

Scribe Undergoes Test For Fallout Danger

By JERRY BENNETT
 WASHINGTON (NEA) — I have been hit by fallout. And so probably have you. Frankly, atomic scientists don't yet know for sure whether we have absorbed enough to be dangerous. Maybe it is, but probably it isn't. My diagnosis comes from specialists at Walter Reed Army Medical Center where I took a new type of physical examination that detects radioactivity in the body. Some day, a test like this may be taken by everyone.

Through the use of two enormous contraptions called the Whole Body Human Counter and the Steel Room, doctors found that my underweight physique is radiating Potassium-40 and Cesium-137. Capt. Harry Claypool, assistant chief of the Department of Nuclear Medicine, consoled me by explaining that it's perfectly natural to be loaded with Potassium-40. You're born with the stuff. Cesium-137, however, is a product of nuclear blasts, and is one of the many radioactive particles that make up fallout. Nobody had any before the bombs started go-

ing bang in 1945. Since then it has been showing up in increasing amounts in hundreds of thousands of persons. There are considerable variations, however, in the amounts found in people from different parts of the world. That's why Capt. Claypool, his bosses Lt. Col. James B. Hartgering and Maj. Kent T. Woodward and Los Alamos radiation expert Dr. Ernest C. Anderson built the Human Body Counter.

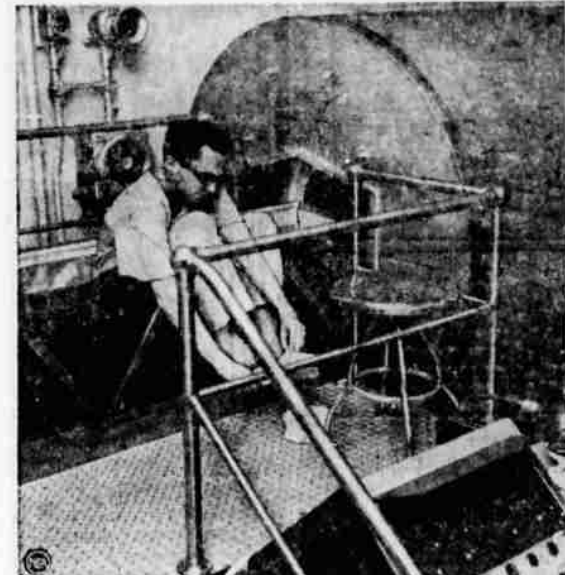
By testing troops returning from overseas, foreign diplomats and volunteers like myself, they hope to compile information on the radioactivity level in individuals from all over the globe. This information could prove vital in safeguarding world health when the fallout danger mark finally is determined. My test started with technician Maureen Chapman asking me questions about my diet. She wanted to know how much milk, eggs, meat, vegetables and bread I normally ate.

Like Strontium 90, Cesium-137 is absorbed from the soil by plants. You get it into your system by consuming vegetables, or meat and milk from unsuspecting animals that munched on contaminated grass. Maureen explained that the test I was about to take would not register the amount of Strontium-90 in my body. The Whole Body Counter registers only gamma rays. Strontium-90 emits beta rays that are so weak they cannot pass through the skin. An accurate Strontium-90 measurement can be made only by testing excreta or by tissue analysis. The Whole Body Counter looks like a toppled-over oil tank. Sticking out of a small hole in one end is a contraption resembling a coffin.

I laid down inside with my feet pressed flat against the end. Then someone pressed a button, the coffin slid forward, and I was sealed inside the tank. Beside me was a panic button I was told to press if I couldn't take the three minutes confinement. So far only two persons have panicked during the ma-

chine's 10 months of operation. While I listened to soft piped-in music, my body sent out gamma rays that pierced a thin steel shield inside the tank. The rays then collided with a special chemical. Each time a ray hit the chemical, it made a flash of light. These flashes were counted by highly sensitive photo tubes and the results relayed to a control panel. The panel showed that I emitted 260 Cesium-137 rays and 390 Potassium-40 rays per second. In order to insure that my diagnosis was correct, I was sent to the Steel Room. Inside was a large chair like the ones found in dentists' offices. Beside it was a device that resembled an X-ray

machine. The walls, floor, ceiling and door were made of steel to help block natural radiation from the adjoining room. After I sat down, the chair was tilted back and the X-ray-like device placed above my chest. For an hour, I listened to soft music while my body rays struck the weird looking contraption above me. This machine is equipped with a sensitive crystal that identifies all types of gamma rays. It verified the findings of the first test. I never did learn what I'd like to know most. Is the amount of Cesium-137 in my body enough to harm me? Unfortunately, nobody knows. But if a scientist should some day translate this unknown into bad news, I'll have plenty of fellow worriers. Dr. Claypool says that most of the 1,400 people who have taken the test showed a radiation count similar to mine.



NEA CORRESPONDENT Jerry Bennett prepares to have his radioactivity measured in the Whole Body Counter.

Policy Committee Chief Urges Strauss Showdown

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Republican disagreement over the timing of a Senate vote on the Lewis L. Strauss nomination goes to President Eisenhower today. Sen. Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, chairman of the Senate GOP Policy Committee, said in advance of a White House conference he is urging that efforts be made to bring a showdown on the controversial Cabinet nomination.

Senate Republican Leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois told reporters Monday he is afraid a vote on Strauss' nomination for secretary of commerce will have to be delayed until next week. Dirksen said that unless the Senate can get an agreement to vote by Wednesday, he can't keep a full contingent of Republicans on hand for the rest of the week. But Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) said he won't agree to a vote by Wednesday. Bridges said in an interview he thinks steps ought to be taken to get GOP members to cancel outside speeches and stay around for a showdown vote. "After all of the fuss we have made about the long delays in getting this matter before the Senate, we Republicans are not placed in a very good light if we are responsible for further postponements," Bridges said. Eisenhower first sent the nomination to the Senate Jan. 17. Approved 9-8 by the Commerce Committee on May 19, it has been before the Senate since June 4. Senate Democratic Leader Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas said he may ask for an agreement today to vote later in the week on Strauss. He said he plans night Senate sessions after Wednesday and possibly a meeting on Saturday in an effort to dispose of the

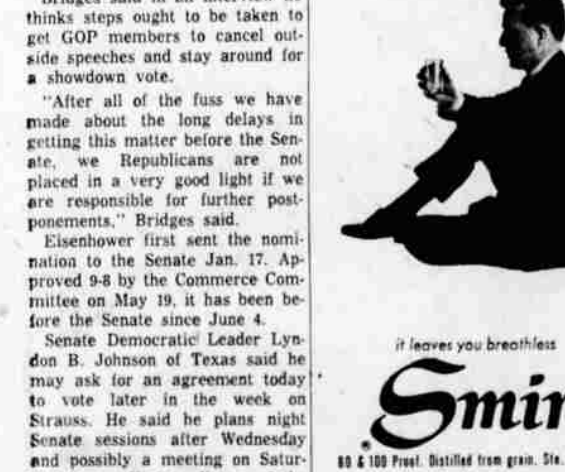
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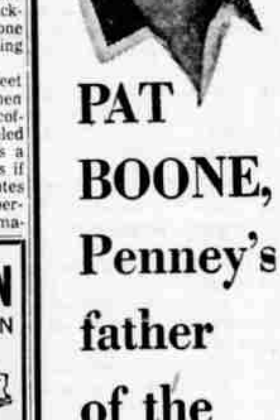
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