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ARMY SERVICE FORCES
UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE
MANHATTAN DISTRICT
OAK RIDGE TENNESSEE

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IN REPLY REFER TO
EIDMK-4

31 May 1946.

Subject: Experimental Program at Western Reserve University.

MEMORANDUM to A. V. Peterson.

REPOSITORY Oak Ridge Ops Office
COLLECTION (RHIG) Classified Docs 1944-1994
Records Holding area 9 Bldg 2774-4 Vault
BOX NO. 8HA - H 248-18 273

FOLDER None

1. Contrary to Colonel Warren, I believe that thorium has been known and studied for some time. The literature attributes to it only slight toxic qualities. Compounds are used for external therapy and internally for radiology. Thoria was a common item in the home in the form of the Welshbach mantle prior to the advent of the incandescent electric lamp. In reply to indirect questioning designed to obtain other information, Charles Lindsay III indicated that their experience in years of operation with soluble and dry material showed no hazard.

2. The recommendations of the medical section with regard to handling uranium are not uniform and generally accepted among MED health units. Is it expected that recommendations with regard to thorium will be better received especially when recommendations can only be of a more restrictive nature?

3. Thorium is accompanied by meso-thorium, an isotope of high specific activity which renders ordinary thorium more active than ordinary uranium. However since meso-thorium is an isotope of radium its chemistry and physiological action are comparatively well known and do not warrant additional investigation due to increased interest in thorium.

4. The prosecution of the second problem proposed by Colonel Friedell would be incomplete unless it were to include plutonium. To expend funds for such a program without the inclusion of plutonium would be an extravagance. On the other hand I am opposed strongly to the introduction of plutonium or for that matter polonium into any congested area. I have a definite opinion against the work currently being carried out at Chicago for that reason. Certainly no material should be supplied until an adequate disposal plan for the contaminated tissue is in effect.

5. I strongly recommend that such programs be carried out only at locations such as Oak Ridge, Hanford or Los Alamos. At such places the problem of transporting radio-active material to the animals is replaced by the relatively simple one of transporting

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By M. R. THEISEN, ANALYSAS CORP. 1-13-94
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animals to the radio-active material. The disposal of contaminated putrefiable matter and the hazards associated with handling radio-active (particularly α emitters) is centralized in localities where such problems are relatively minor.

6. In addition there is work going on at other laboratories. It would be more efficient, cause less repetition and give more comparable results if the problem were centralized rather than dispersed in the hope that the problems will be solved by the increased chance of a fortuitous event.

7. I am not inclined to favor an extensive program of academic studies involving the use of radio-isotopes. All investigators are anxious to engage in such work. Priority necessarily will go to MED contractors. If such contractors are allowed to engage in fundamental studies in competition to non-project workers who are unable to receive allocation of material, we are open to serious criticism.

8. Although I believe Colonel Friedell to be the most practical member of the medical staff and I should like to see him engaged in project research I can not support the proposed contract.

T. S. CHAPMAN,
Chief, Operations Branch,
Research Division.

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