

ANC WASTE DUMPING

newsletter no.5

MAY-JUNE 1981

THE BOREHOLE: A VITAL NEW DEVELOPMENT

For months we have been waiting, well aware - because of the delay over Mullwharchar - that something was up. Matters have now clarified and appear to be related to the recent retirement of Sir John Hill as Chairman of the UKAEA and his replacement by Dr Walter Marshall.

On 26th April, in Scotland, Dr Marshall made an important statement to the Sunday Standard which is reproduced in full below: -

Energy chief gives nuclear dump vow

THERE is to be no dumping of nuclear waste in Scotland for at least 100 years and even then it is unlikely.

Dr Walter Marshall, Chairman of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, gave this guarantee in an exclusive interview with the Sunday Standard last week.

Dr Marshall, a former Government Chief Scientist and Director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell until 1975, said that it was the intention to store nuclear waste at Windscale "for at least 100 years" before it was permanently disposed.

When asked about the fears of dumping at Mullwharcher, south of Loch Doon in the Galloway Forest Park, he said: "We went there simply as part of a research programme to investigate all the ways of dealing with nuclear waste."

"People became worried that the research would be converted into a disposal programme rather rapidly. There are very good

reasons why this will not be the case."

Dr Marshall, widely regarded as one of the world's leading scientists in the field of atomic energy, said: "If you buried hot waste in rock it would heat up the rock and might crack it with serious effects on local geology. We are not going to do that."

"We are not going to bury any nuclear waste until it has cooled down. If we found a safe dumping place there are still good technical reasons why we would not want to use it for at least 100 years. The waste will be stored on a nuclear site, probably Windscale."

"If it ever went to Mullwharcher or anywhere else after a century - and that is by no means certain - the heat and therefore the greatest portion of radioactivity would be gone."

Dr Marshall is strongly critical of the environmental and anti-nuclear lobby in Scotland and believes their objections are "primarily emotional."



by Gunter Kager

"Exclusive" or not, the Daily Record followed up the next day (27th April) under the heading NUCLEAR FEARS LIFTED. The report was very similar but contained the additional information, attributed to Dr Marshall, that the borehole programme was at present irrelevant and that he was impressing his views upon Civil Servants and the Government.

* THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS

JULY 15th.

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Since the story so far has not broken in either the English or Welsh press I have naturally taken steps to verify the accuracy of these reports both with Harwell and with UKAEA Headquarters in London. The latter commented to me: "Of course, Dr Marshall does not make Government policy." Point taken; and indeed the notion of Dr Marshall (or anybody) actually changing the mind of Mrs Thatcher by sweet reason is purely romantic. One would be right to suppose that the weight of public opposition has something to do with it too.

In any case we surely know by now how things are fixed. Whatever about who makes policy Dr Marshall's unequivocal statements make it quite impossible for the borehole row to be continued on anything like the old basis. His statements were therefore made with tacit government approval, the situation being classical: the scientists take the rap, the Government preserves whatever face it may still be held to possess.

The oldest and, arguably, the most radical of the oppositionists, the Scottish Conservation Society, were quick to seize the point. In a statement issued on 6th May they said (in part): "New evidence is mounting that the experts see serious problems in burying hot waste, and it cools very slowly. This appears to

have led to a change of policy not revealed in public until the new Chairman of the UKAEA gave his guarantee that "no waste would be buried for a hundred years". Sir Denis Wilkinson, who is Chairman of the Committee which advises the Government on radioactive waste expected a pilot disposal plant to be built in 1995. It is hard to believe he could be so wrong but certainly the signs are that an increasing number of experts question his timescale...."

The SCS statement also makes reference to the £9.3m research programme of the Department of the Environment on radioactive waste disposal for 1981/82. (A note of fantasy here: we are already nearly five months into 1981!) We too have studied these documents in considerable detail. They consist of a large number of research contracts, mostly to go - one can only suppose - to universities and the like. They cover waste conditioning, geological disposal and oceanographic disposal. Some are highly theoretical, all are long term and none is in the least likely to be concluded by 1983 - in addition it is reasonable to doubt whether some of these contracts will even be allocated within that time.

by PANDORA

Mullwharher

In the House of Commons on 4th March, a question was put to the Secretary of State for Scotland, by Mr. George Foulkes, concerning when and how he intends to announce his decision on the report of the inquiry into the proposal to test-bore at Mullwharher.

