

17 September 1932.

D.C. Jones, Esq.,
The University,
19 Abercromby Square,
Liverpool.

Dear Caradog Jones:

Excuse delay as I am just home from the States.

I was speaking rather roughly at the Herbert Spencer lecture, in treating the reproductive period as having a definite upper limit. Of course it has not. The full treatment is that based on reproductive value according to age as in Chapter II of my Genetical Theory of Natural Selection. The curve of reproductive value runs down for men rather as it does for women, not quite so steeply and about 10 years later for most of the fall. The point is that elderly men in fact have few children, not that they could not have them.

You are right that the principle of selecting children rather than parents applies to anything selected such as sex. The mothers of my triplets came from families containing about 300 boys and 400 girls, but the fathers from families containing about 400 boys and 300 girls. One child per

family is a useful rough allowance, which would be exact if family size followed a Poisson series, actually it is rather too little, as the families are rather more variable.

A very common form of the fallacy is to collect let us say, 500 poets, and find that they average 3.2 children, whereas their parents averaged 4.4, and then to argue that poetic talent is unfavourable to reproduction.

I should like to see your paper some time, but I shall not have time to go into details. I am looking forward to your being called as a witness before the Sterilization Committee, where you will be faced with some doctors who think that mental defect is scarcely inherited at all!

Yours sincerely,