

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY DENTAL SCHOOL

DEAN'S OFFICE

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY BUILDING
CHICAGO ILLINOIS

Dec. 4, 1913.

Dr. F. S. McKay,

Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Dear Doctor:-

You may or may not have been surprised at the long delay in answer to your letter of Oct. 7th, enclosing one from Dr. Price of the Research Commission offering aid, which I now return to you with this.

The fact is I haven't been in a physical condition to do anything of late. It is true, I wearied through with my lecture course last winter, but thus far this winter I haven't attempted to give any lectures. I am well enough now to do so, so far as my general condition is concerned, but my eyes don't work well. I haven't been able to read anything since last May. I haven't read any kind of ordinary print at all, yet I can see well enough to walk about. I had a good deal of scramble to get a diagnosis of my difficulty, but have finally succeeded, as I think, in getting a reasonably correct estimate of it, and improvement seems well on the way. My physicians, including the oculist, seem to think that I will recover my vision, but it goes awfully slow. Under these conditions I haven't got along much with the work. It is true my private secretary is reading to me every day from one to two hours.

Now as to the business on hand. It is more and more of a surprise to me to hear you say that you are satisfied that the dark stain in these teeth occurs after the teeth come through the gum. There is an element in it that is calculated to deceive. While I was at work on it when I was with you, I often examined teeth that were

just peeping through the gum, the cutting edges of which were white and normal in color, and found dark stain under the gingivae. Every tooth that I cut had a normal enamel over the cutting edge, and all that I have yet seen, excepting one or two, have had this normal enamel over the cutting edge, and when the tooth is first seen coming through the gum it shows its white, normal cutting edge. This I found to be the rule in the examinations I made when I was with you. Certainly not all of them could be stained after they came through the gum. You, on the ground, who have an opportunity to examine many of them from month to month, should give better evidence even than this, possibly, and that question we will leave for the present. Only I wished to call your attention to it.

I could correct up and shape my report in pretty short order whenever you are really ready for it.

Now as to receiving funds from the Research Commission, I am of the opinion that what we have to say about this matter should be put in form, and copies of it sent to the Commission for their judgment, and this perhaps should, in a private way, include the expenditures up to the present time - not for a return of the money, I suppose, but to show what has been done by private means and by the city of Colorado Springs, to forward the matter. Then the question will come as to whether other lines that require money should be followed out. A suggestion in regard to that from you would be the right thing. Then the Commission would have something tangible on which to act.

I still think that my report should only cover the histopathological conditions found, and some suggestions along pathological lines, while yours should cover a specific statement as to where

Dec. 4, 1913.

you have found this condition in the teeth, and the extent of it in the different places where you have examined it; a good outline of the examinations of water which you have made up to the present, the ideas you and your chemists may have in regard to what should be done in the near future in that line, and then any suggestions you may have to make in regard to other lines of study that may be introduced and pursued in the future.

I suppose you will allow me to state briefly my conviction at the time of my examination at Colorado Springs, that it was not the water that was at fault - a conclusion that I still hold, but the fact that the idea was so firmly fixed in the minds of many dentists and of the populace as well that the water was at the root of the evil, required absolutely that the investigation which you have made should be carried out, and probably be carried much further than has been done as yet, in a search for special substances that might produce this feature.

There should be no stone left unturned in that form of investigation. If that is put out of the way, your mind and the minds of other men who may be at work, or who shall attempt to work in the future, will not have that proposition to deal with, and will be free to take up other lines that may be suggested.

Now, doctor, this is about the line of thought that has engaged my attention practically from the first. We want to keep those who propose to aid us, posted as to what we have done and what we propose to do, and we have certainly a good deal of matter to present. Your report would necessarily be much longer than mine, and should be accompanied by maps showing the affected and non-affected areas that you have examined. It should be remembered in your report that in

Dec. 4, 1913.

this work you have sought out the affected areas, and perhaps not examined so many of the non-affected areas as you may feel now necessary to show the intermingling of these practically in neighboring grounds.

Now, doctor, I beg of you to overlook what may have appeared to be indifference on my part in this matter. I have no feeling of indifference in regard to the matter, but my interest is sharpened by your report. I should have been with you long before this if I had been able to travel alone, but I haven't been able to do this now for a long time and am not able to do so yet. I would be helpless to right myself in any little mishap that might occur. I can now walk a few blocks only at a time. For the last six weeks I have been running out myself occasionally to do little errands not more than a block away, but that is as far as I have as yet been able to go on foot, though I can get about the house and do quite a little tinkering. I am now going down to the school every day, simply to have the advantage of my tinkering outfit, so to speak, as a means of occupying my mind and stave^{ing}/off as well as possible the terribly depressing effect of my physical condition. Simply to sit all day and do nothing I find a terribly hard task, and anything that I can do that will relieve this tedium seems to be an advantage to me. I have done nothing whatever in the school this winter this far. I may give some lectures a little later possibly. In the meantime I have an immense amount of work in store to be done as soon as I am able, if that time ever comes. At least I want to put much of it in shape so that somebody else can follow it out if I cannot.

Please write me and let me know that you have received this and whether or not it coincides with your judgment in the matter.

Very truly,

G.V.B.

G.V. Black