

In recent years there has been a slight, though appreciable, increase in radiation all over the world. The health implications of this fact, for our own and succeeding generations, warrant the most sober and thorough consideration. It must be acknowledged that some conflicting views have been expressed, but the consensus of the best scientific evidence available indicates that no significant immediate or long-range harmful effects of serious proportions will result from the increased radio activity that has occurred. Nevertheless, it would appear to me as a layman that there remain a number of unanswered questions, particularly in relation to possible genetic effects, which underline the need for the compilation and co-ordination of existing information by a body such as the new international Committee and which call for continuing research by competent scientists.

I suggest that Canada's own atomic energy program merits attention. For I believe that we have demonstrated in this country in this field, and yet establish and develop an independent national program which in quality, if not in size, is unsurpassed.

Canada's contribution of most immediate value during the war was the supply of uranium ore although we contributed as well to the basic research. Since the war, we have continued to carry out in this country a very active program to find and develop new sources of uranium supply. Besides providing raw materials, Canada has undertaken a vigorous program of research and development on the applications of atomic energy. During the past decade these efforts have been devoted exclusively to peaceful purpose -- power for domestic and industrial use and radioactive isotopes for medicine, agriculture and industry. In addition, Canadian-produced Cobalt 60 Beam Therapy Units for the treatment of cancer have been placed in upwards of thirty hospitals and treatment centres in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland and Brazil.

We are anxious to assist other countries in getting their atomic energy programs under way and, although we cannot offer assistance on the same scale as the United States and the United Kingdom, we have already given, and intend to continue to give, every measure of help within the limitations of resources available for this purpose.

I have spoken briefly of the results of our discussions on disarmament and the peaceful uses of atomic energy. I turn now to the question of new members. The General Assembly's action last December in admitting sixteen additional states to membership in the United Nations marked the end of a decade of difficulty and division. It had given new hope to all those who share the belief that this world organization is destined to become, in the words of its Charter, "a centre for harmonizing the actions of all nations".