

News of Science

Muller's Paper Barred

During recent weeks considerable publicity has been given to the report that H. J. Muller of Indiana University was not permitted to present a paper at the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy that was held in Geneva 8-20 Aug. From newspaper accounts based on interviews with Muller, statements by officials of the United Nations, and statements from Atomic Energy Commission spokesmen, the facts appear to be as follows:

Muller, Nobel laureate and professor of zoology at the University of Indiana, was invited—as were many others—to submit a paper for the Geneva conference. This he did.

In a letter dated 18 July Muller was told by the AEC that the U.N. had “not requested” his paper and that because of size limitations of the United States delegation he could not be included. Four days later another letter from the AEC to Muller contained an apology for the late notice and blamed the U.N. for the delay.

Before the two letters to him were sent, Muller had left for Europe. He attended the Geneva conference, as a spectator, but did not present his paper and was barred from taking part in the discussion because he was not an official delegate.

More than a month after the conference began, Warren Unna of the *Washington Post and Times-Herald* reported additional facts. He obtained from U.N. headquarters in New York a flat denial that the U.N. had barred or “not requested” Muller's paper and the further statement that the U.N. had been instructed by the AEC, in a letter dated 30 June, that Muller was not a delegate and that the AEC did not want his paper on the program.

Confronted with the U.N. statements, the AEC then admitted that it was responsible for the omission of Muller's paper. It appears that the paper was initially reviewed and accepted by the AEC technical staff that processed the conference papers. But after the paper was forwarded to the U.N. for oral presentation, it was decided by the AEC

that mention of the Hiroshima bombing made the paper “definitely inadmissible” at a conference devoted to the peacetime use of nuclear energy.

Accordingly, the U.N. was requested by the AEC to omit the paper and was informed that Muller was not a delegate. At the time this explanation was given, the AEC also declared that no suppression of Muller's views was involved since his paper would appear in the proceedings volumes to be published in a few months by the U.N.

In a statement made to the press on 3 Oct., Lewis L. Strauss, chairman of the AEC, expressed his regret that the “snafu” had occurred and declared that he assumed full responsibility for it. He added that the correct procedure would have been to ask Muller to omit mention of Hiroshima. The mistake occurred, he indicated, because the AEC technical staff had had to handle so many papers in such a short time.

The Soo and the Suez

The Soo Canal, which links Lake Superior and Lake Huron, celebrated its centennial year during this past summer. The Soo long has surpassed all other canals in volume of traffic; frequently it has been cited as having an annual volume greater than the combined tonnages of the Suez, Panama, and Kiel canals. However, in 1954 the Soo—properly named the St. Marys Falls Canal—lost its position to the Suez. Ironically, this occurred in the canal's 100th year of operation and just a year after the establishment of an all-time tonnage record of 128.5 million net tons.

The Suez outranked the Soo by a wide margin; comparative records of 106.8 and 85.4 million net tons give a difference of 21.4 million tons. Last year marked the first time that the commodities moving through the Suez exceeded 100 million net tons, whereas in 6 of the last 10 years the Soo volume has passed this figure.

This change in positions was primarily the result of the change in traffic in two commodities—iron ore and oil. In 1954 iron ore represented 73 percent of the

Soo tonnage, and petroleum, both crude and refined, accounted for 65 percent of the volume through the Suez.

In 1954 the petroleum products that passed through the Suez reached a new peak of more than 69.95 million net tons. This was also greater, for the first time, than the iron ore movement through the Soo, which totaled only 62.6 million net tons. Although the oil figure represents a gain of more than 7 million net tons over the 1953 total, the volume of iron ore declined by 36 million tons from the previous year.

Further expansion of the Middle East oil fields, which have had a spectacular development since World War II, largely accounts for the Suez Canal's increase. However, the decrease in shipments in the Soo was caused by economic factors.

The Soo ore traffic in 1953 reached an all-time high of 98.6 million tons. This record flow was the result not only of the high tempo of industrial activity in 1953, but also of the 1952 steel strike, which had delayed ore shipments. In the first half of 1954, however, steel production was only 71.5 percent of rated capacity, and this declined to 64 percent in the third quarter of the year. Accompanying this decrease in demand was a record import of 17.7 million net tons of ore. These are the conditions that caused the cargo traffic in the Soo to drop to the lowest volume since the 1930's except for 1946.

While iron ore has always dominated the Soo traffic, the rise of petroleum to its dominant place in the Suez trade has been a post-war phenomenon. In 1946 this commodity group amounted to about 9.3 million net tons, or 38 percent of the total traffic between the Red and Mediterranean seas. Only 8 years later the volume had increased $7\frac{1}{2}$ times to account for two-thirds of the total cargo tonnage.

Pipe lines have had an important effect on the commerce of both the Suez and Soo. Lines from Saudi Arabia and Iraq to Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea divert large quantities of crude oil from the Suez route, whereas the Soo is affected by the pipe line from Duluth-Superior to Sarnia, Ontario, which opened in January 1954. From 1951, when the pipe line from the Alberta oil fields reached the head of the Great Lakes, until the Sarnia extension opened in 1954, the crude moved eastward in tankers. The 1953 volume reached 3.4 million tons, but fell to one-fifth of this amount last year.

In comparing the two canals, it should be noted that because of ice the Soo locks cannot operate for more than 9 months a year, whereas the lockless Suez never closes. Based on the figures for 8