

Critical Heat Flux Overview

Mysterious World of CHF

**Seminar for the National Centre for Nuclear
Research**

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Acknowledgement

Some illustrations used in this presentation have been taken from textbooks and papers of the following authors:

- P.B. Whalley,
- L.S. Tong & Joel Weisman & Pei
- D.C. Groeneveld
- S.S. Doerffer and
- by courtesy of the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.
(AECL)

Outline

- Introduction
 - Pool Boiling Process and its Crisis
 - Two-phase Flow Regimes & Flow Boiling Crisis in Tubes
- Analytical & Empirical Approaches to CHF in Tubes
- CHF Experiments & Prediction Methods for CANDU Fuel Channels and LWR Fuel Assemblies
- Considerations on CHF in Annuli as Applied to Certain CANDU Fuel Channel Distortions
- CHF Enhancement
- CHF Fluid-to-Fluid Modelling
- Final Remarks



What's CHF?

CHF = Critical Heat Flux

CHF = **Phenomenon** → may occur in boiling systems (nuclear reactors with H₂O or D₂O coolants)

- may lead to serious damage of the system
- may drastically deteriorate heat transfer
- limits nuclear reactor operating power
- sets operating margins for nuclear reactors

CHF is of paramount importance to safety of CANDUs and LWRs

CHF expresses also a **Value** of the heat flux at which **CHF Phenomenon** occurs

Other terms: boiling crisis, departure from nucleate boiling (DNB), burnout, dryout



Pool Boiling Process & Its Crisis

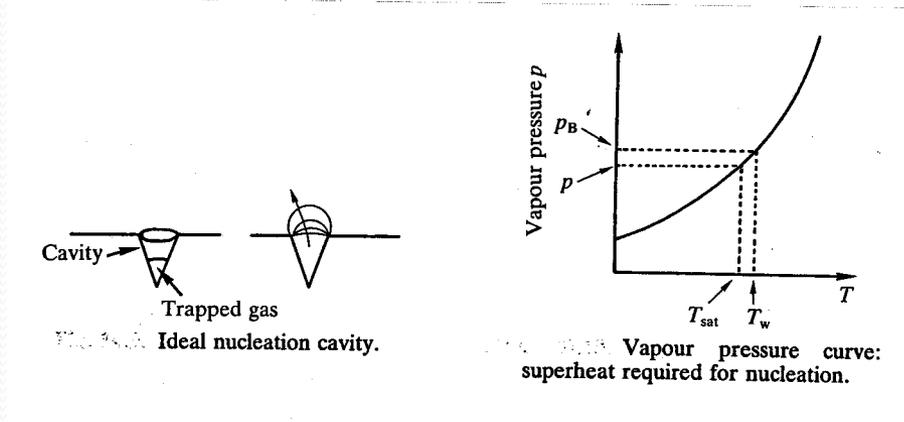
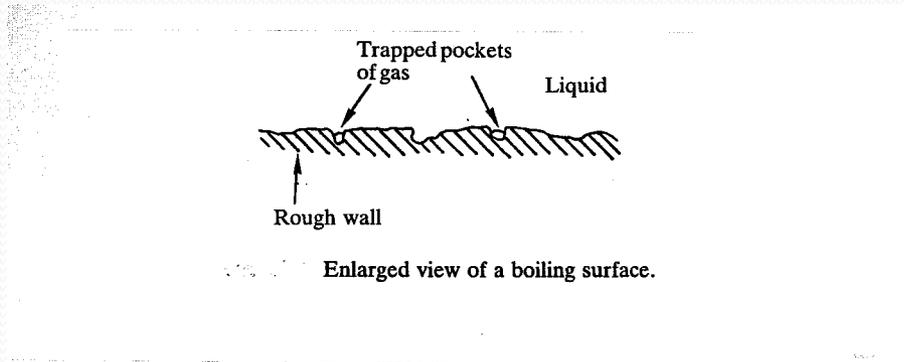
Boiling Process - Nucleation

Heterogeneous (solid-liquid):

Needed: pits, cracks, crevices & trapped gas

Homogeneous (liquid)

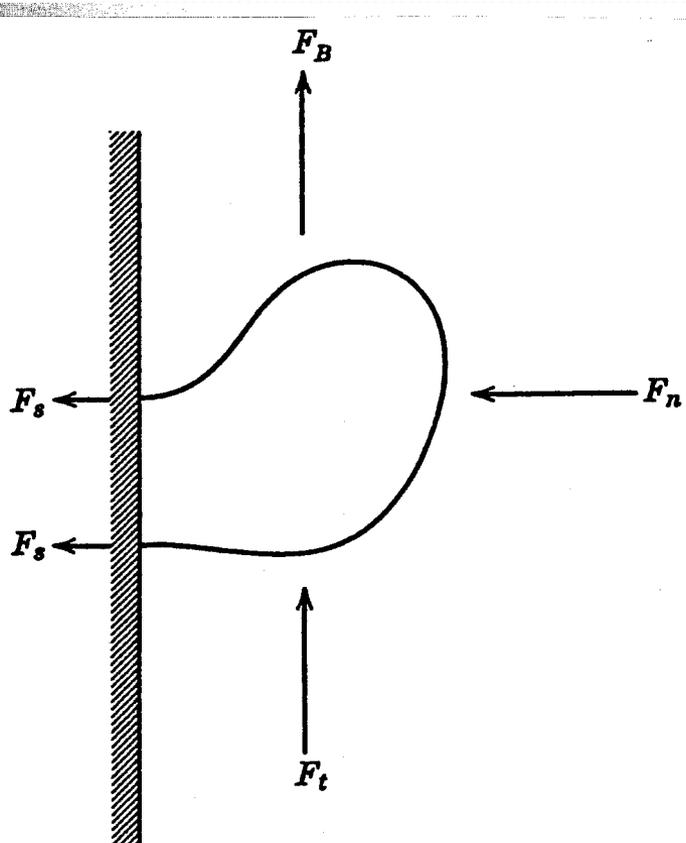
No nucleation sites -
explosive growth rate



$$p_B = p + \frac{2\sigma}{R_B} \quad \Delta T_{Sat} = T_w - T_{Sat} > const \quad \Delta T_{Sat} = 5K \text{ (For water at 1 bar)}$$

Bubble Departure from the Site

Departure bubble radius (r_b) is a result of the acting forces:



Buoyancy force :
$$F_B = \frac{C_B (r_b)^3 (\rho_L - \rho_G) g}{g_c}$$

Surface tension force :
$$F_S = C_s r_b \sigma$$

Tangential inertia force :
$$F_t = \frac{C_t (r_b)^2 \rho_L (u_{rel})^2}{g_c}$$

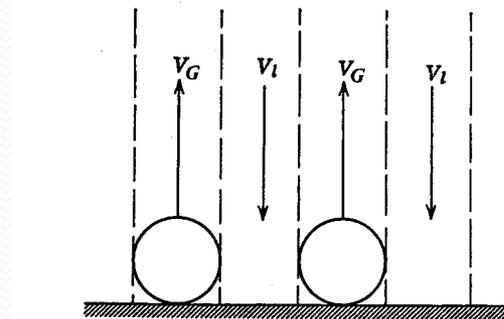
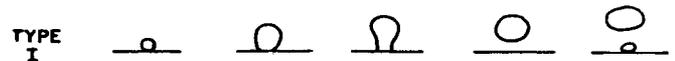
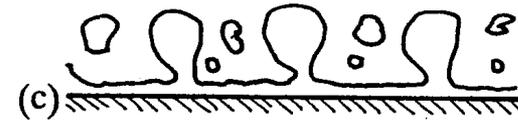
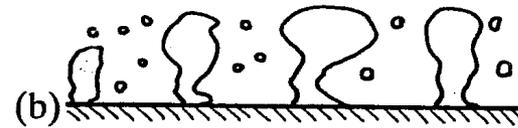
Normal inertia force :
$$F_n = \frac{C_n (r_b)^2 \rho_L (v_{rel})^2}{g_c}$$

$$r_b \rightarrow \sum F_k > F_S \quad (k = B, i, n)$$

r_b depends on flow conditions

Bubble Formations

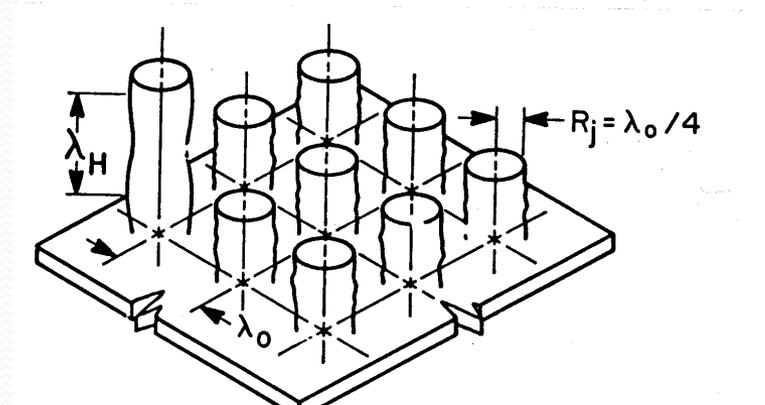
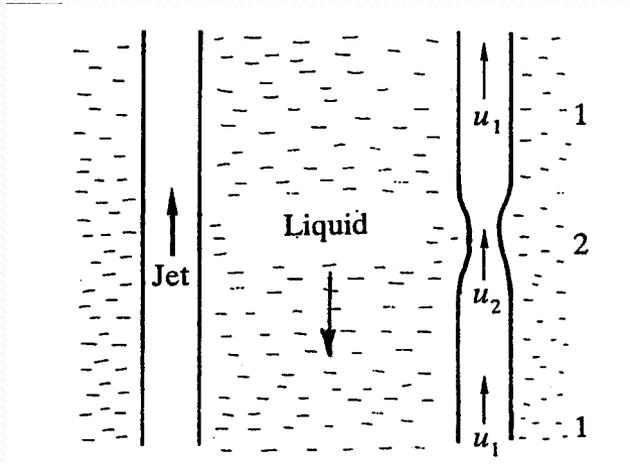
- (a) Isolated bubble region
- (b) Slugs & columns region
(vapour jets)
- (c) Film boiling region



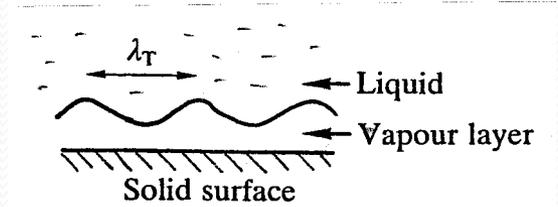
Idealized vapour jets

Boiling Crisis – Pool Boiling

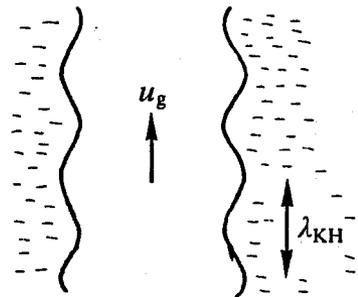
Kelvin-Helmholtz instability



Taylor instability



Criterion for stable film boiling



$$\lambda_{KH} = f(\sigma, \rho_l, \rho_g, g)$$

Boiling crisis:

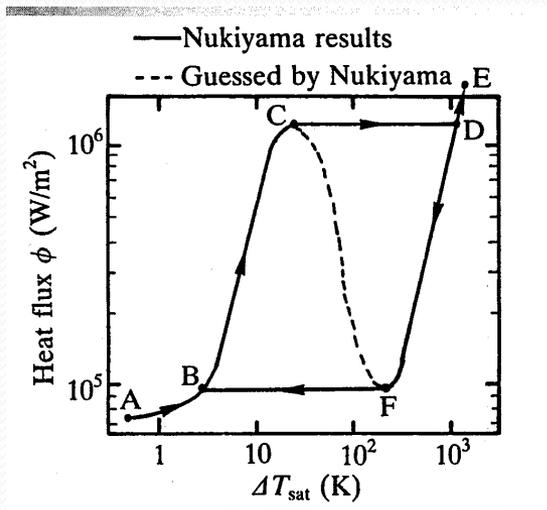
$$\lambda_{KH} = \frac{\lambda_T}{\sqrt{2}}$$

$$u_2 > u_1 \rightarrow p_2 < p_1$$

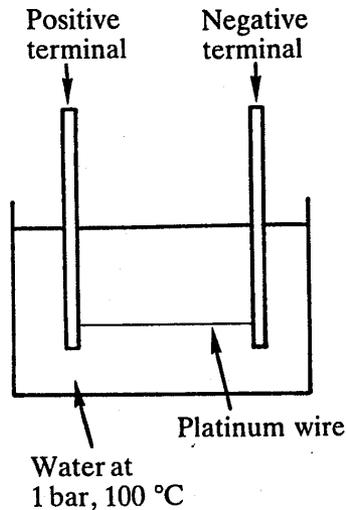
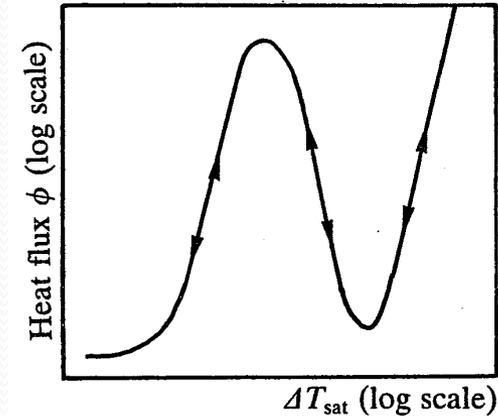
Leads to jet breakup

Boiling Curve – Nukiyama (1934)

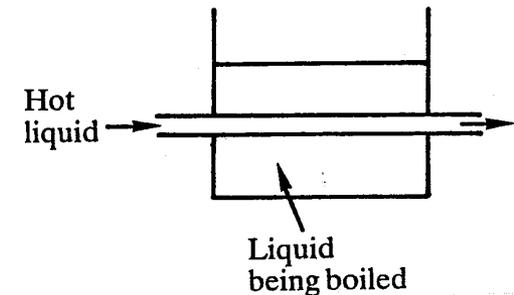
Heat-flux controlled surface
(nuclear/electric heating)



Temperature-controlled surface



- AB - SP convection
- BC - Nucleate boiling
- CD - boiling crisis
- CF - Transition boiling
- FDE - Stable film boiling

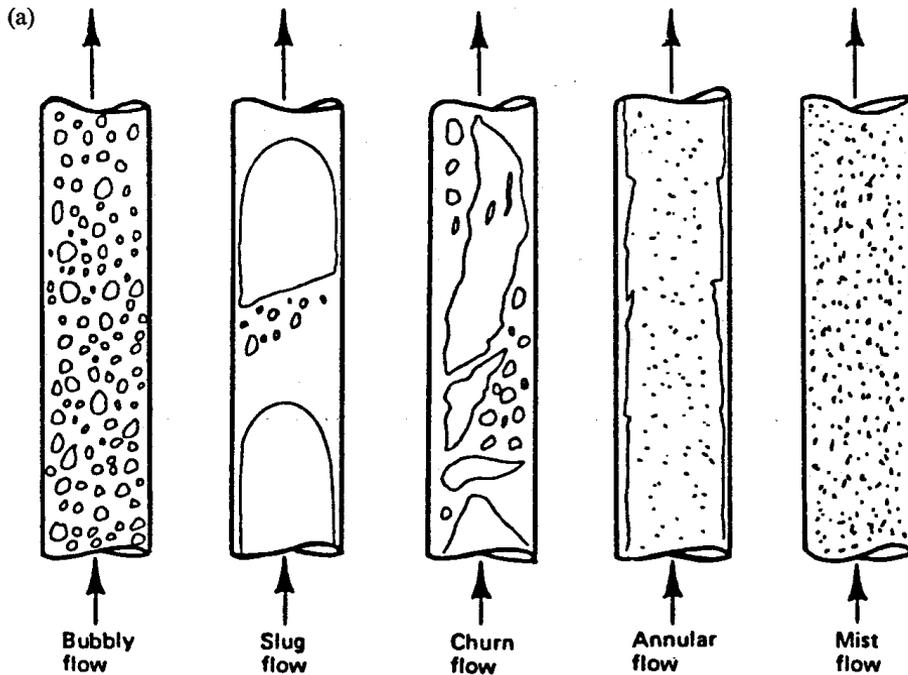




Two-phase Flow Regimes & Flow Boiling Crisis

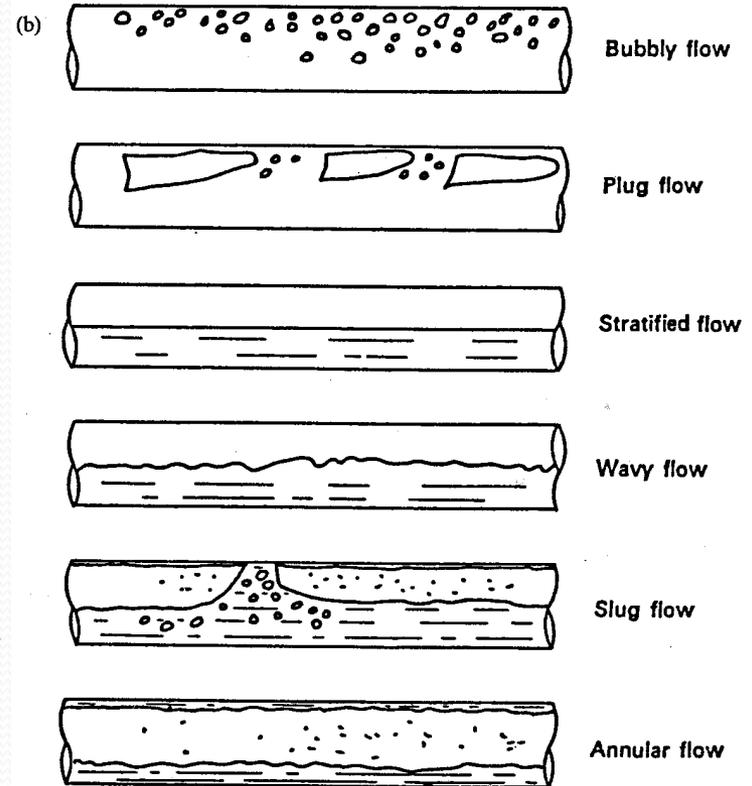
Two-phase Adiabatic Flow Regimes in Simplest Geometry - TUBE

