

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 Tuesday 22nd July, 1958.

Present:- Lord Bridges (in the Chair)
Sir Philip Morris
Sir Donald Perrott
Professor H. S. W. Massey
Mr. P. Bowles
Dr. T. G. Pickavance
Mr. R. E. Reynolds
Dr. J. A. V. Willis (Secretary)

1. ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Peierls and Professor Wilkinson, both of whom are abroad, and from Mr. D. W. Fry. The Chairman thanked Professor Massey for coming to strengthen the university representation at the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The Committee approved the minutes of their 1958 second meeting, subject to correction of the number of the minute on page 3, which is minute 5. and not minute 4. as printed.

2.2 With reference to Professor Peierls's suggestion recorded in minute 4., the Secretary said that arrangements had been made that in future, in itemising any increases in the building estimate, the original estimate for the cost of each item would be shown as well as the increase in it.

2.3 With regard to Professor Peierls's suggestion recorded in minute 5., that the estimated expenditure in each financial year should be shown in comparison with the money available, the Secretary said that this was now being done for the financial year 1959/60 in Appendix II of the Quarterly Financial Statement.

3. HOUSING AND HOSTEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RUTHERFORD LABORATORY

3.1 The Chairman said that paper N.I.(G.P.)(58) 9 had been prepared on the instructions of the Board, making specific recommendations. With regard to housing, the Committee agreed that the Institute ought to provide its own houses or flats when money can be obtained for this purpose. There was some discussion of the recommendation in paragraph 5 (a) that in the mean time the A.E.R.E. should be asked to allocate up to 8 houses to the Institute, Sir Donald Perrott pointing out that the housing position at A.E.R.E. is acute. It was agreed however that some houses must be made available to the Institute to enable it to fulfil its functions. It was made clear that the estimated requirement was for up to 8 houses for the transitional period between the beginning of 1959 and March 31st, 1961, and that this was additional to the houses occupied by A.E.R.E. staff seconded to the Institute. Although the Institute was asking for favourable treatment from the A.E.R.E. with regard to allocation arrangements, the number of houses was small, and the Director of the A.E.R.E. had indicated that he thought the request reasonable. Sir Donald Perrott agreed that the A.E.A. could accept

this call on the A.E.R.E. housing resources for the transitional period.

ACTION 1 The Committee recommended to the Board the proposals made in paragraph 5 of paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)9.

- 3.2 With regard to hostels, the Committee recommended the scheme to use Coseners House, subject to satisfactory surveyors' reports and subject to reasonable assurance that planning permission would be given for extending the accommodation if necessary. Sir Donald Perrott confirmed that Coseners House could be made available and said that the A.E.A. would prefer to transfer the ownership to the Institute, but would be prepared to manage the hostel for them.

ACTION 2 The Committee recommended to the Board the proposals made in paragraph 8 of paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)9 subject to obtaining reasonable assurance that planning permission would be given for extending the accommodation at Coseners House if necessary.

- 3.3 Sir Donald Perrott suggested that the Institute might wish to take advantage of the scheme approved by the Treasury for the A.E.A. for guaranteeing loans for house purchase to members of A.E.A. staff. If the Institute wished to make use of this scheme it would be necessary to include an item in the estimates. Dr. Pickavance said that the number of Institute staff likely to use this scheme was small, and it would not apply to visiting university scientists. However, it was agreed that provision should be made.

ACTION 3 The Secretary was instructed to add provision for the scheme to the draft estimates, as necessary.

4. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

- 4.1 Dr. Pickavance introduced the Quarterly Financial Statement, paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)10, and the Addendum to Appendix IV, N.I.(G.P.)(58)15. He said that the major items of interest arising in connection with this statement, namely the financial position in 1959/60 and the power supply contract, were dealt with in separate papers. However, it would be seen that steady progress was being made with contracts and considerable contract activity was anticipated during the coming quarter. Some of this action would require approval by the General Purposes Committee, but proposals were not yet ready to submit and in some cases this might have to be done by correspondence.

5. FINANCIAL POSITION IN 1959/60

- 5.1 Paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)14 was discussed. (There are errors in the third section of paragraph 2. The figure £1,314,000 should read £1,618,000 and the figure £52,000 should read £80,000. The figures in the table in paragraph 3 are correct). Dr. Pickavance said that in view of the preparation of annual estimates now going on, the financial position in 1958/59 and 1959/60 had been brought up to date as far as possible in this paper. It showed an estimated over-spending of £603,000 in 1959/60 as compared with the forecast estimates, and an under-spending of almost the same sum in 1958/59. Dr. Pickavance added that he had had an analysis carried out of the expenditure already committed. Taking building and plant together, the commitments already made would not result in expenditure in 1959/60 of more money than was in the forecast estimates. If all the contracts which it was hoped to place before mid-October were placed, it was estimated that the expenditure resulting from them would bring the total expenditure in 1959/60 just up to the total amount in the forecast estimate.

- 5.2 Sir Donald Perrott said that in the A.E.A. there was a large estimated over-expenditure in 1959/60 as compared with the forecast estimates. He said that he would be prepared to include the Institute's additional requirement of £600,000 in his discussions with the Treasury, and would report at the next meeting on the results of his discussions.

