

Telegrams : Depaten, Rand, London.

Telephone : Gerrard 6933

Extn. 1134.

Any communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to :-

THE SECRETARY

and the following reference quoted

330/24/6/103



MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
Division of Atomic Energy,
Shell Mex House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.

Your Ref.....

7th June, 1949.

Dear Professor Szilard,

As you will know from Cockcroft's letter to you of April 5th, he has passed on to me your letter of March 22nd which was sent to him, on behalf of Mr. Meier, on March 30th together with a copy of your letter of March 22nd to Mr. Meier.

Of the two questions which are raised I am writing at once to let you know that, in our opinion here, there is no reason why the secrecy restrictions imposed on your U.K. Patent Application No. 19157/34 should not be removed. These restrictions were, as you know, applied at the request of the Admiralty under Section 30 of the British Patents and Designs Acts. If they are removed we can, at the same time, ensure that fresh secrecy restrictions are not imposed under the provisions of the post-war British Atomic Energy Act.

However, before we ask the Admiralty to arrange for removal of the secrecy restrictions we are confirming with the U.S.A.E.C. that they also see no objection to removal of secrecy. We are taking this step because we understand that you yourself have suggested it in a letter to the Admiralty.

/I hope

Professor Leo Szilard,
The University of Chicago,
1155, East 57th Street,
Chicago 37, Illinois,
U.S.A.

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Telephone: Gerard 6933
Ext. 1135

Any communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to THE SECRETARY and the following reference quoted

100/216/103

Your Ref.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
Division of Atomic Energy,
Shell Mex House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.



7th June, 1949.

Dear Professor Sailer,

I hope that I shall very soon be able to write to you again at this point and will be able, at the same time, to give you some comments on the first point you have raised in connection with your U.K. Patent No. 440,203.

Mr. Meier.

I wonder whether you will remember meeting and entertaining me in the wartime 'Tube Alloys' days when I paid a short visit to Chicago in 1942. I shall, in any case, look forward to seeing you again when you are over here in the second half of June. These restrictions were, as you know, applied at the request of the Admiralty, 50 of the British Patents and Design Acts. If they are removed we can, at the same time, ensure that fresh secrecy restrictions are not imposed under the provisions of the post-war British Atomic Energy Act.

Michael W. Perrin

However, before we ask the Admiralty to arrange for removal of the secrecy restrictions we are consulting with the Admiralty and they also see no objection to removal of secrecy. We are taking this step because we understand that you yourself have suggested it in a letter to the Admiralty.

I hope

Professor Leo Sailer,
The University of Chicago,
1155 East 57th Street,
Chicago 37, Illinois,
U.S.A.

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Extn.....1134.....

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330/25/6/14



MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
DIVISION OF ATOMIC ENERGY,
Shell Mex House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.

Your Ref.....

4th July, 1949.

Dear Professor Szilard,

I enclose a more formal letter to you about your two patents, written in such a way that I could send a copy direct to Mr. George Meier.

I have necessarily had to be rather vague in my references to the secret Patent Application No. 19157/34 but you, from your knowledge of its contents, will probably appreciate the reason for our belief that it is based on the existence of certain isotopes for which there is, as yet, no evidence. When secrecy is removed we will be able to discuss our views as to its validity.

I appreciate your memory of my day with you at the Dunes on Lake Michigan, and hope that it will not be too long before you manage to come over here when I shall look forward with much pleasure to meeting you again.

Yours sincerely,

(M. W. Perrin)

Professor Leo Szilard,
The University of Chicago,
1155, East 57th Street,
Chicago 37, Illinois, U.S.A.

1949

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..... 330/25/6/14.....



MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
 DIVISION OF ATOMIC ENERGY,
 Shell Mex House,
 Strand,
 London, W.C.2,

Your Ref.....

4th July, 1949.

Dear Professor Szilard,

Thank you for your letter of June 17th. Since the British Government would not be interested in the As you will need to make up your mind about the open Patent No. 440,023 fairly soon, I think you will like to know that we have had this carefully examined here from the point of view of its validity and its relation to the British atomic energy programme. Although, as you say in your letter of March 22nd to Mr. Meier, the first claim of this patent would, on its face value, appear to cover that part of our atomic energy work which is concerned with the production of radioactive isotopes in a chain reacting pile, we are of the opinion that this claim, from the point of view of patent law, is not a valid one.

We assume that the reference to "an element" in claim 1 must be interpreted as meaning an element which will, in fact, transmute into a radioactive element under neutron radiation. If this is correct there is nowhere, in the Patent, an indication of those specific elements, other than iodine, which will give the desired result.

