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CANADA SETS RECORD STRAIGHT ON ACID RAIN

The Department of External Affairs today moved to set the record straight on acid rain, following some remarks made Thursday in New York by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

What is important is each country's performance in controlling its own sources of pollution. In Canada, sulphur dioxide emissions over the past 10 years have decreased by 25%, while in the United States, they have remained generally constant.

The significance of the thermal power generating sector as a source of U.S. pollutants has led to the development of strict control requirements, especially for new sources. Canada has not had the same need because it relies to a much smaller extent on thermal power. It is not true, however, that Canada is not requiring strict controls on new thermal power sources.

In April 1981, new thermal power guidelines were issued which are generally equivalent to U.S. requirements for new sources. The new Hat Creek facility in British Columbia is being required to install scrubbers.

It is also not true that neither country is requiring scrubbers on old plants. In February 1980, the Ontario government issued tighter controls on Ontario Hydro facilities which involve installing scrubbers at one of its major stations.

In addition, Canada has adopted a policy which makes federal funding of conversions of oil-fired facilities to coal contingent on their being undertaken in an environmentally-sound manner.

These actions have been taken in addition to the tighter controls which are being required on Canada's major polluting source, the INCO smelter at Sudbury, Ontario.

It is misleading to suggest that Canada is constructing large coal-fired plants along the border. In fact, there are two new stations: a 200 MW facility at Atikokan, Ontario, and a 600 MW facility at Poplar River, Saskatchewan. Both will burn low-sulphur coal, and in both cases, there is a possibility of tighter controls if required for international reasons. In any case, the combined emissions of these two plants of 50,000 tons of sulphur dioxide is infinitesimal compared with the 35,000,000 tons emitted in North America each year, including 29,700,000 tons in the United States.

What is considered to be of the greatest importance is that both countries begin moving to better control the problem more effectively in whatever way is most appropriate to their own situation.