

*Adjournment Debate*

report citing increasing summer temperatures in the last 10 years.

• (1835)

What is the cause of climate change? Briefly, it is caused by an envelope in the atmosphere which is created by the burning of fossil fuels on our part as a society, beginning with the industrial revolution 150 years ago.

What are the effects of this envelope? This envelope does not allow solar rays deflected once they touch the earth's surface to re-enter the atmosphere. Thus, the greenhouse effect is gradually formed. In other words, the effect of solar rays as deflected by the earth's surface is no longer the same as in the past. They are contained by the greenhouse gases envelope.

What is the main problem at the base of this? In essence, it is our dependence on fossil fuels, coal and gasoline, but also the emission of methane gases in our dump sites and the production of other gases that are mostly correlated to human activities or the necessities of agriculture and the like.

Next month the international panel on climate change will meet and likely approve a draft report which will mark a major turning point in the climate change debate.

Until now some members of the scientific community believe that the rising temperatures since the beginning of the industrial revolution could be attributed to at least in good part a variability in climate rather than the result of human activity. With this draft, the scientific panel will likely state and confirm that climate change is taking place as a result of human activity. Hence the adoption of this report by the international panel on climate change would result in an authoritative confirmation that global warming is posing a threat.

Some have suggested that the effects of climate change may actually be advantageous to Canada. These assumptions are now being refuted.

The report I am referring to predicts the changes associated with climate change are likely to have a negative impact not only on human health but on other human activities such as agriculture, forestry and the like.

The consequences are far reaching in economic and social terms. These are again explored in the panel's draft report as discussed last week in Montreal. The first attempt to assess the social and economic impact of climate change is the one that took place in Montreal.

I would appreciate very much a reply by the parliamentary secretary to this issue which, although stretched into the long term, is going to be of significant importance for the human family the globe over.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Davenport raised an important issue when he asked this question of the Minister of the Environment a month ago. He of course based it on an editorial in the *Globe and Mail*. I want to refer to that which was on the subject of the need to take action on climate change. It was published shortly before the hon. member asked his question.

The editorial makes some good points about voluntary approaches and the need to adapt to a rapidly changing climate. These clearly are not enough to deal with the problem. After all, the evidence that our climate may be changing at an unprecedented rate is rolling in on a daily basis as the hon. member has indicated.

In Canada, the summer of 1995 was the third warmest in a century. The year 1995 was the second worst year in history for forest fires. Record rains have hit Alberta and five early season tropical storms hit parts of the Atlantic provinces.

This year is shaping up as the earth's warmest year on record. It is also a preview of what we can expect in the future. Scientists are concluding that recent data constitute growing statistical evidence that their previous predictions of climate change are being borne out.

Therefore, in calling for voluntary reductions of emissions of greenhouse gases the *Globe and Mail* is heading in the right direction. After all, the *Globe and Mail* would have us recognize that the costs of climate change are also rapidly rising. Damages from the Alberta floods in June exceeded \$50 million. Heat and humidity helped fuel one of Ontario's most destructive storms, causing \$20 million in property losses and firefighting costs associated with the loss of nearly seven million hectares of forest across Canada.

By reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases we will reduce the threat and costs of climate change and at the same time create jobs and become more competitive economically. I am quite sure that as Canada's business leaders continue to respond to the economic opportunity associated with reducing energy consumption, thereby reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, the *Globe and Mail* will take another step in the right direction and agree that the goals contained in Canada's national action program on climate change must be met. We must stabilize our emissions of greenhouse gases at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and address further reductions over the longer term. Meeting such a goal will require that we take a mix of approaches, voluntary measures wherever possible and market based or regulatory measures where appropriate.

As my time has run out, I conclude my remarks.

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.41 p.m.)