

February 26th, 1936.

Dear Wright,

I daresay you remember my ringing you up about a man working here who had a patent which he thought ought to be kept secret. I enclose a letter from him on the subject as you suggested. I am naturally somewhat less optimistic about the prospects than the inventor, but he is a very good physicist and even if the chances were a hundred to one against it seems to me it might be worth keeping the thing secret as it is not going to cost the Government anything.

With apologies for this hasty note, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. C.S. Wright.

Department of Scientific Research & Experiment,

Admiralty,

S.W. 1.

c/o The Clarendon Laboratory,
Parks Road,
OXFORD.

26th February, 1936.

Dr. C. S. Wright,
Department of Scientific
Research & Experiment,
Admiralty,
LONDON. S.W.1.

Sir,

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that I have applied for a British Patent, Application No. and you might find it advisable to prevent its publication.

The object of this Patent has nothing to do with instruments of war, but it contains information which could be used in the construction of explosive bodies based on processes described in the Specification. Such explosive bodies would be very many thousand times more powerful than ordinary bombs, and in view of the disasters which could be caused by their use on the part of certain Powers which might attack this country, it appears very undesirable that such information should be published through the medium of this Patent.

I understand that you would be able to intervene and prevent the publication of this Patent only if I assign the Patent to the Admiralty. If a form can be found which will enable me

to retain my freedom of action concerning the applications which have nothing to do with instruments of war, I shall be pleased to assign the Patent to the Admiralty. No financial obligation of the part of the Admiralty would arise out of such a transaction.

I am fully aware of the fact that if a successful private manufacture is set up on the basis of this Patent, information will leak out sooner or later. It is in the very nature of this invention that it cannot be kept secret for a very long time, and my only concern is that the processes should be developed in this country a few years ahead of certain other countries. This purpose would be served by keeping the Patent secret, and we cannot aim at anything more.

I have to add that we have no certainty for the time being whether the processes described can be put into operation. I have, however, observed and investigated certain anomalies which indicate that this may very well be the case. At present there are still two alternative explanations for these anomalies, and it may take a year before we can decide in favour of one or the other.

I have so far delayed the publication of this Patent as far as possible by post-dating the original application, and asking for extensions of time. The last date for the acceptance of the Patent is now March 28th, and this cannot be postponed further.

I shall be glad to be at your disposal in London should you wish to see me regarding the details of the Patented Processes. My Patent Solicitor - Mr. Champneys, of Claremont Haynes & Co., Vernon House, Sicilian Avenue, Bloomsbury Square, London, Telephone No. Holborn 8811 would also be pleased to give you any information on this matter.

Yours very truly,

(Leo Szilard)

c/o The Clarendon Laboratory,
Parks Road,
OXFORD.

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