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Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory

BAR HARBOR, MAINE

July 9, 1954

Mr. John Hill
Hill and Knowlton, Inc.
Empire State Building
New York 1, N.Y.

Dear John:

I felt badly yesterday to take what might appear to be an obstructionist attitude about the proposed statement. I thought that I would explain the general principles on which I took the position that I did.

First, it is very easy for the public to confuse a statement made by the Tobacco Industry Research Committee with a statement made by the Scientific Advisory Board of that organization. The fact that the Tobacco Industry Research Council has the word "research" in its name naturally makes any statement from it appear to be an attitude, or point of view, which concerns investigation in the field of tobacco and health.

Second, we have agreed upon and announced the policy that we believe that research results should be commented on, or criticized, in scientific journals, after the publication of the material on which comment or criticism is being made. One of the worst obstacles in stabilizing and rationalizing the whole situation, and in removing it from the realm of public hysteria, is the fact that the press, radio, etc., have employed other less impersonal tactics, and have, without thought or obligation to the public, produced uncertainty and insecurity, by lay comments on matters that should be scientifically checked and evaluated.

Third, to introduce evidence on the "opposite side" of the problem from that which has been publicly featured has two dangers: it keeps the exchange of views on what can easily become a controversial plane, and it sanctions the same sort of approach to the public which I believe is proving increasingly to be a weakness on the part of those critics who mix zeal and emotional factors with scientific investigations. Although the so-called "white book" was well prepared, a number of my friends immediately interpreted it as a defense reaction, and pointed out the danger of removing from context certain quotations from scientists and others. In other words, they at once began to recognize "two sides" to a question which most of us believe has many more than two facets involved.

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Fourth, in order to establish and to maintain what we all feel is, and will be, a constructive and mutually satisfactory relationship between the Advisory Board and the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, I feel sure that the membership of the Advisory Board would, with some justification, question or object to its Chairman O.K.ing, without consultation with his Board, a public statement from the Tobacco Industry Research Committee. It might affect the attitude of the public towards the Board's own efforts to establish the whole situation on a firm and impersonal basis. It may well be that the Board will O.K. the issuance of a statement, but if it does not do so, we shall all want to develop some plan by which any one of the cooperating companies can, if it is driven to it, make the sort of statement that will not handicap what we are all trying to do. I have spoken of "any one" of the companies, because the moment that a joint Tobacco Industry Research Committee statement appears, it is capable of being interpreted as a joint Advisory Board and Tobacco Industry Research Committee action.

I know that it is hard to sit by idly, and accept criticism and attacks, but I hope and believe that at the July meeting we shall be able to reach a point where sufficient progress is made in discussing and organizing the research program, so that a statement might be prepared which contains news of activities that will be a better argument against attack than the presentation of counter evidence on the level at which the attack has been made. Just as soon as we can begin to show progress in planning, I am certain that the public will be correspondingly reassured and will begin to develop a more balanced and patient point of view.

With best wishes, I am,

As ever,

C. Chittles.

CCL:gc

CC: Mr. Hoyt: Mr. Hartnett.