

Adjournment Debate

Less than two weeks ago, on March 25, the all party House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment tabled its report on global warming. This unanimous report entitled *Out of Balance—the Risks of Irreversible Climate Change* warns that the phenomenon of global warming is a fact and it poses a severe threat to Canada and to the planet as a whole.

The report obviously supports what the minister stated in a speech he gave in Toronto on September 13, 1989, and I quote:

The greatest reductions in carbon dioxide can be obtained through energy efficiency and conservation.

Having made these remarks, the minister then cut the budget for energy efficiency and conservation by a two-year total of 28 per cent.

The minister still talks a good line. He was quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article of March 30, 1991 apparently qualifying remarks—laughable in a morbid sort of way when you consider this government's massive bias against energy efficiency and alternatives in favour of fossil fuel and nuclear megaprojects—that the Mulroney Conservatives have a “market based” approach to energy policy. Said Mr. Epp:

I think it is the role of an energy minister to get us into areas where the present infrastructure will not take us. If people argue that I am moving away from the marketplace, I will accept that charge.

Mr. Speaker, I pray for the day when I will be able honestly to level that charge.

Perhaps, just maybe, the minister is beginning to believe some of the good advice he has been receiving. For example, in March 1989, his department received a report entitled *Energy Demand in Canada, 1973–1987*, which included a series of proposals for future policies and programs. It says, and I quote:

To achieve the major economic and environmental benefits that energy efficiency still has to offer, government policies and programs for the future will need to emphasize a strategic combination of, energy efficient standards; improved information programs; financial incentives, and Research Development and Demonstration assistance.

To rely solely on energy prices and existing market mechanisms is a formula for failure. Active and constructive intervention in the marketplace is absolutely essential.

In Halifax last June 18, just 11 days after his bill to authorize the bill dollar gift to Hibernia passed second

reading, the minister told members of the Solar Energy Society of Canada that, and again I quote:

It is clear that a safe, environmentally sound and economically viable energy path is imperative for this country. For this reason, we are firmly committed to the expansion of the efficiency and alternative energy sector. Like you, we want it to play a much larger role in Canada's energy economy.

The words and the evidence are clearly at odds. So my question to the parliamentary secretary is this. In view of this government's repeated funding cuts to energy conservation, efficiency and alternatives, what conclusion can Canadians draw other than that this government's actions, contrasted with its claim to be truly committed to energy conservation, efficiency and alternatives, merely demonstrates its stunning hypocrisy?

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to the goal of maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality and in the green plan as set out by a comprehensive framework for the achievement of this goal.

The green plan contains strategies for improving the quality of air, land and water. The green plan promises that as a part of the strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the government will take several specific actions. It will implement the National Action Strategy on global warming that will be a comprehensive approach, cast in the international context, emphasize flexibility to take account of new information and developments and recognize regional differences.

It will table a National Energy Efficiency Alternative Energy Act dealing with the regulation of energy efficiency levels in energy-using equipment, labelling of products to convey information on energy use, and collection of statistics on energy use.

It will set minimum energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment.

It will improve and expand the present Energuide program for energy labelling of home appliances.

It will update and regionalize the federal Measures for Energy Conservation in new buildings, and encourage their incorporation in building codes.

It will improve the energy efficiency of transportation by setting new fuel efficiency standards, helping to inform fleet managers and drivers and working with the