

new techniques which may lead to a process of neutralizing these wastes and making them harmless. This would be the ideal solution. It is one of the reasons I believe we should not be too hasty in rushing ahead to put it underground and making it irretrievable.⁽⁶⁵⁾

In refusing even to consider the solution under review, Mr. Rubin and Dr. Edwards take a still more extreme position than the Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning, which in 1980 recommended that a moratorium be declared on additional nuclear generating stations if progress in high-level nuclear waste research and development was not sufficiently advanced by 1990.⁽⁶⁶⁾

So far, two preliminary concept assessments have been carried out by representatives of government and private organizations and citizens' groups, in 1981 and 1985. The definitive assessment will be performed after the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) submits its final assessment. For its part, TAC believes that the deep geological disposal concept is promising and worthy of in-depth research, and that the results of on-going work will continue to diminish the uncertainties related to various aspects of the overall concept. TAC maintains that it is vital that funding be kept at a level that will ensure the project's viability.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The Committee agrees, and therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 5

Given that the goal of a nuclear waste management program must be to protect Canadians' health and safety, short-term considerations of economy must not be invoked as an obstacle to achieving that goal. Consequently, the resources necessary for verification of the Canadian disposal concept must remain adequate until the concept has received its final assessment by the scientific community, and the public at large has either accepted or rejected the proposal.

The Assessment Process

The 1981 Canada-Ontario joint statement defined the assessment process for the Canadian high-level radioactive waste management concept, and designated the Atomic Energy Control Board as the body in charge of the regulatory and ecological review of the disposal concept. The review will be carried out by an Interagency Review Committee (IRC), set up by the AECB, Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, and the federal Department of the Environment. The IRC will issue a public report on the official concept assessment document produced by AECL. Both these documents will be the subject of public debate, under the auspices of the federal government, probably via an environmental assessment panel. The recommendations that come out of that debate will be submitted to the AECB, which will publish a statement as to the acceptability, conditional acceptability or non-acceptability of the concept.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Like some of the witnesses who appeared before it, the Committee has questions about the role of the agencies involved in the process, and about the resources that will be made available to the general public during the final assessment of the concept. The Committee

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Gordon Edwards, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, Issue No. 7, February 3, 1987, p. 15.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning (Arthur Porter, Chairman), *Report: Concepts, Conclusions and Recommendations*, Vol. 1, 1980, p. XIX.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Technical Advisory Committee, "Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program", brief presented to the Standing Committee on Environment and Forestry, Hamilton, January 1987, p. 12.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Technical Advisory Committee on the Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program, *Sixth Annual Report*, July 1985, p. 25.