



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

*May Caucus #  
7-3059*

MEMO

May 7, 1979

SUBJECT: AGENDA - Select Committee-TMI

TO: Honorable Charles Mebus  
Chief Clerk

FROM: Honorable James L. Wright, Jr.  
Chairman, Select Committee - TMI

*JW*

The following are scheduled to appear and testify before the Select Committee - TMI on May 10th and May 11th in the Majority Caucus Room.

THURSDAY, MAY 10th

Governor Dick Thornburgh	10:00 A.M.
Lt. Governor William Scranton, III	11:00 A.M.
Colonel Oran Henderson Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency	2:00 P.M.

✓ FRIDAY, MAY 11th

Dr. Robert Wilburn Secretary of Budget & Administration	10:00 A.M.
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HARRISBURG 17120*

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE - THREE MILE ISLAND

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Verbatim record of hearing  
held in the Majority Caucus  
Room, Main Capitol Building,  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on  
Friday,

May 11, 1979

HON. JAMES L. WRIGHT, JR., Chairman  
Hon. Bernard F. O'Brien, Vice Chairman  
Hon. Nicholas B. Moehlmann, Vice Chairman  
Hon. Eugene Geesey, Secretary

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Reported by:  
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CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: I would like to call to order the Friday morning meeting of the Select Committee on Three Mile Island. A couple of notes, first. Next week we thought the General Assembly would not be in session. It is my understanding that there will be a token session on Thursday of next week. It's my understanding that the following week we will be in session for five days.

It is my intention of trying to call a working session of this Committee. During the morning will be either Wednesday or Thursday or Friday of next week that we come back into session to discuss future schedules, sub-committees and other items of importance.

Peg Foran has for you a couple of handouts that were requested yesterday when we met with Colonel Henderson and the Emergency Management people. So, those of you who did not get them, pick them up from Peg Foran before you leave. There is a reproduction of that booklet on radioactivity and there is a list of those members of the Advisory Committee that was conducted yesterday.

Our witness this morning is Secretary of Budget and Administration, Dr. Robert Wilburn. Dr. Wilburn is the Director of the Air Force Academy, served on active duty in the Pentagon, Vice-President of Chase National Bank, President of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

He comes before us this morning as Chief of Staff in

the Governor's Office from the Three Mile Island affair. It is my understanding that the Doctor does not have a prepared statement. I gave him a list of questions that arose yesterday. I would suggest that he make some comments and try to handle the questions that I have suggested to him. Dr. Wilburn, we are listening.

SECRETARY WILBURN: Before we start, I would like to clarify what my role was during this incident. I do not think that the title Chief of Staff would really be an appropriate one for me. If that title should be given to anyone, I believe it should be given to Jay Walderman (phonetic). There were about a half a dozen of us who virtually lived with the Governor during the period of Three Mile Island crisis and, I believe, served in the role as advisor and close aides to the Governor to do whatever he could to assist in that situation.

During the period of the crisis, the Governor did rely upon me from time to time to do a more in depth look at our evacuation plans and our emergency preparedness planning. From time to time, I did do that evaluation and go back and forth between PEMA with the Governor and county agencies and so forth.

With that, let me try to answer the questions that were raised.

The only thing that I did want to add was that my involvement in this crisis really began on Friday morning at

approximately 9:30 A.M. and continued through approximately the next Wednesday. I really was not involved prior to Friday morning, prior to the crisis when it did escalate.

The first question that was just given to me says, "as the Governor's right-hand man during this crisis, who were you and the Governor listening to and how much reliability did you have in the information that you received?"

Again, I would remind you that I started my involvement at 9:30 on Friday morning. At that time, of course, this is when the crisis had escalated considerably. It was at that time that we were receiving information from the NRC from 10:00 that morning we had a telephone call. We placed a call, rather, to Chairman Hendrie. We later, within that hour, talked to the President of the United States.

Later that morning, we received input from several people in the White House, including Mr. Jack Watson, Mr. Gene Hietenberg (phonetic), Jessica Huppman (phonetic). We also received input, of course, continually from our Department of Environmental Resources, from our Department of Agriculture, of course from the Emergency Management Center, Lieutenant Governor's Office, continually all this information was coming into the Governor's Office. We were trying to sort out this information to the best way we could.

It says here, "from whom were you getting your advice about the severity of the problem?"

The severity of the problem, the advice was coming principally from the NRC and from the Department of Environmental Resources. From those two principal sources, we were getting the information about how serious the problem was. Of course, our own Department of Environmental Resources was helping work with us as a check against the input that we were getting from the NRC. It is true that we were getting some conflicting advice in the early morning. However, after Mr. Denton was on the site, we tended to get things in a much more coordinated fashion. I think we had a much greater reliability as soon as we had someone that we had considerable faith in on site. In fact, the call that was made to the President that morning, we requested that we have a single senior source of information concerning the site and the Governor did request that they send the best available person and the President responded by sending Mr. Denton. I think from that point on, the information difficulty was greatly reduced after Mr. Denton arrived on the scene.

The next question that is here is, "what was the opinion of your Command Post as to the reliability of the information you were getting?"

From my point of view, the information that we were receiving from on the site was much better than the information that we were receiving from off the site. The information that we were receiving -- and by off the site, I mean from

Washington. It really wasn't until Mr. Denton arrived on site and did an on-site analysis of what the situation was, I believe that we really began to have everything sort of coalesce.

Prior to that point, we were getting advice from all over that was often conflicting in nature. We were getting all kinds of information. I think the most reliable information certainly did come from Mr. Denton, once he was here. We also placed great faith in the information we were getting from our own Department of Environmental Resources on their readings and on the extent of problems as they were reporting it. We were getting other statements that had less than theirs.

Next one is, "what was your personal opinion as to the reliability of the information?"

Again, I guess it depends on the source. I think that the Governor had a very good picture from Friday morning on of what the potential threats were that began to develop during that Friday of what the potential threats were that existed. I think that as soon as we began to interact with the right people at the NRC and with the right people in the White House, we began to get a much better and much clearer picture and this was beginning to unfold throughout the morning. I think that we certainly had as good a picture as was possible, given the circumstances throughout that day.

The next question, "did you ever feel frustrated in



your attempts to get what you considered reliable information under the circumstances?"

We were continually frustrated because we always wanted to get better information. Of course, we were always trying to ask the questions about what is the worst possible thing that could happen. What kind of lead time do we have and to question and cross-examine the various sources of information to try and determine whether or not we were, in fact, getting "reliable information". I think it's fair to say that no source was considered without this kind of cross-examination. I have to admit that I personally felt some great respect for the skills that one develops as a prosecutor in watching Mr. Walderman and the Governor cross-examine the various witnesses in trying to determine exactly what information -- trying to find conflicts, trying to make sure that the information that they were getting was the best possible information and asking the same questions many different ways.

I thought through this whole process that we were getting the best information that the people we were getting the information from had. It was always frustrating. The question, were you frustrated? We were always frustrated throughout this entire period because there is always that doubt. There is always a question you wanted to have better information and we tried to get the best information we could.

The next question is, "what do you suggest could be

done to correct the problem of reliability and information?"

I think we have learned many things from this incident. I think that in the future, if we would have had the kind of response that occurred with Mr. Denton being here even earlier, of course, the problem would have been even better under control. I think that if individuals are dispatched as soon as possible on both the technical side as well as the evacuation side, with assistance from the federal government on the evacuation side, also, I think as soon as these people can be on the site, the better. Perhaps this can provide a laboratory experiment in which in the future some of these problems won't occur again and we will have more reliable information more quickly. I don't know if I answered these questions, but that's what I think.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Bennett, Reid Bennett, has a question to ask.

BY REPRESENTATIVE BENNETT:

Q Mr. Wilburn --

A Yes, sir.

Q For the record, will you tell us what your official position is with the Administration?

