

Supply—Forestry

patience he will succeed in getting good results from efforts made to co-operate with the provinces, so that this industry, this natural resource, will be protected as much as possible. I know that his work will meet with success.

I will probably not have the opportunity next week to discuss his bill on feed grain when it is introduced in the house. I would therefore like to say now that this legislation is necessary, that the farmers have been hoping for it for many years. Our farmers are less dependent on unscrupulous dealers now than they were in previous years.

● (3:50 p.m.)

It is still very likely that the cost of feed in winter will work out against the farmers. That is why the farmers welcome the steps being taken and I am sure that the minister who made a complete study of that matter will give that legislation all the consideration it deserves.

The farmers often have to get rid of their cattle because of the high cost of feed and grain to fatten it.

It is a well-known fact that the former minister of agriculture, the present member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton), had included in his program that particular matter of bringing the price of feed grain down, so that the farmers could go in for cattle breeding. We have to import our meat from western Canada and it seems to me that there would be here a very interesting market for the eastern farmers, as far as cattle breeding is concerned, if they could get feed grain at a better price.

I am sure that our farmers will consider those openings with satisfaction and I ask the minister to give that matter his full attention.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, as the estimates for the Department of Forestry are before the house, I should like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks. Yet, before coming to the heart of the matter that interests me, I wish to point out to the house that I do not fully agree with what the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) said about what the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauv ) is worth.

I agree with him that he is a good minister, a competent man; but as far as giving him a more important department is concerned, I feel we need good ministers everywhere.

I do not approve of trying to increase the prestige of other ministers at the expense of the Minister of Forestry.

[Mr. Ricard.]

I feel, even though the minister himself, at the beginning of the debate, seemed to apologize for the relatively lesser importance of his department, that the department is most important and that we should give it all our attention.

What worries me most with regard to the Department of Forestry is forest fire protection. I know the minister and his officials watch very closely everything that is related to forest protection.

On the other hand, I wonder if enough is being done in this field. Our country is a great exporter of forest products. We must see to it that we do not become an importer in the near future.

Forest products are used for three main purposes, the most important of which are paper-making and construction.

Two curses threaten our forests with depletion: forest diseases and forest fires. A while ago, the minister told us that, in this connection, research was intensive and that the results were rewarding.

Still, I doubt that we are doing enough to prevent forest fires.

I urge the minister to increase the means to protect our forests against fires, for instance, by educating the people who go out into the bush, by giving foresters the tools and instruments required to prevent forest fires that are caused in many ways.

That is my chief concern and that is what I wanted to bring to the attention of the minister this afternoon.

[English]

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, I think I am correct in saying that the present Minister of Forestry is the third minister to hold this portfolio.

Mr. Sauv : The fourth.

Mr. Barnett: I am told he is the fourth. I was going to say that perhaps the fact that the present minister is from the province of Quebec, and my impression was that his immediate predecessor was from the province of British Columbia, and I believe I am correct in saying that the original holder of the portfolio was from the province of New Brunswick—

Mr. Sauv : The member for Charlevoix held the portfolio for just a few weeks before the election in 1963.

Mr. Barnett: In any event, my point in making reference to the geographic area from