

Government Orders

Last of all, Mr. Speaker, as its sixth task, a federal Forestry Department will be of great assistance to the other government departments having involvement with forests and forest issues. I can think of at least nine departments which are involved with significant aspects of forestry in their mandates, and it is vital that there be a lead Department to develop cooperative arrangements within the federal Government.

First, there is Environment Canada and Parks Canada, which have an interest in forest policy which might have an impact on wildlife or migratory birds or the effects of forests on the atmosphere and climate.

Second, agriculture and forestry have had a strong relationship in Canada over the last century.

Third, where it is requested to do so, the Department of Forestry could assist the First Nations of Canada with regard to forest management on their lands.

Fourth, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has other responsibilities as well which relate to forest management.

Fifth, there are Department of National Defence lands on which the Department of Forestry can demonstrate state-of-the-art forestry practices.

Sixth, a cooperative liaison with the Department of Industry, Science and Technology can keep forestry in the picture when it comes to research and development, industrial planning, regional development, and aboriginal economic development programs. And there is that all-important area of international trade, where access to export markets is of the highest importance to our economic well-being.

Seventh, Fisheries and Oceans understand very well the impact of forestry practices on the fisheries. Energy, Mines and Resources has an interest in biomass energy development. The Atlantic and Western development agencies are involved in ensuring that forestry reaches its full potential in economic development and employment in those parts of Canada.

In summary, then, Mr. Speaker, by introducing this Bill to establish a Department of Forestry, the federal Government is positioning itself to accelerate Canadian forestry's ability to fulfill its full potential in Canada's future.

Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to set out six of the major essential functions which the new Department could fulfill. This Bill is a further indication of the priority which forestry has for the Government. Indeed, over the last four years, this Government has increased the federal investment in forestry by 300 per cent.

As I mentioned when I began, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this Bill, and I urge my colleagues to make this House unanimous in passing this Bill without delay.

[English]

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Speaker, is there a question and answer period following this speaker now?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes, there is. The hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Gaspé is to be commended for supporting the creation of a new department of forestry as proposed by the Government in Bill C-29. The Hon. Member spoke at length about reforestation, and I was glad to hear what he had to say on the subject, since our Canadian forests are the lungs of our environment. The Hon. Member had a lot to say about the United States and was lavish with his praise. He also praised what was being done in the province of Québec. However, although I may have missed parts of his speech, I did not hear him refer to the other nine provinces. He seemed to be concentrating on the province of Québec. I was also disappointed that he had nothing to say about the Gaspé area, his own riding where I am sure forests and a forestry industry exist.

My question to the Hon. Member is as follows: What kind of activities are we seeing in the other provinces at this time? Where is the Government going to make improvements, and above all, how does it intend to go about improving forestry activities in Canada if it is already faced with budget cutbacks and federal personnel cuts?

Mr. Marin: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for his kind words about my speech. Obviously, I spoke mainly about the province of Québec, because I am better acquainted with the situation in that province. Of course the federal Government, through its new department, will be active in all other provinces as well. I may remind the Hon. Member that the riding of Gaspé is part of the province of Québec, and so what I said about the province of Québec, also applies to the riding of Gaspé.