

23 February 1932.

Prof. J.B.S. Haldane, M.A.,
John Innes Horticultural Inst.,
Mostyn Road,
Merton Park, S.W. 19.

Dear Haldane,

I should think the cousin marriages would cover a most useful range for recessives. If one starts with a number of well diagnosed defectives and classifies them by parentage, 1st. cousins versus not first cousins, then the test for a given number of defectives gets more and more sensitive the rarer it is. Of course at $p < .01$, the defectives are only fed into our population at ^{the rate of} $\frac{1}{60}$ a year or less, and one may be short of cases; but this only means that these defects are unimportant from the point of view of public health.

Starting with cousin marriages, one would certainly work at a higher level of frequency, but for that reason at a particularly important level. It has the great advantage of spotting also desirable factors, if any are recessive, e.g. musicians or mathematicians, or explorers in families not so characterised; and these there is scarcely any other method of finding out about.

It is stupid that consanguin^eous marriages are not uni-

versally legal. Near kin know much better than others whom they will get on with, and what faults to look out for in their children.

Yours sincerely,