

F. A. S. NEWSLETTER

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REPORTS on FEDERAL SCIENCE AGENCIES

NSF Interview. The new National Science Foundation, moving slowly, is still in the early stages of organization and has not yet crystallized its policies to the point where they can be publicly evaluated. It is not likely soon to emerge as a dominant factor in American science setting new patterns by bold new programs. Rather it is likely to conform to the pattern of federal scientific support which has become familiar since World War II in the activities of the Office of Naval Research and Public Health Service. These are general impressions resulting from an interview last week with Dr. Alan T. Waterman, NSF Director, and members of his staff.

Emphasizing that intelligent policies must depend upon a background of knowledge and experience, and that the agency has yet to get Congressional approval of its first budget, Waterman indicated his belief that NSF must of necessity proceed slowly at the outset. The present period of external inactivity, he said, provides that opportunity so rare in most operating organizations -- time for internal evaluation and planning. To few of the questions which scientists are asking about NSF could he give specific answers but he discussed, in general terms, the direction of his thinking on some of them.

Specific plans and projects of the Foundation clearly will have to be based on some general evaluation of the current status of American science, and on broader national policy. A survey of U.S. science, such as has been suggested by FAS and others, is contemplated. It is hoped to base this survey on direct contacts with investigators in particular fields, synthesizing the information thus gained into a larger picture as time goes on. From this may come more intimate and detailed knowledge than could be obtained by general observers who would of necessity operate over wide areas. The requirements of a national policy for basic research, which NSF is charged by Congress to develop, thus will gradually emerge.

The approach he suggests has the advantage, Waterman pointed out, of avoiding an initial large outlay in time, money, and energy. Limited to a \$15 million annual appropriation by the Act, NSF will have to budget carefully to cover the very wide range of activities it is expected to undertake. For the current fiscal year, \$14 million has been requested by the President. The request is now before the Senate and House Appropriations Committees as part of a supplementary appropriation bill (NSF was established too late to be included in the regular budget for this fiscal year). The House Committee has held hearings, but the Senate has not, and Waterman had at the moment no indication of how NSF will fare in this first, crucial year.

In its internal organization, the Foundation is so far adhering closely to the divisional structure recommended in the Act, although it has the authority to alter it as circumstances require. Thus, there will be four divisions: Medical Research; Biological Sciences; Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences; Scientific Personnel and Education. Assistant Directors responsible for two of them have been appointed. To the questions whether the first two divisions do not considerably overlap, and whether the third was not so large as to be unwieldy, Waterman replied that the first two could probably define their areas in specific cases through administrative cooperation, and that the third could be handled by establishing sub-divisions. No Social Science Division is contemplated now, decision on this, as on a permanent divisional structure in general, requiring long-range study. In any event, Waterman said, the administrative organization would not prevent the Foundation from undertaking, in any field, projects which the Board feels should have support.

No decisions are yet available on the mechanisms for fund

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New Head for RDB. The appointment of Prof. Walter G. Whitman of M.I.T. as chairman of the Research and Development Board -- following the resignation of former chairman William Webster -- represents another upheaval in the short but turbulent history of this government agency. RDB was originally conceived by the authors of the Armed Services Unification Bill as a key part of the Military Establishment with specific responsibilities for reviewing the research and development programs of all three Services, assigning areas of responsibility for overlapping projects, uncovering deficiencies in the programs, and keeping the entire program within the bounds set by the Bureau of the Budget. The Board has had rough sledding almost from the start.

The Board itself consists of two representatives of each of the Armed Services (usually officers of General rank) headed by a civilian chairman appointed by the President. However, in order to survey the large and complex programs planned by each of the Services, the Board is assisted by a number of committees with special fields of competence (ordnance, electronics, aeronautics, etc.). Membership on the committees is a part-time responsibility and includes military representatives and outside civilian experts from industry, government, and universities. In order that these part-time members may be properly briefed, each committee has a permanent secretariat and the Board as a whole is provided with its own large permanent secretariat.

Under such a committee system, in which the responsible people convene only one or two days per month to study the detailed and involved programs of each of the Services (the annual expenditure for military research and development averaged \$500 million in the pre-Korean era), a large share of the burden fell on the permanent organization. With the committee secretariats overburdened and unwilling -- or unable -- to handle the necessarily complex analysis of the military value of the proposed programs, and with organization and jurisdictional problems facing them at every turn, the RDB settled down to a steady output of paper, shunning decisions except where absolutely necessary.