Mr. George Younger's reply was as follows. "The report is under consideration. It is not possible to say at this stage when the decision will be announced. The normal procedure for notifying decisions on planning appeals to the appellant, planning authority and other parties concerned will be followed; I shall consider nearer the time the form of any wider announcement which may be made in view of the public interest in this case."

The Mullwharher inquiry ended on 19th March last year. This long delay in announcing the decision is very sinister.

Demonstrate

In response to the announcement about the Mullwharher inquiry (whenever this happens) Dumfries and Galloway Friends of the Earth, and the Campaign Opposing Nuclear Dumping are planning a demonstration in Dalmeilington, starting from the Loch Doon road end at 11 a.m.

This demonstration will be the second Saturday after the announcement, if this is made on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, or the third Saturday after the announcement if made on a Thursday or Friday. The aim is to make a quick response while allowing reasonable time for organisation/publicity.

For further details contact Noel Charlton at 09887-442.

7th June: June Meet at Mullwharher.
Contact Kathleen Miller, 0644-3380.

Dr

new chairman
UKAEA

Interview between Neil Harris and Walter Marshall.
in a programme on Capital Radio, London.

Harris. What are the current plans for the disposal of high level n. waste?

Marshall. The plans are to vitrify the fission products... That work is in hand and should be operational some time in the 1980's. Once the fission products have been converted to the solid form, my own view is that we should store it even 100 years. Because that waste is radioactive and, because it's radioactive, it's actually generating heat. If you bury something hot, then it heats up the surrounding rock and that, in itself, makes you stop and ask, 'Does that change the environment - Is it a safe and proper thing to do?'

And you can avoid that problem altogether if you don't hurry to bury it at all.

Harris. Can you see a time when you'll be able to demonstrate a safe disposal route?

Marshall. I can see strong arguments for wanting to store waste for some considerable time - strong technical arguments... If you store it to avoid the heat question, you're getting the side benefit that, all that time, the radioactivity is decaying. The ultimate radioactivity that you get - say something from 300 years onwards - is, even if you dispersed it over the whole countryside, it would not be a significant addition to the background that we're getting from granite and the natural radioactivity of materials.

What I do see as a difficulty is in reconciling two points: you ask me to demonstrate the disposal route and I'm telling you I've got very good technical reasons why I don't want to dispose of it soon. So how can I produce to you the demonstration that I believe in when the overwhelming technical arguments are that I ought to store it myself and look after it - I mean myself, I mean the nuclear industry - for that length of time, 50 to 100 years.

Harris. Before the Windscale Inquiry, the nuclear industry had not paid enough attention to the disposal of nuclear waste?

Marshall. Well, both yes and no. You see, on the arguments I've just given to you, if you see very good technical reasons why you want to take your time to do it, you tend to concentrate on those things you must do now. Something you don't want to implement for 50 - 100 years doesn't actually come high on the priority list!

Harris. Do you think that nuclear waste will end up underground or underwater?

Marshall. I think it's too early to say. I think there's quite a good chance that it will end up neither, and that we will end up storing it for quite a long time... If you waited, not for 100 years, but for several hundred years, all the fission products would have gone and you are then left with the very long-lived radioactive waste... a different class of materials that we call actinides. They actually would be a useful fuel, if we used them in the fast reactor. So that, if you want to be very speculative, you could think about in the future that if we buried the waste after, say 100 years, a few hundred years later we might be digging it up again. But I don't think that second reprocessing would be either necessary or economic...

My present judgement is that the best thing to do would be to bury it in land or bury it under the sea. And I certainly agree that we must pursue the research programme we are now doing, energetically. But, so far as a policy question is concerned, I want to keep all my options open.

It is worth bearing in mind what was said at the EEC Conference on Waste Disposal, in Luxembourg in May, 80. It was suggested that a programme for the indefinite storage of waste is more acceptable to the public than a rigid and early commitment to final disposal. There would be plenty of time for the development of acceptable arrangements for final disposal. A waste processing and storage programme would make most sense politically, economically and technically. (note the order, with political coming first.)