A I am Secretary of Budget and Administration. In that position, I have reporting to me the Office of Budget, the Office of Personnel and the Office of Administration.

Q And, again, when did you personally become involved with the Three Mile Island incident?

A Sir, at 9:30 on Friday morning.

Q The date?

A This would have been March 30th, I believe.

Q March 30. I notice this morning an article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette with today's date, an indication that there is some possible misunderstanding about the recommendations of an evacuation. Do you personally know anything about that? Do you personally know whether or not an evacuation was ordered or suggested by any federal or state agency?

A During the time that I was with the Governor, there was never a recommendation from anyone -- any state official concerning an evacuation. I entered his office, as I said, around 9:30 on Friday morning. At that time there was concern about a recommendation that had come from Dr. Collins at the NRC.

This is when we were attempting to reach Chairman Hendrie to discuss that recommendation further, to find out who the individual was and what kind of information that recommendation was based on, what kind of readings that was based on. The only source that I was aware of of that recommendation was Dr. Collins from the NRC.

Q And did you then reach Hendrie?

A Yes, we did.

Q And what did he say to you?

A Dr. Hendrie -- this phone call was between the Governor and Dr. Hendrie on speaker phones. So, I did have an opportunity to listen and also to ask questions. If I remember correctly, there were two phone calls that morning with Dr. Hendrie.

During the first phone call, it was recommended by Dr. Hendrie that no evacuation take place, that it was not called for by the information that they had at that time and that he was suggesting that we put out an alert to stay indoors just as a precaution. That was the contents of the first phone call, to the best of my recollection.

Q Will you then tell us what the second phone call was if it's important to the first one.

A The second phone call that occurred had approximately, I believe it was just before noon, 11:30, 11:45. During that phone call, that phone conversation it was recommended by Chairman Hendrie that the Governor put out the advisory on the -- this was a discussion between the Governor, actually, and Chairman Hendrie. I believe that it was a jointly arrived at recommendation, to the best of my recollection and conversation, that the best thing to do would be to put out these advisories on pregnant women within the five mile area and the pre-school aged children. This was being done as a purely precautionary measure at that time. I think we would recognize

it as being very precautionary.

Q And that recommendation was made by Dr. Hendrie to the Governor?

A Yes, sir, this was in the second phone call at 11:45.

Q The Governor indicated to us yesterday that his position on the evacuation was not to order one, because of some kind of possibility of a mass panic. Do you agree with that?

A I'm sorry, sir, could you repeat the first part of that?

Q The Governor indicated to us yesterday in his statement that he was reluctant to suggest or order an evacuation because of fear of a mass panic.

A Yes, sir.

Q Do you agree with that?

A Yes, sir, I believe that this is something that one does get a sense for during the course of a crisis and there were periods in which the sense of panic within the populace seemed to be greater than at others. I believe that just by looking at the mass migration of people, it appeared to be no risk at all in the way they were moving out of the area, but there was a very high level of fear and anxiety within the general population. There was always potential of fear and panic. I felt that very clearly during the entire period.

Q Do you know Mr. Thomas Lloyd?

A I don't recognize --

Q Let me suggest to you that he is a Supervisor in some capacity at Three Mile Island.

A Sir, I do not know him, personally.

Q Are you personally aware of any statement made by Mr. Lloyd to Mr. Henderson that they were preparing to evacuate the Island and suggested that an evacuation take place?

A No, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE BENNETT: Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions at this time, but I may have some later.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative O'Brien.

BY REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN:

Q Doctor, you told me -- or you made a statement that you took over Friday. Did you work with Colonel Henderson?

A Sir, I worked out of the Governor's Office and I was doing essentially what special projects or activities he asked me to do for him. I did not work as such with Colonel Henderson. I mean, I worked with him but not directly at his office.

Q You said you worked with the evacuation plan?

A Yes, sir.

Q Colonel Henderson took us over to his headquarters yesterday and showed us the evacuation plan he had. Did you have a different evacuation plan?

A No, sir, the Governor asked me to go and do an

evaluation to try to determine to the best of my ability, how good the evacuation plan was, what possible holes there might be in the evacuation plan, whether or not I felt the evacuation plan was workable and so forth. I was looking at it purely from an extension from the Governor's Office and at no time did I attempt to interfere with the operation of PEMA, which was entirely under the control of Dr. Henderson.

Q Well, you didn't work directly with Colonel Henderson with his evacuation plan, you were working on a separate one?

A No, sir, I was trying to help review the evacuation plans that Colonel Henderson had, to try to see if there were any holes in the plan; and too, if there were any, to keep them filled; and to keep the Governor apprised of the evacuation plan as then existed.

Q Do you think that you and Governor Scranton used Colonel Henderson at all times? Was he in all of those meetings that you had or were there some secret meetings that were held?

A I think that Colonel Henderson was involved in -- not in every meeting, certainly, but he was involved in every meeting where appropriate.

Q Why wouldn't he, as the Director and the knowledge that he has? I'm not knocking Governor Scranton because I don't care who it is, when their life is involved, but here is somebody in an office who is experienced and everything else.

Then somebody like Governor Scranton coming in and somebody like myself just walk in off the street and then they're going to take over right away and bypass somebody like Colonel Henderson? Yourself, do you have more experience in evacuation plans than you feel that maybe Colonel Henderson would have?

A No, sir, I don't really believe we attempted to interfere --

Q Then why would the Governor take you and consider you an expert?

A I believe what the Governor was doing was asking me to go down and look at the evacuation plans, do a cross-check. I think he was very concerned that we do everything we could to make sure that we had the best possible plans available. At no time did we interfere with the operation of those plans or with the organization of FEMA.

However, I do think that the Governor should be very concerned about the adequacy of those plans, should cross-check them, that it makes a lot of sense from my point of view to be continually reviewing them even during the crisis and to be sure that there are no holes and if there are, to make sure that they get plugged up.

Q Doctor, whose plans were you evaluating?

A Sir, we were looking at the plans that Colonel Henderson had for the integration of the county plans. We were trying to ask questions and make sure that those questions,



in fact, someone was addressing them. We were continually cross-checking each other to make sure that we weren't missing anything. We were talking with the state police continually. We were talking with General Scott of the National Guard. We talked with County Directors. We talked with PEMA officials, just trying to check and cross-check and make sure that everything fit together. So, if an evacuation would have to be called, it could be done in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Q Doctor, do you think that Colonel Henderson wasn't telling the truth yesterday when he made the statement that he told Governor Scranton and Governor Thornburgh that he recommended an evacuation?

A No, sir, I wouldn't say that.

Q Do you think he is making it up?

A No, sir, what I said was that when I first came into this situation around 9:30 on Friday morning, that the Governor was very concerned about a recommendation that he viewed as having received from two sources, Colonel Henderson and Dr. Collins concerning his recommendation of an evacuation. He was trying to determine whether or not that recommendation held any substance at all or whether or not it was based on any kind of facts and what kind of facts it was based on and so forth. That was my understanding of the situation.

Q Doctor, where I am concerned, yesterday Governor

Thornburgh testified with me asking the question that I am concerned that NRC had no one here. The company had no one here present that had the knowledge to advise the Governor or anybody else how serious that problem was and when a dose would come out, would be a serious dose. He agreed with me that in his mind, he agreed that no one was there, a so-called expert. Do you feel that there was anybody there that you could rely on any more than the Governor?

A When Mr. Denton came in and started to analyze the situation, he made the statement that he thought that the staffing was very thin and he said it in such a way that the --

Q Allright, let's go to that point. In other words, what I am saying and I want it on the record, up until that point, people are issuing statements and it was all guesswork. The Governor, Colonel Henderson, everybody else couldn't tell what to do, to advise people what to do at that point. There was no one there knowledgeable to advise anybody whether they should evacuate or shouldn't evacuate.

