

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Files

DATE: April 7, 1959

FROM : John F. Bonner, Asst. Chief, Medical Research
Branch, Division of Biology and Medicine

720136

SUBJECT: VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, ATOMIC ENERGY PROJECT,
APRIL 4, 1959

SYMBOL: EMM:JFB

Dr. Neuman was not in his office when I arrived, so I wandered over to the Biochemistry Department and was caught by Dr. Alexander Dounce. He reviewed his recent work and theories on replication of RNA. He has mellowed considerably - in an hour of one-sided conversation he never once referred to anyone as a "blundering idiot" or "stupid fool". I believe some of the books and papers on his desk are in the same position as they were five years ago. The dust is a little deeper and more apparatus was piled in the corners, otherwise nothing much had changed. Dr. Dounce is still full of enthusiasm for his work, and reasonably certain that everyone who has passed high school chemistry has a deep interest in the biochemistry of nucleic acids. As a quick and biased review of much of the current work in the field, it was well worthwhile.

I then returned to the "0" wing and met Dr. Blair, whose parking space I had usurped. He was planning to attend the meeting of the local chapter of the Society of Experimental Biology which was being held at the Medical School. We talked a few minutes and made arrangements for meeting different people on Monday. I gave him a brief report of Dr. Darling's visit, the fallout situation and the request by ANP for additional field work this summer. I mentioned the possibility of establishing a fission-product inhalation study with dogs at Albuquerque; Dr. Blair didn't seem to be too happy about the idea. Dr. Neuman came in about this time and Dr. Blair left to attend the meetings.

Neuman and I discussed the various possibilities concerning the ANP program. We both felt that the present arrangements should not be continued beyond FY 1960, and that the work requested for this summer should be carried out only if funds are available in advance. (The \$65,000 for FY 1959 has not yet been received). For the future there are two main alternatives:

1. Establish a fission-product inhalation facility at Rochester. This is estimated to cost \$1,000,000 in new construction. Both

(continued)

ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT

15-1

149435

US DOE ARCHIVES
326 U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY
RC COMMISSION
Collection... Dem
Box 3374
Folder 3

April 7, 1959

Mr. Robert Wilson (Project Engineer) and Dr. Robert Thomas (Dr. Stannard's section) are very interested in the work. They have carried out the field work, and can design and supervise construction of the necessary laboratory inhalation chambers. At the present time Dr. Neuman is not too happy with the situation in which the Air Force plans a release with little advance warning and the two Bobs dash off to the desert. He is willing to go along with this arrangement for another year, but not much longer. He is not very enthusiastic about undertaking the expanded program, mostly because of the past ups and downs of the ANP program, with the possibility of rapid fluctuations in future needs and financing.

2. Establish a fission-product inhalation facility at Albuquerque under the Lovelace Foundation (This was discussed as a purely hypothetical situation). Responsibility for biological field tests could then be transferred to Lovelace. The equipment could be moved easily, as it is all in trailers. I pointed out that the Lovelace group has had a great deal of experience in the field at NTS in connection with blast studies, and has a nucleus of competent engineering and physiological talent. They have had no experience with the design, construction and operation of inhalation chambers, or the measurement and characterization of aerosols. Their background in the use and handling of radioisotopes is also weak. I suggested that the two Bobs could be loaned to Lovelace for a few years, or that they might like to transfer to Albuquerque more or less permanently. Dr. Neuman thought that there is a good possibility that Wilson and Thomas would consider some such arrangement.

Dr. Aser Rothstein came in, and we talked about the mercury toxicity program. He has decided to use pigeons as his test animal to attempt to measure CNS effects after chronic exposure. Dr. Rothstein had just finished reading the Saturday New York Times. We discussed the possibilities of the proposed transfer of responsibility for radiation standards to HEW. I emphasized the idea that transfer of actual research programs would probably be gradual, and that the effect on the Rochester program would be minimal, - perhaps two or three projects would be affected.

Dr. Newell Stannard joined with the group for lunch. We discussed fallout problems in general, and AEC public relations. Dr. Stannard cited a recent example at a large undergraduate symposium in which the principal speaker (Dunn, Columbia University) stated, during the question session, that he knew AEC withheld large amounts of fallout data. Fortunately, some other faculty member, not associated with the AEP, challenged his statement.

(continued)

1149436

DOE ARCHIVES

April 7, 1959

After lunch, I visited the new Pharmacology Department quarters. I had not received Dr. Victor DiStefano's renewal proposal, and wished to inquire about the status of the work. Dr. DiStefano was not in the laboratory, but I noticed a kymograph held the tracings of an experiment with AEMT. Dr. Eugene Boyd was in the laboratory and we talked about his current work with hallucinogens. Boyd is no longer working with LSD, but has shifted to another class of drugs. I brought up the subject of the "isotope farm" and the use of its products in experimental pharmacology. He was quite bewildered to think that anyone would seriously consider an expansion of the project. He had not read or heard anything of ANL and its accomplishments since our visit there five years ago.

I asked about Dr. Hodge and his travels. Gene said he hadn't really noticed much decrease in Dr. Hodge's perambulations, and that he thought Dr. Hodge was out of town. At this moment Dr. Hodge walked in. We went into his office and talked about the new pharmacology department and its teaching and research program. He said that DiStefano had sent in the progress report and renewal proposal. We found a draft of the progress report, but I said I would stop in again on Monday to see if a spare copy were available. He thought that DiStefano was quite interested in continuing the study. I mentioned the proposed Walter Reed large-scale screening program for anti-irradiation drugs. Dr. Hodge was quite surprised that DBM had not seen an outline of the proposed program, - it had been sent to him for comment, and he had recommended that Dave Doherty's program be expanded and that complete coordination with AEC be established. He had suggested that the proposal be sent to Bruner or myself for information and comment. I told him about the request for Dr. Bruner to serve on the advisory committee. Hodge was very surprised at the lack of representation from ORNL. He also mentioned that Joe Howland had suggested to DiStefano that his program could be considerably expanded with Army funds. However, DiStefano is not an empire-builder and decided to stick to his present level of operation with AEC support. Hodge said he was sure that Howland expects to receive a large amount of Army money. I told Hodge I didn't think it was proper for Howland to accept money from the same source that he would be serving in an advisory capacity, without discussing the matter with the Washington office, particularly when we had been urging him to use his AEC funds for the same purpose.

This brings up a very important point, - the advisability of staff members paid 100% by the project, accepting funds from other sources without Washington approval. If AEC salaries and facilities are involved, I believe we have the right to determine whether or not such programs are compatible with AEC interests.

(continued)

1149437

DOE ARCHIVES

April 7, 1959

After talking with Dr. Hodge, I drove over to Twelve Corners and had a short chat with Mr. Fred Esler. Mr. Esler is a kind of "practical" electronics expert and worked for the Manhattan project during the war. He recently sold the AEP a small closed circuit TV for use in the whole-body counter.

1149438

DOE ARCHIVES