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ARMY SERVICE FORCES
UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE
MANHATTAN DISTRICT
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IN REPLY REFER TO

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14 February 1945

[redacted]

COL. NICHOLS:

Review of the proposed projects by the University of Chicago for investigation of the medical aspects of the District operation reveals a comprehensive program. From the point of view of academic research the pattern is complete and very thorough. The amount of work outlined in this report would correspond to a program which would ordinarily involve the radiology departments of several medical schools for a decade.

It would appear from examination of these summaries of the proposed research that not sufficient consideration has been given to results which must actually be achieved in order to permit the normal progress of the DSM operations. It should be clearly recognized that the services of the medical organization is an accessory function. This function is not well defined, but its primary interest is to maintain the health of the operators at a level which will in no way interfere with operations and to ascertain that no serious impairments will be suffered due to the special hazards. It appears that the greatest portion of the research is aimed at fundamental knowledge of radiation and of radiation injuries. It is recognized that this objective is a commendable one, but it hardly contributes to the war effort, unless, by virtue of the unique and extremely hazardous operations, complete understanding of radiation injuries is essential for continued operation. This is obviously not the case since previous background and data accumulated up to the present indicate that the hazards may be maintained at a minimum by relatively simple precautions and expedients. The ease with which precautionary measures may be introduced obviates to a considerable degree the necessity for much of the research. It is true that there are many hiatuses in our present knowledge, but there appears to be no necessity for filling these gaps at this time, and delay until after the war may be tolerated.

It is not established that active pursuit of all the phases of the biological effects of radiation are necessary in continuing the operations of the Manhattan District.

In view of the rigorous demands of the war effort I would be willing to state that research should be conducted for purposes of orientation rather than for providing complete knowledge and understanding at the present time.

HYMER L. FRIEDELL
[redacted]or, Medical Corps

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