

assessment process.<sup>(51)</sup> Moreover, the TAC's 1987 annual report mentions that "the time may be opportune for a more direct participation by learned societies, scientific and professional associations, general interest groups and various elements from the university and college communities in independent evaluation of program [CNFWMP] progress and issues involved."<sup>(52)</sup>

During his testimony before the Committee, TAC Chairman L.W. Shemilt stressed his group's independence from AECL. He added that one measure of TAC's worth is that the Government of Sweden has twice asked it to judge Sweden's own research program on deep geological disposal of high-level radioactive nuclear waste.<sup>(53)</sup>

### C. The Atomic Energy Control Board

The Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) was set up in 1946 under the *Atomic Energy Control Act*. It reports to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Four of its five members are appointed by Order in Council; the fifth is the President of the National Research Council, himself appointed by Order in Council, and a member of the AECB *ex officio*. The Board members are backed by 250 scientific, technical and administrative staff.

The role of the AECB as a federal body is "to make provision for the control and supervision of the development, application and use of atomic energy, and to enable Canada to participate effectively in measures of international control of atomic energy". Originally responsible for all nuclear activity, from research and development to regulation, it now deals solely with the control of prescribed substances and nuclear facilities from the standpoint of health and safety, by means of a licensing system.<sup>(54)</sup>

There are many people involved in the licence-granting process including: most of the Board's own specialists, advisory committees of technical experts, and experts from provincial and federal institutions, including the universities. According to the *Atomic Energy Control Regulations*, any person or body wishing to extract, refine, process, export or use prescribed substances (uranium, thorium, plutonium, etc.) or to operate a heavy-water (deuterium oxide) production plant or a nuclear facility, must obtain a licence. The Board's final role is to make sure that operators live up to their responsibilities.

With respect to waste management, the Board makes a distinction between storage, which is the confining of material with the intention of recovering it, and disposal, which is a form of management without any intention of recovery, and which must be able to last indefinitely without human involvement. Currently the AECB is assessing the concept of disposing high-level radioactive wastes deep within geological formations. The concept assessment process, which includes public hearings, is expected to be complete by the early 1990s. Not until then will the search for a site begin, and the Board will have to approve a licence for any chosen site.

Although none of its members appeared before the Committee, special attention was nonetheless paid to the Board, with many witnesses offering comments and recommendations on it. In the opinion of David Poch, legal counsel representing some fifteen churches,

<sup>(51)</sup> Technical Advisory Committee on the Canadian Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program, *Seventh Annual Report*, July, 1986, 111 p.

<sup>(52)</sup> Technical Advisory Committee on the Canadian Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program, *Eighth Annual Report*, July, 1987, p. 70.

<sup>(53)</sup> Shemilt (1987), p. 37.

<sup>(54)</sup> Atomic Energy Control Board, "Walking the Extra Mile: the Role of the AECB", *Control*, Ottawa, 1986, p. 11.