DRILLING in STIRLING - NERC's first

application to drill in Perthshire was turned down by the Stirling District Council. But they made a second application, after assuring the Council that it had nothing to do with waste dumping as such. This re-application went in at the end of January and has been accepted, because NERC gave an undertaking that it has nothing to do with waste dumping.

Tory Council Rallies Behind Anti Nuclear Alliance!

In the last Waste Dumping newsletter, we reported that Somerset County Council had decided under section 48 of the Town and Country Planning Act not to take a decision on NERC's application for planning permission to test drill in Sedgemoor. Somerset requested a Planning Enquiry Commission to look into the wider issues.

Tom King, the Minister, has now responded that in his opinion there is "no merit in holding a Planning Enquiry Commission to examine for the second time the background to the borehole programme." He referred to the 1976 Royal Commission into Environmental Pollution and suggested that that was the appropriate forum for such debate. Somerset were asked to re-consider the planning application.

The Somerset Anti Nuclear Alliance only heard about this when it was announced in a local paper about a week before and none of the parish councils concerned were informed so there was some fear that central Government would apply pressure to rush it through. In response anti-nuclear groups and ecology parties in the area wrote in to the County Planning Officer and a small petition was raised by the Bath Anti Nuclear Group. About forty people attended the meeting of the County Planning and Transportation Committee on April 1st, sang some songs and performed some theatre which was briefly captured by local television.

Penny Phillips, leader of the Tory group on the County Council, proposed the following resolution:-

1) The Committee regret that the Minister feels that there is no need for full public debate on the implications of these applications and that he has decided not to agree to its request that he constitute a Planning Enquiry Commission under sections 47-49 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 in order to determine them;

2) Notwithstanding the Minister's decision, the Committee still believes that these applications can be satisfactorily determined only in the context of a public enquiry into their real, national implications, so that interested members of the public can make their views known, and in the circumstances the Committee feel they should not determine the applications until such an enquiry is possible; and

3) to inform the Minister that, if the applicants lodge an appeal under s.37 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 against a 'deemed refusal' of planning consent, then the Committee hope that the terms of reference of any local enquiry into that appeal will be sufficiently wide-ranging to cover all the implications of the applications.

Somerset's stance is very clever because they have not refused on planning grounds and they have not accepted the application either. In effect, they are stating quite plainly that it is not a planning issue, that it is political and that is exactly the message that we have all been trying to put over for quite some time. It will be interesting to see how the Minister responds in this little game of chess.

David Taylor.

,13 St. James's Square, Bath, Somerset.

Somerset Anti Nuclear Alliance



that's nothing!
We know where
there's enough to
kill everyone
in Britain.

Unions asked to black nuke waste dumping

A CAMPAIGN is under way to get the trade unions to prevent the dumping of nuclear waste in the sea. It is being organised by the PCAP (Protection and Conservation of Animals and Plants). So far eight major unions and many public figures have expressed their support.

The nuclear power programme is producing ever increasing stocks of radioactive waste material. The technology does not yet exist that could provide a safe method of disposing of it. At present the most radioactive is stored in containers to wait for the technology; less dangerous wastes are buried at sea or on land and 'low-level' waste is simply pumped into the sea.

The obvious risk of dumping in the sea is the concentration of radioactivity in fish; more profound fears are raised by the long term effects. If for instance, the plankton in the sea were harmed by the radioactivity, we could damage the source of 70% of the world's oxygen and the ultimate source of food for all marine life.

Many countries, including the US, Sweden, Norway and Austria have ended dumping at sea, but Britain dumps on the biggest scale.

At the recent TUC Conference on Energy (27 February) majority opinion was favourable to a document, presented by the Fuel and Power Industries Committee, that advocates a continuation of a 'balanced energy strategy' including the expansion of the nuclear programme. This document sees no insuperable problems with nuclear energy. PCAP intend to get this attitude changed. Some unions are already behind them. They hope that Joe Gormley will sponsor a resolution to Congress against dumping. If this was accepted and union members refused to move the waste, radioactive dumping at sea could end, soon.

