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Managing Editor Loris Racine Directeur

Editor Joan Powers Rickard Rédactrice en chef

Associate Editors Wayne Campbell
Dr. Wally Cherwinski

Rédacteurs en chef adjoints

Designer and
Print Supervisor Robert Rickard

Maquettiste et
contrôleur de l'impression

Photography Bruce Kane Photographie

Printer Dolco Imprimeur

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A talk with Edward Teller

During his recent Canadian visit, Dr. Edward Teller, eminent American nuclear physicist, met with research groups at the National Research Council of Canada. Discussions covered several areas of study, including the Physics and Chemistry Isotope Enrichment project (story page 10) and the Division of Chemistry.

Born in Budapest, Hungary, Dr. Teller began his career in 1930 as a research student at the University of Leipzig, Germany. Since then, he has received numerous honors for contributions to the fields of chemistry, quantum theory, molecular and nuclear physics. During the 1940s he was one of the pioneers in the detailed study of the mononuclear reactions.

In a public lecture at NRC's Sussex Drive Auditorium, Dr. Teller discussed the future of nuclear fission reactors, expressing his confidence in their continued safe operation. After weighing the merits of current models of fission reactors, he observed: "the best happens to be CANDU." Since it offered considerable neutron economy, he felt the CANDU was the best alternative to the breeder reactor. He added that future versions of CANDU, which may burn thorium fuel, could extend the lifetime of uranium supplies ten times or more.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of well planned research and development to the future of humankind: "Nuclear energy is only one small slice of the large technological pie; all of which has an influence on the way we live and how well we can live with each other." □