

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

A—Department—

1. Departmental administration, \$1,714,500.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Vote No. 1 will be found at page 182 of the blue book. The details thereof are listed on page 184. Shall this item carry?

Mr. Flemming: Mr. Chairman, to continue the remarks which I had begun previous to interruption of committee of supply, may I repeat that I was calling the minister's attention to five items which are to be found on page 191 of the blue book detailing the estimates for the current year. These five items total something in the order of \$8 million, covering forestry inventories, reforestation, forest fire protection, forest access road construction and stand improvement. I made reference to the importance of preventive measures to combat forest fire outbreaks. All of us read with great dismay about the tremendous fires which took place last summer in the interior of British Columbia, and thus cannot help being impressed by the importance of continuing preventive measures through co-operation between the federal government and the provincial governments. I have no doubt these measures will continue in operation, but I draw the minister's attention to them because I have confidence that he can emphasize their beneficial effects.

With respect to forest inventories, quite often we are requested to give some idea of the amount of timber standing in certain areas in certain provinces. The federal government participates with the provinces in making such inventories. This is a most essential operation, especially when we consider that the forest industry in general makes the greatest contribution towards equalizing our balance of payments through its exports, and when we consider the contribution which the industry in general makes to employment in Canada. Therefore nothing could be more important than to have up to date information on forest inventory for the benefit both of governments and of the industry itself.

I will not go into the question of reforestation because everyone knows how important it is. In my opinion forest access road construction is something which will help bring about more productivity. Day by day speakers in this chamber emphasize the importance of greater productivity, and quite properly so. Increased productivity is essential to

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our country, and forest access road construction can open up new timber areas which are at present undeveloped because of economic reasons. Funds for forest access road construction will relieve the burden carried by timber companies, and will open up hitherto inaccessible regions.

Stand improvement is also most important. We all know how beneficial a program of maximum growth can be. I know the officials of the department are experts on this, and that they are very conscious of its importance. This is another area which requires a great deal of co-operation between land owners, and in most cases in our country these are the provincial governments and the federal government. Efforts should be made to maintain a good standard of growth year after year on land which, if it is neglected, will not produce anything like the potential of which it is capable.

When we compare the results we have achieved in this respect in Canada with similar results in other countries, particularly the Scandinavian countries, the comparison is not very favourable to us. Therefore I feel the importance of stand improvement is something which should be emphasized to the minister, and subsequently by him to the provincial governments, and of course to anyone who has an interest, both economic and national, in maximum productivity.

I have nothing more to say at the moment, Mr. Chairman. I believe the estimates have been dealt with pretty well in committee. I appreciate the opportunity to make these few remarks and I will not trespass on the indulgence of the committee any longer in connection with this particular item.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Schreyer: Mr. Chairman, at the very beginning I should like to say that during his occupancy of the portfolio he now holds the minister has given the impression that he is enthusiastic in respect of the function, responsibilities and further prospects with regard to his department, particularly as it relates to the ARDA program. Like many other members in this house I was very enthusiastic when the ARDA program was first discussed and when the legislation was passed. I believe most people who had read about this program had high hopes in respect of ARDA when it was first placed on the statute books. However, during the past few years I believe we have had quite a number of reasons for feeling somewhat disappointed about the program because, at least in some