MEMO TO FILES

August 16, 1957

C. L. Dunham, M.D., Director
Division of Biology and Medicine

R   408601

VISIT BY DR. ROBERT HARRY, GEORGE VANDERBILT RESEARCH FOUNDATION

SYMBOL: BM:CLD

This visit resulted from a meeting between Mr. Vanderbilt, Dr. Harry
and Chairman Strauss which took place two or three days previously.
It is my understanding that at that meeting Mr. Vanderbilt and
Dr. Harry implied that the AEC was shirking its responsibility for
monitoring the Pacific Ocean and the marine life therein to make sure
that the people of this country would not be injured by earing sea-
foods contaminated with radioactivity from weapons tests. Dr. Harry
called me on August 15 and wanted to know whether I felt AEC had any
responsibility in this area. I indicated that I thought AEC did and
that it was only a question of how extensive the program should be
and how to devise it so as to get the most out of it from the stand-
point of safety and science generally for the least money. After
considerable backing and filling and several times suggesting it
wasn't worth his while to come and discuss the matter with us he did
agree to contact Mr. Vanderbilt, who was then in New York with a view
to meeting me the following day. It turns out that Mr. Vanderbilt was
unable to be in Washington this morning but Dr. Harry did come and I
invited Dr. John Wolfe, Chief, Environmental Sciences Branch,
Dr. Sterling Emerson, Asst. Chief, Biology Branch, to be with me when
Dr. Harry came. Dr. Harry had very little more to say other than to
keep suggesting, without any evidence, that dangerous amounts of radio-
activity might be turning up from time to time in fish and that the
AEC therefore had a moral responsibility to sample the entire Pacific
Ocean. During the conversation I learned considerably more about the
Vanderbilt Research Foundation. Its annual operating budget is $100,000.
They have a policy of not expanding the staff beyond their base income
and that they are responsible directly to the Dean of the School of
Biological Sciences of Stanford University, and that generally it is a
fairly modest activity. It is interesting that the proposal to AEC of
a couple of months ago entitled Project Monitoring called for a budget
of over $100,000. In other words, this would exactly double their
activities. I find there is a fairly close working relationship between
this group and NRDL and that they have received funds from ONR on the
recommendation of some Academy Committee beginning about two years ago
to do some sampling of fish, and I think other life in the vicinity of
the Palaus, the specimens to be sent to NRDL for analysis. Dr. Harry

assured me this was for basic research purposes and was in no way a
duplication of what we had asked their Foundation to do during and
after Operation Redwing and which they did satisfactorily, namely:
to sample in certain areas at certain times and transmit duplicate
samples to Hanford for analysis and to Tokyo, in care of Dr. Hiyama.
We talked a great deal about the potentialities for basic research
in oceanography using planned and tracer experiments as well as taking
advantage of radioactivity introduced into the ocean currents as a
result of weapons tests. I told Dr. Harry that we at the present time
were re-evaluating our program in the Pacific with a view toward
sharpening it and we would certainly keep his organization in mind
when it came to any expansion in their particular area (geographical)
if expansion were decided upon. He obviously left very little changed
in his basic thinking. It is my impression that he is rather unimagi-
native and there is certainly no evidence of scientific stature in the
man. The minute discussions got beyond collecting and identifying
specimens he seemed to find himself pretty far afield.

cc: Mr. Strauss, Chairman
    Dr. Wolfe, DBM
    Dr. Emerson, DBM

C O P Y