

November 25, 1957

President E. L. Wilkinson

310 Maeser Building

H. T. Hall

Re: Trip East

I would like to pass along a few impressions obtained on my recent trip East. In talking with government officials concerned with the distribution of research funds in the form of grants and contracts, I learned that they are very desirous that the scientific personnel located in the universities of the United States be fully and adequately equipped to do the best possible job in basic research in the physical sciences. They feel that the policies of the professional educators in the public schools during the past fifteen years or so have dealt a real blow to our national security. Changes in public school instruction will no doubt be made, but the effects of these will not be realized for many years. The most effective way of immediately bolstering our scientific security is to make certain that our qualified scientists are well equipped to pursue their studies. The government expects to substantially increase its aid to university research. I wonder if the Church feels as strongly about our present international situation in regard to science as do the scientists. If so, would the Church wish to bolster our research activities at the BYU?

I had an interesting conversation with some scientists from Princeton University concerning the role of the Catholic church in science. Traditionally, the Catholics have been "backward" in scientific areas, but in this country there has been an about-face in this respect. Such men as Hugh Stott Taylor, physical chemist and Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton University, and Peter deBye, Nobel Laureate of Cornell, became tired of their friends asking how they could be good scientists and belong to the Catholic church at the same time. Several years ago they decided to do all that they could to develop real scholars in the physical sciences who were also strong in the Catholic faith. As a result of their efforts, Catholic educators, in recent years, have placed great emphasis on graduate education in physical science. The best people obtainable, regardless of religion, have been hired to fill their university positions (I am not advocating this for BYU). Their efforts are definitely producing results, and my Princeton friends feel that within a decade or two the Catholic people will be widely recognized for their scientific achievements. In this connection it was also pointed out that, as a country, we are indebted to the Catholics for pursuing a rigid course in their elementary instruction and for not having succumbed to the ineffectual philosophies we have inherited from the Columbia school of education.

My visit to the duPont Company brought up an item that rather disturbed me. Apparently some L.D.S. graduates have not made a good impression with the officials at the duPont Research Laboratories. This seems to have stemmed in part from a "holier-than-thou" attitude. I learned that two L.D.S. fellows who openly took great pride in their non-smoking and non-drinking and tithe-paying had been discharged for laziness and dishonesty. I once heard Elder Marion Hanks give a talk concerning our relationships with people of the world and how we should respect them for the many fine qualities that they have; and I have often wondered

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if a devotional talk by him along these lines wouldn't be appropriate at BYU. I think that many of our students come to judge people who are not L.D.S. entirely on a basis of whether or not they smoke and drink. This, of course, completely clouds their mind to the other really fine Christian attributes that people might have.

The talks that I gave on this trip concerned our work at very high pressures and temperatures. The results of our work here at BYU have been accepted with enthusiasm everywhere, and we are looked to as the world's leader in this field. We have not had any problem obtaining money for this research. As a matter of fact, we continually turn down offers of support. We have been very selective in accepting only money that allows us the utmost freedom in the research that we do in this field.

H. Tracy Hall

HTH:cj

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