

## Forget global warming: Welcome to the new Ice Age

Lorne Gunter, *National Post* — Published: Monday, February 25, 2008

Snow cover over North America and much of Siberia, Mongolia and China is greater than at any time since 1966.

The U.S. National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) reported that many American cities and towns suffered record cold temperatures in January and early February. According to the NCDC, the average temperature in January "was -0.3 F cooler than the 1901-2000 (20th century) average."

China is surviving its most brutal winter in a century. Temperatures in the normally balmy south were so low for so long that some middle-sized cities went days and even weeks without electricity because once power lines had toppled it was too cold or too icy to repair them.

There have been so many snow and ice storms in Ontario and Quebec in the past two months that the real estate market has felt the pinch as home buyers have stayed home rather than venturing out looking for new houses.

In just the first two weeks of February, Toronto received 70 cm of snow, smashing the record of 66.6 cm for the entire month set back in the pre-SUV, pre-Kyoto, pre-carbon footprint days of 1950.

And remember the Arctic Sea ice? The ice we were told so hysterically last fall had melted to its "lowest levels on record? Never mind that those records only date back as far as 1972 and that there is anthropological and geological evidence of much greater melts in the past.

The ice is back.

Gilles Langis, a senior forecaster with the Canadian Ice Service in Ottawa, says the Arctic winter has been so severe the ice has not only recovered, it is actually 10 to 20 cm thicker in many places than at this time last year.

OK, so one winter does not a climate make. It would be premature to claim an Ice Age is looming just because we have had one of our most brutal winters in decades.

But if environmentalists and environment reporters can run around shrieking about the manmade destruction of the natural order every time a robin shows up on Georgian Bay two weeks early, then it is at least fair game to use this winter's weather stories to wonder whether the alarmist are being a tad premature.

And it's not just anecdotal evidence that is piling up against the climate-change dogma.

According to Robert Toggweiler of the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory at Princeton University and Joellen Russell, assistant professor of biogeochemical dynamics at the University of Arizona -- two prominent climate modellers -- the computer models that show polar ice-melt cooling the oceans, stopping the circulation of warm equatorial water to northern latitudes and triggering another Ice Age (a la the movie *The Day After Tomorrow*) are all wrong.

"We missed what was right in front of our eyes," says Prof. Russell. It's not ice melt but rather wind circulation that drives ocean currents northward from the tropics. Climate models until now have not properly accounted for the wind's effects on ocean circulation, so researchers have compensated by over-emphasizing the role of manmade warming on polar ice melt.

But when Profs. Toggweiler and Russell rejigged their model to include the 40-year cycle of winds away from the equator (then back towards it again), the role of ocean currents bringing warm southern waters to the north was obvious in the current Arctic warming.

Last month, Oleg Sorokhtin, a fellow of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, shrugged off manmade climate change as "a drop in the bucket." Showing that solar activity has entered an inactive phase, Prof. Sorokhtin advised people to "stock up on fur coats."

He is not alone. Kenneth Tapping of our own National Research Council, who oversees a giant radio telescope focused on the sun, is convinced we are in for a long period of severely cold weather if sunspot activity does not pick up soon.

The last time the sun was this inactive, Earth suffered the Little Ice Age that lasted about five centuries and ended in 1850. Crops failed through killer frosts and drought. Famine, plague and war were widespread. Harbours froze, so did rivers, and trade ceased.

It's way too early to claim the same is about to happen again, but then it's way too early for the hysteria of the global warmers, too.