

10th May, 1935

Professor W. Weinberg,
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Dear Professor Weinberg.

Thanks for your letter of May 5th about Dr. Bodewig's note. When I succeeded to the control of the "Annals," I found that my predecessor, ^{Prof.} Dr. Pearson, had accepted a long paper from Dr. Bodewig, of which he had published the first part; further, that he had criticised some of the remarks in this paper in an editorial comment, and thus given Dr. Bodewig some right to reply. But, looking through the material offered, I decided that no more of it ought to be published, but that it was only fair to Dr. Bodewig to let him have a short space for rejoinder on the points on which he thought himself ill-used. I also accepted the short paper from Dr. Koller which is printed after Dr. Bodewig's note.

So far as I can judge, Dr. Bodewig's paper will be taken no more seriously in this country than in France, ^{Germany} What I have done has been merely to make sure that he should have no ground for considering that he had been treated with injustice. I have since refused to print controversial matter on the subject, even from the former editor of the

journal. I cannot, therefore, accept your own letter for publication, though I am very glad to have it, and to learn your views.

I think you make an important point in that, if by educative popular propaganda, combined with economic readjustments, the sounder portions of the population could be induced to increase their birthrate, then sterilisation of the unsound would be able to do far more good towards racial improvement than it can do at present. While on this topic, I should be very glad to know whether the rate of reproduction in Germany shows a real increase in 1933, as is sometimes asserted in this country, and, if so, to what extent the increased birthrate makes good the reproductive deficiency observed in previous years. I suppose that in the period 1927-32, births fell short of those needed to maintain a stationary population, by something like 15%-20%. Do you know of any calculations, relating the more recent records of birthrate to the size and age distribution of the reproductive population in such a way that one can judge whether the true reproductivity is still lower in Germany than in France and the other South European countries?

Some of my colleagues in England, notably Professor Haldane and Dr. Penrose, are inclined to think that the mutation rates of some rare defects, such as haemophilia, are so large that they can be estimated. This means something like 100 times as great as the mutation rates of the mutations familiar to geneticists in *Drosophila*. It is important, here,

that the time unit in reckoning these rates is the generation of the species concerned, and not any astronomical unit of time. It may be, therefore, that the rates in man are generally very much larger than in *Drosophila*. It is probable, on the other hand, that only exceptionally high rates provide material for estimation of their magnitude.

Yours sincerely,