

Supply—Forestry

industry. I do not think that sufficient consideration has been given to this aspect. I read the release from the minister's department on the recent conference with the provincial ministers of forestry. In the minister's own statement tonight and in that release a very substantial emphasis was placed on the value of research in all fields, product research, entomological research, forest biological research and so on. Nobody is going to deny the essential importance of all this work. No one in the house would challenge for a moment the importance of this work. But in any such conference I think there should also be consideration of taxation policies at all levels of government as they relate to the forest industry. This is fundamental. I have no doubt that informal discussions have taken place, perhaps between the federal government and a single province in an informal manner over the years.

I recall that taxation policy did enter into the discussions of the mines, forests and waters committee in 1959. This is an important area. I do not think any government should impose taxes in the form in which they were imposed by the budget in June because they are bound to have a direct effect on the one industry in Canada which in all its various phases employs more Canadians than any other single industry.

It is essential that taxation policy must take into account the special requirements of an industry which not only is so essential to us in our domestic development, for example, in the field of construction, but is so important to us in the export field. Even now there does not appear to be sufficient awareness of this necessity.

There is one other field to which I feel sure the minister will be devoting a great deal of attention. I imagine that the department has already considered the matter in some detail and depth. The minister mentioned in one of the departmental releases the question of forest fire protection. In one of his speeches he also mentioned one officer who is apparently doing a gargantuan task in British Columbia, because he is one man trying to cover the whole province. I wonder how much thinking has gone on with regard to the establishment of a national force to supplement provincial forces in times of grave emergency.

Despite the fact that the ten year average of acreage burned in forest fires is approximately 2,700,000, we know from the publication of the dominion fire commissioner that in 1961 there were 9,300,000 acres burned, an increase of almost 400 per cent in that year. We are all very conscious of the dreadful problems that confronted the province of

Newfoundland and also the problems of British Columbia in this regard two years or more ago. On such occasions the federal government, if requested, normally send in units of the army but these units of the army are not specially trained for this purpose. As the minister well knows, firefighting is not only a hazardous occupation but it is one in which the firefighter, if he is to be effective, must have skilled direction. He must have had training and the opportunity to have learned how to survive while fighting forest fires. Dead firefighters are not effective. The dangers are very great. The inexperienced can do little good. We know that at the time of the Newfoundland fire the forest officers in national parks had to be diverted from their work and sent to Newfoundland to provide their skilled services.

If it is not economically feasible at this time to develop a separate force, then I hope that within the armed services we can have units of the army trained in fighting fires, so that a corps of trained men can be available, ready to be sent to fight fires and play a more effective role, with their safety better guaranteed, and less risk of endangering lives needlessly.

I have been somewhat critical of the government's policy, but I hope the minister realizes this is not in any personal sense. I do feel that some decisions which have been taken, particularly in the field of taxation with respect to the forest industry, deserve reconsideration. I say this because if the problems that the industry advanced to a committee of this house in 1959 were as real and as urgent then as the industry claimed, I cannot believe all these problems suddenly disappeared in the course of four years. In fact it seems to me there is a necessity for a continued program of special tax legislation geared to meet the requirements of the forest industry.

Item agreed to.

10. Grant to Canadian forestry association, \$25,000.

Mr. Hamilton: There is one question I would like to ask the minister on the basis of the item we have before us. If one looks at these tables carefully he will find that in almost all these votes a number of personnel have received certain salary adjustments. Was this because of classification or because of salary increases?

Mr. Nicholson: Salary increases. They were not substantial.

Item agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: This completes the estimates of the Department of Forestry.