

Therefore, we have the motion before us today. I invite Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament to support this motion because it is supportable by any independent thinking MP who recognizes the necessity to look for a solution which can only result from a process of frank exchanges with the Americans, particularly the Reagan administration.

There are millions of Americans who believe like us that it is intolerable to continue to absorb the damage that is taking place. Therefore, we have an important economic theme to put on the table and an important mission to convince the Reagan administration that the cost of inaction is greater than the cost of action. We must engage them on that economic plane and, in order to be convincing, we must be equipped with the quantitative analyses that are necessary. The latest study which was carried out in 1981 by Tom Crocker, an economist at Wyoming University, indicated even then a yearly cost to the American economy of \$5.5 billion. That cost is now greater. It is on this economic plane that we will make our point in Washington, not by engaging in this false hope that launching another round of research, as was launched in 1980, will enable us to achieve the kind of emission control program we need.

Canada has done its share, as have 21 other nations that belong to the EEC. That is why there is a reference to the Helsinki agreement in this motion. It involves a group of industrial nations that decided to address the problem in this manner, by committing themselves to a 30 per cent cut at least by 1993. Unfortunately, the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland and Turkey are major industrial nations which are not part of the agreement.

We face a situation in North America whereby we are intimately intertwined in finding the solution to the economic damage caused by acid rain. Just as the United States and Canada cause each other damage, the same can be said for the United States and Mexico.

The economic approach is the key to the solution to this issue. The approach followed by the Government of Canada by way of two summits has set us back. It has created false expectations. Canadians are being asked to wait another five years to see whether or not some action will take place. There will be no agreement, no program or deadlines to cut one ounce of sulphur emission until this research binge over the next five years is completed in 1991.

I regret to say that the Government has failed on the acid rain front. The Government may have thought that good public relations could convince President Reagan to agree with its policies, but it has failed. We are wasting valuable time and have lost another year. The second Shamrock Summit provided another opportunity to make a strong economic case to convince the Americans that their damages are equal to, if not greater than ours. The Government did not have the guts to advance our theme. The major player in Cabinet with respect to this subject was even left at home.

I hope that enough Tory MPs will see the merits of our approach we are proposing today, which I submit is the only

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one that will bring about the solution to the acid rain problem we are facing in North America.

• (1140)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine).

Mr. Fontaine: Mr. Speaker, when the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) accuses the Government of being shortsighted about the long term economic interests of our two countries, I think that, if we consider the number of years his party was in power without ever doing anything about the environment, they could be accused of being farsighted.

What did they do during all those years? They were a bunch of amateurs. In fact, the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount (Mr. Johnston), one of their number, in an article appearing in *The Ottawa Citizen* this morning appears to be just that when he tells us, for instance, about Mirabel, a matter that was decided with a snap of the fingers, or when he tells us that the National Energy Program proposed by Mr. MacEachen was in the Budget and that all the ministers were put before a fait accompli. More amateurism.

The Hon. Member for Davenport was a minister at the time, but if we are to believe Mr. Johnston's statements, he did not have access to Cabinet directly because it was a group in the Prime Minister's Office that was running the country. And they are the ones that engineered the Petrofina purchase.

So why didn't the Hon. Member for Davenport stand up at the time and argue about protecting the environment, when there were plenty of smoke stacks spewing forth pollution and trees that were losing their leaves? Didn't he notice them until now?

It is strange that he should notice all this on the very day that for the first time, our Prime Minister managed to elicit an official position from the President of the United States, who formally admitted the existence of serious acid rain problems and the existence of transboundary pollution.

He is saying all this today. He is making a big discovery, when our own Prime Minister has come back to this country with the assurance that \$2.5 billion will be appropriated by the U.S. Congress to fight acid rain. These are the positive aspects the Hon. Member for Davenport conveniently forgot to mention in the House today.

I wish he would talk to us about his own achievements within the previous Liberal Government.

Mr. Caccia: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to do that, particularly considering the fact that the Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine) first came onto the political scene on September 4, 1984. He does not know the history of Canada before that date, and that is a serious handicap.