ACTION 4 The Committee agreed that work and contract action should proceed in accordance with the programme in the Quarterly Financial Statement until the next meeting. Sir Donald Perrott's report and any later estimate of expenditure in 1959/60 would then be considered.

6. MAGNET POWER SUPPLY

- 6.1 Dr. Pickavance introduced paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)11 which explains the situation resulting from the discovery after detailed study by the English Electric Company that their original proposal is unsatisfactory in the case of one particular fault condition. Dr. Pickavance said that he had no doubt that it was right to insist on the particular requirement which the machine had been found not to meet. The English Electric Co. had now proposed an alternative design which was fully satisfactory but might involve an increase in price. They had not yet worked out the cost, but had quoted a ceiling price £25,000 greater than the present contract price. The Project Committee recommended the acceptance of this alternative design. Dr. Pickavance said that the Project Committee had amended the wording of their recommendation from that appearing in N.I.(G.P.)(58)11, (see Action 5 below).

- 6.2 The Chairman said that the paper was very clear and he had great confidence in the way in which this problem had been tackled and the satisfactorily early date at which the difficulty had been brought to light. Sir Donald Perrott said that no doubt the English Electric Co. were technically under some obligation to provide satisfactory equipment at the original contract price, but they nevertheless had a very reasonable case for consideration. He had asked the A.E.A. Director of Contracts to authorise amendment of the contract price if necessary up to £490,000. Dr. Pickavance emphasised that the equipment was very far from standard and that it was quite reasonable that the difficulty should only be discovered after several months of detailed study. He thought that the English Electric Co. were not at fault, but had in fact done very good work on the contract.

ACTION 5 The Committee approved the proposals of the Project Committee, as follows:-

1. That the English Electric Co. should be instructed to proceed with a 1,000 r.p.m. set to their new design.
2. That the A.E.A. contracts department should negotiate the price on the basis that the work should not be delayed pending negotiation, that the originally quoted price should be maintained, if possible, but that, if necessary, the price should be increased to not more than £490,000.

7. STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1957/58

- 7.1 The Secretary introduced paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)12, saying that the Institute's only expenditure during the year 1957/58 had been incurred on their behalf by the A.E.A., and this statement summarised it. The statement showed firstly the direct expenditure corresponding to specific provision in the Institute Sub-Head, and

secondly A.E.R.E. expenditure representing costs incurred by the A.E.R.E. in the same way as in their own work, and subsequently recovered from the Institute Sub-Head as appropriations-in-aid. The statements were prepared on a commercial accounting basis including overhead charges in order to represent the full cost of the Institute. In the case of the direct expenditure however, the sums were only charged to the Institute Sub-Head when the cash had actually been expended. This was shown separately in column 2 of Appendix A.

7.2 Sir Donald Perrott said that interest on the capital value of the A.E.R.E. was not included in the overhead charge in these accounts, although at the present time this interest was being included in the charges to outside bodies in general.

7.3 The Chairman said that broadly speaking we were dependent upon A.E.R.E. to prepare the statement of expenditure and he thought that the form of this statement was satisfactory for the year 1957/58.

ACTION 6 The Committee accepted the statement of expenditure by the U.K.A.E.A. on behalf of the Institute in the year 1957/58.

7.4 Sir Donald Perrott said that with regard to the Institute accounts, a number of points would require decision, such as for example the appointment of auditors, and the policy with regard to capitalisation of interest on the value of assets. He would be prepared to deal with points of this kind on behalf of the Institute. The Chairman asked for a list of the points to be communicated to him, so that he could judge whether the Institute might wish to consider them. Sir Philip Morris said that one point of difficulty was the variation from year to year of expenditure on provision and replacement of equipment. In the case of his own university, he maintained an equalisation fund.

8. CAPITAL ESTIMATES FOR 1959/60

8.1 Dr. Pickavance introduced paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)13 pointing out that the items included would all be the subject of proper submission to the Institute in due course. The later items were included in the forecast estimate in order to avoid financial objection next year on the ground that they had not been mentioned soon enough.

8.2 The Chairman said that several of the items had been before the Institute already; others represented provision for the use of the 7 GeV accelerator for nuclear physics experiments, the previous provision having been merely for the accelerator itself. In a third category he would put the large provision for a second laboratory. This had been discussed in general terms on the Board but no decisions about it had yet been taken. With regard to the provision for experiments, Professor Massey asked whether this included the expenses of visiting teams which it was proposed to cover from Institute resources. Dr. Pickavance replied that this was so as far as capital expenses were concerned. The part of the estimate at present before the Committee did not include recurrent expenses.

ACTION 7 The Committee recommended to the Board the inclusion in estimates of the schemes shown in paper N.I.(G.P.)(58)13.

8.3 With regard to the second laboratory, Sir Donald Perrott suggested that the Institute might be well advised to be looking now for possible sites since a large number of airfields and other service establishments were at the present time being closed.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting should be arranged if possible in the second half of October, but the date was left to be fixed later.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman announced with regret that Sir Philip Morris, having come to the end of his term of office as Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, had decided that he ought to resign from the Board of the Institute in order to make way for the nomination of his successor Dr. Aitken. The Committee expressed their appreciation of the part Sir Philip Morris had played in their work, and their regret at his departure.

J. A. V. Willis.
Secretary.

Rutherford High Energy Laboratory,
Harwell, Berks.

28th July, 1958.

HX. 58/810.

Circulation:-

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