

*The Budget—Mr. Kristiansen*

Again from *The Vancouver Sun* of February 10, 1984, we have "Ottawa predicts disaster in woods", and "Tree planting cuts can mean disaster". *The Vancouver Sun* of November 19, 1983, carried the headline, "Forest renewal aid called abysmal". The suggestion here is that Canada spends more abroad assisting other countries with reforestation than we spend on our own resources. The January 1984 newsletter of the Western Sylvicultural Contractors Association headlined, "Federal forest funds fade". The article said:

For all intents and purposes B.C. has lost out on a \$60 million cost sharing program with the federal Government. The money would have been spent on backlog reforestation—rehabilitating and planting 600,000 hectares of the Province's better N.S.R. sites.

*The Vancouver Sun* of February 18 this year said, "B.C. forests being raped, prof charges". Again *The Vancouver Sun* of February 8, 1984, said, "Forest renewal plan put on hold for a year". This delay is absolutely devastating for employment and the viability of that province and its people. Another headline, from the *Trail Times*, reads, "Forestry aid is less likely to continue". In *The Vancouver Sun* of February 9, 1984, the headline reads, "Government is gambling with the future of B.C. forests". The government referred to is both the Government in Ottawa and the provincial Government in Victoria. In *The Vancouver Sun* of February 4, 1984, an article headlined "Axe-wielding Waterland attacked for cutting 500 jobs" says:

Professional foresters and B.C.'s biggest forest union laced into Forests Minister Tom Waterland on Friday for axing more than 500 jobs in his ministry.

To quote from the February 3 Canadian Press statement on which this story was based, Mr. Speaker, it said:

The provincial Forests Ministry will cut 506 positions April 1 to reach its target of reducing its work force by 25 per cent to 4,145, Forests Minister Tom Waterland said Friday.

Waterland said employees have been given the options of taking earlier retirement, voluntary retirement and collection of severance benefits or moving to another position in the Forests Ministry or another ministry if jobs are available.

Waterland said 316 jobs will be eliminated in 46 regional offices, 100 positions in the six district offices and 90 positions in the Department's headquarters.

The cutback should not affect any specific branch of the Ministry, Waterland said, because it is a uniform cutback throughout the Department.

That Ministry, which has been criticized continuously for having too few skilled people to do the minimum job of overseeing forest management in my province, not to mention their failure to begin the process of catching up on backlog reforestation, says that a 25 per cent cut across the board in services, including their total destruction of the B.C. forestry school, is not going to have any impact. The Minister has the nerve to suggest that people can move to jobs elsewhere in the Department. It is a tragic picture, Mr. Speaker, absolutely tragic, and the policies of this Government in Ottawa are not helping.

I can understand the frustration of some of the federal Ministers who I believe have had a legitimate and sincere interest in trying to promote the welfare of that industry and the people who depend upon it. But whether they be Ministers in this Liberal Government or Ministers in the former Clark Conservative Government, they are of no help when they cut

programs just because we have an irresponsible Government in British Columbia which is destroying its forest industry. For the federal Government to join in this attack on our forest industry does not help anyone at all.

Another headline from the *Nelson Daily News* says, "Forests Ministry lay-offs hit city". Some 50 people in my home town of only 9,000 people have just been laid off. This does not simply mean that those 50 families are going to be in trouble, or that this community, Nelson, which already has an unemployment rate of some 30 per cent to 40 per cent, is going to be in trouble; it means that we are not going to take any concrete steps to renew and revitalize one of the most decadent timber areas in British Columbia. We have been logged and logged for almost a century, and virtually nothing has been put back. Then we get complaints from both the federal and provincial Governments that they do not have enough money to do the job that is required. Well, there is more news in the headlines.

● (1650)

This headline, from the *Trail Daily Times* of February 17, 1984, again from Canada Press, reads, "Taxpayers Cheated. Sloppy Work Costs-Ombudsman". The article says:

British Columbia Forest Products Ltd. has been getting millions of dollars of timber tax free because of sloppy work by the provincial forests Ministry, Ombudsman Karl Friedmann said Thursday.

And slipshod measuring by ministry scalers had cost six small independent firms \$4.5 million to \$6.3 million, and forced them to the 'brink of financial disaster,'—

Provincial ombudsman Karl Friedmann went on to say:

'Since the timber was not scaled, the company benefiting from the use of Crown timber had never been billed, and millions of dollars have gone uncollected.'

Friedmann said it appears the ministry will not bill the company because B.C. Forest Products had made it clear it does not want to get a bill, and this was contrary to the spirit and intent of the Forests Act.

To quote from him again, he said:

'This position contradicts any proposition that the ministry might be managing the province's forests in the public interest.'

That is from the provincial ombudsman of British Columbia after an extensive investigation.

The headline from *The Vancouver Sun* of February 29, 1984, reads, "\$750 million in fees unpaid over the period of the last five years". That charge, made in the legislature, reported in *The Vancouver Sun*, is well substantiated. We have seen drastic declines in revenue, not just because of recession but because nobody has been collecting the money that part of the forest industry in that province has been making even in good times. Talk about horses on the payroll!

For governments, whether federal or provincial, to suggest that they do not now have the money and therefore we will have to bail out eventually the entire Province of British Columbia, which produces the lion's share of forest products in this country and the lion's share of employment—the federal Government's own report suggests that—is absolutely scandalous.