

Siminovitch never participated in the social events in his lab. I never saw him wearing a lab coat and I could hardly imagine how long it had been since he had done an experiment himself. The time he was usually in his office was either 8-9 in the morning or 5-6 in the afternoon. Since I was always there I could observe him more than anybody else. We got along very well in conversation and he was very enthusiastic and supportive of my work until April 1978 when I told him that I was prepared to leave his lab. "And why did I write a strong letter of recommendation to get your three year Centennial fellowship to stay on in my lab," he told me. He was a very good salesman for my work and he most probably felt that if I had left he would have nothing to sell. I told him that I was looking forward to a more stimulating environment and that the offers were very attractive. He told me that he wanted everybody in his lab to learn the technology I had developed. But it was too late. He did not have the right people or the stimulating atmosphere that was needed. So he was stuck. In the following years other scientists in the United States and Great Britain followed up my ideas and techniques to clone and characterise several of the cancer genes named oncogenes.

I believe my work on the transfer of mammalian genes using the calcium phosphate technique is important. Before that it was thought to be impossible, but it is now a commonly used approach.

As far as I know, my work was the first to show that cancer genes (oncogenes) exist in tumour cells as can be shown by gene transfer of the cancer phenotypes. My intellectual and methodological approach has been extensively used for cloning and analyzing the cellular oncogenes.