

OFFICIAL USE ONLYADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINEMINUTES

The fifty-fifth meeting of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine was held at the Atomic Energy Commission, Headquarters Building, Idaho Falls Idaho, on Friday and Saturday, March 9 and 10, 1956, with the following persons in attendance:

ATTENDANCE

Members of  
ACBM

Dr. Gioacchino Failla, Chairman  
Dr. Shields Warren, Vice-Chairman  
Dr. Charles H. Burnett  
Dr. John C. Bugher  
Dr. H. Bentley Glass  
Dr. Edward A. Doisy

Biology and  
Medicine

Dr. Charles L. Dunham, Director  
Dr. Walter D. Claus  
Dr. Forrest Western  
Dr. Paul B. Pearson  
Dr. Thomas S. Ely  
Dr. John N. Wolfe  
Mr. Howard C. Brown, Jr.  
Mr. Robert L. Butenhoff  
Mrs. Frances R. Montgomery

Other AEC

Mr. A. Tammara, Asst. General Manager  
for Research & Industrial Development  
Mr. Merrill Eisenbud, Manager, NYOO  
Mr. William Berman, OGC

Idaho Oprns.  
Office

Mr. W. C. Funk, Deputy Mgrs., IOO  
Dr. G. Victor Beard, Director, Health  
and Safety Division  
Dr. Louis S. Gerber, Medical Services  
Mr. J. W. McCaslin, Phillips Petroleum Co.  
Mr. John Horan, Westinghouse Electric Co.  
Mr. John G. Feldes, Argonne Nat. Lab.  
Mr. Frank Tabb, General Electric Co.  
Miss Margaret Berlin  
Mrs. Emma Turley

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Friday, March 9, 1956

A planned tour, arranged by Mr. Allan C. Johnson, Manager of the Idaho Operations Office, was conducted for the committee and the staff of the Division of Biology and Medicine to inspect the facilities of the National Reactor Testing Site which included the Health and Safety Division.

Saturday, March 10, 1956

9:00 A.M.

The Chairman convened the meeting. Mr. W. C. Funk, Deputy Manager, IOO, then welcomed the group and offered any assistance that he and his staff could lend to the Committee to make their visit both profitable and pleasant.

Current Activities  
of the Division of  
Biology & Medicine

The Chairman asked Dr. Dunham to proceed by discussing the current activities of the Division. Dr. Dunham stated that the medical report on the study of fallout on the Rongelap people has been turned over to the Government Printing Office and it should be available in six or eight weeks.

Dr. Dunham made reference to the last two meetings of the committee wherein Dr. Claus and Mr. Eisenbud briefed them on plans for monitoring the waters of the Pacific during and immediately after Operation REDWING. The Navy has made a ship available for this purpose. In addition to U.S. activities the Japanese have a five-vessel expedition which will move down to the equator west of the test site about midway through the test schedule. An exchange of samples is planned between a group under the direction of Dr. Roger Revelle, Director, Scripps Oceanographic Institute, LaJolla, California, and the Japanese oceanography group. Dr. Dunham reported

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that the project had the Commission's concurrence.

Dr. Dunham then reported on the meeting of the Program Directors at Hanford. He mentioned that the programs under the direction of Dr. Parker and Dr. Kornberg are going well and that the group was particularly impressed with Dr. Wager's observations of carcinoma of the lung produced by plutonium.

Dr. Dunham spoke of a letter<sup>1/</sup> that he had received from Dr. Warren Weaver of the Rockefeller Foundation requesting certain information for the Genetics Panel of the National Academy of Sciences. He stated that this Panel is tentatively considering certain recommendations concerning limits of radiation which ought to be set up for total population exposure and for occupational exposure. Dr. Weaver requested this information from Hanford, Argonne, Brookhaven and Oak Ridge.

Dr. Dunham told the Committee that while contacts with on-site contractors were appropriate, he was reluctant to seek the information from non-AEC contractors and that he felt that it would be more appropriate that the questions in these instances be submitted directly from the National Academy of Sciences.

