

*Adjournment Debate*

over one million hectares under control. But just to put this into perspective, I am told this is one of the fastest expanding infestations which has ever been witnessed by scientists. It has spread from 67,000 hectares in 1983 to over 1.5 million in 1984. I am told that with respect to the Eddy forest products limits alone, their losses by stunted trees and so on during this one year will equal their total plantings during the next five-year or ten-year period under its reforestation program. We can see, therefore, the economic loss and danger to the forests.

I was trying to make the point in the House that there is an urgency for decisions to be made now. The B.T. insecticide needs to be approved for use in the infected jackpine stands in Ontario. I am told that the effectiveness of this insecticide for use with the jackpine budworm infestation can be provided within a two-week to three-week period. Then it is simply a case of the Minister of Agriculture approving it.

I also want to point out the urgency of a decision being made by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources to approve a plan for next year. It is not just a case of turning on the plan at the whim of the Minister. There are long-term preparations which have to be made. Pesticides have to be ordered. I am told there is a three-month delivery date and there has to be a period of public hearings or approvals after the Minister makes the decision. Planes have to be contracted for. These decisions cannot be put off until January or February at the whim or convenience of the Ontario Minister.

● (1825)

I know, Mr. Speaker, that we are very fortunate to have a Minister of Forestry in the Government of Canada who has extensive experience in these problems in New Brunswick. I am very pleased that he is in the House this evening to respond to my representations. I simply hope that he will give an indication that the federal Government, through the Minister of Agriculture, will act expeditiously to approve the insecticide and that he will use his influence with the provincial Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Agriculture to approve a control program at a very early date. I say this because, although the actual responsibility for the control program is under the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, our scientists at the Great Lakes Research Laboratory in Sault Ste. Marie are very involved in the actual egg counts, the scientific analysis and investigation of this infestation. Clearly, given the experience of our Minister, his recommendations and representations will have a great deal of influence on the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources in this matter.

**Hon. G. S. Gerry Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)):**  
Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for Algoma

(Mr. Foster) for his kind comments. I have had some considerable experience in dealing with such matters, coming as I do from the Province of New Brunswick. I also want to apologize to him for being absent when he asked his question. I was addressing a very major group of the Western Forest and Conservation Association in California regarding issues of great concern to Canada—and the Canadian forest industry.

When we have an infestation of any insect, as we have lots of them in this country, it is a matter of great concern to our country and certainly to the forest industry. Believe me, we have agonized in some detail over these infestations and how to deal with them effectively. As the Hon. Member has rightly pointed out, management of the forests and the spray programs are essentially the responsibility of the provinces. We have been working very closely with the province here and I will outline in some detail the steps we have taken to ensure that his legitimate concerns are being addressed.

There is unfortunately only one chemical at this time which has been registered for the jackpine budworm, and that is Fenitrothion, which we have used of course in the Province of New Brunswick. However, the CFS has been working in the Forest Pest Management Institute in Sault Ste. Marie in collecting insects and doing research to find out if it is possible to have a biological insecticide suitable for fighting the jackpine budworm. We would prefer that if it is possible to do and within reasonable cost.

My officials in Sault Ste. Marie met today with the manufacturer of another chemical, Aminocarb, to discuss possible testing of that insecticide to combat the jackpine budworm as well. The Hon. Member may be aware that there is a group called the jackpine working group. They met yesterday to discuss ways of controlling infestation. Present at the meeting were members of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, my own Great Lakes Forest Research Centre and, of course, the Forest Pest Management Institute. We invited representatives as well from the E. B. Eddy Company, a very large employer in the Hon. Member's riding. In the near future we hope to be able to provide the test data to the manufacturers and to Agriculture Canada on the results of our testing. I mention that because of course the registration of pesticides is their responsibility. If they are proven to be effective against the jackpine budworm, it will then be incumbent upon the manufacturer to seek a label amendment from Agriculture Canada. If that is approved, the new insecticide could be available in time for the program next spring.

Believe me, Mr. Speaker, having been a forestry Minister in a province of Canada I know how much time it takes to take all the necessary steps to make sure you have a program prepared to go. I do want to inform the Hon. Member that while steps are being taken by CFS, the decision to go or not go in the Province of Ontario does rest with the province. While we understand that there are some people who have concerns, rightly so, about spraying chemicals or even biologi-