Claim 1 is, in our opinion, a mere statement of the problem to be solved, and does not carry the matter further than the earlier statement by Joliot and his wife in "Nature" of February 10th, 1934, that radioactive elements may possibly be formed by bombarding elements with neutrons.

Professor Leo Szilard,
 The University of Chicago,
 1155, East 57th Street,
 Chicago 37, Illinois, U.S.A.

/Since

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
DIVISION OF ATOMIC ENERGY,
Shell Mex House,
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and the following reference quoted

330/25/6/34

4th July, 1949.

Your Ref.

Dear Professor Sallard,

Since, for these reasons, we do not feel that Claim 1 is valid, the British Government would not be interested in any suggestions for acquiring the rights in the patent.

I can also let you have some further information about your secret Patent Application No. 19157/34. We are still waiting to hear from the U.S.A.E.C. whether they agree with our view here that there is no need to maintain secrecy on this case. Meanwhile, in order to save time, we have found out from the Admiralty, under whose order the specification is now kept secret, that they would have no objection to its release and return to you, and will take this action immediately we hear from the U.S.A.E.C. and report to them that neither they nor we have any objection.

While this specification remains secret it is not so easy to discuss in detail our views as to its validity, but I can say at once that, in our opinion, the patent would be invalid in law and therefore of no interest to the British Government.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. George Meier and will communicate with him again when we get through the formalities, which I have described above, about the waiving of secrecy on 19157/34.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Perrin

(M. W. Perrin)

Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Telegrams : Depaten, Rand, London.

Telephone : Gerrard 6933

Extn.....1134.....

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MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
Division of Atomic Energy,
Shell Mex House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.

Your Ref.....

5th August, 1949.

Dear Professor Szilard,

Since writing to you on the 4th July I had a visit from Mr. Meier just before he left for the U.S.A., and he has been good enough to furnish me with copies of your letters to him of 6th May and 3rd June, 1949.

We have carefully considered the proposed amendments of Patent No. 440,023, as outlined in your letters. Whether they are allowable is, of course, a matter for the Patent Office to decide. The claims you now propose, however, appear to us to be such a departure from the present claims of the patent that, in the event of your seeking to amend the specification along those lines, we may have to oppose the amendment.

If, however, we make the assumption that your proposed amended claims were allowed by the Patent Office, I think it is only right to tell you that we should not be prepared to recognise them as valid. In our opinion the absence from the specification of any information as to the specific elements which give the desired result would invalidate your first two amended claims. As regards the third claim, in which you specify "uranium or thorium", there appears to be no basis in the specification for a claim of this character. It is true that, in the paragraph beginning at line 17 on the second

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and the following reference quoted



MINISTRY OF SUPPLY,
Division of Atomic Energy,
Shell Mex House,
Strand,
London, W.C.2.

250/256/41

25th August, 1949.

Your Ref.

Dear Professor Siffert,

page of the complete specification, there is a reference to uranium and thorium, but the context makes it clear that the substance you proposed to irradiate with neutrons was not uranium or thorium alone, but a mixture of a large number of elements including uranium and thorium, from which the beta active products had been removed.

With reference to your secret Patent Application No. 19157/34, we have now been notified by the U.S.A.E.C. that they have no objection to the removal of the secrecy order. The Admiralty have accordingly been advised that neither we nor the U.S.A.E.C. have any objection to release from secrecy. You will, no doubt, hear from the Admiralty shortly about the re-assignment of the patent application to you.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Meier who may, on his return from the U.S.A., be able to tell me more about your views.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Perrin

(M. W. Perrin)
The University of Chicago,
1155 East 57th Street,
Chicago 37, Illinois, U.S.A.

1155 East 57th Street
Chicago 37, Illinois
June 17, 1949

Mr. Michael W. Perrin
Ministry of Supply
Division of Atomic Energy
Shell Mex House
Strand, London, W.C. 2, England

Dear Mr. Perrin:

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 7th of June. Naturally, I remember the pleasant day which we spent at the Dunes on Lake Michigan, and your doubts about whether mankind was sufficiently mature to be able to cope with the atomic bomb which was then in the making.

I shall be very glad to have your further comments on the two questions which I raised whenever you are able to make such comments, and I trust that you will communicate them also to Mr. George Meier.

My plans for visiting England have in the meantime become somewhat indefinite, but I am looking forward to seeing you again at some time in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Leo Szilard