Dear Rothschild,

I have been looking at the papers you sent me, and it really is an incredible story. How on earth did the A.R.C. or the Ministry get sold to the idea that A.I. was going to help in livestock improvement?

As to the three annexes, I am glad Rendel and Robertson were encouraged to cut their teeth on a little quantitative theory, for they at least will be wiser for the experience. Of course I should take no notice whatever of their conclusions, which are pure, or rather disguised, assumptions, so long as critically collected data are lacking, relevant to the particular population to which the results are to be applied. I suppose, in the course of time, it will be the Council's policy to get a few mathematically and biometrically trained workers into its service. These chaps do not know how to begin.

It is a pity that they have been uncritical enough to accept the traditional reverential awe with which A.I. has been regarded. III page 2 "An A.I. unit has the greatest opportunity of constructive breeding of any organisation which has existed in the history of animal husbandry". They seem, however, to have abandoned the claim on which A.I. centres were established,
(at the expense of other methods of genetic improvement), namely that superb sperm could be had over the counter from the A.I. centre, just because the said centre could pay fifty times as much for the bull as the small farmer could. A few years ago all the administrative pundits seemed to be hypnotized by the differences between 2,000 guineas and forty, although there was no evidence of genetic superiority.

Now the claim that A.I. is certain to be valuable in the dissemination of sperm known to be good, is replaced by the more conjectural optimism that it provides a better way of creating good stock than that previously employed. I hope it is not yet assumed that it has proved value in its new role.

Of course I never expected that A.I. would produce a sensational increase in milk yields, yet I supposed the centres would, at a great price, secure about average bulls. The Cambridge data suggest that they have done much worse, and I do not know what to make of it. In all six bulls there is a considerable falling off from dam to daughter. Is it possible that the nutritional conditions have fallen off between the years over which the dams were tested, and those for the daughters? Of course, I should not expect the data to be good enough for reliance to be placed on it; and the Report contains nothing in the way of an examination of the internal evidence of reliability, but the puzzle remains as to why the results should seem so bad!
Has anyone an interest in saying:— "Now that you have taken my advice, see how things are improving"? They could improve, just now, rather easily.

Yours sincerely,