

*Forestry Department*

The main purpose of this bill, entitled department of forestry act, is to unify the research work now being done by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and the Department of Agriculture in such fields as forest management, forest entomology and pathology, and also with regard to improved uses of wood products and by-products.

I understand, however, that the new department will, in addition, be asking parliament to vote the funds needed for forestry inventories and perhaps for the construction of access roads to our forests, and for assistance in fire protection. As I understand it, all this will be done in co-operation with the provinces because the federal forestry department has no intention to dictate policy to the provinces. That, I think, is a very good point. The department's job will be to carry on or intensify the research work now being done, and to co-operate with the provinces in forest and protection, road construction and forestry inventories.

A few years ago, the federal government passed an act entitled the Canada Forestry Act, designed to help provinces wishing to take advantage of the benefits provided under the act to make an inventory of their resources and to protect their forests. I am told that the forest inventories undertaken under that act have now been completed.

But I hope that the new department will continue to grant subsidies to the provinces to enable them to carry on those inventories, or rather to undertake more detailed inventories.

I think that all the provinces, except Quebec, took advantage of this act. Today, I am convinced that the department of forestry, which is to be established under this bill, will give the province of Quebec the opportunity of undertaking inventories that will be paid for jointly by the province and by the federal government.

The hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge) made a few remarks on this new department. He suggested that the new department be named the department of forest industries and forest research, or something like that. I personally heard someone suggest that the new department be called the department of forest products. However, everything considered, I think that the new department should be named simply the department of forestry. That is a fine name

[Mr. Dumas.]

and since the wording of the bill is such that there will be no infringement upon the rights of the provinces, I see no reason why we should complicate matters by choosing another name.

The hon. member for Kootenay West also mentioned the question of a deputy minister. I intend to deal with that point, but not in the same way as the hon. member. I understand that the appointment of a deputy minister is left to the discretion of the Prime Minister. It is his right and I am entirely of that opinion. But I feel that the appointment of a forest engineer to that function would be welcomed.

There are many qualified forest engineers in almost every province.

In the province of Quebec, we have an important group of forest engineers and I am sure that it would be quite easy for the Prime Minister to find in that group of some 400 or 500 forest engineers someone qualified to head that important department. There are also many forest engineers in the neighbouring provinces of Ontario and there are bound to be some among them who have the required qualifications for that post. Therefore, the Prime Minister will have only too many to choose from when he is looking for a competent man among the more than one thousand forest engineers in this country. I therefore hope that he will assume the responsibility of carefully selecting someone in this profession, to manage the business of that department.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Hamilton) pointed out that at least six provinces in this country were spending more money for the administration of their forests than they were recovering from that industry. That is true. There may be two provinces in Canada which do not spend all the revenue they get from their forest lands: Ontario and Quebec. Those two great provinces have almost unlimited forest resources. They are earning large profits from those resources, but nevertheless, I think that they are now spending more than 50 per cent of that revenue. We must admit that the federal government is spending a very small percentage of the revenue from its lumber industry.

Before the adoption of the forestry act, the federal government was spending barely 2 or 3 per cent of the revenue it derived from that industry. Today, it is spending perhaps 8 or 10 per cent. It should spend more.