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ATOMIC ENERGY

Text of statement to be made in the General Assembly by the Canadian Representative, Mr. Hugh Faulkner, M.P., on the Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (Item 14) on Tuesday, December 5, 1967.

As one of the countries most advanced in the development of nuclear energy, including the production of source materials, Canada has maintained a keen interest in international cooperation in this field, and has endeavoured to play a constructive part in the operations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It is in this light that the Canadian delegation has considered the IAEA's latest report, for the period 1 July, 1966 to 30 June, 1967.

During its brief history the International Atomic Energy Agency has demonstrated its ability to serve the international community by promoting the application of atomic energy to an ever-widening range of peaceful purposes. The Annual Report of the Board of Governors to the General Conference indicates the range of these activities. In the field of technical assistance, the Agency has provided the services of experts to member countries, has established fellowships and has organized international and regional training courses. The Agency's technical assistance programme is financed by a voluntary operational budget for which the target of two million dollars has not been met in recent years. This is unfortunate, particularly when it is considered that even if the target were met, the Agency would not be able to undertake all the programmes requested of it. It will therefore continue to be necessary to establish priorities among requests to ensure that the Agency's limited resources for the technical assistance programme are used to the best advantage.

The number and the capacity of nuclear power plants, either in the planning stage or under construction throughout the world, are growing rapidly. The Agency has responded to this development by promoting international co-operation in reactor research and the exchange of information, and by considering the practical aspects of the problems encountered in the early stages of nuclear power projects.

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No. 95

In co-operation with other international organizations, the International Atomic Energy Agency has promoted research in respect of the application of nuclear energy to food and agriculture, medicine, and radiation biology. It has also drawn up, promulgated and assisted in the application of international codes and standards to protect the health and safety of persons coming into contact with nuclear materials and facilities.

By means of scientific symposia and panels the Agency has continued to promote the exchange of information on nuclear research. Recognizing the importance of the trend toward the complete mechanization of information systems, the Agency is currently considering the possible establishment of an international nuclear information system which would integrate the main national and regional documentation centres.

Another Agency function, which is of paramount importance, is the establishment and maintenance of an international safeguards system to ensure that nuclear materials and facilities intended for peaceful purposes are not diverted to military ends. Canada has given wholehearted support to the Agency's activity in this area and to efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is the policy of the Canadian Government that contracts providing for the export of nuclear materials and equipment cannot be concluded without prior agreement with the Governments of recipient countries to ensure, with appropriate verification and control, that the material or equipment is intended for peaceful purposes only.

It follows, therefore, that Canada welcomed the statement of the Director-General at the Eleventh Session of the General Conference of the IAEA when he indicated that the Agency has an important part to play in the implementation of safeguards related to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and that the Agency would continually review its procedures and practices to ensure their maximum effectiveness and to take account of constantly changing situations. Canada also welcomed the statement of the President of the General Conference concerning the work of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva, and the task which the Agency might be mailed on to perform regarding safeguards arrangements. The President of the General Conference expressed the view that such a task was in keeping with the Agency's objective, and that he was therefore confident that the Conference would wish him to express the Agency's readiness to undertake that task and to make such preparations as might be necessary to enable it to discharge the wider responsibilities which would devolve upon it.

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page 3 No. 95

Before concluding I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Canadian Government, to commend Mr. Eklund, the distinguished Director-General of the Agency, and his staff on the Agency's achievements, some of which I have just described. I should like to reaffirm Canada's determination to co-operate fully with the Agency in its efforts to develop the peaceful uses of atomic energy for the welfare of mankind.

The Canadian delegation will of course by happy to vote in favour of the draft resolution in Document A/L.534 sponsored by the Delegations of Argentina, Bulgaria and Indonesia.