

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Unfortunately there can be no point of order during the adjournment debate. I just put that on the record so that the matter might be clarified.

FORESTRY—NEGOTIATION OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS. (B) EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, on February 10 I put two questions to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) in the absence of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Caccia) who is responsible for forestry. I asked:

Can we have the commitment now from the Minister of Finance that the \$5 million out of the \$130 million that had been allocated will in fact be available—

That referred to the negotiations for a renewal of the Canada-B.C. forest subsidiary agreement. Initially, the federal Government had supposedly allocated some \$52 million, to be matched by funds from the Province of British Columbia, for a \$100 million plus campaign to begin to restock some of the 640,000 hectare backlog of non-satisfactorily restocked forest land in the Province. There has been a renewal of the existing agreement which, instead of providing for \$52 million plus \$52 million, provides for a total of \$11 million being spent on that grave problem in the Province.

● (1820)

This is a missed opportunity, Mr. Speaker, which simply cries out for attention because, according to the federal Government's own reports, more than 30,000 direct jobs and 30,000 indirect jobs will be lost between the next 5 to 20 years in British Columbia alone. This will necessitate the probability of a massive financial bail-out of the entire Province of British Columbia, if we do not get started now on a massive reforestation project. It will be a disaster which is almost beyond comprehension to people like myself, the people I work with and the communities who depend on the forest industry for their very existence.

Another question I asked on that date of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), in the absence of the Minister responsible for forestry, was whether he would give us some assurance that the moneys not spent from this year's allocation, because of the failure of the Province and the federal Government to reach agreements, will be added to whatever moneys might be planned for this coming fiscal year in order that we can save whatever little is left of the most important industry in this country. The Minister of Finance at that time answered that it would be given consideration.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Speaker, we had the government estimates which showed that expenditures forecast for 1984-1985 for forestry, as compared to the expenditures forecast for 1983-1984, fell in total by some 61 per cent, from \$115 million to almost \$45 million. This is at a time when not only British Columbia, but almost every major forestry province across Canada, is crying out in anguish because the fall-down effect is going to begin hitting very soon. We will see community after community go the same way as the former British

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Columbia community of Ocean Falls. It was totally obliterated from the map because we simply have not done the job.

My colleagues and I realize, Mr. Speaker, that under our Constitution—and this Party played a part in strengthening that section—the prime responsibility and jurisdiction is with the Province. However, the fact is, by the Government's own report, that unless we begin now to expend that money, whether or not it is matched, we are going to have to bail out the Province of British Columbia and communities in other Provinces anyway. While I can understand the problems of the Government, we cannot afford to wait any longer.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the action of the Minister of the Environment in not attending the founding meeting of the Canadian Council of Forest Industries just a few days ago, which was held just a couple of blocks away from Parliament Hill, was absolutely abominable. The Minister said in a recent meeting in Vancouver with the professional forestries association that he would do anything possible to ensure the forestry industry's survival. Shortly after making that commitment in British Columbia—and he made the same commitment to my leader on February 13 in the House of Commons—he did not attend that very important meeting. We have been trying for 10 or 20 years to get representatives of the Canadian forestry industry into one group which could speak with one united voice to the federal Government yet the Minister could not even go that few blocks to the conference. I do not know if he was visiting with royalty or what he was doing, but he should have at least accorded that industry the recognition of its rightful place in Canada.

That industry, in terms of dollars coming into this country, is the most important industry we have. Some Members on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, must get that message sunk in to their heads or we are all in for trouble in a few short years.

Mr. Denis Ethier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, having regard to the charge concerning the absence of the Minister at that conference, I wish to tell the Hon. Member that when the Minister is here he will reply to that, I am sure.

In answer to the Hon. Member's question with respect to forest renewal, the framework for forest renewal approved by the federal cabinet in 1982 spoke of increasing the federal contribution to forest renewal in Canada to \$130 million annually by 1987, through a new generation of five-year federal-provincial forestry agreements. It was understood, however, that the \$130 million figure represented a notional amount for which funding for each agreement would be sought on a case by case basis through submissions to cabinet. Although only notional amounts, some Provinces, including British Columbia, took it for granted that the figures mentioned in the framework paper had been approved. Such is not the case.