

recently in Manitoba leads us to believe that an incredible 57,200 Canadians are suffering from abuse.

One-tenth of these people live in institutions, while two-thirds are living with relatives as part of the family.

Since many elderly persons are either unable to live on their own or lack the resources to do so, they remain in the family setting and end up having to depend on family members for the care they need. Even in the best of situations, this can create tensions for all concerned, and the situation may become explosive. Although it is a fact that abuse of the elderly can occur in institutions, those who are studying this question have attached particular importance to abuse in the family setting, where there is greater resistance to admitting the facts, and shame or fear of retaliation is a major factor. The elderly may believe there is no one to whom they can turn to help them with their problems or take care of their interests. There are a number of ways to remedy this, and with the financial support and expertise of the Government of Canada, provincial authorities and non-governmental organizations are becoming increasingly involved in finding ways to deal with this problem.

Through shared cost health programs, funds are available to community services to enable elderly people to stay at home for a longer time and thus avoid premature institutionalization, or else to give a respite to relatives who take care of them. Such services include for instance home care, meals on wheels, day care services for adults, and rest services designed for those who care for the elderly. Other programs—New Horizons, to name one—make it possible to benefit as much as possible from the ability and opportunities of senior citizens to lead a normal life by promoting social gatherings and a wide variety of community activities.

Thanks to the various departmental research and pilot programs, it is possible to give a positive response with respect to projects concerning all aspects of prevention or elimination of abuse of the elderly, and to projects aimed at finding practical ways to come up with worthwhile suggestions at the community level, including education and training.

Our Government is committed to implementing prevention, protection and treatment measures with respect to any kind of abuse of a person by another.

● (1800)

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—CANADA-UNITED STATES
DISCUSSIONS. (B) CANADIAN POSITION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a question I asked of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) yesterday with respect to the report on acid rain issued recently by the two special envoys, Mr. Davis for the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney) and Mr. Lewis for the President of the United States.

Adjournment Debate

I asked the Minister of the Environment to express an opinion about the report and to go beyond the report by reaffirming what I and many others believe to be the Canadian position which was, in my view, abandoned by the report. That position is that action needs to be taken now with respect to acid rain emissions on the American side of the border. I was not altogether happy with the answer given by the Minister of the Environment and I would like to tell the House why I think the envoy process has been such a disappointment.

At one point, I along with other members of the Special Committee on Acid Rain of the House had hoped what we might see a report coming forward from Messrs. Davis and Lewis that would do two things: recognize that acid rain is a serious trans-boundary pollution problem, something which the report did do, and call for some action on the part of the United States with respect to acid rain entering Canada from that country.

At one point, there was a rumour that Mr. Lewis might be recommending a \$1-billion action program. That did not sound like what was needed. In fact, it fell far short of what was needed, but at that time I felt it would be at least a start, a significant step forward in that it was action. Instead, we have a recommendation that there be a five-year period in which voluntary research is entered into regarding the development of new technologies for controlling acid rain. There is no guarantee that this research will in fact take place because it will require, to a significant degree, the co-operation of American industries that are involved in the emission of acid rain. There is no telling what the attitude of those industries will be. It has not been positive to date and there is no reason to expect that it will suddenly change as a result of the report.

I think the Canadian Government is trying to make much out of little. That is understandable as it has to make the best of a bad situation. However, the fact is that the Canadian position has been further undermined. It was undermined at the Shamrock Summit when the Prime Minister, with a great deal of fanfare, said that acid rain was a number one problem and he was going to get something done about it. Instead, a year's study was agreed to, in this case through the envoy process. Now we have suffered another setback with the recommendation, which was agreed to by the Canadian envoy, that American polluters basically have another five years to think about it. This is totally unacceptable when we know there are technologies to control acid rain. Those technologies are available now.

● (1805)

If Mr. Davis could not get Mr. Lewis to say that action through the use of those technologies should begin now, he should at least have had the decency to issue a separate report. Mr. Davis had the option to issue a separate report. I know that from discussions we had with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Davis. He could well have issued a separate report and not have appeared to have given away the Canadian position that action is needed right now.