



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics
Professor Joshua Lederberg

JUL 29 1969

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

I would be grateful to you
for further information on:
your actual views on the environmental
situation; are they accurately reported
here?

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CONGRES

viser, already anticipates drastic action and mentions that electric autos may replace internal-combustion cars, surely a wild, unrealistic beginning of a practical study.

EMOTIONALLY CHARGED

The Christian Science Monitor, quoting Glenn T. Seaborg, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Nobel Prize laureate, says, "There is a certain hysteria in the country about environmental problems. Environment has become an emotionally charged word today, almost on a par with 'crime in the streets' or 'student revolts.' It is obvious that enough is not being done in controlling and regulating the environments. But much more is being done than the public is aware of and more than ever before." Glenn Seaborg is right. The extreme conservationists contributes little. We are not yet a nation of poisoned, strangulating hypochondriacs doomed to choke on foul air, swallow our own smoke and gaze vacantly on a devastated countryside. Education, leadership, money and time will see us through.

Here we have the clever reporter suddenly turned scientist who treats the entire subject of man despoiling nature as if it were a sudden dramatic disturbance like a typhoon, earthquake or flood, civil war, riot or a raging fire.

Nobody but a fool will deny that there has been a selfish despoiling of nature, that selfishness has often masqueraded as public service and that industry has in many places injured nature. But oversimplifying the problem by manufactured evidence and misrepresentation will only promote prolonged and bitter argument. Armchair philosophizing and academic chatter will not save us from engineering rape. Our salvation requires realism, sober, steady, reliable courageous day-by-day hard work, balance and serenity.

One must admire the boundless, fathomless indignation of Marine over the rape of the universe. To be sure, the basic remedy is at hand--stop breeding by the two-legged, reduce populations and thus guarantee uninterrupted enjoyment by the survivors.

Thank you

Joshua Lederberg

My interest in this material relates in part to background for a weekly column on "Science and Man" which appears weekly in the Washington POST.

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