

28th April, 1956.

My dear Chester,

Thanks for your letter. We have really a terrifically long way to go in making the International Institute as useful as it could be, since I think the great majority of our foreign membership quite take for granted that it is primarily an assembly of officials concerned with national statistics, vital and economic, and of their more academic economic advisers. These people cannot deny the importance of mathematical statistics, especially as many of them fancy themselves, and have gained promotion in their own capacity* as mathematical statisticians, and if we put in undeniably good mathematical statisticians who insist on talking of the Natural Sciences and in terms of scientific research, and holding sessions relevant to the application of mathematical statistics to scientific research, we have done a pretty good generation's work.

On the other hand I think the people concerned, though there are exceptions such as Darmois, will really feel that there is an intrusion to resent if people without first class statistical qualifications are pressed upon them in numbers, and inevitably

to the exclusion of others who they are thinking of as normal candidates. I think this may explain partly why I found the ground a little sticky in respect of the biometrical candidates you mention. I should expect, however, that we should be able to bring them in later, if, as I hope, a larger proportion of the Institute begin to realize how much statistics, as an academic study, itself owes to its scientific applications.

Perhaps you recall I gave my Presidential Address to the Royal Statistical Society up almost wholly to recalling the scientific importance of some early statistical work. When I first proposed that members of the Institute over some defined age should not count in the quota, I meant it to be an immediate compensation for the recent ^{loss} ~~blossom~~, in the American quota, due to some American citizens of foreign origin not being counted as such during Rice's presidency. As a temporary expedient I had meant these ^{elderly} persons to be counted in the total, of which one-eighth would be the allowable quota, though not in the numerator, so that, as I then proposed it, it would have been a slight relaxation of the one-eighth rule, rendering it more effectively more like one-seventh, on the view that so many as one in eight of the membership of the Institute could be counted out.

As I see it now, its principal value is in preventing any moral pressure being brought to bear on old members such as

E. B. Wilson, (who ^{personally} should ~~indeed~~ be an Honorary Fellow, and not counted in that capacity). From this point of view I think you are right in proposing that persons over a certain age should not be counted either in the numerator or in the denominator, so that only accidentally and occasionally should such an amendment ease the quota rule. Its adoption would, I suppose, immediately throw us back on to the limit of 35, which, with the increase of the membership of the Institute, had become obsolete, and I suppose it would be a year or two before this again started to be one-eighth of the members eligible as voters.

I am very glad you do not feel like pressing the second proposition, the consideration of which could scarcely have been dissociated from Rice's claims at Petropolis to remarkable national superiority, and consequently, whether ^{adopted} ~~proved~~ or not, would undoubtedly be distasteful to many members of the Institute.

Sincerely yours,