

Organisation of the Electron Laboratory

Notes on an informal meeting at the Royal
Fine Art Commission, 13th July, 1961

Present: Lord Bridges
Sir John Cockcroft
Sir Harrie Massey
Sir James Mountford
Dr. T. G. Pickavance

The meeting was exploratory and had the general object of identifying principles for submission to the Governing Board.

The following points were firmly accepted by those present.

1. The Director of the Electron Laboratory should be responsible directly to the Governing Board.
2. He should have on his own staff a Secretary of the Electron Laboratory who would, however, work through the Secretary, N.I.R.N.S., in connection with the financial channel between the Treasury, the Office of the Minister and, at present, the U.K.A.E.A.
3. There should be close and permanent links between the Electron Laboratory and the Universities of Liverpool and Manchester who would be basing their high energy research very largely on the Laboratory. Joint appointments of research staff (between N.I.R.N.S. and these Universities) would be an essential feature of the arrangements, and these research staff should also teach.
4. Although these special arrangements with the two adjacent universities were essential, facilities must be provided in any N.I.R.N.S. laboratory for other universities. Special provision would have to be made for Glasgow University, who had been closely concerned with the origins of the project and would commit a substantial part of their programme to the 4 GeV machine, but would be too far away to enjoy the very close integration envisaged for Liverpool and Manchester.
5. The Director would need an Advisory Committee with strong representation from Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow, but with some members from other places including the Rutherford Laboratory.

There was strong preference for a Director with university rather than Government science background. He should be closely associated with one of the two neighbouring universities by holding a Chair in physics, but if a person other than one of the four existing professors were appointed he might be given a special Chair at Liverpool or Manchester for the duration of his appointment. Sir Harrie Massey and Dr. Pickavance were asked to prepare a list of possible candidates for informal consideration at a future meeting.

It was agreed that the appointment should preferably be for a fixed term, and that although the job was essentially a full time one it would be important for the Director to play some part in University affairs without, however, carrying departmental responsibility during his service with N.I.R.N.S. A period of three years was thought to be too short for the first Director since it would end with construction only partly completed, but five or six years would be too long for a senior man to be divorced from departmental responsibilities in the university. A compromise of, say, three years part time followed by three years full time was mentioned but discussion was deferred until the list of possible candidates was available.

In discussion of the general principle of the integration of university staff with the Laboratory, it was considered that appointments would be made both from inside and outside the universities, but that in the latter case it would be desirable to bring as many as possible of the staff into association with teaching work at the universities. This integration might not be possible for some of the applied physics and engineering staff who would be needed.

Salary scales and conditions of service for N.I.R.N.S. staff at the Laboratory would have to be the same as at other N.I.R.N.S. sites; at present these were the same as in the U.K.A.E.A. A member of University staff seconded to the Laboratory would therefore be paid at the N.I.R.N.S. rate for the duration of his secondment. This was not thought to be an unduly difficult problem for academic staff; the Director would be able to ensure that seconded university staff were seen to be helping to run the Laboratory and, in particular, helping visitors from other universities. However, for technical and technological staff of the "Experimental Officer" class the disparity in salary between the universities and N.I.R.N.S. would be considerable in some cases where the people and their work could be directly compared. But there were few of these staff in universities, in relation to the needs of the Laboratory, and the proper solution appeared to be for N.I.R.N.S. to employ their own Experimental Officer staff and to make some of them available to visiting university research workers as was done at the Rutherford Laboratory.

A Secretary and a Project Leader for the machine would be urgently required, but both appointments would closely concern the Director who must therefore be appointed first. The Project Leader would need to be an experienced man with expert knowledge of synchrotrons.

It was agreed to hold a further meeting before the next meeting of the Governing Board.

T. G. Pickavance

Distribution:

Lord Bridges
Sir John Cockcroft
Sir Harrie Massey
Sir James Mountford
Professor Mansfield Cooper
Sir Keith Murray
Dr. T. G. Pickavance