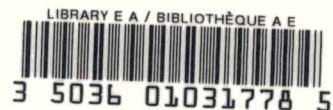


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UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION - Item 34

Text of statement to be made in the
Special Political Committee by the
Canadian representative, Mr. Paul
Beaulieu, on Friday, December 17, 1965

Mr. Chairman, the Canadian delegation has the honour of introducing to the Special Political Committee the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/L.125 concerning the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. The sixteen co-sponsors are the following: Brazil, Burma, Canada, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Ghana, India, Japan, Mali, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Thailand, and the United Arab Republic.

The members of this Committee know that the Scientific Committee was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session on December 3, 1955 under resolution 913 (X) to receive and assemble in an appropriate and useful form information on radiation furnished by various Member States of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies, as well as by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also has responsibility for making a summary report on the observed levels of radioactivity in the atmosphere, evaluating the reports it receives, and indicating research programmes which might require further study.

The Scientific Committee is composed of scientists of 15 member countries, and Canada has the honour of being among them. It is worthwhile pointing out that the success of the Scientific Committee's work over the past eleven years is largely due to the fact that it has limited its activity to purely scientific questions submitted to it by the General Assembly. We sometimes hear the suggestion that our organization accomplishes little more than just talk. However, close examination of the subject before us today and of the thorough studies on the question provides an example of the sort of fruitful international co-operation in which our organization can justly take pride.

We all know, Mr. Chairman, why the United Nations has concerned itself with the question of atomic radiation. We know that over the past twenty years nuclear tests have been contaminating the atmosphere with massive doses of atomic radiation. We know that this radiation affects all aspects of human life. The fact that this radio activity will remain for a long time and will have a continuing effect on mankind for

Main body of the document containing several paragraphs of extremely faint, illegible text. The text appears to be a formal letter or report, but the characters are too light to be read.



generations to come leads to great concern, indeed alarm, among nations. Atomic radiation comes from more than one source. Some, such as natural sources of radiation and the use of X-rays for medical purposes, are less important than others but still cannot be ignored.

Thus it was of great importance to study and better understand the harmful effects of atomic radiation, whatever their source. World opinion was in a state of alarm over this urgent problem. It was fitting that the United Nations should assume responsibility for this research in order to co-ordinate and to further the development of studies already undertaken by many organizations, both national and international.

The Scientific Committee has discharged this task with competence and success. One of the most valuable results of its work will no doubt be that of providing a means whereby not only scientists but also those who are not experts on the subject may understand and appreciate the danger to humanity of radioactive particles in the atmosphere and compare this danger to that of radiation from other sources.

Having examined the work accomplished by the Scientific Committee since the eighteenth session of the General Assembly, my delegation would like to congratulate the Scientific Committee for the comprehensive studies which it has prepared on radioactive contamination of our surroundings by nuclear tests, and on radiation carcinogenesis in man, studies which are in the report adopted by the Scientific Committee at its fourteenth session included in document A/5814 of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly. In our opinion these studies constitute a significant contribution and bring our knowledge on the subject up to date. Moreover, my delegation is pleased that the Scientific Committee, in document A/6123, has expressed its intention to present a comprehensive report to the General Assembly in its next session which will provide such estimates as can be determined of the risk arising from different sources of radiation.

Mr. Chairman, Canada has for a long time been particularly concerned with the question of atomic radiation. Our Department of National Health and Welfare operates a national programme of research and of measurement of radioactive fallout which includes the analysis of atmospheric particles and of the concentration of various radioactive elements found in milk, water, wheat, soil, and human ossification. This information is published every month and distributed to all interested individuals and organizations. A report of Canadian data in August, 1965 shows a certain lowering of several indices of radioactivity in comparison with those of the same period in 1964 and in the case of samplings taken from the atmosphere the index is at its lowest point since 1961.

The decrease in the number of nuclear tests in the atmosphere



since the conclusion of the treaty banning tests in the atmosphere, outer space and under water seems to have been an important factor in the lowering of these indices. We should not, however, cease to be vigilant. The indices remain at a high level. The sources of natural radiation are still present. My delegation wishes at this point to renew the appeal which Canada has frequently made that all countries who have not signed the Moscow Treaty should do so and that this treaty should apply to all nuclear tests in whatever location they may be made.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to comment briefly on the draft resolution SPC/L.125 which is before us this morning. I would first of all like to point out that this resolution is strictly concerned with the administrative, scientific and humanitarian aspects of the question. On the whole it is similar to the resolution unanimously adopted by this Committee and by the General Assembly in the Eighteenth Session. Its purpose is to confirm the preoccupation of the General Assembly with the harmful effects caused by atomic radiation whatever their source and to confirm the desirability that the Scientific Committee continue its work. This is the gist of its preambular paragraphs.

In operative paragraphs 2, 4, and 5, the resolution is first intended to praise the efforts and the results of the Scientific Committee as well as the co-operation which it has received from specialized agencies in particular the World Meteorological Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. It then notes the reports of the Committee on its work in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Sessions and its intention to present an additional comprehensive report to the Twenty-First Session of the General Assembly and requests the Scientific Committee to continue its programme of activities. Finally it recommends the parties concerned to continue to co-operate with the Scientific Committee and requests the Secretary-General to continue supplying it with the assistance necessary for carrying out its work and distributing its findings to the public at large.

It is with this purpose in mind, Mr. Chairman, that my delegation has the honour to introduce the draft resolution to this Committee on behalf of its co-sponsors. We continue to be convinced that international co-operation in this domaine will prove indispensable in order to prevent or to remedy the noxious effects of atomic radiation on nutrition, health, genetics, meteorology and all manifestations of life. The co-sponsors hope that this Committee and then the General Assembly will give full attention and their unanimous support to this project as has been the case in the past.

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