St John's College
Cambridge.

Sept. 30. 1938

Dear Fisher,

Thanks for letter. You seem to have anticipated all my points very effectively ; it does look as if the differences, so far as there are any, between Student and you and me have been rather over-emphasized.

If you are bringing out a new edition of Statistical Methods I wonder if you would modify the passages about inverse probability in it. I didn't agree with them when the book first appeared, but at that time i.p. fell between two stools. The logicians like W.E.Johnson, Frank Ramsey, and Keynes accepted it, but did not develop it to any point where it was much use for actual application ; a lot of others that accepted it also seem to have thought that the uniform prior p. of Bayes and Laplace was an essential part of the principle, and if this was so it would say that any estimated difference must be accepted - the null hypothesis would always be rejected. The practical men, in the circumstances, had a good deal of sense in not trying to use it in the state it was in. But it is now in such a state that it can be used. Either method would get the right answer some time or other ; I think i.p. would give it, on the whole, more quickly, but as I still haven't found an actual case where our decisions would differ I haven't any strong views. The chief difference is about what order we should say the same things in.

I have been wishing for some time that a public benefactor would subsidize the C.U.P. to scrap 'Scientific Inference' and give me a chance of writing something up to date. I

should have written it in 1923, when Einstein was still news.

I haven't thought much more about publishing the paper I showed you. One of the referee's remarks was that the rule that, in sampling a population with mixed standard errors, you get the most accurate estimate by taking the sample numbers proportional to the product $n\sigma$, and weighting to allow for the bias, was given by Neyman somewhere. I have not checked this, being full up with a seismological job, but if it is so it xxxxx anticipates about 2/3 of the paper. The latter part deals mostly, I think, with things that you can deal with better than I can. If you think there is anything in it that is worth attention I might rehash it into a short note for the Annals, but I don't feel very strongly about it. I don't think it is suitable for the Roy. Soc. or the C.P.S.

Yours sincerely,

Harold Jeffreys