

375/9/7/11/2

N.I. (G.P.) 58 Second Meeting

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held in the Board Room, Treasury Buildings, Whitehall at 2.45 p.m. on Friday 23rd May, 1958.

Present:- Lord Bridges (in the Chair)
Mr. P. Bowles
Professor R. E. Peierls
Dr. T. G. Pickavance
Professor D. H. Wilkinson
Dr. J. A. V. Willis (Secretary)

1. ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sir Philip Morris and Sir Donald Perrott.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Committee approved the minutes of the 1958 first meeting.

With regard to actions (3) and (4) (Minute 4), Dr. Pickavance reported that Messrs. Brown Boveri and the English Electric Company had been given instructions to proceed and were hard at work. The formal contracts were still being negotiated. It was agreed that a press announcement (to be agreed with the firms) should be made when the formal contracts were issued.

3. VACUUM PUMPING EQUIPMENT

The Committee had before them paper NI(GP)(58)6 giving the recommendations of the Project Committee. The Chairman said that the recommendation to place the contract with Messrs. Edwards had been referred to the members by correspondence and, with their agreement, he had approved the recommendation. The request for financial authority up to a slightly larger sum to allow for small variations arising during the course of manufacture was normal. With regard to the third recommendation that the Atomic Energy Authority should be invited to warn the Treasury informally that there will probably be a request to increase the estimate for the vacuum plant at a later date, the Chairman said that he would prefer to treat this as part of the general question of the handling of successively revised estimates (see Action 3 in Minute 4 below).

The Committee:-

- 1) Gave financial authority up to £160,000 for the contract with Messrs. Edwards to allow for any small variations arising during the course of manufacture.

4. INCREASED BUILDING ESTIMATE

The Committee had before them paper NI(GP)(58)7 detailing an

increase in the latest building estimate amounting to £152,000. The Chairman said that the Committee would first wish to be satisfied about the details of the increased estimate and would then consider what effects this might have on the rate of progress of building and finally would consider how the increased estimate should be put to the Atomic Energy Authority and the Treasury.

Dr. Pickavance went through the paper in detail explaining the reasons for the individual increases. He dealt particularly with the large increase detailed in paragraph 3 (a) of the paper, due to the additional quantity of steel reinforcement now estimated as being required for the construction of the magnet room. He said that the original estimates of the engineering consultants had been made according to fairly conventional engineering practice, but the magnet room was a very unusual structure and the amount of reinforcement turned out to be much greater than had been estimated.

With regard to paragraph 3 (b) of the paper, the Committee considered that the wording was a little misleading and tended to suggest that an increase of £11,062 was caused by departure from a decision of the Committee. Actually, as recorded in minute 2 of the 1957 second meeting, the Committee had decided that the contract with Messrs. Chivers should set an upper limit to the cost of importing labour to be borne by the Institute. This was arranged as recorded in minute 1 of the 1958 first meeting, and it involved an addition to the estimate as now stated.

With regard to paragraph 3 (d) of the paper, Dr. Pickavance said that the Chief Architect had emphasised to him the large increase in the size of building required as compared with the first estimates. The volume had increased from 590,000 cu. ft. to 960,000 cu. ft. The cost had increased from 3/11d. per cu. ft. to 4/11d. per cu. ft., this being mainly accounted for by increased loading requirements.

With regard to paragraph 3 (f) of the paper, Dr. Pickavance said that the A.E.A. Industrial Group resident engineer had been authorised to commit expenditure up to £10,000 for special measures to meet the tight programme, and £7,000 of this had been used to cover the cost of concrete plasticiser. The Project Committee intended to keep a tight hold on the balance of the £100,000.

With regard to paragraph 4 (a) of the paper, Dr. Pickavance said that the extra cost of the 120 ton crane and the stronger building required to support it had been taken into account when selecting the English Electric Company's tender for the motor alternators.

Commenting on the paper as a whole, Professor Peierls said that it would be an improvement if, in future, in itemising the increases the original estimate for the cost of each item were given as well as the increase in it.

Turning to the possible effect of the increased estimate on building progress, the Chairman said that he had received a letter from Sir Donald Perrott pointing out once again that no increase in capital expenditure in 1958/59 or 1959/60 was at present expected to be possible and that, therefore, if increased estimates were to involve more capital expenditure in these years, it might be necessary to slow down the construction. Professor Peierls said that in this case long warning was desirable so that we might choose which item to slow down. Mr. Bowles pointed out that at present the major expenditure was on building, and if too much increase were allowed in this it could possibly result in an excessive need later on to slow down work on the large plant contracts which were now being placed. The Chairman said that these points must be kept in mind, but he

considered that it was much too early to consider slowing down any of the work at this stage. While it was too early to be dogmatic, it was quite likely that it would never be necessary to do so.

Turning finally to the question of getting A.E.A. and Treasury approval for the increased estimate, the Chairman suggested that the timing of an official approach to the Treasury should be discussed with the A.E.A., but on the whole he was in favour of informing the Treasury of the present situation at least informally at this stage.

The Committee:-

- 2) Approved the increased building estimate as detailed in the paper NI(GP)(58)7.
- 3) Agreed that the question of submitting an increased estimate to the Treasury should be discussed with the A.E.A.
- 4) Noted the possibility that the increased estimate might, at a later stage, require a slowing down of construction and decided that this possibility should be kept under review, but that at the present stage no action should be taken.

4.5 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Committee had before them the quarterly financial statement NI(GP)(58)8. The Committee reviewed the progress in placing contracts as detailed in Appendix III and Appendix IV. Dr. Pickavance explained in more detail the nature of some of the items listed. He also corrected the third entry listed under Injector in Appendix IV. This should read "linear accelerator vacuum vessel" rather than "D.C. gun vacuum equipment".

The Committee considered the three proposed contracts exceeding £25,000 listed in Appendix IV where approval to place contracts by competitive tender was requested. The 120 tons crane presented no complications. With regard to the electric wiring, Dr. Pickavance said that this contract was for lighting and small power supplies in several buildings. He explained that the tenders were being sent out for fixed price quotations related to particular drawings and specifications. As the design and construction proceeded there might be changes in the layout which would result in the final cost differing from the tender. The differences would be assessed by A.E.A. quantity surveyors. This was the normal practice with contracts of this kind. If the changes resulted in a final price exceeding the amount authorised by the Committee it was intended to come back to the Committee for further authority. Professor Wilkinson enquired whether the experimental area was included among the buildings to be covered by this electrical service contract, and Dr. Pickavance said that he would arrange for the reply to be inserted into the minutes. (Secretary's Note:- The experimental area is included). The contract for main pipe work is similar in nature to that for electrical services just described.

With regard to the charts shown in Appendix V of the quarterly financial statement, Professor Peierls suggested that in view of the comments made on financial stringency, consideration should be given to showing in future statements the estimated expenditure in each financial year as compared with the money available.

The Committee:-

- 6 5) Gave approval for the placing by competitive tender of contracts

for the 120 ton crane at £30,000, for the main electrical services at £55,000 and for the main pipe work for heating hot water and ventilation services at £69,000. In each case the final price should not exceed the amount stated by more than 10% without further authority.

7 6. NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to hold their next meeting at 2.45 p.m. on Tuesday July 22nd, 1958.

J. A. V. Willis.
Secretary.

Rutherford High Energy Laboratory,
Harwell, Berks.
HX.5168

9th May, 1958.

Circulation:-

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