Ros Bailey



The way I look at it is that Windscale is nearly 300 miles from London as the crow flies - incidentally, could you get one of your buffins to work out just how far a contaminated crow can fly?

£3,300m

BNFL (British Nuclear Fuels Ltd) has announced a £3,300 million development programme for the next ten years, subject to approval by the government. The company expects to be able to raise all but £850 million from its own earnings.

Of this huge sum of money, £800-1000 million (January 1980 prices) will be spent on the construction of THORP, the reprocessing plant that was the subject of the Windscale Public Inquiry in 1977. This plant will reprocess the uranium oxide fuel from the AGR programme. Another £365 million is to go on research and development of THORP. The refurbishing of the Magnox reprocessing plant and vitrification has been allocated £1000 million. The vitrification programme will cost upwards of £200 million, and is planned to be in operation by 1987. The plant is to combine the best features of the Harvest programme and the French vitrification process.

Not all the money is to be spent at Windscale. £450 million is to go on centrifuge enrichment at Capenhurst, £5 million on fuel canning facilities for the AGR programme at Springfields. An unspecified amount is to go on new ships and spent fuel containers.

Nuclear Engineering International
February 1981

Report about the Windscale fire in 1957 reveals alarming figures

UK: The Political Ecology Research Group (PERG) in Oxford published a report in January about the consequences of a fire at the British Windscale reprocessing plant in 1957. An evaluation of scientific literature in the report shows that the amount of cancer cases in Cumbria, at the west coast of Britain, is alarmingly higher than the national average.

The fire in the reactor took place in October 1957. After 42 hours the damage from accident was measured; 400,000 curies of radioactive material had been released into the environment.

The Windscale reprocessing plant which started operating in 1952, was programmed to produce plutonium for the nuclear weapon industry and to fuel fast breeder nuclear reactors. When the plant closed down in 1973, no more than 100 tons of uranium oxide had been reprocessed.

PERG concludes in its report that the Windscale plant since 1962, dumped half a ton of plutonium through a pipeline into the sea. It is the only reprocessing plant in the world releasing plutonium into the environment directly.

Contact: PERG Oxford (Peter Taylor), 34 Cowley Road, Oxford, UK. Tel.: 865-725354

Ecology group backs plan for Windscale

From John Chartres
Manchester

The West Cumbrian branch of Friends of the Earth, leading opponents in the past of many of the developments at the Windscale nuclear complex, have decided to support proposals for an additional waste treatment plant there.

Officials of the branch made clear yesterday, however, that they would never welcome any installation that produces plutonium, the raw material of nuclear weapons. They are prepared to support a present planning application as a contribution to improvements in waste management procedures.

In a letter to Copeland Borough Council, now the planning authority for the Windscale area, Mr John Preedy, the secretary of the branch, points out that his organization has twice asked British Nuclear Fuels to indicate the levels of radioactivity in the materials going into the proposed plant compared with those of the treated waste.

"Since this information has been withheld it is impossible to judge whether the people of West Cumbria will benefit or suffer radiologically from the

operation of these plants", he says.

The letter, which is to be considered by Copeland planning committee today, also says that a suggested new road to the works is unnecessary and that a "green field" site outside the existing works boundary should be allowed only if it can be shown that there is no alternative.

It questions the beneficial effect on local employment because the company has stated only that some new jobs will be created. "We infer that the number will be very small," Mr Preedy says.

Mr Bill Badger, spokesman for the branch, said yesterday that it had supported the proposal because, given certain assurances, members saw it as being in line with the improvements in waste management at Windscale they had constantly called for in the past.

Referring to the criticism of Windscale procedures contained in a recent report by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Mr Badger said: "Any move to cut down the risk of radiation exposure at the plant should be supported on behalf of the workforce and the public."

The Leveller

Waste Workers at Risk

On 6th January 1981, a fire broke out in a trench storage facility for high level radioactive waste at Cap La Hague — the French reprocessing plant near Cherbourg on the Normandy coast.

