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Sir Hubert Warr to Mr Balfour

Confidential

Magdalen College,
Oxford.

July 31. 1904.

Dear Mr. Balfour,

You have kindly allowed me from time to time to write to you on matters of moment to the University, and your kindness emboldens me to write again now. It is I think possible that my letter may not be needed, for you may have taken action already. But if so, you can disregard this letter. It is about the filling up of the Regius Professorship of Medicine, which has been vacant so long. You have been I know only too familiar with the difficulties which have beset this appointment. I have been specially interested in it but must say I have not seen my way to a really satisfactory solution, until within the last few days when I think the possibility of one has appeared in the person of Dr. Osler of Baltimore. I believe you know all about this gentleman, and as I say I think it not impossible you have already thought of recommending him and communicated with him.

What I have to say is this. Dr. Osler has been here this last week. I had some little talk with him. I found that the idea of his coming had been mooted to him by Sir John Burdon Sanderson. He gave me the impression that if he were offered the post he would take it. And if he did come I believe he would really practically unite parties as no one else would. Sir John Burdon Sanderson, Professor Gatch and Arthur Thompson who wanted Dr. Ritchie would now all welcome Dr. Osler. So, I have reason to believe would Sir William Church, who represented rather this "Oxford Graduates" and anti-Ritchie party. Over and above this I understand Sir Victor Horsley would approve this appointment. But I have in particular one very strong and interesting piece of evidence. Sir William Broadbent who is of course a man of special eminence and standing and has the advantage of being quite outside our Schools and their interests (and prejudices) was as it happened staying here as my guest, last week. He told me he thought this appointment of Dr. Osler would be a magnificent one for us and full of advantage for the cause of medical education and Science in this country and would be recognized and welcomed as such by the medical world generally.

Further than this I could not but be struck by the very good reception and welcome which Dr. Osler received both when he spoke on several occasions and when he came up for his Honorary Degree at the Theatre. His speeches too impressed me very much. He is a philosophic and cultivated man, a student and lover of Locke and Burton and so far the kind of man whom Oxford generally I believe would welcome.

It would also I think be a very interesting and pleasing thing from the Imperial point of view just now to appoint a Professor to Oxford, who is a Canadian by birth and a Professor of the United States.

2 From Sir H. Warren. to Mr. Balfour.

I might say more, but will not trouble you with a still longer letter. If you have not yet decided to prefer Dr. Osler perhaps you will let these considerations have what weight in your own exhaustive and deliberate estimate you think they are entitled to. * * *

It would be a great thing for us to have this question well settled and as to Dr. Ritchie I believe we should be in a better position to take up his case and get something done for him, if we received Dr. Osler. As to Dr. Osler coming, there is reason I believe to think that he might command a consulting practice here which would add to the scanty Emoluments of the Chair.

With apologies for writing so much. I hope not more than the situation deserves.

I have the honour to be
Yours very faithfully

T. Herbert Warren.)

(P. of M.)

P.S. I happened to see Sir Wm. Anson yesterday and told him I thought of writing to yourself. I have also told the Vice Chancellor.