As each successive chairman retired (usually for reasons of health), the new chairman was hailed as being the answer to all of RDB's problems. After two of the nation's top scientists, Bush and Compton, had to retire because of ill health, Webster, a proven administrator, was looked upon as a happy choice. Now Webster returns to his executive position with a public utility corporation and Whitman is looked to as the saviour of RDB. In the meantime, there has been a steady exodus of scientists, especially the more competent ones, from the secretariat. This has been balanced to some extent by the acquisition of some distinguished experts on the committees. However, this still has not solved the problem of how to operate the committees effectively in their part-time schedule without an equally distinguished permanent staff.

Perhaps the most difficult hurdle which RDB must overcome in the near future is the large expansion in military research and development expenditures brought on by the Korean War. Whereas in the post-World War II days, the military were operating on a limited budget and the close tie-in between RDB and the Budget Bureau enabled the two to control programs through allocation of funds, the several-fold expansion in money available for the military has made budgetary control of the Research and Development program difficult. It has tended to reduce the apparent need for selectivity and to replace it with the idea that we can't afford to omit anything which may improve our military effectiveness. However, the already observable pinch in scientific manpower will soon bring the expansion to a halt and again place on RDB the responsibility for very careful appraisal of its programs, in order not to actually weaken the country by squandering scientific talent on worthless projects.

Tenth AEC Report. The tenth semi-annual report of the AEC to Congress, released on July 31, again emphasizes the large expansion in facilities contributing directly to the military effort. Although the major effort moneywise is going into military uses, considerable space in the report is devoted to the AEC's many worthwhile non-classified projects, chiefly in the radioisotope and health physics fields. An interesting note is that the fellowship program, a subject of considerable controversy in the recent past, is being gradually liquidated on the grounds that such a program can be administered by the fledgling National Science Foundation.

Students and the Draft. On July 23, FAS chairman Lyle Borst wrote to Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Assistant for Manpower to the Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization, again urging the importance of a limited scholarship program to ensure equal opportunity for every young person to receive deferment for specialized training. To Borst's inquiry as to the current status of this proposal and ODM's attitude toward it, Flemming replied on July 30 that a specific proposal is now under review by Government agencies, prior to submission to Congress. Flemming made no prediction on when action might be expected, but expressed the continued interest of ODM.

Meanwhile, there have been reports that students qualifying for consideration have been refused deferment by some local boards. Raymond S. Howes, of the American Council on Education, complained about this during a radio broadcast on "Youth and the Draft," sponsored by Liberty Network. In reply, Brig. Gen. Louis H. Renfrow pointed out that the qualification scheme is only a recommendation to the local boards and not mandatory. However, he commented that "The local boards which disregard the recommendations of Selective Service and of its advisory board are being arbitrary. Arbitrary action, here or elsewhere, should not be tolerated." He recommended fullest use of the Selective Service appeals procedure, when qualified students are denied deferral.

Bulletin Clampdown. The U.S. Post Office, in compliance with a Department of Commerce order dated March 2, 1951 banning the export of technical publications to countries of the Soviet bloc, has refused to continue mailing the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to addresses behind the Iron Curtain. However, the Washington Post of July 29 reported that consideration is currently being given to rescinding the order in the light of objections raised.

In an editorial in the June issue of the Bulletin, Dr. Eugene Rabinowitch, editor, protested the export ban as fundamentally futile. Only in a country as completely regulated and policed as the Soviet Union, he pointed out, could the ban be effective; in the U.S., where the affected publications are available at newsstands to Soviet representatives, the ban can only create a false sense of security. The editorial also took exception to classification of the Bulletin as a "technical publication," since it contains "only articles devoted to political, social, and military implications of scientific discoveries and, occasionally, summaries of progress in various important fields of science based on generally available information." Rabinowitch said further that those in the Soviet satellites whose hopes lie in the West may take the ban as a sign of our capitulation to totalitarian ideologies, since a small trickle of Western ideas and attitudes now penetrating the Iron Curtain has been stopped. The Washington Post commented editorially that the action "is likely to produce reciprocal action on the other side of the Iron Curtain."