Ad Hoc Research Advisory Group. Dr. Dunham announced that an ad hoc group composed of Drs. Curt Stern, Charles Burnett, Robley Evans, Austin Brues and Orr Reynolds had been appointed by Dr. Shilling for the purpose of assisting the Division of Biology and Medicine in reviewing the research program of the Division of Biology and Medicine and to

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<sup>1/</sup> A copy of Dr. Weaver's letter and Dr. Dunham's reply previously was supplied the members of the Committee.

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identify those research areas which should be emphasized, curtailed or eliminated in its opinion.

JCAE Hearings on Peaceful Uses Dr. Dunham spoke of the 202 Hearings before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The JCAE evidenced considerable interest with respect to the AEC's responsibilities in health and safety -- as they relate to State and local governments.

ACEM Appointment Dr. Dunham announced that, subject to security clearance, the recommendation for Dr. Fred's appointment as a member of the Advisory Committee had been approved by the General Manager.

Remarks by Mr. Tammaro Mr. Tammaro told of the concern of Dr. Bradbury, Director of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, over the long-range future of that Laboratory. He said that while the primary mission of the Laboratory will remain in the field of atomic weapons research and development for many years to come, Dr. Bradbury believes that in order to retain top quality scientists, the Laboratory should have a definite role in the development of peacetime uses. Mr. Tammaro noted that Dr. Bradbury's concern about Los Alamos pointed up the broader problem of defining the missions of all the National Laboratories. He reported that the definition of laboratory missions and the integration of laboratory into a smoothly meshed over all research program was an important problem to which his office would give top priority in the coming months.

Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission Dr. Warren and Dr. Bugher reported on their visit to the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Japan. Dr. Warren

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2/ Visit to ABCC by Drs. Cannon, Burnett, Hastings, Francis and others

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believes that Dr. Holmes, the present director, had done an outstanding job in establishing contacts with the various Japanese agencies and in maintenance of these contacts.

Dr. Bugher commented on the genetics program. He said it should be carefully reviewed with respect to future developments. He recommended a full-time geneticist be added to the staff of the ABCC.

Dr. Bugher mentioned that the Japanese Advisory Council are considering the change of name for the ABCC. (A change of name for the project had been recommended previously by the ACEM). They are hoping to come up with a name which would be symbolic of the change to peacetime uses of atomic energy.

Dr. Warren, in corroboration of Dr. Bugher's observation, pointed out that there is bitter resentment in Japan of the placement of the "Atomic Energy for Asia" program in Manila. On the other hand, the action of the Commission in increasing the amount of fissionable material which could be made available to the Japanese has been of tremendous value. It was Dr. Warren's belief that "the more we can do to help the Japanese in developing this program the better will be our foothold in Asia; and our hope to meet the challenge of the Communist way of life against our own way of life can be presented to the people of Asia."

Dr. Glass stated that he thought Dr. Bugher's remarks on the genetics program were very encouraging and he agreed completely with the need for a very careful review.

Dr. Bugher continued at this point by saying "I should like to pass on to you a clear idea that I received of the essential desire of the

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Japanese to maintain their independence with respect to aid. They have great pride. They want to take encouragement from the United States and look for our technical training and guidance, but they want to do the work themselves."

Fallout - Project Sunshine It was the sense of the Committee that in view of the fact there will be a great amount of additional data on world-wide fallout available from the New York Operations Office Health and Safety Laboratory in the near future that they would prefer to have this material in hand before making an over all statement on Project Sunshine.

The new data will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee and the results of this discussion will be forwarded to the Commission.

International Affairs Mr. Brown reported briefly on joint AEC-State Department discussions on possible aid to an atomic energy program among the "Community of Six," - Belgium, Netherlands, West Germany, France, Italy and Luxembourg. The program is known as "Euratom."

Special Operation Activities Mr. Butenhoff reported on an operation known as Operation "Cue Ball," the latter being a coded name for classification purposes.

A further report on this project is to be made at a subsequent meeting.

Special Health and Medical Problems Dr. G. Victor Beard, Director, Health and Safety Division of the Idaho Operations Office, invited the Committee's attention to several problems which concern the Health and Safety Division. He said that at the present time 35 off-site wells are

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being sampled for radioactivity; that if the State of Idaho adopts legislation requiring one-tenth drinking water tolerance at the point of intake, this could, if strictly interpreted, require weekly sampling of some 1500 wells in the area of the State of Idaho. Dr. Beard said he did not think it was too much of a health problem as there has been no radioactivity found in any samples to date.

