AMF Canada Limited and CGE are AECL's chief contractors for fuel element fabrication, and other work related to Canada's nuclear power program is carried out in collaboration with Shawinigan Engineering, Orenda Engines Division of Hawker Siddley Canada Limited, Canadian Westinghouse Company Limited, Montreal Locomotive Works Limited and Montreal Engineering Company Limited. In general, AECL's policy is to stimulate the interest of private industry in the development of nuclear power so that these firms can take over construction of power plants when the time arrives, leaving AECL free for fundamental studies and developing new reactor concepts. AECL also lends general support to the nuclear and related studies of Canadian universities and lets contracts to the universities on specific problems.

In the international field, close ties are kept with the United States Atomic Energy Commission and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, both of which have representatives permanently at Chalk River. There is an agreement with the United States for co-operative work on heavy-water-moderated reactors; it provides for the free exchange of all technical data in this field and a commitment by the USAEC to spend $5,000,000 in the United States on research and development related to reactors of Canadian design. Collaboration has also been established with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and Euratom, as well as with Australia, Japan, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, West Germany and, less formally, with Denmark, France, India and Norway. In India, a major experimental reactor—the Canada-India Reactor—similar to NRX at Chalk River was constructed and was formally inaugurated in January 1961.

Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories.—At this research and development establishment basic and applied research is carried on by about 200 professional scientists and engineers supported by 300 technicians devoted to research in nuclear physics, nuclear chemistry, radiobiology, reactor physics, radiation chemistry, environmental radioactivity, physics of solids and liquids, and other subjects, using as their primary facilities the two major reactors, NRX and NRU, the auxiliary reactors, ZEEP, PTR and ZED-2, the tandem Van de Graaff accelerator and analytical facilities such as a precision beta-ray spectrometer, mass spectrometers, electron microscopes, multi-channel pulse analysers, automatic recorders, and analogue and digital electronic computers.

Basic research is carried on in many fields, especially that of the structure of atomic nuclei, and of the interactions of neutrons, not only with individual nuclei but also with liquids and crystalline solids, particularly those involving energy transfer. For nuclear structure studies, the tandem Van de Graaff has made pioneer work possible by providing multiply-charged ions of precisely known energy and direction. It has proved possible to produce nuclei in specific energy states by different routes and to identify and analyse the states, thereby deducing the spin and other characteristics and discovering, for example, a correlated series of rotational states in the nucleus neon-20. Not only is this important to a basic understanding of nuclear structure, but it also finds application in unravelling the complex of nuclear reactions responsible for the genesis of nuclei in the interior of stars.

Studies of neutron interactions with matter are made possible by the intense beams of neutrons available from the NRU reactor. By monitoring the neutrons in cosmic radiation it has been possible to find correlations with the occurrence of solar flares and contribute to the recent advances of knowledge of phenomena in interplanetary space. Isotope techniques have brought about revisions in the basic theory of chemical reactions induced by radiation. This basic research may find a useful early application in the technology of using an organic liquid as coolant in nuclear power reactors.

Since extracted plutonium is no longer required, the fuel in the NRX reactor has been changed from natural uranium metal to a combination of natural uranium oxide and a uranium-235 aluminum alloy. The available neutron flux has been increased thereby while keeping the power at 42 megawatts. It is planned to revise the fuelling of NRU similarly at the end of 1963.