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February 13, 1952

MEMORANDUM

TO: General Advisory Committee  
FROM: Shields Warren, M.D., Director  
Division of Biology and Medicine  
SUBJECT: PROJECT GABRIEL

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384

Project Gabriel was undertaken in early 1949 at the request of General Manager Carroll Wilson, to determine the long-range effects which the explosion of a number of atomic bombs might have on animal and vegetable life through radioactive contamination of air, water and soil. Dr. Nicholas M. Smith, Jr., of ORNL undertook the study and presented reports in November 1949 and in November 1951.

An ad hoc committee, consisting of recognized experts in the fields of operations research, meteorology, soil technology, biology and physics, was assembled by the Division of Biology and Medicine on November 29--30, 1951 to consider the Gabriel reports on long-range effects and to extend its implications to short-range local effects (surface and sub-surface bursts, and under conditions of rain or snow). This material was reported briefly to the General Advisory Committee on December 12. The attached pages present a summary of the studies to date, including those of the staff of the Division of Biology and Medicine.

The General Advisory Committee on December 12 suggested that one or two additional independent surveys should be undertaken by competent analysis groups as a check on these estimates. On the basis of preliminary explorations, it was recommended to and approved by General Manager M. W. Boyer and Deputy General Manager W. Williams that Rand Corporation be asked to undertake the study. Negotiations are presently in progress. A second group (possibly M.I.T.) will be approached if the Rand Corporation decides not to accept the project, or if the Rand studies disagree markedly with present concepts.

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