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MONTHLY SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

October 1948

U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December , 1948

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PART V

BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

Advisory Committee Meeting

The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine held its twelfth meeting at the Hanford Operations Office in Richland, Washington, on October 8 and 9 with all members present.

The Hanford particle contamination problem was presented by Dr. Herbert Parker of the Health Instrumentation Division. He reported that approximately 10^9 particles were being discharged per month and that an appreciable number found their way into the operating galleries of the canyons as well as being present in the area outside. A broad discussion followed on the nature, activity and hazard of the particles, and it was the belief of the Committee "that there is no scientific evidence that it is an unwarranted hazard to continue the present process for six weeks, during which time steps will be taken vigorously to control the hazard." If, on continued investigation after the installation of the protective measures, it is found that particles continue to be discharged in appreciable amount, a reappraisal of the problem would be necessary.

A program outlined by the Director of the Division of Biology and Medicine for the Chicago Toxicity Laboratory was approved by the Committee:

1. To determine the general toxicity and local effects of radioactive zirconium, tantalum, columbium and lanthanum, and yttrium, strontium and cesium following inhalation.

2. To determine the toxicity and relative effectiveness of these radioactive materials following absorption into the blood stream.

3. To determine the toxicity of these materials by ingestion.

It is felt that the other aspects of the program submitted by the RM study group in biology and medicine could well be assigned to other activities as follows:

a. Effect of external radiation (gamma rays or x-rays): On laboratory animals, to such extent as found necessary at locations to be selected; on animals at Oak Ridge, under the supervision of Division of Biology and Medicine, to be supplemented by field experiments with munitions as developed.

b. Effects of external radiation (beta rays): At a laboratory to be selected.

c. Effects of internal radiation: Respiratory barriers to be studied at Rochester in connection with activities already under way there.

d. Contamination of food and water: Studies at University of Rochester; military aspects of contamination and decontamination of food and water supplies - probably best carried out in Rochester. Definite assignment to be made later.

e. Contamination of wounds by radioactive materials: Much work has already been done by Argonne and elsewhere; probably best handled by Argonne.

f. Criteria for assessment of radiological damage: Probably best handled by research contracts in various universities through the Division of Biology and Medicine.

g. Special instrumentation for military medical use: Coordinate with the Armed Forces Committee.

h. Diagnosis and treatment of radiation sickness, and of deposition of radioactive materials in tissue: Coordinate the work already being carried on at Rochester, Argonne and at Berkeley. In addition, research projects in universities should provide useful information. These will be handled through the Division of Biology and Medicine.

i. Definition of dosages acceptable as military risks under conditions to be prescribed: To be correlated with NEPA Committee on radiation hazards.

j. Psychological aspects of radiological warfare: To be correlated with Social Sciences groups and other operating groups with the Division of Biology and Medicine and Division of Public and Technical Information Service.

RW Study Panel

At the instance of the Director of Biology and Medicine, and based on the recommendations of the RW Panel, a Radiological Warfare Study Panel has been formed with Dr. Franklin C. McLean, University of Chicago, as Chairman.

Representatives of the various laboratories met at the Argonne National Laboratory on October 19 to discuss the availability of

biologically assimilated radioactive materials for commercial purposes. It was proposed that such meetings should be held semiannually to report the progress of this program and that the next meeting should be held in conjunction with the meeting of the American Chemical Society in Detroit during the latter part of March 1949.

University of Rochester Training Building

Pile driving for the Training Building began October 15 and was 40 per cent completed at the end of October. The sanitary sewer contract was completed except for repaving of sidewalks and driveways.

Berkeley Betatron

The University of California Regents have approved a tentative location for the betatron on university-owned ground adjacent to its Hospital in San Francisco. Inspection is being made of suitable instruments for the selection of one to fit the needs of the project.

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