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NEWS DIGEST

Call to step-up British nuclear accident plans

PLANS to cope with a nuclear emergency in Britain are among the "worst in the world," according to a new study released by 50 local authorities today.

Britain lags far behind other countries, said the report.

The Government was urged to launch a major planning shake-up to deal with a nuclear accident after privatisation of the electricity industry.

Councillor Ian Leitch, chairman of the National Steering Committee of Nuclear-Free Local Authorities, challenged the Government to start an urgent and radical revision of emergency plans for nuclear reactor accidents — and for the Central Electricity Board and its successor "National Power" to meet the costs.

"Following the Chernobyl accident, central Government had its chance to revise emergency planning.

"But the signs are that nothing will happen," he said.

A committee member, Councillor Mary Cane said: "The report demonstrates that British plans are amongst the worst in the world.

"As we have seen in the United States, more stringent safety measures present problems for investors.

"The Government has made its choice — profits before safety."

The report, *Emergency Planning and Nuclear Facilities in the United Kingdom*, was prepared by Earth Resources Research Ltd.

Mr Malcolm Bruce, MP, the Social and Liberal Democrat spokesman on energy, said the report showed current arrangements were hopelessly inadequate and improvements could and should be made.

MoD admits radiation at dockyards

Guardian April 20th '90

Paul Brown, Environment Correspondent

MORE than 800 workers in the Royal Dockyards have received more than the maximum recommended lifetime dose of radiation while working on nuclear submarines, the Ministry of Defence revealed yesterday.

The highest dose was 775 millisieverts (mSv), more than seven times the maximum recommended dose of 100 mSv.

John McFall, Labour MP for Dumbarton, asked a series of parliamentary questions after the publication of a report from Southampton University linking radiation doses received by

workers at Sellafield to cases of leukaemia in their children.

The Gardner report, as it was called, said workers who received more than 10 mSv in the six months before conception or more than 100 mSv in a lifetime stood a greater than 1 in 300 chance of their children contracting leukaemia.

Yesterday's figures revealed that computerised records kept since 1979 showed that 574 dockyard workers had received doses above 100 mSv and an additional 283 doses above 200 mSv.

More than 50 per cent of the 6,570-strong workforce had received more than 10 mSv.

Breakdowns for individual years showed that hundreds of

workers had received high doses in a relatively short time. In 1984 alone, nearly 200 workers received more than 20 mSv — enough to fall within the Gardner risk scale.

Dockyard workers who are worried about the leukaemia risk to their children are currently being offered counselling.

John Large, a consultant to Mr McFall, said: "These figures are much higher than expected and compare very badly with similar workers in the civilian sector."

"One of the interesting omissions in the figures is that they do not include data collected before computerisation in 1979. I have just been doing a study of

the United States dock workers and their exposure peaked in the 1960s and 1970s. If our figures followed the same pattern then the whole picture is far worse than even this information shows."

He said that if the Gardner report was correct, civilian workers servicing nuclear submarines were being exposed to unacceptable health risks.

It was ironic that, had the dockyard not been privatised, these figures would never have been released.

"The Ministry of Defence must now do what the Americans have done and get workers exposure down about fivefold. Their record is very poor," Mr Large said.