

13 December 1932.

Professor E.B. Poulton, F.R.S.,
Wykeham House,
Oxford.

Dear Prof. Poulton:

Many thanks for your card. I have sent Neave an annotated copy of my typescript notes for the discussion at the Entomological Society, urging him, however, not to make my statistical criticisms too prominent compared with the biological contributions, on which I believe any just view of the subject must ultimately be founded.

You will be glad to hear that I have obtained permission to meet the main cost of my snail experiment out of the funds of my department at the Experimental Station, so that I shall not be begging again from the Evolution Fund.

On another aspect of the polymorphism problem — Mrs. Barlow at Cambridge formerly did a good deal of genetical work with the trimorphic plant Lythrum salicaria, with, however, only inconclusive results. In the light of her own

and of other published experiments, I believe it should now be possible to put up an experimental programme which should at least be decisive on the more promising possibilities, and I have drawn one up and suggested it to her. It is quite possible that, even if she has the time and is sufficiently interested to take it up, she may not have at her disposal the necessary land and labour, and in that event I shall have to try to interest the Government Grants Committee of the Royal, or some other source in her undertaking.

On a question of organisation; do you not think it important that the Committee distributing these grants ^{should} to make it a rule that the plan or design of the experiments, at any rate if these are going, in the end, to involve statistical tests, should be scrutinised in advance, not so as to hamper the initiative of the experimenter, but so as to give some guarantee, as far as human foresight makes it possible, that the money allotted shall not be wasted? I was very disappointed to find recently that the Merton tests of Harrison's theory of the induction of melanism in Lepidoptera is all too inconclusive, and this only because the experimenters relied on showing up the melanism, if it occurred, by inbreeding, instead of by outcrossing to Melanics. This difficulty might have been, and was in fact, foreseen before the experiments were done. It may be that it would have been impossible to obtain melanics, though Harrison claims

to have plenty of them, but in fact no attempt was made to obtain them, and in consequence the time and labour expended was largely wasted.

Yours sincerely,