

July 22, 1941

Dear Provost,

As I have no means of knowing how closely you have looked into the question of the position of Miss Simpson as secretary to the Galton Laboratory, it may be well for me to set out the passé novus as to the several aspects of it which seem to deserve your consideration before authorising the proposal that her appointment should be suspended, and her salary cease, contrary to her own wishes, at the end of September next.

(a) It appears to be contrary to the agreement arrived at before Lord Sankay in October 1939, giving permission for my Department to be moved and to continue its work in the rooms made available at Rothamsted. During my own time as Galton Professor and, so far as I know, in the time of my predecessor, the services of a secretary have been essential to the normal work of the Department. Since the outbreak of war Miss Simpson, in addition to her previous duties, has undertaken what was previously done by Miss Kern in respect of the publication of the Annals of Eugenics, and, further, has expanded a part she previously took in the handling of data within the Department.

(b) It appears to be prima facie inequitable that a pre-war

employee of the Department should be turned away when a new employee, taken on during the war and for its duration, is working in similar terms in the same laboratory. Admittedly, Miss Lucka's salary is met out of the sum of £325 allocated from the Weldon Bequest, which became available on Norton's return to the United States. There was, therefore, no call for fresh College funds on her appointment, which appeared, and appears, to have been in every way a proper one.

(c) With regard to the call on the College finances required by the continuing of Miss Simpson in her present post, it should be observed that approximately £160 a year, in addition to Miss Lucka's salary, was freed on Norton's retirement. This sum alone comes within a few pounds of the amount required for Miss Simpson's salary and insurance, and should, in my opinion, be allocated to this purpose in future years. It should be noted further that, during the current year - October 1940 - September 1941 - the unexpended portion of Norton's salary has been accruing, and this surplus will suffice to meet the small deficit on Miss Simpson's salary for a very considerable period.

(d) It has been laid down that it is Miss Simpson's duty, as of other members of the Department, to make her services available for any war work in which she can be advantageously employed. There is no prospect of her obtaining such work on leaving the Department, while, on the contrary, her work during the past two years has been very largely within the category of war-work, in connection with the emergency blood transfusion service. I enclose copy of a
(recent)

recent letter from Dr Lendsborough Thomson, which I received on letting him know of this threat to the activities of the Galton Laboratory.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Lord Sankey, who was good enough to mediate in October 1939 when the right of the Department to continue its researches was called in question.

Yours sincerely,

copy of letter

COPY

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
c/o London School of Hygiene,
Keppel Street, London, W.C. 1

2128

Dear Professor Fisher,

I am disturbed to hear that a threatened reduction in the staff of the Galton Laboratory may make it impossible for you to continue the co-operation which you have been giving in the emergency arrangements made by the Medical Research Council for the production of grouping sera for testing blood donors, and in collecting information as to the incidence of the several blood groups in different parts of the country. Dr Taylor and his colleagues, who have been seconded from the Galton Laboratory to the service of the Council during the war, are doing work at Cambridge which is essential for the blood transfusion schemes which are at present being developed and maintained on a large scale. The records which are being obtained provide a unique opportunity for studying the geographical distribution of blood groups, and it would be most unfortunate if this valuable material could not be handled and analysed. This work could be done nowhere so appropriately as at the Galton Laboratory, and the Medical Research Council will certainly hope that you can find means of continuing it.

I am,
Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) A. Landsborough Thomson