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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BUREAU OF THE BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

February 5, 1968

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Editorial Offices
Washington Post
1515 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I want to make a couple of observations concerning your article in the Post on Budget Bureau decisions.

I agree with you on the need for better exposure for the role of the Budget Bureau, and I've tried to do what I could along this line.

The Industrial Research affair illustrates the problem I have. When the people at APL asked me to lead a colloquium on the relations of science to public policy, I thought I should. I tried to make it a lively afternoon. I led the discussion around to the dilemmas of criteria for scientific choice, taking off from Weinberg's work, and speculated aloud about his third criterion--social merit.

Now I find that I am stuck with something called the "Carey Social Merit Matrix" and I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I own up to it, but something seems to have got lost in translation. The very last thing I want is to let it be supposed that this constitutes my state of mind about social values, or that I give low marks to population research. What I was really doing was stabbing clumsily at a very fragile and hemophilic subject, in order to stimulate my listeners to think and argue in terms of relative social priorities. Scientists, in particular, ought to engage in this sort of enterprise more than they do. So I grabbed a piece of chalk and spun this fantasy out for them, and they bit into it and began to get a little better grasp of the uncertainties and ambiguities that pepper the social system and slow our efforts to reach higher ground in ordering public choices.

I couldn't agree with you more that "my" matrix isn't ideal for making science policy. But if it exasperates enough people

sufficiently to take hold of the problem of relating public choices to social merit, perhaps my afternoon in the countryside was worthwhile.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Carey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

William D. Carey
Assistant Director