

Detrick Research Monitored

The State Health Department appears to be seeking to replace Frederick County officials as the agency for monitoring disease incidents at Fort Detrick.

At present army officials and the county have a "memorandum of understanding" regarding procedures, such as quarantine, for some types of disease cases at the germ warfare research center here.

However, Dr. Charles Spicknall, director of the county Health Department, said Monday "I am not at liberty to say anything about this."

"I have been instructed that all information relating to this issue will be given out only by the governor's office.

Fort Detrick officials were also "mum" about the issue. No one contacted there this morning was able to supply any information on the matter.

The tentative recommendations of the Health Department are the first products of a meeting last month a four-man liaison committee and Ft. Detrick officials. They call for a broader role for the state agency in monitoring disease incidence related to the biological tests.

The confidential report, which stressed that there has been "no evidence" of diseases being transmitted from the base said the information "need not be a matter of public record" and could be kept at the military post for disclosure "only to those persons from the State Health Department who have security clearance."

Dr. Neil Solomon, secretary of health and mental hygiene, has been working on position statements for the state in regard to germ and chemical warfare research and testing in Maryland. As yet nothing has been said about chemical testing at Edgewood Arsenal, although testing has been halted under Army orders for the time being.

Last Thursday the governor rejected as incorrect a report published in state newspapers and wire services that State Health Director Dr. William J. Peeples said he would support

a moratorium on chemical-biological weaponry research at Fort Detrick.

The governor said he is relying on the report of Dr. Neil Solomon, State Secretary of Health, who "reported to me that as of this time, from their examination and investigation, there is no health hazard."

The questions asked the governor and his answers at a news conference last Thursday at Annapolis follow:

Q.—Governor, two days ago Dr. Peeples said he would go along with a moratorium on the experimental work that is being done at Fort Detrick—the biological research. Did Dr. Peeples speak for both you and Dr. Solomon?

A.—Dr. Peeples didn't discuss this with me at all. I would assume that he had with Dr. Solomon, but Dr. Solomon can answer that for himself. I don't know.

Q.—Dr. Solomon, would you answer? Did Dr. Peeples speak for you?

A.—Let me say I am not so sure Dr. Peeples spoke for himself on what was in the paper. What was in the paper led one to believe that Dr. Peeples would order a moratorium. As you well know, no State official has this authority. Dr. Peeples spoke in response to questions that were asked by a group as far as his personal opinion about this is concerned, and he apparently gave an answer. I have tried to speak to Dr. Peeples — as you know, he wasn't

in Baltimore today — and find out exactly what was said, because I really don't know what was said.

Q.—How do you feel about a moratorium pending an investigation by some researchers?

A.—Well, as you are probably aware, we came out with a position statement in regard to both the chemical and the germ warfare situation and said that there was no evidence whatsoever in the State to show that there were any harmful effects to the citizens. Secondly, that we would do everything possible to monitor this. If and when our study is complete and shows that whatever action should be taken, at that time we would, but at the moment there really is no reason. I am sure we could all think of a tremendous number of areas that could be raised in the health field and certainly questions could be raised and one wouldn't call moratoriums on various areas until you got the facts. And we just don't have all the facts. But we do know at the moment that it's not a health hazard.

Q.—Governor, do you support your Secretary?

A.—Well, I had asked Dr. Solomon to look into both of these matters, and he had reported to me that as of this time, from their examination and investigation, there is no health hazard in either one of these operations, so that I am relying on his report.