

Pollution Control

be too high emission levels in the present American polluting situation.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I have two brief questions on the subject of the announcement today. I should like to preface them by saying that I think the House should give some recognition to the former hon. member for Nickel Belt who, as the House will be aware, campaigned long and hard to see a reduction in the level of acid rain which is taking place.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): He is no longer in this House, but I am sure his influence is being felt in this matter. I would ask the minister, if I might catch his attention for a moment, first: in view of the fact that it has been Inco itself which has given rise to the problems which resulted in this task force being formed, will he assure the House that indeed it will be Inco that pays the cost of this task force and not the taxpayers of Canada?

Second, I would ask whether the terms of reference of the task force will be broad enough to encompass a study of the effects of the sulphur dioxide emissions on the workers in the Inco mine and on the people of the community of Sudbury?

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I understand exactly the relevance of the second part of the question. What we are dealing with here is the long-range airborne transportation of pollutant particles, whereas I understood the second part of the hon. member's question to be relating this problem to the condition of the workers in the mines. The impact of acid rain is not immediately in the area where it is generated but may fall 300 or 400 miles from the source point. So it does not seem to me, on the face of it, that the question he raised, which may be a very important one, would naturally fall within the purview of the committee. The financing of the work, which will essentially involve existing civil servants on the staffs of the two governments of Ontario and Canada, would be met in the normal way.

● (1610)

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, my first question to the minister is in relation to a statement that I believe was made last week regarding emissions. The minister referred to 40 per cent to 50 per cent reduction. I wonder whether he could clarify if that was in relation to the orders which, I believe, allowed emissions of 3,600 tonnes per day, particularly in view of the relative decline in production by Inco, certainly in recent months, which has brought that down, I believe, to 2,200 tonnes per day? Would the minister comment first on the release he made, indicating whether the 40 per cent to 50 per cent reduction was on the 3,600 tonnes or the 2,200 tonnes, which is the present rate of production?

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, I hope I am accurate in saying that the figures I used were that within four or five years there could be a reduction of 50 per cent to 60 per cent on 1.1 million tonnes generated each year. I do not have a

calculator with me to make the calculation, but my belief is, on the basis of the information which I have received, that a 50 per cent to 60 per cent reduction on that figure could be—

Mr. Fulton: On the generated quantity?

Mr. Roberts: The hon. gentleman says "on the generated quantity". Yes, a 50 per cent to 60 per cent reduction on the generated quantity could take place over the next four to five years.

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, having regard to the cost to the environment, I wonder whether the minister could comment regarding particularly those lakes that we already know are dead. Could he also comment on the relative costs? Could he give us a ball park figure on the cost to the environment to date of the pollution from Inco within Canada? I recognize there is some from outside our boundaries.

Would he also state whether in his view it is the responsibility of Inco that these lakes be revitalized, and should it be required that at some point in the future the various types of vegetation and animals whose health has been affected will have to be revitalized to bring them back as closely as possible to their original condition? Could he indicate whether in his view at this point such cost would be the responsibility of Inco, or within federal or provincial jurisdiction?

Mr. Roberts: On the first point, Madam Speaker, it is very difficult, with the state of knowledge that we have now, to link specific consequences with specific causes. It is very difficult to make that linkage. It is also difficult to estimate the over-all cost of acid rain to the environment. We know it is very, very considerable. It is easier to assess the impact in relation to lakes, and less easy at the moment to assess in relation to forestry, but we are talking of consequences in the hundreds of millions of dollars. It is difficult to trace back specific consequences in an area to specific source points. Perhaps it would be helpful to say that the Inco emission is not well over but slightly over 50 per cent of emissions in Ontario and about one quarter of emissions in the eastern part of Canada. So clearly Inco emissions represent a considerably important factor in those deleterious consequences, even though we are not able to bring exact consequences back to exact sources.

I think the second question the hon. gentleman posed, if I understood him properly, was whether Inco was able to afford to undertake these measures on its own. If that is the question, my response would be that I believe that Inco can well afford to take the steps which would be imposed to bring emissions down to 50 per cent or 60 per cent within the period I described.

Madam Speaker: When I recognize another hon. member for the purpose of asking a question we will have spent about an hour on this particular statement. I will recognize another member now, but I will ask the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. McMillan), who has had a chance to make an important statement and ask a few questions, if he will voluntarily defer