Vertical upflow

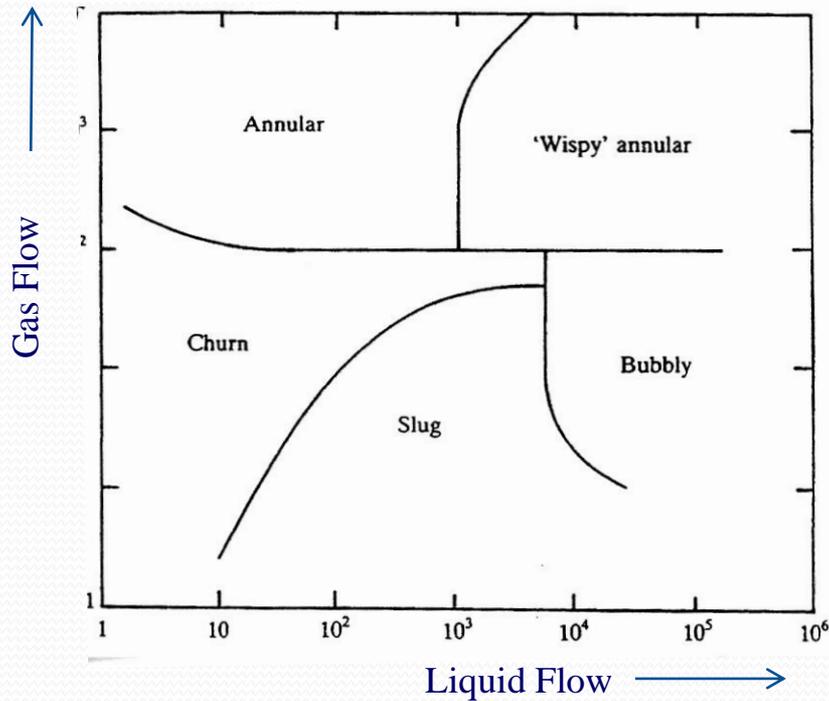


Gas flow increases

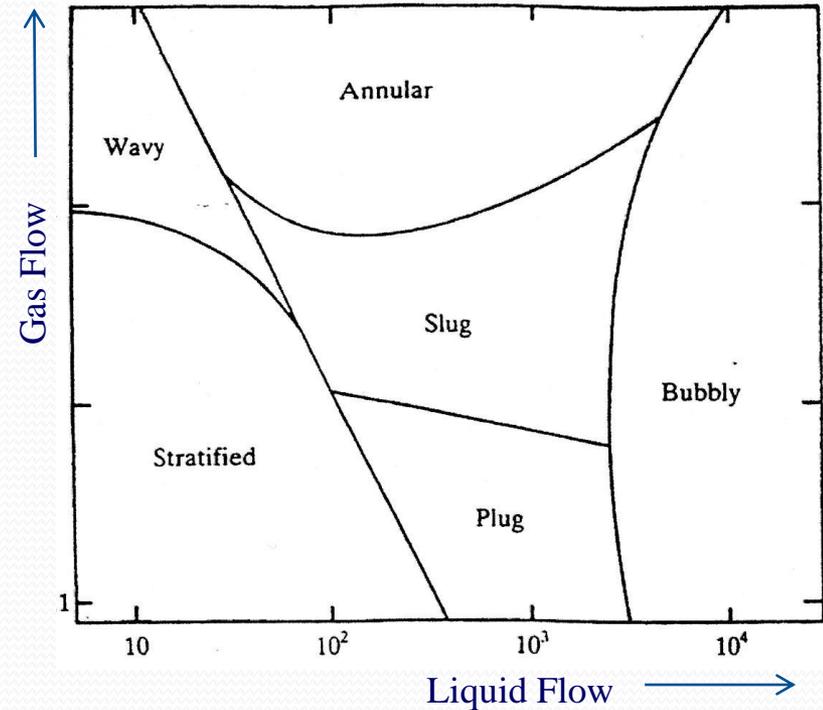
Horizontal flow



Two-phase Flow Patterns' Maps



Vertical Tube with Upflow



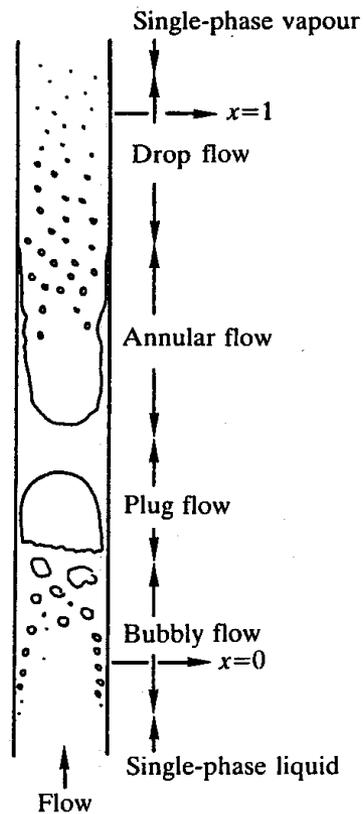
Horizontal Tube

* Such flow patterns maps are also obtained for fuel assemblies and used in TH computer codes to calculate heat transfer & pressure drop in a reactor core

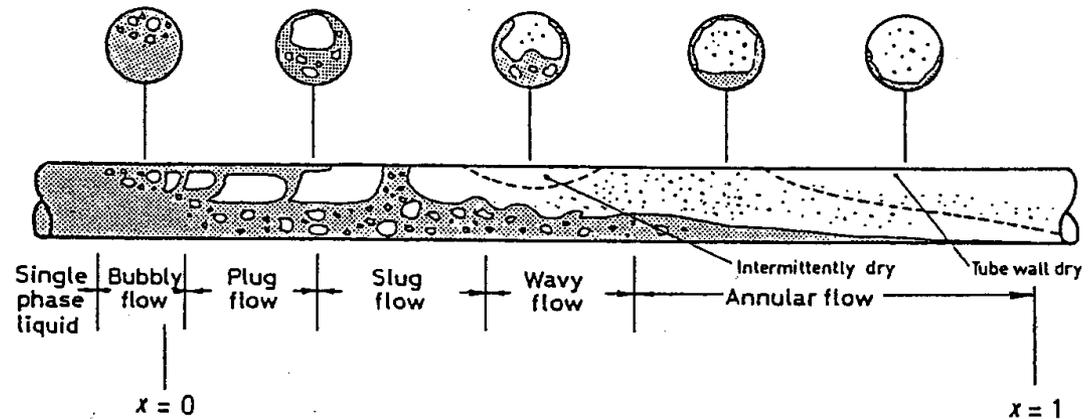
Diabatic (evaporating) Flow Regimes

Vertical upflow

Horizontal flow



Flow patterns in an evaporating flow.

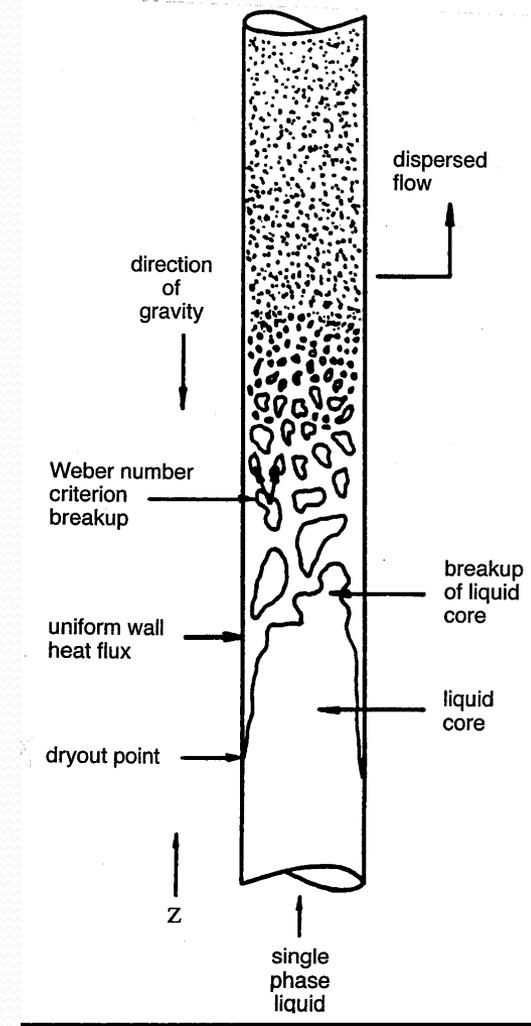
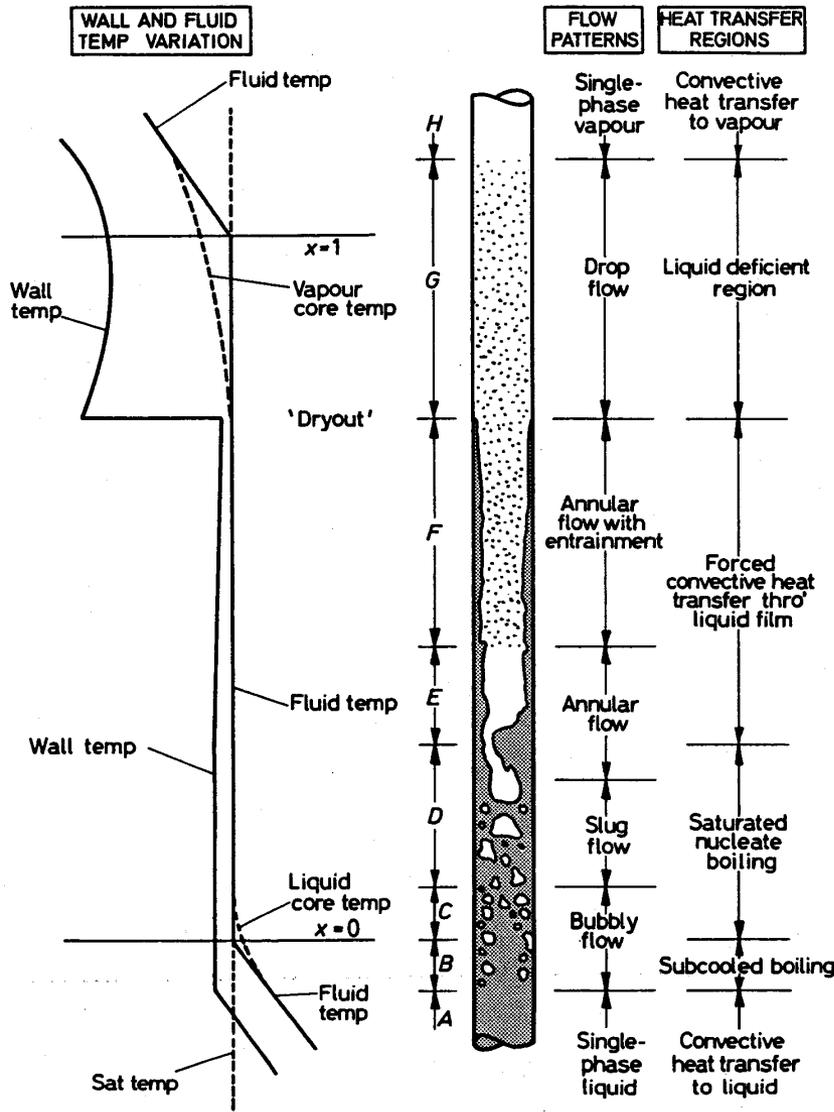


Heat generated in the wall or transferred through the wall is delivered to the coolant

Boiling Crisis – Flow Boiling

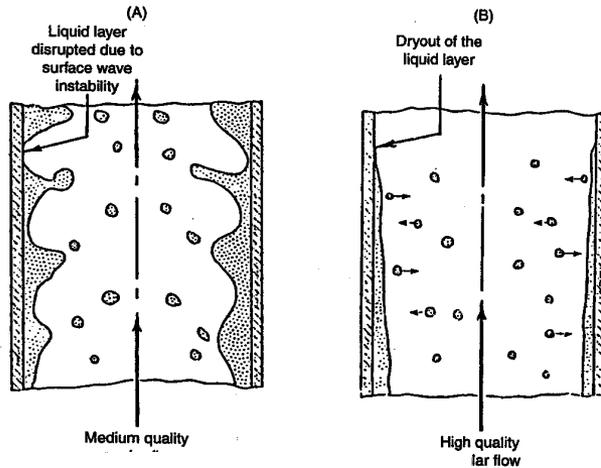
Dryout (mostly in CANDU)

DNB (mostly in PWR)

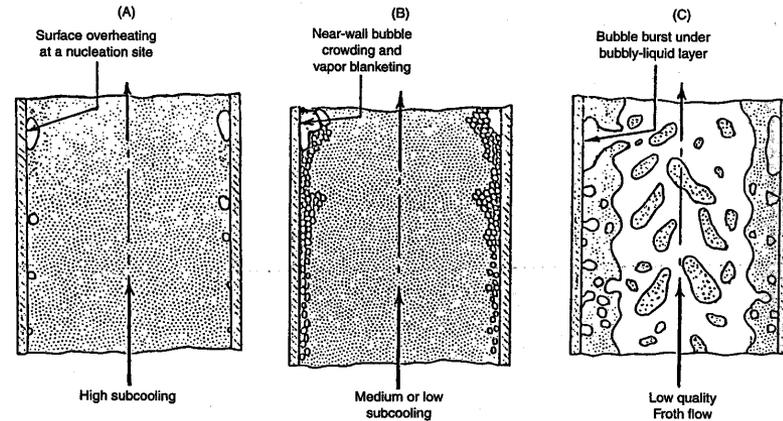


Boiling Crisis Mechanisms – Flow Boiling

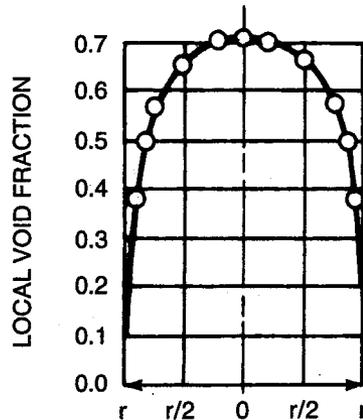
Dryout



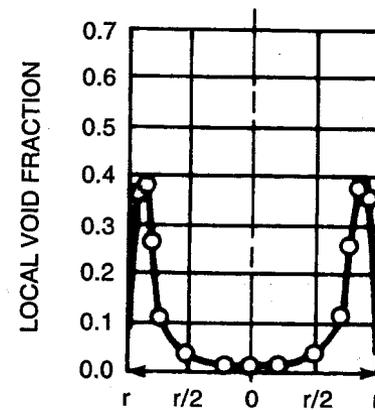
DNB



(b) ANNULAR FLOW



(a) SUBCOOLED & BUBBLY FLOW





Analytical Approach to CHF

Extreme cases of CHF in Tubes

Dryout Analytical Model

(One extreme CHF mechanism)

