

drastic decline in food production—with serious political implications for just about every nation on earth. The drop in food output could begin quite soon, perhaps only ten years from now. The regions destined to feel its impact are the great wheat-producing lands of Canada and the U.S.S.R. in the north, along with a number of marginally self-sufficient tropical areas—parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indochina and Indonesia—where the growing season is dependent upon the rains brought by the monsoon.

The evidence in support of these predictions has now begun to accumulate so massively that meteorologists are hard-pressed to keep up with it.

In England, farmers have seen their growing season decline by about two weeks since 1950, with a resultant over-all loss in grain production estimated at up to 100,000 tons annually. During the same time, the average temperature around the equator has risen by a fraction of a degree—a fraction that in some areas can mean drought and desolation. Last April, in the most devastating outbreak of tornadoes ever recorded, 148 twisters killed more than 300 people and caused half a billion dollars' worth of damage in thirteen U.S. states.

Trend: To scientists, these incidents represent the advance signs of fundamental changes in the world's weather. The central fact is that after three quarters of a century of extraordinarily mild conditions, the earth's climate seems to be cooling down. Meteorologists disagree about the cause and extent of the cooling trend, as well as over its specific impact on local weather conditions. But they are almost unanimous in the view that the trend will reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century. If the climatic change is as profound as some of the pessimists fear, the resulting famines could be catastrophic. "A major climatic change would force economic and social adjustments on a worldwide scale," warns a recent report by the National Academy of Sciences, "because the global patterns of food production and population that have evolved are implicitly dependent on the climate of the present century."

A survey completed last year by Dr. Murray Mitchell of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reveals a drop of half a degree in average ground temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere between 1945 and 1968. According to George Kukla of Columbia University, satellite photos indicated a sudden, large increase in Northern Hemisphere snow cover in the winter of 1971-72. And a study released last month by two NOAA scientists notes that the amount of sunshine reaching the ground in the continental U.S. diminished by 1.3 percent between 1964 and 1972.

To the layman, the relatively small changes in temperature and sunshine can be highly misleading. Reid Bryson of the University of Wisconsin points out that the earth's average temperature during the great Ice Ages was only about 7 degrees lower than during its warmest eras—and that the present decline has taken the planet about a sixth of the way toward the Ice Age average. Others regard the cooling as a reversion to the "little ice age" conditions that brought bitter winters to much of Europe and northern America between 1600 and 1900—years when the Thames used to freeze so solidly that Londoners roasted oxen on the ice and when iceboats sailed the Hudson River almost as far south as New York City.

Just what causes the onset of major and minor ice ages remains a mystery. "Our knowledge of the mechanisms of climatic change is at least as fragmentary as our data," concedes the National Academy of Sciences report "Not only are the basic sci-

entific questions largely unanswered, but in many cases we do not yet know enough to pose the key questions."

Extremes: Meteorologists think that they can forecast the short-term results of the return to the norm of the last century. They begin by noting the slight drop in over-all temperature that produces large numbers of pressure centers in the atmosphere. These break up the smooth flow of westerly winds over temperate areas. The stagnant air produced in this way causes an increase in extremes of local weather such as droughts, floods, extended dry spells, long freezes, delayed monsoons and even local temperature increases—all of which have a direct impact on food supplies.

"The world's food-producing system," warns Dr. James D. McQuigg of NOAA's Center for Climatic and Environmental Assessment, "is much more sensitive to the weather variable than it was even five years ago." Furthermore, the growth of world population and creation of new national boundaries make it impossible for starving peoples to migrate from their devastated fields, as they did during past famines.

Climatologists are pessimistic that political leaders will take any positive action to compensate for the climatic change, or even to allay its effects. They concede that some of the more spectacular solutions proposed, such as melting the arctic ice cap by covering it with black soot or diverting arctic rivers, might create problems far greater than those they solve. But the scientist sees few signs that government leaders anywhere are even prepared to take the simple measures of stockpiling food or of introducing the variables of climatic uncertainty into economic projections of future food supplies. The longer the planners delay, the more difficult will they find it to cope with climatic change once the results become grim reality.

IN MEMORY OF DR. JOHN SHEARER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to fondly honor my friend, Dr. John Shearer, who passed away on November 18, 2009, at the age of 77 in Petaluma, California.

Publicly, John was a powerful advocate for children's health care and health care reform. He preferred a single-payer system and privately he was a kind, selfless man of great integrity.

As a physician, he was expert, compassionate, and gentle, the kind of doctor you would want to have care for your sick child. I should know, because John Shearer was our family doctor, and my family adored him.

A native of Kokomo, Indiana, John moved with his family to Detroit and originally trained as a pharmacist. Then he earned his medical degree from Wayne State University in 1962.

John moved his wife and his children to Petaluma in 1964, where he started El Rose Medical Clinic with three other doctors. His son, David Shearer, recalls that his father made a lot of house calls with his black doctor's bag in the early years of his practice. In those days, you see, there were no OB-GYNs, so he delivered hundreds of babies in Petaluma.

Dr. Shearer was very active in community and social issues. He was involved in Physicians for Social Responsibility, an organization dedicated to preventing nuclear war and proliferation, and halting global warming and toxic deprivation of the environment. In 1972, he was a part of a grassroots Save Our Schools, or SOS, that I also worked on with him in Petaluma to raise money to keep Grant Elementary School, which was located in Petaluma, open when it was threatened with closure.

In the 1980s, he was the head of Physicians for Social Responsibility in the North Bay. He also began the Children's Health Initiative to ensure that all uninsured children in Sonoma County would have health care.

Dr. Shearer served as medical director of the Jewish Community Free Clinic in Cotati and Rohnert Park. He was the chief of the medical staff at Hillcrest Hospital from 1974 to 1975, and president of the Petaluma Valley Hospital medical staff from 1986 to 1987.

He also served as chairman of the Petaluma Valley Hospital ethics committee for many years. He served as president of the California Physicians' Alliance, an organization of physicians advocating for single-payer national health insurance.

John is survived by his wife, Donna Brasset Shearer of Petaluma; his son, David Shearer of Gig Harbor, Washington; his daughter, Annette Moussa of Petaluma; and two grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, even as John Shearer was a tender man with impeccable manners, he was a bold and fearless activist for justice and health care. He did not hesitate to advocate for a single-payer system among his physician peer group. He was a prince of a man who was loved and respected by many and will be genuinely missed.

John, I thank you for your friendship, your counsel, and for making my family feel like they were part of yours.

REAL THREAT OF NUCLEAR IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, over the past several years, I have worked hard to remind my colleagues in Congress and the Americans that they represent of a real threat of a nuclear Iran. The Obama administration has been engaged in discussions with Iran during the last several months.

As many of us expected, the President's open hand to Tehran was met with a clinched fist. Despite international efforts to negotiate with Iran, Iranian leaders continue to be devious and defiant. Enough; now is the time for Congress to act. Fortunately today the House of Representatives did.