

the organization not to explore it. I refer here to the offer made by the Foreign Minister of South Africa and reported to the Security Council of the Secretary-General in Document S/8506. The South African Foreign Minister has informed us that the South African authorities would be willing to receive a personal representative of the Secretary-General.

I would suggest that this offer be explored in relation to all the resolutions of the Assembly relating to South Africa, without prejudice to any position which may have been taken by the respective members of this organization. I throw out this suggestion because my delegation believes that we must consider every possibility of making headway in establishing contact with the people of South West Africa to find out how best the United Nations can help them achieve the self-determination and independence this Assembly approved in Resolution 2145. To leave any method unexplored or unused would be, I think, to do a disservice to the interests of the inhabitants of South West Africa which is, after all, our overriding concern.

If most of us are agreed on the objective of making use realistically of the rather limited resources and capabilities of this organization we should be able to find a way of advancing to that goal of achieving self-determination and independence of the peoples of South West Africa, provided we do not insist on one road only, at the expense of rejecting consideration of all others.

## RADIATION ANTIDOTE SOUGHT

A team of scientists at the National Research Council of Canada may be on the verge of a breakthrough in the search for an antidote for the treatment of persons who have received excessive doses of radiation.

The first glimmerings of hope for such a breakthrough comes from research conducted by Dr. James Whitfield, Dr. Helen Morton and Dr. Alan Perris of NRC's Division of Radiation Biology. Their work indicates that a relatively simple compound - calcium chloride - may provide the answer. Calcium chloride has many commercial and industrial uses. It, however, is probably best known today as the agent used to keep roads and highways free of ice.

Radiation produced by nuclear and other sources kills by slowing down the process by which cells in human tissue normally divide and replace themselves. The three NRC physiologists have been working for two years on ways to make bone-marrow cells divide rapidly and still remain functional. The vital red blood cells are produced in bone-marrow, which is the first to feel the slowing effects of radiation. Higher doses of radiation affect the lining of the intestine and massive exposure cripples the nervous system.

Dr. Whitfield said the team made little progress until calcium chloride was injected into a rat. "Much to our surprise the stuff considerably increased normal cell division in the animal's thymus gland and bone-marrow," he said. "It also worked with rats

that had been exposed to radiation. Functional cells with normal characteristics were being produced at the end of the chain of rapid cell divisions."

A check on earlier research in this field revealed a connection between the calcium-chloride effect and a hormone secreted by the parathyroid gland in man and animals.

The team then tried experiments with a compound marketed under the trade name "Versene" that is known to reduce the calcium level in the body. It found that if Versene is injected into test animals the calcium level falls and the parathyroid gland is stimulated into action. Unusual amounts of hormone are secreted and there is a surge of compensating calcium being fed to the body tissues, which then stimulates cell division.

"Research done ten years ago at Chalk River, Ontario, by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited showed that there is some evidence that Versene and parathyroid hormone do have some ability to reduce radiation lethality in irradiated rats," Dr. Whitfield said. "The beautiful thing here is that we are triggering a normal body reaction and not introducing an alien substance into the system. Furthermore, an entirely unexpected and an extraordinarily important dividend now being paid by this work is that this triggered, normal reaction, involving two well-known hormones, is actually a principal control system for the regulation of cell proliferation in various tissues of the body."

The team's work has attracted interest in the international scientific community. Dr. Whitfield stresses that the team is merely on the threshold of "something that could prove very interesting".

## AIRPORT INSPECTION STUDY

A study of inspection and baggage-handling services at international airports was announced recently by Transport Minister Paul Hellyer. The study will be undertaken by the Bureau of Management Consulting Services of the Public Service Commission as an extension to a study completed a short time ago for the Department of Manpower and Immigration.

The project is under the auspices of the Inter-departmental Inspection Services Committee, which is chaired by a member of the Transport Department and comprises representatives from the Department of National Health and Welfare, National Revenue (Customs), Manpower and Immigration and Agriculture, and from the Air Transport Committee.

The study will include surveys of baggage-handling and inspection services at major airports throughout the world. Inspection services generally are concerned with health, customs, immigration and agriculture.

On completion of its study, in which the total inspection requirement will be examined as a single system with a common "flow pattern", the bureau will recommend modifications to meet the changing demands of modern air transportation.