Based on mass balances for three phases (Whalley, 1977)

$$\frac{dG_{lf}}{dz} = \frac{4}{d} \left(D - E - \frac{q''}{\lambda} \right)$$

G_{lf} – liquid film mass flux

D – droplet deposition flux

$$D = f(C, K)$$

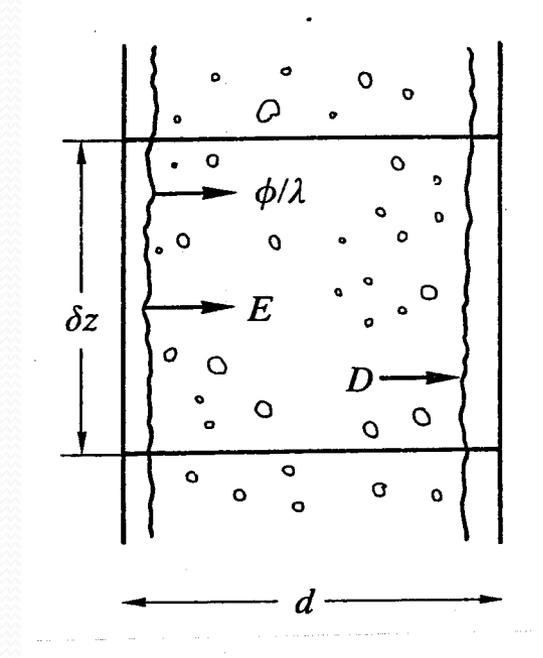
E – droplet entrainment flux

$$E = f\left(\frac{\tau\delta}{\sigma}\right)$$

q''/λ - evaporation flux

C – droplet concentration

K – mass transfer coefficient



$$q'' = \text{CHF} \quad \text{when} \quad G_{lf} \rightarrow 0$$

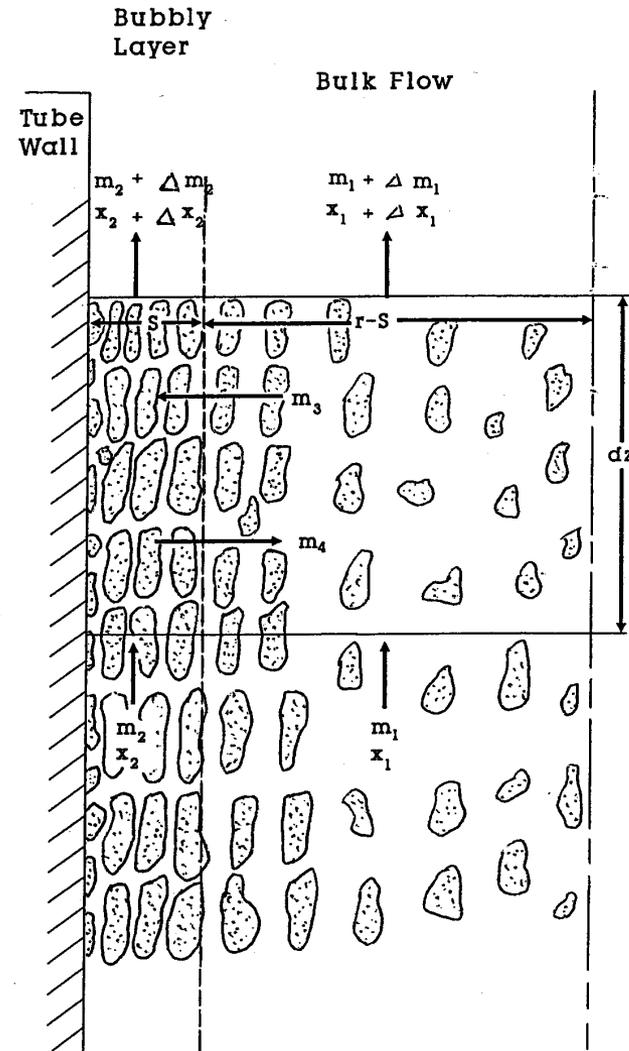
DNB Analytical Model

Based on sublayer dryout and bubble coalescence theories
(Weisman & Pei, 1983)

(Another extreme CHF mechanism)

Assumptions:

- Bubbly layer builds up near-wall region preventing turbulent eddies from radial phase exchange
- CHF occurs when bubble layer reaches its max. thickness ($\alpha > 0.82$)



Verification of Analytical Methods

- Presented old CHF analytical models cover only two extremes of CHF mechanism spectrum successfully predicting CHF.
- The current analytical effort: please note the progress made by **Prof. Michael Podowski** and his coworkers at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy USA; still a limited range of conditions covered by their analytical/numerical models.
- To cover a wide range of conditions – **empirical CHF prediction methods are needed!**

Empirical Approach to CHF

Verification of the correctness of CHF models and to develop CHF prediction methods over a wide range of conditions
RELIABLE experimental data are needed!

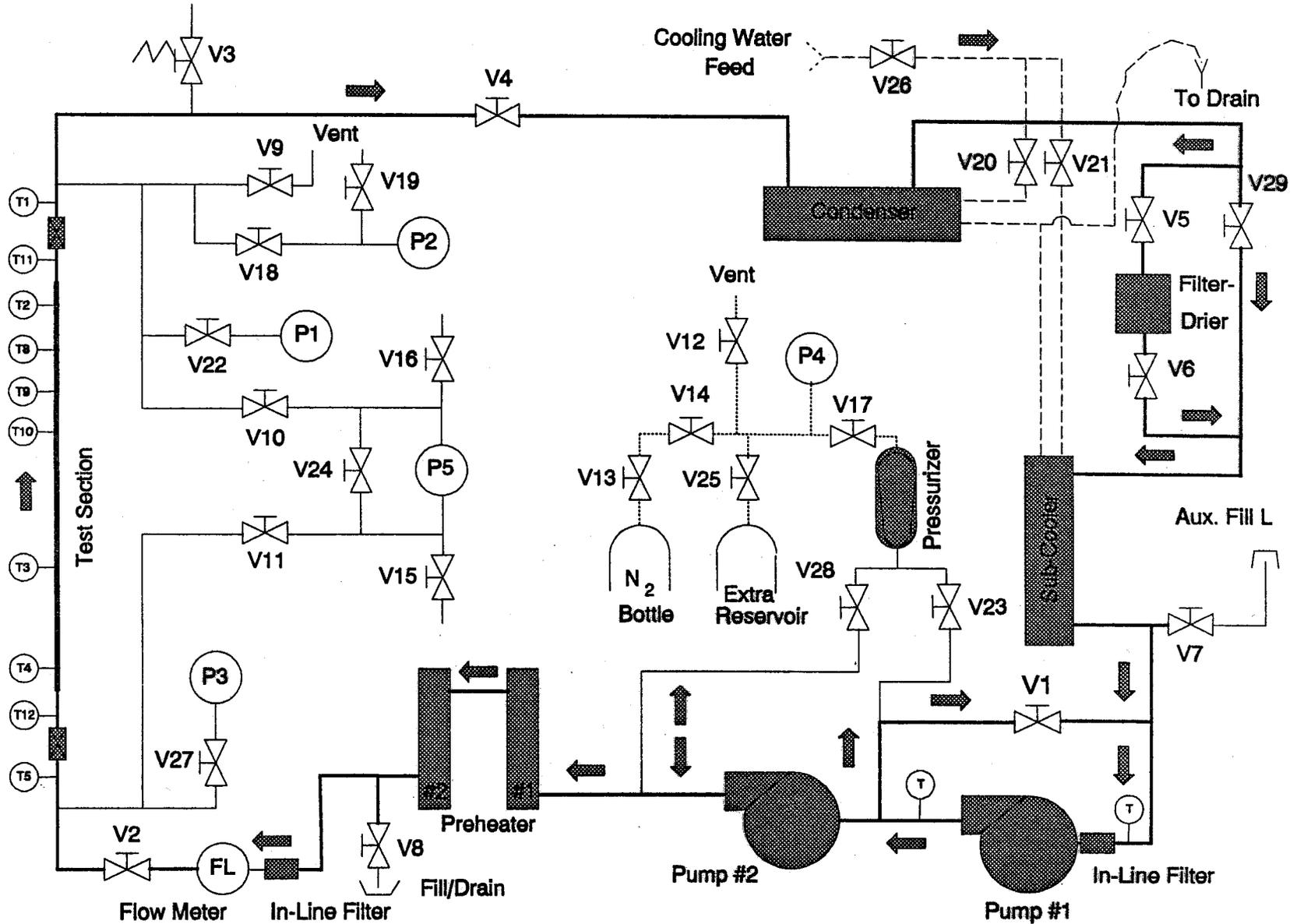
Empirical Approach

As inferred from theoretical considerations CHF depends on:

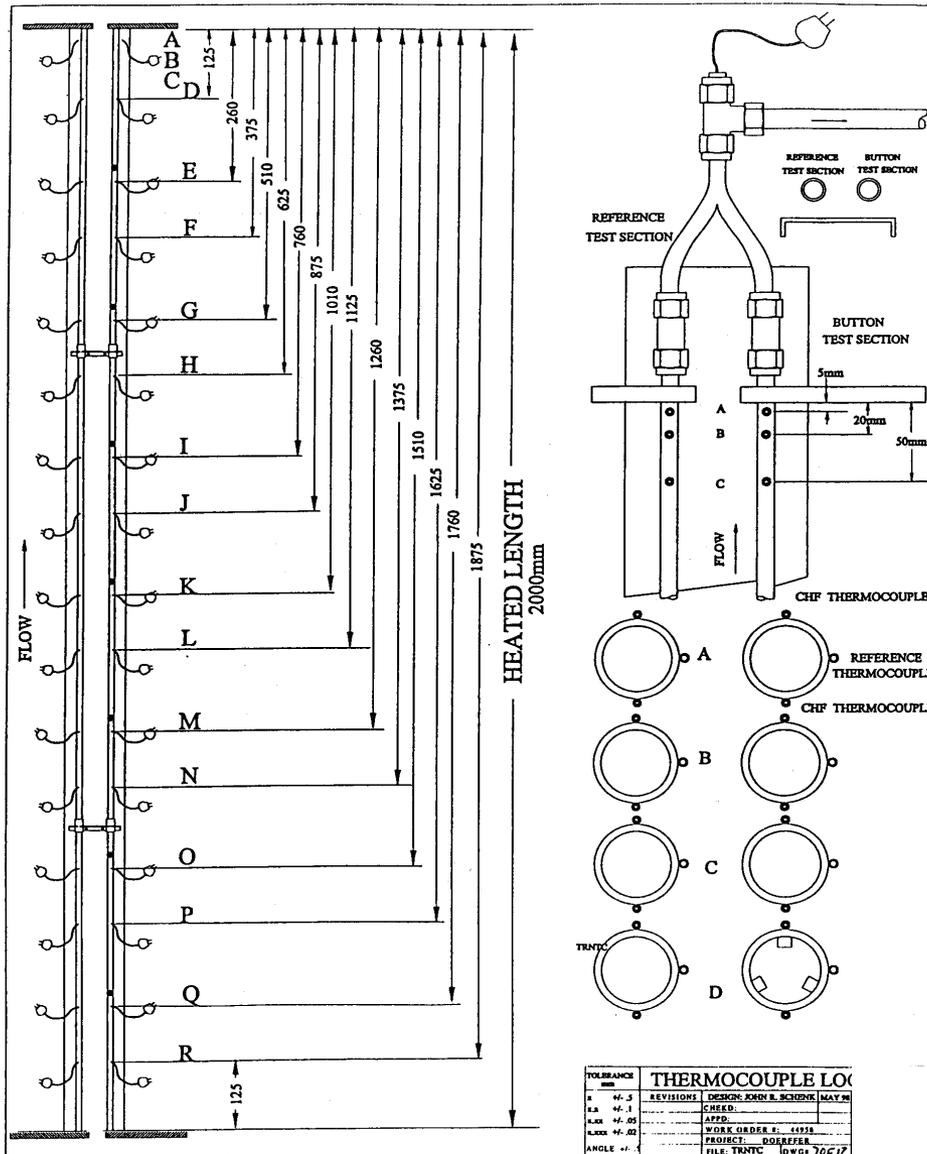
- **Flow parameters** (pressure, P , mass flux, G , local quality, x , inlet cond.),
- **Geometry** (cross section, D_e , heated length, L , appendages, grids),
- **Fluid properties** (latent heat, density, enthalpy, surface tension), and
- **Other** (flow orientation, heat-flux distribution, surface properties, time, etc.)

These parameters define CHF value & also CHF experiment!

CHF Experimental Facility



Tubular Test Sections

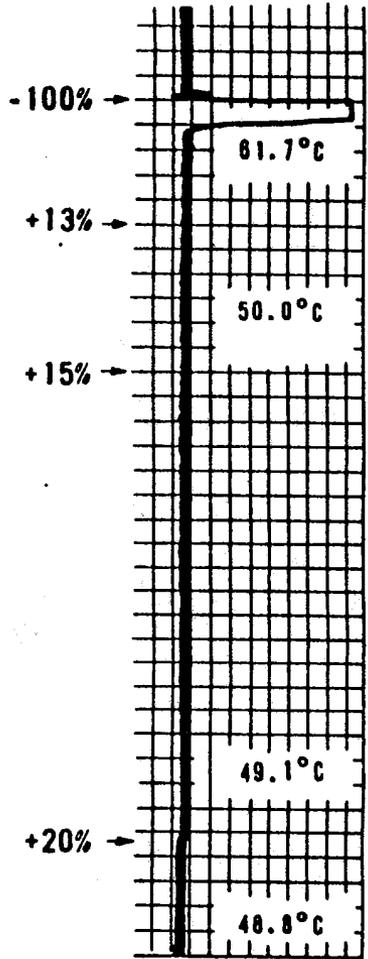


The CHF experiments in tubular geometry are relatively the simplest and cheapest!

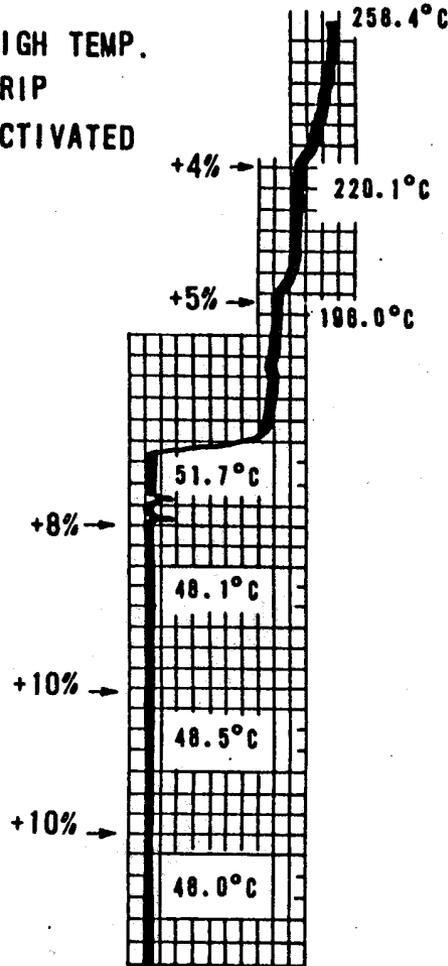
That is why such setups have been extensively used in world-wide CHF research.

Wall Temperature Trends at CHF

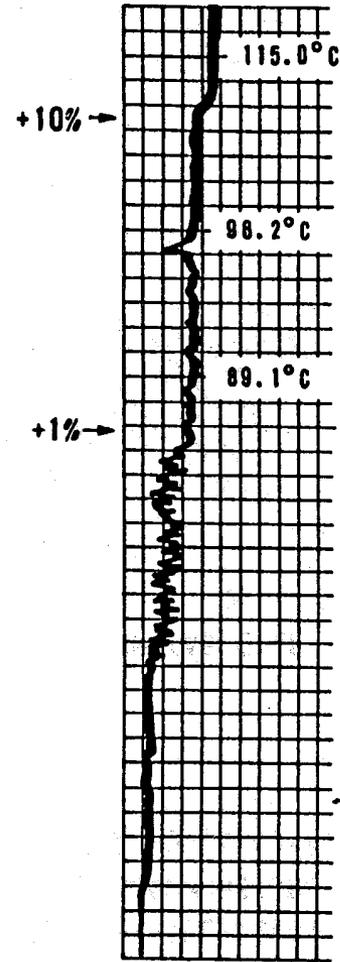
SCALE $\approx 20^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{DIV}$



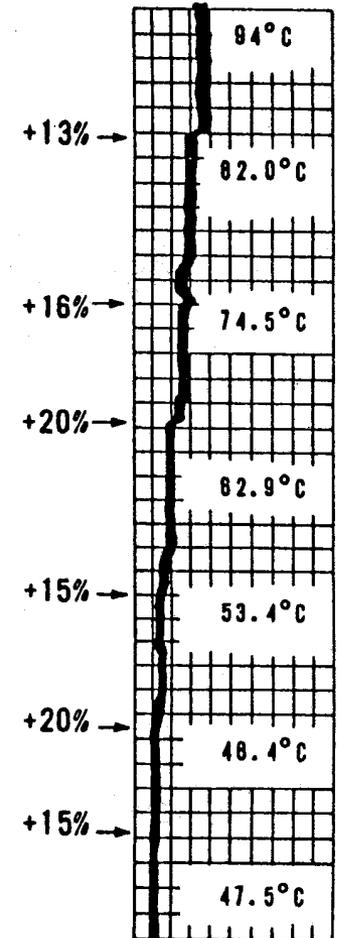
(a) FAST DRYOUT (DNB)



(b) STABLE DRYOUT



(c) UNSTABLE DRYOUT



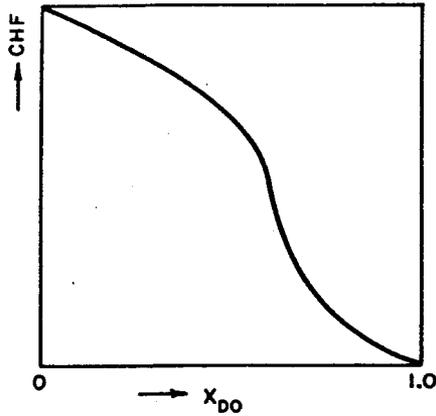
(d) SLOW DRYOUT

(Courtesy of AECL)

