

on my Head, referring of course to the continuing problem of acid rain. I might also suggest that another appropriate tune for what has been going on over so many years with respect to acid rain would be the song that was a hit a number of years ago called *Killing Me Softly With His Song*.

What is happening here and what is happening to our lakes in Canada has everything to do with the quiet way in which the life in many of our lakes and streams is being extinguished over the course of time by the continuing inaction on the part of Governments with respect to acid rain. I think the new Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) said it very well a couple of days ago, that politicians have essentially been asleep at the switch.

I think it is fair to say also that not all politicians have been asleep at the switch and there have been voices at the political as well as at the scientific level over the years which have called upon Governments to recognize that this was a problem, and to act, and that those voices have gone largely unheeded. Now it appears that indeed attention may be paid to them, and that is a good sign.

What has happened since I asked that question on March 19? A number of things have happened. Here in the House we have formed a special committee on acid rain on which I have the honour to serve as the New Democratic Party Member. That committee recently had the opportunity to meet in the Muskoka area with the two special envoys on acid rain, the former Premier of Ontario, Mr. William Davis, who is the special envoy of the Prime Minister and Mr. Drew Lewis, the special envoy of President Reagan with respect to acid rain. We had the opportunity to meet with those two gentleman in Muskoka for a couple of hours to discuss their work and the ways in which we might co-operate on the problem of acid rain and I must say, as one who was initially cynical and remains to a degree cynical about the envoy process I was nevertheless encouraged by what Mr. Lewis had to say about the direction he thought his report would be going and about the kind of advice he might be giving to the President with respect to acid rain. I was particularly encouraged that there did not seem to be any debate any longer, at least in Mr. Lewis's own mind, about there being a problem and about the need for action. If that could become an incontestable political fact in in the United States, that would be a victory for us and I hope that sort of thing will be forthcoming.

With respect to the Canadian envoy, Mr. Davis, my over-all impression was that he was far too relaxed about the subject and not as intense or as passionate about the need for action as I would like to have seen. That may be a question of style, it is too early to judge, and I hope that the former Premier will prove me wrong when he makes his report.

● (1805)

I am, however, concerned about reports which came out the day after the special committee met with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Davis, reports having to do with the budget which Mr. Davis received for his acid rain work. There was a report to the effect that the over-all cost of Mr. Davis' appointment would be in

### Adjournment Debate

the neighbourhood of \$500,000 and that, quite understandably, a great deal of that money would have to do with travel and accommodation. However, a great deal was also going toward his own personal staff, which is handling not just work pursuant to his responsibilities as Special Envoy for Acid Rain, but also his own personal business having to do with the variety of corporations on whose boards he serves. I am concerned about this.

I know that the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain is also concerned about it because they do not want to see the whole issue of acid rain dragged down to the level of those arguments which go on about the nature of political patronage in this country. They certainly do not want Mr. Davis to be seen as a patronage appointment. I want to register their concern and my concern to the Government, and through the Government to Mr. Davis, that when he brings down his report, in every way possible it should be of a quality which will justify the money spent, so that we will know when it comes down that some of the concerns I have expressed before, and which others have expressed, about Mr. Davis' appointment will be proven wrong. We would be glad to be wrong on this matter, Mr. Speaker. I just hope that the Government is taking every step now to ensure, with respect to the report on Mr. Davis' budget, that the money being spent in the name of acid rain is, in fact, being spent on that very issue.

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the comments made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), I think the Hon. Member ended with a somewhat regrettable tone. I will deal with that in a moment. For now, I would like to come to the substance of his representations.

It has been a long time, indeed, since he first asked the question and a great many events have taken place in the interim. I appreciate his mentioning the fact that our current Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) has indicated the high priorities acid rain has with this Government. I think this has been done with honesty in terms of how actions have not been taken over a long period of time by governments and politicians in the past in spite of the fact that there are some who have had a keen sense of awareness of the problem.

The issue boils down to identifying for the record several points which I believe are important. First, in February of 1985 a commitment between the federal Government and the provincial Governments for the apportionment of deposition in each area of Canada was gained so that our desired level of 20 kilograms per hectare per year could be reached. We then followed that up with a number of specific actions, including the sub-committee reinstatement and actual funds which were put toward the cost of control in Canada and so on. We have been doing this work in Canada. In fact, we have been seen to be doing our homework.

We were left with the serious problem which has been in existence ever since 1979 when the first memorandum of intent was signed with the United States. We have had, in fact, an impasse which could not be overcome. That impasse had to be dealt with in some way. I think that we were fortunate to