

*S.O. 29*

85 per cent of our forest lands are considered to be productive. As a result, forests provide the feedstock for the province's main industry. More than 36,000 people in New Brunswick depend on our forests for their income. The wage bill for forestry work represents \$250 million. The gross value of the province's forestry products exceeds one billion dollars annually.

The federal Government has signed a five-year reforestation agreement with the province of New Brunswick, which expects to spend more than \$77 million. The federal contribution will be \$42 billion. Moreover, the Federal Government has allocated over \$56 million to the Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre now under construction in Fredericton. This will be one of the most advanced centres for scientific research in the world. After completion, it will employ over 400 workers. The Conservative Government is therefore doing something to help the people of New Brunswick.

The Canadian Forestry Service has also contributed over \$2.4 million to build an auxiliary research centre in Edmuntston. Located in one of the major forestry areas of the province, this centre will assure a federal presence which will give the various users of this service greater access to technology.

In addition, the federal Government administers a Maritime Forestry Centre in Fredericton, where researchers try to improve forestry management for the entire region.

The federal Government has also signed similar agreements with all other Atlantic provinces. Nova Scotia receives over \$79 million, Newfoundland, over \$48 million, and Prince Edward Island, \$20 million. These amounts represent the combined federal-provincial contributions.

Since 1982, the federal and provincial Governments have decided to join their efforts at the request of the Canadian Resources and Environment Ministers Council. This is how the interservice Canada Forest Fire Centre was created. Its purpose is to coordinate and support forest fire fighting agencies throughout Canada. And here is a policy that has been established by this Government, Mr. Speaker.

The Centre's purpose is not to fight forest fires directly, but rather to monitor the forest fire situation in Canada. It also coordinates the allotment of water-bombers used to that end and other resources from either Canada or the United States. Earlier, a number of speakers referred to the resources supplied by the United States and other provinces—this is thanks to the Centre, that was planned and set up by this Government. The Centre also will play a very significant role in coordinating the distribution of the national fleet of CL-215's as soon as they are operational, under the terms of a co-operative, federal-provincial purchase agreement reached in 1984.

The governments participating in the Centre's programs include the Government of Canada through the Canadian Forestry Service, Parks Canada and Northern Affairs, and every provincial Government. The Federal Government is

responsible for one-third of the Centre's operating budget for 1985-86. The remaining portion is covered by the provinces, in proportion to their productive lands surveyed within their respective jurisdictions.

The Centre is the hub upon which depend all established programs to control forest fires in Canada. Today, the situation in New-Brunswick is viewed as serious, according to data supplied by the Canadian Interservice Forest Fire Centre. The most significant fire was in the area of Tracadie. It destroyed more than 40,000 hectares. Another raged in the Newcastle area, and finally there was another fire at the Canadian Forces Gagetown Base, where some 6,000 hectares have already been destroyed.

The people in those areas had been evacuated, but those who lived there have now been able to return to their homes. Some buildings have been destroyed, but as of now we have no details on the extent of the damage. All fires are now under control because of favourable weather conditions in the last 24 hours. The situation is now generally stable, although firefighting will continue for a few more days.

In Gagetown, the Canadian Forestry Service provides integrated forest management and firefighting services to the Canadian Forces base there. Fire detection is done from four watch towers. Fire fighters include military personnel from the base and CFS employees. Fires on the base are fought by the army, with technical advice from the CFS.

Fires that extended outside the base were first fought by the army with the CFS's technical support, before a general alert was sounded.

Mr. Speaker, since forests are under provincial jurisdiction, I hope that my province of New Brunswick will request federal assistance to cope with this economic disaster because our forests are vitally important for us.

On Prince Edward Island, the fire risk was also extremely high. Several homes and buildings have been destroyed. Some areas were evacuated and several roads were closed. Things have now greatly improved due to better weather conditions. There remain only two fires which are also under control.

Nova Scotia experienced 40 fires last week and they are now all under control.

Similar circumstances were also found in Newfoundland where three large fires threatened the communities of Grand Falls, Windsor and Brown's Arm-Porterville. Several areas were evacuated while the fires were blazing during the weekend, but finally the people were told that they could return home. Conditions have greatly improved but supervision will be carried on for a few days.

As for the CL-215, some provinces have bought them under the terms of the federal-provincial agreements and they have already put these water bombers at the disposal of the provinces requesting them for emergencies. Quebec has provided water bombers to fight fires in New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan has also sent two planes which unfortunately