

*Lumber and Plywood Price Stabilization*

sawmills in British Columbia. To the extent that unemployment has been reduced it has, of course, been due to changing weather conditions, which have enabled the resumption of logging operations on a much larger scale. This has produced more logs for the mills. But it is still a fact, which I ascertained only a few minutes ago from the people who head the loggers union on the west coast, that a number of mills are reduced to one shift a day and are still working short time. So nothing has in fact been done to meet this part of the problem. When the minister says in his statement, with a naivety and disingenuousness that really is surprising, that he looks to the industry to safeguard the requirements of traditional customers, he really cannot be very serious in suggesting that an industry which has failed to do these things will suddenly be chastened by a remark made by the minister in a statement to this house.

● (2:20 p.m.)

The second factor with which this house and the country are concerned is the increasing price of timber, affecting directly the cost of housing. It is perfectly clear to anyone who has studied the matter at all—and I do not claim to have studied it more than a little—that the rate of increase in the price is not due to increased costs or any other justifiable reason. The increase is due merely to the fact that the demand is very great and the operators and corporations involved are getting what the traffic will bear. This is something our kind of society ought not to permit, and something our kind of economy cannot afford.

When we look at the last paragraph of the statement we find that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is presently discussing with the provincial governments concerned the question of additional supplies of timber to be made available to industry. In view of this statement I have a right to ask how it is intended to make this additional timber available. I have a right to ask, at what price, under what conditions, by what arrangements, for what use? This is really almost an insulting kind of statement, namely to tell the house that there is discussion about making more timber available, without any facts surrounding it at all.

I am pleased to hear that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will be vigilant with regard to increases in price and anti-competitive developments in this regard. But the fact is that prices have risen without justification and that action should have been taken before now. I congratulate the minister

[Mr. Lewis.]

on a statement which is soft in words and even softer in meaning.

[Translation]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for making available to us a French copy of the statement he just made. However, we are still puzzled and we are somewhat embarrassed to comment.

One might wonder if we are not back in Europe or in England, or if there is a war on, because everybody is gone and it is impossible to work. Is there a shortage of lumber or of materials? What are we short of?

I must point out to the minister and to the government that what has been lacking is planning. When we consider that in 1966, 1967 and 1968—and I have figures to prove this—lumber yards in Montreal and all Eastern Canada had great difficulties to sell their lumber, and now we are being told that Canada is importing roundwood and logs.

Has the department responsible for ensuring the mobility of workers given up its task? Is planning related to building materials made in universities or in an ivory tower? One may wonder where that will lead us.

As far as our party is concerned, there are no congratulations to offer to the minister as to the existing planning. In fact, we lack money and several other things. If we have a surplus of raw materials that we cannot exploit how will we be able to make profits?

I would like to draw the minister's attention to that situation for, in my opinion, it should not arise every year. I suggest that a good device to give work to our unemployed people, once and for all, would be to do some planning for more than a year in advance.

[English]

#### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE OF  
C.N.R. AND AIR CANADA ANNUAL REPORTS  
—SUGGESTED MOTION

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council):** As has been mentioned several times in the house, there have been discussions about the prospect of referring to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications the most recently tabled annual reports of Air Canada and Canadian National Railways. I believe there might be agreement to accepting an order somewhat along the following terms without debate. With the consent of the house I would move:

That the annual reports for 1967 of the Canadian National Railways and of the Canadian