

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

49 WEST 49th STREET, NEW YORK

THE MEDICAL SCIENCES
ALAN GREGG, M.D., DIRECTOR

CABLE ADDRESS:
ROCKFOUND, NEW YORK

September 18, 1933

Dear Penfield:

I have come back from my vacation and seen your letter of the 24th of August which Doctor Carter answered on the 30th. I am glad I know you well enough to make a little more complete explanation of the attitude here than I can ordinarily. There are two points of our policy which have come up recently in connection with your Neurological Institute at McGill.

One point is the question you raise on architectural acknowledgment of the part that the Rockefeller Foundation has played in the affair, and the other is the question of attendance by some representative of the Foundation at the corner stone ceremony. We decided a good while ago that it would be in poor taste for buildings toward which we had contributed to be marked with the name of the Foundation or the Founder, and I know that this is in express agreement with Mr. Rockefeller's preference. I remember on one occasion receiving several letters from various persons in Europe asking for one detail or another about the Rockefeller family, and even expressing the regret that they had not put the name up since they had seen that Pick's laboratory in Vienna had a large placard, Rockefeller Laboratory, and they were ashamed that

they had not made a similar acknowledgment! You can see that if that sort of thing went very far, it would be interpreted in a way that on the whole would be unfortunate. It might be a genuine handicap to an institute in implying a degree of protection or patronage which we are not at all interested in suggesting and might not be prepared to effect.

We have on some occasions welcomed the placing of another contributor's name, especially when the contributor was some local person of wealth, but we are really disinclined to give any encouragement at all to architectural acknowledgments of any kind. Our attitude is not even that of the Young Lady from Siam in the limerick

Who said to her lover, Young Priam
To kiss me of course you will have to use force
But God knows you are stronger than I am

The same general philosophy applies as you probably know to the bestowal of honorary degrees, in which point I think Mr. Rockefeller has set an excellent example.

Now in point of attendance at inaugural ceremonies, there is much the same preference to keep out of the picture. Literally a good deal of time would be taken if the Foundation were to send representatives to public ceremonies, and although on rare occasions when there are local features which would result in absence being a handicap to the people we are trying to help and we

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have been present at ceremonies, I know your party is not one of this kind. I know you will understand that the absence of any representative results not from lack of interest but from a common sense modesty which is based on a perfectly sincere conviction that the credit belongs to the local people.

I have gone rather into detail because I had some misgivings about a letter I wrote Principle Currie in reply to his invitation to the ceremony of the corner stone laying. I want you and Martin to understand our position and if it be necessary explain it to Currie a little more than I could without being verbose.

I am delighted that things are getting on so well, and I send you and your family my best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Alan Gregg

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