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Questions and Answers

Q & A

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JEFF FRISCHKORN: The Canadian economy has benefited enormously from the import of American technology and yet, you criticize America for its failure to control boundary pollution. How much is Canada willing to pay for the cleanup of American industry?

MR. HOWARD: We will start at home by cleaning up ours and we'll wait for you. That's a fatuous question. The economy in both countries is highly integrated. The figure is 15 percent. Why would we go and deliver you into poverty? It would be easy to argue this at length, but I don't think the question is fair.

MR. HAMILTON: The United States and Canada are both bound by a treaty. Both are members of the OECD. The responsibility to cleanup also ought to be a well established principal in the United States as far as the State of Ohio because it is the only state with completely uncontrolled SO_2 emissions which contribute 110 percent to the acid rain in the United States.

EDWARD MARCUS, University of Waterloo: I wanted to address a question to Mr. Beach. It seems that the coal industry is in good shape because we want to reduce our import of oil offshore, whereas the nuclear industry is a bit slow right now considering the Three Mile Island scare and the cost of nuclear power plants.

It seems that the use of coal will increase and it appears to me that the coal industry would do itself a favor to stay out of the acid rain controversy. In your presentation you referred to the problems of the utilities paying for control and that is really not the coal industry's problem.

Why hasn't the coal industry just stayed out of the controversy?

MR. BEACH: Well, the coal industry is composed of all sorts of folks. Some of us are actually scientists and engineers. As I pointed out, we do have some problems with the data that is being used to try to establish this cause and effect relationship, so I guess it bothers us to see that professionally and scientifically something like this is on the verge of happening.

Besides that, we are businessmen. I also have some business administration training that was not mentioned and from that standpoint we businessmen hate to see money wasted.

Besides that, there are a fair number of us in the coal industry who agree with some of the policies of the current Reagan Administration. We believe in the principle that the government has paid far too much for too long in this country and something needs to be done about that, so we have some of those reasons for taking this stance on this issue.

Even more from a business stance we are concerned that if controls were mandated they would not be mandated uniformly across the board;

some elements of the utility and coal industry would suffer substantially more than others. Our company is in that position. Therefore, we are being out front on this issue.

Can I just say one other thing? Dr. Hamilton rebutted some of my remarks a little bit. I would like to rebut some of his briefly. We certainly don't agree with the statement that 2.7 percent of the deaths in the United States per year are a result of air pollution and there are also a number of folks in Dr. Hamilton's profession that would not agree with that statement either. These numbers mostly come from Ian Susskind whose work has been largely discredited in the epidemiological sense. There are a number of important parameters that were overlooked in some of their work such as temperature and smoking and a few other factors. I just happened to have with me about eight references of papers on this subject that would dispute that 2.7 percent figure.

TOM JENKINS: I am with the Ohio Sierra Club. I have a question for Mr. Beach. You indicated, I believe, that there has been no clear causal relationship between power plant emissions and acid rain. What would it take to convince you of such a connection? For example, physical modeling which we heard about earlier today by Dr. Martin, is that the sort of thing which would either prove or disprove the relationship?

MR. BEACH: Well, I think we need a better handle on what is happening as far as precipitation quality is concerned, number one. Is there actually any decrease taking place in the ph of rainfall? I pointed out there are some questions about that in our minds. Also what is the contribution of man or what is the anthropogenic input to any reduction from the levels in ph in rainfall? There are some serious questions about that. We have collected some data that would suggest that other things are involved here.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned today is the impact of local sources of nature and emissions of man on the ph of rainfall. I think we need to get a better handle on that. Additionally I think the work that's been talked about and has been proposed, particularly the work in Great Britain with the tracing of pollutants to confirm if indeed or to what extent long range transportation is taking place and what its role is in affecting the acidity of rainfall, could be done through modeling. I suspect with good meteorological data and more research in the area of actually following the gases emitted from sources of pollution, we may discover more about their fate in the atmosphere.

ALLEN WATTS: St. Clair University. Mr. Beach, might a comparison of acid rainfall over several decades to the increased amount of sulphur emissions over those decades provide misleading conclusions if the advent of higher stacks in later decades appeared to ease local problems?

MR. BEACH: There is no question that has some effect. There is a big question as to what effect the heightening of stacks has had. High stacks have dispersed the pollutants over wider areas. The addition of

particulate scrubbing systems to our plants has probably increased the contribution of those emissions to the sulfates in the atmosphere. I suspect a fair amount of SO_2 and acid material was probably neutralized to some extent by particulate emissions before the advent of particulate control systems. Those two factors and many others have some bearing on all of this, the question is how significant the change has been.

MR. CUMMING: I would like to thank all of our panelists and the audience for their contributions.