

Softwood Lumber

The forest industry provides employment for nearly 300,000 people directly and 750,000 indirectly. In 1988, more than \$30 billion of forest products were exported. One seventh of manufacturing income is forest-related and forests contribute more than \$17 billion to Canada's net balance of trade—more than agriculture, fishing and mining combined.

Forestry is a bigger industry than automobiles and oil. Canada has the second largest supply of softwood in the world, after the former Soviet Union, and is the leading exporter of softwood lumber. By the way, this fact reminds us of the importance of what we are debating tonight.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Canada produces one third of pulp exports and 63 per cent of all newsprint.

Canada produces about 16 per cent of all the world's softwood lumber and should continue to do so during the next decade. In addition, Canada accounts for about 40 per cent of all the international trade in this product, since it exports 70 per cent of its production.

In 1989, Canadian production of softwood lumber amounted to some 59 million cubic metres, compared to 45 million in 1980. Scattered across the country, most sawmills are small and employ fewer than 100 people. British Columbia provides 61 per cent of the softwood lumber produced in Canada, followed by Quebec, with 18 per cent; Ontario, with 10 per cent; Alberta, with 7 per cent; and New Brunswick, with 2 per cent.

Nearly three quarters of British Columbia's production is exported, compared to half of the production in other provinces.

What is most troublesome about our present trade situation with regard to forest products remains its vulnerability.

This weakness is evidenced, to some extent, by the limited number of markets and even more so by the concentration of production around just a few products. Besides, since wood is a commodity which is becoming increasingly scarce, thus bringing closer the cost and the price of products of a lesser value, there might be a possibility for improving our exports by eventually resorting to products with a higher added value.

Moreover, the industry should decide to diversify its products and markets by using new technologies in order to be protected from economic fluctuations.

The future of this industry is at stake and Canada has resolutely entered into a transitional period of forest resources management and development. So the pace of this transition—in this case, the change from essentially extracting forest products to adopting a more cultural approach—must be accelerated without forgetting however the importance of adhering to the principles of integrated management for the entire Canadian forest resources.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, you and others may wonder why a member from Atlantic Canada would stick around here all night to speak on this issue since it does not affect Atlantic Canada. I must say that I have a very strong interest in forestry. My riding is very intensely based on the forestry industry. Also, as a Canadian member of Parliament I have an interest in Canada. This a national issue. It is not just because British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario or Quebec is having a problem. It is an issue that all Canadians must address.

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I think that we have to look at it also as an issue of sovereignty, an issue where we must protect what we have. I do not mean by following some of the ideology that the Americans are using at the present moment. I am saying that we must not look at it in an anti-American movement. We must start looking at a pro-Canadian movement. If other countries are going to harm our industries then we have to start taking some action.

With regard to British Columbia, I want to speak in a little more detail. I know that the Liberal leader in the province of British Columbia, Mr. Gordon Wilson, has expressed his very deep concern with the state of affairs. The Liberal critic for the forestry sector in the province of British Columbia also issued a press release recently. I would like to quickly quote his statement. He says: "Lumber manufacturing operators in B.C. will be devastated by the new tariff on softwood lumber". That in itself is reason for me to stick around this evening to say something about it and try to convince our neighbours to the south that what they are doing is completely wrong and immoral.