



SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

State House, High Holborn, LONDON W.C.1R 4TA

Telex: 25962 Telegrams: Scires London Telex

Telephone: CHANCERY 1262 Ext. 360

Our reference:

Your reference:

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Dr T G Pickavance
The Churchill Hospital
Headington
OXFORD

Dear Gerry

We have learnt that you can now read letters so I write to tell you how distressed we were in the office when we first heard of your illness and how anxiously we have followed your progress. This anxiety has been shared by everyone we have met in the S.R.C., in the Universities and at CERN. If good wishes and prayers can aid recovery you have had massive support.

Perhaps you would like to know how we have been getting on in the office. I will give a summary starting with Yvonne. She had an exciting time about Easter. She became engaged to a very nice Australian accountant, went to Lourdes on a pilgrimage, returned and caught German measles. I think I have everything in the right sequence. We were already tight on staff as we had lost George Luke and Doug Brand on transfer and Catherine Jenkins who had left. We did not get our replacement EO (Chris Rimmer) until the beginning of May. This meant that Jack Beattie, Peter Casey and I had to deal with a round of grant applications from "cold". In our ignorance I think we did splendidly by over committing deliberately to the extent of 10% as we thought. However when Yvonne came back she pointed out some elementary things that I had overlooked so the actual overcommitment looks like 15% or so.

You may be interested to know about the out-turn for 1970/71. Despite all our efforts to push up the number of claims paid before 31/3/71 we only achieved £40K overspend in excess of the Grants Allocation. As you will recall we have regularly underspent by about £200K compared with Printed Estimates. Jack Beattie is instituting a tighter form of accounting in the office so that we shall know much better what the situation is on "slippage" "underspend" "overcommitment" etc.

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Peter Casey has been elected a local councillor, so have Dr Massey and Dr Maxwell - all for the Labour Party. It is a good thing for these young men to take part in local politics don't you think? Peter independently of his success in local politics was interviewed among others by the "New Scientist" in an article about scientists doing non-scientific jobs. I teased him by saying that the article was so deprecatory of his own ability as to make it appear as if we had hired a drop-out.

We suffered a sad loss shortly after Easter when our bright pair of agency girls Ena and Jane left for permanent jobs locally in Holborn. I had tried in vain without their knowing to get them an increase in pay because they were so valuable to us. Brenda nobly stepped into the breach and is running the secretariat of the Division splendidly with the assistance of a South African girl Rosemary who will be with us until the end of July. By that time Brenda will have been able to assess the clerical requirements of the job and we would then hope to get suitable permanent staff. We are still short of a C.O. Some of the CO work had been taken over by Ena and is now with Brenda and the rest by Eddie Nicholls who is another tower of strength. In fact if we had somebody who could look after the routine business of filing, booking correspondence, collating papers etc. I would think we would be well satisfied.

Now let me tell you about the highlights of Board and Council business. At the April Council the High Flux Beam Reactor was approved and recommended to DES. The April Board was at Daresbury. Prior to the Board meeting we had a seminar on the Daresbury work. The high energy physics presentation was quite exciting but the discourse on the vicissitudes of the Nuclear Structure Facility most depressing. Bob Voss claimed that there was absolutely no good mathematical model upon which to base a design. He was also gloomy about other aspects.

At the Board meeting itself Sir Brian spoke on the strategy of the forward look. As I expect you will remember forecasting Nuclear Physics Division is down to approximately a constant budget for the next five years. The Board has now to decide on whether to go for the High Field Bubble Chamber or a new computer for Daresbury. (DNPL has put in a bid for an IBM 370/165 at £2.35M). Meanwhile there is not enough money for a coupled IBM 360/65/75 at Daresbury so the plan is to instal the 360/75 on its own. The Board is



to have a weekend meeting at Oxford on 23/24/25 July to debate which of Nimrod and NINA should be closed down, when and how. An alternative proposal that a small number of independent eminent scientists should examine the problem and recommend a solution to the Board was rejected.

I went to the CERN Committee of Council on your behalf about three weeks ago. The main items discussed were the finance officer appointment for the 300 GeV, the Italian delegation to Council, and the future size and constitution of the Committee of Council. On the first there was still opposition - mainly French - to the appointment of a British national. We and the Scandinavians deplored that nationality had been made an issue. It was decided that member states should each submit the name of a candidate for the post in order for a decision to be made in June. It may be that no candidate manifestly as good as the British one will come forward. The affair of the Italian delegation is like something from Lewis Carroll. Now that Amaldi is President of CERN the Italians want him replaced on their delegation by Salvini as they claim (and Amaldi confirms) that Amaldi is now outside their briefing system. But the rules say that the President must be chosen from among members of Council delegations so if Amaldi ceases to be part of the official delegation he is disqualified as President. On the other hand if a delegate is "absent from a sitting" someone can be nominated as delegate in his stead. It was agreed to interpret the rules then in the sense that when a delegate is in the chair he is absent from the sitting in that he is not with his delegation therefore he can have a replacement. It took a long time to arrive at this decision. I could not understand the fuss as Smoquina is the chief delegate anyhow and he can bring plenty of advisers who can speak if he wishes. On the size of the committee there is a great desire to keep it small and informal and to continue to sit round a table. There was seen to be merit in having stronger scientific representation. It was said that the Finance Committee get more science than the Committee of Council or Council. The matter will be discussed again.

The May Board meeting was at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, we all stayed in colleges and were well looked after. Sweepnik was quite impressive. The Cavendish has financial problems like the rest of us and has decided that since top priority must go to radio-astronomy there must be some sacrifice in high energy physics. It has been decided by the Cambridge nuclear physicists themselves that they will



withdraw from counter experiments and concentrate on bubble chamber research. One important factor is that they find it difficult to fit experiment in CERN with university activities.

By the way Ken Riley and Leslie Green have expressed willingness to serve on the Board. Unfortunately Ziman is reluctant - he you will recall was our non-nuclear physicist. Sir Brian is trying to persuade him. The other important matter discussed at the May Board was the long standing one of adequate financial support for people going to CERN and provision for replacement teaching. Some definite proposals have now been framed for discussion with the Treasury.

That's probably enough about Board business for the moment. By the way I should say that Paul Matthews has taken over as Chairman of the Laboratories Committee in your absence.

It is pretty cold and miserable just at present and I shall be quite glad to get some Aegean sunshine later this month. My Renault TS 16 has not arrived yet although ordered on 1st February. A friend received his last week; it was ordered in October!

We will organize things so as to write to you regularly from the office. Best wishes from all of us for your full and speedy recovery.

Yours

John Clemm