has slowly developed and extensive precautions are now observed in the atomic industry and by enlightened radiologists.

In spite of the fact that safeguards of this kind have been in effect in my own country for some years, the health problems associated with radiation have increasingly engaged the attention of officers of my own Department of National Health and Welfare and of a number of other government agencies since the development of our atomic energy programme. In addition to the protective measures taken by the authorities at our Atomic Energy project to ensure the health and safety of their own workers, extensive precautions are required to safeguard the health of persons working with radioactive isotopes in research laboratories and industry. Medical uses of radioactive isotopes are subject to review by physicians specially experienced in this field. We find it necessary, also, to provide assistance and advice on measures for the safe storage, transportation, handling and waste disposal of radioactive materials of all kinds.

A broader problem is presented by the undoubted fact that in recent years there has been a slight, though appreciable, increase in radiation all over the world. The health implications, for our own and succeeding generations, of this increase in radiation warrant the most sober and thorough consideration. Already significant studies are being pursued in a number of countries, with the result that a body of scientific literature in this field is rapidly developing. It must be acknowledged that some conflicting views have been expressed, but the consensus of the best scientific evidence available seems to be that no significant immediate or long-range harmful effects of serious proportions will result from the increased radioactivity 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 proposed technical committee and which call for continuing research by competent scientists. With this in mind, the Canadian Government instructed officers of my own Department early this year to accept this whole question as a national public health problem and to begin exploring and further areas and methods of investigation. It may be of interest to the Committee to review briefly the steps that we have taken in this regard. I mention these, not in order to draw particular attention to what we are doing in Canada but because they may serve to illustrate the kind of work now being done and the substance, therefore, of what the proposed committees would be concerned with.

We approached this problem by establishing a national Committee, consisting of outstanding experts from the various interested government agencies and from Canadian universities. This Committee held its first meeting last May and recommended three areas for special investigation.