A I would say that we certainly would have desired to have better information. To say that there was no information is not correct. We were receiving information from the plant. We were receiving information from our own Department of Environmental Resources. There were NRC people on the site from Wednesday morning on. So, we were --

Q Now, I made it very clear that I am not 100 percent

an NRC sponsor. I feel that they have made so many mistakes over the years that I wouldn't rely on their judgment.

A Sir, I think it was clear that we were getting very conflicting information that we had difficulty filtering. We did not feel comfortable with the information we were getting until Mr. Denton arrived on the scene.

Q Now, when you say out of all of this, we thank God that it came out the way it did, but we were lucky because of the information we were getting. It really could have happened the other way and those people would not have had time to evacuate.

A We were getting information, however, that we did believe was accurate, on what actually did happen. The question was what the potential risks were. I think at that point there were conflicting reports.

REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN: I will have further questions later, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Geesey.

BY REPRESENTATIVE GEESEY:

Q Mr. Secretary, you mentioned three times during the course of your testimony the phrase "conflicting advice." Specifically, what kind of conflicting advice are you referring to?

A I guess I should say conflicting information.

Q Well, you said that once and conflicting advice twice.

A Okay, I guess it would be better to be conflicting information. The only advice that I guess we received that you could call conflicting was from Dr. Collins. When we got down to the MRC to talk with Chairman Hendrie, that was reversed immediately and he said that he did not support that recommendation. Apart from that, the advice itself was fairly consistent.

Q Specifically, what advice or information were you given by Dr. Collins?

A Well, it's my understanding that Dr. Collins had recommended an evacuation.

Q Was there any other instances that you can recall where conflicting information or advice occurred?

A None stand out. It's my understanding, and again, I was not present during Wednesday and Thursday, that the information was more conflicting during that period than it was from Friday on. From Friday on, I think the biggest one that stands out in my mind is that one.

Q Where was Dr. Collins at the time that he gave you that information?

A I really can't answer that question. I don't know. You know, this was second-hand information to me. So, you will have to ask someone else.

Q Since you were substantially involved in trying to resolve the difficulties that occurred down there, I am certain that you must have formulated some sort of opinion on the performance of the NRC prior to the accident. Would you care to provide the Committee with the opinion that you formulated on their performance prior to the accident?

A I guess my comment would be that it can't be too favorable because of the mere statement that Mr. Denton made about how thin the technical staff was at the plant. It would seem to me that that's a large responsibility of the NRC, to assure that there exists adequate staff, adequate regarding the nature of the plant. That's part of the licensing function, I feel. I was very concerned about how the licensing actually occurs and that whether or not sufficient consideration is given to whether or not the people that are going to run these plants are actually prepared and have the technical staff at the site to run the plant. So, in that regard, I would have great concern about the NRC's role prior to the actual incident occurring.

Q Are you aware of or have you formed an opinion of NRC's previous knowledge of problems at the plant and their failure to take corrective measures?

A The only thing that I know about is what I have read in the newspapers about the prior knowledge that the NRC had had, and of course I would share this with the same concern

that you do and others, that if they have this information and nothing was done with it, I'm very concerned.

Q Well, I guess what you are really saying is that the NRC's performance prior to the accident was something less than adequate?

A That would be my personal opinion.

Q Substantially less?

A Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE GEESEY: Thank you, no further questions.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Freind.

BY REPRESENTATIVE FREIND:

Q Secretary, I had a question that I wanted to ask the Governor or Lieutenant Governor yesterday and I didn't have a chance to. One thing that we are aware of is the fact that in nuclear power plants, there are just employees and utility companies there during normal -- in the absence of a disaster.

A Yes, my understanding is that at some plants there are NRC people permanently stationed there, but not at this one.

Q That's right. As a matter of fact, when we toured the plant, they told us that for four hours when there was a problem, approximately four hours, they never notified the government, because their plans state that until they declare

an on-site emergency, they don't have to notify anyone. So, during that period of time, they have their own people with their own equipment. Now, I am not making any accusations, but if they wanted to, they could lie and no one would ever know. A utility company facing a problem like that has their best interest in lying. Do you feel one way, at least from the issue of credibility, because we had a credibility problem for the first couple of days, is taking their reading from their people? Do you think there should be a regulation that some kind of government personnel should be on site at all times with their own equipment at that nuclear power plant?

A I personally feel if you look at the relatively small number of nuclear plants there are around the country, 70 or 80, that that would be a wise thing to do.

REPRESENTATIVE FREIND: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Cohen.

REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank you.

BY REPRESENTATIVE COHEN:

Q At the beginning of your statement, you said that there were a half a dozen people meeting with the Governor regularly during the crisis, including yourself.

A Yes, sir.

Q Who were these people?

A The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, Jay Walderman,

myself, Paul Critchlum (phonetic) --

Q Who?

A Paul Critchlum, Martin Aus (phonetic). Those, I believe, would be the ones that were there most of the time.

Q All right, thank you. When Governor Thornburgh testified before us yesterday, he gave us a statement that was substantially the same as the statement that he had given to the U. S. Senate Investigating Committee that he testified before, which as Representative Hoeffel pointed out yesterday, when he testified before the Senate, he recommended state licensing of personnel and the facility. When he testified before us, that recommendation was omitted. Does that omission recommend a change in policy by this administration?

A I can't really answer that. I can give you what my opinion is, but I can't say what the official policy is because I haven't discussed it with the Governor.

Q Is it your position that you personally favor state licensing?

A I personally feel we should have some input into the licensing program. I am not arguing for state licensing, but I think there should be some input. I really can't specify what that degree is. I think that requires a considerable amount of effort and research.

Q You were assigned to evaluate Colonel Henderson's evacuation plan?



A Yes, sir.

Q What was your conclusion?

A My conclusion was that we could have conducted a five mile evacuation. Although I wasn't there on Wednesday, I believe it would have been possible to do that Wednesday. I believe that the time for a five mile evacuation diminished considerably as we became more and more alert and as, of course, some of the people moved out of the area. Probably, it was cut in half by late Saturday night. I feel that we could have accomplished the ten mile evacuation by midnight Saturday night, that would be March 31st.

Q How much lead time would have been necessary?

A Again, as was correctly pointed out a minute ago, I am not really an expert on these things. I rely on the advice from the people from the federal government, from the state police, from PEMA; but there did seem to be some reasonable concurrence on the time estimates. It was felt that it would probably take somewhere around five to six hours at the beginning of the period for a five mile evacuation. By Saturday night, that time was probably cut down to three hours. We were estimating that it would probably be six or seven hours or maybe eight hours, let's say, for a ten mile evacuation. These were -- let's say that any of the estimates that I was getting from state police, from national guard, from PEMA, we were just trying to bring together and see if

we all agree on them.

Q Had there been a meltdown, how much notice would there have been?

A Again, that's a very difficult question to answer. I'm not an expert or anything. So, from everything that we were learning of this crisis, it would depend on how the meltdown occurred, what the sequence of events were. I believe that they were talking about something like a 24-hour minimum lead time on the meltdown. That was my understanding of the technical discussions that were going on.

Q So, taking that 24-hour lead, there would have been plenty of time to order an evacuation?

A Yes, sir.

Q Why was there no disaster declared by the Governor?

A I believe and it was my reading of the situation that during this whole period, that individuals were very much on the verge of panic, that any kind of escalation of the statement of the problem could have had dire consequences in and of itself. So, there was a real attempt on the part of the Governor to try to maintain stability. This was discussed at length with federal officials, continually. We were assured by federal officials in the White House, the closest advisors to the President, that we would be given all the assistance that we would be receiving had a disaster been declared. They agreed with us and, in fact, encouraged us not to declare a disaster.

They thought this would also escalate the problem and would cause greater consequences than should occur at that time.

