

10th November, 1954.

My dear Polunin,

I did not know you were interested in continental drift, and am much interested to hear the opinion you quote. Within a few years I expect that very important evidence on this subject will accrue from the study of rock magnetism. At the present time it has gone so far as to convince the geophysical world of the reality of the large movements of the earth's pole, which the proponents of continental drift have always postulated. It is, however, a logically tenable hypothesis that although the pole has migrated about the crust, yet the relative position of the main crustal features have remained unchanged. It will need the accumulation of palaeomagnetic data from all over the world before it is clear whether this is a tenable view, or whether large movements of crustal blocks are also demonstrated. At present I find the rather equivocal attitude that although horizontal movements up to 300 miles are admitted, as in the Red Sea, movements of the order of 3,000 are strenuously denied. Since the magnitude of the horizontal forces required must ^{be} ~~stay~~ the same in the two cases, I think this may be regarded as a last ditch defensive position appropriate to those who do not ^{wish} ~~wish~~ to admit that their

old grounds for disbelief were untenable.

Last week a vote in the Senate House decided to extend the maximum tenure of chairs from 65 to 67, and so it is probable, si nihil obstat, that I may continue here for a time.

Sincerely yours,