

November 17, 1969

Secretary Robert H. Finch
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20201

Dear Mr. Finch,

Having just preceded you on the program, I had the privilege of hearing you address the Mayo Alumni at Los Angeles Saturday afternoon.

Before you arrived I had strongly supported and congratulated you for your actions on DDT and cyclamates. I was not so extravagant to tell the group that this was a more positive contribution to the health of the public than the sum-total of their "repair and salvage" operations.

I was then rather dismayed and depressed at the tone of your own opening remarks which seemed to say "stamp out research" for it is diverting our best minds.

This was particularly oppressive in the light of the bafflement you must feel about the scientific base for the evaluation of environmental hazards.

Then I thought: research must be uncomfortable to the administrator on the spot as you are, for it undoubtedly exposes hazards and dilemmas of which all of us might prefer to remain blissfully ignorant - till the bodies pile up.

Surely this is not your motive. But I wonder if you perceive how negatively you are coming across on this issue, quite apart from the hard realities of budgetary choices. You really sound as if you relish the demoralization of research, in which you may be all too successful.

Nevertheless, I am too much in your debt in other areas to do other than cheer you on. And I am in absolute agreement with you about re-structuring medical education for multiple levels of entry and exit. I do not think decrying research is much positive help.

(It was not "academic medicine" that fought comprehensive health care tooth and nail!) Nor have we seen much positive help for a place like Stanford to move ahead with its own plans along these lines.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

ROBERT
FINCH