



Santiago, march 13, 1986.
R-86-86.

Mr. Frank Press
President
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Av.
Washington, D.C. 20418
UNITED STATES

Dear Mr. Press :

Thank you for the booklet "Scientists and Human Rights in Chile".

On page 23, line 34, I am quoted as saying that "labour laws in Chile do not allow dismissals". This statement is clearly erroneous. The misunderstanding is probably due to language difficulties. Labour laws in Chile -as in most countries- do allow for dismissals. However, in the case of a private institution like ours, dismissals are so expensive as to hinder even the normal turn-over of academic staff. Massive dismissals are virtually impossible, even if we were interested in carrying them out (which we certainly aren't). As you will understand, any person conversant with the Chilean legal structure might interpret this statement as meaning that I was not truthful in my conversation with the members of your Committee. In case that the booklet were printed again, I would appreciate a rewarding of this passage.

I would like to mention that I have a different interpretations on the reasons which led the members of CIEPLAN to leave our University (page 33, line 23), some years ago. At that line, I made personal inquiries with one of their most respected academic leaders to ascertain whether they were going because of political pressure or lack of academic freedom. He was quite clear in saying that this was not the case, but that our budget was badly insufficient, and that it was impossible for them to obtain external financial support



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while working in the University. As you may know, foreign grants to our Universities, were reduced almost to nil in the years following the military coup. I may add that their decision to move out was wise from the point of view of the financing of their research. As for our University, the fact that they were not replaced, shows that this was no case of personnel change for ideological reasons, but simply a problem of budget.

Thank you for your attention.


JUAN DE DIOS VIAL CORREA
Rector

