

Climate change `fraud`

John Ingham, Daily Express (Britain), 12-2-09

THE scientific consensus that mankind has caused climate change was rocked yesterday as a leading academic called it a “load of hot air underpinned by fraud”.

Professor Ian Plimer condemned the climate change lobby as “climate comrades” keeping the “gravy train” going.

In a controversial talk just days before the start of a climate summit attended by world leaders in Copenhagen, Prof Plimer said Governments were treating the public like “fools” and using climate change to increase taxes.

He said carbon dioxide has had no impact on temperature and that recent warming was part of the natural cycle of climate stretching over billions of years.

Prof Plimer - author of *Heaven and Earth: Global Warming, The Missing Science* - told a London audience: “Climates always change. They always have and they always will. They are driven by a number of factors that are random and cyclical.”

His comments came days after a scandal in climate-change research emerged through the leak of emails from the world-leading research unit at the University of East Anglia. They appeared to show that scientists had been massaging data to prove that global warming was taking place

The Climate Research Unit also admitted getting rid of much of its raw climate data, which means other scientists cannot check the subsequent research. Last night the head of the CRU, Professor Phil Jones, said he would stand down while an independent review took place.

Professor Plimer said climate change was caused by natural events such as volcanic eruptions, the shifting of the Earth’s orbit and cosmic radiation. He said: “Carbon dioxide levels have been up to 1,000 times higher in the past. CO₂ cannot be driving global warming now.

“In the past we have had rapid and significant climate change with temperature changes greater than anything we are measuring today. They are driven by processes that have been going on since the beginning of time.”

He cited periods of warming during the Roman Empire and in the Middle Ages – when Vikings grew crops on Greenland – and cooler phases such as the Dark Ages and the Little Ice Age from 1300 to 1850.

And he predicted that the next phase would cool the planet.

Climate change is widely blamed on the burning of fossil fuels which release greenhouse gases such as CO₂ into the atmosphere, where they trap the sun’s heat.

The talks at Copenhagen are expected to find ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally.

But Professor Plimer, of Adelaide and Melbourne Universities, said that to stop climate change Governments should find ways to prevent changes to the Earth’s orbit and ocean currents and avoid explosions of supernovae in space. Of the saga of the leaked emails, he said: “If you have to argue your science by using fraud, your science is not valid.”

The CRU's Professor Jones has admitted some of the emails may have had "poorly chosen words" and were sent in the "heat of the moment". But he has categorically denied manipulating data and said he stood by the science. And yesterday he dismissed suggestions of a conspiracy to alter evidence to support a theory of man-made global warming as "complete rubbish".

But mining geology professor Plimer said there was a huge momentum behind the climate-change lobby.

He suggested many scientists had a vested interest in promoting climate change because it helped secure more funding for research. He said: "The climate comrades are trying to keep the gravy train going. Governments are also keen on putting their hands as deep as possible into our pockets."

"The average person has been talked down to. He has been treated like a fool. Yet the average person has common sense."

But Vicky Pope, head of Met Office Climate Change Advice, said: "We are seeing changes in climate on a timescale we have not seen before."

"There clearly are natural variations. But the only way we can explain these trends is when we include both man-made and natural changes to the climate."

"We have also seen declines in summer sea ice over the past 30 years, glaciers retreating for 150 years, changing rainfall patterns and increases in subsurface and surface ocean temperatures."

And as the war of words between the rival camps intensified, leading economist Lord Stern dismissed the skeptics as "muddled".

Lord Stern, who produced a detailed report on the issue for the Government, said evidence of climate change was "overwhelming". He accepted that all views should be heard but said the degree of skepticism among "real scientists" was very small.