Q Were you aware, was Governor Thornburgh aware that failure to declare a disaster would hurt individuals in the area, who would thus be ineligible for aid and insurance benefits?

A We were told by White House officials at the very highest level that we would receive the same assistance and they would make available to us and make every effort to do that.

Q What was the time frame given for receiving this assistance? As of today, that assistance has not been received by the individuals.

A As I understand it, the only assistance that's been provided to date is the availability of small business administration loans for individuals who received the impact. One of the difficulties in this crisis, unlike a flood or hurricane or some other natural disaster, it's difficult to determine exactly what the consequences are, what the losses are and that I think one of the critical things that we have to do is study this to the extent that it's possible to determine what the implications and impacts are. I don't know had a disaster been declared, if any individuals would have received payment.

Q Are you aware that under state law the individuals would be entitled to receive up to \$5 million in the current

Emergency Management Act of 1978 from state funds, merely had the Governor declared a disaster?

A I am aware of that Act. Mr. Bittenbender is with me here today and I guess he could answer those questions better than I could. I don't recall all the technicalities of that Act.

Q Was there any discussion with the insurance companies about the consequences of the failure to declare disaster?

A No, there was not. At that time, we did not have discussions with insurance companies, to the best of my knowledge. Now, whether or not someone else did, I can't answer that.

Q Were there any discussions with insurance companies about licensing?

A I did not, personally, and I am not aware that anyone else did.

Q Was there any discussions with insurance experts about the consequences of the disaster?

A Not that I am aware of.

REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Itkin.

B. REPRESENTATIVE ITKIN:

Q Dr. Wilburn, would you say that you were one of the most trusted advisors of the Governor during this period of time?

A Yes, sir.

Q Would you also say it's fair to say that when any critical decision was made that you were privy to those discussions?

A I am not sure that I was privy to all of the discussions, since at times I was not available. I may have been elsewhere working on another piece of the problem. Certainly I was available or present in providing recommendations on many of the discussions.

Q You mentioned to the Committee that your first time of involvement was 9:30 A.M. on Friday, March 30?

A Yes.

Q Prior to that time, what was your knowledge of the situation?

A I intentionally stayed away from the problem up until Friday morning. The reason for that was my involvement in other issues and other problems. It was not until Friday morning when the situation began to escalate that the Governor asked me to become involved.

Q You mentioned, therefore, that you basically had no more than a layman's knowledge of the situation prior to the 30th of March?

A That is correct.

Q At 9:30, you mentioned that the situation escalated.

A Yes.

Q How did you know that the situation had escalated?

A Well, I guess for two reasons: the fact that the Governor asked me to become involved and it's his statement of fact that the problem was escalated; and the other one is the layman's knowledge that I had -- I certainly was reading everything that was coming out to that point. I just had not been involved in the meetings and in the discussions up to that time.

Q On the morning of March 30 at 9:30 or shortly thereafter --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- what was the problem to the best of your knowledge?

A To the best of my knowledge at that time there had been an uncontrolled -- at that time it was called an "uncontrolled release of radioactive material" that was unanticipated that gave us the concern that the situation was not in as good of control as we had previously thought. At that point, we were very concerned about -- and we were told up to that point that the situation was in control; that there would be no more uncontrolled releases. When that release occurred and it caused us great concern about what was going to happen next.

Q Was that the depth of knowledge that you had on the morning of March 30th that there was an uncontrolled release of some magnitude of some problem that no one seemed to know

exactly what had happened and no one seemed to be able to communicate to you or to the Governor or to the other members of the staff what had happened at that point?

A Now, you are talking about my personal knowledge at that point.

Q Yes.

A The Governor's knowledge at that point certainly wasn't in much bigger detail than mine was. I think the knowledge of Mr. Walderman and the Lieutenant Governor certainly wasn't in much bigger detail at that point. As I said, that was really the point at which I entered into this problem.

Q In other words, from your last response, am I to assume that you did not know substantially all of the information that the Governor had at his disposal at the time that he involved you into this problem or subsequently thereafter?

A I had at that point, I think, considerable amount of the information that was printed and was available and the discussions that occurred. I don't think I knew everything, certainly.

Q You said that you were a participant in the discussions relative to an evacuation?

A Yes, sir.

Q And that occurred during the morning of the 30th after 9:30 A.M.?

A That is correct. There were many participants in those conversations, I might add.

Q To the best of your knowledge, at the time of those discussions, was there any more information of substance that you have failed up to now to communicate with this Committee?

A The information of substance that was most important, I believe, was the information that was obtained from Chairman Hendrie in Washington. This was a discussion on what had happened, what could happen, what the potential lead times were, what the worst possible case scenario would be. The two questions that everybody provided us with information were always asked: what is the worst possible case? What could happen? What do we have to be concerned about? How much lead time do we have, if that would occur? I don't think anyone ever came into that office without being pinned down with those questions and trying to get as much information from those individuals as possible, about what was the worst possible case and how much lead time would we have.

Q What did Chairman Hendrie state, to the best of your knowledge, as to what had happened and what was the scenario of the worst events that could have occurred on the basis of what had happened?

A To the best of my recollection, the discussion centered, of course, upon the degree of fuel damage that had occurred. It was not until later that day that the possibility



of hydrogen accumulation within the reactor was brought forward. This was not known information or discussed in the morning. The discussion that morning centered around the likelihood of further releases. I think Chairman Hendrie said that the situation was stable at that time. There was no reason to expect that there would be further releases, that he was going to -- they would be monitoring and sending their best people there. That was the picture that was being described to us.

Q Was it ever discussed that the release that occurred on the morning of the 30th had nothing to do with what was occurring in the primary system of the plant?

A The discussions from Chairman Hendrie, I believe, surrounded the fact that the release had occurred and, although this release had occurred, it was not likely that there would be any further future releases and the situation was stable. I really can't go into much greater detail than that.

Q So, during the morning of the 30th, the Governor's office was aware of the worsening condition of controlling the plant?

A At that time it was being presented as a stable situation to us by Chairman Hendrie, but that an uncontrolled release had occurred and that the situation was one that was obviously very critical.

Q Did you or others in those discussions correlate this emission as having to do with the plant, itself? I mean

the power plant, itself, in the reactor; or was it a separate and distinct type of reaction occurring all about what was going on in the plant?

A I'm trying to remember now exactly what I thought Friday morning. It was very difficult for me to relate to it. We certainly learned a considerable amount about the reactors over the next several days. At that point, I was certainly even less than an expert than I was a few days after that. At that time, we really knew not too much about the situation.

Q The public first learned about the problems within the plant, itself, in terms of the reactors system, the cooling down mode having trouble, not until 10:00 that evening. The Governor at 12:30 P.M. that day, some 9½ hours earlier, held a press conference in which he discussed the emissions which had occurred earlier that morning.

A Yes, sir.

Q And it was, I think, understood by all that his precautions were based on the factor of that emission and not due to the worsening conditions of the plant, which he had apparently from your testimony today, knowledge of.

A Let me understand what you are saying. What I was saying was that the decision, to the best I can remember now, was based on the fact that the emission had occurred, that the Chairman said it was basically a stable situation. The Chairman also said that he couldn't rule out the possibility

that there could be some other small releases of radioactive material and that it was on this discussion that the situation was made to evacuate -- to put out the advisory on pregnant women and small children. That was the only information that I was aware of at that time.

Q Were you aware or to your knowledge was the Governor aware of the cause of that particular emission and what was going on in the plant that produced the emission?

A I certainly was not aware of it Friday morning and I don't know if the Governor was. I was not aware of it at that point.

Q It is our knowledge at least at the present time and that should have been early discerned, that the cause of the emission was produced by an attempt that was made at the plant to pump contaminated water back from the auxiliary building into the containment building, which is completely divorced from the operation of the plant.

