

October 18, 1957
Letter, South African Charge d'Affaires in Vienna,
'Production of Heavy Water in South Africa'

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Summary:

The South African Charge d'Affaires in Vienna requests information on reported preparations to produce heavy water in South Africa.

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DEPT. OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
 LEGATION OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
 HOTEL BRISTOL, VIENNA

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October, 1957

THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Pretoria

Production of Heavy Water in South Africa

You will have noted that in the State Information Digest of South African Affairs, Volume 4, No. 19, dated 11th October, the following claim is given front page publicity:

"At Sasol, the Union's giant oil-from-coal plant, a process has been developed which could put the country in a position to produce atomic energy cheaper than anywhere else in the world. It is expected that this process will have world-wide repercussions."

Considerable interest has been expressed, particularly on the part of the Scandinavians, in the South African project for the production of Heavy Water, in the course of the present I.A.E.A. General Conference.

I should accordingly be glad to learn whether the claim advanced by the State Information Office is, in fact, well founded. My latest information on the matter, which is contained in the second Progress Report on the formulation of an Atomic Energy Research Programme, compiled by Dr. Roux, does not indicate that investigations of the production of Heavy Water, using Sasol Hydrogen, have yet reached the conclusion that has been drawn by the State Information Office.

I should be grateful if you would consult with the Department of Mines and let me know, for my own information, what the position is.

File

D. S. Ste
Chargé d'Affaires