

Dr. John C. Bagher

From
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Karl M. Wilbur

PERMANENT BIOLOGY PROGRAM FOR THE ENIWETOK AREA

The recent meetings of the American Institute of Biological Sciences at Cornell afforded an opportunity to discuss the possibility of an AEC biological facility at Eniwetok with persons conversant with problems in Pacific marine research. These included Dr. R. Fleming, former Chief, Division of Oceanography, Navy Department, Dr. O. E. Reynolds, Chief, Division of Biological Sciences, ONR, Dr. Charles Fish, Head of the Narragansett Oceanographic Institute and now serving with the Pacific Science Board, and Dr. T. H. Bullock, UCLA, who took part in the Eniwetok survey in 1948. Dr. Douglas Whitaker, Vice President of Stanford University, has also been consulted.

All of these persons felt that the AEC would be rendering a very considerable service in making the Eniwetok area available to biologists. In the discussions we specifically asked for opinions as to the needs that would be met by studies in that particular area as contrasted with studies which could be carried out in marine laboratories in this country. The chief points advanced were the following:

1. Information concerning the biology of the Eniwetok area of the Pacific is minimal and studies along several lines are needed. This also applies to poisonous and food fishes.
2. Studies of coral reef formation could be profitably studied both by following growth of corals marked by fission products and by geological studies. Dr. John Wells of Cornell has begun geological studies of corals in the area; and he and others would be interested in further studies.
3. Ecological and physiological studies could be pursued to great advantage because of the abundance and diversity of fauna. Such studies would supplement and provide comparative data for similar studies in more northerly latitudes.
4. Continuing studies of the distribution and fate of fission products are desirable in their own right and to provide training for individuals in this general line of study.

The desirability of having a permanent biological facility available in the Eniwetok area seems clear. Also there is good indication that enough biologists would make use of this to make such a project feasible

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from the scientific point of view. An arrangement for the transportation of investigators would, of course, be required. Dr. O. E. Reynolds has offered the cooperation of ONR and has indicated that the Navy may be able to provide transportation.

If the AEC wishes to go forward with the program, a committee made up of individuals familiar with problems of marine biology in the Pacific might be set up to formulate a program. Dr. Douglas Whitaker has expressed his willingness to convene a group for this purpose.

cc: Dr. Pearson

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