

December 20, 1941

My dear Salisbury,

I have just seen your note of December 13th, having been away during the week. I was very glad to see the expansion on the section Heteromorphic Fruits and Seeds.

^a The point has come up about which I should like to consult you in connection with what, in the barbaric jargon of our time, has been called the Biology War Committee. I believe this originated with two or three discussion societies trying to find out what could be done about the war effort in its biological aspects, and that they set up a Joint Committee. Rather unfortunately, when that Committee was asked to make itself representative of the biologists of the country in general, it seems to have forgotten how far it was from being representative already, as was inevitable since the leading Societies ~~at~~ at that time knew nothing of its existence, and proceeded, rather tactlessly than arrogantly, ^{in my opinion} to present the Societies with a fait accompli, inviting them to nominate some members of the existing Committee as their "representative".

It seems to me obvious that any real representation must imply that the Society can appoint whomever they like and can instruct him as closely as they please, or replace him by some other

representative if they are not satisfied with his views. There is not representation, e.g., of the Genetical Society, in our looking through their existing list and deciding that we prefer Darlington to Eriery, seeing that both remain full members of the Committee.

As a matter of fact, when I first received their circular, I misinterpreted their proposal, supposing that we were asked to add ^a ~~say~~ representative of our choosing who should speak in our name, to those already chosen for their personal qualifications. It was only when I heard that the Linnean put the other interpretation on it, and consequently was having nothing to do with it, that I raised the point with young Blackman, who has been very active in the matter, and found that the Linnean had interpreted them correctly. If this is so, and remains so, the Genetical Society also will have to stand out, as I understand that Darlington himself is so critical of their procedure that he would not even accept such endorsement of his membership as the Society seems to be asked to give.

I am putting this to you, not that I suppose it has any real importance; but because I understand you are to be Chairman of an official Committee with which this rather miscellaneous body is asked to deal.

Thanks for the second lot of proofs.

Yours sincerely,