THE YORK DISPATCH, MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1961.

HEARING ON A-PLANT STARTS BEFORE AEC

TWO STATE AGENCIES GIVEN RIGHT TO INTERVENE AT OPENING OF SESSION

PROJECT RECOMMENDED

The State Health Department and the State Sanitary Water Board today were granted permission to intervene today as the Atomic Energy Commission began a public hearing on the Philadelphia Electric Company's application to construct its proposed 40,000-kilowatt nuclear power plant at Peach Bottom.

Permission was granted by AEC Hearing Examiner J. B. Bond as the sessions got under way this morning in the AEC auditorium at Germantown, Md. By noon, four of the applicant's seven witnesses were heard. There were three more company witnesses to be heard this afternoon and the AEC intended to send two witnesses to the stand.

Representing the Pennsylvania agencies were Assistant Attorney General William M. Gross, attorney for the State Sanitary Water Board, and assistant Attorney General Jacob L. Cohen, general counsel for the health department.

Goodling in Attendance

Present as an observer only was Congressman George A. Goodling, Loganville, and his administrative assistant G. Maxwell Rohm.

AEC Counsel Thomas Englehart opened the hearing by announcing that the staff of the commission's division of licensing and regulation was recommending construction of the Peach Bottom reactor convinced that it could be constructed and operated at the site without undue risk to the health and safety of the public.

The only opposition evident was the filing of a limited appearance by Lawrence Goldberg, 6642 West Seventeenth street, Philadelphia, to put into the record an unsworn statement challenging the constitutionality of the Atomic Energy Act of 1956 in that he believes it fails to promote the general welfare.

The first witness for the company was Robert F. Gilkeson, Philadelphia Electric vice-president, who outlined the company's background and its qualifications to undertake the York county project.

Francis E. Drake Jr., vice president of Rochester (N. Y.) Gas and Electric Company and secretary of High Temperature Reactor Development Associates, formed by the some 50 utilities to sponsor the project, testified as to the association's financial ability to underwrite the project.

No Questions From State

The commonwealth agency lawyers, Gross and Cohen, had no questions for the early witnesses, but it was expected they would cross-examine later company and AEC witnesses who are to talk about hazards involved.

In a press release issued before the hearing the state agencies said they were participating "to assure" themselves "that the proposed facility will not be harmful to waters of the commonwealth, nor dangerous to the health of its citizens." It noted that neither the company nor the AEC opposed the state intervenor.

The release said the agencies want to make recommendations to the AEC as to the type of information that the applicant should be required to submit to provide assurance that the plant can be constructed and operated without undue risk to the health and safety of the public.

Karl M. Mason, director of the health department's environmental health bureau, noted that even if the company is granted a permit it will have to apply for and be granted a sanitary water board permit by satisfying the board that its liquid wastes are well within safe limits and, in addition, will need approval of the health department for treatment and discharge of the plant's gaseous waste.

Later, James L. Everett III, research director for Philadelphia Electric, described the proposed site of the power plant as a wooded area in rough terrain about nine miles upstream from the Conowingo dam.

Philadelphia Electric, he said, owns the 600-acre site and its subsidiaries own the land on both sides of the Conowingo pond to just below the Holtwood dam another eight miles upstream.

The only sizeable communities within a 10-mile radius of the site, Everett said, are Delta, Pa., and Cardiff, Md. When the plant is ready for operation no persons will be permitted to reside within the 600-acre exclusion area, he said.

Tells of Precautions

At present about 40 persons reside within a one mile radius of the area, with summer residents increasing this number to about 120.

George H. Bosworth, Burlingame, Cal., supervising engineer for the Bechtel Corporation and project engineer for the Peach Bottom atomic power plant, outlined construction programs [illegible]

He said the building over the spent fuel pit is designed to contain radioactive materials which may be released if an accident [illegible] to occur there. In the event of [illegible] normal emission of radioactive material, Bosworth said [illegible] monitoring devices would sound alarms and leak-tight valves in the ventilation and discharge lines would be closed.

He said liquid waste would be released to the Conowingo pond but only after they had been monitored for radioactivity and decontaminated so that drinking water in the river would not be harmed.

In addition, he said, solid waste would be transported from the site by licensed carriers in conformity with AEC regulations.

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