

border. On January 16, 1986, the American Department of Energy published a draft report naming 20 regions being considered as locations for nuclear waste disposal sites: five of these are situated in the drainage basin of the Red River, which flows into Manitoba. In the fall of 1986, American Congress suspended the search for a site, though without abandoning the idea permanently. Here is an extract from Manitoba's presentation to the American Department of Energy's public hearings in April 1986:

Because Manitoba is so vitally dependent on the Red River and its watershed, because there will be an ultimately undefinable risk to the valley from a nuclear waste disposal system in the drainage basin, and because Manitoba is a non-nuclear province which does not generate high-level nuclear waste, we feel that Manitobans should not be asked to bear any risk associated with nuclear waste disposal. We have previously taken this position with respect to nuclear waste disposal within our own boundaries, and have been assured by our federal government that there will not be a disposal site in Manitoba.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Manitoba's Deputy Minister of the Environment, Thomas H. Owen, added that the American government had placed itself in a difficult position, because it had made a commitment to locate one disposal site in the southwest of the United States and one in the northeast; but almost all of the northeastern United States is on watersheds that drain into Canada.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Although AECL insists that no research has yet been undertaken to determine potential disposal sites, the Committee, following the lead of the Concerned Citizens of Manitoba Inc., maintains that in light of the upcoming debate, it is imperative to obtain a list of the criteria that will be used in selecting the ideal site. The Committee therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 12

In the event that a Canadian nuclear fuel waste disposal concept should prove safe and scientifically and economically acceptable, Environment Canada, in collaboration with the Atomic Energy Control Board and the other federal and provincial departments and ministries concerned, should immediately formulate and make public the selection criteria for potential disposal sites for high-level radioactive waste. Furthermore, the provinces that produce nuclear-generated electricity, where it has been proven that safe disposal is possible, should be considered for disposal sites. The provinces, and especially the municipalities under consideration as a repository, must be guaranteed full public hearings.

Even if the Canadian government's current policy is not to accept waste from other countries,⁽⁷⁷⁾ organizations like the Concerned Citizens of Manitoba Inc. are worried that Canada may at some point decide to take in foreign nuclear waste.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In order to inform the public at large adequately, and to allow Canadians to make a free choice, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 13

A public review process should be launched if the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources should envisage the possibility of accepting nuclear waste from other countries.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Thomas H. Owen, Deputy Minister, Department of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health of Manitoba, *ibid.*, p. 18-19.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ The Hon. Marcel Masse, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Issue No. 14, April 1, 1987, p. 19-20.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Carol Duyf, Concerned Citizens of Manitoba Inc., Issue No. 7, February 3, 1987, p. 30.