

However, the best scientific evidence available, indicates that it is most unlikely that any significant genetic effect would result from the increased radioactivity that has occurred.

Canadian scientific experience in this connection is confirmed by that of research scientists in other countries. For example, in a statement in the British House of Commons on March 22 last, the Minister of Health, the Right Honourable Ian Macleod stressed these points:

- (1) Radiation does produce genetic effects and the radioactivity of the planet has increased slightly as the result of nuclear bomb explosions.
- (2) Present knowledge is insufficient to fix precisely the level of radioactivity above which genetic damage would significantly affect the well-being of populations.
- (3) Research in genetic changes is necessarily and inevitably slow in producing conclusive results.
- (4) It is extremely unlikely that the increase in radioactivity which has appeared up to the present will have any appreciable genetic effect.

While the genetic problem is exceedingly complex, the important factors are known and Canada possesses at the present time the scientific potential to carry on continuing investigations in this field. The Department of National Health and Welfare is pursuing research efforts with a view to the further development of a long-range program for the collection and study of human data that will aid in the assessment of this problem.

The Department is carrying out a systematic and continuing examination of all evidence available in order to ascertain all of the facts in connection with increased radiation. As the program develops further, it will involve, among other things, the constant examination of a variety of materials to determine the level of potentially-dangerous radioactivity.

In furthering this project, full advantage will continue to be taken of the experience of outstanding Canadian scientists who have a particular knowledge of this field and every effort will be made to co-ordinate this long-term study with Canada's over-all public health programme.

The Government is fully aware of the problems posed in the field of public health by atomic developments and will continue to take proper steps to assess progressively the possible hazard to human health of increased radiation background.