

*Pollution Control*

program which could result in increased sulphur dioxide emissions. I also made it clear that Canada remains committed to drastic reductions in Canadian source emissions and would continue to look for a similar commitment from the United States. It was clear from that meeting that in order to secure a similar reduction from the U.S., we will need to move forward on the control of domestic emissions, as the province of Ontario is doing today.

● (1530)

With regard to the second point, the best available simulation techniques show that Inco emissions alone account for approximately 30 per cent of the sulphur deposition in Ontario. About 25 per cent of the sulphur deposited in the Ottawa area originates from the Inco operations at Sudbury. With respect to the Muskokas, which are particularly susceptible to damage from acid rain, approximately 40 per cent of the sulphur deposition originates from this source.

While I acknowledge that these simulated projections may not precisely reflect real life levels, their approximate relative magnitudes certainly point to significant benefits for the Canadian environment as a result of reductions.

I know hon. members are interested in our progress towards the bilateral agreement on transboundary air quality that the United States and Canada have committed themselves to developing. We are currently reviewing a U.S. proposal calling for the establishment of bilateral working groups to develop the basis of the agreement. This approach was successfully employed in negotiating the Canada-U.S. agreement on Great Lakes water quality. Given the length of time the development of an agreement might require, we are also seeking interim commitments to emission reductions pending completion of the formal agreement. The objective of the interim reductions commitment would be to preclude lenient interpretation of existing legislation which would allow for emission increases, apply existing legislation to effect further reductions from current levels, and identify the need for new legislation required for a long-term control strategy program.

Canadian moves to address the problems of acid rain sources in our own country will, I believe, considerably increase the chance for success in the negotiations we have now entered into with the United States.

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Madam Speaker, like other hon. members, I listened with great interest to the minister's statement. It is, I think, the first such statement on motions the minister has made in the House in his capacity as Minister of the Environment. Given that fact and given the forum in which he has chosen to make his statement, I was expecting something important, something major, especially in view of the importance of the subject matter. However, what we have been treated to is little more than an announcement by the federal minister that his colleague, the minister of the environment for Ontario, is making a statement elsewhere this afternoon.

I nevertheless welcome the statement of the federal minister and I especially welcome the announcement about acid rain that the Ontario minister is making in Toronto. But I am concerned on a number of counts. Coming from Prince Edward Island and the Atlantic region, I am not an uncharitable person, nor am I unkind. Yet, the temptation is almost irresistible to accuse the minister of attempting to coat-tail on initiatives being taken by Ontario. Indeed, there is the urge to accuse the minister of trying to scoop his colleague in the province of Ontario or even of seeking to share in some reflected glory from what measures have been adopted by the Ontario government.

The statement I am asked to respond to is essentially that of the province of Ontario, not of the federal government. As the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) has suggested, it took a great deal of courage for Ontario and the environment minister in particular to make the kind of statement being given this afternoon in Toronto. It took leadership. My regret is that that same kind of leadership is not being provided by his colleague at the federal level.

My party is enormously concerned about the problem of acid rain. We are concerned about the pollution emissions from Inco and we certainly welcome whatever initiatives come from either the Ontario government or the federal government.

The previous minister of the environment, the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), once described the problem of acid rain as the most serious environmental problem ever to have been faced by Canada. I agree with that sentiment. Acid rain is killing our lakes, threatening our fish stocks, and devastating our forests, our wildlife and our land. The implications are profound. They are especially profound when one considers that something like three-quarters of our country's exports are related in some way, either directly or indirectly, to our natural resources, in their raw or finished state.

I remind the minister, therefore, that this is not just an Ontario problem, however important acid rain pollution may be in that province. It is a Canada-wide problem. I hope that, as the minister proceeds with his negotiations with Ontario and the United States, he will keep that fact in mind.

For example, in my own region, the Atlantic provinces, acid rain has badly hurt the salmon stocks. The ban on sport fishing of salmon is directly related to the problem of acid rain. It is thus a little worrisome that the federal government has seen fit to take the lead from Ontario. It is counting on Ontario to provide the leadership that is so badly needed. But acid rain is a trans-Canada problem and an international problem. For that reason the federal government has legitimate constitutional authority in this area and also a responsibility to provide the national leadership so badly lacking.

I want to direct my remarks now specifically to what the minister has read to us. In some places the statement is gloriously ambiguous. I welcome the suggestion that there will be an Ontario-Canada task force. I suspect, however, that it is not a terribly new measure. Negotiations have been going on between the federal government and Ontario for some time.