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Dear Swaminathan,

Thank you

very much for your letter of 27 June
— sorry you were not able to visit
Cambridge. If you ever want to
spend a night in Cambridge — and
this applies also to your family —
we should be only too pleased to
find beds for you.

If you do
give the Blackett Memorial lecture
at the Royal Society, I hope I
shall get an invitation to be
present.

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I am now very much the retired potato breeder and would be very surprised to get an invitation to the Peru Symposium. On the other hand I do have a joint paper on the efficiency - or lack of it - in selecting potato progenies in the seedling and early clonal generations. I expect to hear more about it soon as it should be in the September issue of Potato Research.

Although now retired for $3\frac{1}{4}$ years, plant breeding and the spread of new varieties of potatoes is so slow that I still keep an interest in the varieties I helped to breed.

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Mavis Piper continues to be an important variety - last year (1980) it was the most widely grown variety in the UK. It is also now the quality variety and Sainsbury's sell only it and sometimes a bit of King Edward. The first early, Mars Bard, is also now an important variety and I am looking forward to see how much was grown this year (1981). I have grown it myself and am very satisfied with both yield and quality. This is unexpected because we always knew the yield was good but had such doubts about its

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quality that we discarded it and had to rescue a stock! Fortunately it is very resistant to virus - so it was not too difficult to build up a stock again.

I have not, however, completely ceased scientific work - I am investigating woodlouse problems again. A short note on the stability of polymorphism in Armadillidium vulgare is in Heredity 46, 135-137. I plan a paper on the same subject in 1982 or 1983. There is an International Symposium on Terrestrial Isopoda (woodlice) in London in 1983. I expect

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to attend. I have been to a woodhouse meeting in the UK this year. I was the oldest person present!

I have not heard for several months how the Indian work on breeding potatoes resistant to the two cyst nematode species, G. lobodera rostochiensis and G. pallida is progressing. Some progress has been made at the P.B. I with resistance to G. pallida — resistance to G. rostochiensis is no problem as Maris Piper etc are resistant. Also I have heard that PBI material sent to New Zealand

(6) is giving good results for G. pallida resistance. I also notice that the Scottish workers are also using PBI material in addition to their own. There are thus some reasons for thinking that varieties with resistance to both G.rostochiensis and G. pallida will be produced in the U.K.

It must be admitted, however, that resistant varieties suitable for growing in the Hilgiris are harder to produce because of the necessity of having a much higher resistance to blight, Phytophthora infestans, than that needed by varieties in the U.K.

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The other big problem in breeding potatoes for the Nilgiris is organisation. Ooty is a very pleasant place but it is both isolated scientifically and a very long way from the main station at Simla. It will need a very strong director at Ooty to get anything done and he must also be convinced that the main potato problem in the Nilgiris is control of cyst nematodes and be so convinced that he will abandon most other problems and not waste his small resources on doing physiological research etc. He will also need a lot of help

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from Simla.

If you go to the Symposium in Peru, I hope they choose the right season for it as hivia can be very cold and unpleasant in the rainy season. I should also be interested to learn if Do Sawyer has changed his ideas yet — although I can well understand why, he seemed to me to expect to get results ever so quickly and to be very impatient. I also felt, and I know that Do F.G.W. Jones had a similar opinion, that a lot of CIP work was not of much practical value and was not always based on

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sound principals. They sometimes seemed to prefer the difficult way and to ~~be~~ neglect the simple methods e.g. storage of material as "traced" seeds is both easy, well tried and efficient - so why investigate callus etc as a means of preserving material.

We do hope all your family is well and making good progress in their various vocations.

With very best wishes

Yours sincerely
Harold G Howard