

- the unequivocal detection of the enhanced greenhouse effect from observations is not likely for a decade or more.⁵⁰

Elizabeth Dowdeswell informed the Committee that there has been one major change in our knowledge since 1990:

... and is that chlorofluorocarbons are believed to be much less significant contributors to global warming than previously thought.

That is not of great significance to the climate change convention itself, because in fact when we were designing the Convention, we had referred the greenhouse gases except for those controlled by the Montreal Protocol, so we had taken that into account.⁵¹

Although this reevaluation of the contribution of CFCs to global warming may have little significance in the context of the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, the *1992 IPCC Supplement* has, from a scientific point-of-view, described this information as a "significant new finding". According to the *1992 IPCC Supplement*:

Depletion of ozone in the lower stratosphere in the middle and high latitudes results in a decrease in radiative forcing which is believed to be comparable in magnitude to the radiative forcing contribution of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) (globally-averaged) over the last decade or so.⁵²

This information is also of considerable significance to the Environment Committee. This Committee has extensively studied the threat of stratospheric ozone depletion and has tabled two reports to Parliament on this problem, *Deadly Releases CFCs* (June 1990) and *Ozone Depletion: Acting Responsibly*, (June 1992). CFCs are known to have the highest global-warming potential of all the greenhouse gases. Yet CFCs are now thought to be so effective at destroying ozone as to neutralize their own global warming effect. This information reaffirms the Committee's concern regarding the serious nature of stratospheric ozone depletion.

As the potential risks of climate change become more apparent to nations worldwide the level of scientific inquiry increases. To combat climate change effectively it is essential that Canadian policy be continually updated as new knowledge arises. Elizabeth Dowdeswell told the Committee:

All policy making related to climate change must be based on a solid scientific foundation.⁵³

Minister Jean Charest also confirmed this prerequisite for policy development:

On the question of carbon dioxide, our policy is described as a policy of a first step. Canada's policy of stabilization at 1990 levels for the year 2000 is one that will be called upon to evolve depending on the evolution of the science.⁵⁴

CONVENTION NEGOTIATIONS

Canada played a lead role during the negotiations for a convention on climate change. Well in advance of the climate change negotiations, the serious nature of climate change was apparent not only to the Environment Committee and federal government departments, but also to

⁵⁰ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *1992 IPCC Supplement*, February 1992, p. 6.

⁵¹ *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 48, 30 November 1992, p. 6.

⁵² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *1992 IPCC Supplement*, February 1992, p. 6.

⁵³ E. Dowdeswell, Brief presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment, Appended to the *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 48, 30 November 1992, Appendix Env-18, p. 1.

⁵⁴ *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 45, 16 November 1992, p. 29.