

They can be carried along by winds and fall to earth as acid rain or snow many kilometres from the original source of pollution.

Environment Canada then goes on to ask the question, as many people watching might want to ask, what are the sources of acid rain. The answer is as follows:

The main sources of sulphur oxide emissions in North America are coal-fired power generating stations and non-ferrous oil smelters. The main source of nitrogen-oxide emissions are automobiles and other vehicles.

Environment Canada has identified not only what acid rain is and how it happens but in essence from where it comes.

The next question is what is the impact of acid rain and the answer is as follows:

Acid precipitation can have many harmful effects. It can increase the acidity of lakes and streams to a point where fish and other aquatic creatures such as frogs and salamanders cannot reproduce—

We have seen evidence of this. One need not be an expert to see the clear evidence of the destruction that has taken place in the lakes of eastern Canada. The document goes on:

—ultimately, they become extinct in overly acidified bodies of water. Acid rain can also increase the acidity of soil and, particularly in combination with other atmospheric pollutants such as ozone, is suspected of slowing the growth of trees or making them more vulnerable to disease.

It is quite clear that acid rain also erodes buildings and destroys monuments. It has a tremendous effect not only on the quality of life and the cost of maintaining buildings, but it has a tremendous effect on our food production and a tremendous negative effect on forest production. It affects our lakes and waters. Quite clearly this is a serious matter. Of over two million lakes in Quebec and Ontario, 43 per cent are vulnerable to acidification, and 10 per cent of the salmon rivers in Nova Scotia can no longer support salmon and another 10 per cent are becoming acidified. They go on at some greater length and go into the details of it.

● (1210)

However, the interesting point, which is obvious to anyone who looks at it, is that acid rain is the result of industrial activity and that that industrial activity is ruining the rivers, the lakes, the forests and even the soil upon which it falls. There are ways readily available to us to stop it. That last point is the crucial point. It is not some phenomenon which no one understands; it is not some phenomenon for which there is no solution. This is clearly understood by the scientific community and probably clearly understood by the overwhelming majority of Members of Parliament.

We now face the crucial and crisis period. We have lakes and rivers which are no longer capable of sustaining wildlife. We have forests which are being destroyed by the continuous raining down upon them of sulphuric acid. We know how to stop it and, therefore, it is not sufficient to have from the President of the United States yet another statement which clearly takes only one tiny step toward the ultimate solution. In endorsing the Lewis-Davis report, the President of the United States does not—and I say it categorically—commit himself to a course of action. All we ask of him, at least in the first instance, is that he go forward today with a course of action, if not identical, at least similar to that which we in

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Canada have already adopted, not only in our best interest but in his best interest.

I know my time is up, but I ask the Government to acknowledge that another motherhood statement, albeit acknowledging acid rain as a serious problem, does not do anything for future generations or even for the generations which are now here. We need some clear course of action. We need a timetable. We need a commitment, and we do not have it in what came out of Washington. Although there is intention to do something, I should like to think that we in the House could speak as one voice in saying to the United States administration: "You do not have the time for another study; what we need now is action".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Question or comment. The Hon. Member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Desjardins).

Mr. Desjardins: Mr. Speaker, I paid close attention to the remarks of my colleague from Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), but I must tell him that perhaps it would have been more appropriate if he or his Party had introduced the motion now under consideration. To me anyway, it might have been more credible than a motion sponsored by the environment critic of the Liberal Party. I would suggest that he has introduced this motion and expects us to take action simply because he and his Party were unable to do anything when they were on the Government benches, beginning in the early seventies when the acid rain issue was growing ever more significant. What he is advocating in this proposed bilateral treaty is precisely what he himself was unable to achieve.

The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain is right in saying that there has been a lot of rhetoric on the question of acid rain. However, that is not our fault. We have been in power only 18 months and we have already taken practical action. We have affected funds and developed programs during this 18 month period. It is not our fault if some people believe that the problem of acid rain has existed for too long without any solution being found. We came to power only in 1984, but since 1968 or 1970, when the acid rain problem was already important, they have done nothing except make speeches.

The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain says that we are still at a rhetorical stage, but does he not believe that the whole issue of relations with a friendly foreign country is very sensitive? Indeed, what Canada has done as a country and what the Prime Minister has done to show some leadership was the most that we could do, namely clean up our act. You yourself have recognized that the Canadian Government took important action; you had the honesty to say that we took important action in our own country to improve the environment. Will the Hon. Member not have the honesty to recognize that we have cleaned our act and that the Prime Minister went to Washington to meet calmly with President Reagan