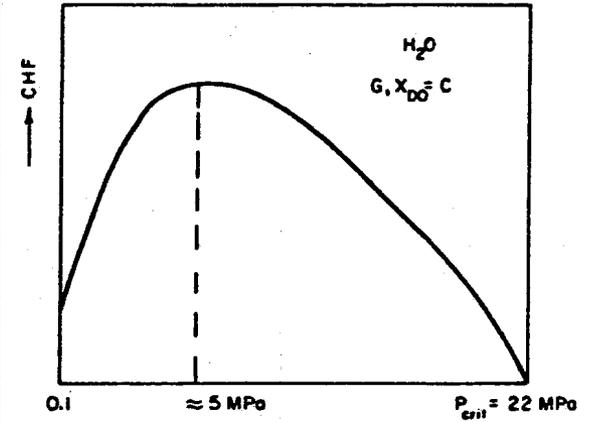


CHF Parametric Trends in Tubes

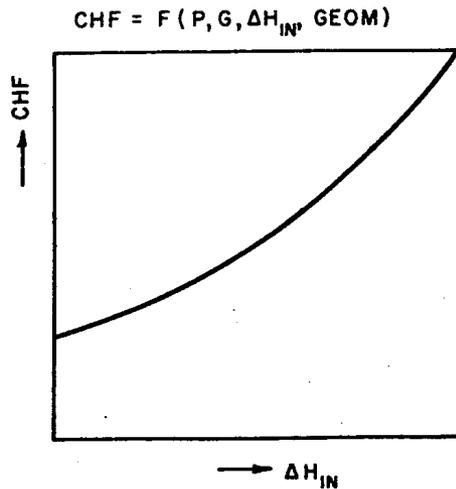
CHF Parametric Trends



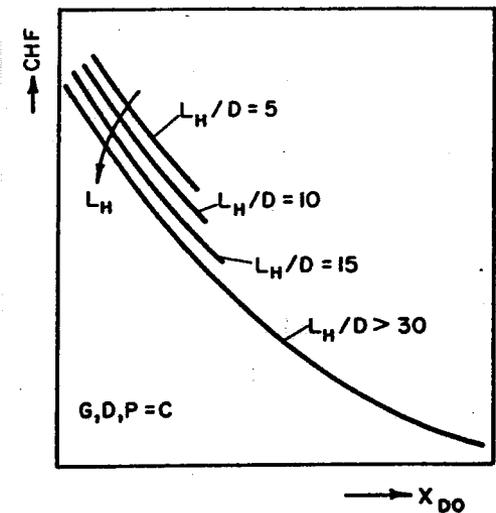
Effect of dryout quality



Effect of pressure



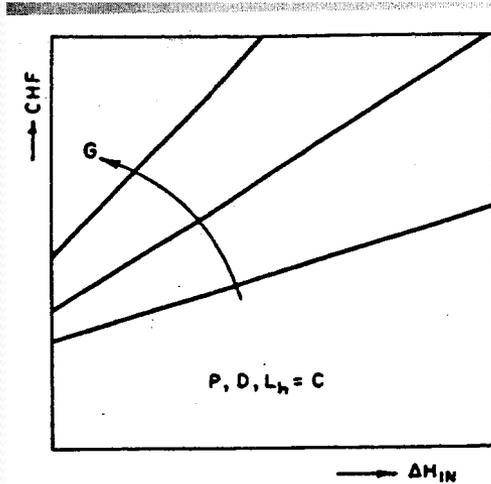
Effect of inlet subcooling



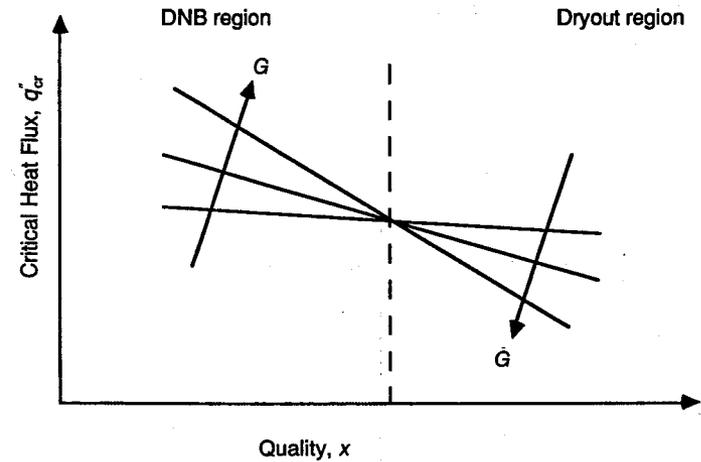
Effect of heated length

CHF Parametric Trends (cont.)

Effect of mass flux

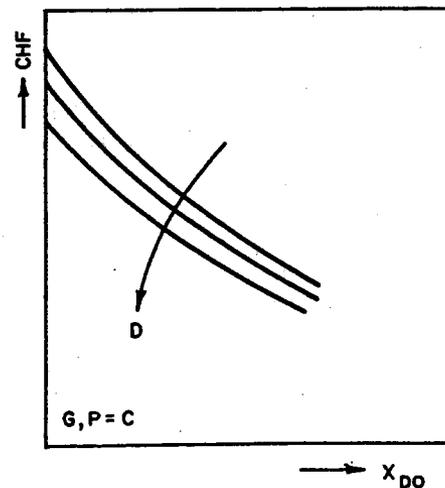


Inlet conditions



Local conditions

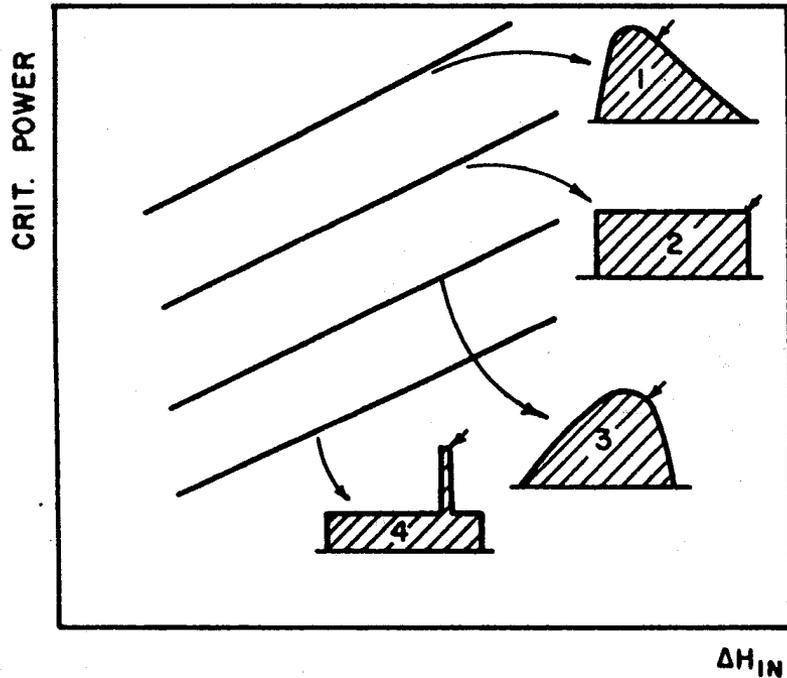
Effect of diameter



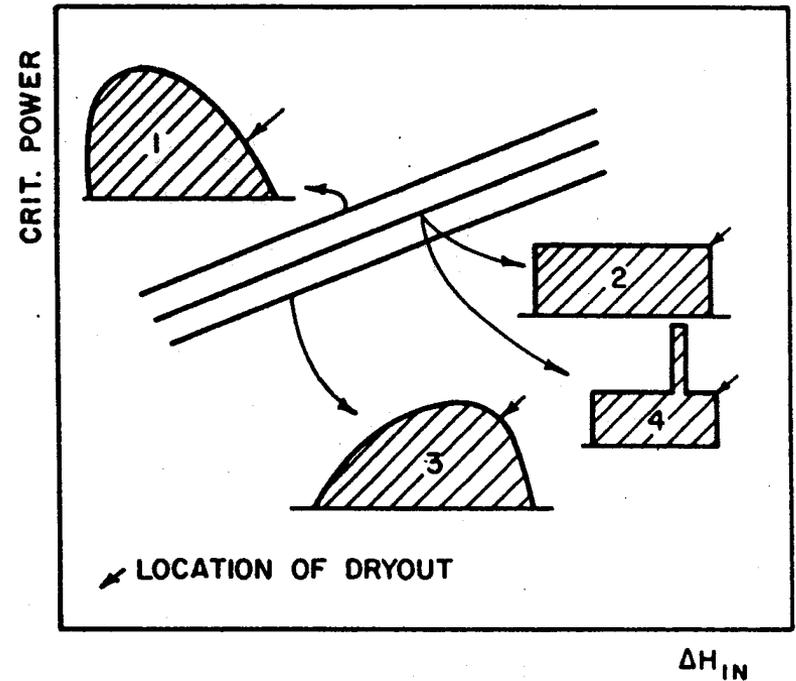
Local conditions

CHF Parametric Trends (concl'd)

Effect of axial flux distribution (AFD)



DNB (Subcooled conditions)



Dryout (of annular film)

Note: The major CHF parametric trends are similar in all geometries!

Encouragement to investigate CHF in simpler geometries!



Empirical CHF Prediction Methods

CHF Empirical Predictions

- Inlet-conditions type correlations assume overall **Critical Power** hypothesis (“black box” – early used correlations not satisfactorily account for separate effects such as AFD, RFD, grids etc.):

$$CP = f(P_{in}, G_{in}, T_{in}, L_H, geometry)$$

- Local-conditions type **CHF** correlations:

$$CHF = f(P, G, x_c, geometry)$$

(these correlations modified for separate effects are much more reliable than the inlet-conditions type)

Boiling-length Average Approach

The BLA hypothesis: exists a unique relationship between boiling length, L_B , and critical quality, x_c , which is independent of AFD for a given P , G and geometry

L_B = distance from the $x = 0$ to the CHF location

$$x_c = \frac{A \cdot L_B}{B + L_B} \quad \left(= \frac{4 \cdot q_{BLA} \cdot L_B}{\lambda \cdot G \cdot D} \right)$$

$$A, B = f(P, G) \quad q_{BLA} = \frac{1}{L_b} \int_{L_{x=0}}^{L_{x=x_c}} q(l) dl$$

For annular flow regime (dryout) - better than local-conditions approach

Takes into account “flow history effect”

CHF Empirical Predictions for Tubes

**For vertical tubes over 700 CHF correlations
are available!**

(according to the literature as of 1990)

Mysterious? A poor state-of-the-art?

A remedy?

CHF Look-up Table Method

International, normalized (to 8-mm ID) database with > 30,000 entries covering the widest ranges of parameters in water (vertical upflow):

$P = 1 - 20 \text{ MPa}$

$G = 0 - 7.5 \text{ Mg}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$

$X = -50\% - 100\%$

(Groeneveld et al., 1996)

Note: Some regions (shaded) higher uncertainties due to lack of data

Pressure (kPa)	Mass Flux ($\text{kg}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$)	Quality																						
		-0.5	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.15	-0.1	-0.05	0	0.05	0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1
1000	0																							
1000	50																							
1000	100																							
1000	300																							
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1000	5500																							
1000	6000																							
1000	6500																							
1000	7000																							
1000	7500																							
1000	8000																							



From the simplest flow geometry
let's move to the most complex
geometry

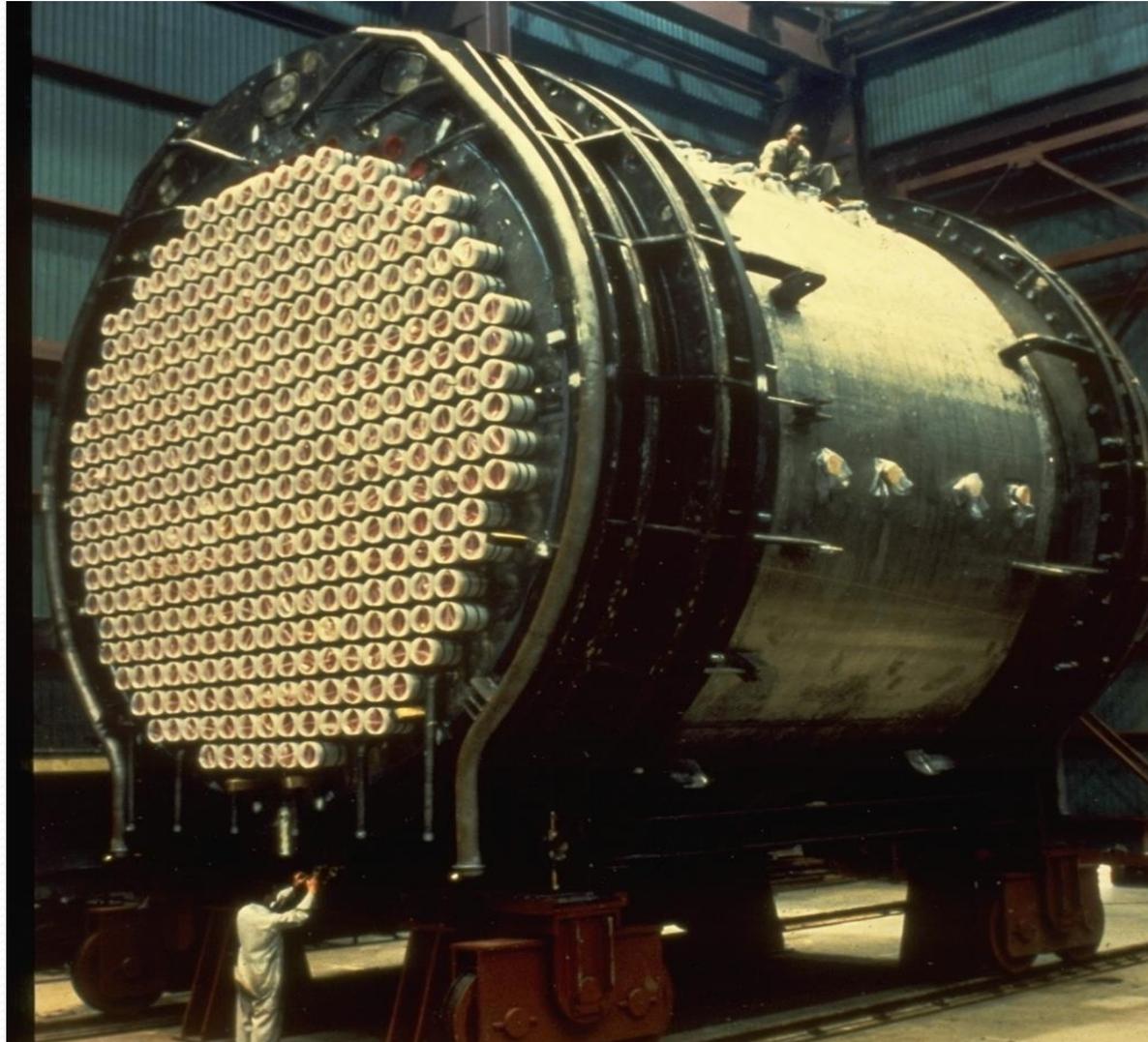
CHF in CANDU[®] Reactor Fuel Channels

(Horizontal Channels)

Experiments & Predictions

[®] CANDU (**CAN**adian **D**euterium **U**ranium) is a registered trademark of AECL

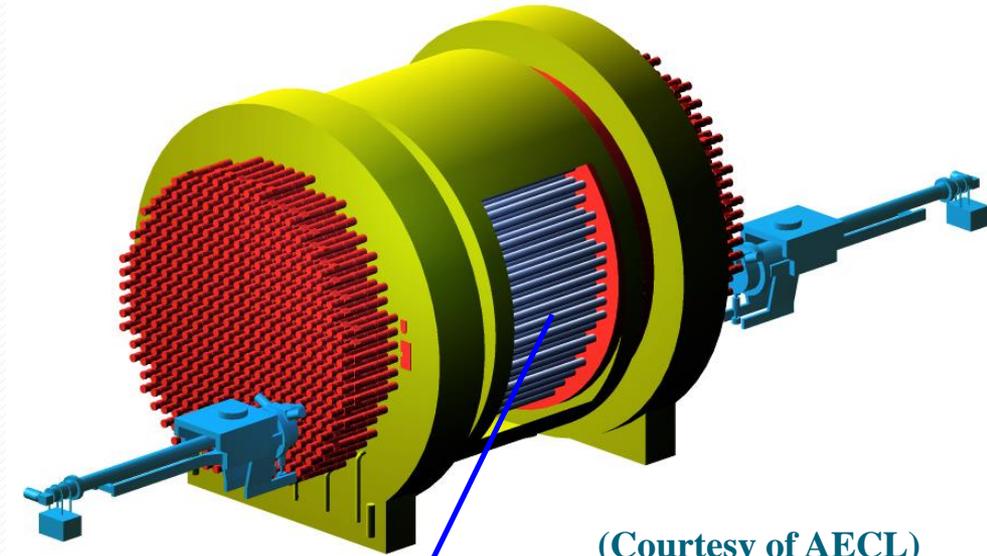
CANDU 6 Reactor



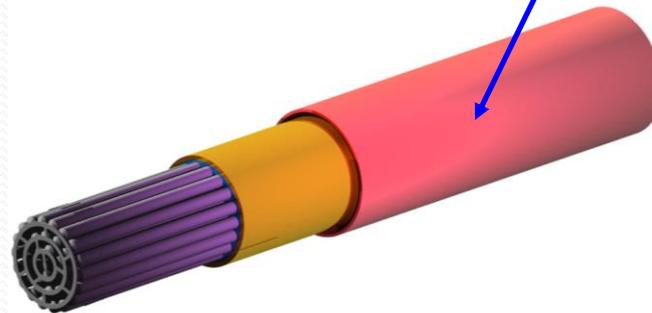
(Courtesy of AECL)

CANDU Reactor Intrinsic Features

- Channel reactor
 - Horizontal channels
 - Pressure tube as core pressure boundary
 - Heavy-water cooled
 - Heavy-water moderated
- Separate coolant and moderator
- Short fuel bundles replaceable on-line



(Courtesy of AECL)



(Courtesy of AECL)

CANDU Fuel Bundle

(Courtesy of AECL)



- Length ~50 cm
- Diameter ~10 cm

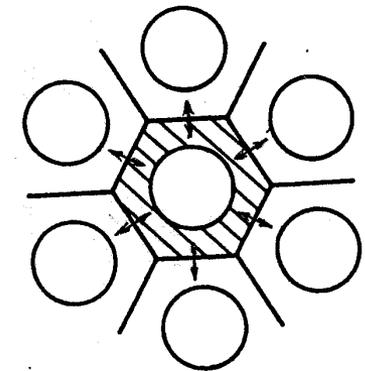
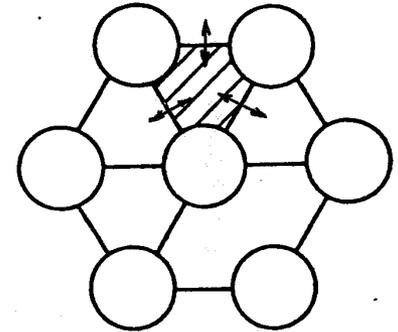
A questioning attitude...

