

December 28, 1939

My dear O'Brien,

Many thanks for your letter of December 12th, which I am afraid has been held up over Christmas. As perhaps Allen Mawer told you, I resisted the College's plan - or lack of plan - for the Galton Laboratory, believing that the work established by Galton's trust deed had a right to be continued, so far as the situation of the personnel made possible, even in the event of war. The College insisted on the evacuation of their premises in Gower Street, which I think they have a legal right to do, but went beyond their rights in forbidding my assistants to continue the work of the Department elsewhere. However, during October, by the intervention of Lord Sankey, Chairman of the College Committee, it was agreed that the Department should continue its work in rooms kindly lent by Sir John Russell at Rothamsted. This, though inconvenient to my assistants, does allow the Department to continue in existence. The College at present is meeting existing salaries, though I understand that, in the event of my Laboratory assistant being called up for

military service, his salary will lapse, and I shall have to look elsewhere for the means of replacing him. I imagine, however, that I can do something to keep the concern going by offering statistical services and advice in return for fees, instead of gratuitously as heretofore.

With respect to the serological unit, I also had experience of the very brusque way in which Landsborough Thomson handled the business but the position does not seem at present unsatisfactory. The salaries of the four research workers and two laboratory attendants have been taken over by the Medical Research Council for war work from the outbreak of war. Although formally they are separated from my department, they are, up till now, working together as an unbroken unit, and have not been dispersed. This, I think, is a most important point. We are actually still collaborating a good deal in collecting and examining the large numbers of blood groupings which are being made in various parts of the country in connection with the blood transfusion service.

In addition to the £1750 of their grant unexpended, there is also a small balance, about £40, in the Westminster Bank, available for continuing their research work proper when that again becomes possible. I should much hope that, at least if the serum unit can be maintained in existence, your Committee will approve of their resuming their researches on their original grant <sup>as soon as that is</sup> ~~when that again becomes~~ possible.

The satisfactory element in the present situation is that the M.R.C. is, in effect, preserving our research unit

intact, so that it should be able to take up its old work with a minimum of delay. This would<sup>still</sup> be true even if, as may happen, the young medical assistant, Dr Race, were, in the course of the war, called away on other service.

It is really reassuring to hear of your personal interest and kind wishes. I hope some time during the coming year you may be able to visit us here, or, if not, to make an appointment where I can meet you in London.

Yours sincerely,