

January 22, 1941

Dear Dr Fortuyn,

I was glad to receive your letter of November 25th, which arrived here January 22nd; that is under two months, which at the present time is pretty good. Things are going on quietly here. My Laboratory has been moved to Harpenden, conveniently near my own home and in a district which has not suffered appreciably from bombing raids. I am glad to say that Mrs Fisher and the family are all well. Travel is exceedingly difficult, owing to official restrictions and lack of passenger transportation, so that I do not know yet whether I shall be able to take advantage of the invitations I have received to visit the United States during the Summer. I have been working chiefly on fundamental tables for the d-test, and also for the tests of significance arising in the use of discriminant functions. This is all long-term work, the fruition of which is likely to be remote.

Being now in the country, in addition to the colony of Mus musculus which I have had for some years, we have been catching the three species of wild mice, of which one, Microtus aeneus aeneus, shows a curiously high proportion of defective or anomolous

developments in the tail, not unlike those produced by some mutants in Mus musculus. It is at least remotely possible that the short tail in Microtus has been produced by one of these factors, the effects of which have been very largely repaired in wild Microtus population. It is, however, difficult to see any way of carrying the analysis further, unless there are other species within the genus Microtus which could possibly be hybridised with our own Microtus population. It may be that you have some species of this genus wild in Peking, or the neighbourhood, and if that were so I could, I think, get American help towards getting a few animals transported.

I am, at the same time, studying the hereditary variation of the tail length in heterozygous Musculus mutants, the homozygotes being inviable.

We are much encouraged here by the extremely heavy defeats which the Italians have suffered both in Albania and in Africa, so that the early conjecture that Italy would prove more a liability than an aid to Germany seems to be very fully realised. Italian independence seems to be already practically at an end, though for some time yet German support may hold the mainland of that country.

I shall be very much interested to hear further of the research on ~~quantitative~~ inheritance which you mention. In my opinion, as you know, such work is both the most difficult and the most badly needed in the field of genetics.

Yours sincerely,