MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY—RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTS BRANCH

All communications should be addressed to:—
THE CHIEF ADVISER.
Please quote the following reference:—
-/PRB.

FOREST PRODUCTS RESEARCH LABORATORY.
PRINCES RISBOROUGH, AYLESBURY, BUCKS.
Telephone: Princes Risborough 102.
Telegrams: Timberlab, Princes Risborough.

29th March, 1940.

Dear Professor Fisher,

Many thanks for your letter of March 21st, and for your comments on my paper. I am sorry to take up more of your time but I am anxious to avoid confusion and to be quite correct in my references to your work and Bliss's papers.

With regard to your comment on p.2, on reading pp.164-165 of the 1935 paper carefully, I understand that no reference is made to applying the correction for exact purposes to the general case, (i.e. finite number of survivors or deaths, not few or all). The fictitious probit is introduced there only for the cases of few or no survivors or deaths (although the appendix is called, "The Case of Zero Survivors").

The first published reference to the exact method seems to be (3) and it would appear that you gave the solution for the exact method in a personal communication to Bliss. In view of this, I hope the last paragraph of p.2. is now correct.

As regards your comment on p.10, I feel that it has nowhere been stated before that your method, as represented by my equations (2 & (3, is the same as your general method of successive approximation to maximum likelihood solutions, as represented by my equation

$$\Lambda_{ij}\,\delta\theta_j = \left\{ \frac{\partial L}{\partial \theta_j} \right\} \delta\theta_j = L_i$$

- continued -

I have accordingly made the slight alteration to p.10 in order to emphasize this.

In addition, I have added something to the end of section 2, which I think is important.

I shall be very glad to know if you agree with these points.

Yours sincerely,

J. Gaunt.

Professor R.A.Fisher, Sc.D., F.R.S.
The Galton Laboratory,
HARPENDEN, HERTS.

ENC.