The main union at the site, the C.F.-D.T., had demanded checks on the storage trenches in the north west corner of the site a year before, including a permanently attended alarm system. Nothing had been done by COGEMA, the company which runs the plant, and although the fire began at 5 a.m., it was not properly detected until 10 a.m. The union demanded evacuation of the building downwind from the storage tank at 1.30 p.m., but this was ignored, and the workers continued as normal until 4.30 p.m., when they went home.

19 workers close to the north west corner of the site were contaminated and one painter received a dose of 6 rems (5 rems is the maximum permitted yearly dose). Higher levels of caesium than normal were measured inside certain buildings because the air system was pumping contaminated air in. The workers were suspicious about other radiation hazards since, in the past, the management has admitted releases of caesium, because that is the least dangerous radio nuclide. However, the workers have strong reason to believe that the escape of plutonium and strontium has taken place undetected. At the perimeter fence on the 6th January 1981, a level of radiation was observed to be ten times higher than the limit.



Three hundred vehicles had to be decontaminated on 7th January, although this was only done after the union put pressure on the management. On 9th January, 1200 workers at La Hague demonstrated outside the director's office to demand proper information about accidents, and more stringent application of regulations, both on personal radiation levels and on rapid evacuation procedures.

Risks Minimised

At this time, the management still had no answer to the sudden fire in the waste storage. No further instrumentation had been installed (as requested by the union) to measure exactly what was being put in the trench, and what volume was there. The attitude of COGEMA was to minimise the incident: "La Hague is less dangerous

than a factory making women's clothes. Statistics can prove it", declared M. Delange, the director of La Hague. This is after a year of incidents, including 2 fires, as well as a complete breakdown of the electricity supply for several hours, endangering the safety of the cooling system for the waste (15th April 1980).

Demands

On 13th January 1981, the results of tests were revealed, showing that some alpha rays were emitted, suggesting plutonium escape. A union commission was set up to investigate this. The C.F.D.T. had already complained that not enough information was given about strontium and plutonium releases. The C.F.D.T. has taken a militant line in insisting on their right to information and as much safety as possible for their workers at La Hague. Since COGEMA became a private company (it was sold off by the French State) conditions have become even worse. "It is intolerable that because of a political desire to show they are in control of the situation, they expose the workers to risks which could affect them physically in the future". Frequent reports made by the C.F.D.T. show they have reason to make such bald statements.

They demand:

1. That union representatives be allowed to stop machines that are dangerous.
2. That information on the safety of the installation is open to workers.
3. That individual records be held by each worker of his/her radiation levels.
4. That an epidemiological study be done on nuclear industry workers in France.

Windscale

In Britain, the G&MWU has been trying to make conditions for workers at Windscale better. BNFL (the state-owned company which runs Windscale) has not always been co-operative. Last year, G&MWU proposed that supervisors should rectify potentially hazardous situations without waiting for the alarm to be sounded. BNFL replied that supervisors were already instructed 'properly', and the matter could always be taken up at the



time with 'higher levels of management'.

Like at La Hague, management at Windscale do not consider evacuation a likely possibility, although there have been serious incidents at Windscale too. Queries from the G&MWU are frequently passed from the works at Windscale to the BNFL Health & Safety Committee. In the same way, COGEMA at La Hague refuses to comment on certain areas, referring to the Government Safety Committee in Paris. There, however, very little information is released, as was shown when one demonstrator, Brice Lalonde, went to demand to see the safety report on storage of waste at La Hague, on the day after the fire. He was refused after a day's wait, on the grounds that "the peaceful debate between experts must be guaranteed".

Evidently a great deal of pressure will have to come from unions before any information will be forthcoming from either government or management in the reprocessing industry. In France, the CFDT is highly critical of the provisional storage of waste, and the careless way in which it is done. It does not wish to see any more imported nuclear waste arriving at La Hague.

Pressure Needed

It is time the British unions involved at Windscale took a stronger stand on the health and safety of their workers. The CFDT have not succeeded in their struggle yet, but they have their foot in management's door, and they are strong enough not to have that door slammed in their face. **Windscale is no less dangerous and irresponsible than La Hague**, (a recent report from PERG shows that it is worse but well hidden from the public eye.)

