

Supply—Forestry

[English]

The hon. member for Comox-Alberni mentioned the possibility of referring the estimates of the department to a standing committee of this house at the next session. This is a very good suggestion. It might have been possible to make this arrangement this session if there had been time, but I understand that the committees already have a heavy agenda and because of certain procedures in this house it was felt we could not refer the estimates to a committee this year. This might be possible next year, and they could be referred either to the committee on fisheries or the committee on agriculture, forests and rural development. I would welcome the opportunity to explain in detail, with the assistance of members of the department, every item of the estimates.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Chapleau (Mr. Laprise) mentioned that one of our main problems in Canada is the prevention of forest fires.

From the administrative point of view, the problem is rather difficult. Indeed, only provincial governments have jurisdiction over forest administration. There have often been discussions between officials of the Department of Forestry and those of the departments of lands and forests of the various provinces. But we have to confine ourselves to research for the prevention of forest fires.

On November 29, 1965, we issued a press release which showed that, for the year ending October 31, 1965, losses due to forest fires were the lowest in 37 years. This considerable improvement of the situation should not be attributed to the Minister of Forestry. I say no such thing; nevertheless, the number of forest fires last year was considerably lower.

In fact, we have created in Ottawa an institute for research on the means of fighting forest fires. We do not have power of coercion over lumber companies. We know what must be done to eliminate risks in the bush, but we do not have the authority to demand anything of lumber companies, to force them to clean up the forests after timber operations or to take other steps to fight forest fires efficiently. All this comes strictly under provincial jurisdiction.

The member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) asked me whether there are provincial research services in forestry. There are some in British Columbia and Ontario, and the province of Quebec intends to set one up. These

[Mr. Sauv .]

provincial services work in close co-operation with the federal research services in forestry.

[English]

The hon. member for Cariboo mentioned that he had been connected with the forest industry for 26 years. He also referred to the work being done in British Columbia by the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources of that province. I know the minister, Mr. Williston, and saw him recently. I have had meetings with all ministers of lands and forests across Canada. In fact, I make it a point to pay a visit to each of the ten ministers of lands and forest and ministers of agriculture who are responsible for the ARDA program. Once a year I visit each of them in their own capitals, meet their officials and discuss with them the relationship between the federal Department of Forestry and the provincial departments of lands and forests, which in each of the 10 provinces is excellent. We have been fortunate in that the work which we do is essential to the departments of lands and forests in each of the provinces; and we do have to work in co-ordination with them. We have relations, especially in the province of British Columbia, with the British Columbia Research Council and the B.C. forest industries council of the province.

Just recently, as a result of an agreement between the British Columbia forest industry, the provincial department of lands and forests and the federal Department of Forestry, we were able to sign a special agreement to conduct research on the woolly aphid problem which I mentioned earlier. This year we are committing \$150,000 to research, and this is just the beginning. This was made possible owing to the close co-operation between the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources in British Columbia, the forest industry, the B.C. Research Council and the federal Department of Forestry. As soon as the minister and Mr. Hoffmeister, president of the B.C. forest industries council came to Ottawa to discuss the problem, we were able to agree at once on the importance of dealing with this disease and undertook to establish a research program which might well have a beneficial effect.

In fact, two weeks ago I was in Victoria in the laboratory at one of these beautiful new buildings to witness the research being done by our people. I found the subject completely fascinating. The woolly aphid is a very small insect. You can find 3,000 of them in an area of one square inch, so you can imagine the