

Supply

As I said in my remarks, before he was elected we signed with the Americans an agreement dated August 5, 1980 to promote and increase research on acid rain; it was also aimed at drafting and concluding an international acid rain agreement between our two countries. That agreement dates back to the last year of President Carter's administration in the United States.

In subsequent years, especially from 1983 to early 1984, we tried to expedite negotiations with Mr. Ruckelshaus, who was responsible for the United States Environment Protection Agency, so as to set up a reduction program concerning acid rain from the United States. On several occasions Mr. Ruckelshaus approached the White House with various programs, but to no avail. In February 1984 it became obvious that Mr. Ruckelshaus just did not wield enough political clout to obtain President Reagan's approval, so the provinces and the federal Government met here in Ottawa on March 6, 1984 and decided to proceed with an acid rain reduction program in Canada, without American participation.

That was when the Ontario Government Minister of Environment—a Conservative Party member—made this statement familiar to all those who know the history of acid rain in Canada. I will quote him in English:

[English]

We have decided to cut our umbilical cord.

[Translation]

At the same, in March 1984 here in Ottawa, we hosted an international meeting with nine European countries to establish a common front program, as I indicated in my remarks. In June that year there was a follow-up meeting in Munich where 21 countries joined this world-wide movement to fight against acid rain. Again in June 1984, the two Ministers of Environment of Quebec and Ontario as well as their colleagues from other eastern provinces attended a second federal-provincial meeting here in Ottawa to confirm the decision to combine their efforts in an attempt to reduce acid emissions in Canada between then and 1994.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what our Government achieved before September 4, 1984.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments. The Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment (Mr. Gurbin).

[English]

Mr. Gurbin: I appreciate the explanation of failure given to us by the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia), the Liberal critic for the environment. I have a simple, short question. We all know the memorandum of intent was signed between Canada and the United States in August of 1980. We have also heard the explanations of the Liberal critic for the environment as to what the second subcommittee on acid rain has described as "time lost". How many millions or billions of dollars was the Hon. Member's Party successful in getting the

United States Government to commit to acid rain abatement and pollution control during the period between 1980 and September of 1984? Second, how many times was the subject of acid rain ever the major single item at the summit meetings between Canada and the United States during that period of time?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's second question on the summit is one which is very important. I recall very clearly that issue was raised by former Prime Minister Trudeau during the 1984 Summit meeting. It was item No. 7 on the agenda and it had a full paragraph.

Mr. Daubney: Item No. 7?

Mr. Caccia: Yes, item No. 7. Canada's initiative was fully developed at that particular Summit meeting and it was subsequently enlarged upon in 1985, both at the London meeting of Ministers of the Environment and at the Summit meeting in the same year, 1985.

With respect to the Hon. Member's first question, we had to proceed alone because it was evident that the efforts of Mr. Ruckelshaus of the Environmental Protection Agency were not successful in obtaining a program of emission reductions in the United States by February of 1984. As of that moment, we pursued the matter with the Americans in informal meetings, including the meeting in Munich in 1984, and we provided them with the economic arguments which would make it necessary for them to agree to the adoption of a program, but evidently the Americans were not ready to do so.

If the Parliamentary Secretary is implying that the Accord which has now been discussed in Washington at the second Summit includes an amount of money which is earmarked for a reduction of emissions program, with a deadline, then I would like him to say so. This question remains, despite all the dancing which has taken place, despite the two summits and despite the promises made by the Prime Minister during the election campaign. I know that right now the Parliamentary Secretary is looking at page 30 of the envoys' report. That is contingent upon the industry coming forward and upon commercial demonstration programs. That is not a cutting program at all. He is confusing apples and oranges.

• (1150)

Therefore, we have not made progress on the side of reduction, of cuts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans).

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I am pleased—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain. I failed to notice that the Minister was rising to speak. I have already given the floor to the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain. I would only ask him if he would consent to yield the floor to the Minister.