

August 29, 1957

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
c/o Prof. Sydney D. Rubbo
Dept. of Bacteriology
University of Melbourne
Carlton N3, Vic., Australia

Dear Josh:

Many thanks indeed for your information about the possibility of obtaining various species of pigeons. I would not wish you to do more than make contacts with someone who might possibly supply one or more of the different species which are not available to us. So I would be rather embarrassed if you would do more than make preliminary inquiries about their acquisition. Therefore, if convenient, I would only ask that you supply me with the name of a dealer or someone connected with an institution or the government with whom I might enter into negotiations to obtain representatives of these rare species.

I doubt very much, in the light of past experience, if we would be successful in raising offspring from these birds, and their viability might be of such short duration that only a part of the desirable tests upon their blood would be possible. This is one aspect which makes me hesitate to enter into more than preliminary negotiations for some of these birds from Australia if they could be obtained. Also, the cost of transportation would undoubtedly be many times the cost of the birds themselves, and the experimental results with them might or might not warrant the expenditure of funds.

Just at the moment I am hopeful that I can obtain several species of birds from Pakistan with which the possibility of obtaining offspring from the species themselves or from species crosses is much greater. I appreciate your interest very much indeed and if certain species are available it might be that it would seem advisable to make arrangements for shipment.

I am very happy to write you that each member of the staff was definitely in favor of making due effort to keep Bill Stone in the Department. Just before Bill left for Europe last week he decided to remain here. Personally, I think that he would have chafed very much indeed had he decided to go to the U.S.D.A., unless special disposition for the proposed laboratory would have been made, and this hardly seems likely.

Both President Fred and Vice-president Baldwin have been persuaded that A. D. Hershey is the man for the proposed appointment in chemical genetics, and negotiations are now under way to have a definite understanding as to responsibility for his proposed salary between the Department, Dean Froker and the President's office. These negotiations are maddeningly slow at times, but seemingly are necessary. I am expecting to write to Hershey within a very few days to ask him to come to Madison to give a lecture shortly after the beginning of the school year in mid-September. Both President Fred and Baldwin wish to have the opportunity to meet with him before any hint is given him officially as to the possibility of offering him a position.

All of us wish you both an enjoyable and a profitable stay in Australia. Best personal regards to Esther and yourself,

Cordially yours,


M. R. Irwin

MRI/r