



CANADA

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## FALLOUT INCREASE IN WESTERN CANADA

The following statement was made to the House of Commons on September 12 by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. J.W. Monteith:

"... I would like to make a statement on fall-out resulting from the resumption of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union. Since the First test explosion on September 1, my Department's network of 24 air-sampling stations located across Canada has continued to provide regular material for analysis on a daily basis. From the results obtained, it now appears that effects of the Russian testing programme have been observed at some of our stations.

"For example, on September 7, the reading for Edmonton showed a fresh fall-out level of nine dis-integrations per minute per cubic metre of air, a value which was about 30 times higher than the levels observed for this station during the past several months. This is the most significant increase recorded for samples received to date, although a value of four units, or 15 times higher than normal, was observed for Winnipeg on September 8, and a value of one unit or three times higher than normal for Calgary on September 7.

"As I have previously indicated to the House, the significance of all radioactivity data from the health viewpoint can only be assessed on the basis of average levels for a reasonable period of time, perhaps up to a year. The observations we have made in the air-monitoring programme have consistently shown large fluctuations from day to day, and it is interesting to note that the level observed for Cal-

gary on September 8, the day after the high reading, was back to normal

"In attempting to interpret the present situation, I think it is appropriate to refer to the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection, which provide the basic data for calculating the maximum permissible level for the public at large. From these data, a level of 6.6 units has been derived. In this connection it is important to realize that the calculations imply continued exposure at this level throughout a lifetime. Short duration increases above this limit are not considered to be of serious public health concern.

"Furthermore, it is of interest to note that measurements of fall-out levels in air were made during and subsequent to the extensive weapons testing programmes of the fall of 1958. These data were collected by the National Research Council as part of Canada's contribution to the international geophysical year project. Nine of the observing stations were located in areas now served by our present programme and for these stations the highest over-all monthly average reached a value of 6.88 units in February 1959. During the same period, however, individual daily results were as high as 38.1 units. Six months later, when my Department's programme began operating, the monthly average had dropped to 0.85 units, and it has subsequently continued to decrease to the point where the over-all monthly average for July, 1961, was 0.29."