to the possibility of lines of development of very great promise.

"At each stage the General Advisory Committee, and I as its chairman and as a member of other bodies, reported as faithfully as we could our evaluation of what was likely to fail and what was likely to work.

Thermonuclear Progress

"In the spring of 1951 work had reached a stage at which far-reaching decisions were called for with regard to the commission's whole thermonuclear program. In consultation with the commission, I called a meeting in Princeton in the late spring of that year, which was attended by all members of the commission and several members of its staff, by members of the General Advisory Committee, by Dr. Bradbury and staff of the Los Alamos Laboratory, by Bethe, Teller, Bacher, Fermi, von Neumann, Wheeler and others responsibly connected with the program. The outcome of the meeting, which lasted for two or three days, was an agreed program and a fixing of priorities and effort both for Los Alamos and for other aspects of the commission's work. This program has been an outstanding success.

"In addition to my continuing work on the General Advisory Committee, there were other assignments that I was asked to undertake.

"Late in 1950 or early in 1951, the President appointed me to advise the Office of Defense Mobilization and the President; in 1952 the Secretary of State appointed me to a panel to advise on armaments and their regulation; and I served as consultant on continental defense, civil defense, and the use of atomic weapons in support of ground combat.

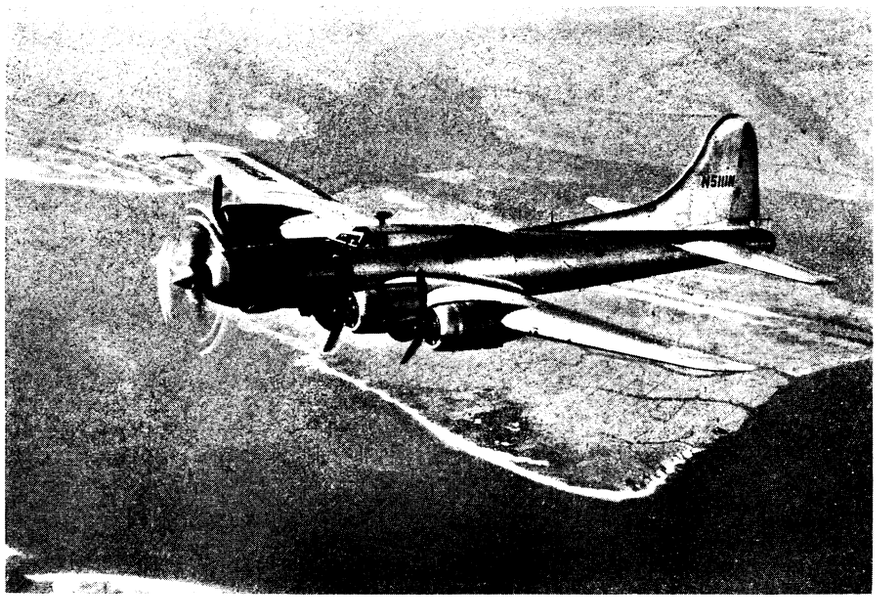
"Many of these duties led to reports in the drafting of which I participated, or for which I took responsibility. These supplement the record of the General Advisory Committee as an account of the counsel that I have given our Government during the last eight years.

Review Necessarily Brief

"In this letter, I have written only of those limited parts of my history which appear relevant to the issue now before the Atomic Energy Commission. In order to preserve as much as possible the perspective of the story, I have dealt very briefly with many matters. I have had to deal briefly or not at all with instances in which my actions or views were adverse to Soviet or Communist interest, and of actions that testify to my devotion to freedom, or that have contributed to the vitality, influence and power of the United States.

"In preparing this letter, I have reviewed two decades of my life. I have recalled instances where I acted unwisely. What I have hoped was, not that I could wholly avoid error, but that I might learn from it. What I have learned has, I think, made me more fit to serve my country."

Science News Letter, April 24, 1954



ENGINES FEATHERED—A single propeller-turbine powerplant, producing 5,700 horsepower, can propel a B-17 alone when its four piston engine propellers are feathered.

GENERAL SCIENCE

Comments of Scientists

➤ AFTER LEARNING that Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer had been suspended by the Atomic Energy Commission pending review of charges he was a security risk, scientists rallied quickly to his defense.

"I can only say I have the greatest respect and warmest feelings for Dr. Oppenheimer," Dr. Albert Einstein, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J., said. "I admire him not only as a scientist, but also as a man of great human qualities."

From the University of Chicago, where the first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction occurred, three scientists commented.

Since the present state of international tension makes it "unfortunately necessary" to carry out loyalty investigations of men in sensitive positions, Dr. Samuel K. Allison, director of the Institute for Nuclear Studies, stated, such an investigation by competent men would completely establish the reliability of Dr. Oppenheimer. "The nation owes him a debt which it can never adequately repay," he said.

"I do not know any other person in the United States who could have provided the brilliant leadership at Los Alamos that he did, working in selfless devotion, and endangering his precarious health.

"The American people," Dr. Allison concluded, "will not be fooled by Senator McCarthy if he cynically uses this investigation as an excuse to divert attention from the coming inquiry concerning his relations with the Army, firing his usual barrage of unfounded accusations, this time, against prominent scientists."

Dr. Cyril S. Smith, director of the Institute for the Study of Metals, said that he was confident that without Oppenheimer's "dynamic and selfless leadership, a successful bomb would have been delayed by many months."

He said that, having been a member of Atomic Energy Commission's General Advisory Committee at the time the H-bomb decision was made, he still believed the committee's decision based on the technical information available at that time, was arrived at honestly, and that it would have been a "real catastrophe had the hydrogen bomb program been initiated without discussion of the issues involved.

"The resolution of honest differences of opinion among informed men," he stated, "is the very basis of democracy, and such discussion is difficult enough under atomic secrecy without persecuting one who proposed a less precipitous approach than that ultimately adopted by high authority.

"The action of the AEC will discourage free discussion of both politics and science," he said. "If followed through, it will effectively suppress the very originality of thought that gave rise to the bomb."

Dr. Leo Szilard said: "I have read very carefully the official charges against Oppenheimer. Whatever they may indicate, they do not seem to indicate the slightest suspicion that Oppenheimer might misuse restricted information. To class him as a security risk, on the basis of these charges, will be regarded by his colleagues in this country as an indignity, and abroad as a sign of insanity—which it probably is."

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