

Adjournment Debate

• (1800)

I believe a task force at this time might perhaps be counter-productive. There are many other initiatives going on in any case that will come toward the end point in our problem. We can talk about initiatives such as the integrated pest management control.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to the end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 42(1), this item shall be dropped from the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—UNITED STATES FUNDING OF MEASURES TO COMBAT ACID RAIN. (B) SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, on October 28 I asked the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) a question that was very simple and straightforward, namely: Since March of this year how much money has the United States put into the abatement—I repeat, the abatement—of acid rain as a result of the envoys' report. The Minister of the Environment replied by saying that \$400 million was put into that direction on nine major projects. The Environment Minister was wrong at that time. He was also wrong on March 19 of this year when he informed this House, and I quote from *Hansard* at page 11657, that the U.S. President had:

—committed himself to hundreds of millions of dollars of cash to abate acid rain in the United States.

On both accounts the Minister gave this House the wrong information. The fact is that he referred to \$400 million in his answer on October 28. That amount should read \$360 million. It has nothing to do with an abatement of acid rain flowing from the report of the envoys and the adoption of that report by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) of Canada and the President of the United States. What the Minister was referring to was an amount of \$360 million which has to do with the demonstration and commercialization technology which is part of a clean coal technology program adopted by the U.S. Congress in December, 1985. That amount has nothing to do with an abatement program in the U.S. from which Canada could benefit.

I hope that today the Parliamentary Secretary will come clean with this House and answer the question that the

Minister avoided answering on October 28. This House is entitled to an honest answer to this very simple question. How many kilograms of SO₂ have been reduced by way of the agreement that was announced in March of this year between the leaders of the two nations? This is what we want to know. We do not want to know what was done under the clean coal technology program. This is a U.S. Congress program. What has been achieved since March of this year? Why I am asking this question is that on more than one occasion the Minister of the Environment has raised hope during Question Period in this House, and has given answers that have turned out to be incorrect or outright wrong.

In the meantime, while these exchanges take place in this question and answer period that is so unsatisfactory, the cost of acid rain is accumulating in a variety of ways. As the Parliamentary Secretary knows from a committee meeting this afternoon, there is an increasing and substantial cost to the maple syrup producers in this country. It amounted to something like \$87 million in 1986 alone according to *L'Union des Producteurs Agricoles*.

• (1805)

There is a cost involved in inhibited forest growth. There is a cost to motel owners and the tourism industry. There is a cost to the public purse through incidence of respiratory diseases and hospital admissions when air pollution reaches certain levels. There is a cost to buildings and structures eroded by acid rain. There is a cost to salmon breeding grounds in eastern Canada. There is, of course, this phenomenal cost imposed on the sports and fishing industry, as well as resort areas such as Muskoka affected by acidification. The Government took great pride in the envoy report which was going to resolve the question of acid rain and the emissions which pour over our border daily, totalling some 26 million tonnes or more of SO₂ a year. Therefore my question was intended to get an indication from the Government as to what the agreement has achieved so far. The question was simply this. How much money has the U.S. put into the abatement of acid rain since March and how much of a reduction was there in sulphur oxide emissions which cause acid rain and which spew across the border, damaging the Canadian economy and environment? That question is still valid today and I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will come clean with us.

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to respond to this important question. The Hon. Member can be sure that the Parliamentary Secretary will come clean on all questions, not only with him but with all Hon. Members.

The endorsement of the report of the special envoys on acid rain by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and President Reagan in March, 1986 was not the final word on a joint solution to our common acid rain problem. It established a foundation and a process which the two countries can use to move toward our ultimate objective of solving our transboundary air pollution problem once and for all.