

*Forestry*

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on an excellent presentation concerning the problem of acid rain and its damage to forests. Coming from a region where a great number of my constituents earn their living from the forests, naturally I am interested in this whole question.

In 1982, with the help of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, I organized and sponsored a seminar on the problem that faced our forests, that being acid rain. We had gathered enough evidence to show that, as most Canadians know, the pulp and paper industry in this country is of extreme importance. Its importance cannot be exaggerated. Study after study has pointed to the fact that acid rain is something that is visible, it is concrete and obviously we have got to tackle the problem.

I am sure that in this House the concern about acid rain goes above Party lines. There is no doubt about that in my mind. Our own sulphur emissions need to be under control, and I am sure that we will tackle that problem with great vigour. However, we have a problem with our neighbours to the south. Study after study does not seem to convince them that we need an absolute commitment to seriously limit the problem of sulphur emissions that create acid rain. The Canadian Pulp and Paper Association has conducted extended studies. These have indicated that if the trend continues within the next quarter century, there will be no more pulp and paper industry in this country. This is incredible when we consider that this country had such tremendous forest reserves. We are surrounded literally by forests. Within 30 minutes of my home town, I can literally be lost in the wilderness. Nevertheless this danger is mounting week by week to the point where our whole forest industry is in severe danger.

Needless to say, we do not want to be portrayed as alarmists, but the fact remains that acid rain is probably the greatest threat facing the forest industry. Yet, it does not stop with our forest industry. There was a series of interesting programs on the CBC about a year and a half to two years ago that pointed out the danger to our forest industry. They also showed that if this damage continues, there will be social unrest in our country because the industry will be on the verge of being eliminated. We cannot exaggerate the importance.

Surely all Members of this House would want our Government to be insistent—and we will not accept no or maybe for an answer—and indicate to our industries, which we are doing, and indicate to our neighbour to the south that its northeastern states are affected. We in particular are being affected. I have met with the maple syrup producers in my area and they are seeing the damage year by year.

Like all Members of this House, we will appeal as forcefully as we can to our friendly neighbours to the south for an agreement. We are willing to put a tremendous amount of water in our wine if we have to, but we need a commitment and a reduction or else we will live to see the damage to our forest industry if it is not corrected. That is the issue that faces one of our major industries. It would probably be the greatest catastrophe of our lifetime.

It is imperative that we stand up and be counted and let them know, not only to the south, but everywhere, that Canada is going to solve its acid rain problem even if we have to take radical steps. We will call upon our neighbours to the south in the northeastern states to join us to make our two Governments understand that the time has come to correct the problem. We do not want to live with a catastrophe on our hands. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this time that has been allotted to me.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on a motion introduced by the Hon. Member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley (Mr. Gardiner), a fellow member on the Forestry and Fisheries Committee. The Hon. Member represents a riding, like mine, where the forestry industry has created many jobs for a number of years, jobs that have benefited several generations. Our constituents also realize that forestry operations are extremely important to the economy of our ridings and to the economy of this country.

Mr. Speaker, our forests are one of our major resources. They cover nearly half of Canada's total area and, south of the sixtieth parallel, cover almost two-thirds of our territory. Logging has stimulated economic growth in Canada since the time of the huge annual log drives on Canada's rivers. Today, the forestry industry consist of about 7,000 companies, most of which are