

August 16, 1957

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Division of Biology and Medicine

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VISIT BY DR. ROBERT HARRY, GEORGE VANDERBILT RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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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 eating 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 standpoint 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 radioactivity 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 NRDD for analysis. Dr. Harry

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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 unimaginative 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

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