

ATOMIC ENERGY *newsletter*

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A SERVICE FOR INDUSTRY • BUSINESS • ENGINEERING AND RESEARCH

April 26th, 1949.

Dear Sir:

Radioactive contamination of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers... a possibility were the new reactor testing plant (AEN 4/12/49) to be located at Fort Peck, Montana, near the headwaters of these rivers...influenced choice of site in Arco, Idaho, it was announced last week.

Montana congressional delegation in Washington last week urged Fort Peck location...cited danger of another atomic installation on same power grid that supplies Hanford plutonium works.

Delegation was told: No satisfactory way has yet been found by U.S. to dispose of radioactive wastes... that Arco is a natural sump site--not even surface drainage to the 40-mile distant Snake river. (SEE: Britain Dumps Radioactive Waste at Sea--page 2, this LETTER.)

Record peace-time U.S. atomic energy budget of \$1,090,120,397.00 for fiscal year starting this July 1st...has been approved by House appropriations committee. It is \$150 million more than current year spending... but \$77 million less than had been asked by U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

No cuts made in research and development work...reductions were in overhead expense. (Cost analyses: See individual reports from atomic installations that immediately follow.)

HANFORD PLUTONIUM WORKS, Richland, Washington...For the new fiscal year, \$2.8 million were requested for construction, equipment, maintenance and operation of this city--\$9.5 million less than current funds. From new funds, construction will get \$1.9 million...largest part (\$1.3 million) for a new school...balance for community utilities.

Prime contractor here, General Electric Company, administering the community as well as the plutonium and allied works, gets \$200,000.00 monthly as its community operating fee. Rentals accruing to G-E from dwellings and business locations here average \$303,900.00 monthly.

Possibility of disaster here must keep closed to human habitation some 150,000 acres across the Columbia river from Hanford works, AEC Chairman Lilienthal announced last week. Despite protests from the Northwest (AEN 3/29/49), he said the remote chance of an atomic explosion at Hanford Works prevents opening this area for settlement. (A survey just released shows that for both 1947 and 1948, average accident rates at Hanford Works were lower than those for clerical workers throughout the United States.)

OAK RIDGE, Tenn....An \$11 million dollar budget for facilities, new equipment, and new construction has been submitted for the new fiscal year by this atomic city...with \$8 million required for maintenance. This compares with a present allocation of \$27 million for facilities, etc., and \$8½ million for maintenance.

Roane-Anderson Company (wholly owned subsidiary of Turner Construction Co., N.Y.) receives a monthly fee of \$16,000.00 to operate the community...says this is just over 1% of the gross amount of its government contract as community administrator.

Fairchild Engine and Aircraft, prime contractor on the NEPA (Nuclear Energy for Propulsion of Aircraft) project here, recently announced unfilled orders of its various divisions totalling \$90 million, against \$44 million at the end of 1947. (NEPA is U.S. Air Force's main effort to propel aircraft by atomic means.)

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico...The recently approved U.S. atomic weapons budget for the fiscal year beginning this July 1st is to be \$109 million in cash and \$100 million in contract authority. It is expected that since Los Alamos is the center of this activity a large percentage will be spent here.

Over \$18 million in cash and contract authority were requested for new community construction...with \$4 million for operation and maintenance of the community.

Radio station KRSN, Los Alamos, will go from government to private control if the FCC approves Rio Grande Broadcasting Company's pending application to operate it on 1490 kilocycles, unlimited time, 250 watts. Now, KRSN "pipes" its program over power lines...a wartime security measure.

RADIATION HAZARDS...and coping with the dangers.

...Children were discovered playing in fenced-off radioactive waste area at Los Alamos last week...were rushed to health laboratory for examination. Fortunately, they had not picked up any radioactivity.

...Radioactive contaminated waste from Britain's Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell is now being dumped in lots of about 20 sealed drums at a time in the Atlantic several hundred miles SW of the British Isles. Ministry of Supply official who made the announcement said it is encased in something heavy, like concrete, to ensure it goes to the bottom...that it would not have harmful effects on fish or animal life.

...Radioactive materials have been added to the Poisons List in France, in an order just issued by that country's Minister of Health. Covered, are radium, uranium, actinium, thorium, and their salts, but not naturally occurring waters or muds. Intermediate products, radioactive residues, artificial radioactive elements and all products rendered radioactive by the addition of radioactive elements are also included.

RADIOACTIVE ORE DISCOVERIES...new workings...worldwide...

UNITED STATES...New Mexico- Considerable interest is being attracted to the White Silver mining district, 25 miles south of Silver City, N.M., where extensive uranium ore exploration activities are under way. Geologists are said to be optimistic about the possibilities of uranium ore in this area... four different samples were recently found to be radioactive.

...Nevada- Nevada Uranium Production Company, with recently secured equipment, is completing a powder magazine at its leased Rainbow mine at Round Mountain. The main 340 foot tunnel, largely in uranium-bearing ore, will be extended, and winzes will be sunk where the highest measure of radioactivity is indicated.

MEXICO...Mexico City- This country will begin uranium ore mining activities soon, Ricardo Lopez, director of the Institute of Geology announced last week. Ores have been reported in Baja California, and in Chihuahua and Chiapas States.

CANADA...Nisto Mines, Ltd., has started work on its Tobey concession at Black Lake, northern Saskatchewan. Diamond drilling is to follow surface work. Small lenses of massive pitchblende are showing on the Nisto ground...lengthy sections are expected to contain about 0.5% uranium oxide (equaling \$27.50 per ton) over mining widths.

...Five radioactive showings were recently reported on the 26 claims of Danaray Uranium Mines, Ltd., (of 330 Bay St., Toronto) whose property covers Pointe Aux Mines, two miles south of Camray on the East shore of Lake Superior. Although the snow prevented more than preliminary examination, one of the showings was believed to be pitchblende. Rock types are different from Camray and Jalore (Jones & Laughlin) pitchblende discoveries in the area.

