

Government Orders

• (1320)

If those two people and the people who work with them can agree with each other on the needs and principles of sustainable development, working together to build a healthy forest industry and a healthy Canada for the future, then it is possible. I hope that the minister will accept this amendment and we can proceed together to build a stronger industry, a stronger Canada and a healthy environment.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, support of the sub-amendment which specifically supports the principle of sustainable development in relation to the forestry industry of this country.

I will begin first of all by saying one never knows how much one appreciates anything until one has lost it. You would understand that if you came from the Nickel Belt. Unfortunately, I never did have an opportunity to appreciate the luxurious growth which did exist in the Sudbury Basin before the Chicago fire and before the development of smelting nickel. The folks who had lived there for a long time told me of the lush growth on the hills, the streams which ran through the hills, valleys, the streams filled with trout. One old gentleman told me that when he was a boy he would go with his father and fish for trout to bring home for supper, and he had just gone about a mile from where he lived in the small community of Coniston.

If you have been to the Sudbury Basin in the last 15 years, Mr. Speaker, you will know what I mean because we have lost our forests. We lost them because we were greedy—I am talking about the species—and cut down the trees. Everybody attributes that to the Chicago fire because the wood from the trees cut in the Sudbury Basin really went to rebuild Chicago after the Chicago fire. Then along came the smelting of nickel which was done on roaster beds. They would cut the logs down and pile them all up into a huge beds, then they would put eaves on the ends of these piles and then light a fire. The ore would smelt and the nickel would run off into the eaves and be collected.

As a result of that, the SO₂ finished off what little growth there was close to the ground. Once the growth was gone the wind removed the soil from the hills so that all we had was simply hills of bedrock.

We miss those forests. I think it really does detract from the quality of life. I know when people talk about the quality of life today we talk about food, the clothing we wear, the kind of houses we live in and the kind of cars we drive. But I think quality of life also speaks to the question of the environment as well because I think there is something very soothing about the forests. It certainly keeps man closer in touch with nature. So, we are attempting now to rebuild the forests. When I began my speech I said that in fact we do not know what it is like. We do not know what we have lost until we have actually lost it. We do not have it, and we want to rebuild it.

Today Canadians, as a nation, are much more aware of the importance of the forests in our country. I get letters from student groups in high schools who are pleading for me to intervene with the ambassador from Brazil, to write letters imploring him to cease the development in the Amazon Basin so that we can maintain the tropical rain forests. There is a heightened consciousness of the need to protect the forests, not only in the world but also in Canada. It is important to know in Canada, in particular, the importance of forestry to our country. Half of the total land area of Canada, 79 per cent of the area within the 10 provinces, is forested. Sixty percent of forest land is productive. Production of forest products in 1987 accounted for \$38 billion. Only the food and beverage industry exceeded the forest industry's contribution to manufacturing in Canada.

In 1986 forest product exports were \$17.9 billion; lumber exports were \$4.1 billion; paper and paperboard, \$7.5 billion; and other forest products accounted for \$1.4 billion. In 1987 exports were up to \$20.9 billion.

They provided Canada with a net balance of trade of \$18.3 billion in 1987. Farm products in comparison accounted for \$1.4 billion; fishery products, \$2 billion; energy products including petroleum, natural gas, and electricity, \$5.5 billion; metal ores and non-ferrous metals, \$6.2 billion.

The forest product industries in this country account for 15 per cent of Canada's total merchandise trade. Canada supplies 23 per cent of the world's exports of pulp and paper, and 23 per cent of total exports of manufactured forest products. There are 840,000 persons employed directly or indirectly in the forestry industry, representing 7.4 per cent of all working Cana-