25th May, 1957.

My dear Rao,

Many thanks for your letter. I think you are on a pretty good wicket in claiming validity and generality for the method of maximum likelihood. I do not know what particular examples the Berkeley people have been thinking up lately, but certainly many of Neyman's earlier objections deserve your terms "triviality" and "illegitimacy". However, their object is not the improvement of natural knowledge, but the retardation of that improvement.

I presume that, in order to demonstrate these faults in my methods, it has been necessary to use the definition of consistency which I have criticized during the last five or six years explicitely, and which I did not use in the original exposition of my views because the asymptotic definition of consistency can be ascribed to all estimates based on finite samples, and no discussion of efficiency is possible without the restriction that the estimates considered are to be consistent.

I should not, in any case, be concerned to take the sort of thing you refer to seriously, though perhaps Basu may do so, since it has been Neyman's custom for years to tempt young men, such as

Welch formerly was, with the alluring prospect of getting their names known quickly if they bring forward supposedly mathematical work with bold claims to overthrow opinions previously thought to be well founded.

I will send in a report on Atiqullah soon; perhaps a single copy to you will be sufficient.

Sincerely yours,