



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

21 THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF NORTH WALES,
BANGOR.

GOWER STREET, W.C.1

TELEPHONE: EUSTON 4400

PLEASE QUOTE: NH

29th June, 1940

My dear Fisher,

Thank you for your letter about the Readership. I ought to have replied to your earlier letter on the same subject, but when it arrived I found myself in great difficulty in forming any opinion at all and the matter was made more difficult because hardly any of the candidate's published work was accessible to me in Bangor. The opinion I ultimately formed was very much on the lines of the question contained in your last letter. It seemed to me that the mere measurement of skulls and some statistical treatment of the results in itself is a very narrow problem. It might become an important problem if the work was brought into relation with the wider field of ethnology and was related to the general body of knowledge in that subject. Of course, I am not competent to answer the question myself, but it was the kind of question to which I tried to find some answer in the opinions expressed by more expert people. I did not find any sufficiently favourable answer or indeed any really enthusiastic support on other grounds which made it clear that the proposal ought to go forward. Accordingly I suggested that the case was not as strong as other cases which were before us and this suggestion was accepted.

At the same time some suggestion that the work has in the last few years shown some evidence of a wider aspect was apparent, and from what I was told it seemed to me that there was good ground for hoping that if progress were made in this direction a very much stronger case could be stated in a year or so's time.

We have been rather anxious not to damage the reputation of the people we have considered but not finally sent forward, and with this in mind the Professorial Board was not informed of the names of the people who had been turned down. The suggestions were originally made direct to the Appointments and Promotions Committee and were examined by Sub-Committees appointed by it. The only names sent forward to the Professorial Board were those in which case we made a positive suggestion for promotion.

No doubt you have heard by now of the requisition of the College buildings by the War Office which has put an end for the time being to any prospect of a return to London. In all the centres we are feeling the loss which arises from the separation of Faculty from Faculty, and even of subjects within the same Faculty. The personal side of this is that we all deplore the separation from many good colleagues of the Gower Street days. When members of the Faculty of Science think in this way I am sure that you are one of the people they have very much in mind. Quite apart from the breaking of contacts in purely scientific matters I think we miss the mischievous, provocative, but always stimulating mind of the Galton Professor.

One thing I am sure we are very heartily glad to know is that you and your staff are continuing the work at Rothamsted. The difficulties on the administrative side at the early stage of the evacuation were tremendous, partly, no doubt, due to the lack of foresight of some people like myself, who denied emphatically up to 3rd September last that the need would ever arise, and who consequently refused to give their minds to the proper consideration of the problems it would bring. It must have seemed to many in the course of this session that we have been too tied up by red tape. Whether that is true or not I do not think that any of us have any regret at all that certain energetic individuals managed to break the tape.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Professor R. A. Fisher, F.R.S.,
The Galton Laboratory,
Rothamsted Experimental Station,
Harpenden, Herts.