

Forestry

On a broader scope, in coming to a conclusion, it is regrettable and unfortunate to have to finish on a negative note on this because we have heard time and time again from this Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) about his special relationship with the President of the United States and how he is going to be able to resolve and deal with acid rain.

We have not seen that, despite this special relationship. I asked one of my colleagues, the Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) who is our noted environment critic: "What happened to Bill Davis?" What did happen to Bill Davis? What was his contribution in trying to solve the impact of acid rain on Canada and in our forests? I think that the Government itself would admit that Mr. Davis and whatever he was doing—and I was not a Member of the House at that time—was an absolute failure.

There is much that remains to be done. The importance of signing an agreement between Canada and the United States will help resolve the general over-all problem of acid rain and its impact on our environment, and in particular, its impact on our forests where so many people have their livelihoods, and so many communities depend on it, and so many people are now beginning to understand the importance of that industry to our ecosystems and to our way of life in this country.

• (1420)

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this motion which the Hon. Member from Prince George—Bulkley Valley (Mr. Gardiner) has put before the House.

I want to emphasize that this motion states the obvious, but it comes quite a long time after policy directions were taken by the Government. The substance of the motion deals with having a more stable and sustainable forest industry and reducing acid rain causing emissions.

The Throne Speech at the beginning of this session stated some things very clearly. One, of course, was the environmental imperative in which the subject of acid rain was a very significant component. During the debates that followed it, we voiced on more than one occasion the objective of an acid rain accord with the United States.

In this session, during the budget debate and elsewhere, we have heard references to the new fully-

fledged Department of Forestry which is being created by the Government and which will, I hope and trust, give significant new emphasis to the forests and all of the resources associated with them in the months and the years to come.

I have the privilege of being a member of two standing committees of this House, the Forestry and Fisheries Committee and the Environment Committee. Initiatives are now under way in both areas.

I believe that among other subjects we will be addressing in the forestry committee are terms of reference for the new Department of Forestry. In so doing, we will be addressing a stable and sustained forest economy, forest industry, forest ecology and forest environment in this country. We will give the significance to the forests of Canada that they deserve. We will help the Minister hopefully, and the other departments of Government to reconcile and resolve those many areas that overlap, and sometimes cause conflict. Multiple use forest management requires intensive co-operation and perhaps, in fact, requires some transfers of mandate from one department to another.

In terms of the environment, already in our environmental committee we have talked about the concepts of sustainable development as enunciated so well in the World Commission on the Environment and Development, the so-called Brundtland Report. I have already recommended to that committee that we use forestry as one of the subject areas to develop concepts of sustainable development in Canada's future. I think that forestry is a very apt subject in that respect.

I recognize that the Hon. Member from Prince George comes from an area where forestry is of great value in terms of employment, economics, ecology, recreation and aesthetics. I understand that because I come from New Brunswick where the forest is also extremely important. More than one-third of our entire provincial economy in New Brunswick is related to forestry. We all realize Canada's forests go far beyond their economic value. The Minister of State for Forestry (Mr. Oberle) has described on more than one occasion that he sees Canada's forests as an analogy to the human body. He describes them as the very lungs and kidneys of an ecosystem. Forests help to regulate the atmosphere by trapping and converting solar energy into oxygen. They also play an important role in controlling global precipitation and moisture exchange. It is therefore imperative that we direct our efforts to ensuring that Canada's