

*Supply*

separate Ministry of Forestry since the 1960s when Mr. Diefenbaker proposed that one be established.

● (1730)

I was not so much shocked as I was amused when the Minister responsible for the Canadian Forestry Service, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Caccia), said in the House today that he did not think it was necessary to create more paperwork and another Department to take care of the forest sector of our economy. This statement comes from a Minister who represents the same Government that forced Canagrex on the Canadian agricultural scene. This is the same Government that created Petro-Canada and created the Canadian Development Investment Corporation. With all of this bureaucracy, it is a wonder we have not run out of trees to produce all the paper required for the paperwork this Government has thrust upon the Canadian people.

The establishment of a separate and distinct Ministry of Forestry is needed in this country. At present, as the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) pointed out in an earlier debate, the jurisdiction for Canadian forestry policy is now handled by an Assistant Deputy Minister. Our number one industry in Canada does not even rank Deputy Minister status.

The forest industry is in deep trouble for a number of reasons. World-wide competition has hurt us, together with the fact that the federal Government has not paid enough attention to the industry. The Science Council of Canada's recent report on the state of Canada's threatened forests is frightening, to say the least. It is frightening because if decisive action is not taken jointly by Government and business, our forestry industry will meet the same fate as the dinosaur and the dodo bird. These species did not respond to the challenge of change in order to survive and they became extinct.

Today, we cut about one million hectares of forest each year. At least one-third of that amount is not sufficiently restocked, and today we find about 12 per cent of our forest land in this sad state. What can be done about this horrendous situation? According to a survey carried out with 34 Canadian pulp and paper companies in 1980-81, of every dollar earned by this industry, only ten cents on the dollar goes into dividends. Not surprising, an additional ten cents from every dollar goes to Government fees and taxes. It is therefore of the utmost importance for Governments at all levels to realize that taxing the industry over and over again will mean that more and more money will not be put back in reforestation. It will not be re-invested to update equipment in order to remain at the same level of competition with the United States and the Nordic countries.

In conclusion, a several pronged approach is needed to help the forest industry grow, expand and develop. Reforestation and forest management are vital aspects that have been neglected far too long. Neglecting them any further will simply mean that future generations will never be able to debate this subject again because the forestry industry, if neglected now, will not be around tomorrow for debate.

The first point I would like to make is this. Year in and year out we have a tendency to look at reforestation. The problem that we run into each year is this. At the time we are dealing with reforestation, whether it be with the private sector or the provincial Ministers, the tubelings and the trees and the hiring of individuals each spring must be looked at. We have a problem when we start off. We are hiring inexperienced people. In doing so, we have the problem of thousands and thousands of trees being destroyed. There is not a proper understanding of the planting of trees. I have been in touch with the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) asking him to give thought to having a program instituted each spring for those who will be employed in the industry. Those who do not have the good fortune to be fully employed look for this seasonal employment. There should be a training program at the beginning of each season. In this way, we will have proper soil and planting. This would not only save the industry, but would save the taxpayer thousands and thousands of dollars. There should be a one-week program implemented.

Second, in order to co-ordinate the efforts of all provincial Governments and the aspects of the forestry industry that are a federal responsibility, a new Ministry of Forestry is needed. For an industry to be ignored as much as is forestry is truly a shame on the part of the Government. Within the Ministry of the Province of Ontario, one that I can maybe relate to better than others, thousands and thousands of cords of wood are left in the bush to rot each year. I urge all Members of Parliament, particularly those from Ontario, to give serious consideration to this.

We look at saving energy. Why not have a program whereby individuals can go into the bush and cut the tops of the trees that are left and the remaining cords of wood? This can be brought into the communities and sold or given to senior citizens and others who cannot afford to purchase wood for fuel. We have thousands of cords of wood not only in Ontario but in other parts of Canada that are not being used and are being left to rot. This is something that should be looked at.

Northern Ontario, which has always had as its major economic base primary industries such as forestry and mining, will not survive if the forestry industry is allowed to rot like a decaying tree. If the Government is not willing to examine the problems that are plaguing the forest industry now, we may soon find ourselves in very serious trouble.

The over 300,000 men and women across Canada in the forest industry join with me in urging the Government to make this all important sector of our national way of life a priority once and for all. I know there are others who want to speak. I appreciate the opportunity of being able to speak on this very important subject.

**Mr. Ray Chénier (Timmins-Chapleau):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) would like to say a few words. I will divide the time in such a way that he has that opportunity.