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March 25, 1918

My dear Mr. Gates:

Thank you sincerely for your friendly and frank letter about the report.

When I went over it in galley proof I felt about the New York State and City program as you do, and forthwith deleted it.

As to your suggestion about eliminating all allusions to policy, I do not find myself convinced. No one else who has read the proof has expressed any doubt on this point. The statements as to policy fall under three heads:

First, the Foundation must not tie its hands by inflexible regulations. This is emphasized by an allusion to the contrast between governmental machinery and the freedom and initiative of a Foundation.

Second, certain positive things which are characteristic of the Foundation are mentioned, such as constructive comprehensive programs with concentration upon a few things. This is so thoroughly in harmony with your "anti-scatteration" theory that I am sure it has your approval.

Third, the mention of certain things which the Foundation "can-

not wisely or successfully do". All the things mentioned I think we should agree fall outside the scope of our work. The allusion to our not taking part in any propagandist campaigns with respect to controversial, political or social questions seems to me important. The one thing that the opponents of foundations seem most to represent is the attempt to control public opinion. The fact that such control would be futile in any field except one where incontrovertible scientific evidence is available as, for example, in public health work, does not seem to allay the suspicions of people who are looking for sinister motives and manoeuvres.

This report has been purposely cast in popular form. It is hoped that it will be widely read and will give people a more vivid and accurate idea of what the Foundation is trying to do. I cannot escape the belief that a definition which is ninety-five per cent. positive gains a little by five per cent. of negative delimitation.

If you feel that this is a point which ought to be discussed further, I should be glad to have Mr. Embree arrange for a special conference on the subject. I shall probably sail on Wednesday so that there will not be time for a meeting before I leave.

I hope I shall reach Paris a little ahead of the Kaiser, although his progress as just now reported is a little disconcerting.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE E. VINCENT

President

Mr. Frederick T. Gates  
26 Broadway  
New York City

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