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June 21, 1967

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

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 The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine met on June 8-9, 1967, at the AEC Headquarters, Germantown, to review various problems with the retiring Director of the Division of Biology and Medicine, Dr. Charles L. Dunham, and with his successor, Dr. John R. Totter. All members except Dr. Russell were present. Our comments on selected major questions put before us are:

Calsoyas Correspondence. The ACBM reviewed the file of correspondence on Dr. C. D. Calsoyas' position and were briefed by Mr. DeRenzis on the background aspects. The ACBM are of the opinion that Dr. Calsoyas' appeals to you and others are being handled in the proper way.

Workmen's Compensation. The ACBM believes that the Commission's efforts to upgrade the state workmen's compensation laws should be further pursued, particularly as these laws relate to possible long-term radiation effects on workers in the radiation industry. The ACBM, however, would like to see the Commission study further the scientific merits of the record keeping system and central repository and to have an early opportunity, possibly at its September meeting, to discuss this aspect of the problem with the Commission.

Radiation Hazard in Uranium Mines. The ACBM reviewed the evidence that radon and radon daughter products have led to an increased incidence of lung cancer among uranium miners of the Colorado Plateau, and learned of efforts currently under way to establish realistic but safe permissible levels of exposure to these substances. This is primarily a responsibility of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the AEC is assisting in developing apparatus for better mine dosimetry and in research correlating the biological effects of these substances with radiation dosage to different parts of the respiratory system.

Pions in Cancer Therapy. The clinical application of pions to cancer therapy seems to have promise because of the possibility of manipulating the Bragg-peak distribution, because of the large amount of energy in the tail of the beam and the high linear energy transfer of secondary beams

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which may increase the relative biological effectiveness and give an even better depth dose distribution. Although the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory is not the best location for a clinical evaluation of pions, it may be satisfactory upon the establishment of a new medical school at the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque which could be a source of patients for the project. The cost of the additional biological facilities, though substantial, is small, we believe, in relation to the cost of the entire pions project already funded. We recommend that the DBM continue to actively explore the feasibility of this added use of pions.

Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission Program. The ACBM reviewed the objectives of the ABCC program in the light of the Bureau of the Budget questions of February 28, 1967. The ACBM continues to regard the ABCC program as a unique scientific opportunity. Nowhere else can an exposed population and descendants of an exposed population of human beings be studied. The lack of numerous large startling differences between the exposed and non-exposed samples should be regarded as valuable scientific findings. The ACBM is not prepared to judge the political and fiscal aspects of the question, but it thinks that the U. S. national interests are best served by continuing the ABCC program. If positive differences between the exposed and non-exposed populations should be demonstrated after-our withdrawal of participation, our withdrawal could be a costly political error.

The next meeting of the ACBM is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, September 7-8, 1967, at the AEC Headquarters in Germantown.

Sincerely yours,

Earl L. Green
Chairman, Advisory Committee
for Biology and Medicine

Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg
Chairman
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C. 20545

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