

JOHN INNES HORTICULTURAL INSTITUTION
MOSTYN ROAD, MERTON PARK, LONDON, S.W.19

From the Director, Dr. C. D. DARLINGTON, Liberty 3645
20th. February 1942.

Dear Professor,

First of all about Genetical Society business. I think that a committee meeting early in March is almost essential. Ford is in favour of it. If you agree I will get him to send notices out for the 5th. March (a Thursday) for, say, 11.0 a.m. I think that the Royal would be a good place to meet if you could fix it. The business would be (a) the spring meeting (b) other meetings this year (c) the B.W.C. (d) A.O.B. as far as I am concerned. I quite agree that joint meetings are very good under present circumstances, for they do help us both with accommodation and with the question of attendance. I am not sure where the S.K.B. want to meet this spring, but I asked Bennet-Clark to write to you about it. I am also not sure when they want to meet. I shall be in a position to say something definite at our committee, as I attend their Council meeting on 25th. of this month. I hope that they choose a reasonable place and time so that we can meet jointly. Their meeting will, in any case, be in London, perhaps at the Imperial College. This is what I had in mind when I thought that, if necessary, we could meet at the Zoo in the summer. I have asked Crane about East Malling, as he is very familiar with their activities. He seems to think that they may not have much to show in war-time and that they may be reluctant to entertain us at present. A more serious trouble is, however, that they are in a restricted area, on account of airfields, and that may cause difficulties for members coming in from outside. I will write to Hatton and confirm this if you wish me to.

Secondly about Lewis. I quite agree with your comments on his paper, which he did not discuss with me during its preparation. I have shown him your comments and had a talk with him about the subject. I am not sure that he quite realises what is at issue but he is, I believe, going to write to you. It seems to me that the plants may be aberrant, at least by animal standards because they, the plants, have facilities that animals

have not, for gametic selection. Also, inasmuch as plants do not normally show sex separation, it may be that during the short time when this method of outbreeding is in operation in a plant, they cannot free themselves of habits useful before sex separation but making for an upset of this mechanism. The time for careful adaptation may be longer than the existence of the mechanism. This is, however, just an idea that I had on the spur of the moment and may prove quite ridiculous when gone into more closely. In any case I hope Lewis writes to you as I am sure that it will do much to get the matter clarified.

Finally, we have been turning out a lot of old reprints and have come across some of Bateson's papers, including some on poultry, and also, I believe some of the reports to the Evolution Committee. I am not quite sure about this last point, as I have not yet been through all the papers. However, if you are interested I should be glad to send you copies of any of Bateson's papers that are available. Some of them are certainly worth keeping. I was reading one yesterday, which was a long review of "The Mechanism of Mendelian Heredity" in which he (Bateson) makes the following remarks. "The hypothesis of reduplication was offered as one way in which the processes could be logically represented, at least in plants. It is admittedly a very crude conjecture, but it has the merit of being non-committal and applicable to units of various magnitudes." This is a somewhat surprising defence of one's own hypothesis, I should have thought I hope to find some other similar treasures in his writings before I have done.

Yours sincerely,

H. Huxley