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Wider use of nuclear power but use of safeguards stressed

Canada recognizes the need for the expansion of the use of nuclear power as an alternative source of energy in developing countries, according to Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva and to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, W.H. Barton. He was addressing the plenary session of the UN General Assembly in New York on November 12.

"I am pleased to note again this year that such a large proportion of the International Atomic Energy Agency's regular budget has been dedicated to programs of direct interest to developing member states," he said, "and in particular to note the increased emphasis that the developing countries members of the Agency have placed on the introduction of nuclear power into their energy programs."

It was becoming increasingly clear he explained, that in a number of countries nuclear energy provided a major alternative to hydrocarbons, which were "in short, unreliable and expensive supply".

Controlled expansion

The Canadian ambassador, however, expressed his Government's "deep concern" that this expansion be controlled, consistent with the obligation of the Agency to ensure that its assistance not be used in such a way as to further any military purpose. Mr. Barton referred to the Agency's study on the feasibility of regional fuel-cycle centres — a move he said, "which Canada endorses wholeheartedly".

"Urgent study is needed of such possibilities in order to make the most effective use of scarce resources. The joint efforts of groups of countries to co-operate to this end could be a breakthrough in the wider introduction of nuclear power for development. Canada shares the views expressed by other countries as to the role which regional fuel-cycle centres might play in lessening the danger of proliferation of nuclear explosive devices by limiting

the number of facilities producing fissile material."

NPT signatories favoured

Mr. Barton said that it must be recognized that the increased interest in nuclear power had created an unprecedented demand on the resources of states such as Canada. "In our efforts to allocate these most efficiently," he said, "we have taken into account our strong concern to ensure that nuclear power be restricted only to peaceful applications." He added that Canada therefore intended to give particular attention to assistance to those countries which have ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty and thereby fully subscribe "to what is today the best, if still an imperfect, instrument for preventing the proliferation of nuclear explosive devices".

The ambassador concluded by saying that Canada looked to the International Atomic Energy Agency as the international community's main instrument for giving guarantees "that the atom is safe from man as well as from accident" — guarantees that are essential if nuclear power were to be an accepted and long-term source of energy, and a desirable area for international co-operation.

Oil exports cut by one third

Canada will reduce exports of crude oil by an average of 240,000 barrels a day in 1976, almost one third of its total sales to the United States this year.

The decision, announced by Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Alastair Gillespie on November 20, follows publication of the September 1975 report of the National Energy Board on Canadian oil supply and requirements.

Based on current supply and demand forecasts, oil exports should drop to an average of 460,000 barrels a day from the 1975 average of about 700,000 barrels a day. The reduction will be