

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. At the Changing Atmosphere conference in Toronto a couple of years ago, 300 leading scientists urged that global carbon dioxide pollution be reduced by at least 20 per cent by the year 2005.

Yesterday, the environment committee recommended the same. The Second World Climate Conference in Geneva is only weeks away, but according to the minister, the government does not have a position on carbon dioxide reductions; no targets, no schedules and no percentages.

Will the minister today tell Canadians and the nations participating in Geneva what the government's position is on carbon dioxide pollution?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the report of the committee on the environment was tabled after Question Period yesterday. I received a copy of it. I can tell the hon. member that I am looking at that report very closely, as is my colleague, the minister of energy. Our position is the same as we have maintained since Bergen. We will look at that report, hopefully we will have ideas and hopefully there will be some solutions indicated.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the public is very anxious to know the position of the Government of Canada and to be assured that the government is not only giving good speeches, but also acting on the environment.

In view of the fact that three governments, two of which are industrial nations, Germany and Denmark, have already announced a commitment to reduce pollution of CO₂ by 20 per cent by the year 2005, will the Government of Canada follow that leadership?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we have made the commitments in international fora before on CO₂. This government is very concerned about CO₂ emissions. But before making commitments that just may be a wish or a motherhood statement, we want to tell Canadians exactly what the implications are all about.

ENERGY

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. There has been a lot of loose talk lately about gasoline rationing. However, much more likely is a program to encourage significant but voluntary conservation measures. For the sake of the environment, we in the NDP applaud and support such conservation measures and encourage further efforts in this regard.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the government will invoke Article 904 of the free trade agreement to cause exports of Canadian oil and gas going to the U.S. to be reduced by the same percentage as the drop in Canadian consumption achieved by these voluntary conservation measures?

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I find that quite interesting from a colleague from western Canada who should be a supporter of the industry and the manner in which it performs.

It is nothing new for the NDP to be fighting the free trade battle. You've lost. What we are going to move forward with is monitoring and working with our provincial counterparts to ensure that a stable energy source for Canada will continue. This is the commitment given by the minister and by his provincial counterparts.

• (1500)

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I hope the government understands what it is dealing with here.

If we do not reduce the percentage of Canadian production going to the United States to a degree equivalent to that by which we reduce our own consumption, the free trade ratchet works to ensure that it must be allowed that greater supply in future.

Is the government really intending to induce a cutback in Canadian consumption of Canadian oil and gas while allowing American consumption of Canadian oil and gas to continue unabated?

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.