Serious accidents at either La Hague or Windscale would affect huge areas of both countries — La Hague is nearer to London than to Paris) Trade Unionists who demand safety at nuclear installations are protecting themselves, their relatives, and their whole society.

Good reading: **Near Miss**: Agent 82, 70p from Smiling Sun or mail order (p&p 20p).

Windscale report demands changes

Pearce Wright
Science Editor

Severe criticisms of past safety arrangements at the nuclear waste fuel reprocessing plant of British Nuclear Fuels at Windscale, Cumbria, have been made by three investigators appointed by the Health and Safety Executive to examine the organization.

They have produced 15 important recommendations, and many minor ones, affecting the management of the factory, which handles all the waste fuel from nuclear power stations in Britain and has big contracts for reprocessing waste from other European countries and from Japan.

Announcing the report in the Commons yesterday, Mr Norman Lamont, Under-Secretary of State for Energy, said serious deficiencies had existed, but many of the safety recommendations had been implemented and others would be introduced urgently.

The investigation began more than 18 months ago after incidents in which

workers had been contaminated and radioactive liquor had leaked. The immediate cause of the inquiry was the loss of large quantities of contaminated water from cooling ponds containing unprocessed material. The loss had gone undetected for many weeks.

The report, in describing some of the more important incidents, disclosed that "rather more than 100,000 curies of radioactivity escaped over a period of years from one silo. The management is blamed for that accident, having shown, the report said, lack of judgment and safety consciousness.

The engineered part of the system, though, not meeting present standards, would otherwise have been adequate to prevent that incident, in the view of the Health and Safety Executive's investigators and three outside consultants.

Those consultants were: Mr F. Morley, secretary of the National Radiological Protection Board; Mr T. A. Parry, deputy head of research and development services at Pilkington Brothers; and Dr D. A.

Williams, former general manager, Group Safety Centre, BP Trading.

The investigators traced the roots of the trouble to 1971, when Windscale was transferred from the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority to a newly created, wholly owned subsidiary, British Nuclear Fuels.

The report's first conclusion said that by the early 1970s safety standards at Windscale had deteriorated to an unsatisfactory level.

Changes in management procedures needed to ensure a secure safety system were laid down in the report, including the strengthening of the technical support groups responsible for providing a safety service, the development of a quality assurance organization responsible for standards from design to commissioning, and the introduction of safety audits.

British Nuclear Fuels said last night that the report was fair, comprehensive and constructive. All its recommendations had been accepted. Most of those yet to be implemented would be dealt with during the next few months.

Reprocessing Needed for Future Energy Projects: Conference

Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel will continue to be an important part of nuclear energy projects, according to physicists and energy experts who gathered from around the world at the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum Annual Conference in Tokyo Thursday.

On the final day of the three-day conference, some of the participants expressed their optimism that the recent shift in American policy from opposition to support of reprocessing will help nuclear energy development. American opposition to reprocessing had been a major point of disagreement between Japan and the Carter administration.

According to the executive vice president of the U.S. Atomic Industrial Forum, Edwin A. Wiggin, "The new administration in Washington can be expected to rescind the indefinite deferral of spent fuel reprocessing that was imposed by the Carter administration since it has proven to be a policy of self-denial and economic penalty."

"It is a policy to which no other nuclear nation has subscribed or can be expected to subscribe," he added.

Speaking before the afternoon session, Wiggin said reprocessing is a prerequisite for the development of the fast

breeder reactor (FBR) which the current Reagan administration has endorsed.

According to Wiggin, the American nuclear industry also favors reprocessing although many technical problems still remain to be solved.



Early Day Motion

An Early Day Motion has been tabled by John Tilley, M.P. for Lambeth Central. 'This House calls on the Government to establish a public inquiry into the safety aspects of transport of nuclear waste products within the United Kingdom' — E.D.M. No.16. So far over forty MPs have signed the motion.

The Greater London Council recently called for nuclear waste to be rerouted around London, and both Tory and Labour Boroughs in London are calling for a public inquiry, as are Worcester and Ipswich.

Groups all around the country are organising write-ins, and all people active in the anti-nuclear movement are urged to write to their MPs.

