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NORTH EASTON, MASS.

July 11, 1933.

My dear Mr. Edwards:

Throughout, the tone of your letter of June 23, 1933, is most disturbing and disheartening. If you but realized it, you are attempting to justify an attitude that is inexplicable on any reasonable basis. Review the facts: You ask to be allowed to collect for the Arnold Arboretum and name your own terms. They are accepted. After a time you begin to complain of the heavy expenses you are put to and suggest that you can make more money by collecting for several institutions. You ask for an increase. It is granted. Again you complain of your expenses and tell me that you can make more money as a general collector. The Arboretum grants permission for you to withdraw from your contract and offers to take woody specimens and orchids up to three thousand dollars. Then you accuse us of attempting to throw you over in spite of our explanation of our attitude, namely that at the rate you collect, it would be much more advantageous for the Arboretum to pay you on a per specimen basis as would the other institutions with which you might enter into an agreement. Then you tell me that one reason for my desire to meet your terms is the sudden discovery that for us the Honduran flora has proved to be less productive of results than we had hoped. You write "You merely took a gamble that the country had many ~~new~~ species - I have found many- but now that they are not coming in as fast or plentiful as you had hoped you want to call the deal off!" You will never make a more absurd statement or a more inaccurate one if you live to round out a century of time. We are not dissatisfied with the flora or the absence of new species. We are dissatisfied with your performance and it is our duty and privilege to tell you so. Take for example your recently received numbers of orchids, nos. 390 to 423. These numbers by the label records, cover the time between March 28 and May 31. In April you were afield nine days. You collected thirteen orchid numbers. In May you were afield ten days and in that time you collected about fifteen orchid numbers. This record speaks for itself. The record for woody plants is not any more creditable or understandable. You speak of your hardships. Of course I do not know how far away from your base you explore, (the label records do not indicate much consecutive time spent in the field), but on the evidence it is clear that at any time of year, you do not spend as much time afield as does the average collector. Coming back to the last shipment: You spent about thirty-four days afield between March 28 and May 31 and collected one orchid each day on the average. Then you refer to my record round Tela and inform me that the Tela region is richer than your mountain region and that I had the resources of the Fruit Company behind me. If we use your term gamble, I am ready to gamble that the coastal regions are poorer in orchids than your mountain region. I was afield every day from early morning until evening and my pressing and note-making had to be done in the closing hours of the day. In three weeks in a poor country I collected about three times as many species as on the record before me you collected in about two months. I was a transient; you are a resident.



Ames, Oakes. 1933. "Ames, Oakes July 11, 1933 [to J.B. Edwards]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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