

May 27 [1927]

Cripps's Corner

My dear Fisher,

I had a fairly satisfactory interview with the Registrar General, though it was short. He said that the work to get the question of 1911 repeated in 1931 had a strong backing, and he seemed to be favourably disposed himself. It was a question as to how much could be fitted in. He seemed to understand the arguments in favour of the disclosure. He began to discuss whether the forthcoming decennial supplement could be utilized for the purposes we want. If I understand it rightly, they plan extra information in registrations of births and deaths ~~at~~ ^{for} a year or two on each side of the census. I said I was advised that we could not get all we wanted in this way but I feared it would be rather a waste of time on his part to discuss these questions with me. If they were to put the age of parents in birth registrations would it answer all our needs? I said

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that you had seen Stevenson and were writing a memorandum which I hoped to send him. He said he hoped you would discuss the decennial supplement with Stevenson. I am not sure whether you did make out in your interview with Stevenson what were his views on this point; but if not it would be worth while trying to understand his views as well as making yours clear to him. The R. G. said that they wanted to ease the census work by increasing the amount of information obtained in registrations. How would I be to send Stevenson your memo and offer to see him again? Would you like your memo at once set up in type? If so please get it done through the office as we shall want it in the Review. I think we shall win.

Yours sincerely
L. Darwin
Sec. C. D. D.

P.S. on another subject.

I have read Mac Bride on Nomenclature. Did you notice his statement that it is "a tenable proposition" that the peculiarities of workers existed in the insect before "the caste system was evolved". Is it called the "caste system"? It so ^{it is} a very bad term. But have you thought what absurdities this tenable proposition leads to? The queen, before this evolution of 'caste', must have had the bodily frame as well as the instincts of existing workers, if reliance is placed on Lamarckism. How about cases when there are 2 or 3 kinds of workers? Then the bifurcation of species must have taken place before the evolution of caste, or she would have the same instincts. But as caste is a characteristic of whole groups of species, it is practically certain that the bifurcation took place after the evolution of caste. Again how could practice make a bee build a honey comb, unless ~~its~~ ^{its} reason was so far developed as to make it see that the less wax used, the more honey could be stored for a given amount of labour. The French lady who translated The Origin made the 6 sided prism of the comb end in a 6 sided point; for, it is presumed, she saw

that my father's assertion that they ended
in ~~the~~ 3 sided points was geometrically
impossible. If the bees were guided by
intelligence, they were wiser than his French
lady.

Did you notice his remarks about
mimicry? It is a tenable proposition - at
least as tenable as his - that the ancestors of
singing birds, which don't eat butterflies, did
so 100000 years ago. I have seen a bird
chase a butterfly.

I mentioned there two well known arguments
against Lamarckism in my book. That makes
me wish to have them stuck up for.
But of all things I don't want internal
rows. A letter from outside to the Review
might be worth while. But I don't know if
it is worth bothering about. No answer to
all this needed. I hope you can read it.

L.D.