How far CHF findings in tubes can be applicable to CANDU fuel channels or any other LWR fuel assemblies?

CHF in Fuel Channels

Differences between fuel-bundle and tube geometries:

- External flow (convex surface) as opposed to internal flow (concave surface)
- Presence of “communicating” subchannels (“porous tubes”)
- Presence of transverse flows (interchannel turbulent mixing, cross flow, void diffusion, etc.)
- Presence of bundle appendages (spacers, buttons, end plates, bundle misalignment)
- Presence of radial heat-flux distribution
- Presence of cold wall



CHF Predictions in Fuel Channels

Subchannel analysis based on CHF tube data:

- CHF tube prediction methods modified by several bundle-specific correction factors/functions:
 - CHF tube look-up table
 - CHF tube correlations
 - CHF tube models

$$\text{CHF}_{\text{Bundle}} = \text{CHF}_{\text{Tube}} \cdot \prod K_i; \quad i = 1, \dots, 9$$

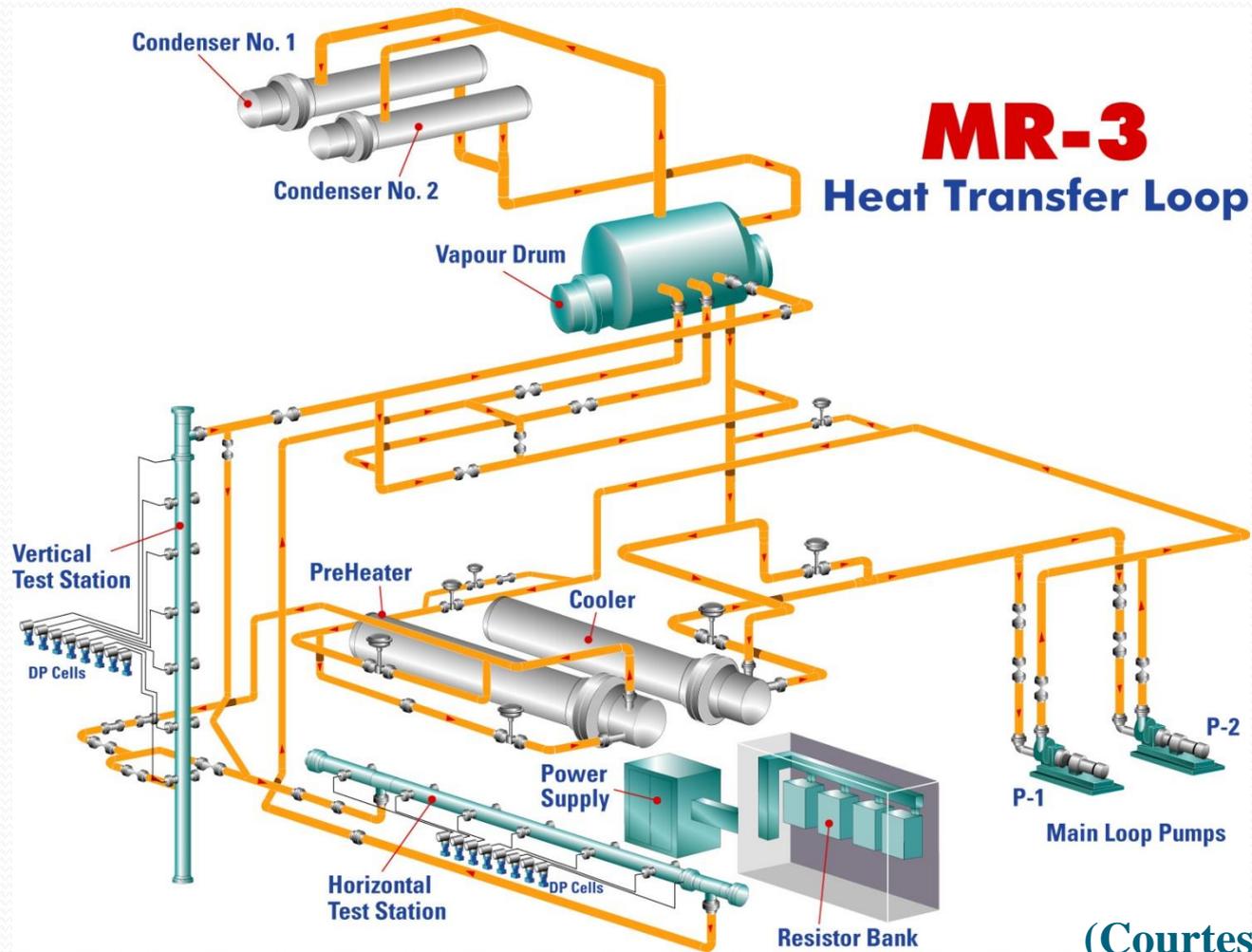
The effect K = 1 - diameter, 2 - geometry, 3 - spacer, 4 - heated-length, 5 - AFD, 6 - RFD, 7 - orientation, 8 - low flow, 9 - transient

Note: TH codes (e.g., RELAP5-3D, PWR & CANDU codes) use a similar approach; but specific fuel assembly CHF test data are used for licensing proposes.

CHF Experimental Facilities for CANDU Reactor Fuel Bundles

- **Full-scale high-pressure steam-water loops (CRL & Stern Laboratory in Hamilton, Canada)**
 - tests at actual CANDU reactor conditions
- **Full-scale low-pressure Freon-134a loop (CRL)**
 - simulations of high-pressure steam-water conditions by Freon-134a
 - CHF fluid-to-fluid scaling applied to water-conditions conversion
- **Small-scale steam-water and Freon-134a loops (CRL)**
 - simple test sections and bundle sub-assemblies
 - fundamental & separate-effects studies

Freon Test Facility at CRL



(Courtesy of AECL)

Freon Loop Fuel Bundle Simulator

- A 6-m (20 ft) long full-scale bundle string with simulated junctions and appendages
- Non-uniform axial and radial power distributions

CHF experiments in CANDU power channels and LRW fuel assemblies are the most complex & expensive! Therefore, CHF correlations at actual geometry & conditions for licensing purposes are **proprietary!**



(Courtesy of AECL)

CHF Predictions in CANDU Channels

Empirical methods based on CHF fuel bundle test data*

- CHF cross-section average bundle correlations
- CHF look-up tables for 37- & 43-element fuel bundles

*Developed for local as well as BLA conditions and used in the AECL's NUCIRC & CATHENA codes

For licensing purposes of water-cooled nuclear power reactors, the CHF correlations based on tests in water, at reactor conditions in a full-size fuel geometry are necessary – to be accepted by nuclear regulators!

These correlations are only valid over the tested ranges of conditions with defined uncertainties.

Let's see the experimental setup in a full-size CANDU fuel channel geometry & at actual CANDU reactor conditions at the Stern Laboratory in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

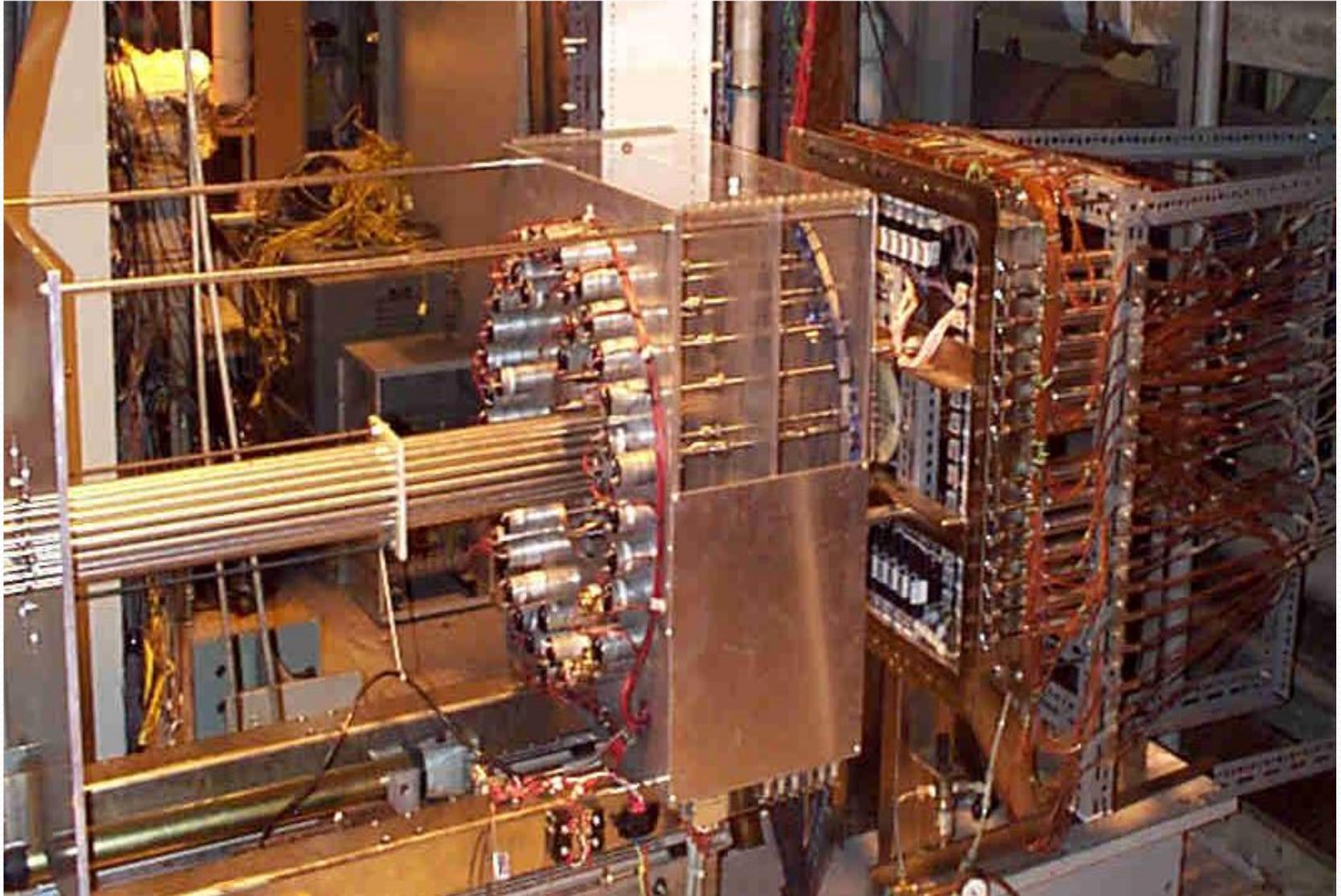
Water Test Facility at Stern Lab in Hamilton



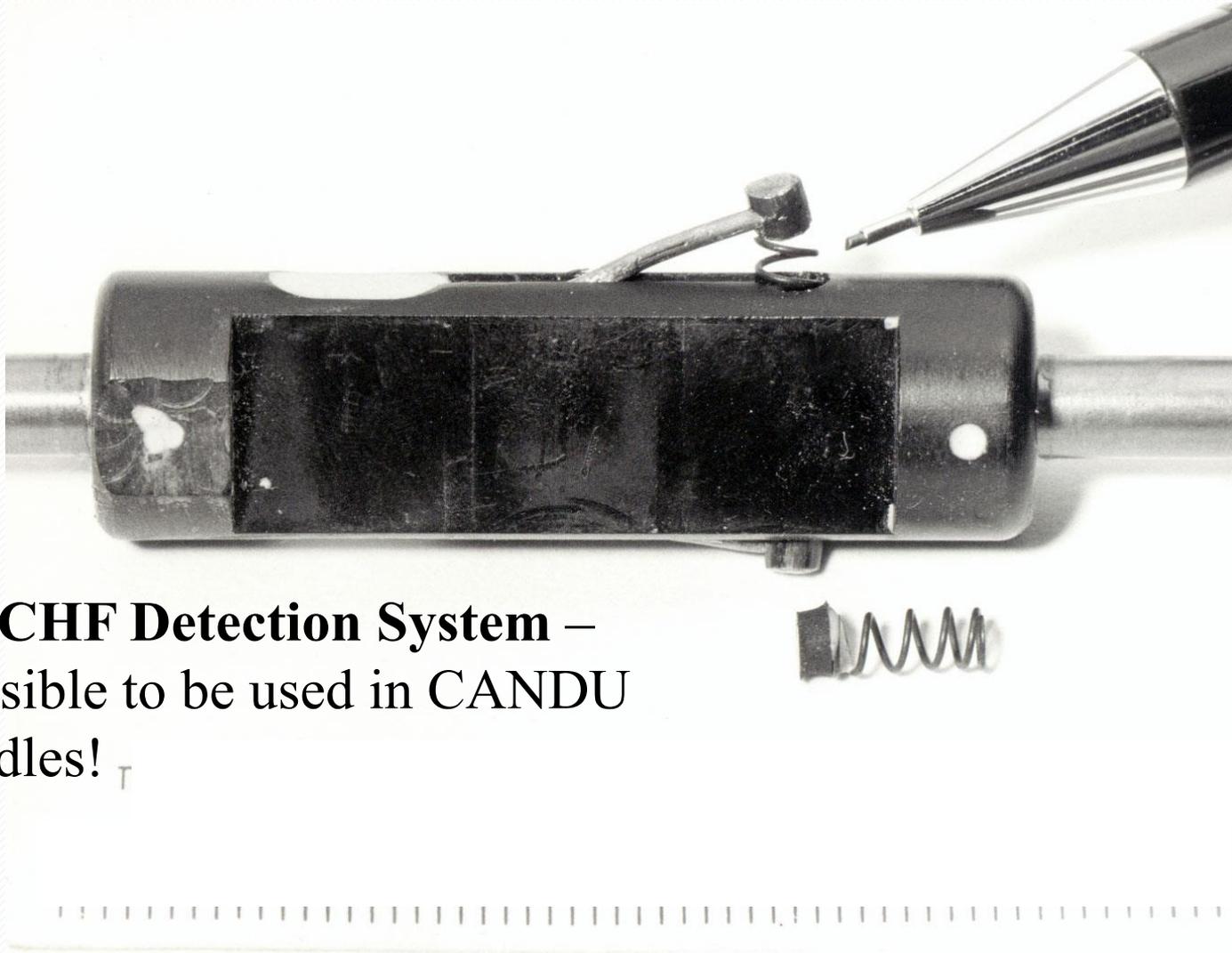
(Courtesy of AECL)

CHF tests - full-size CANDU fuel channel & at actual reactor conditions

Sliding Thermocouple Drive Unit



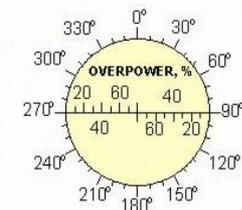
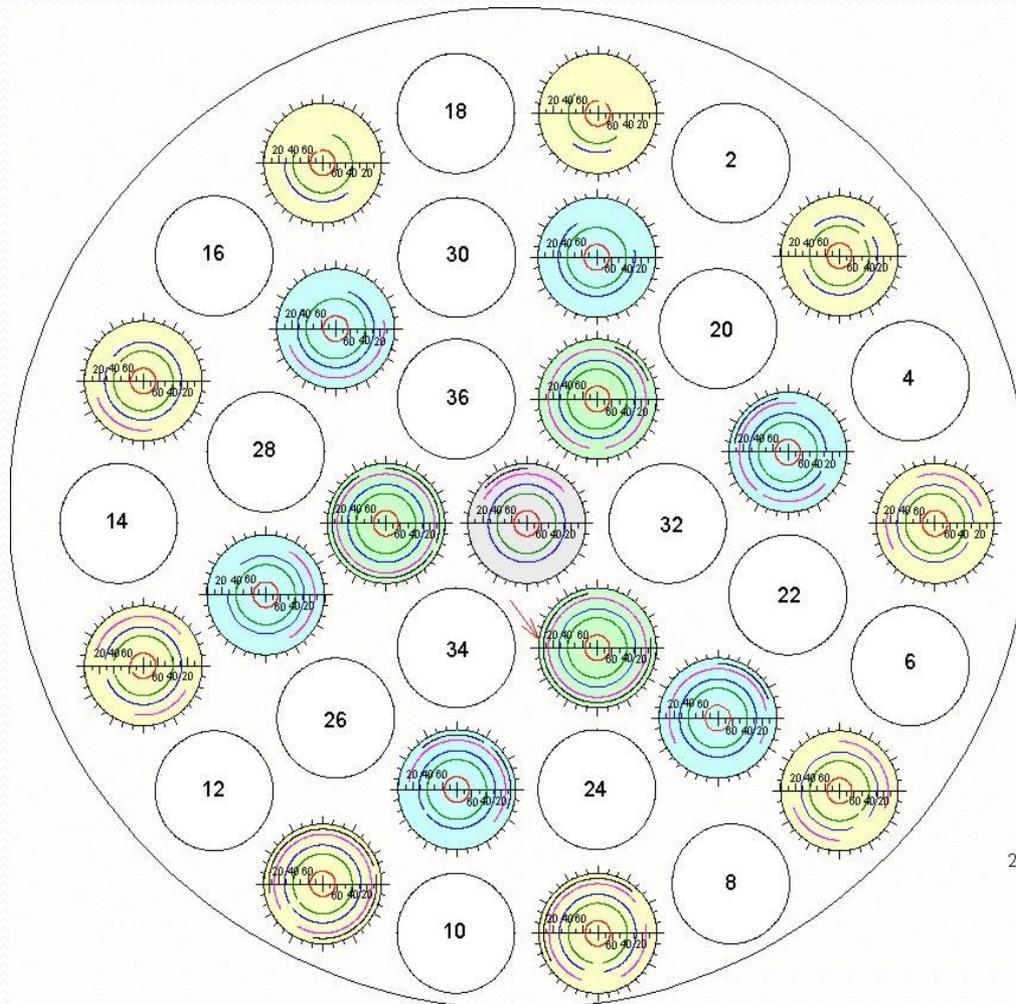
Sliding Thermocouple Assembly



Unique CHF Detection System –
only possible to be used in CANDU
fuel bundles!

