NOTES ON THE MEETING HELD IN THE
REGIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION CENTRE
ROYAL INFIRMARY EDINBURGH ON
TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 1969

Present: Dr D M Pendreigh, Chairman
Dr W d'A Maycock, Mr L Vallet — Blood Products Laboratory, Elstree
Mr R A Cumming, Mr J G Watt — Blood Transfusion Service, Edinburgh
Dr J Cash joined the meeting during the morning

1. Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held at Elstree on Friday, 27 June, 1969, were agreed.

2. Progress to Date on Liberton and Elstree Projects

Liberton:

Dr Pendreigh stated that the project was in the final stages of receiving official clearance. It would be about one year after clearance before contractors could move on to site. Building and commissioning would take about 2½ years making the summer or latter part of 1973 before the unit was operational. Mr Watt felt that this was a very optimistic estimate and suggested as late as the latter half of 1974, the Architects and Engineers having given the end of 1973 as the earliest possible entry.

Elstree:

Work commenced on site in October (instead of March) 1969; the building will take two years and be complete about October/November 1971. Thereafter there will be a six months commissioning period and the unit should be operational by spring or early summer of 1972. Dr Pendreigh went on to compare the financial side of both projects, comparing the £1½m for Liberton with the approximate figure of £1m ie the cost of the existing Elstree Laboratory at present day prices, (£250,000) and the cost of the new extension (£700,000). It was however, pointed out that the Liberton figure included the cost of computerisation.

Dr Maycock asked why it was felt so essential that Liberton should be computerised. Mr Watt explained that with the Flow System automated control became a necessity. It could be controlled manually but would require a staff of 30 people for continual control against 3-5 people if computerised.

Running Costs

3. The estimated 1969/70 revenue expenditure of BPL Elstree was about £142,600, of which some £91,400 (or 64 per cent) was for salaries and wages.

An estimate of possible revenue costs of the expanded BPL had been made in March 1968. This estimate was, however, out of date because of rises in salaries, wages and prices generally that had occurred since its preparation. The revenue cost, estimated in 1968, was £215,000 pa of which possibly some 55 to 60 per cent would be for salaries and wages if present experience were applicable. This estimate included some £11,000 for solvents, £17,000 for fuel, electricity, gas and water, £4,000 for rates and insurance and possibly £55,000 on general supplies. The estimated total

establishment ranged between 90 and 107 persons.

The revenue estimate for Liberton included similar sums for solvents, fuel, electricity, gas and water, but Mr Watt thought general supplies might cost about £80,000.

Dr Maycock undertook to provide a list of revenue headings at present used at BPL Elstree.

4. Centrifuges

It was felt by everyone that although Sharples centrifuges were most used they were not especially good machines and there was inadequate after-sale service by the manufacturer. The different alternative firms known were discussed and Mr Watt pointed out that Westfalia appeared to be worth looking into. They had sent literature and discussed the matter with him, quoting a price about £100 less than Sharples.

5. Freezing and Thawing

Using freezing plates of a stock size, 12" x 22½", 2 x 5 litres of saline were frozen in one hour, except for residual zones. The same volume of plasma took approximately 1½ hours. Using larger plates, which were on order, heat transfer from the sides of the bags could be improved and freezing of the entire contents could be expected in shorter times. When these modifications were complete and acceptable conditions of freezing had been achieved, a manufacturer would be asked to consider production of the freezer.

Mr Watt expressed the opinion that this appeared an excellent machine, and asked the cost but no firm price could be given.

Mr Watt stated that radiofrequency thawing trials had been carried out at manufacturers' premises since, until recently, no machine had been available for trial in the BPU. When one had become available and tested it was found that it affected the coronary care unit and equipment in the plant. It therefore could not be tested further at the BPU.

Mr Watt then explained Dr Johnson's thawing unit which could thaw approximately 400 litres per hour. This was Dr Johnson's own machine and was, at present, not patented. General discussion took place on thawing and crushing prior to thawing. It was agreed that more details of Dr Johnson's thawing machine should be obtained. Mr Vallet described a method of thawing in which frozen bags of plasma were laid on heated shelves. It was agreed that both groups should proceed urgently with further investigation of methods of thawing.

6. Centritherm

It was agreed that no further discussion was necessary at this stage and that any questions should be left until the machine had been seen in action.

Dr Maycock asked how many centritherms Mr Watt thought would be required. It was agreed that two would be required at the commissioning period and probably a third might be required when more was known about their reliability and maintenance needs

7. Transportation

It was agreed that this was an important subject and a meeting should be held in the near future with this as the main item for discussion.

8. Range of Products

Dr Maycock was to discuss this with Dr Rosemary Biggs, but to date had been unable to do so.

During the short discussion which followed Mr Watt pointed out that Bovine IgM was now ready for field trials - probably Spring 1970. Human IgM from Fraction III is now undergoing laboratory assessment.

9. Documentation and Records

Both groups agreed to look into this matter - including Telex - and discuss it more fully at a future meeting. Quality control tests should also be discussed under this head.

Dr Maycock agreed to send copies of documents used at Elstree before the next meeting. On the individual numbering of each vial, Dr Maycock did not feel this was of any special benefit, but the matter was left to a time when fuller discussion could take place.

At this point the meeting broke up to visit the plant area for a general inspection.

No date was made for the next meeting.