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Statement by Mr. W.B. Nesbitt, Q.C., M.P.,
Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation
in the Special Political Committee,
December 15, 1960

Agenda Item 24 - Report of the
United Nations Scientific Committee
on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

Mr. Chairman:

The Government and people of Canada have long been concerned about the hazards of radiation. This concern has found expression in the development within Canada of an extensive system of radio-active sample analysis. It has also found expression in active Canadian support for international efforts to increase man's knowledge of radiation. During the past five years the focal point for international consideration of this complex question has been the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, on which Canada has had the privilege and responsibility of serving since its establishment.

The annual progress report of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation which has been circulated in Document A/4528 and which is the subject of our present debate gives even the layman an insight into the complexities of the problems to which the scientists on the Committee and their collaborators have had to address themselves. It is clear that co-operation among scientists, both national and international, with the encouragement and assistance of governments and of inter-governmental organizations, is essential to achieve the desired results. It is therefore gratifying to note from the lucid report before us that in pursuit of the Scientific Committee's work increasingly fruitful collaboration is taking place among the Specialized Agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, international non-governmental and national scientific organizations and individual scientists, and that active co-operation has been increasingly forthcoming from

TWENTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
December 17, 1950

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750 Third Avenue
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Statement by Mr. W. H. Beveridge, Chairman
Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation
in the General Assembly
November 14, 1950

United Nations Scientific Committee
on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

Mr. Chairman:

The Government of Canada has long been concerned about the hazards of radiation. Its concern has found expression in the development within Canada of an extensive system of radio-active waste analysis. It has also found expression in an active Canadian support for international efforts to increase our knowledge of radiation. During the past few years the focal point for international co-operation in this complex question has been the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, of which Canada is a member and which is responsible for serving as the international clearinghouse for the exchange of information.

The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation was established in December 1955 and since that time the subject of our present deliberations has been the subject of the work of the Committee and the studies of the world-wide situation on the Committee and their collaboration have had an active character. It is clear and co-operation among scientists from different countries and the encouragement and assistance of governments and of inter-governmental organizations. It is essential to continue to work together in this way to ensure that the knowledge of the scientific community is not fragmented and that the work of the Committee is not hampered by the lack of necessary facilities or information as to the work of the Committee. The International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Governmental and National Scientific Organizations and the Atomic Energy Commission are the organizations that are working together to ensure that the necessary information is available to the scientific community.

governments of member states, whether represented on the Scientific Committee or not.

New lines of enquiry and avenues for sharing knowledge and stimulating the exchange and flow of relevant information are indicated in the current Progress Report. I sense that the general feeling in this Committee is that a wide-ranging debate on this item is neither necessary nor desirable at this time, particularly in the light of the limited time available to us before the Assembly goes into recess. I may, however, be forgiven for taking the Committee's time to make a few remarks on that part of the Scientific Committee's report which results from an initiative taken by my Delegation in co-operation with certain other delegations at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly. I refer to Annex I of Document A/4528 which contains a report prepared in response to Resolution 1376 (XIV) by which the Scientific Committee was requested to consider and study appropriate arrangements for stimulating the flow of information and data relevant to the effects of radiation on man and his environment and to consider more effective arrangements for encouraging genetic, biological and other studies to elucidate the effects of radiation exposure on the health of human populations.

The Canadian Delegation is pleased to note the active consideration which has been given to these matters by the Scientific Committee during the current year and to note the assistance which has been offered by member states in response to the invitation contained in the resolution adopted unanimously last year. No less than thirteen countries, in addition to the IAEA and the WHO, have now offered, in connection with the programme of radio-active sample analysis, facilities and assistance to enable countries which are willing to participate in the programme but which do not have the necessary technical and financial resources at their disposal, to make the full contribution they would desire. Implementation of this international co-operative programme should make it possible to fill in some of the gaps in the information available to the Scientific Committee. As the Committee's report notes, the major flow of material to the Committee has thus far come from relatively few nations and has been more informative with regard to radio-active contamination levels than to biological aspects.

Members of this Committee may be interested to know that subsequent to the Canadian Government's offer, in response to resolution 1376, to receive and analyze samples from other countries, arrangements were made between the governments of Canada, Ghana, Pakistan and Burma for co-operation in this field. Consultations are also taking place with another Asian country with the same end in view. Canadian laboratory facilities are being expanded to take care of this programme, which when fully implemented will involve the analysis of some six hundred samples from these countries during the initial year. It should be noted that the programme of assistance drawn up by Canada in co-operation with these other countries takes account of the decreasing rate of deposition of fall-out consequent upon the continued suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests, the permanent cessation of which under effective international control is so fervently desired. The Canadian programme, therefore, instead of concentrating on the measurement and analysis of fission product radioactivity in air and precipitation, emphasizes the public health implications of radiation, that is, the importance of levels of radiation in diet and in the human body. It is drawn up to meet special national problems and the nutritional habits of the population in the countries concerned.

The Canadian Delegation is pleased to note that the resolution adopted unanimously last year, besides stimulating more active co-operation of governments, also served to stimulate consideration of proposals designed to improve the channel of communication between UNSCEAR and individual researchers, associations and institutes. Several worthwhile suggestions have been made in this connection. In accordance with the letter sent out by the Secretary of the Scientific Committee on April 7, 1960, the Canadian authorities have taken special measures to give widest possible distribution to the statement addressed to scientists outlining specific areas in which additional research and data are required.

The Canadian Government fully endorses the views of the Scientific Committee on the desirability of encouraging research designed to seek solutions to the genetic and biological problems of the effects of ionizing radiation and on the desirability of full co-operation and sharing of knowledge among the international scientific community in order to make the best use of the scientific

Members of this committee are requested to know that regarding
to the Canadian Commission of Inquiry, it is necessary to establish the
and analyze the various aspects of the situation that exists between the
Government of Canada, the United States and other countries in the field.
Committee members are also requested to know that the Canadian Commission
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The Canadian Commission of Inquiry is requested to know that the resolution
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and the United States. It is necessary to know that the Canadian
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additional research and data is being requested to know that the
The Canadian Government will conduct the work of the Canadian
Committee of the Canadian Commission of Inquiry, it is necessary to know that
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and on the development of the Canadian Commission of Inquiry, it is necessary to know that
international scientific cooperation and the field of the Canadian Commission of Inquiry.

and material resources available. The continued co-operation of governments and the various inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations which have contributed to the work of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, as reflected in its report, gives us grounds for expressing our confidence in its ability to discharge the responsibilities laid on it by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, with these comments I should like to present for the Committee's consideration the draft resolution which has been circulated in the name of my Delegation (in Document). Since the Committee appears to be making satisfactory progress in the task which has been defined for it, and since it will now be embarking on preparation of its next comprehensive report, it should be necessary at this stage only to take note of its present report and proposed programme. This draft resolution is therefore designed simply to express appreciation where appreciation is due and to provide the necessary authorization for the Scientific Committee to proceed without interruption with its worthwhile work in the coming year.

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in the name of the Commission. It is a report on the subject
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