No Mission to Moscow. A British physicist, E. H. Burhop, was stopped on July 21 from accompanying a party of 19 other Britons on a cultural-exchange visit to the USSR. Burhop's passport was dramatically cancelled "in the national interest" at the last moment before his scheduled departure. The Foreign Undersecretary said the action "was a precautionary measure in respect of certain inquiries that have taken place." Burhop was associated with the atomic energy project for 18 months up to 1945; since then his work has been entirely in non-secret fields.

Information from London sources is that the Labour government is jittery lest further real or mysterious defections like Pontecorvo and the two Foreign Office employees endanger its slim majority in the House of Commons. Debate on the action in Parliament included protests from both major parties that the summary seizure of Burhop's passport violated a British subject's constitutional right to leave the country. In contrast to similar cases in the U.S., the public airing of the action may lead to public disclosure of criteria for official permission for such cultural exchanges, consistent with constitutional guarantees.

Lilienthal on the Lilienthal Plan. In a recent TV interview, David E. Lilienthal proposed that the U.S. withdraw its plan for international control of atomic energy. His reasons are: (1) that since Russia now has A-bombs of her own, there is no big secret to share with the rest of the world, and (2) that, in the six years since the end of World War II, Russia has made it clear she has no intention of allowing international inspection, the key to effective atomic energy controls. Government officials, however, expressed disapproval of Lilienthal's idea. "We're still for peace, even though it's impractical," said Gordon Arneson, State Department adviser on atomic energy matters (quoted by Peter Edson, newspaper columnist).

Lilienthal also expressed the opinion on "Meet the Press" (July 1, NBC) that Russia does not have enough A-bombs to support a war. He praised the AEC as a "superb organization," although he was "profoundly shocked" by the release of the AEC report on the Eniwetok tests as revealing information of importance to Russia.

Atomic Responsibility. More than a hundred leading physicists from virtually all the democratic nations attended a scientific conference early in July in Copenhagen, as guests of Prof. Niels Bohr. Receiving an appeal from the German section of the All Mothers World Federation, to use the results of scientific research only for the welfare of mankind rather than for its destruction, they endorsed the following statement issued by Bohr:

"The problems referred to in this telegram (appeal) have no direct connection with the questions discussed at this conference, which deal exclusively with purely scientific, physical problems. Every step forward in our insight into the laws of nature, which may help to give us greater command over the forces of nature, holds the hope of improving the living conditions of man, but also holds dangers which put our entire civilization to a serious test.

"The responsibility, however, of overcoming these dangers rests not only with scientists but must be shared by all circles of every nation. I do hope that at this meeting, where physicists from so many countries are assembled, we shall also contribute to the promotion of international understanding which must constitute the foundation of all real cooperation among the nations for the progress of mankind."

State and Security. The damage to our national strength which results from irresponsible use of catch-all loyalty procedures is illustrated by recent events in the State Department. As a consequence of criticism arising from the public disclosure that two of its career officials had been suspended pending security clearance, the State Dept. is considering drastic revision of its clearance procedures. The Dept. now acknowledges that it was probably in error in its interpretation that suspension is mandatory under Public Law 733 of the 81st Congress -- which it cited in explaining the suspensions. The Department was also criticized for unnecessary timidity when it recently reopened, under the President's April 28 "reasonable doubt" order, 500 loyalty cases to which that criterion had originally been applied on the Department's own initiative.

In sharp criticism, the American Foreign Service Journal asked whether a Foreign Service Officer should report "...only what will harmonize with the temper of the times and what cannot possibly be publicly held against him five or ten years from now. Shall he report honestly and fearlessly and 'as he sees it,' knowing the dangers of honesty and the risk to his career and his reputation? Or shall he resign from the Service to seek fields where his talents will be less circumscribed and his future less in peril?" The Department is now studying the possibility of giving applicants a hearing, as is done by the AEC, where security and loyalty qualifications are also of the greatest importance.

