

18 September 1939

Dear Provost,

Thank you for your letter of September 15th. It has only just reached me through being forwarded to my home.

You tell me in your second paragraph that "the College, as arranged, was evacuated to Wales on the outbreak of war". You will, perhaps, agree however that no arrangement was made for evacuating the Galton Laboratory to Wales, but only for some of the departments who are responsible for undergraduate teaching. If you can arrange for accommodation for my department in Wales I will endeavour to cooperate with your plans so far as I, and other members of the Department, find it possible.

I imagine, however, that you may find it difficult or even impossible to find adequate accommodation in Aberystwyth. You will recall too that the College is under a definite obligation to provide facilities for the work of the Department. If this is so, you may agree that the arrangements so far made for the evacuation of the College to Wales are incomplete. I have, however, no desire to insist that the Galton Laboratory should be accommodated in Wales, but would be content to retain our accommodation in this College in spite of the disadvantage to which you refer in your fourth paragraph.

Alternatively, I could probably still obtain temporary accommodation elsewhere at some expense to the College, if you will authorise me to do so.

I have some difficulty in understanding the second half of your fourth paragraph "when the blow does come, it will be sudden and it will be a very serious handicap on our possibility of protecting the College if it is not completely evacuated."

Personally, I should anticipate that at some time chosen by the enemy they would have a serious smack at the London area. On the other hand it would be rash to assume that they will not find it more profitable to do damage in smaller and less strongly defended centres.

As I said above I am not in any way inclined to be obstructive to any scheme which would apparently reduce the danger of damage to the calculating equipment of the Department, which it is certainly my duty to keep intact, and in the hands of men and women capable of using it, and of instructing others, should it be required for war work. This equipment, to which is joined that of the British Association, is immensely superior to that which my predecessor was able to put at the disposal of the authorities during the last war.

Indeed, if we acted quickly it might still be possible to accommodate the Department in the new building recently erected at Rothamsted. To disperse the machines and the mathematical computers at once would however be as harmful as to risk their destruction by enemy action.

Yours sincerely,