

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, January 26, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, January 25, consideration of the motion of Mr. Jack Burghardt for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stevens (p. 728); and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Dick (p. 735).

**Mr. Lorne McCuish (Prince George-Bulkley Valley):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity on behalf of my constituents in Prince George-Bulkley Valley to address the Speech from the Throne. People in my riding are very straightforward and direct. They tell things as they see them. They have a distrust for fancy words, promises and platitudes. For them the proof is in the pudding. Obviously, the authors of this Throne Speech, be they ministerial or bureaucratic, would find it very uncomfortable to be in my riding.

The history of Prince George-Bulkley Valley reads very much like the history of Canada. We find in the past explorers like Simon Fraser, the Hudson's Bay Company, pioneers, settlers, loggers and dreams. These dreams are very much alive today in a place which views itself as a viable and growing entity. However, there is a mounting sense of frustration which stems from the feeling that a great deal of potential is being thwarted.

There are two facets of the economy in Prince George-Bulkley Valley, Mr. Speaker, which I would like to address today. The first is forestry and the second is farming and ranching. These are both endeavours which have gone hand in hand with the development of mankind and with the shaping of the character of Canada. In looking at forestry, farming and ranching, I hope to point to the areas where we as legislators can facilitate a more prosperous and stable future for those who involve themselves in these honourable professions.

Our attitude toward the forests of Canada has changed vastly from the early days when the slogan was "Burn off the timber and bring in the settlers". This slogan soon changed to a plea—"Save our winter payrolls". Canada at present is facing a similar dilemma. We must rationalize our immediate gain with the future consequences.

For generations, Canadians have been able to rely on forestry for jobs, for government revenue and for balancing our trade accounts. More than 300,000 Canadians work at jobs

directly related to forestry. An additional 700,000 jobs are indirectly supported by that industry. One in 10 jobs in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is dependent on the forest industry.

While the contribution of forestry to Canada's economy is profound, it is even more so in my province. A full 25 per cent of British Columbia's labour force is supported by forestry. This represents 250,000 jobs. Roughly 50 cents of every dollar earned in the province can be traced to the forest. Prince George-Bulkley Valley is in the heart of the forest land. It is little wonder that Prince George has earned the title of the white spruce capital of the world.

As the present Government well knows, industry of this magnitude is an important source of tax dollars. Every year the forest industry provides this Government with \$3 billion in revenue. The Government returns only a small fraction of this amount to assist the industry. Less than 1 per cent of the wealth created by the forest in British Columbia is reinvested in their future. Perhaps this neglect is due to a feeling that tax dollars are better spent creating temporary jobs to garner votes rather than creating permanent jobs and securing the future of a vital industry.

Forestry is also important to Canada because of its contribution to our balance of trade. It outstrips the combined contributions of mining, agriculture, fisheries and petroleum fuels. In the latest year forestry was responsible for production valued at \$25 billion, and a whopping \$11.4 billion of that contributed to Canada's balance of payments. That, Mr. Speaker, represents 15 per cent of Canada's total exports. Placing British Columbia's contribution in context, the province produces 60 per cent of all Canadian softwood and over 30 per cent of its pulp.

● (1110)

In addition, our forests provide the setting for a multimillion dollar recreation and tourist industry. They also play an important role in the ecological balance. Forests minimize erosion, regulate stream flow, improve water quality, clean the air, moderate extremes in temperature, provide habitat for fish and game, and protect spawning grounds. Even if one was to accept the demise of forestry as an industry, we would have to contend with mother nature as well.

Some 300 communities in rural Canada are completely dependent on forestry. These communities face possible extinction if we do not help to plan their future prosperity. There can be little doubt that forestry has been, is and will be a critical part of Canada's economy. In fact, most observers of the industry conclude that there is significant room for growth. The Science Council of Canada has suggested that, given the proper recognition, forestry industry can generate an addition-