

Government Orders

stand on something. In terms of resource conflict, process is important.

In our province there is currently no policy in place that can resolve these resource conflict differences. When my colleague from Esquimalt was the premier of the province, we had a process in place, but it has been emasculated by the current government. I have not checked the clock or the news today. I assume that the minister is still in charge in British Columbia. If he has not been changed yet, he certainly should be. He gives forestry a bad name, and I think a new attention, a new direction, to forestry is needed at the provincial level as well.

I said at the beginning that we will be proposing a number of amendments to this bill. I have also said that we will be calling for this committee to have an opportunity to travel through the country to give Canadians a chance to talk about forestry at a national level. If we do that, it will be the best show in town. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we will have an attendance at those meetings because people are so concerned and interested in our forests that they want to have a say and present their views.

I want to wrap up on an international approach, a global approach. We have read in all of the magazines, or heard on the news, of rock stars and others who have travelled primarily to South America where the rain forests are being threatened. Obviously, we have a concern to protect our forests and work on our rain forests, but we also have to think about the concerns we have about those forests in other parts of this world of ours.

• (1650)

They are, Mr. Speaker, to use the words of the minister, "perhaps the lungs of the earth". We have to ensure that we have those lungs. If we can help our forests at home here, we can ensure forests in other parts of the world are protected as well. We will be calling on that in the committee when we are dealing

with this legislation so that we can give this department the strength and mandate that I think it needs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I liked the idea of the Hon. Member that the shorter the speeches, the less trees we will cut, which is going to be very fine for the Speaker in the Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Charles-Eugène Marin (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that Canadians from coast to coast are glad that the Government has decided to create a Forestry Department. I rise not only to speak in favour of the Bill but also to exhort my colleagues on both sides of the House to pass this legislation quickly and enthusiastically.

The Minister gave the background of this Bill. He also described in detail the challenges and opportunities which show convincingly why Canada must have a Forestry Department without delay.

Québec is one of the major forestry provinces of Canada. About 229,000 people work in fields of activity directly or indirectly related to forestry; that is one worker in thirteen. Forestry is the leading industry in more than 120 municipalities in the province. Forest products are the province's largest export. For example, exports of forest products in 1987 amounted to \$49 billion, 25 per cent of Québec's total exports.

I am therefore particularly proud to show you, Mr. Speaker, how the new Department will keep Canada a world leader in forestry, how we will remain among the leaders in forest products and conservation and how this new institution will maintain our world reputation as a people who cherishes and knows how to administer this vast resource of which we are the guardians and beneficiaries.

Indeed, given the importance of forests for our country, it seems almost inconceivable that we do not yet have such a federal Department. I think that the Department should have six main tasks. I give considerable importance to the first one, which is to lead the nation to an awareness of the value of our forests and to educate the public about this.