



May 13, 1937.

Dear Fisher,

Very many thanks for the offprints of Sheppard, which have safely arrived. I am very glad to have them. Sheppard was with us in Edinburgh for two terms exactly ten years ago; it was from him that I first learned to view with suspicion the bad old traditions in statistics, the muddling between population and sample, and the invocation to Bayes.

Your ideas which you mentioned in your last letter seem very valuable. I can see at once how the characteristic equation

would arise in maximizing one quadratic form with respect to another.

Taxonomists at the Plant-Breeding Station here are interested in your method of finding linear combinations of measures which bring out the differences between species in highest relief. I have advised them to try out the method on some of the extensive material they have in their records.

Yours sincerely,
A.C. Atken.

May 18, 1937

Dear Aitken,

Thanks for your letter. With respect to Sheppard, I had not known that you had previous contact with him. I am getting his son to write an obituary notice, or at least the personal part of one, for the Annals of Eugenics. Now, would you care to say anything ~~about~~ scientific work? I consider, myself, that it has a great and permanent value, and that there is the more reason to do him justice in an obituary in that it was never fully appreciated in his lifetime, owing to the fact that Pearson would never put him up for the Royal. Either an examination of what his actual contributions were, which would be of permanent value, or a short note of personal appreciation would, therefore, be acceptable.

Yours sincerely,