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MINUTES

of the

EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

of the

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

HQ, 1717 H St. N. W.
Washington, D. C.

June 9-10, 1961

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The 87th meeting of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, was held at AEC Headquarters, Washington, D. C., on June 9-10, 1961. In the absence of Dr. Bugher, Dr. Bentley Glass acted as Chairman. Other Committee members present were Drs. F. J. Hodges, J. G. Horsfall, R. F. Loeb, L. D. Marinelli, and H. G. Wood. Also in attendance were Dr. Charles L. Dunham, Director, DBM, and various members of his staff.

It is proposed to hold the next ACBM meeting at Berkeley, California, on August 31-September 2, 1961.

The Minutes of the 86th meeting of ACBM were accepted with two revisions.

The business of the 87th meeting is summarized under the following headings:

1. NASA Life Sciences - DBM Program Cooperation
2. Radiobotany Program
3. Postdoctoral Training Program in National Laboratories
4. Project Chariot
5. Administration - Contract Policy - Reorganization of Divisions and Departments
6. Miscellaneous Items

1. NASA Life Sciences - DBM Program Cooperation

The radiobiological research activities of DBM and their relation to the NASA programs through the latter's Office of Life Sciences Programs were described by Dr. Douglas Grahn of DBM and Dr. G. Dale Smith of NASA. A draft memorandum of understanding was circulated to the members of DBM, in which Dr. Dunham (for DBM) and Dr. C. H. Roadman (Office of Life Sciences, NASA) have indicated their desire for cooperation between the two organizations. It is planned that this draft will serve as a basis for a letter from Dr. Dunham to Dr. Roadman. The plans call for scientists in AEC laboratories to investigate radiation effects on living cells and organisms subjected to flights in space arranged for through the NASA Life Sciences staff.

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It was the opinion of DBM that such cooperation is very much worthwhile and should be fully encouraged.

2. Radiobotany Program

(note in room 7 Radiobotany Center)

Further measures to build up an important program in the botanical sciences were discussed by Dr. R. Caldecott of DBM. Dr. Caldecott pointed to the development of institutes in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy which appear to have more potential than any analogous institutions or programs in the United States. He also stated his opinion that many investigators in the botanical sciences from abroad would like to visit the U.S. for scientific work relating to atomic energy but could not be properly accommodated. It was proposed that an ad hoc committee be appointed, with Dr. Horsfall representing DBM, to consider the feasibility of establishing special programs in radiation botany in one or more universities or other offsite scientific institutions. The committee would include representatives from such major divisions of the botanical sciences as soil science, microbiology, plant pathology, biochemistry, physiology, morphogenesis, genetics, and ecology.

3. Postdoctoral Training Programs in National Laboratories

Dr. Dunham discussed with the Committee the advisability of having funds specifically earmarked to support postdoctoral training in the national laboratories. The discussion was based on Dr. Hollaender's request for support to be given to a fellowship program at the Biology Division, ORNL. It was pointed out that a fellowship program might be difficult to carry out for administrative reasons whereas support for postdoctoral training in research would be a feasible method to accomplish the same ends. Such a program is not only of benefit to the younger workers who are thereby supported but also provides stimulation and encourages optimal research activity on the part of the senior staff. In view of the record of the Biology Division at Oak Ridge, it is recommended by DBM that the AEC take steps, including the provision of necessary additional funds, to facilitate enlarging the postdoctoral program there.

4. Project Chariot

Recent developments relating to the biological aspects of Project Chariot were reported on by Dr. J. N. Wolfe, DBM, and Mr. J. F. Kelly, DMA. In particular, steps are being taken to resolve the problems raised in regard to hydrography.

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Dr. Wolfe reported in detail on a recent issue of Nuclear Information (Vol. 3, Nos. 4-7, June 1961, published in St. Louis, Mo.) in which it was claimed that an important hazard of this project would reside in the following food chain: reindeer lichen to caribou to man. It was stated that the reindeer lichen absorbs more strontium-90 than any other plant, that it is an important food of the caribou of the region in which Project Chariot is planned, and that the caribou is an important food source for the Eskimo. According to Dr. Wolfe, the discrimination factors in this food chain have not yet been determined. Furthermore, no lichen patches sufficient to support caribou during the winter are known to exist within the territory under discussion, although the article is based on their existence. These articles were based on two reports sent by two A.E.C.-supported workers in the field, with permission to publish. The same reports were sent to the AEC and labelled "Not for Publication". DBM believes that the environmental studies for Project Chariot have been conducted with scientific skill, care, and thoroughness, and it expressly desires that they be carried to completion.

5. Administration

Contract Policy. Mr. H. A. Stanwood brought up to date the continuing discussion on the use of contracts vs. grants in support of basic research, a discussion initiated at the last meeting of ACBM. It appears that current administrative practice is satisfactory and that the proposed use of grants as well as contracts seems to be unnecessary. DBM recommends, therefore, that a single system be used, but that it include provision for negotiation over longer periods, say for 3 to 5 years, and that ample formal notice be given with respect to the times at which contracts are to be negotiated for renewal or are to be terminated. ()

Reorganization of Office of Health and Safety. Dr. N. H. Woodruff reported that the Office of Health and Safety had been divided into two new offices, that of Operational Safety (under himself), which is charged with all matters relating to industrial health and safety, including industrial medicine, and the Office of Radiation Standards (under Dr. Forrest Western) which will deal particularly with radiation guides and serve for purposes of liaison with the Federal Radiation Council and also with state agencies proposing to assume responsibility under Public Law 86373.

Reorganization of OCDM. Mr. R. L. Corsbie told DBM that the President is initiating a reorganization of the Office of Civil Defense and Mobilization. Although the Executive Order has not yet been written, it appears that the Office of Emergency Planning under the new arrangement

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will be directly under the President. It also appears that the national effort will be in the direction of something like a Five-Year Plan involving Federal expenditure of perhaps \$5 billion to promote the construction of fallout shelters for all. It was suggested by Dr. Glass that there is still insufficient study of the long-range effects of nuclear wars of different magnitudes throughout the period subsequent to emergence from civil defense shelters, and that time should be made available for DBM to discuss this problem at the next meeting.

Division of Reactor Development. Dr. J. Lieberman, of the Division of Reactor Development, reported that a Hazards Evaluation Branch had been established which is looking forward to considerably more conjoint effort with DBM than had been possible for the Division in the past. In particular, the new Branch will endeavor to specify the nature of the exhaust vented into the atmosphere with respect to both its physical and chemical composition, so that biological studies may be planned on the basis of as much pertinent information as possible.

6. Miscellaneous. Dr. P. M. Johnston reported that the AIBS Advisory Committee on Histochemistry and Cytochemistry, set up at the request of DBM, had met. It was suggested that a program be given at a future annual meeting of the Radiation Research Society in order to acquaint research workers with the possibilities of histochemical and cytochemical research.

Mr. Corsbie reported that the 1957 edition of the Handbook on Effects of Nuclear Weapons is now being revised under the editorship of Dr. Samuel Glasstone and a collaborating staff of more than 100 consultants.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry I. Kohn, M.D.
Scientific Secretary to Advisory
Committee for Biology & Medicine

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