Mr. Eisenbud commented at this point to say that he thought that "if we were getting a good screening sample of 15 wells with no radioactivity in them, this should be a good example of what to expect."

The second question raised by Dr. Beard concerned the concentration of radioactivity which should be permitted in the atmosphere of communities near the ANP site. It was his estimate that exposure to the lungs from airborne activity would be about 100 times greater than external whole-body exposures. Should the permissible dose be as low as 1.56 rem per year to the lungs, as presumably would be required by NCRP recommendations, or should the permissible dose be more comparable to that used in the Nevada Test Site area - that is, based on external exposure?

Atoms-for-Peace Dr. Pearson referred to the report of the Panel on the Impact of the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, also known as the McKinney Panel Report. He said that the McKinney Panel had attached great importance to the peaceful use of atomic energy in biology, medicine, and agriculture. A program has been developed between the Division of Biology and Medicine and the Division of International Affairs to implement the

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Panel's findings. The program consists of three steps:

1. The first phase of the program is to send small missions of scientists to foreign countries to study the potential uses of atomic energy in those countries in the fields of biology and medicine. (This part has been approved by the State Department and by the International Cooperation Administration).
2. The second phase involves bringing scientists, particularly younger scientists, to this country for training in the techniques and in the use of atomic energy in biology and medicine.
3. The third phase of this program is to make available atomic energy tools and isotope laboratory or perhaps a gamma field so that when a scientist returns to his native country he may utilize his newly acquired knowledge.

Dr. Pearson mentioned that some definite action has been taken in respect to sending out missions to foreign countries. Plans are being formulated to send a group to South America, which will include Dr. Robert J. Hasterlik, ANL, Dr. Paul Aebersold, ORNL, Dr. Karl Wilbur, of Duke University, and Dr. Stakman. Dr. Nathan Hall, formerly of the Division of Biology and Medicine, and now stationed in Peru, has been asked to join the group on its planned tour.

Minutes of Meeting held at the AEC November 30, December 1 & 2, 1955      The minutes of the meeting held at the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington,

D. C. , on Wednesday, November 30 and December 1 and 2, 1955, were

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approved unanimously upon a motion made by Dr. Warren and seconded by Dr. Burnett.

Next Meeting The Committee selected the date of May 26 and 27, 1956, for their next meeting, which will be held at the AEC in Washington, D. C.

Executive Session Further consideration was given to the problems of the ABCC with special reference to the reports made by Dr. Warren and Dr. Bugher upon their return from visiting the project in Japan.

Upon the conclusion of the discussion it was voted unanimously that the following resolution should be forwarded by the Chairman of the ACEM to the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission:

"Recognizing the very unsatisfactory operation of the ABCC from the inception of the contract with NAS, realizing the urgency of the present situation, and mindful of the importance of the knowledge to be gained in Japan to the United States and to the world, the ACEM recommends that the AEC discuss with the NAS the steps necessary to improve radically and immediately the operation of the ABCC. In the unanimous and considered opinion of the ACEM, this requires transfer of the operating contract from the NAS to another organization, such as a university or group of universities."

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Appendices:

- (A) Letter to Dr. Bronk from Dr. Dunham, dated 12/30/55
- (B) Letter to Mr. Strauss from Dr. Failla dated 3/13/56
- (C) Letter to Dr. Failla from Mr. Strauss dated 4/23/56

December 20, 1955

Dr. Detlev W. Bronk  
President  
National Academy of Sciences  
2101 Constitution Avenue  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Bronk:

By now you will have received the report of the November 27 ad hoc conference held under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Keith Cannan at which the present status and future program of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission were thoroughly discussed. I am writing to express my own concern about the future of ABCC and to report the views of the Atomic Energy Commission's Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine on this matter as expressed at a recent meeting in Washington.

