

No. 56/6

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY - THE PROBLEMS OF CONTROLS

Statement delivered October 12 at United Nations Headquarters by Mr. W.H. Wershof, Head of the Canadian Delegation to the Conference on the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Article XII of the Statute.

In his opening statement in the general debate, Mr. Chairman, the distinguished representative of India pointed out quite correctly that the problem of safeguards was far more important and difficult than any other facing this conference. It is more difficult because it necessarily raises in sharp form conflicts between differing objectives and points of view, all of which are deserving of consideration and sympathy.

My Government hopes to see atomic energy developed greatly as a source of power and production during the next several decades. We hope to see this both at home and in other countries throughout the world, especially those which are short of hydro power and conventional fuels. We are confident that the establishment and effective operation of the International Agency will assist greatly in this development, and we support the Agency for that reason. We expect, however, that the primary role of the Agency may be to assist countries in planning, organizing and setting up their atomic programmes, and that much of the content of those programmes will be based upon equipment, materials and services furnished from one country to another in the ordinary course of trade. In the case of source materials, for example, we would expect that the normal pattern will consist of ordinary commercial transactions between individual countries.

Whether the resources which countries require for the development of atomic power will move internationally through the Agency or through normal trade channels, we feel it is not only desirable but essential to have safeguards against the diversion to military purposes of special fissionable materials (as they are called in the statute). We believe that the export of equipment or materials for military purposes, if that takes place, must be treated as an export of arms and regulated as such. We think it is highly desirable that the export of equipment and materials for peaceful purposes should not be mixed up with this difficult question of the export of arms. Indeed, if it is so mixed up, we are quite sure that such equipment and materials will move less freely among nations.

I should like for a moment to mention this question of military uses, since the question must be in our minds when we consider the problem of safeguards. Surely, the widespread availability of atomic weapons is highly undesirable. If any countries are to produce or have atomic weapons, it is the view of my Government that they should be known to have them, and should not acquire them clandestinely with the aid of international transactions that appear to be for peaceful uses.