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M. W. Boyer, General Manager

March 13, 1953

John C. Bugher, M.D., Director, Division of Biology and Medicine

MONTHLY STATUS AND PROGRESS REPORT, FEBRUARY, 1953 -
DIVISION OF BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

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Transmitted herewith is the Monthly Status and Progress Report for this Division covering the month of February, 1953.

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Report

CC: J. H. Burchard

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MONTHLY STATUS AND PROGRESS REPORT

Division of Biology and Medicine

MOUTH OF FEBRUARY, 1953

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Neutron Test Activities

GW-1 Effects Program--UPSHOT/KNOXHOLE. ([redacted]) Pre-operational plans and arrangements for the GW-1 Effects Program, which will be a part of forthcoming tests, are being completed on schedule. The Group Office at Camp Murray, Nevada Proving Ground, was activated on February 26, 1953 to handle final preparations. GW-1 Effects Group personnel participating in operation UPSHOT/KNOXHOLE totaled 184, as of February 2, 1953. Maximum attendance of 146 at the Nevada Site is scheduled for the week of March 16. A "Security Guide for the GW-1 Effects Group and the Test Operations Group" has been prepared for personnel use during the operation. The guide specifies security responsibility and procedures for such matters as personnel clearance, physical security, and the like for participating personnel.

Bio-medical Experiments (Program 23). ([redacted]) Under the GW-1 Effects Program, an extensive series of genetic tests will be conducted. The overall objective is to determine the kinds of mutations and the dosage-frequency curve resulting from the fast neutron irradiation of the spore bank.

The objects to be exposed are the classic genetic test materials which have been used for establishing the mechanism of heredity and from which data may be extrapolated to human subjects. The Fruit Fly, Drosophila, employed spontaneously and following x- and gamma irradiation, has been the most used object for studies of gene mutation frequency. Plant material, especially the buds of the spiderwort, Tradescantia, has been very useful in determining the special kinds of mutations due to chromosome breaks. Such species are fairly hardy, and they will be compared with other material such as wheat, corn, and human weed seeds, and also fungi and bacteria. At lower dosages a small number of mice will be exposed in order to get comparisons with a warm-blooded mammal (4lbs min. All of these specimens will be exposed to neutron beams (with gamma rays screened out) in containers sunk in the ground at appropriate intervals from ground zero and covered with heavy lead shields. It is hoped to have at least preliminary data on the genetic effects of fast neutrons

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Bacterial Decomposition of Labeled Compounds. (UNCLASSIFIED)
 At the University of California, Berkeley, it has been found that certain organic compounds labeled with C^{14} have undergone decomposition as a result of the radiation from the C^{14} in the molecule. Changes have been observed in the following: valine, norvaline, norleucine, threonine chloride, sodium glycolate, and cholesterol. The percentages decomposition varied in the different compounds. These findings demonstrate the necessity of checking the purity of stored labeled compounds.

Detection of Cancer by Isotope Localization. (UNCLASSIFIED)
 A gamma ray scanner has been developed at the University of California, Berkeley, for the localization of radioactive isotopes in the human body. A movable portion of the apparatus, bearing a series of small radiation detectors which record as dots on a photographic film, is passed over the radiating patient. By this scanning procedure a picture or image of the patient is formed as a pattern of dots, each one of which represents a given degree of radioactivity. The number of dots in an area show the radiation in a particular portion of the body. This technique when used with radioiodine permits the detection of thyroid cancerous growths in various parts of the body.

Effects of Irradiation on Amino Acids. (UNCLASSIFIED) Studies are being conducted at Reed College (Portland, Oregon) to determine ionizing effects on biochemical compounds, such as the amino acids. One of these acids, cysteine, has been found to give some protective action against radiation when fed to animals prior to irradiation. No evidence as to the nature of this protective action is apparent. It has been found, however, that several unknown products are formed when cysteine is subjected to x-radiation from a cobalt-60 source. In recent experiments, one of the products formed was identified as ALANINE (also an amino acid). This has not been demonstrated previously, and studies will be continued to determine if the products formed by the decomposition mechanism bear any relation to the protective action of cysteine.

Toxicity of Iodine-131 in Sheep. (UNCLASSIFIED) Iodine-131 is a principal constituent of concern in the disposal of gaseous wastes emitted by the separations plant stacks at the Hanford Works. In order to obtain data on iodine toxicity to establish firm permissible exposure limits, a continuing experiment utilizing sheep, the common grazing animal of the region, was initiated at Hanford in 1950. Specifically, the immediate objective was to determine the permissible concentration of I-131 in vegetation contaminated by stack effluents. Doses of I-131 up to 5 millicuries per day were fed to sheep for 30 months. Results indicate that no pathology was evident in the thyroid or in any other tissue. Since the amount of radioactive iodine fed

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to the sheep was many times the amount of intake from local vegetation, the danger from fall-out hazard would be considered minimal. However, supplemental studies will be conducted to determine possible application to man, as well as animals.

Development of Organ Perfusion Apparatus. (UNCLASSIFIED)

A medical research group at the University of Minnesota has developed, in the course of their studies on porphyrin metabolism, an inexpensive organ perfusion apparatus. The device has been used by this group for various organ perfusion experiments including liver, whole leg, heart, kidney, spleen, and thyroid. This apparatus will circulate several hundred milliliters of blood per minute and can be adjusted for either a controlled rate of blood flow or a controlled pressure (either constant or pulsating), with automatic compensation to correct for changes in resistance of the organ.

While its use to date has related primarily to isotopic studies of porphyrin synthesis by the liver, it is expected that the apparatus will eventually prove of value for a variety of other biochemical and histochemical studies.

General

Conference on Infection and Immunity Factors. (UNCLASSIFIED)

A conference on "Infection and Immunity as Factors in the Response to Whole-Body Irradiation" sponsored by the Division was held in Washington on February 20, 1953. In attendance were representatives from Commission laboratories, off-site research contractors, the National Institute of Health, and the Department of Defense. Brief informal summaries of recent developments at the respective laboratories were given which stimulated discussion and comparisons of related data. This was the first meeting of its kind and considered successful in the original purpose to provide a mutual exchange of information. This will aid in expediting progress in the most promising directions, prevent any undue duplication of effort, and encourage renewed interest in resolving problems in this area.

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