The AEC has a two-fold interest in seeing that the program is not interrupted: the necessity for making the most scientifically of all available material on the effects of ionizing radiations on humans coupled with a need for assuring that misleading and unsound reports of the effects of radiation on man emanating from Nagasaki and Hiroshima are kept to a minimum. Were the United States to pull out, the vacuum created would assuredly be filled by something, and it might well be something bad, even flavored with occasional tinges of red. Especially might this be the case at Hiroshima. In such an event, both the world scientific community and the United States as a country would be the losers.

The conference recommended in its unified program plan a broadening of the scientific interest and scope of the ABCC as a necessary requirement for interesting the best qualified people to undertake what is more and more an "epidemiologic" approach to the long-term radiation effects study. I cannot but agree with this idea especially in the light of my several years' contact with the ABCC and its many vicissitudes which have in great part stemmed from too narrow and limited an approach to the radiation problem. An exception, of course, is the genetics program which was broadly conceived and perhaps as a consequence of this was quite successful.

I note that the conference recommended that you be asked to call a high-level meeting of interested and potentially interested governmental and non-governmental agencies. This is logical and necessary and the immediate next step towards eventual resolution of the Academy's problems in administering the ABCC program.

I wish to go on record as wholeheartedly supporting the report and recommendations of the ad hoc conference. At the same time, I want you to know that I feel the matter to be one of great urgency. I am ready to cooperate in any way possible in such steps as you may take towards resolving the problem.

Sincerely yours,

Charles L. Dunham, M.D.  
Director  
Division of Biology and Medicine

cc: Dr. G. Failla  
Dr. Shields Warren  
Dr. Edward A. Doisy  
Dr. Charles H. Burnett  
Dr. Simeon T. Cantril  
Dr. John C. Bugher  
Dr. H. Bentley Glass  
Dr. R. Keith Cannan

cc: GM thru Tammaro  
John Hall, IA

April 23, 1956

Dear Dr. Failla:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of March 13, 1956, in which you urge immediate discussions with the National Academy of Sciences regarding the administration of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Japan, and in which you also report the Committee's resolution that a new contractor be sought.

Please be assured that the importance of this matter is appreciated. I have asked the General Manager to review the matter with Dr. Dunham and to report back to the Commission. I feel that the Commission should have the benefit of the views of the staff since questions of authority and contract administration are involved.

I know that ABCC matters have demanded much of the time of the Committee during the past five years and that several of your members recently found it necessary to travel to Japan in order to obtain first hand information and impressions. The Commission values greatly such interest by your Committee.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ W. F. Libby

(Acting) Chairman

Dr. Gioacchino Failla, Chairman  
Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine  
Columbia University  
630 West 168th Street  
New York 32, New York

March 13, 1956

Honorable Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman  
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Strauss:

In my letter of January 4, 1956, reporting on the 53rd meeting of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine, concern was expressed over the critical status of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Japan and some suggestions for remedial action were made. As suggested by the ACEM Dr. Dunham wrote a letter to Dr. Bronk, President of the National Academy of Sciences, on December 20, 1955. At the 55th meeting of the ACEM held in Idaho Falls March 9 and 10, 1956, Dr. Dunham reported that he had not yet received a reply from Dr. Bronk. In the meantime another group, including Dr. Shields Warren and Dr. John Bugher had visited the ABCC in Japan and, reporting to the ACEM, re-emphasized the need for prompt action. The Committee discussed the matter again and prepared the following statement, which I am transmitting to you ahead of the full report of the meeting, because of the urgency of the situation.

"Recognizing the very unsatisfactory operation of the ABCC from the inception of the contract with NAS, realizing the urgency of the present situation, and mindful of the importance of the knowledge to be gained in Japan to the United States and to the world, the ACEM recommends that the AEC discuss with the NAS the steps necessary to improve radically and immediately the operation of the ABCC. In the unanimous and considered opinion of the ACEM, this requires transfer of the operating contract from the NAS to another organization, such as a university of group of universities."

I am very sorry to add another problem to the numerous ones you already have, but it seems that only action at a high level can straighten out the present situation.

With kindest regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

/s/ G. Failla

G. Failla  
Chairman, Advisory Committee for  
Biology and Medicine

GF:ks

MINUTES

Meeting of

Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine

U. S. Atomic Energy Commission  
Idaho Falls Operations Office  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

March 9 - 10, 1956