

Adjournment Debate

what the President of the Treasury Board is seeking to do and is doing. He has consulted, in accordance with the provisions of the Official Languages Act, with the linguistic minority groups. He has spoken, as required by the act, to a number of people.

Evidence of that is in the action by the Vancouver group. If we see evidence of that across Canada, we know that people are gathering around this policy, this principle of language duality as represented by the Official Languages Act.

The member complains that time is passing and action is not sufficient to meet his desires. He has to realize that it is a difficult process but the goal is to convince all Canadians of the benefits of the official languages policy.

The President of the Treasury Board has time and time again committed himself to this task. The Government of Canada is committed to this task. I do not know why the member raises this complaint. To answer my own question, I do know why. The Commissioner of Official Languages raised this point and he wants to take advantage of it. I do not fault the member for that. The more he raises it and brings public attention to this issue the more people will understand the need for progress.

• (1810)

The Official Languages Commissioner has his job to do and he has done it well. He has brought it to the attention of the House of Commons and all Canadians. I assure the member and the Official Languages Commissioner that the government is proceeding at the appropriate rate of speed. It is consulting, it is ensuring that the end product will be satisfactory to all Canadians and will accomplish the desired end of unanimous consent and concurrence to official language policy.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on what I think is a very timely debate. As you know, I rose in the House last Friday to question the Minister of Forestry about the British Columbia—Canada forest agreement which was expiring the day after. That was actually an anniversary date. It was more bad timing by the government because that was the anniversary date for the expiry of forest agreements in Alberta, Saskatchewan,

Manitoba and Ontario, and not just for a week or two, but for a full year.

I rose to ask that question of the minister. I am pleased that his parliamentary secretary is here today to respond. Perhaps he could make an announcement in the Chamber tonight about the forestry agreement. I want to raise my concerns about how important that agreement has been to the provinces I mentioned but, more particularly, how important it is to the province of British Columbia.

The Forest Resource Development Agreement has meant thousands and thousands of people employed in silvicultural work in British Columbia. It has been used primarily to replant what we call our backlog NSR, the Not Satisfactorily Restocked land. It has provided funds for research and it has helped focus activity at both the federal and provincial levels of government to tackle our problems with forests.

It is because of the debate concerning our forests today in this country, in my province especially, that this agreement is so important. It is important because it gives a role to the federal government to work with the provinces at a very basic level in terms of employment opportunity. The B.C. forest agreement contributes close to 600,000 additional cubic metres per year to the annual cut in British Columbia. That means people get jobs because of the forest agreement.

We have been calling on the government and the provincial government to renew that agreement for some time now. We had commitments from the federal Minister of Forestry in April, 1989; June, 1989; October, 1989; December, 1989; and now we are told, after the agreement has expired, that we have to wait some more, we have to wait until planting season. Well, I do not think that is good enough and the people of British Columbia do not think that is good enough.

It is important that we do not let the government of British Columbia off the hook either. This is a process of setting priorities, priorities by the federal government and priorities by the provincial government.

We have had the most unfortunate situation where the Premier of British Columbia hollered loudly last fall for this government to cut transfer payments to the provinces. This government did that and then the Premier cried "foul". The Premier of British Columbia has pulled the rug out from under his Minister of Forests. I