The President is concerned about the administration of existing security clearance procedures in general. In a letter to James S. Lay, Jr., Executive Secretary, National Security Council, on July 14, he pointed out that "there are no uniform standards or procedures to be followed in the different departments and agencies concerned. Neither is there any provision for review at a central point as there is in the case of the Government Employee Loyalty Program. This is a problem that falls within the scope of the work which I have asked to have undertaken by the (Nimitz) Commission on Internal Security and Individual Rights. However, the work of that Commission has been delayed because of the failure of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to report legislation which would exempt the members and staff of the Commission from the conflict-of-interest statutes." He requested the National Security Council to investigate the security program without waiting for the Nimitz Commission to begin functioning.

AGAINST THE TIDE --

A Third Pole of Opinion. In the current debate on foreign policy, major political leaders have been oriented between Acheson-Truman at one pole and MacArthur-Taft at the other. Common to practically all is acceptance of a primarily military approach to the East-West conflict. Differences center chiefly on the extent and character of rearmament, and the locale and intensity of the counteracting forces to be applied to the Soviet Union.

William O. Douglas, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, it is now clear, is seeking to establish a third pole in the debate. Accepting the near-certainty of long-continued conflict between the power centers in the USSR and the U.S., the Justice nonetheless severely criticizes the fundamental assumptions of American foreign policy. In an article in the August 14 issue of *Look* magazine, date-lined en route to Asia, Douglas bluntly asserts that in that area our current policies have rendered us "largely impotent because we have become victims of military thinking." Tracing our development since World War II, Douglas finds that we have shifted too much responsibility and given too much leadership to generals and admirals who, though thoroughly competent in their own field, "have no ear for political trends, no skills in evaluating social or economic conditions." Such men, he says, cannot understand the revolution that is Asia. "No number of atomic bombs -- no amount of firepower -- no number of troops can turn the tide of that revolution" with its driving forces of "intensive nationalism born of a deep revolt against foreign domination," anti-landlordism and land hunger, the "burning concept of equality for the colored races." While the Communists feed these flames with "democratic slogans....that have been part of our inheritance since the days of the American revolution....we stand for stability, for the status quo....behind the powers that be, the vested interests, the landlords of Asia....[we] become partners (in the eyes of the peasants of Asia) with the corrupt and reactionary political powers of that continent."

A new approach is needed, Douglas maintains. We must "go to Asia with warmth and understanding." Having secured a halt to fighting in Korea and a political settlement with China, "we must then launch a political offensive in Asia -- an offensive that takes the initiative away from the Russians. It is a political offensive that will turn the tide of communism in Asia." Special attention must be given to India where "our task is to work with the democratic forces....and help them with their reform programs."

UNESCO Conference. UNESCO's major emphasis in the coming year will be on a world-wide program to combat illiteracy. This decision was reached at the sixth general conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in Paris early in July. Dr. Jaime Torres Bodet of Mexico, UNESCO Director General, announced that \$20 million will be spent over the next twelve years to establish six training and demonstration centers in various parts of the world to train basic education specialists to lead the battle against illiteracy. The story of the first of these centers, at Patzcuaro, Mexico, is told in detail in the June issue of UNESCO's *Courier* (\$1.50/annum, Columbia Univ. Press, N.Y.).

Also on UNESCO's program are promotion of free and compulsory education, furtherance of studies designed to check spreading of desert conditions, a survey of the extent to which cultural patterns in backward areas have been upset by industrialization, and a five-year cooperative project for the writing of a scientific and cultural history of mankind.

Russian-American Friendship Exchanges. On July 7, President Truman communicated to N. M. Shvernik, president of the Soviet Presidium, a Congressional resolution expressing U.S. friendship for the Russian people and urging the Soviet government to remove barriers which prevent full exchange of information between the two peoples (see FAS NL 51-5). Said Mr. Truman, "We shall never be able to remove suspicion and fear as potential causes of war until communication is permitted to flow, free and open, across international boundaries." (See "Bulletin Clampdown" on page 2.)

Replying on August 6, Shvernik proclaimed the peaceful intent of the USSR and repeated the Soviet desire for limitation of armaments, prohibition of atomic weapons implemented by a system of international inspection, and a five-power pact. He charged the U.S. with discriminatory, unfriendly acts citing, as one example, the Department of Commerce ban on shipment of scientific and technical publications to countries in the Soviet orbit. The State Department immediately denounced the Soviet message as a "propaganda trap" designed "to lull our people to sleep."

