

In addition, even though his salary could be guaranteed, his whole productive life depended on research and the necessity and insecurity involved in applying for a research grant every few years was enormous.

During this time, a new program appeared to emerge—a program of career awards which could recognize outstanding achievement and reward it by a pledge of long-term support. It was indicated that this outstanding scientist would receive such an award, but at the last minute, policies were changed and the “career” award was no longer granted.

This established scientist was then requested to have himself considered for a “career development award” in spite of his many years of established and outstanding productivity.

Again, at my request, he permitted such consideration, only to learn that this award was approved, apparently with high priority, but that no funds were available for paying such an award.

Imagine yourself in the position of a man such as this, forced to depend for his academic life on an agency which could, in the middle of things, disband programs and then give awards and not fund them.

Under these circumstances, if you had ability adequate for you to work in other fields, would you remain in ophthalmic research?

The particular scientist of whom I speak left the field of ophthalmic research, not because he wished to, and in spite of the fact that he was greatly productive and extremely happy in his surroundings.

He left the field of ophthalmic research in order to acquire the academic and financial security which he so desperately needed and which was otherwise unavailable.

You may think that this is an isolated, unfortunate example, but it was only 2 or 3 years ago that less than 50 percent of new research grants were approved, and of those approved, approximately one-third in vision were not funded.

If we consider that ophthalmic research is a new field desperately in need of productive talent and desperately in need of stability and encouragement, this type of activity must not be permitted.

No matter how hard the members of our present institute have tried and continue to try to promote vision research, the fact that such things occur points out the need for an institute independent of the more established disciplines of neurology and neurophysiology which can set priorities and provide such encouragement and stability.

The present National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness has made a considerable investment not only in ophthalmic research in general, but even in my own department.

It would be a terrible mistake to imply that this has not been beneficial to the health of our country and nothing could be further from the truth.

The present director of NINDB has sought guidance from a special committee on ophthalmic goals and priorities.

He has selected an excellent training committee with which I now have the pleasure to be associated, and he has made every effort to provide leadership and to stimulate the furtherance of eye research and the improvement of the general health of our people.

I have no criticism of the Institute in terms of its efforts and in terms of its desire to help in the fight against blindness.