

*The Address—Mr. Kristiansen*

There is no mention of the forest industry in Canada in the Speech from the Throne. In spite of the rather brave and encouraging words of the Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Roberts) a few days prior to the commencement of this sitting, acknowledging the rather dismal record of the former Liberal administration as regards the deterioration of the Canadian forestry service and the inactivity of that government in that area over many years, there was not a single word relating to Canada's forest industry in the Speech from the Throne. One out of ten people employed in industry in Canada work in that particular industry, yet there was no mention of it. This at a time when seminar after seminar and conference after conference from the east coast to the west and in between have been drawing attention to the neglect of that industry.

Our timber resources are no longer a renewable resource. Mr. Speaker, when a resource is being depleted faster than it is being replenished, then by definition it is no longer renewable. That is a tragedy. It is especially a tragedy in communities like Kootenay West and many others across the land, which contain single resource communities existing only because of one industry.

Interest rates under this government, as under the former government, are driving people out of their homes, virtually turning back the clock in regard to housing construction from one end of the country to another. Even in the so-called boom province of Alberta housing starts have dropped from 7,828 one year ago to 4,429 today. In Saskatchewan the drop is from 11,000 to 6,000, and in Manitoba the percentage fall is even greater. Thousands upon thousands of forest industry workers have been laid off in community after community after community across the country.

I worked in the forest industry before I was elected to this House, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to spend part of the summer recesses when we get them—we may not get one this year—working in that industry. That is where one hears what is going on. That is where it is at in the forest industry and in other industries throughout this land.

This past weekend I attended a meeting of over 100 woodworkers in the ridings of Kootenay West and Kootenay East. They are angry, Mr. Speaker—more than angry, because in the last two weeks they have seen the number of their brothers and sisters in British Columbia's forestry industry who are unemployed increase from slightly in excess of 2,000 to 6,000. At this very moment the statistics for today are being gathered and it is anticipated the figure will be somewhere between 8,000 and 9,000.

On May 2, Manitoba Forest Industry, the key employer in the central northern part of that province, a plant which employs many native people, will shut down. It will take a lot of other businesses in that part of the country down with it.

● (1550)

In northern Ontario we find that about one-third of Lumber and Sawmill union members are now out of work. One some-

times wonders whether the government is intending to solve the problem of reforestation by causing us to build less houses so that we will not cut as many trees, and maybe things will catch up without their having to do anything. That is rather an odd way to go about it. I could think of more lunchroom-like terms to describe it, but perhaps I will not at this point.

I would like to read a resolution passed by the meeting which I just attended this weekend. It was put by representatives of people who work in the sawmills, the plywood plants, and in the shake and shingle mills of this country. I quote:

Whereas thousands of our brothers and sisters in the western Canadian forest industry are experiencing devastating lay-offs, including hundreds from our own local; and

Whereas these lay-offs are caused almost entirely by the disastrous interest rates imposed by the federal governments of Canada and the U.S.; and

Whereas these interest rates are also responsible for depriving many workers' families of their homes;

Now therefore be it resolved that this local of the International Woodworkers' of America go on record as being absolutely determined to do everything possible to rid our country of governments which inflict such massive injuries upon ordinary people, and generally to do everything possible to correct this disastrous interest situation;

And be it finally resolved that this resolution be immediately submitted to the Prime Minister, to the Leader of the Opposition, and to the Leader of the NDP.

I have done that on their behalf.

I would like now if I may, Mr. Speaker, to move, seconded by the hon. member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis):

That the address be amended by adding thereto the following words:

This House, however, regrets to inform Your Excellency that the government has failed to provide a program to deal with the crisis created by massive lay-offs in the lumber industry, and this House condemns the government for its failure to provide such a program.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to join all my colleagues in the House to congratulate the new Speaker for her high position in the House. I am all the happier and prouder that part of the name of her constituency of Laval-des-Rapides was part of mine before and that I cannot feel unconcerned about the town of Laval-des-Rapides as it is the town where I was born and where I chose to live; I wish her satisfaction and good luck in all the responsibilities she will assume during this Parliament.

My dear colleagues, in this Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne I should have liked today to describe some situations which would perhaps be more relevant to the speech itself. But I think you will not hold it against me if I have made a choice. Most of my speech will deal with the Quebec situation, and I thank in advance members from both sides of this House for the interest they showed and the concern they feel about this situation.

I intend in my speech to review the economic situation, to look into a subject which, I think, the supporters of sovereignty-association do not talk about, namely equalization, the centralization effected at present by the Government of Canada versus provincial governments, which supposes the constitutional status quo. I have been sitting here as member