

In the United Kingdom, first reading has already been given to an Atomic Energy Bill which will empower the United Kingdom Government to establish control over the production or use of atomic energy. In the United States the McMahon Bill has been drafted by a Special Senate Committee on atomic energy, and I am informed that the administration intends to conclude legislation on the domestic control of atomic energy before the adjournment of the present session of Congress.

The House will appreciate, from the reasons I have just outlined, the necessity for introducing a Bill for the control of atomic energy in Canada, in the terms of the resolution now being considered. It remains for me to say something of the general character of the legislation proposed.

Fresh discoveries in the field of atomic energy may bring about swift developments which cannot now be foreseen precisely. Therefore, the measures for control must be not only wide, but also flexible, to meet the new situations.

The Bill that will be based on this resolution will provide for a Board that will continuously study the field of atomic energy. It will be the responsibility of the Board to propose regulations designed to meet fresh situations as they develop. Any such regulations would be issued under the authority of the Governor in Council. The Board will be organized, and will function, much along the lines of the National Research Council. Liaison with the National Research Council is provided for, by making the President of the Council a member of the Board.

There will be provision in the Bill for the incorporation of Crown Companies, and for the taking over of existing Crown Companies, should the Board decide that atomic energy operations can better be performed by separate and subsidiary organizations. It is possible that the operations at Great Bear Lake, Port Hope, and Chalk River, may be carried on by Crown Companies, under the close supervision of the Board.

The Board will report to the Committee of the Privy Council on Industrial and Scientific Research, to which presently the National Research Council reports. An annual report of the Board will be tabled in the House of Commons by the Chairman of the Committee, who, at the moment, is myself. The Board will make such other reports to the Committee as may be required, and will also, on the Board's own initiative, report any matters which the Board considers should be brought to the attention of the Government. Thus, machinery is provided for the Government being kept fully informed, and in a position to deal with any question relating to atomic energy which will deserve its attention, or which may be brought up in this House.

Apart from the proceeds of its operations, the work of the Board, and the operation of the Crown Companies, will be financed by monies voted by Parliament for this specific purpose. Any regulations made by the Board are to be published promptly and tabled in Parliament.

It is the intention of the Government to encourage scientific initiative, and research, directed towards finding constructive applications for the use of atomic energy. The Bill will empower the Board not only to itself undertake research and investigation, but also to facilitate and finance approved research, to be carried out in our universities and elsewhere, under proper safeguards.