

F. Post 12/3/68

Ft. Detrick Conversion Now Being Discussed

Fort Detrick is once again a subject of discussion in Washington following proposals that the biological warfare center should be converted into a civilian-run facility for the study of infectious diseases.

Dr. Albert E. Hayward, an assistant director in the Defense Department's research and engineering branch, told the Washington Post in an interview last week that the transformation of

Fort Detrick into a civilian research center was being discussed by the Departments of Defense and Health, Education and Welfare.

This report was confirmed by Dr. Ivan L. Bennett Jr., director of the New York University Medical Center, who served as science advisor to President Johnson. Speaking at a symposium of the American Association for the Advancement of

Science, Bennett said the transfer of the germ warfare laboratories could be done within a year.

He commented that this move would reflect government efforts to switch from making biological weapons to curing illness. He added that there are also preliminary plans to give the Army's germ warfare center at Pine Bluff, Ark., to the Department of Agriculture for research into biological pesticides.

These moves came after President Nixon's Nov. 25 statement in which he renounced any biological warfare and the first use of chemical weapons. He also ordered the destruction of bacteriological weapons and announced that he would ask the Senate to ratify the Geneva Accord of 1925 banning the use of biological weapons.

The transfer of Fort Detrick from army to civilian research has been supported by Rep. Richard D. McCarthy (D-N.Y.) who told a press conference Saturday that the National Institutes of Health should take over the \$95 million dollar laboratories which

See DETRICK, Page A-5

DETRICK

(Continued From Page One)

contain some of the finest research laboratories in the world.

Officials at Fort Detrick indicate they expect to continue business as usual while they await the decision on the fort's future.

Dr. Riley D. Housewright, scientific director at the facility, said last night that officials on the base do not yet know exactly what the situation is.

"As far as we know the talks are still going on," he said, "but we don't know how far they've progressed. We're not really in a position to make any comment because the matter won't be decided at this level anyway. It will be decided in Washington by someone higher up."