

to express their individual views. I have met with Mr. Waterland and his staff on several occasions regarding the B.C. agreement. I agree that there is a very definite need for a new program. That Province did not take advantage of a modernization program, which many other provinces undertook, in terms of pulp and paper modernization. British Columbia chose to go the route of forestry regeneration, new silviculture activities, research and development and so on. It is my intention to sign an agreement with that province as soon as possible. I cannot at this point in time give the exact date for that. However, we are dealing with it at the present time in the Regional Development Committee. I can only state that I will fight on behalf of the people, and certainly on behalf of the industries, in British Columbia for a fair and equitable portion of the funds which are available.

● (1250)

The Hon. Member did mention the move of forestry from the Department of the Environment to the Department of Agriculture. I can tell the Hon. Member that I was not privy to the kind of discussion and thought which went into the decision made by the Prime Minister. I can, however, assure the Hon. Member that it was not done because the federal Government thought the industry would find it a lot easier to work within the Department of Agriculture because of its registration function and review of pesticides and herbicides. That is not the indication at all. I believe it does fit in the way in which we are trying to portray the industry, not as people who attend the land, but people who farm the land—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I would ask the Hon. Minister to please conclude his remarks.

Mr. Merrithew: I certainly will, Mr. Speaker. In the next few months and few years, Mr. Speaker, I intend to deal with the issue of forestry, to be a strong voice for that sector of the economy around the Cabinet table. I very much regret what happened over the 1970s to the Canadian Forestry Service, at which time its staff, and, therefore, its activities were cut almost in half. That was regrettable, it was very wrong, and I certainly hope it will not happen now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We shall now proceed with debate. The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez).

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I see that it is close to one o'clock. May I call it one o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to call it one o'clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There being unanimous consent, I will call it one o'clock. It being one o'clock, the House shall stand adjourned until two o'clock.

At 12.52 p.m. the House took recess.

S.O. 21

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

HOUSING

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, Canadian consumers with dreams of conserving energy and improving their homes emerged as the big losers after the economic statement of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) took the axe to many programs. Of particular concern to me and my constituents is the reduction in funds for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. This very worth-while program was instituted for home owners and land owners who wanted to improve their properties.

This cut of approximately 50 per cent in RRAP funding affects not only home owners in my constituency but will have an equally devastating effect on small contractors, 50 per cent to 60 per cent of whom will go out of business. The building supply dealers will be no less affected. If there are no repairs to be done, there is no need for building supplies. These cut-backs are continued evidence of the uncaring attitude of the Government toward the poorer regions of the country. This action must be stopped.

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FORESTRY

IMPORTANCE TO ECONOMY

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, in the recent election campaign the Conservative Party promised: "We will establish a new Department of Forestry at the federal level". This will be found at page 49 of the PC Handbook. This promise has been broken. In fact all that has occurred is the appointment of a Minister of State in the Department of Agriculture.

One Canadian in 10 is directly or indirectly employed in forestry, Canada's largest industry. According to Richard Herring, the Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of forestry, funding for the new Ministry would have to double to at least \$300 million to live up to some Conservative promises made during the election. Not one thin dime has been added to forestry expenditures by the new Tory Government.

Under Prime Minister Joe Clark and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, of every dollar raised by the federal Government in forestry-related taxation, less than 5 cents was returned to the sector for replanting, silviculture, marketing, and R and D.

During the election the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promised that a PC Government would initiate a five-year