

Science writers "warm-up" to the Climate



Dr. Kenneth Hare delivering his keynote address to Canadian science writers in the AES Downsview Auditorium.

More than 200 people attended a seminar on Climate Change, November 6, at the AES Downsview building. The conference sponsored by AES and the Canadian Science Writers' Association (CSWA), attracted TV, radio, national newspapers and the scientific press. Also present were government and educational officials, journalism students and a wide scattering of AES personnel.

Keynote speaker at the "Warming up to the Canadian Climate" seminar was Dr. Kenneth Hare, provost of Trinity College, Toronto and chairman of the Canadian Climate Planning Board. He was introduced by ADMA Jim Bruce.

Referring to the Ethiopian drought, Dr. Hare said: "The fool keeps his eye permanently fixed on local events; the wise person knows we live in an interdependent world, something also known by skilled Canadian science writers."

Describing "environmental pessimism", he added that the technique is to cry "wolf" half a dozen times with all change seen as an impending disaster. Dr. Hare concluded: "This makes good copy and arresting headlines but society has the capacity to adapt, survive and even profit from the changes in circumstances."

The auditorium remained crowded as highly qualified experts in climate and related fields gave balanced presentations regarding the need to monitor climate change, natural and man-made, and study its socio-economic impacts.

A morning session about climate change, chaired by Howard Ferguson, director general, Canadian Climate Centre, included presentations on Long Term Climate Fluctuations by Dr. Richard Peltier of the University of Toronto; Man-made Effects by Dr. Philip Merilees, director general, Atmospheric Research Directorate; on climate modelling by Dr. George Boer, and on climate prediction by Dr. Stan Woronko, both of the Canadian Climate Centre.



Despite indifferent weather, the rooftop tour proved to be one of the most popular "get aways" for science writers who spent most of their day in the Auditorium. Dr. Donald McKay of the Climate Centre, with arm raised in the foreground, explains the function of weather instruments used to monitor the roof's solar panels.

An afternoon panel on Climate Impacts chaired by CSWA member, Lydia Dotto, included presentations on Great Lakes water by Howard Ferguson; on increased water demands by Dr. Ralph Pentland, Inland Waters Directorate; on climate change and food production by Dr. John Maybank of the Saskatchewan Research Council; on tree planting by Dr. Doug Pollard, Canadian Forestry Service; on Climate Change and Fisheries by Dr. Alan Longhurst, Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and on Arctic petroleum in the 21st century by Cam O'Rourke of Dome Petroleum.

Over-all comment on the seminar was favourable. AES meteorologists and climatologists were happy to hear a general program, rather than the usual specialized talks, and the media commented that the presentations had been logical and well planned. The

organizers were pleased with the attendance in this outlying part of the city. There were several attractive extras, such as tours of the building, refreshments, live weather presentations and lobby displays on climate impacts and ancient meteorological instruments. Morning and afternoon tours were attended by more than 100 visitors. Popular destinations were the roof-top observatory and solar panel project, the satellite-data labs., the wind-tunnel and the large outside satellite tracking dish. These tours were well rehearsed and the guides attracted attention by holding up their destination signs in the lobby. Science writers not on the tours, sat around in informal discussion or interviewed scientists and other experts.

During the proceedings, Bob Morrow, President of CSWA, announced the launching of Science Information Sources, a resource bank of hundreds of scientists willing to provide information to science writers on request. A list of story ideas, based on AES activities, was



On another tour Graeme Morrissey, chief, Aerospace Meteorology Division explains the intricacies of the satellite data laboratory to interested science writers.

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prepared as a possible part of these information sources. Mr. Morrow also used the seminar to launch a journalism students' workshop. A number of future science writers from universities and community colleges attended the presentations, then met in an AES classroom for a writing assignment based on the day's experiences.

Reviewing the conference, Mr. Morrow said the seminar was one of the most successful CSWA meetings for some time and had revived the Association's activities in Toronto. "Obviously weather and climate involve and interest everyone," he concluded.

The seminar was organized jointly by the Canadian Climate Centre and Information Directorate.



John Sandilands of the Canadian Climate Centre points out items in the Climatic Impacts display assembled in the lobby to two unidentified delegates.



Bob Morrow, president of the CSWA.