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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

April - June 1956

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Part VII

Biology and Medicine

Radiation Shielding and Correlative Biology (UNCLASSIFIED)

A survey group visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in April to obtain first-hand information on shielding data collected by the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission on individuals exposed to the atomic detonations of August 1945. The data may be used in laboratory and full-scale field tests in the United States to develop better estimates of the radiation doses received by individual Japanese.

Weapon Effects

Technical assistance was provided for activities related to Operation REDWING. Members of the biology and medicine staff served with the Joint Office of Test Information for the two shots for uncleared observers and on the Advisory Panel to the Test Director to advise on radiological matters. During the tests, the Commission's New York Health and Safety Laboratory conducted aerial surveys in the test area to assist surface ships in delineating fallout patterns as early as possible. The aerial radiological monitoring equipment used was similar to that demonstrated in Operation ARME in the 1955 test series at the Nevada Test Site. Liaison was also provided between Joint Task Force 7 and representatives of the Federal Civil Defense Administration.

Larger numbers of weapon test reports were expected to be released. As noted in the Nineteenth Semiannual Report, an effort was made in the 1955 weapon test series to write weapon test reports in a completely unclassified form. Seventeen of the 37 preliminary civil effects test reports were issued as unclassified, and an even higher proportion of the final reports will be issued as unclassified documents. Several hundred classified reports from earlier test series will be declassified and released when the revised AEC-Department of Defense Classification Guide is issued.

West Coast Fish Monitoring

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration in April began a routine spot-checking of all species of fish caught in the Pacific to check for the presence of radioactivity. The need for the monitoring program was discussed by representatives of the State Department, the Food and Drug Administration, the Japanese Embassy, and the Commission. FDA representatives stated that the monitoring program falls within their statutory responsibility to determine that all imported foods are fit for human consumption. The Japanese representatives contended that the Japanese people might be disturbed to learn that similar precautions were not being taken for their protection. No radioactivity has been detected in fish since FDA monitoring began.

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BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

Committee on Respiratory Protective Equipment

Steps were taken in April to investigate the adequacy of respiratory protective equipment used in atomic energy plants. A committee was established to study the problem and to suggest improvements in equipment. Members of the committee are AEC contractor personnel.

Premature Aging and Life Shortening

Studies were continued to determine how radiation contributes to premature aging and life shortening in animals and humans. These studies may reveal the biological mechanisms involved and the relative effectiveness of large single exposures as opposed to continuous or repeated small doses. Much information has been accumulated for analysis and further evaluation. (End of UNCLASSIFIED section.)

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