

April 11, 1968

Miss Delores J. Brown
Chief, Grants Administration Section
Office of Research Grants
National Center for Air Pollution Control
8120 Woodmont Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Re: NCAPC/RGB
AP 00220-04

Dear Miss Brown:

I have your letter of March 13 concerning my responsibilities to the Grants Administration Section of the National Center for Air Pollution Control of the Public Health Service. I shall do my best to comply with these requirements, but I have little hope of being able to put together a report of progress that is meaningful by the end of May 1968. The reasons for this are a bit unusual, perhaps, and therefore they require some explanation.

First of all, let me point out that the period during which the balance experiments on human subjects have been conducted (in the general investigation of the significance of lead in the human environment), began in 1939, was shifted to the study of the inhalation of lead in the air in 1950, and focused on the problem of lead in the general ambient air (as one of immediate importance) in 1959. Each experiment of the latter type requires at least two years of detailed investigation, while the primary objective, that of determining a physiologically acceptable level of lead in the general atmosphere, may well be achieved within the next calendar year. Thus far, approximately 8 years have been spent in pursuit of this important problem in a gradual approach in which time has been the important variable under investigation. It was this feature of the work, presumably, which has led the Service to conclude that the work was unprofitable, but whatever the reason may have been, the sponsorship of the work through the Office of Research Grants of the National Center for Air Pollution, while appreciable and appreciated, was but an episode in a much larger investment of other sponsors. The work continues, and will probably be carried out until the objective has been achieved.

What has been accomplished during the period in which the work was supported by the Public Health Service, to the extent of somewhat less than one-fourth of the cost, is a small, but important part of the whole enterprise. There will be nothing of consequence to report until the end of this year, since for the first time, positive evidence of the accomplishment of the primary objective began to emerge some three or four months ago, and, hopefully, may be expected to develop more fully in the latter part of this year. The reason for this situation will appear in understandable form in the progress report which I made in connection with the last application submitted for the renewal of the grant. I trust, therefore, that your office will agree that it will be served better by a later report that will reveal the results of the experiment that is in progress at this time.

Miss Delores J. Brown

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The document relating to patents (none of which are to be expected in this type of research) and the report of expenditures will be forwarded shortly. I shall ask the business office of the Kettering Laboratory to provide the latter at the earliest date possible. This, obviously, was a "slip up" on our part.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wp

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