

Prior to the war, Eldorado Mine, and its refinery at Port Hope had been primarily concerned with the production of radium, with uranium as a less important by-product. Radium was in over-supply at the outbreak of war, and, as a consequence, operation of the mine at Great Bear Lake had been suspended. When the importance of uranium was recognized, the mine was re-opened and brought back into production as rapidly as possible. The refinery was enlarged, and was able to refine ore from foreign sources during the period required to bring down Eldorado ore from Great Bear Lake. Since then, the refinery has been in operation day and night, and has processed a substantial part of the uranium requirements of the United Nations.

A plant for the preparation of fissionable material has been constructed at Chalk River, Ontario, for the purpose of exploring one particular process for producing the ultimate material. This plant has certain features that make it unique, and it is believed by our partners in the United States and in the United Kingdom that Chalk River can make a substantial contribution in the field of peacetime development and use of this new source of energy. It is expected that the plant at Chalk River will provide a centre of research in Canada that will not be excelled elsewhere in the world, for a considerable time at least.

From this brief review of wartime developments, Honourable Members will appreciate the important position of Canada in the field of atomic energy. I have not traversed the field in great detail, since all Honourable Members have in mind a comprehensive review of Canada's part in these matters made by the Prime Minister in a statement to the House on the 17th of December, 1945, on the occasion of moving a resolution to approve the agreed declaration signed at Washington on the 15th of November, 1945, by President Truman and Prime Ministers Attlee and Mackenzie King.

Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were largely responsible for the surrender of Japan and the sudden ending of the war. Since the ending of the war, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada have continued their co-operation, recognizing the imperative need for the control of atomic energy as a weapon of war, as well as for its development in the service of mankind. The purpose of the Bill that will be based on this resolution will be to encourage research in this field, both public and private, while taking adequate security measures against the use of the material from which atomic energy is derived, as a weapon of war.

The three-nation declaration on atomic energy signed at Washington on November 15th, 1945, which was approved in this House on December 17th, 1945, gave recognition to the need for further co-operation, not only between the three countries which have been mainly concerned, but also for extending this co-operation to all countries through the United Nations. The declaration recommended the setting up of a Commission under the United Nations to prepare recommendations on atomic energy for submission to that Organization.

Such a Commission was set up, by resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on January 24th last. Because of her special position in this field, Canada is the only country, apart from the Great Powers permanently represented on the Commission. General McNaughton has been appointed Canadian representative, and the Commission will hold its first meeting on June 14th. This Commission has been charged with the responsibility of enquiring into all phases of atomic energy, and, in particular, of making specified proposals with regard to certain objectives which were stated in the resolution of the United Nations Assembly setting up the Commission, as follows:-