

● (1740)

In southern Saskatchewan you need strip off only six to 20 feet of earth to find the lignite coal, but the only coal we are using is for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. As I understand it, that coal has the lowest sulphur content of any coal in western Canada, and there is a 200 or 300-year supply right there just beneath the surface as well.

Until 1960, the federal Government paid the railroads a subvention. I am sure that my hon. friend, the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds (Mr. Mayer), knows about this and understands it. Until 1960 we paid a subvention of up to \$5 a tonne, which was really a subsidization of the transportation costs to move that coal from western Canada to central Canada. That has gone by the boards.

With a few dozen coal mines shut down in western Canada we are bringing high sulphur coal up from Kentucky and Virginia which are, of course, closer, which means that the transportation costs are lower. Where are the priorities of Canada? If we want to do something about acid rain, why, in heaven's name, are we burning high sulphur coal in Ontario brought in from the eastern United States when there is Canadian coal lying in the ground?

I see the new Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) here. I hope he does better with that portfolio than he did with Transport. He is a nice fellow. I know he is competent and capable, but methinks he has a problem. The Minister might want to get up and correct me, and if I am wrong I am sure he will be anxious to do so. However, I suspect that if we provide a subvention of \$5, \$10, or even \$15 a tonne to take western coal to Ontario Hydro, it will be a violation of the Reagan-Mulroney trade deal, it will be considered an unfair subsidy.

Any sovereign nation worthy of its nationhood and independence will not allow the Government of another country to decide what it can or cannot do. We want to do something as essential as reducing acid rain and cleaning up our air, yet we allow another nation to dictate to us, and the Government is dumb enough to sign a trade agreement which prevents us from using coal from western Canada. That is traitorous behaviour in my books. That is a betrayal of our nationhood. We have no excuse for doing that. We have no excuse for being party to an agreement which prevents Canada from using its own coal from the West in central Canada because the Americans do not like it.

Every time we provided transportation assistance on commodities in Atlantic Canada or western Canada it was to take into account our geography, climate, location of population, and location of resources. We tried to provide equitable treatment. We do not want to discriminate against people because of where they happen to live or where they happen to produce a resource. This goes back to the Crownsnest Pass Agreement of 1897 and other programs funded by the national Government in the 1870s and 1880s. We recognized the

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handicap we have because of our geography, climate, and location of population.

This has now gone by the boards. We no longer have the capacity as a nation to carry out our responsibilities in the name of our own national interests and our own public good. Clean air is a public good from coast to coast and from the 49th parallel to the North Pole.

These so-called Canadians who sit on the government side and on the treasury benches are weak-kneed and lily-livered. I am tempted to buy those nice, thick knee pads that my mother used when she scrubbed floors and send a pair to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in case he makes another trip to Washington. I feel embarrassed, betrayed, and outraged as a Canadian that they would be party to something which prevents us from doing things in my province, your province, Mr. Speaker, and in British Columbia, which the whole nation needs. I call that traitorous behaviour.

The Government sits by and relies on the beautiful word "consultation". It has been consulting and consulting. Every time the Government has consulted, whether with the U.S. or the provinces, it comes back to Ottawa and says that since some of the people with which it has consulted do not like the measures, it will water them down.

My hon. friend, who is bellowing like a bull moose in fly time—

Mr. King: At least I am saying something sensible.

Mr. Benjamin: —needs to be reminded of something from the earliest days of the trade union movement in this country, from which ranks I come. It was the trade union leadership of this country which, for over 100 years, stood up for the protection of the environment, for safety and security, for the rights of individual Canadians and for the health and welfare of Canadians. Conservative Ministers of Finance would ask whether we thought money grew on gooseberry bushes. I remind my hon. friends that on September 6, 1939, they found the gooseberry bush containing a whole pile of money. For what? For war.

● (1750)

Why not do the same thing as we did following the declaration of war, except call it a declaration of peace and spend \$1 billion a year to clean up our air and water? We would all share in the costs, both directly and indirectly, because we are the ones who should pay, not our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. That is what should be in this legislation.

There should be national standards. Expert environmentalists, scientists, the Canadian Labour Congress and the NDP are all calling for those national standards.

Mr. King: You will not have to pay for it.

Mr. Benjamin: The Hon. Member asks how you will pay for it. That is the same line we heard in the "Dirty Thirties". Let