A I understand. Again, I would remind you of the timing sequence when I became involved in the situation. At that point, I really, honestly can't say that I knew enough about the situation to make that kind of a conclusion, personally; I can't really answer that for the Governor.

Q Do you believe that if the Governor had not become aware the morning of the 30th of the worsening condition of the plant, that a consideration of evacuation would have been

necessary?

A The advisory was based, as I understand it, on the fact that a release had occurred, that they couldn't absolutely guarantee that there wouldn't be any future releases, that they were likely to be of a low level of release and that could, possibly, under the worst circumstances, pose a potential danger to pregnant women and young children. That was the reason for their advisory. That's really pretty much the extent of my knowledge that morning.

Q What basis was the determination made that the level of the release that was detected and with the appreciation that there might be additional smaller amounts of additional releases occurring from the plant to necessitate the potential for an evacuation? You talked about the word scenario before.

A This was -- at that time the recommendation was coming from Chairman Hendrie in Washington.

Q But that had to do with the worsening condition of the plant and not with this emission which apparently occurred in an attempt to pump water back from the auxiliary building into the containment building.

A I guess maybe you are reading too much into my statement about the worsening condition of the plant. Again, I am not a scientist, but I wanted to say that what had occurred up to that point is what Chairman Hendrie was basing his recommendation on. I believe that it was based on the fact

that there had been this uncontrolled emission, that it was possible. Again, talking about the worsening plant conditions, there could be further emissions. If that would occur, it could pose some threat to pregnant women and young children. It was viewed as a very precautionary move on the part of the Governor. It was not viewed as something, you know -- if I remember the discussion that had to be done. It was sort of a good safety precaution that: why don't we do this. That would be their kind of discussion.

Q To follow along with this type of scenario, then, the Governor did not believe, on the basis of the information that he had, relative to what had happened with respect to the emissions, the level of the emission, the cause of that emission and what could happen in the future with respect to that particular segment of the problem, that an evacuation was not necessary to protect the health and safety of the residents in the surrounding communities?

A The conclusion was that morning that there was no information that would warrant an evacuation.

Q The reason why I am pressing hard for answers is because there appears to be a lot of discussions going on in the past day or two in this hearing about an evacuation, about the failure or perhaps the problems that may have resulted from an evacuation. It leads the people to believe that one of the principle reasons why an evacuation was not ordered was

because of the apparent harm that could be caused to the public if an evacuation order is issued. I would like to learn from you as to whether or not that was a principle reason or whether the principle reason was that the situation on the morning of the 30th never warranted an evacuation?

A It was my understanding that the situation that morning never warranted an evacuation. I would add to that, however, that if an evacuation were to do with cost -- even if you didn't want it, you might do it. You continually had to factor in the cost of an evacuation. It was my understanding that morning that the situation that morning did not warrant an evacuation.

REPRESENTATIVE ITKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Cowell.

BY REPRESENTATIVE COWELL:

Q Secretary Wilburn, I would like to return to some of your earlier comments. As I recall, when you were describing your role starting Friday morning and thereafter for the next several days, you indicated that one of the things you were doing was to review your evacuation plans and the other emergency plans. Then you noted, if I recall correctly, specifically that you have been looking for holes in the plan. Can you tell us what kind of holes you found, if any?

A Okay, the kind of questions that I was asking as I looked at these plans, I was just double checking about questions like on the -- let me give you one example. The evacuation plan is very dependent upon using private automobiles and buses. It's very dependent on having enough gasoline available. I think that is one hole that existed prior to that point. We did then draft executive orders that would take over the gasoline stations. We did contact the major oil companies to make sure that there were sufficient tank trucks in the area and gasoline in the area to have fuel for an evacuation, if, in fact, it would have occurred. I think that's one thing that perhaps wasn't looked at completely. It was those kinds of things, going in and asking questions about the mode of transportation of school buses. Who's going to drive the school buses? Are you sure the people are going to be there? It was a cross-check, a cross-examination to make sure that they had gone through all of the different aspects of the evacuation plan so that -- you know, it was just double checking, that kind of thing.

I think that petroleum was one. There were others that were thought out more clearly as a result of questioning whether they would be holes or not. I think the discussion about the intersections, particularly when we went from the five to ten miles, the intersections of transportation routes and double checking with the Department of Transportation to

make sure that that was being taken care of by the Traffic Control Engineers. Double checking with the National Guard to make sure that they understood exactly what their role would be in the case of an evacuation. I think things became more clarified. I wouldn't want to say that it had to be called on the first day that these were great gaping holes, but I do think that things could be tighter.

Q Was there anything you would characterize as a major deficiency that was found in the plans?

A I guess the biggest deficiency is something that they certainly were aware of and that would be the need for a very large number of Medevac Units up from the Army. We did then line up the Medevac Units from the Army. We tried to make sure that we were getting as rapid a response to our requests for support from the various government agencies that were involved. The biggest thing for deficiencies, I guess, was the need for something like 350 Medevac Units that would have to be brought in and they would be stationed around the Commonwealth; be started to be moving in, in case an evacuation was necessary.

Q Based on your experience throughout the incident with the benefit of hindsight, are there any specific changes that you would recommend to the PEMA Legislation for the 1978 law?

A I think there has been a dramatic change that occurred



as a result of this exercise, this crisis. That is the realization that the five mile radius is probably too small. That's one realization, that we are probably going to have to move at least to a minimum of a ten mile evacuation. What that means is that you greatly increase the problem of interaction among the counties if you move from five to ten miles. The five mile evacuation, you can really handle your evacuation within the county and use the resources within the county. So, I think the inter-county coordination and cooperation becomes much more difficult when you move to the ten mile evacuation. That is going to require, I think, closer coordination of the plans of the various counties. However, I think existing law does permit PEMA to not accept the plans from the county to make sure that they relate well to our plans. So, I am not sure there is a need for a change in the law, but I do believe that there will be a lot of changes in the thinking of how we would approach an evacuation like this.

Q You are aware that the five to ten mile is not really part of the law. It's part of the plans.

A Right, I understand that. What I guess I am saying is that when you move from five to ten miles, it's not really just a question of distance. It's really a question of now, you are involving many more people. You are involving a much more complex transportation system. You are involving a much more complex situation as far as evacuation of nursing homes,

hospitals and so forth. There are many more people involved in that area.

Also, there is a psychological phenomenon here, that I don't think we had adequately took into account previously. That is the fact that you can't -- when you have a flood, you know where the water is going to go pretty much and you can pretty well contain people's reactions. We had individuals that were reacting in almost a panic situation who live 30 miles from the center of the crisis. We got all kinds of calls from people at all distances and some of them rather humorous, asking us about what kind of things they could do and what the impact was going to be. It was a total lack of public understanding about this kind of a problem.

For example, if you are going to plan on a ten mile evacuation, does it make sense to move people from ten miles into the 20 mile perimeter, which would have been the thinking previously. Perhaps you really have to move people far away if you can't control individual's reactions. This whole question of whether there was panic or not panic, another good example of that is in the hospitals. There was some difficulty just making sure that the hospitals were adequately staffed because of individuals leaving. It did become a critical problem, but it was an indication, I believe, of people outside a ten mile radius. An indication of this panic did exist. These were professional people that got nervous and left. So,

throughout this whole period there was a very delicate balance of trying to keep people reasonably assured what the situation was, trying to get the most accurate information out to them, trying to do worst case planning and at the same time not incite a panic. That's the type of situation we were dealing with.

Q In response to, I guess, Representative Cohen's question earlier, you indicated that there were several people who were meeting with the Governor on a very regular basis.

A Yes, sir.

Q Now I took that to mean an almost constant basis. You identified those individuals as the Lieutenant Governor, yourself, Mr. Aus, Mr. Critchlum and Mr. Walderman.

A Yes, I would say to add to that, that is a very limited list; but I would also add to that Tom Gerusky from DER and Cliff Jones and the Secretary of Agriculture, Penrose Hollowell, met frequently.

