

From Sir John Burdon-Sanderson to W.O.

(This is the first letter received about the Regius Professorship Brought to Canton on June 19th, 1904, and cable sent that night saying he would consider it). (G.R.O.)

Oxford,
June 8, 1904.

Dear Professor,

You are no doubt aware that I am on the point of vacating the Regius Professorship of Medicine here. The appointment of my successor is in the hands of the Prime Minister (Mr. Balfour) who in this matter acts independently of the University. He appears at present to be unable to decide on the proper course to be taken. My colleagues and I have placed before him our opinion in favour of appointing our "Reader in Pathology" who is also Director of the Pathological Laboratory, he being in our judgment a man of higher scientific position than any one to be had in the United Kingdom at present. It appears however that certain objections have been suggested to Mr. Balfour which from a statesman's point of view have value, however groundless they may seem to us.

This being the position of matters, it has seemed desirable to communicate to the Minister our hope that if, for the reasons referred to, he is unable to take the course we suggested several months ago, he should as the next best course, ask some distinguished representative of the science of Medicine, outside of this University to consent to occupy the position. I now write to ask you whether we may venture to entertain the hope that you might be induced to accept the position if it were offered to you.

I think I should add that my only reason for resigning my post is that declining health and strength makes me unable to do the work efficiently. As you will see from the paper sent by this post the work is very light. The Regius Professor need not reside more than one-third of the year, so that he can, if he likes, avail himself of the proximity of London for any work or purpose that may require his presence.

I understand that you are to be in Oxford at the Meeting of the B.M. Association. Will you and Mrs. Osler be our guests? You would find my house conveniently situated for the business of the Meeting.

I would have written sooner but I have been ill and have only lately found myself in a position to make any arrangements,

Yours very truly,
J. BURDON-SANDERSON.