Draft letters are available and also a leaflet on starting a campaign with your local council. Available from LRWTC, c/o 15 Klee Avenue, London. SW4.

OOA - the Danish Anti-Nuclear Campaign have started a waste campaign. This was prompted by claims by the Nuclear industry to have solved the waste problem. ELSAM, the Danish electricity utility have carried out test borings in a salt dome in N.W. Jutland. The report has been postponed but is now expected to be published some time in May - so there will be more news of this in the next issue.

NUCLEAR WASTE VIA HULL

We have just received information that nuclear waste is being transported through Hull docks from either Zeebrugge or Rotterdam To indscale (?) Needless to say all official sources deny this and the only lead we have is a docker who will inform us when the next load comes in.

We wouldbe really grateful if you or any other groups you know of could give us any information that would help us. It goes by road so even what the bloody stuff looks like would help; also things like how long waste stays in the docks; what sort of security the stuff generally has; what anyone else has done to stop a truck on the road; do they normally stick to regular routes/times etc.

Thanks very much

Chris Snell
Hull Libertarian Collective,
66 Mayfield Street,
HULL

—Micronesians want complete ban—

Nuclear waste dumping halted, but...

AGANA, Guam (The NYT News Service) — Micronesian governments and antinuclear activists believe that they have succeeded in halting, at least for this year, a plan by the Japanese to dump radioactive waste from their 21 nuclear reactors into the Pacific, north of the Mariana islands.

In a petition being drafted for presentation to the Japanese parliament, the Government of the Commonwealth of the northern Marianas—Guam is the only one of the Marianas not a member on the Commonwealth, which is under American trusteeship—will ask for complete abandonment of the dumping program.

Last November, an official delegation from the Japanese Science and Technology Agency (STA) visited Guam for two days of talks with Guamanian Government officials and a full day of public hearings in the legislature in an effort to convince islanders and their Government that a plan to begin experimental dumping of small quantities of low-level waste about 1,000 miles north of here was safe.

Subsequently, under the plan, Japan was to begin dumping all of the waste materials, now being stored in metal drums at the reactor sites, into the sea at the same spot. Following the prescription of the London Dumping

Convention of 1975, the drums would be enclosed in concrete, would be resistant to water pressure and would be sunk at a depth of more than 13,000 feet.

In cooperation with Japanese environmental, antinuclear and fishermen's groups, the island governments and activists have presented a united front against the plan. Island officials have toured Japan, speaking at protest rallies and putting their case to Government agencies at all levels.

Last October, Mayor Felipe Mendiola of Tinian, the island from which American bombers took off to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, went so far as to threaten Japanese audiences with demolishing memorials to Japanese war dead on Tinian and throwing them into the sea if dumping took place.

Without public announcement, Japan indicated last month that it had put off its plan to begin experimental dumping this year. In January, disclosing its budget for the coming fiscal year, the science and technology agency said that the bulk of its funds for the dumping program were committed to further surveys of ocean radioactivity and tests of pressure-proof disposal drums.

The only other appropriation was one of about \$350,000 to finance explana-

tory films and pamphlets and travel of science agency officials to Micronesia, presumably for further explanations.

"Clearly, the Japanese have a very strong intention of selling their plan this year," said Jeffrey A. Cook, a lawyer who is chairman of the Mariana's alliance against nuclear dumping. "They will invite Government leaders to Japan and offer economic aid in return for stopping opposition to dumping."

Cook quoted a leading official of STA as having said to the press after the budget announcement: "We will continue to have a plan to dump. We did not give up the plan."

Barely expressed but evident behind many angry comments is a feeling by islanders that the United States is letting them down by not taking up the cudgels for them. In a statement last year, Gov. Paul M. Calvo of Guam, a Republican, accused the "major nuclear powers," without naming the United States, of sharing a Japanese view that Pacific islanders, because there are so few of them, are expendable.

"The only reasonable conclusion is that the risk factor is decreased because the area is sparsely, rather than densely, populated," the governor said. "Restated, if there is an accident, fewer people will be killed or mutilated."

