

DEAR Chairman Ahearn,

Enclosed is an article from a small township meeting held last night.

The township is about 5 miles from TMI.

Please copy and circulate among the other commissioners.

Also, if you can get a video-type of "Good Morning America" ABC's early morning show, for today, you will see an interesting interview.

Again, please copy, and send to other commissioners.

Thanks

L. C. Matchall
Middletown, PA.



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POOR QUALITY PAGES

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Met Ed Sees Gas Release In 1981 To Aid Cleanup

By TOM INFIELD
Intelligencer Journal Staff

More radioactive gas might be released into the atmosphere from Three Mile Island in 1981 or later when technicians remove the uranium fuel core from the damaged nuclear reactor, officials said Wednesday.

Robert C. Arnold, chief of TMI clean-up operations for Metropolitan Edison Co., told a public gathering near Maytown "we can't be sure what's going to be necessary to do the cleanup until we have access" to the disabled Unit 2 reactor.

Tom Potter, a radiation health consultant to Met Ed, said at the same meeting the amount of gas could be "about as much in the fuel as is now in the containment building."

Met Ed last month asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for permission to vent 45,000 curies of radioactive krypton-88 gas into the atmosphere, slowly over a period of a month or two.

The public's exposure to gamma radiation from the release would not exceed one-tenth of a millirem, compared to as much as 78 millirems by the utility's estimate during the accident last March, officials said.

116 Is Normal

People in this area normally receive 116 millirems of exposure in a year from all sources, they said.

Ridding gas from the reactor's containment building is the first step in Met Ed's plan to enter the building, pump out 600,000 gallons of radioactive water on the floor, open the reactor itself and remove the fuel.

Wednesday night, Met Ed briefed about 100 area residents and local officials in a meeting at the East Donegal Township building.

"The real issue I'm concerned about is the cleanup... The gas is the real issue," said state Rep. Kenneth Brandt, who asked for the briefing.

"That's the next step of what's coming off that island. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of surprises," Brandt said.

One woman in the audience, Patricia Longenecker, of Elizabethtown R4, suggested a public opinion poll might favor taking the gas to Washington, D.C., in glass bottles.

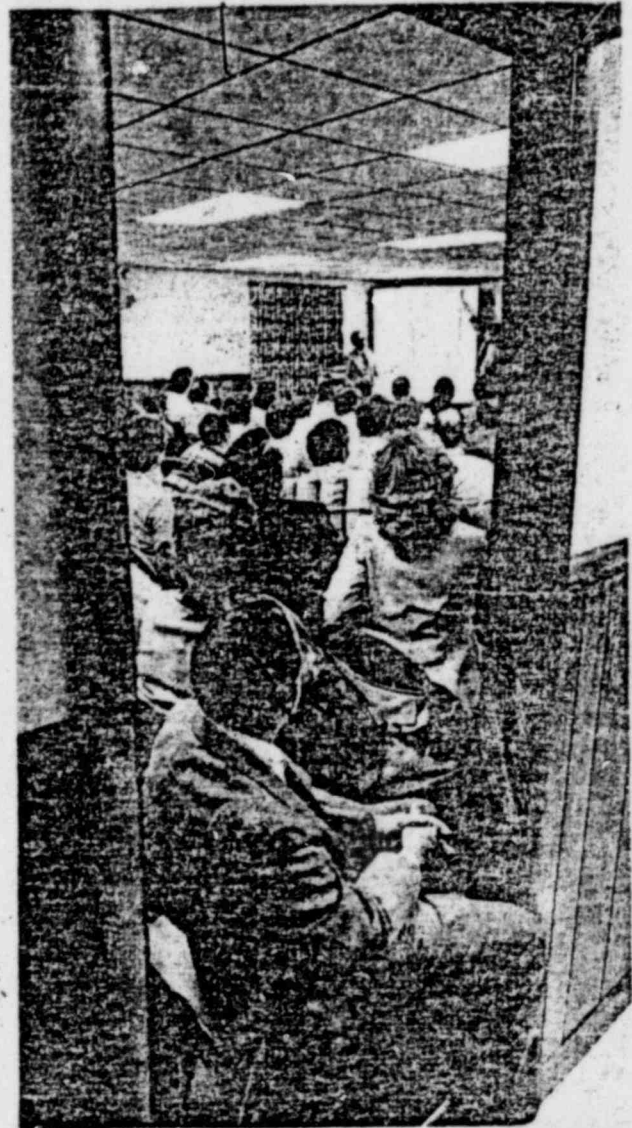
But the chance of future radiation releases came up moments later as Bud Devine, a councilman in Columbia, asked what else Met Ed might have in store as the four-year clean-up effort goes on.

