

Government Orders

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to ask my hon. friend a question.

I just had a group of European journalists in my office in an attempt to provide them with some facts about our forestry practices, our green plan, the way we worry about our environment, and our sense of obligation to the rest of the world as stewards and custodians of 10 per cent of the planet's forests.

I asked a journalist from Germany where he would have got the information that appeared in an article he had written in a particular paper. He said: "Look, we are here every day looking in on the debates of the House of Commons". Now I know where he got the information from. He received it from my friend, the hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls.

When did the member last see squadrons of hundreds of aeroplanes flying over huge areas of forest land in our country, killing everything in their sight with Agent Orange? Everything in its path would be destroyed recklessly. That is what we read in European newspapers. That is why there are promotions for boycotts on our lumber products, for God's sake, in Europe.

Does the member not know that he has a responsibility to stick a bit closer to the truth? Does he not know that our forest industry uses 10 per cent of the chemicals used in the food chain in agriculture in Canada and that is 10 per cent of what the Europeans use in their agriculture, having destroyed all their land? Does he not feel a sense of responsibility to be factual about what he says? Does he know that the chemical of which he speaks, incidentally, is the same chemical that mothers use to eradicate head lice on their children's heads and use to spray on their plants inside their homes? Does he not know that the forest industry no longer uses chemicals to the extent that it did 10 or 20 years ago?

BT is actually 80 per cent of all the sprays that are being used to eradicate some of the insects that destroyed, incidentally, all the forests on Cape Breton Island and other forests in his own province. Does the hon. member know that? If he does not, could I ask him to inform himself? And, after he has done that, could I ask him to be a bit more responsible and sensitive to the

fact that what we say in this House is actually repeated by people in other parts of the world to the detriment of our industry, our workers, and our communities?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, if people repeat what is said in this House then I can imagine what they are going to repeat after listening to the hon. member. They are going to repeat this: that the very thing that is used to eradicate head lice is being sprayed in all of our forest lands. That is what the hon. gentleman just said a moment ago.

As far as Europe is concerned and how it gets rid of the problem of forest insects, the hon. member should take a very careful look at woodlot developments in Europe where bird hatcheries are sometimes encouraged. Instead of killing birds that are the very predators of the insects we are trying to get rid of in our forest lands, perhaps we should be following the record of some woodlots in Europe and developing bird hatcheries.

Let us turn to this business of using fenitrothion on only 20 per cent of our forest lands. He mentioned Agent Orange. That has nothing to do with fenitrothion. That is 2,4-D. That is what he is talking about. I am not talking about herbicides. I am talking about fenitrothion. If BT is as useful as fenitrothion then why is BT not used throughout this country to get rid of these insects?

I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker, but you have to go a way back. Once upon a time we used DDT in our forests. That is what the Canadian government was recommending. We used DDT until the investigators found that it was destroying everything. Then we switched to other chemicals. We are at the point now where in Canada we are the proud owners of one of the most effective means of getting rid of forest insects, *Bacillus Thuringiensis*, BT, developed in the Quebec region by a brilliant man. His last name, I recall, is Mr. Smirnoff and he developed BT. It had an effect right around the world. In Japan it was welcomed. Countries right around the world said: "What a marvellous discovery". This man who dedicated his life to getting rid of the use of chemicals in our forest lands, as any sensible government should do, devised the method of using BT.