

11 September 1945

55822

Dear Dr Malik,

I have just seen your long and interesting letter of the 3rd of August. I wish I could answer all your questions, but they cover nearly the whole subject of the building up and management of a livestock selection station. I can only give the headings or points of policy which I have put forward from time to time in this country.

Selective improvement can only be forwarded on the basis of objective tests of performance. We know too little of how precise such tests can be made, and this requires to be studied at each place where selection is attempted. All factors (feeding, housing, and protection against disease) which are liable to affect performance must be controlled so far as is possible, and I am sure that in most places it will be ^{profitable} possible to expend money rather freely to enable those responsible for making the tests to assess the value of individual animals much more accurately than now can easily be done.

In respect of staff it is certain that progress can only be assured by having a special director responsible for the improvement of the herd, for the performance tests to be performed, and for laying down a program of selective breeding. This may take ~~any~~ forms with more or less avoidance of inbreeding, which will in any isolated strain almost certainly bring progress to an apparent stop before real progress has ceased to be made. Co-operation of several centres engaged in improving the same breed is thus of great importance. The program to be pursued must ^{carefully} ~~carefully~~ be thought out and laid down ^{explicitly} with a view to adhering to it over a considerable period of years, irrespective of fluctuations in policy and the ideas of agricultural departments. I am sure you have in India men both with the practical experience of cattle management, of the needs of the population in respect of improved cattle, and of the intellectual capacity to make the best use of the world's existing literature on livestock improvement, but these qualities will not easily be found in the same man, and a large part of your Director's problem may be to accommodate the

views of the different persons on whom he must rely for advice. Political interference usually tends to pottaring and ineffective research with frequent change of policy and expenditure of effort in window-dressing. You need serious students, confident of the importance of what they are doing, and not willing to be discouraged by the very obvious obstacles to getting the job at work done.

Yours sincerely,