

M I N U T E S

63rd MEETING OF

A E C ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

PLACE: *Washington, D. C.*

DATE: *June 18, 1957*

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A special meeting was held on June 18, 1957 to conclude certain business remaining unfinished at the University of Rochester meeting, and to discuss certain fundamental matters of policy of the Committee with Commissioner Strauss.

The meeting was called to order at about 9:00 a.m. by the Chairman
with the following persons present:

A D V I S O R Y C O M M I T T E E

Dr. G. Failla, Chairman
Dr. Shields Warren Dr. Charles T. Burnett
Dr. John C. Bugher Dr. H. Bentley Glass
Dr. Simeon T. Cantril
Mr. Hanson Blatz, Scientific Secretary
Miss Rosemary Elmo, Administrative Secretary

STAFF, DIVISION OF BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

Dr. C. L. Dunham

OTHER, AEC

Commissioner Lewis L. Strauss (part time)

PURPOSE
OF
MEETING

The meeting was turned over by the Chairman to Dr. Dunham who made some introductory remarks. DR. DUNHAM stated that none of the staff had been invited since the Committee had expressed an interest in keeping the entire meeting essentially in Executive Session. It was his understanding that the prime purpose of the meeting was to discuss ACEM functions and its relationship to the Commission and that it was the expressed desire of the Committee to discuss some of these matters with Commissioner Strauss who had accepted an invitation to meet with the Committee at about 10:00 a.m..

A folder of material was distributed to the members and DR. DUNHAM related some of the experiences at the recent Joint Congressional Committee hearings on fallout, particularly the reaction to Dr. Glass' interview by a Washington reporter. This apparently resulted in a garbled newspaper account and at Representative Holafield's invitation, DR. DUNHAM read a statement into the record in an attempt to clarify the matter.

The Committee took approximately ten minutes to read the material distributed to them.

DR. FAILLA asked the members to think of questions for Mr. Strauss prior to his expected arrival rather than proceed with the unfinished business.

DR. GLASS gave a brief account of his interview with the newspaper reporter and stated that he had been either misquoted or his statements misinterpreted.

DR. BUGHER spoke of the increased atmosphere of mistrust between the general public and DR. WARREN pointed out that in any public statements, the impression made was more important than the words used. This was particularly important because of the apparently current hostile atmosphere against the AEC for the last two or three years.

AEC
PUBLIC
RELATIONS

A lengthy discussion followed concerning the public relations aspects of weapons testing and fallout during which DR. BURNETT repeated his suggestion that either more frequent meetings of the Advisory Committee should be held in the immediate future or more time should be set aside at meetings for the discussion of the subject at hand.

ACBM
FALLOUT
STATEMENT

In answer to a question by Dr. Warren, DR. DUNHAM said that a strong statement on fallout from the ACBM was now needed. DR. FAILLA spoke of the unfortunate effect of Dr. Pauling's television interview and the fact that his statements had not been refuted. DR. WARREN and DR. BUGHER were in agreement that ACBM members should side-step any public debate on the subject. There was some discussion initiated by DR. GLASS as to the extent to which additional weapons tests added to military knowledge, but considerable disagreement among members arose as to whether such questions should be raised by the

Committee.

DR. FAILLA suggested that the draft prepared by himself be reviewed and modified for the purpose of being presented as a statement from the ACBM to the AEC. He stated that the question has not been whether there is or is not a danger but rather what is the magnitude of the danger.

The question of the transportation of weapons was raised and after a brief discussion, it was generally agreed that present planning as outlined by Dr. Dunham was satisfactory to the
TRANSPORTATION
OF WEAPONS
Committee.

The question of offsite criteria for the Nevada Test Site was raised and Dr. Dunham said that a report would be distributed to the
OFFSITE
CRITERIA
Committee some time in the future.

The question as to the desirability of a bio-medically oriented member of the General Advisory Committee or of the Commission itself was raised but at the suggestion of DR. WARREN this was not pursued because of recent nominations. DR. WARREN indicated preference for strengthening the ACBM rather than attempting to exert any influence upon Commission or General Advisory Committee membership. This opinion appeared to receive general endorsement by other members of the Committee.
BIO-MEDICAL
REPRESENTATION

DR. WARREN raised the question of the statutory status of the ACBM but DR. DUNHAM explained that this had been explored previously without success.

AEC
PUBLIC
RELATIONS

At 10:20 a.m. Commissioner Strauss joined the group.

