

15th February, 1952.

My dear Nesse,

Thanks for your letter and cuttings, especially the particularly wicked one on picking a ^Teft cabinet, which brings across the sharpness of feeling engendered by a presidential election very forcibly.

No, I have not any new honours to boast of, unless you count Honorary Membership of the Pakistan Statistical Association, a body I am afraid I had not before heard of. I am, however, very much hoping, though I have no inside information, that Rob Race may have been chosen this year for election to the Royal Society. Anyway, the effective decision must have been taken yesterday. I learnt something yesterday also which shows how things go in circles, namely that about 115 years ago or more, a meeting of the Section of Economics and Statistics of the British Association, featuring at that time both Malthus and Babbage, were responsible for founding what is now the Royal Statistical Society in this country and later, largely aided by Quetelet from Belgium, the International Institute of Statistics, and now here am I in 1952 plotting and planning to inject a spot of intelligent interest in Statistics into that same British Association for the Advancement of Science by the formation of a new section of Biometry and Genetics. Of course, I do not know yet whether I shall succeed but the suggestion has the support of a good many

scientific societies, and I think it will be listened to. Actually during the whole of my effective lifetime, Statistics has been completely dead in the Associations meetings, although there still is the original Section F labelled Economics and Statistics. One of the great advantages of a new word like Biometry is that it avoids treading on corns unnecessarily. I suppose it is totally beyond the wit of man to prevent the stultification of formerly going concerns.

On a wider front, I think the trouble goes much deeper than that. Ideas of the classification of the sciences which were engendered about the end of the eighteenth century still govern the organisation of teaching in universities. I mean particularly that the biological sciences are classified by subject matter so that we have great departments of Botany and Zoology and sub-departments of Entomology and Mycology and have to form new departments for Microbiology as required and are conspicuously not classified by method or technique or special technical knowledge, or anything functional from the human standpoint. In the Dark Ages of 1924 I had the pleasure of visiting a research centre at ^{Selkville} Bellville in your neighbourhood, and was impressed even then to find that there was a department for research on horses, ^{one for} and cows, and I think there is for ^{was also one each} sheep, pigs and poultry, but none for Physiology or for Pathology, or for Parasitology, Nutrition, etc. There was, however, newly injected and shining like a star, Sewall Wright with a Department of Genetics, an enormous corrugated iron

building crammed from floor to roof with guinea pigs. I am afraid I held up the progress of the party sitting in the hot sun outside this building surrounded by tiers and tiers of guinea pig skins!

It seems to me that all our scientific classification needs cross division, both for teaching and for departmental allocations in research organisations. I imagine it is the latter that will lead the way in moving towards a more rational classification.

Some more personal chatter. I was cheered up this morning at breakfast by falling in with two men concerned in the manufacture of bearings who had discovered and were in the flush of enthusiasm about design of experiments for solving industrial problems. Have not you a book yet that I can sell them?

Sincerely yours,