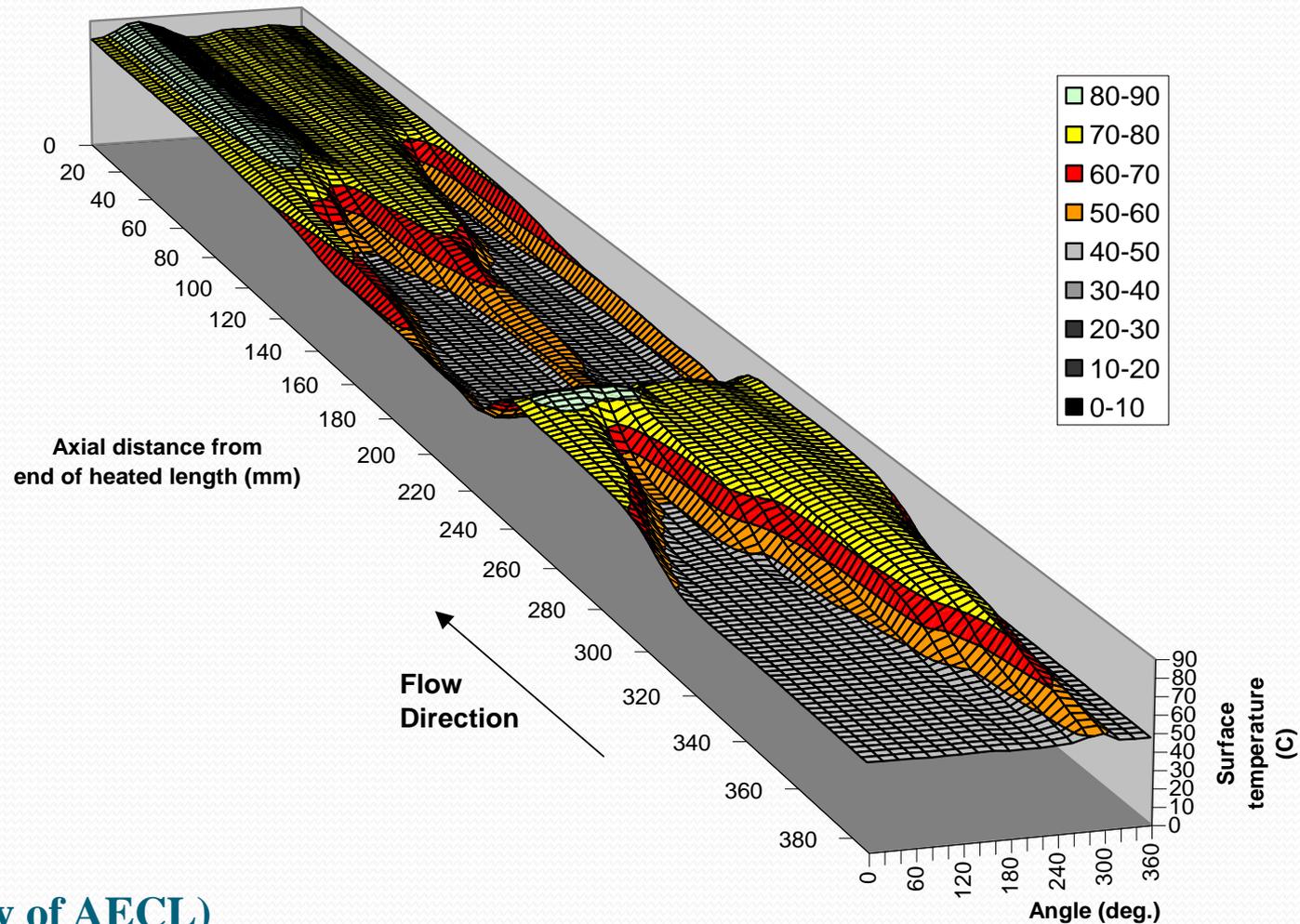
(Courtesy of AECL)

Circumferential Drypatch Map



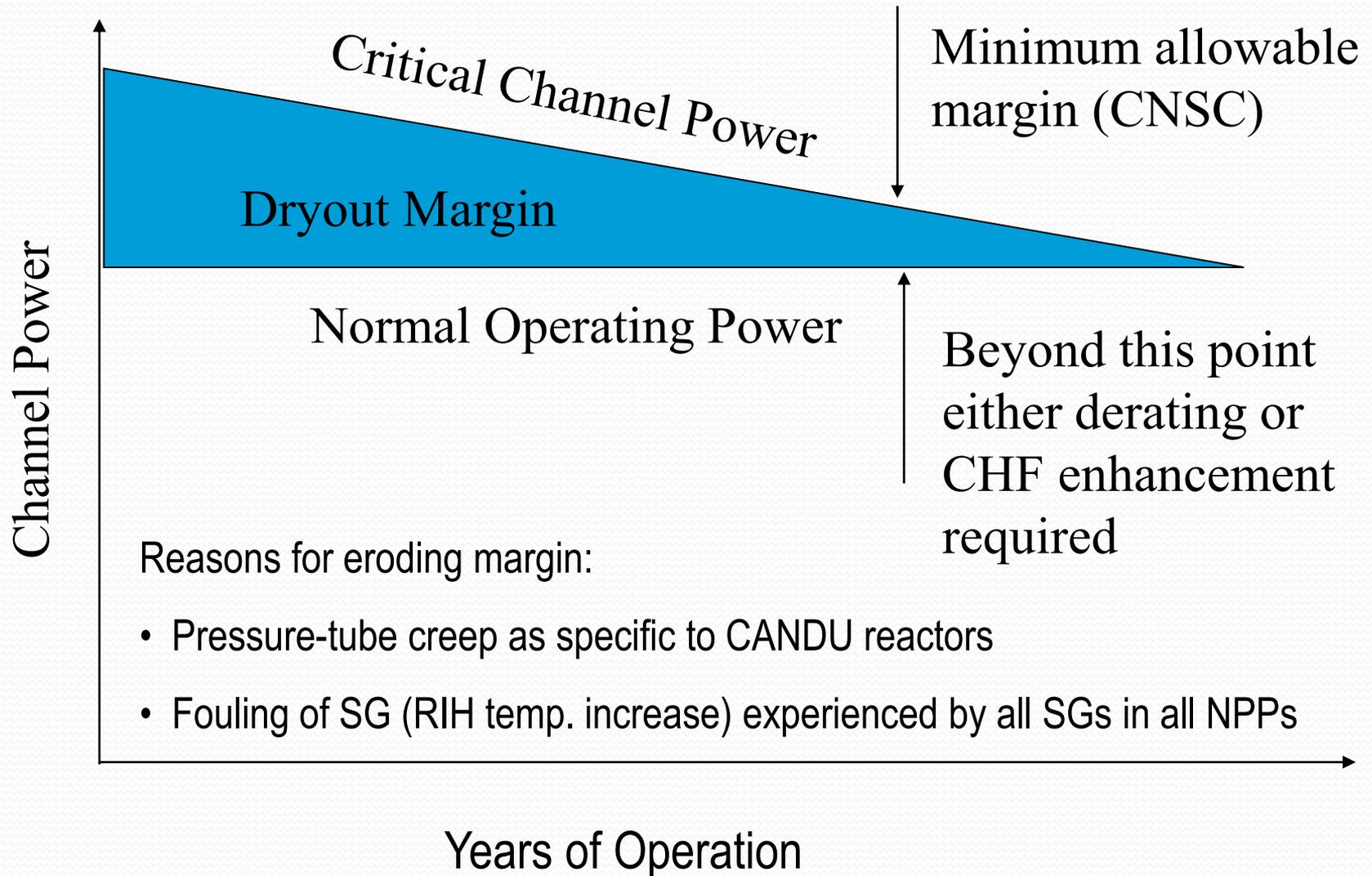
(Courtesy of AECL)

PDO Clad Temperature Profile



(Courtesy of AECL)

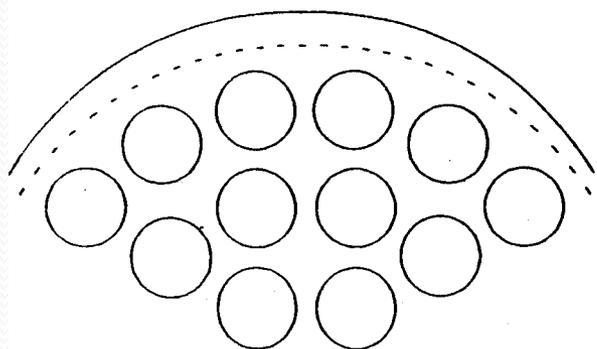
Operating Margin Erosion



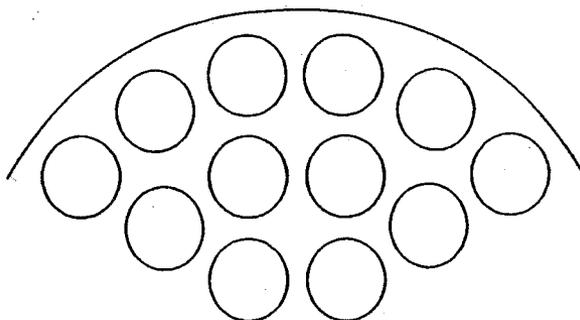
All, so far, has referred to the nominal intact
CANDU fuel bundle geometry.

Hypothetical geometry changes are considered
in safety analysis – how to predict CHF if they
do occur?

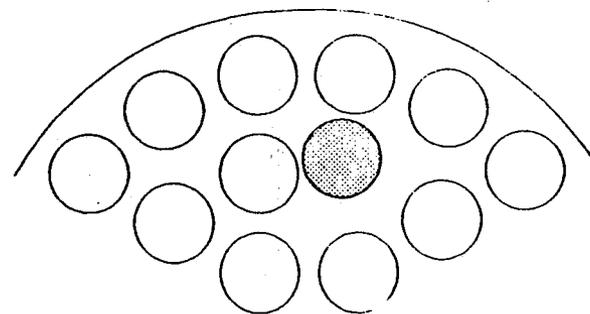
Examples of Hypothetical Geometry Changes in CANDU Fuel Bundles



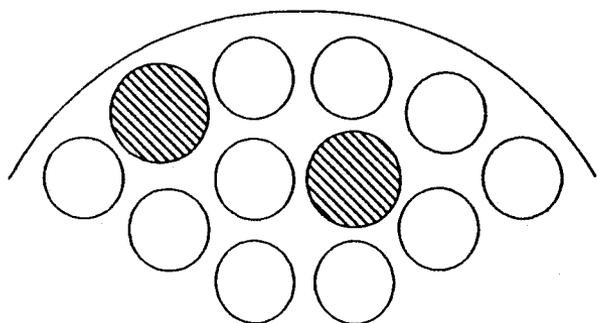
**PRESSURE-TUBE
CREEP**



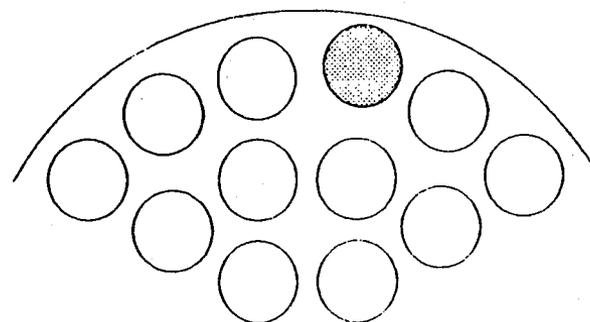
NORMAL BUNDLE



**BOWED ELEMENT
TO ELEMENT**



FUEL STRAIN



**BOWED ELEMENT
TO PRESSURE TUBE**

Let's focus on the pressure-tube diametral creep

To assess this problem, investigate and apply findings from:

CHF in an annular geometry - a more complex geometry than the tubular geometry

To solve this problem, investigate and apply findings from:

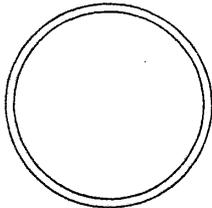
CHF enhancement techniques



CHF in Annular Geometries

Annuli – a More Adequate Geometry?

Tubes

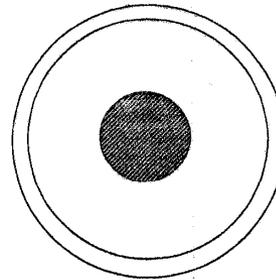


- diameter only
- curvature (concave only)

Note – due to complexity of CHF tests in annuli, limited CHF database exists

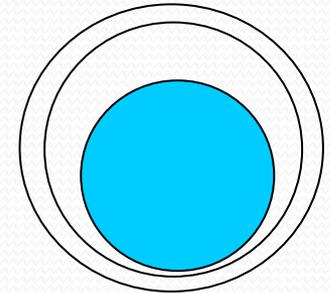
Annuli

Concentric



- diameters,
- gap size,
- curvature (concave & convex)
- concentric vs eccentric
- mode of heat supply

Eccentric



Physical Processes in Annuli Different from those in Tubes

- Shear stress distribution between surfaces causes:
 - Different droplet entrainment from both liquid films (dryout case)
 - Different bubbles' removal from both walls (DNB case)
- Different generation and propagation of waves on both walls (effect of surface tension)
- Droplet deposition on both walls,
- Effect of normal vapour flow from evaporating films on droplet deposition (lift force)
- Presence of cold surface in internally heated annuli

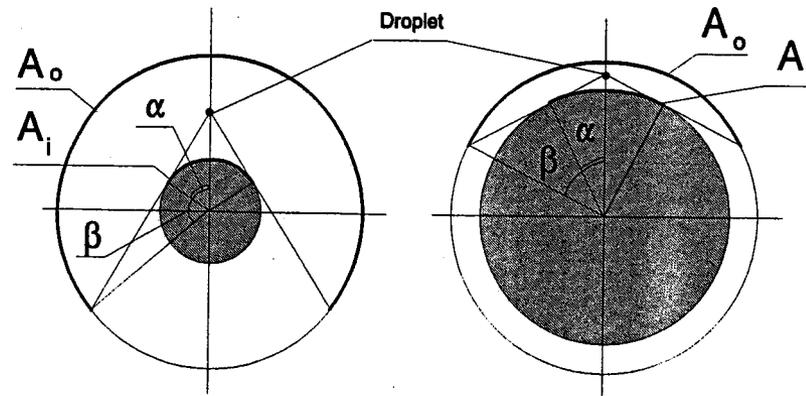
CHF Mechanisms in Annuli

- Shear Stress Distribution: $\tau_i > \tau_o$ (valid for SP laminar & turbulent flow, assumed to be true for TP flows),