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

First Report from the Select Committee on Energy, The Government's Statement on the New Nuclear Power Programme. Review of Vol.1: Report and Minutes. (HC 114/1, £5.30 + 10 p. postage.)

(Figures in parentheses refer to Paragraph numbers.)

This Report, which is one volume of four, presents the findings and opinions of the Committee but none of the evidence. At £5.30p for 124 pages it is one of the most outrageously expensive publications at present on sale. The contents of the other volumes, which consist of evidence and memoranda submitted, are listed in this one, Vol.1. It is obvious that these volumes are essential reading for all serious critics of nuclear power. As, inevitably, they run to 6 - 700 pages each it is obvious that the price of these volumes will ensure that they are not so studied. This outrageous situation must be the reviewer's first comment. Vital information, without which no opinions on nuclear matters can be soundly based is withheld because it is secret; or commercial-confidential; or deliberately made too expensive to buy.

It is time to mount a frontal attack upon this iniquitous situation. The anti-nuclear movement as a whole should fund its own information clearing-house. This should do nothing else but study and objectively analyse information of this sort for the benefit of the whole movement. I privately calculated recently that if in Pandora we had studied all the documentation we should have done, it would have set us back well over £2000. There is no doubt that this situation, if not actively contrived by the political establishment, is at least welcomed by it and it is time to resist. ***Activists in ANC and elsewhere please respond to this suggestion.

That being said, there is fortunately little in this Report of direct concern to us. The Committee did not deal with nuclear waste, holding that this topic was the concern of other Select Committees. Dumping and transport do feature - in vol.2, p.354-358, being Q.1175 - 1211.

Nuclear leak concealed by Japanese company

From Peter Hazelhurst
Tokyo, April 20

The leakage of radio active waste from a nuclear power station last month was admitted over the weekend by the Japan Atomic Power Company. The company said officials covered up the fact that an estimated 40 cubic metres of radioactive sludge flowed over the top of a filter tank in the power station near the town of Tsuruga in Fukui prefecture.

Government officials who inspected the plant today said the radioactive material flowed onto the floor for three hours on March 8 after a careless worker forgot to close a valve.

It is believed that a large amount of radioactive slush flowed into a manhole in the floor of the building and down a rainwater drain leading to the sea.

Officials said a large section of the waste disposal plant was contaminated by a high level of radioactivity. Workers were told to collect the waste in plastic buckets after the leak was discovered.

A spokesman for the Science and Technology Agency said the company failed to report the accident and the mishap was discovered only when scientists reported a high level of radioactivity in the seabed of Tsuruga Bay last week.

"This is an unprecedentedly grave incident which could retard our programme to build more nuclear power stations", an official from the Ministry for International Trade and Industry declared.

Officials said the waste stored in the area was "highly radioactive". Scientists told reporters today that one hour of exposure to the waste would exceed the maximum permissible level of exposure for three months.

Investigations indicate that the level of radioactivity of the mud in Tsuruga Bay has risen to 13,000 picocuries of cobalt 60 per gram. The Japan Atomic Power Company claims that the level of radioactivity is not dangerous and will not contaminate marine life.

But scientists who inspected the filter room today say that workers who cleared the sludge might have been exposed to a dangerous level of radiation. Officials who carried out a check for 30 seconds today claim they were exposed to 30 millirem of radioactivity.

Residents in towns near by refused to purchase fish and seafood from local markets today and groups of fishermen in Fukui prefecture announced that they intended to sue the Japan Atomic Power Company for a loss of livelihood.

Confronted by a barrage of protests from Communists and Socialists, Mr. Rokusuke Tanaka, the Minister for International Trade and Industry, said Government inspectors had been instructed to check all nuclear plants.

An official of his ministry acknowledged: "This is a serious incident. It will strengthen the hands of a powerful lobby which opposes the Government's plans to con-

struct more nuclear power plants."

The scandal has blown up in the face of the Government only weeks after an official report declared that the construction of nuclear power plants should become the core of the country's plan to find alternative sources of energy.

A report by the Science and Technology Agency said Japan would have to build new power stations with a total generating capacity of 25 million kilowatts if the country was to meet its demands for energy in 1990. At present 11 more nuclear power stations are under design.



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