N.E.A. In a move to check the attrition of academic freedom in the public schools, the National Education Association has made public a report of its Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom. The report reveals that, as a result of great pressure from groups which want to "dictate the curriculum to the public schools and determine the teaching of controversial issues not according to the facts but to serve their particular purposes," teachers in increasing numbers are accepting "voluntary censorship." Harrassed with accusations of communism and disloyalty at the slightest deviation from strict conformity, the teachers are in constant anxiety lest they offend one of the self-appointed watch dogs of the school system. A preliminary survey by the committee showed the five leading topics to be avoided, in order of frequency of mention by the teachers queried, were sex, criticism of prominent people, separation of church and state, race relations, and communism. Needless to say, under such circumstances the pupils are the ultimate victims.

Dr. Lyle B. Borst, Chairman of the FAS, has resigned his position as head of the reactor project at the Brookhaven National Laboratory. On September first, he joins the faculty of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, as Professor of Physics.

From the Washington Secretary. A considerable boost to the FAS bank balance (more than \$400) resulted from the membership fund appeal in June. The response, which included several gifts of \$25 or more -- one of \$100 -- came, however, from only 33 individuals, less than 3% of the membership. It would be appreciated if those who have neglected to chip in so far would act on this reminder.

The fund appeal, augmenting dues from chapters and members-at-large, has helped to keep the Office in operation so far this summer. Brookhaven, Chicago, Washington, Mohawk, and Illinois have sent in dues since the April Council meeting. Of these, only the first three have met or exceeded the membership formula which was set up by the Council (see NL 51-4). This time last year chapter dues were more than \$400 above those received so far this year (a deficit just made up by the fund appeal). Member-at-large dues total \$1850 to date, slightly over last year. Additional response from chapters, and more new members, will be required to meet the anticipated expenditures during August and September.

The Executive Committee met on June 17 in New York. Attending were Borst, Higinbotham, Shapiro, and Wolfe, with the Washington Office represented by Kamm and D. Higinbotham. Among topics discussed were NSF, proposals to compensate the Japanese for U.S. destruction of their cyclotrons, government procedures for loyalty and security, and the desirability of a scholarship program linked with the current deferment policy. Plans were made for the next Council meeting in Chicago, coinciding with the American Physical Society meetings, Oct. 25-27. Proposals for international control are expected from the Chicago chapter. Secretarial duties for the Executive Committee were assumed by Wolfe, and Woodward of Cornell was appointed chairman of the Elections Committee for 1952-53. In connection with the FAS financial problem, the membership drive by the Cornell chapter was reported and the urgent need for a continuing membership committee again stressed.

Although other possible means for raising a part of the Federation's budget were also presented for discussion, it was clear that our best hope lay in increased membership strength. To help stimulate such activity, readers are invited to send to the Washington Office names of individuals who may be interested in FAS membership. Besides an invitation to join and an application card, a prospective member receives a few issues of the *News-Letter* and other material about the FAS.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or SUBSCRIPTION

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Highest Degree _____ Institution _____ Major Field _____
Received _____

Present Position _____

Annual Dues for Members-at-Large:
Regular Member* \$5 & \$3; Supporting \$10; Patron \$25
*Regular members with more than \$2500 annual income pay \$5.
Annual *Newsletter* subscription for non-members is \$2.

NSF Interview (Continued from Page 1).

disbursal, either for fellowships and scholarships or in support of research. The emphasis will be on flexibility throughout to ensure the most effective use of funds and to meet the needs of the individual project. As guiding principles, Waterman suggested, first, that where specific information or a particular job are needed, support should go where those best qualified are located. Second, if a particular subject area seemed to be lagging, effort should be made to locate promising nuclei and stimulate their growth. Initially a well-rounded program might well consist of a proper balance between these two points of view. In general, long-range arrangements in support of research, say three to five years, are regarded with favor but it was pointed out that long-term commitments proportionately reduce the number of projects to be supported -- since under government budgeting, money obligated during a given year can only come from that year's appropriation.

