

Supply

● (1500)

GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point. I do not want that to go any further. Will the Minister put a stop to it right now and admit once and for all that, yes, the Government of Canada is not only obligated to providing the service but obligated to subsidizing it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the process is in place. I certainly would not want to interfere with the work of the standing committee.

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Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to apologize to the Chair for my intemperate comment during the Question Period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 82—TREATY TO CUT ACID RAIN-CAUSING EMISSIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Caccia:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government of Canada should, before the next Canada-U.S., summit, negotiate a treaty with the Government of the United States to cut acid rain-causing emissions from sources within the United States, which cause damage to our economy because such emissions are transported across the Canada-United States border.

That this treaty should be in the spirit of international co-operation exhibited by the Helsinki Protocol of July, 1985, already subscribed to by the Government of Canada and should include:

- the reduction by 1994 of transboundary fluxes of sulphur dioxide by at least 50 per cent by 1994, using 1980 as the base year;
- a specific timetable of emission reductions in order to meet the 1994 deadline;
- a specification that such reductions will be applied to sources of sulphur dioxide emissions which will yield the greatest benefits to Canada; and

That failure to enter into urgent negotiations for such a treaty would demonstrate a blindness to the long-term economic interests of both countries, considering the damage caused by acid rain to human health and to forests, lakes, streams, fisheries, agriculture, wildlife, the maple sugar industry and to buildings, monuments and structures.

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, when we reached one o'clock I was referring to the agreement signed by Canada and the United States with respect to the acid rain problem. Using the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) own words I was pointing out that the agreement was certainly no triumph, although it was progress of sorts. Because it was not a triumph, and although it represented a certain amount of progress, that is what makes the motion before us today in the name of my friend, the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia), so meaningful and relevant, and appropriate that it should be absorbing the time of the House.

We will have more research. We will see the expenditure of some money. If Congress will agree and if industry will lead the way by spending its \$2.5 billion first. But there is no guarantee that that will be the case. We are receiving an endorsement of the Lewis-Davis Report. However, I have to point out, using the words of a well-known conservative columnist: "The Lewis-Davis Report is not as cogent as the Canadian Government would have liked. While it stirs the waters it creates no waves. It is of modest recommendations".

It is true that the U.S. President signed an agreement. But later on, in talking to the United States press corps, the President made this comment: "Serious scientific and economic problems remain to be solved". When I heard and saw that comment I could not help feeling that this rather smacks of hedging, backing or fudging on the agreement. A columnist in the United States of the conservative persuasion has made the statement that the "greening" of President Reagan on the issue of acid rain should not be begrudged by those who understandably want more sooner. He says that the President has come a long way. In his speech this morning, the Minister made the same comment. But then this columnist goes on to say:

Down the road somewhere between Shamrock II and IV, we may yet have a treaty establishing emission reduction targets. What we need to do meanwhile is to keep on trucking.

I do not even know what that means, to keep on trucking. To those who are advocating and suggesting that what we have is a giant step forward in terms of a serious problem and to "keep on trucking" while acid rain keeps on falling means that we will continue to kill our lakes and streams, continue to destroy our fish life, ruin our forests, decay our buildings, harm our economy and endanger our health.

The recent agreement with the President of the United States made a contribution to his education. That is fine. I am all in favour of enlightenment. That is wonderful. It is wonderful to know a little more about anything. We can now say in the House that the President of the United States sees, in a mirror dimly, and now he knows in part. Our concern is, when shall he understand fully, even as we in Canada have understood fully? That is the message that this motion is trying to carry forward. It is that we have understood, and we have acted, but it is a transboundary problem. We cannot solve it on our own. We need action from the United States of America.

Surely a motion such as this can be supported by every Member in the House. We in Canada have understood. Why should we not have understood when one-half of our forests are receiving high levels of acid rain? We cannot afford to see our forest industry in any way undermined. We must have a vigorous industry in order to protect our national economy. Canada's lakes, rivers and streams constitute almost 8 per cent of the country's total surface area. What a resource we have, one of the world's greatest sources of fresh, clean drinking water. We have a fishing industry, both commercial and sport, which is vital to our economy. Yet 43 per cent of the lakes in Ontario and Quebec—a total of two million lakes—are suffering today from pollution as a direct cause of acid rain.