January 8, 1943

Memorandum of Conference with
Dr. A. B. Sabin and Dr. W. A. Feirer
(of the Sharp and Dohme Co.) at Cincinnati
January 5, 1943

SUBJECT: Manufacture and Testing of Vaccines.

During the past 12 months Dr. A. B. Sabin has been engaged in a
series of experiments concerned with methods of preparing mouse brain suspension
containing the inactivated virus of: (i) St. Louis and (ii) Japanese B encephalitis, so that these suspensions may be used as immunizing agents. The object of these experiments is to produce a vaccine which might be available for the Army in case members of the armed forces should be exposed to these diseases. During a somewhat similar period of time another group of workers in Philadelphia (composed of Dr. Henle and Dr. Leslie Chambers, under the direction of Dr. Joseph Stokes of Philadelphia and of Dr. P. K. Olitsky of the Rockefeller Institute of New York) have been concerned with preparing a similar "vaccine" for use in humans against Western equine encephalomyelitis. This latter vaccine has been prepared from the allantoic fluid of the incubating hen's egg. All of this work has been carried out under the sponsorship of the Neurotropic Virus Commission of the U. S. Army. However, before the Commission can recommend the use of these vaccines to the Army, regardless as to whether they are to be used under the stress of an epidemic, these vaccines should be first tested on a large group of individuals, preferably of military age. A test of this type was made in Manitoba last spring using Lederle's chick embryo vaccine, and valuable information was obtained about this product.

The work in Dr. Sabin's laboratory (and probably the work in Phila-
delphia) has now reached a stage where such a field trial of the material can now be done. It is not believed that a situation can be found in which the efficacy of
the vaccine (as a protective agent against human disease) can be found, but it is believed that situations can be found in which these vaccines can be injected with justification into 1000 volunteers or more who live in areas where St. Louis and Western equine virus is endemic, or has been epidemic. The purpose of such a field trial would be to test the character and severity of post-vaccinal reactions which might occur, and to measure the titre of antibodies which might be induced in a small selected sample of the various groups of vaccinees. It has been further suggested that these trials be made under circumstances approaching those of army life as nearly as possible, and for this reason it is proposed that Dr. W. M. Hammon and Dr. Karl Meyer be approached on the advisability of turning to certain areas in Yakima Valley, Washington, in San Joaquin Valley, California, and the Salt River Valley of Arizona where St. Louis and Western equine encephalitis has appeared during the past 3 years.

For the manufacture of the material to be used in these tests, a generous offer has been made by Dr. Feiser that his Company (the Sharp and Dohme Co.) will make up 1000 units (1 unit = 2 doses) of each vaccine and that these will be turned over free of charge to the Neurotropic Virus Commission for these trials. Furthermore it has been agreed upon that this experiment should be conducted during the coming spring and that, barring accidents, the trial vaccines should be ready by May 1st, 1943 (or better, by April 15th).

It is further proposed that the Neurotropic Virus Commission shall select one of its members (or a suitable individual with clinical experience) to supervise in the field and be responsible for these various vaccination experiments.

Respectfully recorded,

John R. Paul, M.D.

jrp: ads
cc: Col. Bayne-Jones, Drs. Sabin, Blake, Feiser, Olitsky, Webster, and Hammon.