

Supply—Forestry

Mr. Nicholson: I had contemplated making some remarks in reply to constructive suggestions put forward by members in all parts of the house. I wish to say thanks to all the speakers. I appreciate their suggestions greatly, as well as their good wishes and congratulations.

I should have said earlier that the federal-provincial forestry conference which took place on October 21 and 22, to which reference was made by two or three speakers tonight, was in my humble opinion, and in the opinion of the 10 provincial ministers who attended, a highly successful affair.

It was the first one of its kind, and to answer a question put by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, they suggested that meetings be held at least once a year. ARDA, among other matters, was discussed at some length, and has general support, particularly in the provinces of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.

There was also general agreement that on the whole the federal-provincial forestry agreements which have been in effect for the past 12 years have been successful. The ministers did plead for greater flexibility because of the different topographic and geographic conditions that exist in the east, and which differ from those in the west. More planes may be needed in a province like British Columbia, and more access roads in Ontario and Quebec, where the terrain is entirely different. There was unanimity on the general merits of these agreements.

There was also unanimity on the submission that there should be greater research, and there was assurance of full co-operation among all 10 provinces. One could not have asked for a better atmosphere or for more co-operation. Of course there were a few disagreements, and that is why the meeting was held in camera. It was closed to the press. Some hon. members have commented that they did not see any publicity about it. A press release was issued on the second night of the conference, and there was a press conference; but as hon. members will recall, we had some competition that day. It was the day the S.I.U. visited parliament hill, and they, rather than the 11 ministers of forestry drew most of the members of the press.

Mr. Hamilton: Was there any discussion at this conference about the relative merits of putting federal money into the provincial agreements, as opposed to expanding the research services?

Mr. Nicholson: No, they wanted more money for both, but I was not in a position to commit myself. I told them their views would be taken into consideration and placed before my colleagues in the government.

[The Deputy Chairman.]

One other matter to which perhaps I should have referred earlier was raised by the hon. member for Kootenay West, among others. He stressed the necessity of interesting the youth of Canada—of educating them in the importance of the forest industry. This is of the utmost importance. I cannot commend too highly the junior forest warden movements in certain provinces, particularly Ontario and British Columbia where they have had great success. There has also been work of a similar nature by 4-H clubs in Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and I commend this work very highly.

Mr. Pigeon: Two years ago the provinces signed an agreement to build roads to forests, and I would like to know if the provinces, particularly Quebec, expressed their views about renewing this agreement?

Mr. Nicholson: I can only refer to the press conference and the statement that was made on the subject. It was stated by the 10 ministers, including the minister from Quebec, that the federal-provincial agreements had on the whole been successful. The Quebec minister agreed that these agreements, which cover not only access roads but forest inventory and reforestation, had been more or less satisfactory. He said that the province of Quebec was willing to consider renewal of the agreement on the same general basis as the other provinces, but he said there had been certain reservations made by the premier of Quebec with regard to federal-provincial agreements generally, and these would have to be the subject of further discussion with the federal government.

Mr. Pigeon: I asked the question because Mr. Arsenault, the former minister of forestry, was opposed to these joint programs.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The committee of supply will now proceed to the estimates of the Department of Public Works.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1. General administration including a grant of \$2,000 to the Canadian good roads association, \$10,695,000.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall vote No. 1 carry?

[Translation]

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Chairman, as I rise to speak on the estimates of the Department of Public Works, I wish first of all to congratulate the minister (Mr. Deschatelets) for the honour his leader has conferred upon him, by asking him to take the lead of one of the key departments.

However, I am saddened by the thought that the Prime Minister had some misgivings about the qualifications of the nominee, and about the time he might be ready and willing