

*Adjournment Debate*

I should say, in a preliminary way, that during the time a couple weeks ago when this House was not in session, I went south from my constituency, not very far south into the United States but as far south as the state of Ohio, to be the keynote speaker there at a conference on the environment.

Ohio is right in the heart of the valley where soft coal is mined and much of it burned, thus a contributing factor. There I was able to see—and I would like to report it to the hon. member—that now within the United States the issue of the legislative and legal response to this problem in President Bush's legislation which is now before Congress and the other bills before Congress dealing with acid rain has now unfortunately gone beyond the point at which for too many years the Americans were stuck, namely, the point of whether acid rain was even a problem, to the next stage where they are debating among themselves as to who is to pay, how much, and how they will work this out.

With respect to the issue in the United States it is also important to report to the hon. member that just at the time I was there 10 leading environmental groups of the United States had sent a letter to Secretary Baker criticizing the United States government for not having moved quickly enough to fulfil its commitments on environmental issues in and around the Great Lakes and on other issues such as acid rain.

Happily, as a result of initiatives taken by this government and by the hon. member for Fundy Royal, the issue has now moved to the stage where it has become an issue being debated within the American political system. That is a happy day for all of us because for so long it was simply lobbying by our government of the United States government. Due to the good relations that our Prime Minister has developed with the Americans, we were able finally to see something accomplished.

On the specific point, my information is partial and I do not want to mislead the hon. member into believing

that I have the benefit of full information this evening to completely answer his question. I do know that when Ontario and several of the U.S. states petitioned the U.S. Court of Appeals last year to require the international air pollution provisions of the existing U.S. Clean Air Act to be used to implement a U.S. acid rain control program, it gave rise to a legal issue, one of them being certainly the one to which I think the member is referring.

The precise legal question at issue is the interpretation of that narrow administrative matter. U.S. administration officials have argued that there is insufficient scientific information available to proceed as the petitioners have requested and that the President's comprehensive acid rain proposal would provide a more effective and efficient solution.

Our view is that there is ample evidence for the administration to use its existing authorities and we will continue to press this as a friend of the court, *amicus curiae*, in the proceedings that are now taking place.

In conclusion, media reports that have portrayed the administration's position as backing away from its commitment to acid rain controls are simply not giving a full or complete picture. Indeed, earlier this month President Bush admonished the United States Congress to get on with passing the new Clean Air Act.

I hope that that is at least a partial response to satisfy the hon. member. If this is not adequate information I am sure that he will continue, both during the Question Period and at other opportunities, to raise the issue. I would be happy to get any further information that he might require.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at ten o'clock.

The House adjourned at 5.41 p.m.