

*Adjournment Debate*

It was further agreed that the issue requires urgent attention. Consequently, officials were directed to work on it and report to the deputy ministers at their next meeting in the spring.

The Department of Justice is consulting with interested groups and individuals to determine how personal records are in fact used, to fully explore all perspectives and concerns, and to develop ways of balancing the complainant's interests with those of the accused.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on March 29 I rose in the Chamber to put a question to the Minister of the Environment. At that time world leaders were just beginning talks in Berlin aimed at stabilizing levels of greenhouse gases now threatening earth's climate.

The talks are the result of the June 1992 meetings of 106 of the world's nations. Those talks were held in Rio de Janeiro with the purpose to sign the framework convention on climate change.

Since that meeting in Rio, more than 100 nations have ratified the Rio treaty. Now in Berlin the world's leaders are meeting to assess our progress since 1992 and consider proposals to strengthen the agreement.

Sadly, as important and indeed as critical as this is, there is not much to assess. Canada, like so many other countries that made commitments to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, has failed miserably to live up to those commitments. As we speak tonight, the Minister of the Environment is likely in Berlin. Just as likely, she is embarrassed by the position Canada is in with regard to the commitments we made in Rio.

When we look at what has happened since Rio, we do not have to look far to see that nearly nine billion more tonnes of carbon have accumulated in the atmosphere and the evidence of climate change is mounting. In fact, in response to the crisis the Minister of the Environment acknowledged the crisis and even went so far as to say that if Canada and the other nations which are emitting greenhouse gases do not do something about this, climate change and global warming will create a situation where floods will occur off the east coast of Canada and tiny but beautiful Prince Edward Island will be all but submerged.

It is hard for me to imagine that the Minister of the Environment knows about the possibility of this catastrophic event and she is not prepared to take immediate and dramatic steps to combat it. I hope we do not have to wait for the day when my good friends in Prince Edward Island are looking for new homes in Ontario or Saskatchewan before we begin to take this issue seriously.

Carbon emissions are increasing. This represents a trend that is moving dangerously in the wrong direction.

According to the latest *Worldwatch* magazine, in order to stop the accumulation of greenhouse gases and allow the earth to return to equilibrium over a period of centuries—yes, you heard me correctly, Mr. Speaker, I said centuries—scientists say that carbon emissions will have to be reduced to the rate at which the oceans can absorb them, or 60 to 80 per cent below today's rate.

Yet on the current path, emissions are projected to increase by 60 per cent within the next two decades. Obviously the earth's atmosphere will require sharp cuts in industrial country emissions and a rapid slowdown in emissions growth in developing countries. This means that all the nations of the world need to have action plans in place to guide the progress of this critical issue. No nation can afford to sit on the sidelines.

It is clear the world is facing an issue with uniquely large and irreversible consequences. The delegates in Berlin cannot afford to waste the opportunity to begin turning the ship around. Given that, I ask the minister why Canada's wimpy actions on climate change are not as forceful as our resolve to preserve the fish stocks off the Atlantic coast.

I hope the government today is prepared to say we have to do better.

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government in partnership with the provinces and territories has reached a national consensus on the directions Canada will take to address the challenge of climate change.

In a meeting in Toronto on February 20, energy and environment ministers from the federal, provincial and territorial governments agreed to Canada's national action program on climate change. The Deputy Prime Minister tabled the action plan today at the first conference of the parties to the framework convention on climate change in Berlin.

The action program sets out the strategic directions Canada will follow to meet its commitment to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. The action program is based on the principle of sustainable development as advocated by the Brundtland commission, an approach in which environmental, social and economic policies are fully integrated.

Consequently, the action program provides the opportunity for each jurisdiction in Canada to undertake actions appropriate to their circumstances. The program is a living document. The federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to reviewing the program regularly to ensure that Canada's stabilization commitment is met.

Toward that end all ministers committed to review progress by late 1990 and agreed to continue developing options to close the 13 per cent stabilization gap that currently exists. The release today of Quebec's action plan on climate change is a noteworthy example of the action being taken by other jurisdictions in Canada.