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Sweden 'gets' British pollution'

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BRITISH air pollution is being blamed for the acid rains that fall increasingly on Swedish lakes and forests.

Swedish scientists, worried by the effect of the acid rains on tree growth and fish, have tracked their origin by identifying the soot particles which carry dilute sulphuric acid in the rains.

Dr L. Hansson, director of research of the Swedish National Environment Protection Board, said the acid originated from the sulphur contained in coals and fuel oil.

During burning, the sulphur changes to the gas sulphur dioxide, which is carried by winds over long distances.

This gas is then dissolved in the water drops of the clouds, turning it into sulphuric acid which comes down as rain.

DDT banned

Unofficial figures indicate that 25 per cent. of Sweden's acid rain originates in Britain, 35 per cent. in West Germany. The rest comes from Swedish and other sources.

Sweden, which for a long time has lead in the fight against pollution, totally banned the use of the pesticide DDT two years ago and is soon to ban another chemical, known as PCB, polychlorinated-bi-phenyl.

This is used as a softener in plastics, in paints and as an insulating material in cables. When these are burnt on refuse tips, PCB finds its way into the air and becomes as dangerous a pollution as DDT.

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