One of the responsibilities assigned to the Foundation is evaluation of "scientific research programs of the Federal Government" with appropriate recommendations to the President and Congress. The NSF Director suggested that this might best be approached initially by a study of the coverage and needs for basic research in the national interest. Elimination of unnecessary overlapping and duplication in basic research naturally will result from the facilitation of exchange of information among investigators. Given full information, responsible investigators will avoid areas which are already under study, knowing that their reputation depends upon the originality as well as the soundness of their work.

Among key staff appointments made so far are the following:

Charles E. Sunderlin, Ph.D., Deputy Director -- organic chemist, formerly scientific Director of the London Branch of ONR and Associate Professor of Chemistry at the U.S. Naval Academy.

John Field, Ph.D., Head, Biological Sciences Division -- physiologist, on leave as head of the Physiology Dept. of the UCLA Medical School and formerly head of the Biology Branch of ONR.

Harry C. Kelly, Ph.D., Asst. Director for Division of Scientific Personnel and Education -- physicist, formerly head of the Scientific Section of ONR's branch office in Chicago and member of the staff of the Radiation Laboratory at M.I.T.

Wilson F. Harwood, Asst. Director for Administration -- formerly administrative officer at ONR.

Lloyd M. Trefethen, Ph.D., Technical Aide -- formerly in a similar capacity at ONR.

William A. W. Krebs, Jr., General Counsel -- formerly counsel for ONR and of the staff of the General Counsel of the AEC.

"If an A-Bomb Falls" is the title of a new series of seven comic-style panels put out by Commercial Comics, Inc. It is based on the Federal Civil Defense Administration's "Survival under Atomic Attack," and endorsed by Federal CD Administrator Caldwell. Simple in its presentation, the series suggests what to do in case of attack at school, at work, in the home, and when travelling.

A new booklet, "Emergency Action to Save Lives," released by the FCDA, gives instructions for treating injuries in the event of an attack when no trained first aid or medical care is available.

NSF -- THE LONG VIEW

The scarcity of news and the slow progress of NSF cannot help but be disturbing to the many scientists who have looked to the new agency for leadership to counterbalance the strong and growing tide toward applied, and particularly military, science. Military agencies have long recognized the danger in this trend and, in spite of their primary mission, have given much support to basic research. Of necessity, however, their attention has been on those fields which at least border on applied problems. NSF will have to make a clean break and a fresh start if it is to be effective in introducing a healthier balance in American science. It will have to deliberately take the overall and the long view, resisting the temptation to formulate policy in terms of immediacies, cultivating science as an essential resource fundamental to the strength of the nation in any eventuality.

From this point of view, a first prerequisite is a complete and up-to-date picture of the present status of American science. Director Waterman's projected survey would make NSF much more secure in its planning and much more effective in presenting its case to Congress. It will show where we actually stand and cite chapter and verse to prove our deficiencies. The last such complete survey was made by the National Resources Planning Board in the late thirties. Neither the Bush Report immediately after the war, nor the more recent Steelman Report, are complete or current enough to depict or evaluate the new patterns which have developed under the stresses of the past five years. The long delay in establishing the National Science Foundation forced planning by expedient; we must now re-evaluate and rectify the errors which may have been made. NSF is wisely using its clear authority under the Act for a broad survey of both public and private research, to be conducted through existing agencies and scientific organizations, with the NSF itself acting as sponsoring, collating, and synthesizing center. On the basis of such a study, a national policy for support of basic research should emerge, be widely discussed, and presented to Congress to provide background for the consideration of requests not only from NSF but from other Federal agencies sponsoring basic research.

Apart from any other value the study and report will have, it will signal the central role of the Foundation in discharging Federal responsibilities toward science. Dwarfed in terms of financial resources by the AEC, the Department of Agriculture, the Defense Establishment, NSF will have to assert itself if it is not to be dwarfed also in its influence. There was no intention on the part of Congress to establish NSF as a colossal Central Scientific Agency. But the language of the Act indicates that it was Congress' intention for NSF, in addition to its operating functions, to act as a top-level policy-forming agency. By giving high priority to this responsibility, the new agency will meet national needs.

- - C. G.

OPPORTUNITIES IN ATOMIC ENERGY, by Karl D. Hartzell. Vocational Guidance Manuals, Inc., New York; 1951. Atomic energy from the personnel side for potential careerists, vocational counselors, employment officials, and the general reader.

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