

Radioactive waste disposal examined

Good prospects for the safe, permanent disposal of nuclear reactor wastes exist and should not delay Canada's nuclear power program, provided work on a national plan for the disposal of nuclear waste is begun immediately.

That was the main conclusion reached by an independent panel of three experts in a report recently released by Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Alastair Gillespie. Release of the report, which is entitled *The Management of Canada's Nuclear Wastes*, is neither a statement of policy nor an endorsement of recommendations by the Federal Government.

Dr. Kenneth Hare, director of the Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Toronto; Dr. A.M. Aikin, a former vice-president of administration and planning for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited; and Dr. J.M. Harrison, a former deputy secretary-general for science of UNESCO, and former senior assistant deputy minister at EMR, outlined a consolidated plan for the management of radioactive wastes in their report commissioned by EMR.

Present interim storage methods for nuclear wastes are reliable and safe, but, the report notes, the day is fast approaching when there will have to be arrangements made for ultimate disposal. To date over 1,500 tonnes of irradiated fuel have been produced by Canadian power reactors. It is predicted that about 50,000 tonnes of radioactive wastes may be produced by nuclear reactors by the year 2000.

The report concludes that the best potential for disposal of high-level radioactive waste from nuclear reactors is deep burial in geological formations of igneous Precambrian rocks, preferably in Ontario. However, the report calls for immediate

and accelerated research and development programs to solve the many technical problems and to satisfy the public that the deep geological burial repositories will work as expected.

News briefs

Canadian exports are expected to total \$47 billion this year, up \$10 billion from last year. But economic growth in the industrialized countries — Canada's main markets — is faltering and will be modest at best in 1978, despite a trend of more expansionist policies, says the Canadian Export Association.

Steve Handfield-Jones, Assistant Deputy Finance Minister, told the Agriculture Outlook Conference on December 12, that the Canadian economy should be healthier in 1978, with real growth reaching 5 per cent and inflation dropping to 6 per cent. The trade surplus would improve on the \$2-billion figure for 1977 and all indications showed renewed consumer confidence in the economy. Industrial expansion, however, he said, appeared unlikely and could fall below the 1977 level.

Canadian companies and individuals had \$10.67 billion invested abroad at the end of 1975, an increase of \$1.37 billion or 15 percent over the total at the end of 1974, reports Statistics Canada. Direct investments of \$5.68 billion in the U.S. accounted for 53 per cent of the foreign investment total and Brazil, with \$1.07 billion, was the second largest recipient.

New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent attended the 1977 party leaders' conference of the Socialist International in Tokyo, December 17 to 18. Broadbent was elected vice-president of the organization in 1977.

France and Quebec have signed an agreement to invest jointly \$10 million over the next five years in exploring for copper in Quebec and are discussing the possibilities of industrial and technological co-operation in asbestos production.

The Federal Government has imposed global quotas on imported footwear, effective immediately, in a move to protect the domestic shoe industry from further deterioration. Footwear imports will be restricted to 32.5 million pairs annually for the next three years. The quotas will apply mostly to leather footwear imports.

A timetable for a national waste disposal program is proposed, starting with the declaration of a national plan in 1978 and concluding with a repository fully operational by 1995-2000.

Plastic, rubber or canvas footwear and downhill ski boots will not be affected.

A \$20,000-grant to produce an information manual on family-support services for the mentally handicapped is among nine National Welfare grants announced by Health and Welfare Minister Monique Bégin. The grants, which total \$180,287, cover a wide range of demonstration and research projects and other activities in the social welfare field.

Canadian Superior Oil Ltd., of Calgary, is participating in a joint oil-exploration venture in the Dominican Republic which could provide an additional source of petroleum for eastern Canada, Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Jack Horner revealed recently. The firm's production-sharing agreement is supported by a \$25-million Export Development Corporation foreign investment guarantee. Distributors in eastern Canada will have the first opportunity to buy Superior's share of the oil discovered as a result of this exploration.

Claude Lambert of the Department of External Affairs, has been appointed to succeed Claude Sirois as attaché to Governor-General Jules Léger. Mr. Sirois, who held that position for two years, has been posted by the Department to Geneva, Switzerland.

Captain Louise Chevalier, 26, is the first Canadian woman and the youngest person ever to graduate from the Edwards Air Force Base jet test pilot school, California, U.S. A native of Montreal, Captain Chevalier, who holds an engineering degree from Montreal's McGill University, is a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. After writing an entrance exam that brought her into competition with qualified men from many parts of the world, she began the 46-week course which has been offered to a woman only once before, since the program began in 1950. Captain Chevalier, who has flown everything from gliders and "jumbos" to supersonic jets, will join the staff of the jet test base in Cold Lake, Alberta. She is the only female aerospace engineer in the Canadian Forces.

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