

April 10, 1947

John F. Mahoney, Medical Director  
Director, V. D. Research Laboratory  
Staten Island 4, New York

Dear Dr. Mahoney:

The enclosed letter from Mr. Portnoy is self explanatory. Until the day after your departure he had believed that he would have no income tax to pay on his salary. All the arrangements concerning his salary adjustment were made with the belief that he was exempt, but Public Law 291 clearly states otherwise. As you can appreciate he is in a most awkward position, as living expenses here are already high and are rising. He is very well pleased with the assignment here and wants to stay, but feels that he cannot afford to under the present circumstances.

He has asked for release from this assignment if an adjustment cannot be made, but I should personally dislike to see him leave. In the first place he is a very competent serologist, trained by you. Unless another from Staten Island could be sent we should not have the confidence in a replacement that we have in him. Any replacement would have to learn Spanish in order to work satisfactorily and at the same time would have the matter of getting himself and his family settled here so that several months might elapse before he would be working at full capacity. And finally we know that the Portnoy family is satisfied here, have found the place and people congenial, and fit well professionally with the rest of the group.

In the matter of expense to the project removing him to the States and sending a replacement would probably cost the same as the difference between what he was originally promised per year and what he will now get for the year so that making a salary adjustment would not upset the project budget.

It is known that the Pan American Sanitary Bureau for a long time used to pay many of its people a \$10 per diem. Is there any reason why they cannot compute his salary so that part of it appears as a \$10 per diem or even more? In that way with the tax adjustment, assuming that he will have to pay tax, an arrangement might be made to pay him the net income originally promised at less cost to our budget.

Miss Walker is, of course, in the same situation as Mr. Portney and feels much the same way. I sincerely hope that satisfactory financial arrangements can be made soon so that our work will not be interrupted by personal shifts.

Sincerely,

John C. Cutler  
S.A. Surgeon, USPHS

Respectfully forwarded:

Joseph S. Spote  
Chief, Caribbean Sector