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TOWARD A NUCLEAR TEST TREATY

A BOON TO MANKIND

The following is the text of a statement by Mr. W.B. Nesbitt, Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, in the First Committee on December 1, 1960:

"Until very recently, our discussions in this Committee have focussed somewhat more on the question of general and complete disarmament than on the related matters within the first item on our agenda. For that reason, previous Canadian interventions have not dealt specifically with the very important problem of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests. Even so, on October 19, the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada did express satisfaction that the three-power conference was continuing in Geneva and had progressed far in its work of drafting a treaty on the permanent cessation of tests. As Mr. Green said: 'The Canadian Government has taken a clear position against nuclear testing. For this reason we are gratified that the three nuclear powers unilaterally discontinued their tests during the negotiations. We hope that this discontinuance will be enshrined in the treaty now being negotiated and that many other powers will accede to it once it has been concluded.' I should like at this juncture, and with that statement of Canadian policy in mind, to offer a few observations in regard to the resolutions which have been tabled in documents A/C.1/L.256 and 258.

"Strictly speaking, of course, a cessation of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests is not in itself a disarmament measure. Nevertheless, a definitive end to such tests would be an immeasurable boon to mankind and of great value in the improvement of international relations in regard to disarmament. A nuclear-test treaty, provided it were in fact observed by all nations, would rid the world of the greatest danger which, short of nuclear war, it faces in regard to the largely unknown hazards of radiation. As you all know, the nature and scope of those hazards have been under active study for some time in the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. The Committee's report will be considered in the Special Political Committee at this session. Last year, largely as a result of the efforts of the Canadian and like-minded delegations, important new steps were initiated to improve and complement the activities of the Scientific Committee. I am confident that we can look forward to an increasing understanding of what exactly the radiation hazard means to humanity. Meanwhile there is no question that man-made radiation has been distributed throughout the world as a result of fall-out from nuclear-weapons tests. If we can put a definitive end to these tests, we shall certainly relieve