

Adjournment Debate

tower who is going to decide the future of our communities, but the local people who will deliver the programs and know the programs. They have to deal with the people there, and they know what the problems and the solutions are.

I might add that eastern Ontario has a very broad Community Futures coverage.

Mr. Boudria: I have four.

Mr. Moore: That is right. The designated areas include Renfrew County, Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, Hawkesbury, Prescott—Russell, Land O'Lakes, Smiths Falls, the St. Regis Reserve, and extends as far west as Prince Edward County. You are well covered, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure that the hon. member will be using these tools in the future.

Mr. Boudria: Oh, I have.

Mr. Moore: These areas have well established Community Futures Committees, comprised of local members from the private and public sectors. Their role is to assess local problems and opportunities and to develop a strategy to address them. With a strategy in place, the community can seek funding from the community initiatives fund for the establishment of a business development centre, for self-employment incentives, for direct purchase of institutional training, and for other specific projects.

Under the program, some 13 business development centres have been established through eastern Ontario—and I am not counting those in western Quebec—providing a wide range of information and counselling services to local small businesses, as well as loans of up to \$75,000 for business establishment and expansion through each centre's \$1.5 million investment fund.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

THE LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, the question I rise on arises out of a question asked back on February 15, 1990.

However, the question is relevant in that it deals with the forest industry and it deals with not only how it has been hit through the goods and service tax but through

the memorandum of understanding and the 15 per cent export tax when it exports to the United States.

• (1810)

The importance of the forest industry to Canada goes without saying. However, I should remind the House of some of that importance.

For instance, 79 per cent of the land mass of Canada within the 10 provinces and territories is covered with forest land, with 60 per cent, or 243.7 million hectares in forest production—in other words, productive land. The value of that production is \$43 billion and accounts for 16 per cent of Canada's exports and 21 per cent of all world trade in forest products.

It also employs directly or indirectly approximately 770,000 people as of 1989. However, it appears that that is falling off. From 1985 to the present, the jobs have gone down from approximately 840,000 jobs in 1985 to 770,000 in 1989. I would suggest that it is probably down substantially from there.

In British Columbia, for instance, the forest industry accounts for 20 per cent of the labour force, and 45 per cent of all manufacturing shipments in the province. In my riding alone, Mr. Speaker, I have mills or part of the forest industry in every area of the boundary country: mills in Grand Forks and Midway, in Penticton I have a major mill, in Princeton and in Merritt.

These jobs are directly affected by the policies of this government, whether it be by the goods and services tax, the memorandum of understanding, the 15 per cent export, by cuts in unemployment insurance, or by cuts in the forest resource development agreement. Mr. Speaker, my area hurts.

The Okanagan region, in the last figures I saw, had an unemployment rate adjusted of 16.7 per cent. That region is not the highest region of unemployment within my area. The Nicola Valley has at times gone almost double that and is at present well over that rate.

We depend on the forest industry. In Merritt alone there are five mills which deal with forest products. Any time there is a policy that is brought out that hurts the forest industry, it hurts Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt directly, but also it hurts the province and the rest of Canada.