

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Evidence for real risk of global warming

Sir, – The argument by Professor Alan Walters that “global warming is a hoax”, is not supported by the large body of evidence gathered over the last 200 years.

Edinburgh’s remarkable historical roster of eminent scientists and instrument makers has furnished it with the longest combined climatic record of air temperature, precipitation and atmospheric pressure in the world.

The air temperature in Scotland has increased at an average rate of 0.2°C per century since the pioneering measurements of James Hoy in 1764. Global surface air temperature has increased at an even more rapid rate since 1850, when meteorological records first began to be kept in most parts of the world.

The Edinburgh data also show that Scotland’s climate has become more equable and oceanic.

Marine-sediment cores, collected recently off the west coast,

further reveal how our climate system can switch modes extremely rapidly. Sediment layers produced by the melting of giant icebergs, which approached Scottish waters from the south, alternate with layers made up of the shells of micro-organisms that now live in sub-tropical waters.

Ice cores from Greenland show that the dramatic climatic shifts recorded in the deep-sea muds can occur over just a few tens of years.

All major climate model experiments running on the world’s most powerful super-computers, such as the one at Edinburgh University, predict further rises in global surface air temperature in the coming decades.

(Dr) Roy Thompson

DEPT OF GEOLOGY

AND GEOPHYSICS

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

WEST MAINS ROAD, EDINBURGH