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May 7, 1971

Dr. Wright H. Langham, Group Leader  
Biomedical Research  
University of California  
Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory  
P. O. Box 1663  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Dear Dr. Langham:

Thanks for your letter of April 28 regarding the early experiments with plutonium. I have destroyed most of my papers from Met Lab days and must rely on memory. It is my recollection that Joe Hamilton had plutonium a few months before we did for experiments. However we started experiments with it in mice in the early spring of 1944. We already had a good baseline of hematology and histology with various fission products and we started similar studies with plutonium as soon as it was available. You will find an account of our work in the chapter of NRES vol. 22-B. The chapter is clinical physiology of dogs injected with plutonium and is by Painter, Russell, Prosser, Swift and Kisielewski. I believe that we were the first to use plutonium in dogs. Probably the most important study was to provide a basis for extrapolation from mice to larger animals. We finally ran a number of goats and I well remember performing autopsies on some of these that died or were sacrificed. In 1945 we started the series of beagles for low level treatment. Some of those dogs lived at Argonne until the mid-fifties. You probably have access to a file of our reports published long before plutonium work was declassified and you can guess at dates of the work described in these reports.

George Svihla at ANL is collecting some similar historical information and may have better dates than I. It would be a pleasure for me to read your account.

Cordially,



C. Ladd Prosser  
Professor of Physiology

CLP:jdv

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