

October 13, 1939

Dear Provost,

It was good of you to think of your wire and letter, as I was really rather bothered by the appearance of your letter in the Times of October 10th.

I should hate to have anything like mutual recriminations in the public press; but, as you did unfortunately speak of the dates of my letters in such a way that some readers might imagine that I had not stated the facts fairly or fully, it is incumbent on me that an answer to your question should be at least in your hands, and available for anyone who has a right to inquire in the matter.

You say: "On September 30 the College received a letter from Professor Fisher, also dated September 29, in which he asked whether the college intended to forbid his assistants to continue their work in their new quarters. It is a pity that, instead of waiting for an answer to his question, he composed his own."

The purpose of my letter of September 29 was to remind you that you had, on September 19, verbally agreed to the removal of my department to Rothamsted and had discussed with me this project on the basis that other members of the department

should work there. The letter of September 29 does not contain a question whether the College intended to forbid my assistants to continue their work in the new quarters. It contained much evidence that on September 19 you intended to permit them, although since that date you had continued to deny them this opportunity. At the foot of the first page I say: "The essential question, however, does not concern the amount of space into which we can be squeezed, but on whether you intend to forbid my assistants to continue their work in the new quarters. If this is your intention, as I said before" (this was in my letter of September 25) "the question of a move may be dropped. This would, however, be a most definite reversal of the policy which you verbally approved on the 19th."

You will observe that on the 29th I was not asking any new question. The word "question" in fact means "point at issue". I was pressing for the reversal of your policy, first known to me from your letter of September 23, of forbidding the continued work of the department as such.

What you speak of as an answer of my own was that which you had supplied six days before my letter was written to the Times, both in a letter to me and in one to my assistants:

Sept. 23rd to me:-

"I have a letter from Sir John Russell very kindly undertaking to do anything he can to help us. I note that he says in his letter to me that he could form a better estimate of the matter when he knows what number of workers would be involved. It must be clearly understood here, that the College can make no provision for the transfer of members of your staff to Rothamsted.

"In my original letter to Sir John Russell you will remember I made no mention whatever of personnel. I realise that to leave you transferred alone there might make it very difficult for you to carry on any necessary correspondence, etc., and I am therefore prepared to arrange that Miss Karn should join you, but beyond that the College is unable to go."

Sept. 23rd. to my assistants

"I understand that you are at the present time carrying on your work in the Department of Eugenics. If that is so, I must ask you on the authority alike of myself and the Chairman of the College Committee to cease doing so."

If you will give the time to check over these points, I think you will see that the implication of your letter (October 10) that I had hastily anticipated the attitude of which I complained cannot be supported from an examination of our letters. The best course, as it seems to me, would be for you to write the Times a short note stating that the Galton Laboratory was, by a recent decision, to continue its work at Rothamsted, and withdrawing your implication of October 10th that mine of October 3rd did not state the position fairly and exactly.

Yours sincerely,