of all the costs and benefits involved. Let me briefly address a comment to each of these views.

To those who doubt the seriousness of acid rain, I extend an invitation to come to our country and see for themselves. There they will find signs of the depredations of several million tons of sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen – at least half of which is of U.S. origin – which are transformed chemically in the atmosphere and fall in our country each year in the form of acid rain. Many of our lakes have reached levels of acidity which make it impossible to support fish and related forms of life. In Nova Scotia to date, no less than nine rivers no longer support the salmon population. And elsewhere, the leaching of calcium and magnesium from the soil is threatening our boreal forest – a resource that provides employment to 10 per cent of our labour force in Canada.

Canadian efforts to reduce emissions

Those who are pessimistic about the prospects for halting the high level of emissions have perhaps ignored our own experience in Canada. I suggest they look at what we in Canada have been able to bring about in this effort. The best example is the huge smelting operation of the International Nickel Company at Sudbury, Ontario – the largest single producer of acid-causing emissions in our country. Had no controls been imposed, that smelter would today be producing some 7,200 tons of sulphur dioxide daily. However, for several years, it has been operated at 50 per cent control or below. New regulations in 1980 have reduced the legal limit from 3,600 tons a day to 2,500 tons. In 1983, it will drop to 1,950 tons and we are examining ways to reduce emissions to the lowest possible level.

That is one major example; but there are others. Sulphur containment at a new copper smelter in Timmins, Ontario, will reach 97 per cent. And Ontario's thermal power stations have been required to reduce total sulphur dioxide emissions by 43 per cent during the 1980s – even though, like the United States, we are anticipating considerable growth in demand for electricity.

I cite these examples not to patriotically parade our accomplishments, but to illustrate what can be accomplished through the joint efforts of scientists, industry and government, where there is a determination to make an impact on a situation which can only get worse if left unchecked.

To that third group – those who propound the view that economic and energy considerations make significant controls unfeasible – I would submit that significant emission reductions, if wisely applied, need not detract from economic and energy goals. Nor should the legitimate costs of production be passed off to another party – in this case another country. This is spurious in economic terms and irresponsible in the spirit of international legal considerations.

With respect to coal conversion, there is considerable economic benefit to be derived from a switch to coal from imported oil. In effect, this benefit is sufficiently attractive that we can more than afford the cost of ensuring that resulting damage to the environment be minimized to the extent possible.