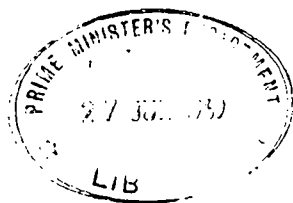


FOR PRESS



P. M. No. 48, 1969

NUCLEAR POWER

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

The Federal Government has invited New South Wales to collaborate in a study of the feasibility of the establishment of a Commonwealth-owned and controlled 500 megawatt nuclear power station. It is also inviting all State Governments to work with the Commonwealth on a National Consultative Committee on Nuclear Energy.

Announcing this today, the Prime Minister (Mr Gorton) said that the Commonwealth would prefer the station, which would be a pilot project for Australia, to be sited in the Australian Capital Territory or the Commonwealth Territory at Jervis Bay, although this would be subject to technical considerations. Mr Gorton emphasised that at this stage the Commonwealth is only proposing a feasibility study and had not yet made a decision to build a reactor.

If the project were to go ahead, all States would be invited to send teams of officers to gain experience in pre-construction procedures, construction, and commissioning of the station. Power surplus to the needs of the Commonwealth Territories would be sold to New South Wales on agreed terms.

Mr Gorton said that the proposal for a National Consultative Committee on Nuclear Energy followed recent discussions between the Minister for National Development (Mr Fairbairn) and State Ministers responsible for power and that it would consider such matters as :-

- . The use of indigenous fuel in Australian reactors
- . Licensing reactors
- . International obligations on safeguards on nuclear materials
- . Disposal of radio-active waste
- . Liability for injury to civilians in nuclear accidents

"The Government has taken the initiative to establish such a joint Commonwealth, State consultative organisation because we feel that this is the time to lay the foundations for a sound administrative and legal framework for the introduction of nuclear energy in the power generation field," Mr Gorton said. "Other countries have found that the building of such a framework takes years and a late start can hamper the establishment of a nuclear industry."

---

CANBERRA, 12 June 1969