

nature of his mission or program, but of that order, well under a half, but better than 5 percent.

Mr. DADDARIO. You fluctuate from a low to a high?

Dr. ASTIN. Yes.

Mr. DADDARIO. Do you include in that, that there should be some judgment made as to the amount in respect to the laboratory?

Dr. ASTIN. Yes. A laboratory with a very routine responsibility would probably need less. A laboratory with extremely difficult technological problems to solve would need more. It would depend to some extent on the nature of the assignment to the lab.

Mr. DADDARIO. The nature of the assignment and the quality of the laboratory?

Dr. ASTIN. Yes.

Mr. DADDARIO. Are you going to rate them through this committee? How are you going to do that?

Dr. ASTIN. No. Our interagency committee will not get involved in rating laboratories.

On the other hand—

Mr. DADDARIO. You indicate that they should be?

Dr. ASTIN. I think that it is essential in any organization that is concerned with a number of laboratories. I think they have to have some mechanism of rating. Within the National Bureau of Standards, for example, I consider that NBS is a composition of many laboratories. I think one of my responsibilities is to have techniques for rating the different laboratories within the organization, and where the leadership or management is ineffective, doing something about strengthening it as well as encouraging those that are strong.

Mr. DADDARIO. I think it is extremely important to come to some determination about how much flexibility and discretionary authority you would allow a director. I would quite agree it should vary whatever the figures might be, and one of the most important criteria would be the quality of the laboratory itself. I have the feeling, although we have not come to that conclusion as yet, that a small percentage of funds would, in fact, raise the quality of good laboratories even further. If a director had this authority, it would not only enhance his capability, but it would have some bearing on the entire quality of the performance of the people under him. You would, I imagine, support that?

Dr. ASTIN. Yes.

Mr. DADDARIO. Dr. Hornig yesterday touched on part of the responsibility that he has and came to some determination about eliminating laboratories when they reach a certain point. Considering that he was considering a judgment of that kind, would his office be the place where this rating process should take place?

Dr. ASTIN. I am not sure whether that would be a proper place or whether it ought to be done on a department basis. Most certainly, though, I would think Dr. Hornig's office is concerned with the overall quality of Federal laboratories. That is one of the reasons his office has encouraged our interagency committee because we are very much involved with the problems which affect the quality of Federal laboratories. In fact, most of our reports deal with one or another aspect of the quality of Federal laboratories.