

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

TO THE

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

710321

REPOSITORY 326 U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
 COLLECTION BIOLOGY OF MEDICINE
 BOX No. 2
 FOLDER 1

April 15, 1959

Mr. John A. McCone, Chairman
 U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
 Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCone:

The 73rd meeting of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine was held at Brookhaven National Laboratory, March 13 and 14, 1959.

This meeting was the first occasion for the majority of members to visit the new research hospital and the medical reactor which will soon be in operation. The facilities fully provide for the exploitation of radio-isotopic techniques to the better understanding of human physiology, pathology and possible treatment of selected problems. The medical reactor is as yet a challenge to give high energy atomic particles a useful place in cancer therapy. Certain limited experimental results to date indicate that this may not be an ethereal pursuit.

The Committee heard with interest an account of the experimental work going forward with tritiated thymidine by which Brookhaven scientists have initiated a new approach to observing nuclear metabolism and cellular reproduction. The biology department presented several studies employing this technique in studying chromosomal biochemistry and genetics. The technique has found application in many laboratories throughout the world.

Dr. L. J. Haworth, Director, gave us a summary of the collaborative role of the laboratory with regional universities in making the facilities of Brookhaven available for research and training. It would appear that this aspect of the laboratory's mission has been achieved to a greater extent in physical research and nuclear engineering than in biology and medicine. Further discussion by the Committee at ensuing meetings will attempt to formulate general answers to questions that become more pressing with the expansion of

4654

1069327

DOE ARCHIVES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE
TO THE
UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

-2-

Mr. John A. McCone

April 15, 1959

the National Laboratories as they concern biology and medicine. These relate to questions of: (1) basic versus programmatic research, and in particular as the latter bears upon questions of immediate concern to the Commission's activities; (2) the extent to which scientists may be required to participate in the educational and training programs of DBM; and (3) the extent to which expansion of biologic and medical research within National Laboratories can grow in relation to like efforts within the universities. The Committee is aware of the Commission's vital interest in these matters which cannot be hurriedly or categorically answered without relationship to the entire program. We hope however to formulate some general answers for your consideration.

The Committee was apprised of the forthcoming hearings on fall-out and the plans of DBM for presentation of programs and data. The Committee noted recent statements by a responsible consultant to USPH that radiologic research providing sound data to answer problems of permissible radiation exposure was nowhere being pursued by a "concerted effort." Your statement reported in the New York Times of March 25 concerning the Commission's efforts in this regard furnish evidence to the contrary. Insofar as the fall-out problem is concerned, it is further noted that the Commission has "no desire to preempt this activity" if new statutory regulations assign some part of it to other agencies. We would only emphasize that it would be a diversion of scientific manpower and funds for another agency to now originate a program which in any respect duplicated the very considerable effort which has already been undertaken by the AEC.

Respectfully yours,

Simeon T. Cantril
Simeon T. Cantril, Chairman
Advisory Committee for
Division of Biology and Medicine

STC:bb

1069328

DOE ARCHIVES