I received today in Banyuls sur Mer (66650) your letter of October 17. As I have no typewriter I am obliged to answer in manuscript and do hope that my handwriting will not pose too difficult problems. I shall try to answer the different points raised in your letter.

Of course the use of sigla in a generic name is forbidden by the rule. The rule which a number of virologists have not accepted. They continue to use sigla or hybrids of words and of sigla. In doing so they hope to succeed in imposing names which violate the rule because these names will be in use long enough. Nothing can be done against this oblique procedure which shows a total disrespect of the law and nonetheless total lack of discipline. Why have rules if they are only good to be transgressed? You think that the rule concerning sigla might be rescinded; this would be regrettable, for what shall we do when Chinese or Hungarians or Patagons will propose sigla based on their own language? For a nomenclature, an international nomenclature, cannot be based only on English words. Now the monster Oncorna. You are asking me to propose substitutes. Oncoribovirus would be suitable and why not more simply Oncovirus (of course a type species should be designated). So far as I know, the DNA oncogenic viruses are named (all known viruses). So this can be no confusion.

Since I have launched the ICNV I have always had the impression that a number of virologists ignore what a nomenclature is, also ignore the basis of systematics and often confuse nomenclature with systematics. I have written enough articles on the subject and have resigned from the ICNV, finding painting more rewarding than unpleasant and useless discussions. I will be pleased to answer any other questions. I shall be back in Paris next week. With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Andre Lwoff

p.s.: Please feel free to circulate this letter to all it may concern.