

In line with the argument that has been made today by the honourable member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, the government was acutely conscious of the fact that one supplier cannot succeed unilaterally in raising the international safeguards standard and that Canada's forward position on safeguards and exports would only have real value and significance if the other major, significant suppliers also agreed to a similar set of policies.

Accordingly, a number of bilateral discussions have been initiated by Canada since the end of 1974 both on the level of officials and in the context of meetings held by the Prime Minister and myself. In part - and I think in significant part - as a result of these initiatives meetings among the officials of a number of countries have been held over the past year to examine the question of safeguards in great detail. There were diplomatic discussions of a sensitive nature, as the honourable member pointed out earlier, and in such cases it is up to the participants, if they wish to do so, to outline their role and policy. I should like to do that today on behalf of the Government of Canada. I might say that all major suppliers presently on the international market shared these consultations, and more may do so. Let me only say this, that as a result of these international meetings Canada has notified certain other interested countries of the standards of safeguards required under its national policy pursuant to the consensus. This was also done by other participants.

This position reflects much, though not necessarily all, of the policy set out in the background paper I have tabled. It is, however, fully consistent with that policy, stipulating, as it does, that transfers of certain equipment, materials and technology will only be authorized on the basis of a formal governmental assurance from recipients to exclude uses which would result in any nuclear explosive devices. These transfers would also trigger the application of the safeguard system of the I.A.E.A., and their retransfer to any third country could only be done on the basis of the consent of the Government of Canada.

It is also stipulated that safeguards should apply to the items covered for their useful life as well as to the subsequent generation of nuclear material produced. It refers to the desirability of imposing provisions for mutual agreement between supplier and recipient on arrangements for reprocessing, storage, alternative use, transfer or retransfer or any plutonium and highly-enriched uranium that is covered. The observance of recommendations and standards for the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities forms part of this undertaking. The standards also call for safeguards to be triggered by the transfer of technology for heavy-water production enrichment and reprocessing. Canadian policy, I should say parenthetically, places safeguards as well on reactor technology.