

9 June 1943

Dear Dr O'Brien,

You may have seen in one of the papers, or heard from one of my friends, that Cambridge want me to go there as Arthur Holford Professor of Genetics, they having decided, after an interval of two or three years from Punnett's resignation, to re-establish the Chair.

This opens out to me the very satisfactory prospect of being again in close touch with Taylor and his serological group, who in spite of having been taken over specifically for the blood-transfusion service have none theless been making a considerable contribution to the new Rhesus and Stedman factors which have appeared in the last year or two.

I hope too that this group on release may become permanently attached to the Department of Genetics at Cambridge, both as an integral research unit and for the teaching of human genetics in the Medical School.

I realise, as indeed we all did, that Punnett was a very inactive man and had let the Department rather seriously down. The interval in which there was no Department has carried this process further rather rapidly, e.g. by the War Agricultural Committee's ploughing up land, and by the Professor's residence

(which carried with it garden, greenhouse, laboratory and animal-house: valuable facilities for the Department's work) having been let in the meanwhile.

I hope and think that the University, in deciding to fill the Chair, realised that a great deal needs to be done before an efficient Department can be built up, and that during the war little more than the preparation of plans can be attempted. However, the research projects I now have in hand with mice, Dros, and plants cannot be intermitted, and I shall be much concerned this summer to get at least provisional working accommodation established on the spot.

We are having the Annual General Meeting of the Genetical Society at Cambridge on July the 16th. If you would care to come as my guest, it might afford an opportunity of your seeing some of the people in whom you are already interested, and of looking at the situation in Cambridge as affected by recent developments.

I have just paid in the cheque for £200 which you have kindly given me to cover the wages of a secretary. If things go as I expect, I shall not have to draw on this before September the 30th, and shall therefore be able to refund one-third of it.

Yours sincerely,