

PETOSKEY NEWS-REVIEW

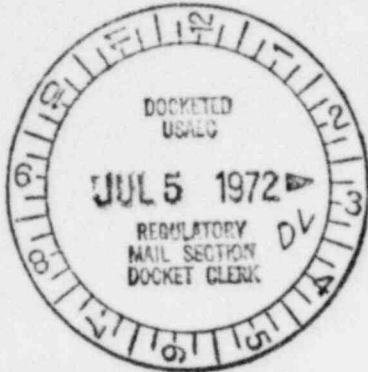
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Regulatory File Cy.



June 26, 1972

Atomic Energy Commission
Germantown, Maryland

Sir:

I would appreciate your immediate attention to the article enclosed.

Could you elaborate on the details of Big Rocks failure to pass your standard for its emergency core cooling system. I would appreciate any comments as to the accuracy of this story and copies of any orders you have given Consumers Power of Michigan concerning their nuclear reactor.

Many thanks,

Ken Winter
Ken Winter
Staff Writer

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avenue to slip into if anything goes wrong." CEB's main worry is the problem of accelerated oxidation of 9% chrome steel in AGR boilers. Present guessing is that CEB will be able to get around this by cutting reactor output about 10%. But no commercial AGR is operating and results from laboratory experiments are highly inconsistent, so no one knows yet what will happen in a working reactor. A switch to helium could also ease two other problems caused by use of carbon dioxide coolant and a graphite moderator: graphite corrosion and carbon deposition on the coolant circuit.

The AGR problems have led to widespread speculation in London that Britain will build no more of them, at least until one is working. Indeed, it's rumored by unofficial sources that in the secret report of Britain's Vinter committee set up to make recommendations on a future British reactor policy, the pressurized water reactor and U.K. Atomic Energy Authority's steam-generating heavy-water reactor emerge ahead of the AGR as the front-runners for use by Britain in the short term. The high-temperature gas-cooled reactor, also studied by the committee, is seen as a longer-term prospect.

A 1,300-Mw BOILING WATER REACTOR HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE GEESTHACHT plant in Germany, even though the utility partners in the project, Hamburgische Electricitaetswerke (HEW) and Nordwestdeutsche Kraftwerke, refuse to acknowledge this (NW, 3 Feb. 8). Breda Termomeccanica, of Milan, already has Kraftwerk Union's order for a BWR vessel for Geesthacht. Informed sources estimate a price of about \$7 million for the 800-tonne vessel. HEW nonetheless sticks to its guns, emphasizing that it has not given Kraftwerk Union any letter of intent and won't do so until HEW has received its construction permit. KWU markets both Siemens pressurized water reactors and BWRs made by AEG.

Received 1/21/72 6-26-72

AEC HAS REJECTED THE ECCS OF BIG ROCK POINT, the Consumers Power first-generation boiling water reactor on Lake Michigan. The utility has until July 1 to submit plans for improvements to the emergency core cooling system of the 703-Mw General Electric plant. AEC's principal objection is that in evaluating the ECCS of Big Rock, Consumers used assumptions that were not conservative enough to meet the requirements of the AEC interim criteria on ECCS. In a letter to the utility, AEC said: "We find that the evaluation method used is not acceptable under the interim policy statement because several assumptions were used that are less conservative than the ones the statement provides. . . . It appears that the current Big Rock ECCS design does not meet the interim acceptance criteria." Among the criteria are the fuel-clad temperature limit of 2,300 degrees and the 1% limit on metal-water reactions in the fuel. The utility told AEC that these limits would be met in postulated coolant-loop breaks of large and intermediate size. But for small-sized breaks the limits would be exceeded, and " . . . work will continue on the small-break accident. . . ." Consumers noted that it had considerable difficulty in modifying the AEC-approved GE computer model to fit the Big Rock plant. "This was due to the difference in piping configuration between the Big Rock plant and the newer BWRs."

A Consumers official said the assumptions used in the ECCS evaluation were realistic, but AEC maintains that although this may be true the evaluation must be made on the more conservative assumptions contained in the interim criteria. "There is no implication that AEC is going to close us down," said the utility official. Consumers is now working with GE on necessary changes. Improvements must be made by July 1974. An AEC staffer said this is the only case of its kind since issuance of ECCS interim criteria last summer.

GENERAL ELECTRIC HAS INTEGRATED ITS NUCLEAR MARKETING SET-UP, naming James R. Birle as general manager of a newly created nuclear energy marketing dept., which draws together within the nuclear energy div. the marketing functions from the atomic power equipment dept., nuclear fuels dept., and nuclear power generation controls dept. Birle had been marketing manager for APED. The change reflects what GE says has become the utility buying pattern: a single transaction covering reactor systems, initial core and, on many occasions, reload fuel.

SAFE-END CRACK PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN AT THE DODEWAARD REACTOR in the Netherlands and first reports indicate similarity to the minute intergranular cracking that was found in various U.S. boiling water reactor systems a couple of years ago. The 58-Mw Dodewaard unit was being started up after refueling when water was noticed - weeping, rather than any full-fledged leak - and an 8-mm-long hairline crack was found in a nozzle safe-end. The Dutch suspect that improper suspension of a pipe caused undue stress. Officials said they expected to have repairs made and the reactor back on line by the end of this week.

CBI NUCLEAR CO. STARTS OFF WITH JUSTICE DEPT. BLESSING of the 50-50 partnership on reactor vessels between Chicago Bridge & Iron and General Electric but with a very empty manufacturing plant in Memphis, Tenn. The partnership, stemming from preliminary agreement last summer (NW, 22 July '71, 1), was not opposed by Justice, whose advisory letter stipulated that the new company should be free to sell vessels or other

AEC DISTRIBUTION FOR PART 50 DOCKET MATERIAL
(TEMPORARY FORM)

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DESCRIPTION: Ltr trans the following:

DISTRIBUTION PER FRANK LOGAN 7-5-72

PLANT NAMES: Big Rock Plant

ENCLOSURES: Info on the Big Rocks Plant Failure To Pass Standard for its ECCS & appreciate any comments as to accuracy of story & cps of orders AEC has given CPC of Mich. concerning their reactor (1 cy encl rec'd)

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