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is money that was earmarked for forest renewal in that Province. The Minister's answer was that he cannot reveal Cabinet confidence, and I appreciate that. However, I take it that his answer is in the affirmative and that that money is being lopped off the agreement.

The Minister from Manitoba and the Minister for Economic Development in the federal Cabinet have begun initiatives to reduce the amount that would have otherwise have been committed to forest renewal in the forestry agreement. I think that that is a tragedy, Sir, and I suppose that I commiserate and sympathize with the Minister because he may have his heart in the right place. However, he certainly does not sit in the right place around the Cabinet table and consequently does not get his message across to the Cabinet. It is perhaps for that reason that it is timely that we should for the third time this year debate the subject of Canada's forests. It is unprecedented, Sir, that today, for the first time this year, we will devote a full day to this important sector of our whole economy.

I welcome the initiatives taken by my hon. colleague and friend, the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis). He has put before the House a motion that is both timely and pertinent. However, I cannot help but ask myself where Members of the NDP were in 1979. At that time we were criticized for not having a clearly thought out strategy. It took us a little longer than perhaps it should have taken to lay before the House our strategy, the Throne Speech and the budget. When we did so, Sir, there was one component of the budget and the Throne Speech about which there was no doubt at all and that was our policy on forestry. There was no question or doubt about the commitment that we had made at that time to begin the painful and tedious process of rebuilding the Canadian Forestry Service. I wonder where Hon. Members of the NDP were at that time.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, they chose to join the Liberal interventionists across the aisle and defeat a Government which had set out a policy which would have respected the history of the country and the potential for economic growth in this particular sector of the economy. They rejected that in favour of certain other objectives.

There was a motion on today's Order Paper that dealt with one of those other objectives. That motion dealt with unemployment. Hon. Members of the NDP like to think of themselves as the champions of the unemployed and particularly of the young unemployed. That question was on the Order Paper today and NDP Members have now chosen to deprive us of that important debate in favour of a debate on forestry. I will not argue with them, Sir. I would like to talk about forestry for a whole week, but I sometimes question where their priorities are and just what kind of political games they are playing.

Nevertheless, I appreciate the belated interest the NDP Members take in this subject and welcome their contribution to the debate. I have no argument with anything that has been said by Members of the NDP so far with respect to the importance of the industry and what should happen in terms of assuring that the industry makes as great a contribution to our

economy and our social well-being and contentment in the future as it does presently and has in the past.

Members of the NDP feel that in order to achieve that objective it would be necessary to hold meetings with the provincial Ministers. Well, Sir, I must admit that these meetings would probably be very productive. Incidentally, the Minister is quite right: these meetings are now taking place. This is one area in which we have experienced quite an enlightened and effective form of co-operative federalism because such meetings have been held on an ongoing basis. The last such meeting was held on September 14. If my friend, the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap, does not know that, it is probably because his interest in forestry came late. He can certainly be forgiven for that.

Forestry is not an area in which the federal Government would be intruding on provincial jurisdiction even though the resource does belong to the Provinces. Provincial Ministers come to the Government and beg it to play the traditional and very significant role it has played in this very important area of forestry. As you know, Sir, forestry not only represents the most important industry in the whole country but has attached to it as well whole range of very important social dimensions. A whole range of important environmental and ecological considerations must be taken into account when one talks about forestry.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the fresh water and clean air generated by our forests that we in the country enjoy and breathe are not things which respect artificial political boundaries. Therefore, there must be an over-all co-ordination by and involvement of a central agency in this important area. I must agree with my friend, the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap, that it would perhaps be better if there were a federal Minister of forestry who could meet on an equal basis and with equal authority and jurisdiction with his provincial counterparts to talk about some of these important things which I have mentioned.

When we consider that matter, Sir, it may be helpful to go back and consider a little bit of the history of the Department of Forestry as it relates to our present circumstances. It was in 1899 that the House for the first time established a Department of Forestry. That Department was likely established because of the keen interest shown by Sir John A. Macdonald himself in this area. As you know, he expressed a concern for the forestry industry and his words were quoted extensively in the House yesterday. He was concerned in 1877 about the imminent danger that he saw of our forests being totally depleted and this most important of our industries being destroyed.

We have now discovered all kinds of innovative ways to push back the frontier, to build road and rail infrastructures in order to gain access to the far North and discover that there are trees there. We have learned to harvest trees everywhere in Canada. However, in the Ottawa Valley, which I suppose is the area which concerned John A. Macdonald, forestry is no longer a main preoccupation. Other industries have now taken hold in the area. In this particular city, the industry of