

The University of Chicago

November 13, 1902.

My Dear Wilson:

I was very glad to get your friendly and interesting letter of October thirty-first, with copies of our statements to the Carnegie Trustees. I regret with you our little tilt in Science, and I am thankful that we can now resume the consideration of interests at Wood's Hall, without further reference to the public.

Harmony in our Board was never more imperative than at this moment. If it be possible to agree, as I believe it is, let us all try to find the basis, and allow minor differences to wait. If I am a bar to harmony, I am ready and earnestly desire to relieve the situation. I cannot rid myself of convictions, but I can, for the sake of harmony, suppress the m. This is what I have tried to do during the past year, not with entire success, I confess; but you will grant, I think, that at the most critical meetings, I have kept pretty strong provocations for strife out of sight, and have thus done something toward securing at least the appearance of unanimity.

The last two years have brought to light most encouraging support from three different sources. It has come so suddenly upon us that it is hardly realized that we have at last come to a point where we are masters of the situation. The support is ready to drop into our hands without a single

sacrifice on our part. The Marine Biological Laboratory has ---  
let us realize this--the Marine Biological Laboratory has ac-  
tually worked its way up to all this; it has earned it by hard  
work and many and even great sacrifices freely made for it.  
We have no reason to boast, but we have reason to reflect on  
the lesson. It is no accident that the Marine Biological  
Laboratory stands where it does today. I know and you know  
that the laboratory has won everything by its policy. Results  
speak louder than mere untried opinions. The case is beyond  
and above argument. Of course we have had criticism, oppo-  
sition, disagreements. So much the more to the credit of the  
Marine Biological Laboratory. We have had competition from  
first to last. We have had three or more laboratories devoted to  
pure research, and all of them fairly strongly supported  
financially. Has any one of them vindicated itself better  
than the Marine Biological Laboratory? We have followed in the  
main the wise course, and the only one that had the least chance  
of leading to the creation of a biological center of  
investigation.

Is this the time for us to desert our own work and  
principles, and cower before our enemies whose scorn for us  
returns to them and their inglorious failures?

In this hour of real triumph, when help is offered on  
our own terms, who can stand up and advise us to stultify  
the very rock on which we have stood? Who will risk advice  
that may put off the day of realization, discourage our generous  
supporters, and dishearten our whole body of workers and friends?

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If the new turn of events is somewhat of a trial to you, don't forget that I have had during the year more than one trial quite as severe. The corporation meeting--to mention but one--was a bitter trial to me, for I felt that the action contemplated was to be final, and that it would prove fatal to long-cherished hopes. I had learned just enough from headquarters to realize that we were about to take a step that would put initiative, responsibility, and control of future development out of our own organization, into an outside organization having interests that could by no possibility always coincide with ours. For the sake of harmony, I yielded to you, and the whole deal was carried through with what seemed on the surface to be almost perfect unanimity. It was best so, as we can all now see. All this shows that we did accept the Carnegie proposal in the best spirit. We left them not a single point to object to in our action. It was all and more than they had a right to expect. In the light of our history and struggles for complete independence, it is almost incredible that we should have been willing to merge the individuality of the laboratory, and yet the vote was given, and given in a manner that evinced great faith in the Carnegie people.

Professor Cattell's discussion of the matter in Science was, as it looked to me, perfectly fair and above criticism. I sent my paper to Dr. Billings, and his reply led me to withdraw it from Science; but after Cattell had opened the subject and invited discussion, Dr. Billings again wrote to me, saying, there was no longer any objection to pub-

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lishing it. Cattell urged me to do this, and I felt that I could at least express my convictions frankly without prejudice to the laboratory. I hardly had any reason to think that my opinion would have any weight, judging by the events of the year. It was a relief, however, to put my conviction on record, and thus free myself from responsibility for the action that had been taken and shield myself from misunderstanding.

The report which our Committee prepared at the request of the Carnegie Executive Committee, on the aims and scope of the work now carried on at the Marine Biological Laboratory, plans for a building, lines of future development, expenses for the next two or three years, cost of maintaining a strong research laboratory, etc., was made almost wholly by those who had most cordially and uniformly advocated the surrender of the laboratory to the Carnegie Institution. My part in this was very small, including only an introductory sketch on the nature and scope of the work already under way. I drew attention to the fact that our aim had always been to develop a biological centre of research, and tried to make it clear that this aim was higher and broader than any scheme that would limit the field to marine zoology. I did my part in good faith, and I therefore protest against the insinuation that I or any other member of the Committee framed the report with intention to discourage the Carnegie Trustees and thus to defeat the vote to transfer the laboratory. Those who know that we were distinctly advised by Dr. Walcott to draw up an ideal plan in ad-

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dition to a plan based on \$20,000 a year; and, further, that I refrained from putting in a minority report which Dr. Billings had courteously suggested I might do,--those who know this will realize how unjust is the imputation that the report was prepared with the design to make it impossible for the Carnegie Executive Committee to accept it. Such a suspicion is not only unjust to us, it is entirely unworthy of any one familiar with the facts.

