6th October, 1956.

Dear Dr. Loxton,

Of course I do not regard it as an impertinence in any sense that you should send me your essay on the cause of cancer. Moreover, after reading it I am not at all inclined to say that it is all nonsense.

The main facts on which you rest your views, if I understand them correctly, are:

(a) that experiments with carcinogenic agents demonstrate that there is a pre-cancerous phase, with a considerable time lag before the production of recognizable cancer,

(b) that cancer's characteristics occur in tissues which are comparatively active in regeneration, and

(c) that repeated injury or irritation should in itself be regarded as having a carcinogenic tendency.

If your medical colleagues accept these three propositions, rewording them if necessary, there is, I think, little added to the theory by attempting to specify, what must be conjectural, the processes by which in the course of time tissues subject to
active regeneration become pre-cancerous and finally cancerous. I do not think that chromosomal material in the cells would behave in successive mitoses in the way you require, and that if you want to speculate on the intra-cellular course of events, you should refer the causation to that very wide class of substances which can be collectively called 'cytoplasmic inclusions'. Some geneticists indeed think an important class of such inclusions have a genic nature and speak of them as plasmagenes; others favour the view that they are more or less benign viruses, while in plant material there is, in my opinion, reason in some cases for saying these have to do with the evolutionary debris of the former symbiotic associates.

So I do not think we are in a position to particularize very confidently.

Sincerely yours,