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper).

**Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this Throne Speech debate. Of course it has primarily become a debate around the Government's economic statement. That is quite natural because as soon as the debate on the Throne Speech debate began, the economic statement was brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson).