

Tim

The debate sponsored by The Spectator on Wednesday evening was exciting - and a clear win for the negative - *not only* because the supporters of the negative were in the majority to start with but on the merits of the arguments.

I suggest that The Spectator host another debate - based on *the science* only - because all subsequent arguments (about the price or effectiveness of carbon tax, the moral imperatives, the risks and so on) are premised on the science being supported (or "settled"). Even the so-called consensus argument, should relate back to specific consensus, not a macro-conclusion. Point by point, the positive has a hard road to climb - which is why I suspect that they use *ad hominem* attacks and avoid real debate!

In the debate last Wednesday, the positive did not even begin to touch the science, even the 'for' scientist began by saying he wasn't going to discuss the science (for heaven's sake!). The positive team consisted of two rather weak politicians, not even representing the current government and one scientist, who refused to discuss the science, and actually had the temerity to throw a crude *ad hominem* at Professor Plimer (poor man was only a geologist).

The negative team was much better, but Professor Plimer amazingly did not use evidence available today from atmospheric studies and other sources: he relied on the geological records, which, while telling, are open to the problem of time scale. Bob Carter or others would have done real justice to the argument.

Here are my suggestions for another debate:

For the positive get one of the government lackeys such as Tim Flannery: you will have a devil of a job getting any of them to agree to this debate (we have tried over and over again); I think they know that with or without a biased audience, they will be trounced. But if they refuse ... which I am sure they will, that would be a great piece of news for the public, don't you think?

As to the *form of the debate*: the Oxford style is not appropriate, as each scientific point can and should be argued: if for example, I question the instruments for measuring temperature, this is either defensible or not. (As a matter of fact, the measuring instruments - temperature gauges throughout the world, are placed mainly in heat zones, such as next to air conditioners: so much for 'objective' science!).

The *voting procedure* in the previous debate was totally audience-dependent, based on the composition of the audience - and is a very biased sample. In this case the sceptics, including myself, thought that they had the rare opportunity to hear a reasoned debate, not polemic .. and packed the house. As you can gather, it was a letdown.

Judges should be impartial legal counsels.

What about another debate along the above lines? If you can pull it off, of course.

I am happy for you to publish this.

Regards, Stan Lifschitz