February 24, 1978

Dear Ruth, Graham and Adam:

Thank you for your letters.

With the turn-down from the Ciba Foundation, we seem to have no choice but to wait until Michael's seventieth birthday to do something for him. I regret to having to wait so long, because I feel that retirement from an important position in the international world of science and academia is a somewhat more of a break in one's life than another birthday, whether it be 70, 75, or whatever. However, so be it. As far as the topic and list of participants are concerned, it should most emphatically be what would be most pleasing to Michael, both as to topic(s) and people invited. All of you over there are in a much better position than I to make decisions on this, because of your long and frequent associations with Michael and, in particular, because of your knowledge of his likes and dislikes (subjects and people). I believe that such occasions should have a frank overlay of sentimentality, but of course with a hard core of the kind of clean science that Michael requires for peace of mind.

I do think that Ruth's point that the occasion should be built around some sort of unifying theme to be a good one and that Graham's suggestion of a topic is perhaps the best - locomotory behavior of tissue cells. It would have the triple advantage of including a large number of Michael's former associates (it would probably "exclude the fewest"), being a subject of pressing contemporary interest and, of course, very close to Michael's heart. Incidentally, I think the symposium should lead to a published volume dedicated to Michael [complete with a short appreciative biography (by whom ?) and a complete list of publications].

Whatever decision is made, the three of you, and other former associates of Michael with whom you are in contact, are in the best position to make it. Do keep in mind that I too am anxious to help (after all, in a real sense I also am one of his pupils). We should leave no stone unturned in our effort to make the occasion a joyous scientific success.

Incidentally, since planning for this will be going on for some time it will be increasingly difficult to hide it from Michael. You should therefore give some thought to just when he should be brought in on the scientific aspects of it.
The social (and ceremonial) aspects should of course be kept entirely secret, until the last minute.

It would be good, I think, if the three of you, and perhaps one or two others (like Joan Heaysman) could get together soon (bodily) to make the necessary strategic decisions. Please keep me informed.

Best wishes to all of you.