

Adjournment Debate

I think this question is very important because, as we all know, greenhouse gases contribute to global warming, the gradual heating up of the earth. Canadians want to know and have as right to know what this government's policy is on this issue.

The all-party environment committee released an interim report yesterday on global warming. I want to quote one paragraph:

Given that human-sourced carbon dioxide emissions are the principal contributor to (global warming), and given that society's use of energy is the largest factor in this CO₂ generation,—energy policy making must have as its immediate focus the more efficient and conserving use of energy.

This certainly is in line with the 1987 Brundtland commission report which says that energy strategies must be aimed at achieving sustainable development.

When the present environment minister of this government endorsed the commitment made by the previous environment minister to stabilize CO₂ emissions by the year 2000, it seemed the most logical question at the time was to find out whether the energy minister agreed with him. After all, it would be up to the energy minister to come up with a plan to use less energy and to use it more efficiently.

I put the question to the energy minister on June 7, and I got the brush-off. I had also put this question to the Acting Prime Minister on May 25. While the government at that time confirmed the commitment of the environment minister, the question of how the energy minister stood on this issue was left unanswered.

Recently details of the energy minister's new energy efficiency and conservation plan have been released. That is a plan that had been promised as a replacement for all the cuts that this government had made to alternative energy and conservation since 1984.

Canada had been a world leader in energy research, especially in conservation and alternative energy, until this government came to power.

In 1983 the previous federal government spent almost \$500 million. Under this government spending has dropped to approximately \$40 million—

Mr. Crawford: Disgraceful.

Ms. Callbeck: —a 90 per cent cut in alternative energy and conservation. This government also closed 12 regional conservation and renewable offices, including one

in my province located in Charlottetown. It also has greatly reduced its contributions to cost shared alternative energy programs with the Government of Prince Edward Island.

A lot was expected from this plan that we found out about recently. However, when the plan's contents were revealed, it became clear that carbon dioxide emissions would actually increase, not decrease, between 8 per cent and 17 per cent by the year 2000. That is certainly a far cry from the commitment made by the Minister of the Environment to stabilize CO₂ emissions by the year 2000.

The question is: Who speaks for the government? Is it the Minister of the Environment who says one thing or the energy minister whose new action plan says something very different? I would also like to know what the energy minister meant when he said in August that Canada should lead by example in reducing CO₂ emissions.

The new plan the minister has released is a far cry from the commitment of the environment minister. It is even further from the recommendations of the environment committee, and still further from commitments made by countries like West Germany, Denmark and New Zealand.

What does the minister mean when he says we should lead by example and he draws up a plan that fails to do so? Why can't these two ministers agree on government policy? The Canadian public—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address the concerns of the hon. member for Malpeque today.

The government has agreed with the need to address the issue of global warming, which is caused by an excessive production of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide. It was for this reason that the Government of Canada joined with other countries on May 16 at Bergen to establish a national strategy, targets and schedules to limit, stabilize or reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.