- Deposition Rates: $D^* = f(C, K)$, $K = f(P, q'', \text{viewing factor } (\Psi))$
 at P, q'' constant $K_o > K_i$ due to Ψ , hence $D^*_o > D^*_i$

$$\Psi = A_o/A_i$$

$$\Psi = r_o/r_i$$

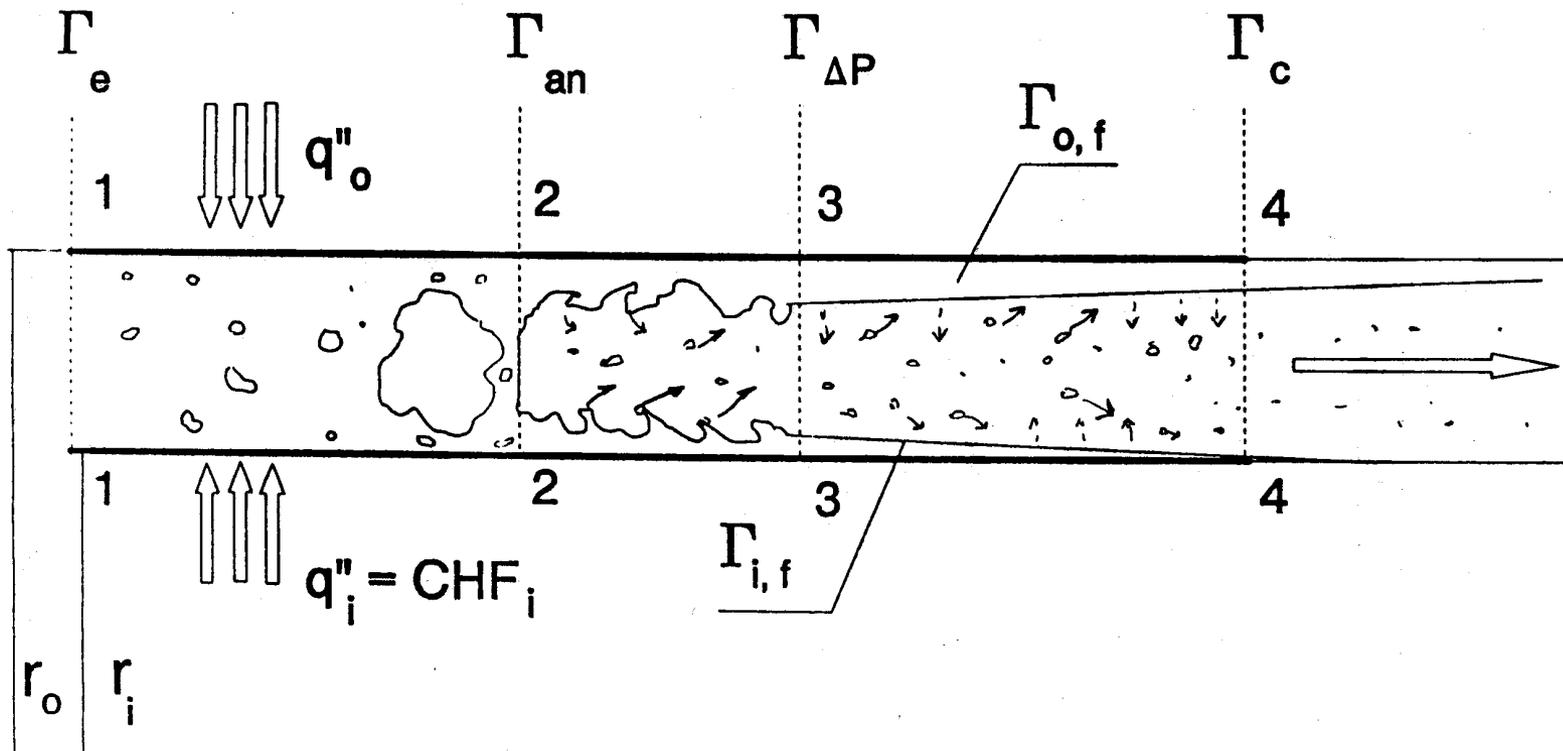


K decreases with P (Kirillov & Smogalev, 1972),

K decreases with q'' due to normal vapour flow generated at the wall,

- Entrainment Rate: $E = f(\delta, \tau, q'')$, thickness of films $\delta_o > \delta_i$ due to $\tau_i > \tau_o$
 and $D^*_o > D^*_i$

CHF Mechanisms in Annuli



Deposition $D = f(C, K)$, $K = f(P, q'', \Psi)$ - Entrainment - Evaporation

$D_{Total} \rightarrow CHF$ surface in a tube, then $CHF_{Tube} > CHF_{Annulus}$

$D_o > D_i$ & $\tau_i > \tau_o$ then $CHF_o > CHF_i$ (uni- & bilaterally heated annuli)

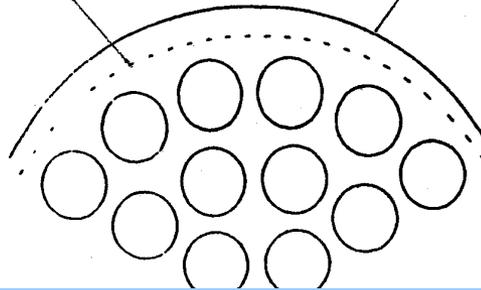
$K \propto P$ & $D_o > D_i \rightarrow CHF_o \propto$ at higher rate than CHF_i (e.g., simult. CHF)

q''_o : $\nearrow \Gamma^c$ & $K_i \rightarrow \nearrow D_i$ then $CHF_{i,q''>0} > CHF_{i,q''=0}$ (at $P, G, x_c = \text{constant}$)

Fuel Bundle-Pressure Tube System in CANDU Reactors

without diametral creep

with diametral creep



Effect of eccentricity – NURETH-6 paper (Grenoble, 1993)

Effect of bilateral heating – NURETH-7 paper (Saratoga Springs, 1995)

Relative effect on CHF the same

in bundle-pressure tube system
with & without creep

as

in eccentric & concentric
internally heated annulus

Successful approximation of a prediction method found for a simpler flow geometry to a more complex flow geometry!



CHF Enhancement

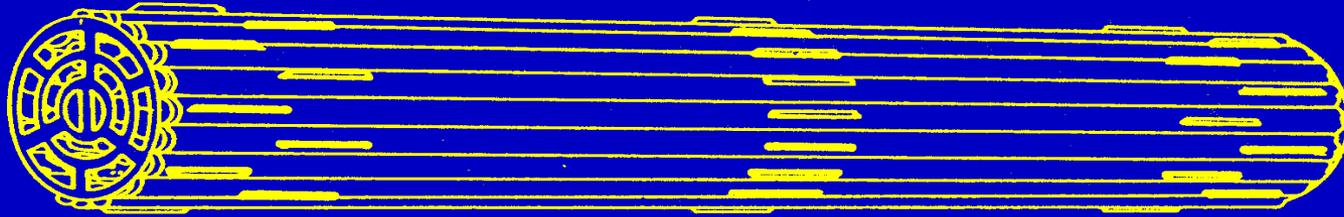
A Quest for CHF Enhancement in CANDU Fuel Channels

Observed CHF-enhancing effect of bundle junctions and spacer planes thanks to a unique temperature detecting technique led to investigation of fuel bundles with:

- One additional spacer plane,
- Two, three and four additional spacer planes,
- Installing wire wraps along fuel elements, etc.

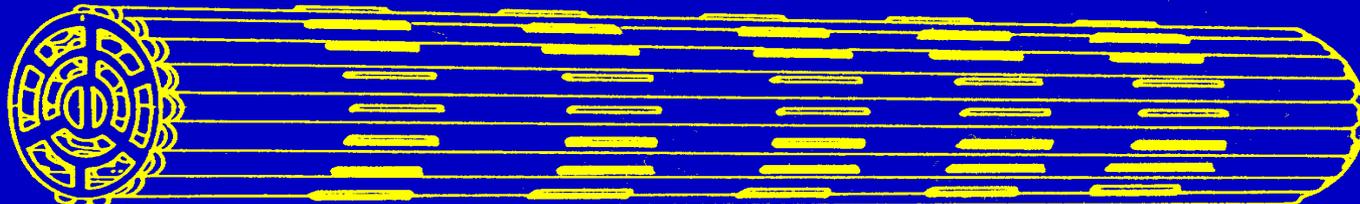
A special CHF-enhancement program was launched to investigate the effect of “buttons” (non-loaded appendages) leading to the CANFLEX fuel bundle

Bundles with Extra Spacer Planes



REFERENCE 37-ELEMENT BUNDLE

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82.5 82.5 82.5 82.5 82.5 82.5

SPACERS & BEARING PADS (5 PLANES)

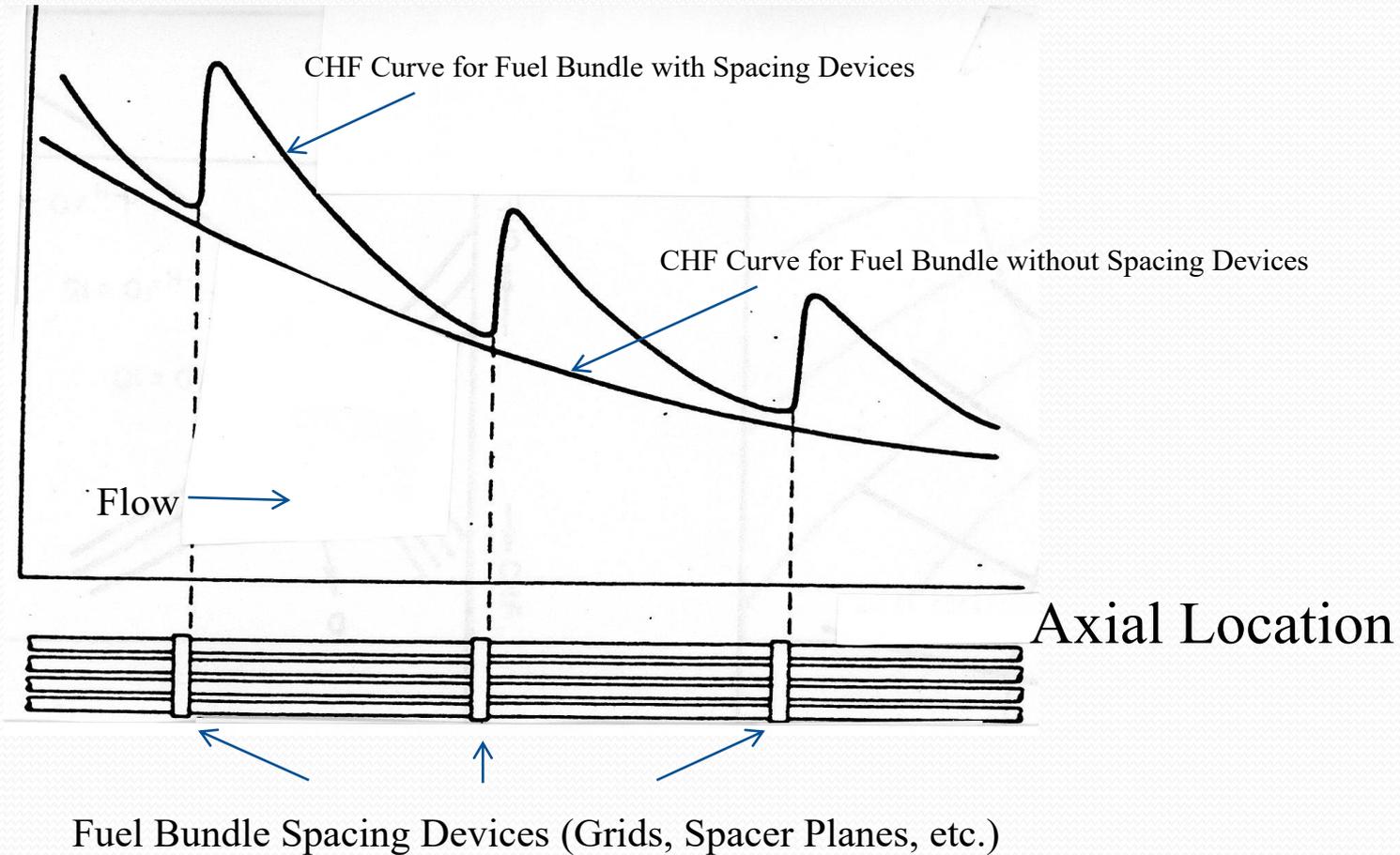
FIVE SPACER PLANE BUNDLE

(DIMENSIONS IN mm)

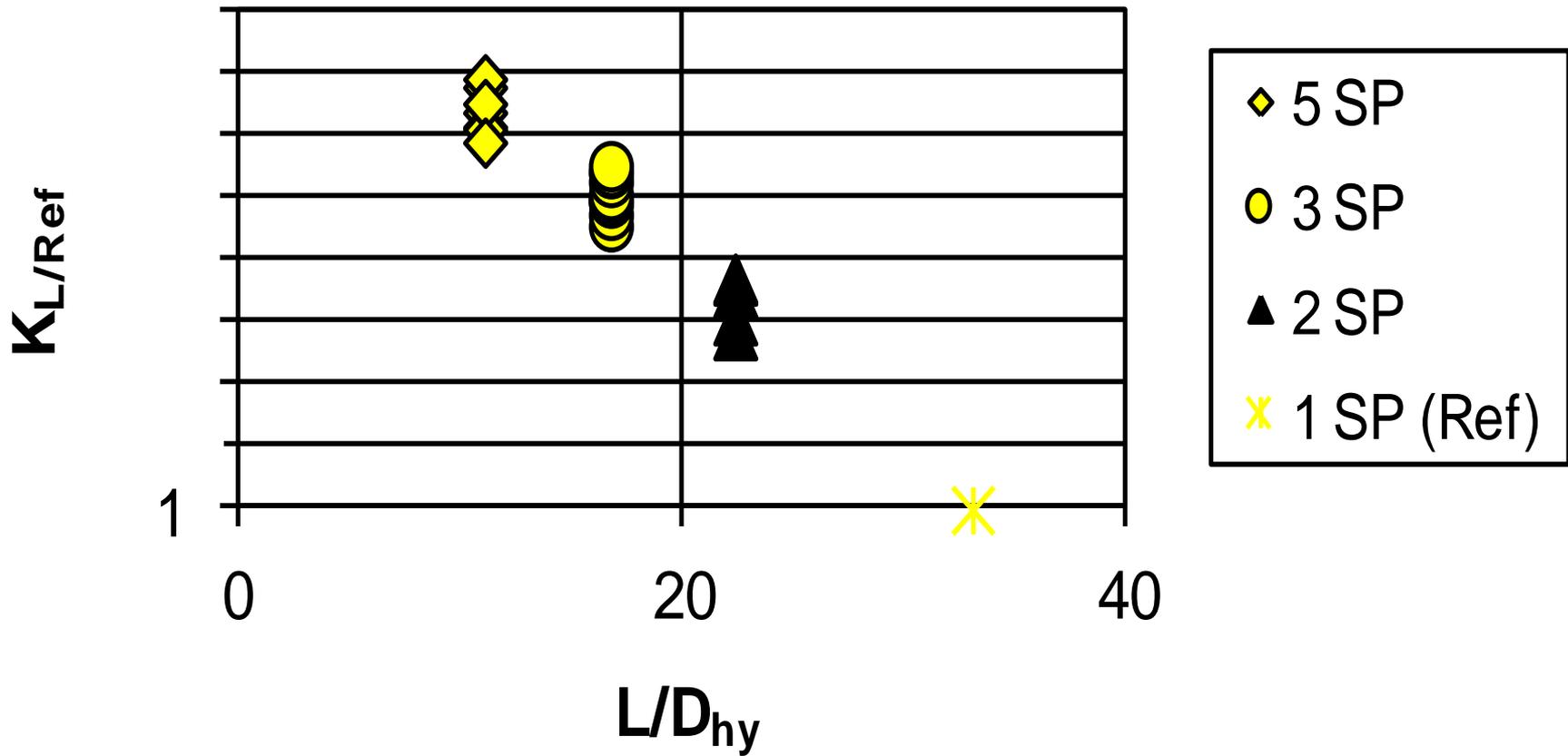
Effect of Spacing Devices on CHF

(Thanks to unique CHF detective system)

