

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Charles W. Shilling, M. D., Deputy Director DATE: January 5, 1959
 Division of Biology and Medicine

FROM : James F. Haggerty, Medical Research Branch
 Division of Biology and Medicine

SUBJECT: VISIT TO BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY - DECEMBER 15-18, 1958

SYMBOL: EMM:JFH ..

On December 15 and 16 I participated in the Medical Deans' meeting held at the new medical facility at Brookhaven. I can honestly say that Dr. Farr's group did a masterful job in handling this group of visiting deans and in presenting certain rather significant phases of the research program to the group. The first morning was devoted exclusively to introductory remarks and scientific presentations by distinguished speakers.

In the early part of the afternoon an opportunity was given the group to participate in conducted tours of the various facilities at the Laboratory. Later that same afternoon the group was broken up into units of about 8-10 individuals who participated in panel discussions covering various topics of interest to the medical schools. As co-chairman of one of the groups, I found the panel discussion most interesting, particularly insofar as hearing the viewpoints of the individual deans with respect to problems associated with radiation. They impressed me as being reasonably well informed for the most part and, I might add, appeared to be extremely pleased that they were brought in on the ground floor with respect to this new and unique medical facility.

The following morning several members of the Medical Department presented 30-minute discussions on their current research work, which I interpreted as quite stimulating to the visiting deans. The four sessions which I attended were quite enthusiastically received, and the presentations were followed by a fairly good number of intelligent questions. Later that morning the panel discussions were resumed, and after lunch each of the panel chairmen summarized the dean's reaction to the various topics that were discussed.

On the whole I was very pleased with the entire two-day program and am confident that each and every member participating in this two-day meeting felt his time was well spent.

Insofar as the program review is concerned, my comments of necessity are fairly general. I attended the Wednesday morning session at the

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Biology Department and, since I was reasonably familiar with BNL and AUI, Dr. Haworth's presentation was "old stuff." His running over in time plus the coffee break resulted in Howard Curtis' having little time in which to present his program. I do not feel that I learned anything from his presentation, for I could have read the outline and come away feeling just as knowledgeable of the program there. I was a little unhappy with the presentation for I would have much preferred to listen to each of the section chiefs give a 15-20 minute presentation. I suspect the reason Curtis did not make this type of presentation was because of his interpretation of the information contained in Dr. Shilling's letter to Dr. Haworth regarding the program review.

I cannot help but feel that the research being conducted in the Biology Department is much better than one might believe from having heard Curtis review the program. I do not see how any staff member visiting Brookhaven for the first time could possibly gain a proper perspective of the program. Though I do not like to be a Monday morning quarterback, I feel that we did not allow sufficient time for the review of each of these programs. I would be much happier if a two-day review were devoted to Biology alone, two days for Medicine alone, and possibly one day for Biophysics. I would further recommend that in future reviews of this particular Laboratory we spell out a little more in detail the manner in which we want the presentation made. After talking with various members of the staff, I think we were all pretty much in agreement that hearing from each of the senior scientists performing the particular research is far more beneficial than listening to the single individuals simply expound on the total program.

In the afternoon I went over to the Medical Department to visit individual groups, rather than sit through the Biophysics presentation. I spent some time with Dr. Lawrence Hanks, the organic chemist who has been quite active in the synthesis of various labelled tryptophan metabolites and of late has been quite interested in problems associated with these excretory products in cancer patients. Hanks impressed me as a first-rate bio-organic chemist, and I was certainly pleased to hear that he will focus his attention on the study of metabolites in various diseased states, particularly in connection with human patients. At the present time there seems to be a revival of interest in studying the metabolic defects in tryptophan metabolism with respect to certain malignancies, and I would hope that some rather significant data might come out of this phase of the medical program.

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I also visited with Hughes and Painter in connection with their thymidine work. Though I found the discussion interesting and informative, I was not overly impressed with the ingenuity of the studies. I do think, however, that the thymidine work is of sufficient interest to have them pursue the problems as vigorously as possible, particularly in connection with human studies.

I also spent some time with Paul LeFevre, whose interests are largely along the line of ion transport across the cell membrane. Paul has been interested primarily in the problem of glucose transport and its effects on other ions. I have a good deal of confidence in Paul's ability and feel that whatever he undertakes will be done thoroughly and it will be a contribution to basic research.

I also had an opportunity to listen to other presentations during the Deans' meeting and was most favorably impressed with the trace element work of Dr. George Cotzias. He has done a good deal of work on manganese and has got out some reasonably good publications in the last twelve months. His presentation evoked a good deal of interest in the Deans' group which I attended, and I overheard words of praise expressed in behalf of Cotzias.

I found Dr. Stoner's work on immunological problems quite interesting and of good calibre. Here again a very active discussion ensued in the presence of the deans, and I was quite pleased with the manner in which Stoner answered some rather difficult questions. He impressed me as being thoroughly well grounded in his subject and handled himself exceptionally well under question.

In the course of my visit through the new medical facility, I also talked with the group on the whole body counter and hadn't realized that they were so far along with it. This particular facility should be most helpful as well as valuable to Farr's group in connection with their patient studies particularly.

My overall reaction toward the Medical Department program was most favorable. I feel that Dr. Farr has a very competent group of individuals, and with such a group one cannot help but end up with a reasonably good and productive research program. I was also pleased with the new facility and am confident that the results coming out of there will justify the funds we have expended to provide adequate facilities for this group. The only disappointment, if one would call it a disappointment, is the timing in completing the medical reactor. I think we were a little too optimistic in

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our initial calculation, for when one looks back on other construction jobs the actual completion of a facility lags far behind the original anticipated date. The group seems to feel that the fuel element will be loaded sometime in March and that possibly by the end of the calendar year of 1959 they will be ready to treat patients. I am inclined to believe that patient treatment by late 1959 might become a reality.

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