

*Oral Questions***ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****ACID RAIN—EFFORT TO INITIATE JOINT CANADA-UNITED STATES LEGAL ACTION**

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I am sure he is aware that Vermont Governor Richard Snelling is meeting this afternoon with five Canadian Premiers, along with the six New England Governors. He will be asking them to join in a \$100 billion lawsuit against acid rain producing utilities in North America.

Since political action has stalled and to date failed dismally to produce any serious action on the reduction of acid rain, and with 14,000 lakes in Canada dead and 50,000 dying, will the Minister comment upon the meeting which is going on in Vermont? Would he also agree to commit the very substantial scientific and legal resources of Canada to this very important and vital environmental legal challenge which may well take place in the courts of the United States in the near future?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have made the question of acid rain one of the major issues in our discussions with United States authorities. The Minister of the Environment and myself have been ceaseless in our efforts to try to convince authorities in the United States to join with us in an abatement program which would apply in North America. Up to the present time that has not succeeded. However, it is a fact that the Government of Canada and the provinces have entered into agreements with respect to abatement programs in Canada, and that recently Canada and a number of European countries have done the same. What is required, of course, is a decision by United States authorities. I do not foresee a decision this year on the part of the administration. Earlier I have said so publicly, that it is not likely they will change their view, which is at the moment that more research is required.

Mr. Fulton: That is precisely my point. The political actions which have been attempted in both Canada and the United States have been unsuccessful. There have been no major reductions in acid rain in Canada or in the United States.

IMPACT OF ACID RAIN ON BRITISH COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Since his colleague, the Minister of the Environment, is in Europe until July, and since reports over the weekend in British Columbia indicate that there has been an alarming increase in the amount of acid rain on the southwest coast of British Columbia, particularly coming from the Puget Sound area around Seattle, my question to the Minister is exactly the same. Does he have anything planned? Will he be talking with George Shultz? Will he be talking with any of the Secreds who were here as delegates over the weekend? Will anything be done for British Columbia, either to reduce the production of acid rain in B.C. or to deal with the production in Puget Sound? Will he do

anything? Will he allow it to go to the courts? Will he support the court action? That is really the crucial question.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in my view the solution has to be a political one reached with the administration of the United States. We have to continue our efforts to persuade United States authorities to come to terms with this question. They have not yet done so. We have met similar situations in the past where we have taken some time in order to reach conclusions with the United States. That does not argue for giving up. We do not intend to give up.

The Hon. Member talked about legal action. Let the Governors produce their grounds for legal action and take it, if they wish, in the American courts. Let them pursue their own objectives in the United States. We have to pursue our objectives in Canada and with the administration in the United States, which we are doing. I expect that we will succeed. I hope urgently that we will succeed.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**POLAND—GRANTING OF EXIT VISAS TO FAMILIES OF HUNGER STRIKERS**

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the fact that the Polish Government is now prepared to grant exit permits to the family of one of the three people in Toronto who have been on hunger strike for the past 28 days, will the Minister press Polish authorities to extend similar humanitarian and compassionate concern so that the other two families can be reunited?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we certainly will do that. We have been doing it up to the present time in cases where family reunification is held up because Polish authorities have refused to grant exit permits. Of course that is the problem. We have received indication from the Polish Embassy in Ottawa that Mr. Augustyniak's family had been approved for passports but that they will not be issued until the hunger strike has ceased.

Also I want to advise the House we have been told that of the 16 cases, which include those of the hunger strikers on whose behalf representations have been made to the Polish Consulate in Toronto in early April, 13 have now been promised passports. We are making some progress. As the Hon. Member suggested, we will continue to press Polish authorities until we have succeeded in all the cases which require attention to bring about family reunification.