

Supply

other Provinces, and negotiations are under way by my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Lumley).

I could recite other elements which have been triggered in supporting and giving momentum to an approach which is so badly needed. The upgrading of the Canadian Forestry Service to the assistant deputy minister level, together with the transfer of responsibility for forestry agreements to the Department of the Environment, have helped to increase the focus and importance attached to the forestry sector within the federal Government. We must now allow the time and the opportunity for forestry initiatives to be further advanced without another organizational disruption.

The figures I mentioned earlier, whether they are taken in block form over a period of years or whether they are taken singly year by year, amount to somewhere between \$700 million and \$800 million which is being or has been injected into the forestry industry. Also I mentioned before the fact that forestry ministers meet every year. They met as recently as September of this year.

As I explained yesterday in the House, the strategy we have put together includes the programs the federal Government would implement to meet the challenge and the needs in the forestry field. The ongoing consultative process at the present time takes place through the CCREM annual meeting, where ministers of forestry meet and discuss issues on an agenda of the kind to which I made reference a moment ago. We met in September to discuss forestry matters. In the same month, in Winnipeg, CCREM met and discussed forest fire controls and pesticides. The Canadian Forestry Advisory Committee is composed of provincial, industry and labour representatives. It is another forum for the consultative process. The Department of the Environment, including the Canadian Forestry Service, holds annual public meetings across the country for the discussion of environmental concerns which include forestry. A federal forest sector strategy committee, which co-ordinates all federal forestry activities, chaired by the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Canadian Forestry Service, is another place where the consultative process takes place on an ongoing basis.

As well, there are constant informal consultations between provincial colleagues and myself. Actually, the whole federal program is now based upon a continuing and evolving process of consultation. A good example this year was the Canadair CL-215 water bomber program which was the result of a federal-provincial task force that called for increased forest fire protection. The Special Recovery Capital Projects program provided an excellent opportunity to respond to this particular problem. There are formal committees for discussion as well as informal ongoing consultations; there is no question about that. They have resulted in the present federal actions which were developed in a truly co-operative manner.

Therefore, I would conclude that what the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap suggested is already happening. There is an ongoing process. I would conclude my remarks by underlining that the importance of the future of the forest industry and its importance as a resource in our country will depend upon

the initiatives taken at the federal level, by a number of provincial Governments, and by all participants in the forestry sector. If there were not this kind of awareness of the problem, as already outlined by the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap, if there were not a co-ordinated effort between the employers and the unions, the provincial and federal Governments' even changes of a structural nature by creating additional ministries or redesigning the whole structure of the federal Government would not result in any additional trees being planted for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister would like to respond to the facts put out by his own Department, upon which the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) touched in his speech. They indicated that only five cents on the dollar brought in by the federal Government, and in fact by provincial Governments as well, is put back into forestry. That is what we are trying to address in the debate. In this session of Parliament, the single largest industry in Canada has never been raised by the Government side. This is the second time the Opposition has raised it in the close to 600 days of this session of Parliament which has gone on for almost four years.

● (1230)

With five cents return on the dollar in 1979, and since \$3 billion was brought in by the Government in 1982 dollars—and I think we can expect it was double that—does the Minister think the amount being spent by his Government on forestry and forestry-related projects is adequate?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I suppose that a similar argument could be made looking at other industries. Agriculture could probably claim a similar ratio. Maybe a similar ratio could be established by other sectors in our economy. Evidently each industry or sector at this time feels that it has to be more and better recognized by the public sector. The final result is a competitive claim on public funds. That is what this debate is about.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, let me give the Minister an example so that he can respond more directly. In Cape Breton, where the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) has a seat, over \$100 million a year is spent in the heavy water plants for the nuclear industry. There is no use for that heavy water in Canada. For three years it has been produced without any exports or any use in Canada. I, and I believe most Canadians, consider that to be a tragic waste of our tax dollars.

Within his own Ministry at this time, less than that is being spent on forestry. Canadians in areas of Canada such as British Columbia, who see their forest industry going down the pipe, want to know whether the Minister thinks that five cents on the dollar, when the Government is harvesting all those tax dollars from British Columbia, northern Ontario, the Maritimes and some areas of the Prairies, is adequate. Even comparing it to the nuclear industry which brings no direct