



EG&G photos

(Left) the pieces of the puzzle start to come together. (Right) using long tongs, a scientist places bits of radioactive debris in a lead container.

radioactivity, a fact that increased the problems in the hunt.

The particles of reactor core are, with time, steadily weakening in radioactivity. Radiation levels were down to one-fifth in September of what they had been when the first measurements were made. This means that the particles left in tundra, muskeg and bush areas will simply decay to below natural background levels and will no longer be detectable. Furthermore, the particles are far enough apart that the chance of direct encounter is very slight. Particles that fell on lake or river ice will have long since settled to the bottom, becoming part of the natural sediment.

Environment and wildlife

The data from solubility studies will apply to wildlife as well as to humans. Calculations suggest that there is no need for concern, and in an effort to verify this, the federal Department of the Environment is analyzing fish from Great Slave Lake, and the Department of National Health and Welfare will be monitoring caribou meat from migrating herds.

National Health and Welfare, which has also been monitoring ground level air at Hay River and water supplies in town-sites, has found no detectable contamination.

A final report on the clean-up is in pre-

paration, which will detail the field work as well as the analytical studies carried out by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. at the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment (WNRE) on a variety of debris to identify health and safety hazards.

With the exception of the non-radioactive stovepipe fragment sent to Ottawa, and some particles consumed in solubility testing in Ottawa, recovered debris is stored at WNRE's waste-management facility at Pinawa, Manitoba.

A claim is being prepared for presentation to the U.S.S.R. seeking some cost recovery for the massive clean-up operation. Pending action on the claim, all debris is considered as evidence.



"Hello! Control, we've just located the satellite, but we have a slight problem with recovery!"

Scotty