

JAN 21 1977

2/21  
John J. [unclear]

MEMORANDUM FOR: File 77-4

FROM: William E. Ryan, Acting, Assistant Director for Investigations, OIA

SUBJECT: SURRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

This investigation was based on information furnished by an employee of Region IV to Arthur Schnebelen during a visit to that Region's headquarters. This employee requested that [redacted] identity be kept confidential. The information provided by the employee related to [redacted] prior service in Region II. In essence, the information was that a Region II inspector by the name of [redacted] had found some bad welds in the neutron shield of Unit I, Surry Nuclear Power Plant. When [redacted] attempted to report this, the principal inspector pulled this finding out of the report and "swept it under the rug." See memorandum, December 7, 1976, Schnebelen to Ryan in File.

Because of the potential health and safety problem, this office called the matter to the attention of John G. Davis, Deputy Director, Office of Inspection and Enforcement, and later confirmed this in writing. In memorandum, December 10, 1976, in file.

On January 12, 1977, a draft reply to Thomas J. McTiernan from Ernst Volgenau was furnished for review with the approved reply being furnished on January 14, 1977, Volgenau's reply states that he requested Moseley, Region II Director, to look into the allegation and also asked Grier, IE Headquarters staff to analyze the safety significance of possible bad welds in the neutron shield.

Moseley's inquiry disclosed that [redacted] did report welding deficiencies of the neutron shield, principally related to surface roughness, in some of the welds and to discontinuity in one weld seam. (C.O. Report 50-280/70-1, 50-281/70-1). The same problem was addressed by two other inspectors, [redacted] (C.O. Report 50-280/70-3, 50-281/70-3, and [redacted] (C.O. Report 50-280/70-4, 50-281/70-4, 50-280/70-6, 50-281/70-5).

Moseley advises that the last report of [redacted] "does not concisely close the welding questions, however, [redacted] verbally informed Moseley on December 27, 1976 that it was closed at that time and that he then (in October 1970) had no concern for the safety of operations using the tank as fabricated."

Grier in a memorandum to Volgenau, dated December 16, 1976, concluded that "this matter is of no concern with respect to public health and safety." Grier advised that the evaluation of his office was concurred in by NRR. In a second memorandum to Volgenau, dated January 11, 1977, Grier pointed out that subsequent to his memorandum of December 16, 1976, he learned that the neutron shield, in addition to providing shielding and coding

coding

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functions also provides support for the reactor vessel. Grier stated, "Our earlier conclusion regarding the safety significance of the alleged defecting (sic) welding remains valid. We continue to conclude that these allegations relate to matters which are of virtually no real safety significance." Grier stated that NRR concurred in this finding.

Back upon the Volgenau memorandum, it can be concluded that no health and safety problem exists because of defective welding in the neutron shield tank. It can be further concluded that [redacted] did formally report welding deficiencies in the tank, as did [redacted] and [redacted] and that these deficiencies were corrected.

Arthur Schnebelen suggests that the only way that we can be sure that the welds that the informant alleged to be bad were or were not covered in the inspection reports would be to locate [redacted] and interview [redacted] regarding the informant's allegations. Although, as Arthur suggests, it might be helpful to interview [redacted] it is my opinion that the record before us does not disclose any irregular conduct by NRC personnel as intimated by the informant. In addition, it is also my view that we are entitled to rely on the advice of IE, concurred in by NRR, that assuming there were defective welds in the neutron shield tank no real safety problem exists.

It is noted that Volgenau's reply relates apparently to Surry Unit No. 2, whereas our allegations related to Unit 1. Since inspection reports referred to above concerned both visits (C.O. Reports 50-280 and 50-281) this is not of consequence. *UNIT 1*

I recommend that our file be closed and Volgenau so advised.

*W.E.R.*  
William E. Ryan, Acting Assistant Director  
for Investigations  
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