

IN CONFIDENCE

18th June 1980

STC(M)80/3

THE NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE - SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

THE MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE
1980

PRESENT: Professor P L Mollison - Chairman
Dr P Dunnill
Dr J Prydie
Mr R D Smart
Dr G H Tovey

DIRECTORS: Dr A M Holburn
Dr R S Lane

JOINT SECRETARIES: Mr T E Dutton
Dr H Glass

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Harley
Mrs S C Yuille

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr Gunson, Dr Walford and Dr Wills. The Chairman welcomed Dr R M Oliver from the Department.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - STC(M)80/2

These were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Progress with the relocation of the Blood Group Reference Laboratory

Mr Dutton reported that no progress had yet been made with the relocation of the University workshops on the ground floor of the Harkness Building. Dr Harris had undertaken to write to an influential medical person at the University to ask him to use his good offices to ensure that the workshops which were impeding development were moved as soon as possible. Dr Holburn said that the uncertainty about the date of the removal was having a demoralizing effect on his staff; and it would also make recruitment very difficult.

(ii) The BPL radio immune assay test

Mr Dutton reported that the Ministry of Defence's patents experts were

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currently examining Abbot Laboratories' allegations that the BPL had infringed their patents. A report from the Ministry was expected shortly.

Discussion turned to the subject of an r₁a test which Burroughs-Wellcome were developing and Dr Prydie withdrew at this point.

4. Technology Working Party

Discussing the membership of the working party Dr Dunnill reported that Dr Gunson, Dr Harvey and Mr Wesley would be invited to join. A preliminary meeting had been held at the BPL in May, and the next meeting would take place on the 2nd or 3rd July. Dr Foster from the PFC Liberton, Mr Jameson, one of its designers, Mr White a consultant from an engineering company which had been concerned with the design of the plant, and Mr Flint from the Department's Medicines Division would be invited to this meeting.

Later in the year, the Working Party expected to be able to involve industrialists with experience of plant design and management in the discussions.

It was hoped that the Working Party would produce a report by late September.

5. Progress with the redevelopment of the BPL - Dr Lane's revised interim budget submission for 1980/81

Mr Harley said that there were three options which could be put to Ministers.

- a) ~~the existing~~ budget allocation (approximately £773,000) which would ~~allow~~ minimum safety standards to be implemented, but allow no increase in production;
- b) reduce the existing allocation, which would mean a serious short-fall in safety standards and no increase in production;
- c) the budget should be increased as suggested in Dr Lane's revised budget estimate (to approximately ^{b.3m} £813,000) which would mean greater safety standards and a doubling in production. This option would in fact substantially reduce dependence on commercial blood products.

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Meanwhile it seemed advisable for the plans for the modular cold storage, which was the 'common factor' in all three options, to go ahead. Members agreed that the introduction of the single donor pack, for which additional cold storage was essential, was a most important NBTS development, and one which 'should go ahead' if at all possible.

Dr Lane said that his revised budget was the basic minimum if safety and production were to be increased. He could not accept responsibility for the laboratory if there was any reduction in expenditure. It was vital to increase the supply of plasma to BPL and plans (including the single donor pack system) to deal with this increased supply were the core of his revised budget.

Dr Tovey said that he anticipated that Transfusion Directors and officers from the RHAs would shortly begin considering ways of increasing the collection of plasma for the BPL. It was absolutely essential that BPL should be in a position to process the additional supplies.

Mr Smart drew attention to the cost to the nation of delaying expenditure on the BPL. The cost of rebuilding BPL would now be several £ million more than it would have been if the July planning had been commenced when the Committee first made its recommendations.

The Chairman felt that the Committee had to support Dr Lane's view that his revised budget was the minimum which should be spent on the short-term upgrading of the BPL. It was sound economic sense to increase production. The morale of the staff and the possible disintegration of the staffing structure, if sufficient upgrading did not begin soon, was also an important factor to take into account. The Committee agreed with the Chairman's views.

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Dr Dunnill thought that a planning manager, who would begin to lay out plans for a new BP Laboratory, was now needed. Mr Smart said that he might be able to recommend a suitable person to take on the task at very little cost to the Department. After discussion members agreed that before making such an-appointment it would be preferable to await the outcome of discussions which were taking place with British industry on the possibility of an NHS/industrial partnership in plasma fractionation.

6. Any other business

There was none.

7. Date of the next meeting

This would take place on 17 September at 2.15.

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