

*Clean Air Act*

How can we Canadians be effective in opposing that kind of development in the United States if we ourselves are embarking on identical measures in Canada? The finance minister's budget provides for the establishment of a \$175 million fund to finance, on a grant basis, up to 75 per cent of the cost of conversions of oil-fired electricity plants to high sulphur content coal in the Atlantic provinces, my region of the country. To be fair, there is a proviso in the program and in the budget that those conversions must be accomplished in an "environmentally acceptable" way. The minister confirmed that in this House and in other forums. However, neither the federal government nor the relevant provinces have made known how the conversions will be proceeded with in an environmentally acceptable fashion. No specific strategy has been enunciated, articulated, or made known to this House as to how those technologies will be required, or at least encouraged.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Nova Scotia Power Corporation was quoted last week in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* as saying that, in the coming year, Nova Scotia will generate more power from coal than from imported oil for the first time in many decades.

Coal conversions in the Atlantic region and in other parts of Canada is a welcome prospect in terms of energy self-sufficiency, but an alarming one from an environmental point of view. Our failure to instal proper environmental technologies in new and converted coal-fire plants is an open invitation to our American neighbours to be similarly negligent themselves.

My party believes that federal and provincial governments should exercise caution in their efforts to revive the coal industry in Canada and to encourage the substitution of high sulphur coal for oil. Certainly the wider use of coal is one way we can lessen our dependence on foreign energy sources, so we support those conversions. Nonetheless, without appropriate safeguards, the costs of that option, especially the damage to our natural environment, could well outweigh the benefits.

As for the provincial governments, my party, and I in particular, believe they should vigorously enforce their control orders on acid rain-causing emissions. Equally important, the provinces should, at regular intervals, reassess whether those control orders are tough enough in light of advances in pollution control technologies.

Together, the federal and provincial governments should put as much pressure as possible on the United States to curb their sulphur dioxide and nitrogen emissions, especially from coal-burning thermal power plants. A bilateral agreement on the abatement of acid rain on both sides of the border must remain the principal target for Canada and the United States. Negotiations toward that end, however, must not be used by either country as an excuse for inaction in the meantime. Many interim measures, including a virile enforcement of existing regulations, can and should be taken.

Funding for acid rain research must remain a priority for Canadians. I welcome the recent announcement by the Minister of the Environment of greatly increased funding for such research. Four million dollars was originally earmarked for 1980-81, and now the amount will be \$7.5 million. By 1984 the

amount will be up to \$29.5 million. Nevertheless, let us not overestimate the scope of the planned research effort. The total amount of money the federal government will be devoting to acid rain research scarcely exceeds its advertising budget for telling Canadians about the splendors of its constitutional package. Far too little is known, for example, about the effects of acid rain on forest growth, on agricultural crops, and on human health. Nor has enough scientific research been focused on the mitigation of the adverse effects of acid rain.

Only by devising and implementing a total strategy against acid rain can we in Canada demonstrate to our American friends that we are serious in our efforts to deal with the problem. I am proud to be associated with Bill C-51 as an essential component of that strategy. I congratulate the minister for the initiative he has taken today and urge him to continue to follow through with the other elements of the required program.

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment which is intended to give Canada reciprocal legislation to that provided by section 115 of the United States clean air act. I agree with the previous speakers that the unanimous parliamentary support given to this bill today should indicate to our neighbours how seriously Canadians view the issue of trans-boundary air pollution.

This reciprocal legislation is required so that the Canadian and American federal authorities can start to move to control acid airborne pollutants produced in one country which affect the other.

The United States legislation limits the formal review process for modifying state control of offending pollutants to those countries which offer reciprocal protection to the United States. Canada does not at present offer such equal legislation, and we must have appropriate legislation protection for the United States from air pollutants emitted in Canada. In fact, Canada does not at present have an international agreement with the United States, as required under section 7(1)(b) of the Canadian Clean Air Act. One is under discussion, but unfortunately progress is slow.

Provincial requirements and restrictions regarding long-range transportation of air pollutants vary across Canada. Pollution sources in Canada which affect the United States can be subjected to emission standards under this legislation. It is certainly the hope of the New Democratic Party and, I am sure, of all members of this House, that the speedy passage and importance attached to this amending bill will be viewed with due recognition by the United States. Comparable action is available under section 115 of the U.S. clean air act.

Of course our long-term goals must be to reduce acid emissions and precipitation to benign environmental levels. Hopefully the U.S. Congress will consider amending the American legislation in the very near future, to deal with long-range transportation of air pollutants.

I note, particularly, that provinces must first be consulted where the source or sources of pollutants are located. This, I am sure, in most cases will cause the diminution of pollutants