DR. FAILLA spoke of the change in public relations and expressed the concern of the Committee for the present climate. He asked Commissioner Strauss how the Committee could help to resolve this problem and also asked what the Chairman considered the relationship to be between the ACBM and the AEC. He also asked if the Committee should take the initiative or whether questions should be asked by the Commission. COMMISSIONER STRAUSS agreed that the present climate was undesirable and unfortunate. He stated that the ACBM was originally organized to advise the Commission spontaneously whenever it wished and on whatever subject, not necessarily limited to biology and medicine matters. He pointed out that the General Advisory Committee has never hesitated to advise on non-technical matters. He expressed the hope that the ACBM will comment on any matter of orientation of AEC policy or in any manner in which it believes the Commission to be guilty of errors of commission or omission.

With regard to the fallout problem, MR. STRAUSS expressed the opinion that the AEC could not have avoided the problem. It has been aggravated in 1954 by there being a lengthy delay (for reasons known to the Committee and not due to the AEC) in reporting the studies following the heavy fallout in the Pacific. The AEC was not prepared for the emotionalism within segments of the scientific community but felt that the results of the current hearings on fallout should be beneficial. He also stated that the recent report in the SATURDAY REVIEW on Albert Schweitzer together with Dr. Schweitzer's statement was a body blow to the testing program. He asked if the Committee could suggest what the AEC could do to offset bad public relations short of hiring a public relations counselor which is the 'run of the mine' suggestion.

DR. FAILLA pointed out that the very number of weapons tested was important to the public regardless of the size of individual weapons to which the Chairman replied that the AEC had perhaps been more meticulous in testing refinements than might have been necessary. He discussed at length the differences between atomic offensive warfare and atomic defense and the different weapons requirements. DR. FAILLA stated that because of the emotional response, it should be demonstrated to the public that the weapons testing program is justified. Repeated statements by responsible and reputable individuals would help. COMMISSIONER STRAUSS stated that the National Academy of Sciences report had been brushed aside by many people including scientists and that this puzzled him as he could think of no statement more reputable. He stated that the confidence of the public in the defense and AEC establishments had to be reinforced. The use of special advisory groups to determine policies didn't appear to work too well in the past.

AEC
PUBLIC
RELATIONS
(continued)

DR. GLASS said that the subject of public relations had come up at both Congressional hearings and in National Academy of Sciences discussions. He repeated his concern about the relative emphasis on physical versus biological research and expressed the opinion that much biological data are missing as a result. MR. STRAUSS stated that the Commission and its contractors agree that much evidence is lacking.

DR. FAILLA pointed out that the lack of biological data is not the result of disproportionate emphasis. The difficulty lies in the nature of the problems involved. He stated, for example, that genetic studies were started very early in the program and that a much bigger research program in this field in the past would not have prevented the present emotional reaction on the part of the public. He thinks that in the present state of the biological sciences and from the nature of the problems, quick answers cannot be obtained, no matter how much money is appropriated for the purpose. He feels that expansion in biomedical research is hampered by the shortage of competent technical personnel. An increase in the budget of the Division of Biology and Medicine by a factor of 10 would not be utilized effectively at the present time. This does not mean that the saturation point has been reached and no increase is needed. Dr. Failla's objection is to the comparison of budgets for physical and biological research. Each should be considered on its own merits. DR. BURNETT suggested that a greater effort be made to develop a training program to provide scientists, but DR. WARREN indicated that such efforts in the past had not been too successful.

COMMISSIONER STRAUSS suggested that the results of radiation exposure from tests should always be balanced against the results which would follow from atomic war. He expressed the opinion that the medical profession as an organized group had not expressed an opinion on the subject and that perhaps it should do so.

MR STRAUSS spoke of the discussions with the USSR concerning the stopping of tests and the discontinuation of weapons production and pointed out that in any such arrangement, the USSR would gain a distinct advantage because of their increased experience in arriving at final production models without as many preliminary stages as is customary by established American standards.

MR. STRAUSS expressed his appreciation of the service of the ACBM.

DR. BURNETT suggested that perhaps greater thought should be given to public announcements prior to the conducting of tests and wondered what plans were being made for the next series. MR. STRAUSS described the usual procedures and stated that full announcements had been made.

DR. CANTRIL stated that public education was needed not only in connection with weapons testing problems but because of a greatly increased problem of radioactive waste disposal in the civilian atomic energy program. There was a brief discussion by DR. FAILLA and COMMISSIONER STRAUSS of next year's budget problems insofar as they might affect the Division of Biology and Medicine.

