

## The atom's expanding role in industry\*

The history of industrial applications of radioisotopes is, in microcosm, the story of how government-supported science can be applied to increase the productivity of industry and thus expand our nation's economy. Fifty percent of the 500 largest manufacturing concerns in the United States use radioisotopes. About 4,500 other firms also are licensed to use radioisotopes. Innumerable other companies use exempt quantities of radioisotopes under AEC general licenses. These thousands of firms benefiting from radioisotopes come from virtually every type of industry, including the metals, electrical, transportation, chemicals, plastics, pharmaceuticals, petroleum refining, paper, rubber, stone, clay, glass, food, tobacco, textiles, crude petroleum, natural gas, and mining industries and the utilities.

Even the production and distribution of radioisotopes themselves have followed a similar government-to-industry course. Under its policy of not competing with private industry, the AEC has routinely discontinued supplying products and services as industry becomes equipped to supply them. In 1965, when industry had substantial capability for producing radioisotopes, the AEC began significant transfer of its commercial radioisotope production and distribution activities to private industry. So far we have withdrawn from the production and distribution of 37 radioisotopes—about one-third of our product line—because of private capability to produce and market them. As a result, about 100 private firms produce radioisotopes and convert them into products for medicine, science, and industry. Total sales of these companies are estimated at \$53 million annually; this consists of about \$8 million in basic radioisotope materials, \$16 million in radiochemicals, \$25 million in radiopharmaceuticals, and \$4 million in radiation sources. In addition, sales of devices in which radioisotopes are employed total about \$40 million a year. Of course, these figures do not include sales of products produced by radiation processing nor of auxiliary materials

---

*\*Remarks at the dedication ceremony for Radiation Machinery Corporation's Headquarters and Development Center, Hanover, N. J., July 31, 1969.*