

✓ Assumed in T.E.P. 9/6  
✓ Letter to Serological Products a draft.

NBTS FACILITIES AND PRODUCTION

NOTE OF AN OFFICE MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 1976

Present: Mr Draper (Chairman)  
Dr Maycock ✓  
Mr Dutton  
Mr P Jones  
Dr Waiter  
Mr Cleasby

THE POSSIBLE GROWTH OF PAID DONOR PANELS

1. Following receipt in the Department of a letter from Serological Products seeking approval to establish a panel of paid plasma donors, the meeting had been convened to consider the likelihood of this and any other similar proposals damaging the NBTS to such an extent that changes in policy were needed. It was agreed that, regardless of the outcome of this consideration, Serological Products should be told that their proposal did not find favour with the Department.

2. Dr Maycock and Dr Waiter expected that the demand by clinicians for blood products - not only Factor VIII - would rise substantially in the future. Commercial manufacturers would identify these trends and envisage a ready market for their products, particularly if UK self-sufficiency could not be achieved. To help satisfy the demand, the Department would not rule out an arrangement by which commercial manufacturers took blood from the NBTS for processing and then returned the products to the NHS, provided that undue profits did not accrue to the firm as a result. However, it was possible that some manufacturers would seek to collect blood or plasma from paid donor panels. A number of firms had already made informal approaches and it seemed that only Departmental disapproval was restraining them from setting up panels. It was understood that there was no legal power to prohibit paid donations in the UK, although firms would be aware of the Government's support for the WHO resolution on national self-sufficiency in blood and blood products derived from voluntary unpaid donations.

3. Mr Draper did not think that proposals for legislation against paid donor panels would be acceptable to Ministers at present, especially as previous attempts to establish paid donor panels had been resisted successfully through persuasion. He thought that firms proposing to set up paid donor panels would appreciate that legislation could always be resorted to, if necessary, and they would be reluctant therefore to invest money in projects of which the Department did not approve.

ALTERNATIVES TO LEGISLATION

4. It was agreed that there were 3 methods of meeting the anticipated demand for blood and blood products, which was expected to build up rapidly as more components were required:

a. To allow health authorities sufficient funds to purchase the additional quantities of products which they required, if the NBTS could not meet the demand; knowing that much of the blood in the imported preparations would come from countries which could not afford its loss.

b. To meet any additional requirements by allowing commercial manufacturers in the UK to obtain blood from paid donations.

c. To expand NBTS collection and production in a move towards self-sufficiency: there were indications that this might mean doubling the NHS effort over the next few years.

A policy decision by Ministers would be required.

5. Option (c) was favoured, but the following difficulties were recognised:

- i The limited availability of money would necessitate arguing the case for NBTS expansion against the claims of other service developments; it was noted that the proposal did not appear in the Department's Consultative document on priorities.
- ii It would be difficult to justify doubling the size of the NBTS effort merely to cater for the needs of one particular group of patients; it was therefore necessary to look at blood collection and the utilisation of blood and blood components against the needs of the NHS as a whole.
- iii Apart from the pressure from and on behalf of Haemophilia patients, there was no discernible pressure on either the Department or Ministers which suggested that there were widespread shortages of blood or blood products.

It was agreed that it might be necessary to persuade health authorities to use money which they would otherwise have used to buy commercially manufactured products to improve NBTS facilities, or to arrange that a proportion of their total allocations were withheld centrally for NBTS use.

#### CONCLUSION

6. It was therefore agreed:

- i to prepare a submission to Minister of State (H) seeking a policy decision on the options in paragraph 4.
- ii that Mr Jones should arrange for Serological Products to discuss their proposal informally with a regular contact in Supply Division, with the intention of dissuading the Company from proceeding.

HS2A

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