

15 October 1930.

Major L. Darwin, M.C.D.,
Cripps's Corner,
Forest Row,
Sussex.

Dear Major Darwin,

Thanks for your advice — sweetened by commendation.

Miss Darwin writes about the *genetical* qualifications of the officer to be appointed. Is it worth while to ask for any? Of course it would be ^{lovely} ~~handy~~ to find a man who knew so much of genetics as to realise how little it can do with human records, but should we give points to a man who knows so little as to think it is the whole secret? My own desideratum is a man who will take statistical advice before the data are collected. I hope this can be reconciled with skill in diagnosis etc.

You have always advocated the claims of propaganda v. research; partly because you think research can look after itself, partly because perhaps our society is worse organised to undertake research than for propaganda. Here is a test case:-

A man has developed, by serological methods of admitted excellence, a method of discriminating between samples of blood even from closely related animals (brothers and sisters,

parents and offspring). He is not a geneticist, nor much interested in genetics. I believe, and am willing to put forward at length the case for believing, that his method may lead to a method of discriminating carriers of recessive genes. A good deal of preliminary exploration is necessary, but this will be a direct and progressive approach to the main object, if such an object is in view. He has now undertaken the first step at my suggestion. Now, if, as is far from certain, his ability to go on with the work (he is old enough to retire) or to extend it in directions interesting to us, depended on his having an assistant, would you consider it a proper course for the Eugenics Society to provide one?

From the propaganda side you may regard such expenditure as aimed at removing an obstacle to our propaganda. Or again, making manifestly false the damaging assumption of the Crews and Salamans, that the Eugenics Society is ignorant of the possibilities of genetic research. Obviously, as in all decent research, the object of the grant should be stated in terms of pure science; its success should certainly not be mortgaged.

That is as well as I can state the problem, without details, which I think you will agree do not affect the principle.

Yours sincerely,