

May 19, 1937

Dear Jeffreys,

I have been a great deal interested in Milne's recent writings, and have been a little puzzled by, I think, the same point as you, namely, his taste for developing the subject as much a priori as possible. I do not think he always felt like this about it; indeed his first reaction to Eddington's a priori approach was, if I remember right, rather that the interesting thing about the universe was that we had to look at it and see how it worked, instead of inventing it by introspection. It may be now that he has been working on some general and reasonable postulate which he has not yet made fully explicit, such as, that the observer has a right to assume that he is not too exceptionally placed in respect of the observations he can make, or that the laws of motion must be expressible in terms of relative only. I do think that his dynamical work is ^amarvellous achievement, and it seems at present to be in the way of clearing up the whole tangle ~~for~~ which Einstein and his following are responsible; but, much as I am impressed by his work, I am afraid I have not followed it closely enough to give an opinion of real value.

By the way, can you tell me what is the best current radioactive estimate of the age of the Cambrian formation? I have been interested in some of the early geological estimates, and have

have been wondering whether, after all, rates of extinction of species do not afford as satisfactory a geological clock for long periods as any other available method.

Yours sincerely,