



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE ATOMIC ENERGY BILL

A statement by Hon. C. D. Howe,  
Minister of Reconstruction and  
Supply, in the House of Commons,  
June 3, 1946

Recent developments in the field of atomic energy have placed Canada in a somewhat unique position among the nations of the world, in that Canada is an important source of raw material, and, as well, shares with the United States the position of having a plant able to produce the final product from which atomic energy can be released. For that reason, it is essential that legislative action be taken by Parliament to control both the production of atomic energy and the materials from which this energy is derived. It is also of the first importance to encourage further research and development towards a peaceful and constructive application of atomic energy, under proper safeguards.

Honourable Members are familiar with the part which Canada has played in the development of the atomic bomb. The House will recall that the primary material required for atomic fission is uranium. Eldorado Mine on Great Bear Lake is the second most important deposit of uranium oxide that has been discovered to date. The importance of this material as a potential war weapon was recognized some three years ago, when the Government expropriated the ownership of the Eldorado Mine near Great Bear Lake, North West Territories, together with its refinery, located at Port Hope, Ontario.

Activities in the field of atomic energy have been carried on in close association with the United Kingdom and the United States. In 1942 the Montreal laboratory was established and leading scientists of the United Kingdom joined with those in Canada to press forward the development of the science of the atomic energy. In 1943, United States had made such progress in developments leading towards the possibility of creating a successful atomic bomb, that it became clear that Allied efforts in this field should be co-ordinated and closely integrated. Accordingly, a Combined Policy Committee, representative of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Stimson, United States Secretary of War. Other United States representatives were President Conant of Harvard University and Mr. Vannevar Bush, President of the Carnegie Institute. The United Kingdom was represented by Lord Halifax and Field Marshal Sir Maitland Wilson. Canadian membership on the Committee was held by myself, as Minister of Munitions and Supply.

In pre-war years, the United Kingdom Government had made a substantial contribution to the development of atomic energy in the field of research. The Joint British-Canadian Laboratory in Montreal continued this work. The Montreal organization came under the administrative control of our National Research Council, and this laboratory, with a staff of over 340, became the largest organization ever created in this country to carry out a single research project.