(JL)

Suva, Fiji
August 11, 1957

Levin

Dear Joe:

I am writing this note while sitting on the veranda of Dr Edmond's home overlooking Suva Bay. Fiji is roughly comparable to the Hawaiians, though far less developed from a commercial point of view & the native Fijians have kept their identity and tribal customs in a way the Hawaiians have not. They are also primarily Melanesian as compared to the Polynesians of the northern islands & to an untrained Western eye less attractive.

Dr Edmonds is director of the Central Medical School here in Suva — I'll have to tell you more about this sometime; it is a training center for semi-professional practitioners for the whole SW Pacific island area & appears to be quite an effective achievement — one that has some bearing on the standard of training needed for general practice even in "civilized" countries. The stabbing thing here & the most pervasive problem is the rapid growth of the (E.) Indian community, which dominates business life, has a population majority, but so far is legally barred from the ownership of land which is held in trust for the native Fijians. We visited a church school for Indian girls yesterday, & there were hundreds of the most attractive kids I've ever seen.

I had hoped to do some science by the collection of soil samples (if you're still screening them) but the USDA regulations, and their counterparts, are quite strict) — and I didn't have time to unravel the red tape. There is some good theoretical reason to expect that isolated islands may have developed distinctive microflora, just as they have macrobiota, and unless they have been worked over already, these soils might be rich sources of novel types. I have local contacts both in Hawaii and Fiji who have indicated their desire to cooperate in providing such samples and mailing them to the U.S. However, it would be up to you to find out what procedures have to be followed to get get them past USDA inspection.

(over)

If you're interested, and if you're still screening you ought to be, you might to check on the procedure that would entail the least fuss on the sending end — If you can let me know about that in Melbourne, I'll start the ball rolling, or you can contact directly: Dr Walter Carter, Pineapple Research Institute, Dole St., Honolulu and Dr Roy Edmonds, Central Medical School, Suva, Fiji, mentioning my name. As these maybe other contacts, it might be easier if I made preliminary arrangements.

None of these people have suggested it, but it might be a worthwhile thing to offer, say, 25¢ per sample in addition to costs, for up to a stated number of them — this could be passed on to natives who might be visiting outlying islands. Let me know if I can add this minor inducement, if the red tape is manageable.

Well, carry on — & see you all in due course.

John.