22 April 1931.

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Dear Ford,

I had a letter from Baker by the same post as yours.

I have a certain amount of difficulty in appreciating what is at issue, and should really like to know if, and on what part, Elton feels slighted. Probably this is because biologists are much more meticulous about references to previous ideas and suggestions than are mathematicians. In a descriptive science this is natural, for with an observational fact such as a row of cilia, one can usefully refer to the man who first noticed it. In mathematics the only points connected with priority are the statement in print of a corrected argument or proof by which it is shown that one statement follows from a set of others.

Baker's point seems to be that Elton had previously made two statements of which you have supplied (he and you both ascribe it to me, but I do not care or <u>know</u> if anything

I said has been useful) the connecting link. He states it in three sentences, of which the first and third he ascribes to Elton, and the second to me, while I think he recognises the connectedness of the three is due to you. Here they are as he states them:-

> "When, after a period of great scarcity, a species is rapidly increasing in numbers, non-advantageous mutations tend to spread through the population. In the course of their spreading, they are likely to become incorporated with certain gene-complexes with which they give rise to characters having selection value. Thus periodical increases and decreases in numbers may result in more rapid evolution than stationary populations".

I am perfectly satisfied to leave it at that, but before replying I should be glad to know if it seems all right to you.

Yours sincerely,