

*Government Orders*

Bill C-29 will also have a major impact on my constituents. I would like to mention that my riding has four paper mills operating at top capacity and also a large number of sawmills which will be able to take advantage of what the new Bill has to offer.

Ever since Jacques Cartier set foot on Canadian soil, the lumber industry has played a very important part in our country's economy and still does. A century ago, there was practically nothing in the way of regulations that applied to the forestry industry. At the time, the Crown, through the provinces, gave individuals tracts of land which they worked very hard to clear, using the wood for the construction of buildings on their property.

Briefly, these people farmed the arable land they had cleared during the summer and worked as loggers during the winter, supplying saw mills and pulp and paper mills with the raw material they required.

At the time there was no advanced technology. In other words, tools and means of transportation were primitive, and that is why clearcutting forests was not as serious a matter as it is today. What I mean to say is that when forests were clearcut, the bare expanses were not as readily visible as they are today.

The forest was also a source of food, which shows how important it was at the time and still is today. Aboriginal people living on reserves depend on the forest, especially for their hunting grounds and trap lines.

The situation has changed today. The speed with which our forests are being cut has a dramatic effect on the Canadian Government's future vision and policy.

[English]

The forestry industry provides one in ten jobs in Canada directly or indirectly. In fact close to 800,000 people work in the industry, 350 communities depend on it, and huge chunks of income tax are paid to the federal government. Therefore it should only be fair that a lot of that money be put back into Canada's forestry to ensure its economic stability.

Yesterday the minister outlined the department's history which I do not intend to repeat today. Please allow me one comment.

It should be noted that since the turn of the century the department was bounced around on nine different occasions which explains its lack of continuity, competence and national involvement. There should be a strong federal presence to provide the much needed leadership. In this case it is better late than never for the federal government to impose its presence. Indeed, the creation of a department of forestry is a step in the right direction.

One cannot argue the generalities the bill offers, except in clause 6(c) where it only refers to the promotion of the forest industry but does not include enforcement.

I whole-heartedly encourage the minister to pursue the idea of hiring inspectors to oversee and supervise forest management. For example, he has mentioned that in Canada there is approximately one inspector for every 450,000 hectares of forested land, whereas in the United States there is one for every 15,000 hectares of forested land.

What I am saying is that it is not enough to advocate a forest management policy. It has to be enforced. The question is how.

The department does have the leverage power through the forest resource development agreements to impose its conditions on the provinces, namely in the area of reforestation and silviculture.

[Translation]

We have a lot of catching up to do. Canada's productive forests cover a total area of 220 million hectares.

• (1220)

Over the years, 12 per cent of those lands have not been satisfactorily restocked. We are looking at an increase of 200,000 hectares or nearly 1 per cent per year. Granted, 88 per cent has been reforested satisfactorily.

However, it means that next year, it will be 13 per cent and the year after, 14 per cent, and so forth. We cannot let a situation like this develop. We must act instead of constantly blaming the provinces. It is the only way to enforce the rules of sound forest management, as described in subsection 6(c).