You did suggest that the figures might have the effect to discourage our supporters; but when you learned that we had followed the instruction of Dr. Walcott, and when you saw that the estimates were not at all above an ideal plan, you made no objection. Our instruction gave us to understand that the ideal plan was wanted for two purposes; first, to give an idea to future needs, and, secondly, to serve as a means of securing a larger support than could now be given to us. The introductory remarks made all this abundantly clear.

It was not my idea to draw up such a plan, and I objected to it, and consented to it, only just because it had been expressly requested.

I hope, therefore, that you will not allow the impression to go from you that the report was not<sup>a</sup> perfectly honest and carefully considered document.

You have repeatedly informed our board that the Carnegie people had nothing less in view than to create an ideal research laboratory that would rival anything in existence.

Taking, then, all the facts into consideration, the Carnegie Trustees must share with us the responsibility for the form of our report. It was left to us to present the facts. I think the report should be published, for I believe it is, in the main, sound and should stand as an expression of what we are striving for.

The programme now stands condemned by our supporters, and yet it contains absolutely nothing beyond what has been freely and openly discussed for years, and nothing for which our own work and experience do not furnish ample justification. If our plans are repudiated, as unsound and excessive, some one ought to be able to devise better ones, and I trust this will soon be done.

The plan of the Carnegie Trustees was accepted with a unanimity and cordiality which they appreciate and acknowledge. I prefer, therefore, to account for their change of attitude as the result of a better understanding of the whole situation. They have had but little time to learn what the laboratory is doing and hopes to do. They made their proposition before they were prepared for it--before they discovered what it would cost to maintain a permanent research station. This point has been cleared up; the "emergency" placed before them has vanished; and the result is an alternative offer that enables both them and us to proceed more deliberately.

It was you who first knew of this last offer, and who first said that it must be accepted. The offer and the word from you brought great relief to me, for I naturally concluded that we could all most heartily agree to accept the

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offer precisely as it came to us. You reminded me that as Chairman of the Executive Committee, I should prepare a reply. The reply was brief, but it covered what I understood to be your judgment as well as that of all the other members of the Committee. After receiving the reply, signed by Lillie, Reighard, and myself, you wrote (October 11) saying that you should "either sign the statement as it stands, or possibly may send in a separate statement recommending that the grant of \$10,000 a year may be made for one instead of three years."

The minority report prepared by you and Dr. Morgan came as a surprise. It is unfortunate that we should have such a division at this time, for it will certainly look as if, after keeping up united action thus far, we are after all hopelessly divided, even when we are all of one mind as to the advisability of accepting the latest offer.

It is pretty clear that our entire board would have easily united in accepting the offer, especially as it was open to reconsideration at any time, and this did not commit us to anything beyond a trial for one or for a few years.

I think that the situation has now become more complicated, and I fear that divided action in our committee will not tend to harmony in the board. Besides, it may undo what we were assured of--namely an annual gift of \$10,000 to match the Carnegie grant. If that happens, I am sure you will regret it as much as I shall.

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If you and Dr. Morgan thought it necessary "to tell the Carnegie Committee frankly your reasons for joining us in the recommendation that the transfer of the laboratory is at present inadvisable," you could have done this individually and unofficially, and perhaps have accomplished your purpose just as well.

The introduction of a recommendation "to establish a station or stations, devoted to pure research, at such points as may seem desirable," was not, I suppose, a necessary part of the report, and I regret that it could not have had another time and place. I do not doubt that this was done in good spirit, and that it was not intended to be inimical to Wood's Holl. Coming as a first notification of division, it is sure to be misunderstood and to excite comment far and near. Of course, it will recall the danger all have felt of "a rival laboratory." It will also offer another obstacle in the way of getting support at Wood's Holl. One of our pledged supporters writes -- "If we can obtain complete harmony within the present Board of Trustees and support from the Carnegie people, there should be no trouble in obtaining all necessary support."

On the one hand we have the Carnegie Trustees offering us \$10,000 and on the other several friends offering to double the sum, if we will be harmonious. Evidently, "harmony" is not a bird of prosperity and good fortune. Shall we turn our friends all down and confess that we cannot endure their generosity?

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I would venture a plea for letting "well enough" alone for a brief season at least. If we can have harmony, let us have it now, when the possibility comes in spite of us. The Carnegie Trustees have made us a most generous offer, and their assistance will inspire our friends to double and treble the amount. Would it not be safer and better to allow the Marine Biological Laboratory a chance to profit by what is in sight and postpone your scheme for a time?

Very cordially yours,

C. O. WHITMAN.