Arnold replied that, while new radioactive gas could not be produced, the reactor's fuel pins may still contain some of the gas produced at the time of the accident.

When work reaches that stage, Met Ed will have to formulate a plan for its disposal, submit it to the NRC and let it be "discussed in public forums... before we can think about removing that fuel," Arnold said.

"We can't say everything will be great once we get over the two hurdles of the water and the gas (in the containment)," Arnold warned.

"We do have a problem; it's not going



One leg out the door, a man listens Wednesday night to explanations of radiation emissions from Three Mile Island at a public meeting near Maytown. About a hundred area residents and local public officials attended.

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Met Ed Talks Of '81 Release

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to go away," he said.

The gas still remaining in the fuel core would be krypton-85, the same gas as in the atmosphere of the containment building of the reactor, Pottier said.

Most of the public's questions focused on Met Ed's current plans:

"Are these meetings to ask the public if we want the gas released or to tell us you're going to do it?" asked a man in the audience, who did not identify himself.

One Public Explanation

Arnold's answer was that meeting near Martown and others like it were "to come out to the public and give the fullest explanation of what's involved." He gave no hint that Met Ed would accede to a public poll.

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Met-Ed Plan Gets Chilly Reception

Officials of the utility that operates the Three Mile Island nuclear plant attempted Tuesday night to sell their proposal to release controlled amounts of radioactive krypton-85 gas from the plant into the atmosphere.

The more than 75 neighboring residents who attended Tuesday's public meeting on the venting proposal did not appear to be in a buying mood, however.

Metropolitan Edison Co. has asked the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission to approve its request to vent into the atmosphere the krypton gas now trapped inside the nuclear plant's Unit 2 containment building.

The commission is not expected to rule before the end of this month, but residents attending Tuesday's three-hour meeting at the Lower Swatara Twp. municipal building responded with an emphatic "no."

Met-Ed officials said that the venting procedure will last from one to two months and will be closely monitored. They said that venting is the safest and cheapest alterna-

tive available to the company and that removal of the radioactive gas is required so that the plant recovery effort can proceed.

Officials also said that controlled venting can be accomplished with a minimal increase in the dose of radioactive materials that residents will be exposed to.

The residents argued, however, that Met-Ed's assurances during the March 28 plant accident strained the credibility of the company's statements about the safety of the venting procedure.

"Your credibility is nil," one woman said.

The residents also questioned the immediate need to vent the krypton gas and said that Met-Ed has a "moral obligation" to the surrounding communities to further explore all alternative methods of either containing or removing the gas.

One woman referred to the March 28 plant incident as "an unexpected chain of events," and added, "We don't need another unexpected chain of events."

"We think, first of all," he said, "that the public in the near vicinity is best served by the venting option."

He said releasing the trapped gas in controlled bursts would be safer than either option of liquidating and storing the gas at super-cold temperature or compressing and storing it.

He called venting the best of a "series of bad choices."

Keith Woodard, another consultant, said krypton-85 is the last of several noble gases inside the containment building. The others, he said, have "decayed away," but the krypton will remain for many years.

The gas cannot be filtered or chemically removed, he said, although charcoal filters will be used to trap the small amounts of any other isotopes that may be in the contaminated atmosphere.

Met Ed has "good samples of the krypton-85 that's in there," he said.

As proposed, the gas would be released from a vent stack on the east side of the plant about 100 feet above ground.

The worst gamma radiation dose of 0.1 millirem would be only one-fiftieth of what is permitted in normal plant operation, Woodard said. The beta radiation dose of more than five millirems would be less than a third of what would be routinely allowed.

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"In case you're worried about a runaway system," he added, the venting system cannot pump more than 1,000 cubic feet per minute, a small rate compared to the two million cubic feet of gas inside the building.

"It's not like it's a large hole in the containment. It's a small, contained system," Woodard said.

Consultants have tracked 10 years of weather data to calculate how long it may take for the release. Venting will be spaced out to take advantage of high winds.

The releases will be monitored "as they go," he said. "We're going to be very careful about this," Woodard pledged. "We're not going to open up and blast off."

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