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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 984

2:15 p.m., Wednesday, May 12, 1954

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Present

Lewis L. Strauss
Henry D. Smyth
Thomas E. Murray
Eugene M. Zuckert
Joseph Campbell
K.D. Nichols
William Mitchell
W.B. McCool
John H. Stumpf

Also Present

Lt. Gen. Donald L. Putt, USAF
Lt. Gen. Thomas S. Power, USAF
Maj. Gen. James McCormack, Jr., USAF
Maj. Gen. Herbert B. Thatcher, USAF
Maj. Gen. Howard C. Bunker, USAF
Brig. Gen. George E. Price, USAF
Brig. Gen. Bruce K. Holloway, USAF
Lt. Col. F.T. Bradley, USAF
Capt. Paul Baker, USAF
Hon. Robert LeBaron (Chairman, MLC)

Brig. Gen. Donald J. Keirn
Col. Ralph L. Wassell
Col. Nathan L. Krisberg

Col. William S. Barksdale, Jr.
A. Tammaro
L.R. Hafstad
Frank W. Davis
Charles G. Manly
Leonard F. Reichle
E.J. Bloch
Samuel S. Sapirie (OROO)
Col. Vincent G. Huston
Clarence E. Larsen (ORNL)
Walter H. Jordan (ORNL)
John A. Hall
Edward F. Miller
Dr. John C. Bugher
Merril Eisenbud (NYOO)
David S. Teeple
John Mackenzie, Jr.
Comdr. James M. Dunford

FIRST D. LITTLE, 8-14-95, ADD
SECOND W. CHROBAK
DATE 8-16-95
CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED
OTHER (SPECIFY): PAGES 164-170

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Mr. Bloch then discussed with the Commissioners the possibility that mercury produced in Western Europe is being sold behind the Iron Curtain. The General Manager said that if upon investigation it appears that sales to the U.S.S.R. have occurred, the question of including mercury among the items restricted under the terms of the International Controls List (Battle Act) would be submitted to the Commission.

At this point Dr. Bugher and Messrs. Hall, Eisenbud and Salisbury entered the meeting.

4. Report on Matters Related to Fall-out from Pacific Test Operations

Dr. Bugher and Mr. Eisenbud reviewed at length the status of various problems which have arisen as the result of fall-out from the Pacific test operations.

With regard to the contamination of inhabited islands in the Marshall Group, Dr. Bugher reported that it appears to be undesirable for the inhabitants of Rongulap atoll to return to the island for a year. He discussed with the Commissioners arrangements which are being made to provide them with another suitable home until conditions permit their return. He then reported on the health of the island residents and of the U. S. personnel now at Tripler Hospital and indicated that all appear to be in satisfactory condition. The U. S. personnel will be returned to duty when the present examination is completed.

With regard to a petition which has been presented to the United Nations on behalf of the islanders, requesting that test operations in the area be discontinued if possible, Dr. Bugher said that it remained uncertain how the petition had been submitted or precisely who had prepared it.

Mr. Eisenbud then reported on the situation in Japan in the light of his experiences in the early part of April. He first reviewed at length events which had occurred aboard the Japanese fishing vessel which received considerable fall-out in the test area and commented on the condition of its crew and the course of their treatment in Japan. He pointed out that the language barrier had been the source of many problems in the relations of American and Japanese medical personnel.

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He then reported on the situation with regard to the contamination of tuna fish and said that during his stay in Japan he had not personally examined any contaminated fish but that it appeared certain that some contamination had occurred. He observed that the Japanese anxiety about the possible consequences of contamination had been caused in part, at least, by the prospect of the cancellation of orders placed by American firms.

In the course of discussion on these matters, Mr. Smyth asked to be provided with a report on fall-out on ships in the Pacific area.

Dr. Bugher then referred to a suggestion which had been received from the State Department that the AEC provide a representative to accompany a Japanese scientific expedition to the areas surrounding the proving grounds. (See minutes of Meeting 982.) He said that especially since the expedition was to be accompanied by a number of newspaper reporters, and since it appeared likely that extensive publicity would be given to any developments unfavorable to the U. S. which might occur, he believed that the position of a representative would be extremely awkward and therefore recommended that none be sent. As an alternative he proposed that AEC representatives meet with the members of the expedition at Wake Island or at some other convenient place to hold unclassified discussions of matters of interest to them. The General Manager indicated that this was also his position on the matter.

Mr. Murray said that since the State Department apparently believed that AEC representation was desirable and since that agency was presumably in a better position to evaluate some aspects of such a question than the AEC, it appeared to him that a representative should be dispatched. Mr. Zuckert said that it appeared to him also that effective representation might be most desirable, both in demonstrating that the U. S. is willing to offer assistance in any reasonable project of this kind and in serving to set in their true light any unfounded allegations which might be made as a result of the expedition. Mr. Smyth indicated that he too was of the opinion that the AEC ought not to decline to participate in any valid attempt to explore questions of this kind. Mr. Campbell said that he agreed that U. S. representation with the expedition would be appropriate since the State Department had requested it, but that he would prefer that some person who was not an employee of the AEC or of an AEC contractor be sent.

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In response to a question by the Commissioners, Mr. Salisbury said that although difficulties might result from AEC participation in the expedition, he was inclined to think that on the whole these would be less serious than the problems which might arise if no representative were sent.

The General Manager said that in view of the opinions expressed by the Commissioners, the staff would make every effort to insure that a representative is on hand to meet the expedition at a convenient port of call. Mr. Campbell said he understood it to be the intention of the Commission that the AEC representative would not be obliged to join the expedition if he should conclude that its purpose or nature would make it unwise to do so. The other Commissioners indicated their concurrence in Mr. Campbell's statement of this point.

At this point Mr. Murray and Colonel Huston left the meeting.

5. Selection of Architect Engineer for BNL Facilities

The General Manager reported that he intended to approve the selection of the firm of Stone & Webster as the architect engineer for certain facilities required in connection with the Brookhaven cosmotron. Questions by the Commissioners on this subject were discussed. The General Manager said that he would circulate to the Commission various papers related to this matter. (See AEC 603/15, subsequently circulated.)

6. Selection of Operating Contractor for Winchester Laboratory

The General Manager reviewed problems which have arisen in the administration of the Winchester Laboratory by the American Cyanamid Company, and reported that he would approve the selection of the National Lead Company as operating contractor. He pointed out that the operation of the laboratory is closely related to the activities of the Feed Materials Processing Center where the National Lead Company is also engaged.

7. AEC Participation in World Power Conference (See minutes of Meeting 983)

The General Manager referred to the question of AEC participation in the forthcoming World Power Conference, and said that Mr. Walter

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