Of course, I didn't mean to leave off Dr. Gordon MacLeod, the Secretary of Health who was involved from the very beginning and considerably throughout the whole thing. So, there was, I guess, as large as a half a dozen. That group may have been ten people.

Q You have touched upon my question because my reaction to the list was that you had generalists there.

A Yes.

Q My specific question was, what state specialists did

you depend upon?

A Secretary of Health, Secretary of Environmental Resources and his staff, Secretary of Agriculture. We brought in specialists. We brought in one of the leading professionals in the county on this type of problem and Dr. Waller (phonetic) from the University of Pittsburgh. He was with us very early in the crisis and we maintained telephone contact with him throughout. So, there were a large number of specialists and spent a considerable amount of time on the whole process with us.

Q The last question, if we got a phone call now and we were told that there was a similar incident occurring at the Beaver Valley plant, how would the reaction of the state be different than it was at Three Mile Island?

A I really can't answer that question. You would have to go to the plant right there. It would depend on the circumstances.

REPRESENTATIVE COWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Schmitt.

BY REPRESENTATIVE SCHMITT:

Q Can you tell me, sir, what is the specific meaning insofar as incident that we are talking about, what the word evacuation means? I think all of us have a general idea and even a specific idea of what an evacuation means, even in

a situation of this kind, not necessarily your personal definition, but the definition of the hard core groups doing all of the activities in connection with an incident such as this?

A I believe an evacuation would have been an open order to move out of the specified radius.

Q In other words, does it mean -- of course it doesn't, but in this illustration, you have a five mile radius for example. If you took a man and just have him step over that hypothetical or imaginary line, does this make him an evacuee at the five mile level or not?

A I think it's a very difficult situation. Obviously, that five mile line would be very difficult to define.

Q It's certainly imaginary.

A It's an imaginary line, right, and you would also have to face the question of whether or not it's going to be an evacuation that is ordered and what if people decided not to evacuate? Are you going to force people to evacuate?

Q If we draft the necessary legislation and try and prevent or alleviate situations such as this, we are going to have to have specific interpretations of the word. The word evacuation which comes up frequently, does that mean food, clothing, shelter? Does it mean housing, hospitalization, etc.? If so, who pays for those things? Property values depreciate in the neighborhood of an incident such as this. Who's burden

is this? Is this the burden of all the taxpayers or just the people involved? That's things that I would like to know. I have my opinion as to what they mean, but I am not certain what the people who will be responsible for directing the position, what they mean. What does it mean to them?

A I'm sorry, maybe I don't understand the question. The evacuation itself would be, I presume, in order that it was in the best interest of the citizens of that area, for their safety to evacuate the area. If it's done, you would have to specify some kind of radius, whether it be five miles or ten miles. You are going to have the difficulty of delineating that specific area. I don't know how you would overcome that problem. I think you would be in litigation for many, many years trying to resolve where that boundary was.

As far as the cost of that evacuation, I think it would depend totally on what prompted the evacuation and what the long term consequences to the area is from the evacuation. It's going to depend on case by case. Right now, as I said before, I don't think we really have a regular handle on what the long term impact of this incident is. I think this is one of the greatest responsibilities we have is trying to determine what the health, social economic, environmental situations are over long term. I think that's something we really have to devote ourselves to.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHMITT: Thank you, sir. That's all,

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Noah Wenger.

BY REPRESENTATIVE WENGER:

Q Mr. Wilburn, there has been a lot of speculation as to the economic loss to businesses or individuals within a certain perimeter of TMI. What effort has been made to assess the economic loss in this area? Have we made an attempt to put any value upon that?

A Yes, sir.

Q And what procedures are we using to determine that?

A I'm really not the person that can answer that.

Perhaps it would be better of some others. I would refer to Robin Ross (phonetic), the Deputy Counsel to the Governor and Richard Blanton (phonetic), who works for him and also Walt Pacella (phonetic). Those are the individuals that have been working and trying to identify whole federal programs that are available and trying to make sure that we do get what federal assistance we are entitled to.

The only involvement that I had was that we did travel and we did go to the White House and meet with White House Aides. Jay Walderman and myself met with Representatives from all of the major federal agencies that might be involved. The only purpose of that meeting was to again, have them reiterate and restate commitments to provide us with all of

the available assistance.

Q But it seems like before you could qualify for the aid, there would have to be a procedure for determining the loss.

A Yes, sir.

Q This is the concern I have as to how do we determine the loss in the first place?

A I know that Robin Ross and Walt Pacella do have some very rough estimates and they are working on that. I really can't answer that. I have not been involved.

REPRESENTATIVE WENGER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Reid Bennett.

BY REPRESENTATIVE BENNETT:

Q Dr. Wilburn, you, of course, are not sworn and no one is insinuating anything. I just want to make sure for the record that I know where we are at. I want you to think very carefully. What time to your recollection did you arrive in the Governor's office on Friday morning of March 30th?

A All I can say, as I said before, definitely it was between 9:30 and 10:00.

Q You indicated earlier that it was 9:15.

A I do not believe I said that. I never said 9:15, sir.

Q 9:30, I'm sorry.

A It was between 9:30 and 10:00. I know I was there by



10:00. I cannot specify the exact time. It was sometime before that.

Q Were you there, Dr. Wilburn, when Colonel Henderson was present in the Governor's Office?

A I don't remember that visit. I don't think so. I hate to be definite, but you have to remember that during this entire period, Colonel Henderson certainly had visited the Governor's Office many times. I don't believe that I was there that morning when he was there. I may have been, though. I'm not sure.

Q To your recollection, Doctor, were you in the Governor's Office while phone conversations were transpiring between the Governor and the NRC people?

A Yes, sir, I was there at that time. This was with Chairman Hendrie?

Q Yes.

A Yes.

Q So, you then cannot testify as to whether or not you heard a recommendation that Colonel Henderson made to the Governor for an evacuation?

A That is correct. The only thing that I know is that when I went into the office, the Governor was very concerned about trying to determine the validity of a recommendation that he was referring to as being Dr. Collins' recommendation.

Q Well, according to the official log of Colonel

Henderson, 9:45, the Governor asked the Director the dependability of Dr. Collins. The Director informed the Governor that based upon past experience, he is reliable and enjoys a good reputation. The Governor then asked the Director and Colonel Henderson for a recommendation and Colonel Henderson from his official log recommended a five mile evacuation. You were telling this Committee that you were not there at that time?

A What I am saying -- I don't remember being there at that time. I don't remember that particular conversation. I do remember the Governor being very concerned about a recommendation from a Dr. Collins. I never heard him say that anyone else other than Dr. Collins had made that recommendation.

Q Thank you. Now, on Saturday morning, March 31st, did you have occasion to go on that morning to the office of the Civil Defense Director?

A Yes.

Q Those are the offices over in the Highway and Safety Building?

A Yes.

Q Approximately how much time did you spend there that morning?

A I spent about two hours, I would say, I guess.

Q Was Colonel Henderson there?

A He was there for the latter part of that. I spent

the beginning period with Mr. Craig Williamson.

Q And Mr. Williamson is the Deputy Director?

A Yes, that's correct. I was also there on Friday afternoon.

Q Did you ask for Colonel Henderson to be brought in that morning?

A I knew that Colonel Henderson was on his way. When I went down there, I talked with the Lieutenant Governor. I was in the Lieutenant Governor's Office. We talked with Craig Williamson. He said that he was going to be there for about an hour and then Colonel Henderson would be coming in and I went down at that time to talk to both individuals.

Q What was your general conversation with Colonel Henderson that morning?

A With Colonel Henderson? By that time, I had spent considerable amount of time with Mr. Craig Williamson going over the evacuation plan and the organizational structure, trying to get some copies of different documents. I guess I was reviewing and sort of cross-checking what I had done with Mr. Williamson and Colonel Henderson was fairly broad terms at that point.

