

the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, commissioned the Royal Society of Canada to study the environmental and ecological consequences of a nuclear war from a Canadian perspective.

The Royal Society of Canada, founded in 1885, is an 1,100-member interdisciplinary society which has participated actively in the learned scientific and academic affairs of Canada. Chaired by Dr. Kenneth Hare, Provost of Trinity College, University of Toronto, the Royal Society Committee on the Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War spent seven months studying the possible effects of nuclear war on the Canadian environment.

In February 1985, the Royal Society submitted its report, *A Canadian Appraisal of the Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War*. The conclusions were in agreement with the findings of earlier studies undertaken by other major national scientific organisations:

“A Nuclear Winter in the wake of a major nuclear exchange appears to be a formidable threat. If calculations are correct – and the Committee believes them credible – temperatures in the interior of continents will plunge by many degrees after the exchange, probably far below freezing in many mid-latitude areas. Severe damage or destruction will ensue for crops and vegetation. The winter will last for some weeks to several months, and will have lasting repercussions.”

The Committee of the Royal Society determined that the Nuclear Winter findings added new dimensions to established strategic thinking, and enumerated their own list of “Strategic Considerations” which included the following:

- The environmental impact of a major nuclear exchange would be global. No country would be immune;
- Nuclear Winter would imperil the food and drinking water supplies of all survivors in mid-latitude nations, and probably the whole world;
- There would be few spectators in a major nuclear exchange; non-combattant nations would be the helpless victims of a Nuclear Winter, just as would the combatants;
- Even if spared direct attack, there would be major damage to Canada’s forests, fisheries and agriculture;
- The U.S.S.R. would also be extremely vulnerable to the effects of a major nuclear exchange. Soviet agriculture, already very sensitive to drought and frost, could not survive a Nuclear Winter.