

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

49 WEST 49th STREET, NEW YORK 20

SEP 25 1944 REC'D

September 21, 1944.

Dear Linus:

I am sorry that there has been so much delay in answering your letter of August 18th. I am still spending all of my time on war work, and Frank Hanson and I accordingly get very little opportunity to talk things over. We have talked about your letter several times, however, and I would like to give you a wholly informal and personal reaction to it.

First of all, let me say at once that the problems you have in mind seem to us to be of absolutely first-rate importance. It seems to us one of the fields in which we ought to have a specially active interest. Furthermore, it seems to me important that we try to carry over into peace-time research some of the ways of working together which have been found so effective during the war.

On the other hand, I must confess to a good deal of skepticism as to whether it is either possible or desirable to carry over, into peace-time research, many of the elements of organization and control which properly and inevitably characterize war-time work.

There is another matter which gives me a little concern. The proposal of your letter is based, at least in part, on the presumption that a large number of well-trained scientists will be looking for employment when the war comes to an end. I agree that there will be a large number of the younger men who will be shifting their employment; but I cannot persuade myself that it is going to be very easy to get able and well-trained men. I would anticipate that, to take care of the accumulated backlog, and under the stimulus of Federal support, the undergraduate registration in our colleges and universities would be very high indeed. This will make a great demand for teachers, and particularly for younger teachers and elementary subjects. I should suppose that the demand for teaching assistants would be a very active one.

Therefore it does not seem to me either realistic or proper or necessary to think of your proposal as, in any way, a way of taking up slack. I am sure that you, yourself, did not intend it so. But I would have been less disturbed if you had remarked that it would probably be very difficult to get the men you wanted but that the problem was so important and the opportunity so attractive that you nevertheless thought you could succeed.

I hope you will not interpret the tone of this letter as unduly critical or discouraging. I mean to be neither. As I said at the beginning, the problem seems to me one of compelling interest and importance. I am not at all sure that we would be prepared to consider support on quite so large a scale as you propose, but I would certainly be interested to have your comments as to the probable relative effectiveness of programs of different sizes. I would also like to have your reactions to the comments of this letter. I think it would be entirely feasible for us to give active consideration to such a situation at the present time. Indeed, if the scheme could be set up with sufficient flexibility to adjust itself to events, I would rather hope that, if we were in fact going to make any proposal to our Trustees at all, we could

make it at the December meeting this year. This, in turn, would make it necessary that the proposal be pretty well worked out by November 1st. And this, in turn, indicates that the correspondence on this subject had certainly better not be much delayed from now on!

Very cordially,

*Warren Weaver*

Warren Weaver.

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