5th March 1934.

Dr. E.B. Ford,
Department of Zoology,
University Museum,
Oxford.

My dear Ford,

Many thanks for your letter of Thursday night, which I have read this morning with the subsequent note on Saturday. I think we ought to postpone the meeting, especially as it is only for a few days.

I want you to get what is in my head in stressing the economic inequality of the burden of parenthood, not that you may not feel the same after seeing fully what I am driving at, but on the chance that you may feel that properly put the point is worth making. I find I touch on it, though rather incompletely, at several points in my book on "Natural Selection". On page 234, referring to the taxation of the rich in the attempt to relieve poverty I venture the assertion "An important factor, if not the whole cause of the need for this continual redistribution of national wealth, evidently lies in the disparity with which
distributed and in its peculiarly heavy incidents upon the poorest class". In the summary of the same chapter, page 227, referring to the Social outlook of men who remember their Mothers being overworked and underfed, possibly to the extent of breaking their health, I say "By extendency to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and, especially, to inflict hardship upon the parents of the next generation, the inversion of the birth rate is an important cause of social discontent". Then on page 258 speaking of the effects of a redistribution of births I say "Extreme poverty would certainly be mitigated, and a more even distribution of wealth insensibly brought about. There would be less need for the process of transferring wealth from the rich to the poor by direct taxation, and this should be welcomed by those who believe that this process is in practice extremely inefficient, in that the real wealth transferred to the poor is much less than the less incurred, directly and indirectly, by the rich."

You see that I have a notion that both those who object especially to the poor being extremely poor, and those who object to the direct taxation of high incomes as a means of relieving the poor have reasons to regard the present distribution of births
as economically objectionable. In fact the present
distribution is merely equivalent to a tax which
the poor pay more heavily than the rich. Such a tax
could not I think be defended on either economical
or political grounds, especially as to counteract
its effects, it has as I believe been largely instrumental
in bringing into existence other taxes aimed at having
opposite effects, which are in my view wasteful and
inefficient for their purpose and is also an important
contributer through that economic class hatred, which
threatens to be a serious bar to the efficient co-
operation of wealth.

I quite agree that this is a non-eugenic
argument, but we must not forget that politicians
and most of their supporters think that economics
are much more important than Eugenics, and that they
will not make any modification of the economic system
unless it can be supported by strong economic as well
perhaps as Eugenic arguments. In this mood the
only aspect of Family Allowances which can enter their
heads is the direct relief of poverty which they are
accustomed to do by adding direct taxation. This
aspect the Family Allowance Society unduly emphasises
and will I think in time get the support of the Labour
party.
Our really critical business is to obtain non-Socialist support for Family Allowances as a means of diminishing or reversing the differential birth rate, and not merely of mitigating the poverty which it causes. I don't see how we can do this without stressing the effect of the differential birth rate as a cause of poverty.

This is a very complicated business and I am writing this long letter rather to elicit your further views than for anything else.

Yours sincerely,