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August 5, 1955

HIM

Haven't heard a word from you for some time so I assume you are busying yourself in other activities. A new problem has arisen upon which I would like to enlist your help. Because of the impact of our program and several others, the corporation has found it necessary to increase the size of our facilities by adding approximately 7,000 square feet of building for engineering space. Following the normal practice of the Perkin-Elmer Corporation, this bricks and mortar addition will be a capital investment. It would be most helpful, however, if we could write-off the cost of the addition over the five year period permitted under emergency amortization rather than over the normal forty years. This is probably the worst possible time for any corporation to attempt the securing of a certificate of necessity because of Secretary Humphreys' recent blasts against such activities. In any case, we have had a rather successful precedent in this sort of thing in the past and we are preparing to approach the Office of Defense Mobilization in an effort to obtain the required certificate. All of our military contacts are being quite cooperative, and we are wondering if there is anything your office, within the bounds of the necessary security, could do to help bolster our case. This addition is primarily housing for engineers and draftsmen. We plan to start construction almost at once and have it in full swing by perhaps the end of the calendar year. I believe it is a fact that a good deal of our pressure for engineering expansion does derive from the impact of the Projector Project.

In this same general vein, we have been faced with another problem which at the moment appears to be under control but may become hot again sometime in the future. We have a large Blanchard grinding machine which is the property of the Air Force but has been assigned to us and is now in operation in our plant. We obtained this machine to work on the many large pieces of glass required by some of our current Air Force contracts and as usual in such cases, we agreed to use the machine exclusively on such contracts. At the moment, the production schedule is such that the machine is not heavily loaded and we have found it very advantageous to make some of the larger pieces for our project on this machine. Of course, within the plant all of our work is of a commercial nature and there have been some eyebrows raised as to the propriety of using this machine for our job. We have arranged a rental system which, at least at the moment, is acceptable to the Air Force but if the question of priority should ever arise I expect we will have a little difficulty. I do not, at this time, request any attention to this matter on your part. I simply describe it so that if you receive a hurry-up call for assistance you will have the background information.

I believe you will be pleased to know that when I board my airplane for the trip West in the early hours of the 9th, I will have, figuratively speaking, the first charting camera in my arms. I had hoped that I would have a negative to enclose with this letter. While such negatives are in existence and they look quite good, they are geographically separated from me at the moment so none is available. They make the Herald Tribune's

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double spread pictures look like Brownie camera stuff. This first camera is still very much of a prototype and there are a number of things built into it which we know will not be completely satisfactory. We want to obtain some operational experience before freezing on the details for the production run. I have not yet received any film from FT but he has the necessary spools and I suspect the film will arrive in the next few days.

The first periscope and hand control will be shipped from Norwalk on the 12th and so, at the present moment, it is in a rather advanced stage of assembly. Here again there are some things which we are putting into the prototype for educational purposes for a little service experience will be of tremendous help.

The first computer and memory unit was checked out and accepted the other day. This little black box works beautifully, and it is of interest that of all of Configuration "C", this particular item should be the first completed and so far ahead of schedule.

I will have with me at least four 24" lenses reworked from the original Pacific Optical units. I have received these on a conditional acceptance for I do not believe they are nearly as good as they can be made since they do not perform as well as the prototype. They are, of course, very much better than the original lenses but I would like to have them at least up to prototype performance before actual final acceptance. The new design 24" is well along but the pressure of getting the first half dozen reworked lenses tested and calibrated has loaded our test facility to the point that I do not have data on the prototype 24" as yet.

I have heard no word from Jim on his re-examination of the performance of the 36" for the B system, which, as you remember, we built up in prototype form and analyzed thoroughly so that Jim could improve his design. You will be interested to learn, if you do not already know, that the last week or so of July caught Jim in a bad schedule bind and so he has postponed his European trip for about two weeks. The wife and family went ahead and he is staying behind to live with the computing machines. We are still waiting for a definitive design for "C" and for a design for the optical test equipment.

I recently received a draft of the test program for the camera equipment and I will go over this with the boys thoroughly during my visit. I am not planning to go out to the site until perhaps my next trip, which should straddle the first of September. It might be for a period considerably longer than has been my habit. I am very interested to know who will be in over-all command of the operations at the site for I think it would be worthwhile for me to sit down with him and get to know him better than perhaps I do now. In addition, I would like to know who will handle the details of transportation and housing since he would probably appreciate advance information concerning the visits of various personnel. If you have any recent data or details on the over-all programming of the base, I would very much appreciate it.

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One last item to give you something to think about. Jim's new business manager, [redacted], is talking such that it may be quite difficult for Perkin-Elmer to contract for the consulting portion of our requirements from [redacted]. I think we will have no difficulty in contracting for the specific designs and such activities as lead to definable drawings or formulas but in that area of consultation for guidance and advice we will have some trouble. Would you be receptive to a prime contract directly with [redacted] for such activities? [redacted] is not quite sure of exactly what he will request in the way of a contract but a week from Monday I plan to sit down with him and go over the details of his requirements. I will certainly keep you informed as to how we proceed.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "RMS", with a horizontal line underneath.

RMS/dmg