March 28, 1939

Dear Dr. Russ,

I have read your paper on "Evidence of resistance to tumor growth" and discussed it with Bradford Hill. The results obtained are certainly very remarkable and, statistically, quite sufficiently significant to show that you have not been deceived by chance fluctuations.

You will recognise, however, that only evidence cogent at every point will produce conviction of the existence of such a phenomenon as you suspect. I think it is true to say that, during the last 50 years, there has always been on the market at least one undisproved claim for the inheritance of acquired characters, and that bad experimental design, uncritical credulity, and fraud have all contributed substantially to this controversial topic. It is, in fact, a subject that I should not like to touch, unless completely independent confirmation can be obtained, e.g., unless some other workers, using written instructions which can be published, succeed in bringing off parallel results. I can imagine, for example, it being questioned whether the tumor fragments applied to treated and (control)
control animals do not systematically favour the former.

I am willing, however, if you wish it, to submit your paper to A.V. Hill with a copy of this letter, and to take his opinion as to whether it should be formally communicated to the Society.

Yours sincerely,