

Government Orders

(f) participate in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resource products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally;

Although day to day management of natural resources falls under provincial jurisdictions these directives in Bill C-48 should lay to rest many longstanding public concerns that the federal government might either encourage the so-called rape and destruction of our natural resources on the one hand or collapse before extremists advocating only recreational and tourist use of natural resources on the other hand.

The legislation makes clear that the minister must have regard for integrated management and sustainable development. That is good for everybody.

Another reason to praise Bill C-48 is that it will help counteract an unfortunate tendency by some people to speak of our natural resource industries as though they were so-called sunset industries, as though their time had somehow come and passed. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The role of science and technology in the Department of Natural Resources is widespread with the scientific establishments at numerous sites from Victoria to Resolute Bay to St. John's as part of a science and technology budget at Natural Resources Canada in the order of \$432 million projected for 1994-95.

Among the minister's duties are that the minister shall, and I quote clause 6, sections (b), (c) and (i):

(b) assist in the development and promotion of Canadian scientific and technological capabilities;

(c) participate in the development and application of codes and standards for technical surveys and natural resources products and for the management and use of natural resources;

(i) gather, compile, analyse, co-ordinate and disseminate information respecting scientific, technological, economic, industrial, managerial, marketing and related activities and developments affecting Canada's natural resources.

Another indicator that our natural resource industries are continually elevating in addition to the specific growth in science and technology is the modernization of their insights, their principles and the managerial techniques as the world moves toward sustainable development, in part pushed by the new wave of green consumerism.

As a prime example of such integrated resource management the federal government has been a major participant in the Whitehorse mining initiative whose report presented September 13 included a set of more than 150 recommendations in light of 16 principles and 70 goals voiced by more than 140 individual participants in the process.

For all these reasons I applaud the government for uniting these departments into one through Bill C-48. However, I also want to voice some concerns.

• (1735)

Bill C-48 helps to spell out the federal role and relationship with provincial jurisdiction over forestry and mining. Despite much talk about the so-called new economy, the \$40 billion forest industry remains number one in Canada, providing some 777,000 jobs or one in every 16 in 1993 with approximately 350 Canadian communities dependent on forestry for their financial existence. It also adds a \$19 billion contribution to Canada's net balance of trade, by far the largest of any industry in Canada.

Although the mining industry has been hard hit in recent years, there are some 150 communities across Canada that depend on mining and mining related activities. This contributes 4 per cent of our GDP, 17 per cent of our exports and a net \$11 billion surplus to our balance of payments as well as being the source of 60 per cent of rail freight and 55 per cent of port traffic. Directly and indirectly, mining provides some 300,000 jobs.

Clearly, forestry and mining are two of the most essential contributors to our national economic health. Therefore I would have preferred to see clause 7 of Bill C-48 say that the minister shall co-operate with the provinces and municipalities rather than may as it now does. These economic sectors are simply too important for us to tolerate government duplications or squabbles regarding jurisdiction. As a Reformer I am especially concerned that there should be as little overlap as possible between the levels of government and that no activity be undertaken by the federal level if the provincial level can handle it.

I also have questions on clause 35, subclauses 7 and 8, which detail other things the minister may do.

Subclause 7 says that the Minister of Natural Resources may make grants and contributions and, with the approval of the Governor in Council, provide other forms of financial assistance. I am told that Parliament can exert control here by simply refusing to appropriate money to the minister for such purposes. But once the funds are voted, the minister does not even need to consult with cabinet before making grants and contributions.

I believe Bill C-48 should have included some procedure to build into the granting process public accountability and transparency as well as requiring at the minimum consultation with cabinet.

Subclause 8 provides that:

(1) The Minister may co-ordinate logistics support and provide related assistance for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge of the Arctic region and contributing to the exercise of Canada's sovereignty in that region and its adjacent waters.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the Minister may

(a) make grants and contributions; and