GREAT BRITAIN...Uranium and thorium ores have been reported found in Scaler's Hill Colliery, Rochester, Kent. The Ministry of Supply has requested samples for testing.

EGYPT...Uranium ore is believed by geologists to exist near the small Red Sea ports of Koseik, according to semi-official sources. Necessary equipment to carry on prospecting has been ordered by the Mines and Quarries department.

SPAIN...This country is now fourth among world producers of uranium ores, with proved reserves estimated at a minimum of 850 tons (uranium content), according to the Directorate General of the Spanish Mining Industry. The most important deposits now being exploited, he announced, are those at Hornachuelos, near Cordona. They cover an area 25 km. long by 6 km. broad, and consist of pegmatites similar to those of southern Norway...yield is 3 kilos to the ton.

CEYLON...Efforts are being made by the Ceylon Government to locate deposits of thorium ores sufficient to work on a commercial basis...those uncovered so far have been suitable only for working on a laboratory scale.

RADIOISOTOPES...in various fields...

MEDICINE...Radioactive phosphorous was recently administered for the second time to a patient suffering from Hodgkin's disease, under the atomic medical program of the University of Tennessee Hospital at Knoxville. Patient contracted the disease a year ago...first treated February this year...reported to have rallied after first treatment.

...Four other patients at this hospital, suffering from polycythaemia, showed reduction in red blood cell count after one or two treatments with radioactive phosphorous. (Excessive red cell count characterizes this disease.) Last week, one patient, after two months of treatment reported "marked relief."

PLANT STUDIES...Algae, one of the simplest forms of plant life, has now been made radioactive by Argonne National Laboratory in Chicago..it is available to qualified research workers from the Isotopes Division at Oak Ridge, Tenn.

U. S. ATOMIC POLICY & PROGRAM CHANGES...reported from Washington, D.C.

...Inventions involving fissionable material or atomic energy developed under an AEC research and development contract are to be reported promptly to the AEC who will take charge of the invention(s). This is one requirement of the new joint regulation, Section IX, "Patents & Copyrights", (section eleven) of the Armed Forces Procurement Regulation that becomes effective July 1, 1949.

...The commission appointed by Pres. Truman to work up a labor code for the nation's atomic plants (AEN 3/15/49) and headed by William H. Davis, former WLB chairman, has recommended creation of a labor relations panel. The panel would deal with disputes of an emergency nature...right to strike would be preserved, but public opinion would be relied upon for acceptance of panel's recommendations. Standstill period would be provided, pending the panel's action.

NEW PRODUCTS...

...Radioactive pharmaceuticals. Distributed below cost of production, to qualified research and medical institutions.--Abbott Laboratories, N. Chicago, Ill.

...Gamma-ray level indicator. Measures, with radioactive material, heights of corrosive liquids stored in tanks.--Instruments, Inc., Tulsa, Oklahoma.

...Directional counter. A Geiger-Muller counter tube that can measure, selectively, radiation coming from only a particular direction, in the presence of additional radiations passing in many directions.--Radiation Counter Laboratories, Chicago 8, Ill.

...Charging and reading instrument for pocket type ion-chamber devices. Regulating circuit permits stable action on input variations between 95 & 130 volts. For 110 V. A.C.--Nuclear Instrument & Chemical Corp., Chicago 10, Ill.

...Portable radiation survey instrument. Designed for radioactive ore prospecting. Uses resistor quenched Geiger-Muller tube for circuit simplicity.--Bay Instruments and Developments, Berkeley 5, Calif.

ATOMIC CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES...

...Beryllium will be manufactured for the U.S.'s atomic project in the government-owned former magnesium reduction plant at Luckey, Ohio, by Brush Beryllium Co., Cleveland, Ohio, who have made beryllium for the AEC in another plant in Ohio. Modification of existing buildings at Luckey will begin immediately... production is expected to get underway this August.

...In connection with the Atomic Energy Commission's new plant to be constructed on the Salton Sea in California, a contract for pumice blocks has been awarded the Builder's Supply Corporation.

...Rapid construction progress is reported at England's new plant for production of fissionable materials at Sellafield, Cumberland, with three firms of contractors employing 2,500 men now fully engaged. One of the two main buildings appears, outwardly, almost complete...other is more than two-thirds built...each will have a 500 foot concrete chimney stack. Miles of railway track are being laid, and a pipe line extending some distance out to sea will be used for waste discharge. More land is being acquired to extend the site to the sea on a frontage of about a mile.

BIDS, CONTRACTS AWARDED, & LOW BIDDERS...for atomic projects...

BIDS INVITED...U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Contracts
Branch, Los Alamos, New Mexico:-

(1) First increment, rehabilitation;
certain buildings; plans, etc., deposit \$25.00; inv. 291-49-77, bids April. 26.

(2) Remodeling houses; plans, etc., deposit
\$25.00; inv. 49, bids May 5.

(3) Bid closing dates on previously announced
bids (AEN 4/12/49) as follows-
Inv. 291-49-5, constructing buildings; May 4.
Inv. 291-49-134, for \$5-\$7 million housing; May 16.

LOW BIDDER...Steel gas main, from Brown & Olds, Los Alamos, \$63,926.

LOW BIDDER...U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Grand Junction,
Colorado:- Constructing housing, at Monticello, Utah,
from Gordon Supply Co., Moab, \$171,000.00.

CONTRACT AWARDED...U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Ames, Iowa:-
Research laboratory, Iowa State College; to James Thompson & Sons, Ames,
\$1,749,000.00.

Sincerely,

The Staff,
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