COBALT-60

Prior to leaving the group, COMMISSIONER STRAUSS asked the Committee's opinion as to the probable expansion in the use of cobalt-60 in medicine and industry in relation to AEC cobalt production facilities. The Committee was of the opinion that present production facilities would be adequate for some time to come, insofar as medical requirements are concerned.

Mr. Strauss left the meeting at 11:30 a.m..

BIO-MEDICAL
RESEARCH

DR. WARREN spoke again of the millions being spent for the construction of accelerators because of international competition in fundamental physics and because of this demand of funds, requests of funds for Biology and Medicine projects always resulted in a struggle. DR. FAILLA agreed that while the Biology and Medicine budget should be increased, there was a real need to compete with Russian development of science in general in the current "cold war" since neutral countries as well as our allies, were apparently impressed by Russian progress. DR. WARREN pointed out the severe disadvantage we find ourselves in because of the critical review of mistakes and errors in the United States, whereas such matters are frequently overlooked in other countries as long as the end results were satisfactory. As an example of this he spoke of the experience in jet plane development. DR. WARREN stated that military needs were frequently multiplied by a factor of 10 in making requests and that this probably holds in the development of weapons. For this reason a certain amount of counterpressure is needed to obtain biological and medical data. In a general discussion it was agreed that there was probably a need for a careful review of military requirements and that this suggestion should be transmitted to Mr. Strauss in a regular letter.

DR. CANTRIL mentioned a recent report by Donaldson in which he claimed that strontium-90 fallout does not appear extensively in marine life, but 90% of strontium-90 fallout remains on the bottom of the ocean. He expressed belief that this is an important consideration in waste disposal plans.

The meeting adjourned at Noon for lunch.

ACBM
FALLOUT
STATEMENT

The meeting was reconvened at 1:20 p.m. by DR. FAILLA and he asked the Committee whether they considered the fallout statement to the AEC to be for Commission information or whether it was to be a statement to be published. It was generally agreed that the AEC could decide its ultimate disposition. A general discussion of DR. FAILLA'S draft followed and it was agreed that various sections would be revised by different members. DR. GLASS agreed to compose a statement regarding other mutations not mentioned. DR. BURNETT agreed to rewrite the section on leukemia with the assistance of Dr. Bugher who would furnish certain data. DR. BUGHER was asked to provide material for the section on bone tumors. The section on life shortening was to be revised by DR. WARREN and it was agreed that there should be some mention of the responsibilities of the medical profession. DR. BURNETT believed that the medical profession should merely be asked to consider the matter at the present time.

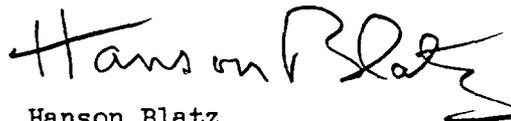
ACBM
NOMINATIONS

It was announced that Dr. Sharp had found it necessary to decline his nomination for membership in the ACBM and because of this and because of the fact that Dr. Failla's term had expired, it was necessary to consider further nominations. In line with the earlier discussions, it was agreed to fill the two vacancies and to add a new member as soon as possible. A list of candidates was prepared for forwarding by Dr. Dunham to the General Manager.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Washington, D.C. on September 13 and 14, 1957. DR. DUNHAM stated that Dr. Western would be prepared to present a review of the potential hazards to the population of normal reactor operations. It was agreed by the Committee that a vote of thanks and confidence should be extended to the retiring Chairman, Dr. Failla.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,



Hanson Blatz
Scientific Secretary ACBM

No Journal Agenda

ITEMS FOR ACBM MEETING, 6/18/57

MR. STRAUSS - 10:00 A.M.

1. Appraisal by committee of future test plans from possible hazard standpoint.
2. Transportation of devices now being carried out but no plan in effect in event of accident.
3. Overall objectives of Sunshine Project.
4. Question of Offsite Criteria. (It was agreed that nothing could be done until DBM comes up with some revised set of criteria).
5. Failla's suggestion to request President to appoint committee to determine how many bombs should be tested, where and when.
6. Sharp declined appointment (Christensen & Horsfall other candidates)
7. Appointment of new chairman, ACBM
8. Chairman's Interview on "Meet the Press" 5/26/57
9. Place and date of next meeting.

Fredell
Peaceful new reactor design?
prop. as a whole
Suggest. Failla. prepare imp. for
ACBM.