Q So, you would say then that you did have a liberal conversation with Colonel Henderson that morning?

A That afternoon. It would have been -- it was afternoon when he arrived. Liberal conversation, we had a conversa-

tion in fairly broad terms about the evacuation matters.

Q Were you still at that point, Dr. Wilburn, concerned with using your expression "holes" in the evacuation plans?

A I was concerned to try to identify whether there might be any.

Q Were you satisfied at that point that the holes had been covered or plugged or whatever the term was that you used?

A Not at that time. Immediately after that meeting, I had a meeting with General Scott. General Scott informed me that he had individuals in each one of the counties. I asked him to get an independent appraisal from those. I also, after that point in time, talked with Secretary Larson about his evaluation of the transportation plans. I also after that point talked with Commissioner Dunn, state police, to get his appraisal of the state police interaction, continually trying to cross-check and make sure. I felt more and more comfortable as the day progressed that the evacuation plans were fairly tight for a five mile radius and were being developed rather quickly for what I call a ten mile radius or 20 mile. I don't believe we could have confined an evacuation to ten miles. So, we had the plan going over into the 20 mile radius. It became very critical for hospitals and other things.

By late that night, I would say 11 or 12:00 that night, I felt very comfortable with certainly a five mile evacuation plan and I would even go so far as to say the ten

mile evacuation plan. I did give a briefing to Mr. Watson, Jack Watson, who is Assistant to the President in the White House that afternoon, I believe, at about 5:00 on what I thought our status of the evacuation plans were at that point. I tried to give a summary of that. He received a briefing from federal officials who were on the site here from 6:00 until 8:30 that night. I asked him to please call me back and give me another independent check on what his federal people were saying about our evacuation plans.

We had another conversation, I believe some time after 8:00 that evening with Mr. Watson and Gene Hietenberg, who is a Deputy in the White House. They told me that they were very pleased with our evacuation plans. They told me that they were very pleased with our evacuation plans and they thought that we were making -- that the plans that we had were adequate and we were making great progress in taking care of some of the specific nursing homes and hospitals and concerned about where we needed additional resources.

So, you know, I hope it's clear that at no time did we want to interfere with the direct operation of PEMA. Intentionally, I did not sit next to Mr. Henderson. Instead, we were trying just to double check to get independent information, just to make sure that everybody was comfortable that we were doing everything that we could do to make our evacuation plan as sufficient and effective as possible. We were just

trying to exchange information around the horn and try each to the other, identify any problems that might exist. I think there were some suggestions that were useful. Most of the work that was being done, I think was very competent. It was proceeding along quite well.

Q Then, would it be safe to assume that you were generally satisfied with the evacuation plan of Colonel Henderson and that PEMA had come up with?

A I was generally satisfied again with the five mile evacuation plan. I would say as of midnight on Saturday night, I was satisfied with the ten mile evacuation plan, 20 mile evacuation plan.

Q Dr. Wilburn, did you personally meet with any of the County Directors outside of the immediate area here as regards to the evacuation plans?

A I only met with Kevin Maloy (phonetic) from Dauphin County. I did get reports through General Scott from all the other counties.

Q What were those reports from General Scott as far as the other counties were concerned?

A Generally favorable reports that the National Guard was convinced that we could effect a five or ten mile evacuation.

Q Five or ten mile?

A Again, ten mile, by this I mean by that Saturday

night, but five miles earlier in the crisis.

Q It is our understanding, Doctor, that the Guard was on a White Alert. How long in your opinion would it take for them to get to the next status and then physically on the scene?

A Those estimates are extremely difficult to make. The estimate that the Guard was giving us was four hours. I think that was fairly optimistic. You have to remember that being on White Alert means something different if you just went on it, let's say, today. However, there was a gradual buildup in readiness and psychological readiness in sort of people realizing that they might be called at any time. The lead times do get reduced in a situation like that and every day the lead time would become less. Perhaps by Saturday or Sunday, that might have been realistic. I think in normal situations, that's fairly optimistic.

REPRESENTATIVE BENNETT: Thank you, Doctor, for your testimony.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Bill DeWeese.

BY REPRESENTATIVE DeWEESE:

Q Dr. Wilburn, on Thursday, a gentleman named Sternglass (phonetic) recommended that pregnant women and pre-school children be evacuated, I believe.

A Yes, sir.

Q Help me with my chronology. On Thursday evening, the Governor in his press conference indicated that that would

not be necessary. However, on the next day he changed his mind and persued that option.

A Yes, sir.

Q Could you help me and explain the sequence of events that helped him change his mind?

A Again, I have to point out again that I was not involved Wednesday or Thursday. So, I am really relating what happened from Friday morning on. It was because of the uncontrolled -- what was believed to be at that time an uncontrolled release from the plant that caused everyone great concern that if it happened once, perhaps happen again, besides the assurances that we had received previously. That's why the precautionary measure was taken.

Q Just one final question to follow up on what Chairman O'Brien asked you. We obviously have -- or at least, I believe we have a direct conflict in what the Governor was saying and what Colonel Henderson was saying. Naturally, we will get a chance to ask Colonel Henderson later on this morning. Do you believe that there is an area here of indirect statements or do we have someone not telling the truth? What's your opinion, sir? You were close to the incident after Friday. You were close to the evacuation. Who's telling the truth?

A Well, if you put yourself in that situation, I believe that Dr. Collins did make a recommendation on the evacuation. I believe that the Governor at that point in time



would have taken any recommendation for evacuation to be coming from Dr. Collins in the NRC or to be coming from our own DER. If that occurred, I am not sure. That probably just simply would have been with Colonel Henderson a slip of tongue with that information and would have viewed that recommendation as having come from Dr. Collins. As I said, all I know is the fact that when I walked into the room, the concern was the recommendation from Dr. Collins concerning an evacuation. I believe that the source of any recommendation on evacuation would be based on the risk -- that risk assessment would be coming from either the NRC or from our own DER. He immediately called the Chairman of the NRC. Immediately called our own individuals in DER to try to get as much information as possible about this Dr. Collins, who he was, whether or not we should act on his recommendation. Again, I am being highly speculative if Colonel Henderson was involved in that.

REPRESENTATIVE DEWEESE: I will yield to Chairman O'Brien.

BY REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN:

Q You are not really answering his question. You are going around the outside. You don't know whether Colonel Henderson --

A I have said that that's correct. I do not know. All I know is that the Governor was very concerned about a recommendation of Dr. Collins.

Q Before in an answer, you said you didn't think so.

A No, I do not know. I didn't mean to say I don't think so. I do not know what Colonel Henderson said.

Q You don't know. He could have passed on what Collins said to the Governor.

A Absolutely. I do not know. That's the correct answer.

Q The only thing I get out of this, and I don't mind the Governor putting you in charge to oversee that things are okay, but I still feel that you bypassed an experienced, dedicated Head of Civil Defense, Colonel Henderson, and sort of put him on the side. Whether he was a holdover or not, I don't want to bring politics in. The fact is, that he was ignored in many cases. Am I right or wrong?

A My role was not to replace Colonel Henderson. The only role that I played was to gather information for the Governor as a cross-check on the adequacy of our emergency plan.

Q Well, wouldn't it be an important place for you to go, the first place would be to go to Colonel Henderson because of his knowledge?

A And he did go to Colonel Henderson and --

Q I'm talking about you. You went over to his Deputy.

A But at that point when I was given that assignment to cross-check, I went immediately. Colonel Henderson was not

there. I talked to his Deputy and then I talked with Colonel Henderson.

Q But you did not even call him and ask him to meet you there. When he walked in, all you did was said hello.

A I think I told him what I was doing there.

Q I think the record will show -- I think that Colonel Henderson, we will ask him, but he came in late. Now, all you said to him was hello.