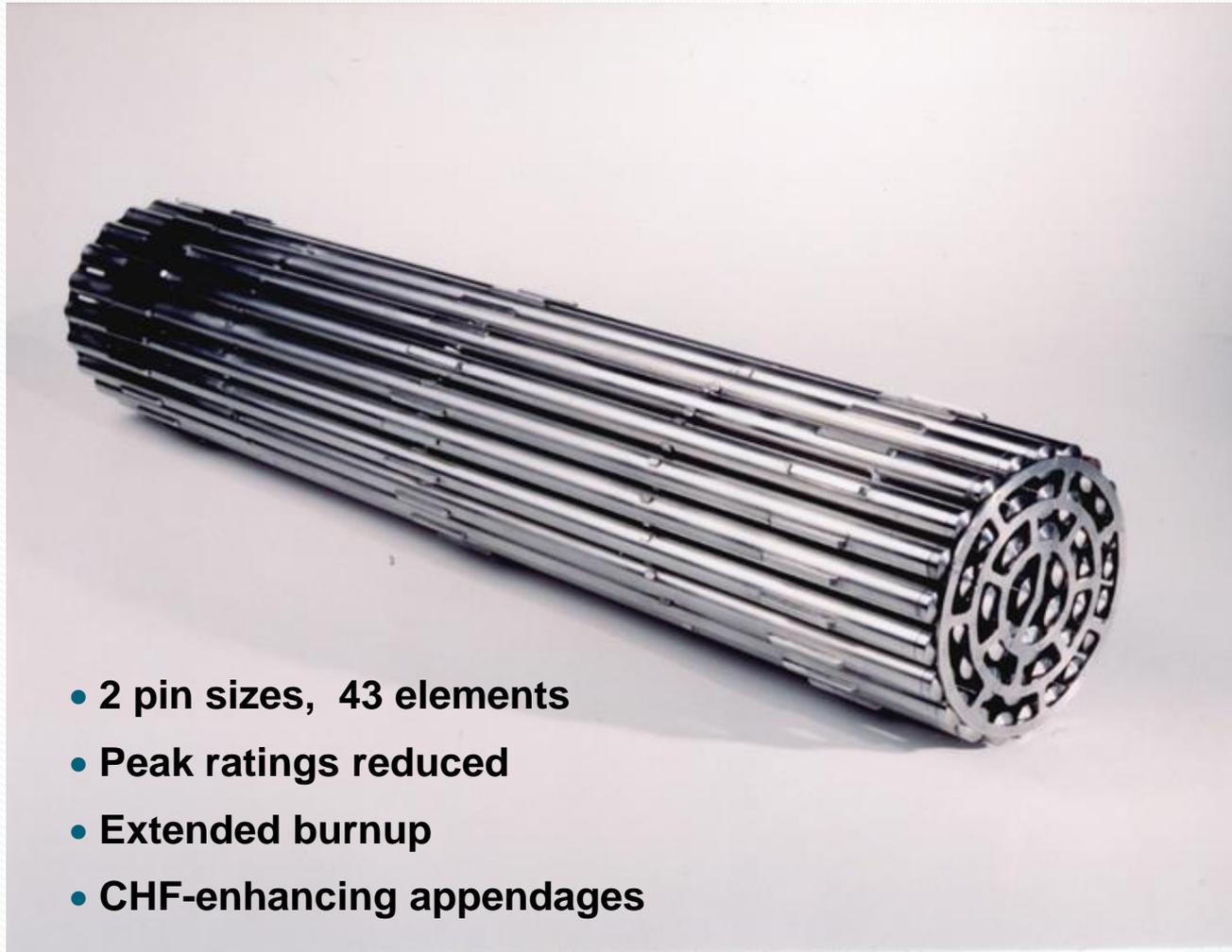
Local CHF



CHF Enhancement in Fuel Bundles by Extra Spacer Planes



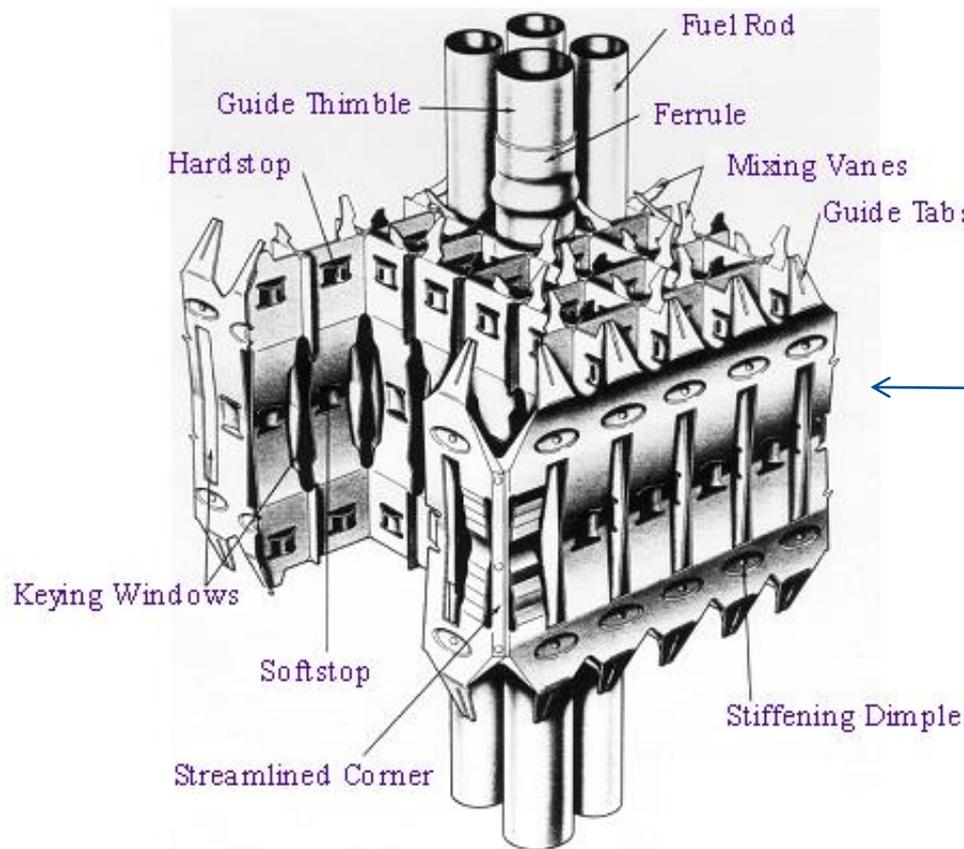
AECL New Fuel Bundle - CANFLEX



- 2 pin sizes, 43 elements
- Peak ratings reduced
- Extended burnup
- CHF-enhancing appendages

CHF Enhancement in LWR Fuel Assemblies

LWR Grid Assembly



CHF Enhancing
Mixing Vanes - in
particular

CHF Enhancing Grid
Structure - in general



CHF Fluid-to-fluid Modelling

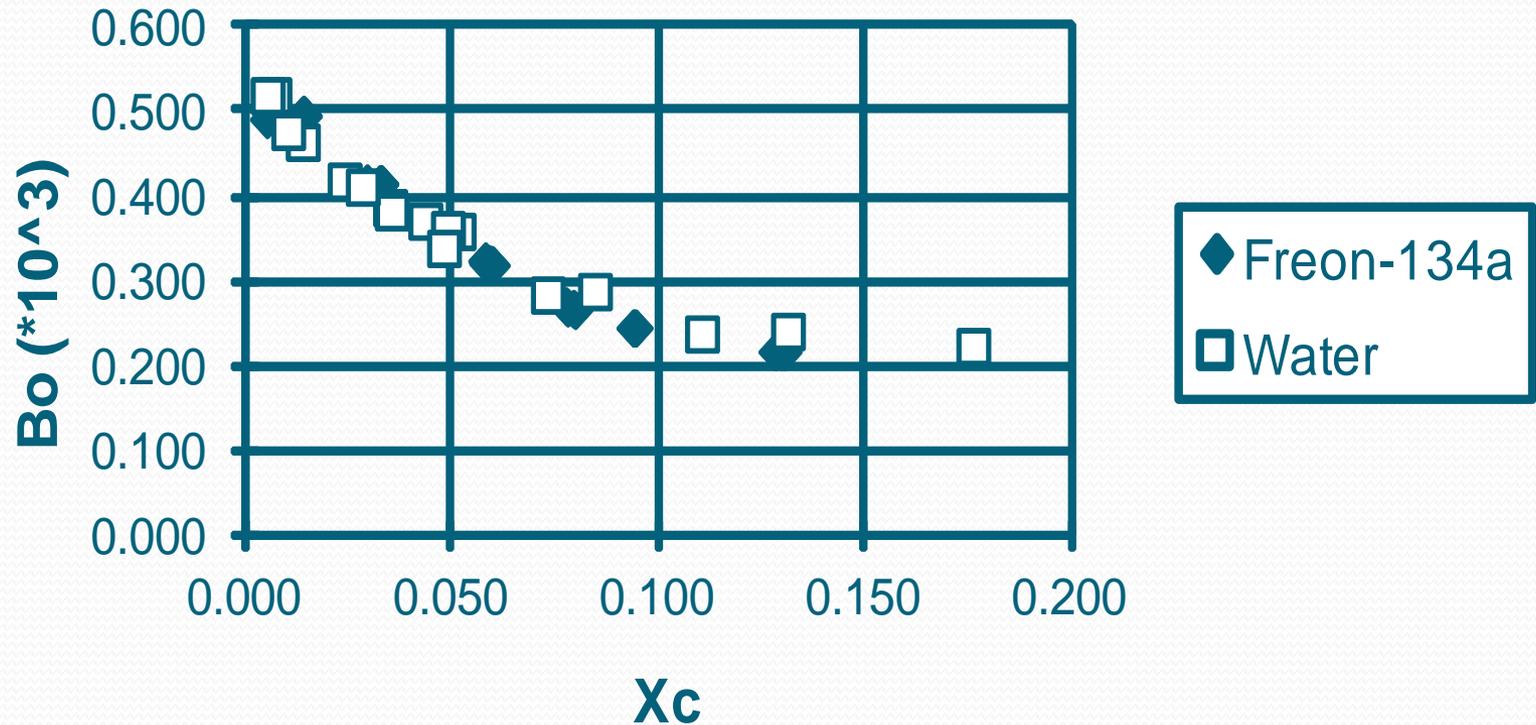
CHF Fluid-to-fluid Modelling Advantages

- Simpler & less expensive test sections & facilities
- Less severe test conditions (1.66 MPa vs 10 MPa, 59°C vs 310°C in Freon-134a than in water)
- Lower power requirements (0.6 MW vs 10 MW)
- Greater flexibility to use advanced instrumentation (fiber-optic void probes), and
- Increased speed of generating data

CHF Fluid-to-fluid Modelling Technique

- Identical geometry in both fluids
- The same liquid-to-vapour density ratio (to model pressure (P^*))
- The same inlet and dryout qualities (to model inlet & outlet thermodynamic conditions),
- The same Weber number, We , (to model mass flux (G^*)), then
- The same boiling number, Bo , is in both fluids (thus modelling CHF)

CHF Fluid-to-fluid Modelling in Tube



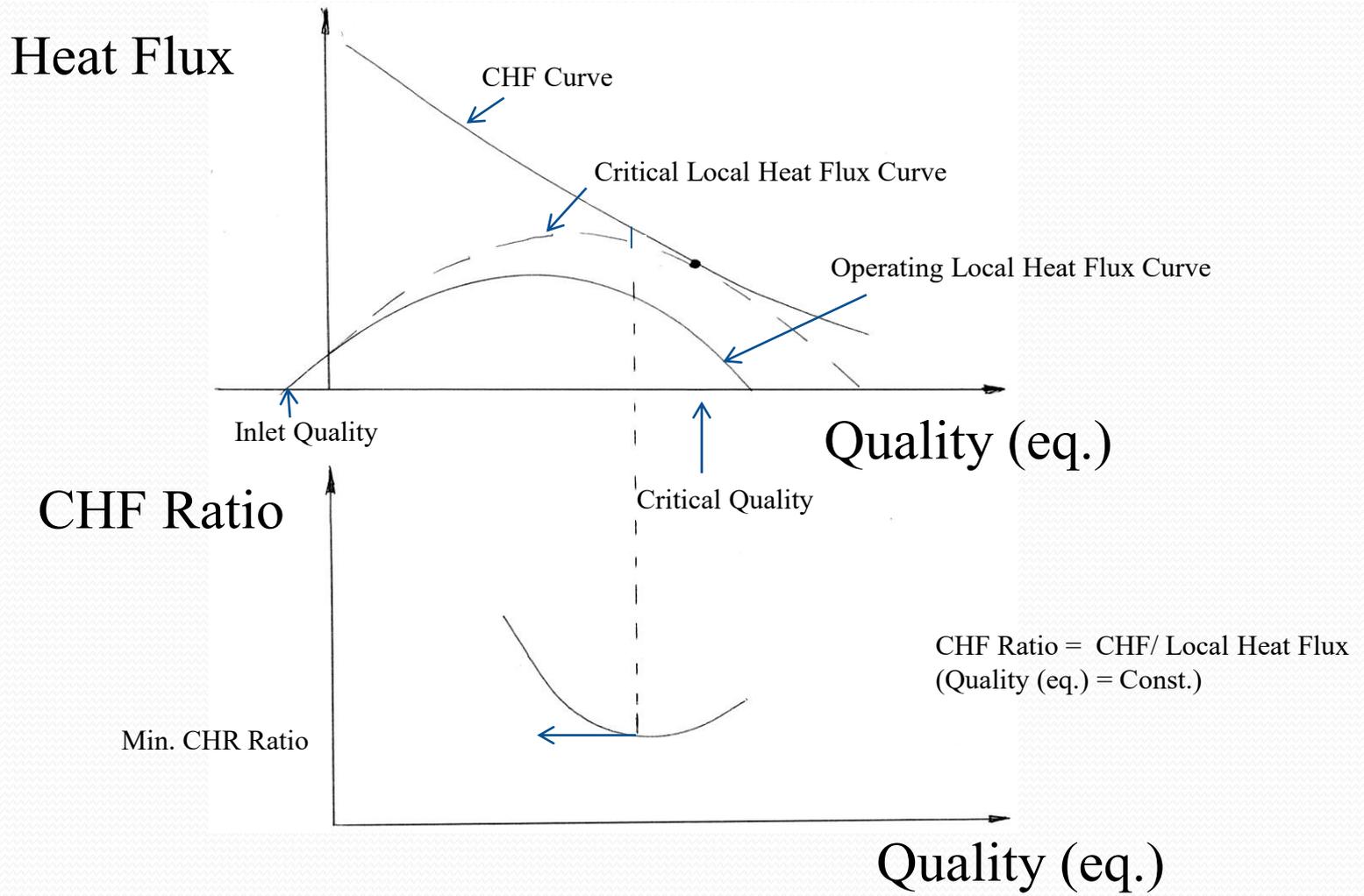
Nondimensional CHF-Reference Results in Water & Freon-134a

Definition of CHF and its Location

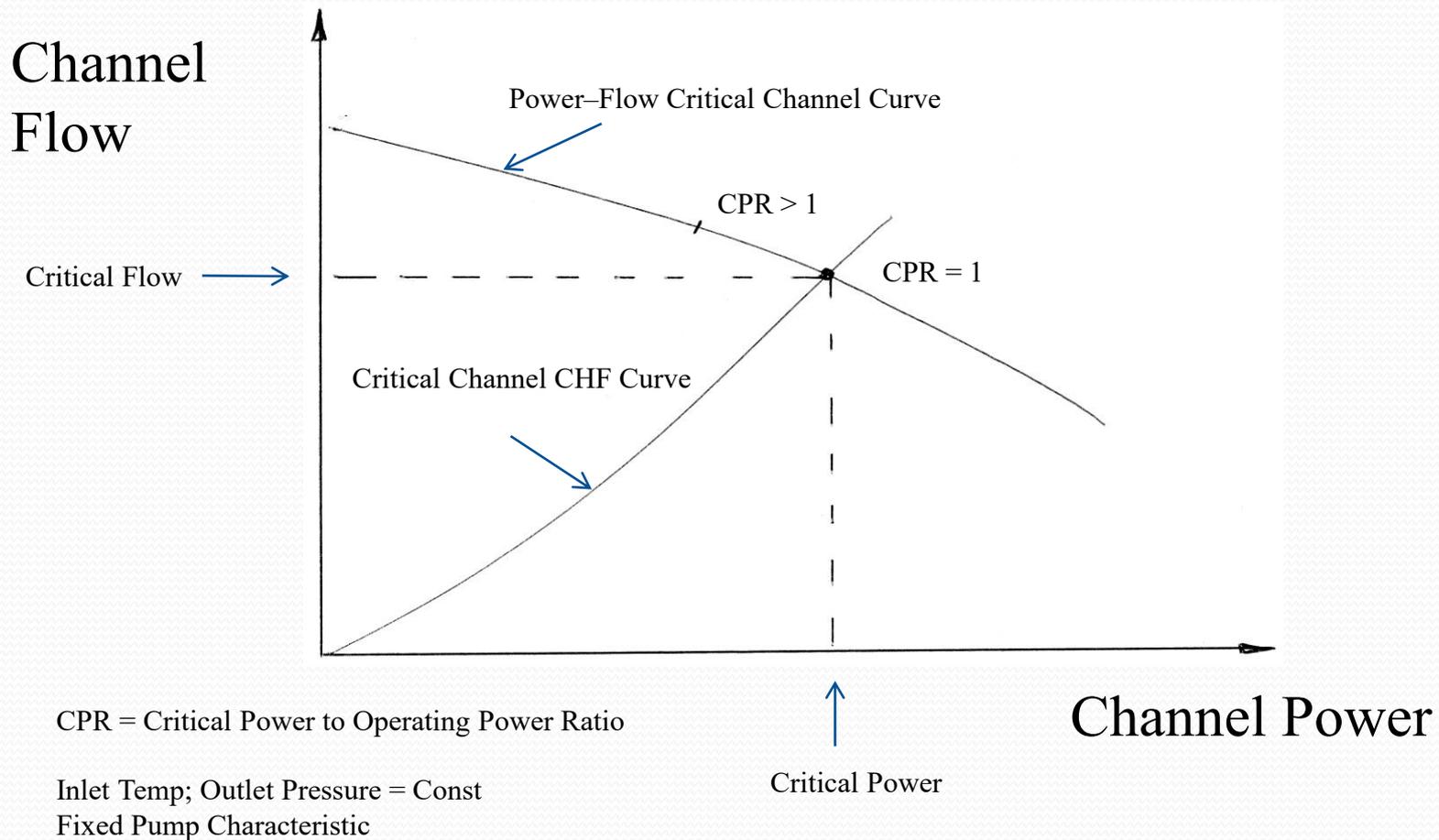
Definition of CHF Ratio (CHFR) or (DNBR)

Nuclear regulators establish the minimum values of CHF ratio (CHFR or DNBR) as acceptable safety limits for normal operation and anticipated operational occurrences (AOOs) or transients so that no fuel damage is expected at this minimum CHFR (DNBR) or greater.

Definition of CHF and its Location



Definition of Critical Channel Power



Final Remarks

- In general, CHF enhancement tests in tubes and fuel bundles can be simulated by modelling fluids with a high degree of certainty; however, at some conditions differences in fuel bundles occur as far as axial and transverse CHF location and CHF value are concerned.
- Modelling fluids perfectly allow for assessment of relative ranking of various CHF enhancing devices and other fuel bundle geometrical changes at relatively less cost and complexity of the experimental setups.
- **For licensing purposes of water-cooled nuclear power reactors, the CHF correlations based on tests in water, at reactor conditions in real full-size fuel assemblies are necessary!**

The End of CHF Overview

This overview sheds light on a complexity of the CHF phenomenon!

Do you agree that still CHF is a mysterious phenomenon?

Please continue the work beyond that we have done so far!