



Advice on Loyalty Requirements

The Office of the President has requested the National Academy of Sciences to appoint a committee to advise on the formulation of Federal Government policy dealing with the relations between questions of loyalty and the award of grants and contracts in support of unclassified scientific research. There follows an exchange of letters between Sherman Adams, The Assistant to the President, and Detlev W. Bronk, president of the National Academy of Sciences, who has been conferring with members of the Administration regarding these matters for some months.—D.W.

Dear Dr. Bronk:

The continued sound and healthy development of our Nation and the protection of the national interests depend to a great degree on the maintenance at full strength of the activities of those who are devoting their lives to scientific research designed to improve the health and well-being of all our people. The role of the Federal Government in support of scientific research has increased to the point where it now sponsors a substantial part of the research activities in the Nation.

In the administration of Government grants and contracts to private institutions for the support of unclassified scientific research, there have been a very small number of occasions when questions have arisen regarding the loyalty of individuals whose work is in connection with these grants and contracts.

When these cases come to the attention of the Government agency administering the program, a problem arises in their handling, inasmuch as it does not involve security but concerns an area outside established Government-wide security procedures for its employees. It is of concern to all Government agencies which support or sponsor such unclassified research. It is of tremendous importance, in the handling of this problem, to avoid misunderstandings between scientists and the Government which might impair the cordial relationships which are so vital to the national welfare, misunderstandings which could lead to a loss of valuable benefits from research. It is equally important that people outside the scientific community understand the nature of the problem, and that their confidence in the Government's handling of this important phase of the public trust be maintained. No one will question the fundamental principle that only those who are loyal to our Government should be beneficiaries of Government grants-in-aid or contracts.

It has been said, "It is a privilege, not a right, to work for the Government." The Government nevertheless recognizes that, in the administration of this principle in

relation to grants and contracts, it is acting, not apart from the people, but as and for the people. Governmental procedures must be designed to protect the reputation and standing of the community of innocent persons.

In the application of these principles the Government expects the cooperation of the grantee or contractor as the case may be. At the same time the Government must take every precaution to guard against harming unjustly any member of the community. Toward this end we are constantly seeking to improve our procedures and at the present time are evaluating various proposals for so doing.

It seems to us that these questions relating to loyalty can best be resolved if scientists, through a representative group such as the National Academy of Sciences, can counsel with the Government on its policy in this matter. Calling upon the Academy in this way is in keeping with its Congressional charter to advise the Government in the formulation of policy to the end that the scientific resources of our country may be fully and effectively utilized. The President has asked me to express to you his strong personal interest in this matter.

I hope that it will be possible for the Academy to take this problem under immediate consideration in order that we may have the benefit of your early advice. If you will get in touch with me, I will arrange a meeting at which these problems can be discussed.

Sincerely/SHERMAN ADAMS

Dear Governor Adams:

I have given careful thought to your recent letter concerning the problems that derive from the appraisal of loyalty to our Government as a basis for the award of grants and contracts in support of unclassified scientific research.

Following the subsequent helpful conference I had with you and other members of the Administration who are intimately concerned, I consulted with many of my colleagues in the National Academy of Sciences. They agree with you and me that it will be desirable for me to appoint a committee of scientists and others to consider the problems in question and to advise with you in the near future. A wise governmental policy relating to these matters is essential if a wholesome environment is to be assured for the furtherance of science and our national welfare. Accordingly, the Academy welcomes the opportunity to aid in the resolution of these troublesome issues.

We warmly appreciate your thoughtful concern for the maintenance of conditions necessary for the satisfactory conduct of research. We are also gratified to know of the President's strong personal interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely/DETLEV W. BRONK