

the unleashed disease and pests that are invading our forests, hydro right of ways and road building.

The head of the IWA of British Columbia makes no bones about it when he says that we are running out of timber in this Province. We are at a crossroads with the industry. Mr. Speaker, the other day it was brought to our attention by a number of the lobby groups in the forest industry that now the furniture industries of Ontario and Quebec have to import maple logs from the United States. It is absolutely unbelievable that our wooden furniture industry must now import logs because of the casual approach that we take to our forest industry. I hope the Minister responsible will respond to this particular point made by the professional foresters. The information that has been provided to us by the Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters suggests that:

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The number of person years available to research in the Canadian Forestry Service has declined by more than 50 per cent since 1968. This has occurred during a period of higher demands for more information and new technology to be applied to the forest industry. Increased research is required in almost all phases of forests and forest management.

At a time when we should be doing more research in this very critical industry in order to remain in a competitive position with competing nations around the world, what is the Canadian Forestry Service doing? It is cutting back the amount of funds provided for research in this largest Canadian industry. I suggest that the saddest comment on this issue is provided again by the British Columbia Professional Foresters. Our current spending on silviculture by all parties, including federal and provincial Governments as well as the private sector, amounts to approximately \$240 million a year. This is less than 1 per cent of the total value of the annual forest production in Canada. Less than 1 per cent is being invested in silviculture. Again, this is something which competing countries such as Sweden consider to be a mindless position for governments and industry to take.

The figure which makes us acutely aware of the seriousness of the problem is the amount of money that we set aside for the Canadian Forestry Service. This past year it was \$70 million. In the same ministry and by the same Minister, \$146 million was budgeted for the Atmospheric Environment Service and \$275 million for Parks Canada. While one does not have anything of a disparaging nature to say about money being spent on climate and weather monitoring and Parks Canada, I do say that it is nothing short of a national disgrace that the federal Government spends twice as much money monitoring weather as it spends on our forest industry. I suggest therein lies the crux of the problem in terms of lack of financial support that this Government is presently giving to this critical industry.

One could go on and on outlining the serious problem facing Canada's number one industry. The other day Members of the House found out, much to their disappointment, that the assistant deputy minister responsible for the Canadian Forestry Service has left the employ of the federal Government after working for it for a number of years. One can only speculate

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why he left but this was a person who was attempting to do a great deal to heighten the role of the Canadian Forestry Service in this country.

The federal Cabinet had promised, a year and a half ago, that it would set aside at least \$130 million for this year and on an annual basis. That was 18 months ago. I suspect that this individual was waiting month after month for that money, having been given that commitment, only to find no money of any substantive nature coming to that critical department. I suspect that that individual simply gave up in disgust. He could not stand before his professional colleagues in the country and say that he is responsible for the Canadian Forestry Service as assistant deputy minister responsible for the major resource sector of our economy and the major exporter in our economy but was unable to get the funds that were promised to him. How could such a person who was a legitimate professional, knowledgeable about the state of the forest industry in this country and knowing what was happening to it, with the compassion and commitment of a professional forester, stand idly by and watch the demise and decay of our forests, based on the lack of interest and negative attitude presented by the Government? That is why we are asking the Minister to bring his colleagues together?

We are also asking the Minister to lift up the role and importance of the forest industry in the Government's eyes. After all, we are talking about the major industry in this country which employs the equivalent of the entire population of greater Vancouver, 1.3 million people. But to what is the industry relegated? Do we even have a minister of state responsible for this area? Is there a deputy minister? There certainly is no minister. There is an assistant deputy minister in the Department of the Environment, which is really an agency. The federal Government is clearly overlooking a role that it should be taking up.

I appreciate the fact that forestry is a provincial responsibility. However, there is also provincial responsibility in other areas for which there are federal Ministers responsible. I do not pretend that creating a Ministry of Forestry will solve the problem overnight. I will not even suggest that creating a Ministry of Forestry at the federal level will provide most of the answers. But it will send a very clear message to the industry that the Government is serious about forestry and is committed to the forest industry in terms of providing an appropriate infrastructure and financial support system to it.

It is quite clear how the forest industry feels about the role that the federal Government is providing. I do not want to suggest for a moment that I am necessarily casting any dispersions or negative comments on the role being played by the Minister because I think most Members understand that we are dealing with a situation where most Members of the House and the Cabinet come from urban areas. They have been raised in the urban tradition and perhaps they lack some appreciation for the forest industry, which tends to be rural by definition.

In closing, I suggest that the federal Government must provide a federal department, as called for by the Science