

Mr. DADDARIO. Isn't that one of the problems that would arise? The reason I ask you that is to make a comparison with the private sector. If he does have to explain it and if he is not going to get support, he does not really have discretionary authority which you would like him to have.

Dr. HORNIG. I don't have any hard figures for the private sector.

Mr. DADDARIO. How it would work generally?

Dr. HORNIG. In general, when research directors confer with us from the private sector we learn that there are more discretionary funds in a private business than we allow our directors in a Federal laboratory.

The director is supposed to know what his job is; if he is in a company he knows what the business is. If it is discretionary, it is still not within his discretion to go off and do something that the company is not involved in.

When we give a laboratory director a discretionary authority, it is discretion essentially to explore what are the best technical opportunities to contribute to his job, not to go off on tangents. You catch up with him on the next year's budget if he goes off on tangents.

Mr. DADDARIO. Let me ask you this question to see if I can satisfy some of the questions in my mind. Being fundamentally of the opinion that the laboratory director should have this authority, do we in fact enhance the capabilities of the laboratory. Are we able to make better use of the knowledge developed and do it more quickly? We just had hearings on pollution and unless we are able to rapidly use the knowledge in this particular area, the problem will get out of hand. We must apply our knowledge quicker rather than later. One of the objectives we would hope to achieve by giving the laboratory director this discretionary authority would be to do this.

Dr. HORNIG. I think this is precisely right. In the first place, very little of what we are talking about is basic research.

Secondly, the job of the laboratory is not to accumulate a pile of knowledge or to turn over the grains of sand in the Sahara Desert and examine them one at a time. Its hardest problem is to decide what the problems really are and how they can be tackled, and for this one needs keen technical insight. It is not usually true that desk-bound people like myself can sit at the top of the pyramid and say what the real technical problems are that are soluble next year. This takes ideas from the people who are hard at work and this is the importance of the role of the laboratory and its director. In many cases one can define the general outline of problems from the agency level, but the question of whether you make progress depends on picking the right detailed problems, those which are ripe for solving at a given time. That requires keen technical insight. This is why I emphasize the role of the laboratory director. As all the study panels have emphasized, the most critical thing is the technical talent.

Mr. DADDARIO. The discretionary authority then would allow the director to pick the right problem because he has the best ability to do that, and then he would be able to pick the right people to accomplish the job.

Dr. HORNIG. Ninety percent of a program is laid out between the laboratory director and his management. But when there are good ideas arising from the technical staff, subject to internal review, that look promising, he should be in a position to move rapidly. This is