

Supply

and to tell him: "We have done our duty in Canada and we are now asking you to do the same." President Reagan gave his answer the day after the second summit, as evidenced by the newspaper, *La Presse* which published an article with the headline "Reagan endorses fight against acid rain". Maybe this is still rhetoric, but the Americans at least recognize in fact or implicitly that the problem concerns them.

The Hon. Member said that there has only been rhetoric on the side of the United States and that nothing was happening. He was afraid that it would remain the same for quite some time. I would like to ask him whether he knows, as he probably does, that the American Congress is now considering Bill S-54 sponsored by senators from New England among others. This Bill, now before the American Congress, is being examined by the Committee on the Environment and Public Works. We have been informed that this is the most important Bill to have been debated by the United States Congress in the last 10 years. We have been told:

The Senate Bill goes further than the recommendations of this report and is in many respects different from many bills tabled in Congress in the last 10 years to fight against acid rain. In addition to the negotiation of a North American treaty on pollution—

This is what the motion debated today proposes.

In addition to the negotiation of a North American treaty on pollution, it proposes the adoption of an import tax on foreign products whose manufacturers are not subject to anti-pollution standards as stringent as those in the United States.

I would also add for the Hon. Member's information that Mr. Victor Maerki, assistant to Senator Stafford, who is sponsoring this Bill, says that this legislation has a better chance than the previous bills because of the Mulroney-Reagan meeting.

For the first time, the American President has recognized that acid rain is a real problem. This should remove one of the major obstacles to passage of this Bill by Congress.

This is what I would like to hear my colleague say, namely that major progress has been accomplished since we have been in power and practical action is now being taken in the United States. This was supposed to be a non-partisan debate and I therefore hope that the Hon. Member will have the honesty to make this admission.

[*English*]

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, when my colleague was asking me all these questions, I thought that he would not leave me any time to answer them. Quite frankly, I said I felt it was a desire, at least on our part and I suspect on the part of most people, to find a common voice. Therefore, I was a little disillusioned when the Prime Minister appeared to be delighted with President Reagan's response, because in truth the response of the U.S. administration has not advanced much in the last five years or six years. However, if the President of the United States had approached the acid rain problem with the same degree of resolve with which he approached the Nicaraguan problem, then I might be impressed. If the President of the

United States were prepared to put his reputation on the line in the battle against acid rain, then I might be impressed. My worry is that I do not know if the President really cares. From reading the reports—I was not there and I am only going from hearsay, quite frankly, and I admit that—I know that our advisors, our embassy people in Washington, had some difficulty in getting the President to do even what he did with regard to acid rain. He did not even want to endorse the Lewis-Davis report in actual fact. He had no interest in pursuing the acid rain question. It was only because we, the Canadian side, insisted that something be said about it that he even went as far as to endorse the report, albeit without setting out any clear way of dealing with that endorsement.

I do not know if the President of the United States understands it, but out of the 16,000 fishing camps and lodges in Ontario, 600 will be closed because of acid rain by the year 2000, and that will cost us \$28 million and 600 jobs. One hundred and seventy-five million acres, which is almost half of Canada's productive forests, generate \$14 million worth of product per year. These forests are affected detrimentally by the high levels of acid rain that is falling on them. Fifty per cent of the soil in Ontario and Atlantic Canada, and 87 per cent of the soil in Quebec is sensitive to acid rain. The value of the crops that grow in eastern Canada is \$3 billion. I am concerned that over 86 per cent of Canada's population lives in areas of high acid rain. Given that similar statistics can be worked out for the geographic areas affected in the United States, I would have thought the President would have recognized, as we have, that immediate action is needed. We need a program now.

● (1220)

This is a nonpartisan issue. We do not differ on this. I am sure that the Minister agrees we should clean it up. I am sure the Minister agrees that the action taken by the Liberal administration was useful in the pursuit of that clean-up. I am sure we all agree that the major problem is the U.S. administration's inability, first, to understand the problem, and second, to move forward. I think we all agree on that.

Therefore, I do not know why we are arguing among ourselves about who did what to whom. Why are we not arguing about how we can get the best possible result from the administration of the United States? Why can we not send them a message that we are not satisfied with further discussion, investigation, and research? Let us do it by all means, but let us put minimum standards in place and let us enforce them so that we will not constantly have acid rain falling on everything that is important to us while they sit around waiting for the next presidential election.

Mr. Gurbini: Has the New Democratic Party House Leader read the Drew-Lewis report?

Mr. Deans: Yes.

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, this motion, coming as it does from a Party that did virtually nothing to advance Canada-U.S. progress on acid