

Adjournment Debate

pollution and acid rain producing emissions are concerned. I do not know. I can see by the look in your eyes, Mr. Speaker, that you do not know. But the Parliamentary Secretary is sitting across from me. Perhaps she knows.

• (1820)

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to participate in the adjournment debate and in particular to reply to a very active Member of the House of Commons, the Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Attewell), my colleague in Metro Toronto. He has spoken about the acid rain agreement with the United States and the position of Ontario Hydro. This issue is most interesting and we must compliment the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) for his active participation in meeting with the Premier of Ontario and establishing a committee to get western coal to Ontario, where it is most needed.

However, the question scheduled for the adjournment debate today deals with trade with the United States. The Hon. Member asked a question in the House concerning negotiations between Canada and the United States about possible treaties. We are negotiating with the United States on acid rain, but we also have a very important agreement with the United States with regard to free trade. The member spoke to this issue on March 16 and asked whether we would have an opportunity to discuss this in the House of Commons. That will indeed be the case, as was stated very clearly by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) on the issues of acid rain and trade.

Once a draft agreement with the United States has been reached on trade, the question of provincial involvement will still be open, given that the scope and content of an agreement has not yet been settled. The ratification of international agreements is clearly an exclusive federal responsibility. It is recognized, however, that there may be areas of a Canada-U.S. trade agreement which will involve matters under provincial jurisdiction. In this case, provincial legislation to implement the agreement in those areas may be required.

For this reason the provinces have been extensively and continuously consulted, both at First Ministers and senior official levels as the negotiations progress. The progress and issues of the negotiations were addressed at the recent meeting of First Ministers on March 11. Further meetings are scheduled for June and September of this year. As the Prime Minister has already stated in the House, Members of the House of Commons will be apprised of and given an opportunity to speak to any trade agreement with the United States.

APARTHEID—SOUTH AFRICA—PRIME MINISTER'S SCHEDULED MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, 1987, I rose in this House to ask a question of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) with regard to the immediate future of Canada's relations with

South Africa and our policy against the repugnant system of apartheid. More specifically, I was concerned about the state of communications between our two Governments.

The Secretary of State assured me that Canada will keep the lines of communication open. I would like to commend the Minister for expressing this constructive attitude as well as add some of my own thoughts with regard to the unfortunate but complex situation of apartheid.

Many residents of my riding of Don Valley East have expressed their concern and interest in this subject. It seems to me that this is particularly important now given the set of regressive measures announced this past weekend by the South African Government. It may be said that Canadians, as well as most civilized people in the world, agree that apartheid, the institutionalized system of racial discrimination, is a principle alien and repugnant to supporters of liberty and democracy. Although in a formal sense the term emerged only in 1948, systematic racial discrimination has existed in what is now South Africa for centuries.

• (1825)

According to the World Guide on Human Rights based upon a number of universal criteria for freedom, South Africa's index out of 100 is only 32 per cent, whereas Canada's, by comparison, is 94 per cent.

Given the overwhelming consensus on the existence of a problem, unfortunately no unanimity has surfaced, either among the outside observers or even among the very South Africans affected by apartheid, on how to resolve it. Considering its long history and the lack of substantive progress on the part of the South African Government in this area, an obvious feeling of frustration has emerged. Unfortunately, this condition often tends to breed reactions characterized by a simplistic evaluation as well as by emotional and extreme measures which at best express strong condemnation and at worst incite violence. Fortunately Canada, both in the past and at present, has taken a balanced approach which warrants a brief explanation.

Because the Canadian Government still believes that peaceful change is possible, our approach incorporates two basic premises. First, the Canadian Government and people oppose and abhor apartheid. Second, we leave the way open for contacts and dialogue which in themselves increase Canada's capacity to influence progressive changes in South Africa.

The Canadian Government rejects the concept that total isolation of South Africa would somehow promote fundamental reform in that country. Racist mentalities feed on isolation. We, therefore, must maintain diplomatic relations with that country. Canada also supports the right of South Africa to participate in the activities of the United Nations.

Given this expression of a strong but balanced commitment, we can see that our deeds have matched our words. By examining the record, the consistency of our concern dates to