Scientists concerned about ozone holes

At Saskatoon, on March 19, 1987, AES launched a research balloon into the upper atmosphere's ozone layer. The helium-filled balloon was almost as high (28m) as a 10-storey building and it carried measuring instruments that radioed back data as it rose ever upward. It reached a height of 35 km where, at a command from the ground, it burst, and the instruments parachuted back to earth.

Scientists are very concerned to explain the appearance of "holes" in the ozone layer which appear for two months every year above both the Arctic and the Antarctic. The "hole" above the Arctic is much smaller. Whether these "holes" are caused by natural weather conditions above the poles or by pollution collecting over the poles is what such balloon launches as the Saskatoon launch of March 19 is trying to determine.

Canada is a world leader in ozone research and the Saskatoon launch will contribute significantly to ozone analysis.

J.G.

AES scientists carry out the pre-dawn launch of the Stratoprobe balloon in Saskatoon.