A That's not my memory. I was telling him --

Q You went over the whole thing with your discussion with the Deputy?

A I went over some of the points that I discussed with the Deputy.

Q Did you ever call the Colonel in regards to the evacuation?

A Absolutely, he sat in the Governor's Office for some time discussing the evacuation. We discussed the equipment that we received from various places. We did have discussions about the evacuation. As I pointed out before, I was basically satisfied with the information that I was receiving. I was essentially letting Colonel Henderson do his job.

Q Do you think that Colonel Henderson is qualified and knowledgeable in the leadership that he is in in Civil Defense?

A It's difficult for me to answer that question. I think throughout this period he did an adequate job.

BY REPRESENTATIVE DeWEESE:

Q An adequate job, sir? Only adequate? This is very important because we have to figure out, sir, if --

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative DeWeese, I believe the minority vice-chairman has the floor at the moment.

REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN: I will follow up.

BY REPRESENTATIVE O'BRIEN:

Q Are you saying it's just a fair job?

A I did not go into the situation to evaluate Colonel Henderson's performance. That wasn't my role. I was trying to evaluate whether or not the plans as they existed could have been carried out. I felt convinced that, in fact, he could do a good job. Okay, I didn't use the term adequate. I didn't choose my terms very carefully. I think the balance would have been carried out in an effective manner and I wouldn't have had great concern.

Q Why would you use the term as if to say: well, under the conditions maybe we all did a fairly good job, which I probably would have given you the same credit and I didn't even know you were involved in it.

A I think we all did a good job. I stand corrected on the testimony and I --

Q I want to say for the record for a rookie coming in and not having the knowledge, I really don't know what you did, but I am very disappointed that you bypassed somebody like

Colonel Henderson. If you didn't want him, you should have got rid of him. He was there, you should have used him.

A I don't believe we bypassed him.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative DeWeese.

REPRESENTATIVE DeWEESE: No further questions.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Cohen.

BY REPRESENTATIVE COHEN:

Q In today's politics, there is reference to a vote of the Environmental Public Works Committee in Washington which denies states without NRC approved evacuation plans, the right to have nuclear reactors. I wonder if you could shed light on why the evacuation plan of Pennsylvania is not NRC approved?

A I really can't answer that. It was submitted, I believe, in April of 1975 to the NRC for their concurrence. They do not approve any plans, it's concurrence with state plans. At that time, I do not know for what reasons, it was not concurred with. It has not been resubmitted since that time, officially, for that concurrence.

Q One final question. You used the phrase "lead time" and the phrase "notice." Are they synonymous, lead time for the purpose of having -- for the purpose of setting up an evacuation, is that synonymous with notice?

A I think it would depend on the context in which the terms was used.

Q We have a lead time of 24 hours for an evacuation. Does that mean we have notice of 24 hours for an evacuation?

A No, the specific question that was asked of me before, if I remember correctly, is what was the lead time on a meltdown. It's my understanding that the lead time on a meltdown would have been 24 hours. There were other scenarios that would have had other lead times of 10 to 24 hours.

Q Does lead time mean the same as notice?

A Again, I think it depends on the context in which the term is used.

REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Geesey.

BY REPRESENTATIVE GEESEY:

Q Mr. Secretary, I would like to state for the record so there is no question about where I stand. If the NRC's performance on an evacuation plan is at all similar to their performance prior to the incident at TMI, God help us all because we are all in trouble. Why their evacuation plan and business is beyond me, because they haven't got the capacity and capability to determine adequately an evacuation plan.

As far as your testimony is concerned, five mile evacuation was in place by Wednesday night, ten mile by Saturday midnight. Colonel Henderson's testimony indicated a ten mile evacuation in place by Friday night and 20 mile by Saturday.

Let me tell you, gentlemen, that is not true. There are communities that were within the five mile range of TMI that did not get its five mile plan until Friday morning in the mail. All of one county did not receive a ten mile or 20 mile evacuation plan until Sunday afternoon. I am still convinced that that evacuation plan is a disaster.

Now, maybe what you say applies to some counties. Let me assure you that it did not apply to all counties. Let me also assure you that I am faulting neither you nor Colonel Henderson nor FEMA, because although you may have had plans in place, the distribution of those plans are totally dependent upon the counties and their directions and the directions that they received from their leadership. In some areas, that leadership wasn't there. The directions weren't given.

So, while you may have had excellent plans at the top, you did not have an informed volunteer force that would have performed had they known, at the local level. Those evacuation plans can only be delivered or carried out if they are properly disseminated to local officials. They were not disseminated. It could not have been done. Perhaps in some counties, but not in all counties. Some counties, had you tried a five or ten mile or 20 mile evacuation Saturday, let me tell you, it would have been a disaster because it wouldn't have happened.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Representative Itkin.

BY REPRESENTATIVE ITKIN:

Q Dr. Wilburn, as I understand it, there were several conversations that the Governor had with the NRC on the day of March 30th?

A Yes, sir.

Q Now, you mentioned one in the morning. What was the next one, to the best of your knowledge?

A There was one at 10:00, I believe. There was one between 11:30 and 11:45.

Q And they proceeded into the afternoon?

A I believe there was one in the afternoon also, but I don't remember that as vividly as I do those two in the morning.

Q At what time, to the best of your knowledge, did the Governor become aware of the so-called hydrogen bubble or the ability to call the plant?

A I believe that was late in the afternoon. I do not know what time.

Q Did he learn that through conversations with the NRC?

A I was not present when he first learned of that, because I was representing him at the PEMA. So, I am not a very good one to talk about that. There is a period of several hours that afternoon when I was involved in the transportation department. I was not present in the Governor's Office. So, what transpired Friday afternoon, I believe others could answer



better than myself.

Q You indicated earlier in your testimony this morning that you really didn't have much information as to the nature and cause of this accident in which the emission had occurred Monday -- I mean Friday morning. Did you subsequently find out what had happened or did the Governor feel that that was not for his decision making process?

A It's my understanding, again, as I said, I was not there for the entire Friday afternoon. So, there may be some holes. It's my understanding that we had a much clearer picture of, at least, what was thought to have happened that afternoon. To continue discussions with Chairman Hendrie and also, of course, Mr. Denton arrived that afternoon to talk to the Governor from the site and then came in for a rather lengthy briefing that evening.

Q Were you aware of the fact that there was some discussion at NRC during the day of March 30 that there may have been required continuous emission, perhaps that two hour intervals during that day?

A I was not aware of that discussion that was going on at the NRC.

Q Did you have any knowledge about not that the discussion had occurred, but that was an alleged fact?

A I personally did not.

Q Do you know if the Governor knew?

A I do not know.

REPRESENTATIVE ITKIN: I have no further questions.

BY CHAIRMAN WRIGHT:

Q Dr. Wilburn, one last question. You have said that the five mile evacuation could have been done within three hours. Was that the number you gave us?

A I believe that was our best estimate. This was some time into the crisis. This was Saturday when the state of readiness was heightened.

Q I understand that that depends on the fact that the public was glued to its radio.

A We already had a voluntary evacuation by almost half of the people that lived in the area.

Q My question is, if there were a call now as a reactionary emergency that required an evacuation of the five mile radius, do you have an estimation of what time that would take?

A My guess would be that it would be five or six hours. Again, that's based upon input from Colonel Henderson and other sources. I have no independent way of ascertaining that.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Thank you very much on behalf of the Committee, Dr. Wilburn. I do want to thank you for appearing here this morning. We will let you off the hook now and we will take a five minute break and allow our stenographer to refresh her paper supply.

(The hearing concluded at 11:45 A.M.)

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence taken by me before the House Select Committee - Three Mile Island are fully and accurately indicated in my notes and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

*Joyce Rae Schwarz*  
Joyce Rae Schwarz, Reporter