

rain when it was in power, is as credible as a sermon on sexual morality by Fanny Hill. When the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) moved his motion he ignored history, refused to give the new Government due credit for a solid achievement in the environmental area, and demonstrated yet again a truism, namely, the Liberal Party never looks sillier than when it is attacking the present Government in a policy area where its own record in office was so appalling.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: Despite the Cassandra opposite, the hon. gentleman who moved the motion, the course undertaken by the present Government on acid rain is bearing fruit and will bear even more results in the future, results which the previous Government was unwilling to seek and, therefore, unable to achieve. Their attitude to the issue is evident in everything the Hon. Member's Party did or failed to do when it was in power.

On November 18, 1980, the then Minister of the Environment assured this House that: "We are acting within our own jurisdiction to the fullest extent and exploring every possible avenue to press the United States to co-operate with us in this very important venture". I urge the Hon. Member who sponsored the motion, and all Members on all sides of the House, to use that statement as a measure against which to judge what the previous Government did or, to be precise, what it did not do on acid rain.

One thing it did not do was place acid rain on the agenda of any summit between the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States, CBC's Terry Milewski notwithstanding. There have been claims, the CBC's among them, that acid rain was first put on a bilateral summit agenda in 1981. However, Sir, by every reliable account, acid rain was not in fact on the agenda as a separate and major issue. It was only mentioned in passing, virtually after the fact.

The Hon. Member for Davenport takes issue with me, but according to a description of the 1981 summit contained in *The Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs* published by the University of Toronto press:

Mr. Reagan said that the United States favoured a prompt completion of the Alaska Gas Pipeline (and) said the United States wished to co-operate in studying and controlling transboundary pollution. His conclusion was positive and up-beat focusing, not on the differences between the two countries, but on their shared likenesses—

Geoffrey Stevens, now managing editor of *The Globe and Mail*, and then its Ottawa columnist, dismissed the entire meeting as a "triumph of style over substance".

On June 17, 1982, I had occasion in this House to quote the words of a distinguished former American chairman of the International Joint Commission who blamed Mr. Trudeau for Canada's failure to achieve a bilateral accord on acid rain. These are the words of Mr. Robert Sugarman to a Canadian audience:

There has never been a statement in the United States by the highest official in your Government—

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—in other words, the Government of Canada—

—to the American people that has reflected the seriousness with which Canadians take the problem.

A week later Canada's Minister of the Environment, John Roberts, instructed Canadian officials, his scientists, to break off negotiations with the United States on the grounds that the Americans were not willing to work out bilateral emission standards with us. That, Mr. Speaker, was the former Government's idea of "exploring every avenue to co-operate".

Almost a year later, shortly after the Williamsburg summit between the then Canadian Prime Minister and the President of the United States, I asked Mr. Roberts, the Minister of the Environment, in the House of Commons during Question Period whether acid rain had been on the agenda of the Williamsburg summit, or whether the Prime Minister had raised the issue even informally with the President of the United States on that occasion. All I, the Parliament of Canada, and the people of Canada received was a statement that Mr. Roberts did not "know whether the acid rain issue was touched on in an informal way". The Minister of the Environment for Canada did not even know whether the Prime Minister of Canada had raised the issue, much less as a major agenda item at a bilateral summit between the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States.

I pressed him on that occasion by asking, first, whether Williamsburg might not have been an ideal occasion for raising the matter and, second, whether he thought that putting the issue forward might not assist in the acid rain campaign. I asked the then Minister of the Environment for Canada whether he, as Minister of the Environment, did not think it would have been a good idea for the Prime Minister of Canada to have raised the issue of acid rain at Williamsburg on the occasion of the summit.

Mr. Roberts' reply was astonishing for its insensitivity, even from a member of a Government which was giving insensitivity and arrogance a bad name. He dismissed my call as "an absurdity". He said it was an absurdity for me in Opposition to even suggest that it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister of Canada to raise the issue of acid rain with his counterpart, the President of the United States, at the summit meeting.

On April 13, 1983, I asked a question of the then Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, now a member of the Senate, Allan MacEachen. I asked whether he had made progress on the acid rain issue under the 1980 Memorandum of Intent at a meeting he had just had with U.S. Secretary of State Shultz. He said:

● (1230)

—that idea was tossed around at our meeting and it was abandoned because we finally concluded it would not lead to any further progress.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. McMillan: That is the vigour, Sir, with which the then Deputy Prime Minister of Canada viewed the urgency of the acid rain question in connection with meetings he was having