

McGill College, Montreal,
May 22, 1868.

My dear Sir,

I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kind letter of May 8th, which gives the first precise information which I have received in relation to the competition for the Principalship.

I hope to mail with this to your address, and to the other Curators, a statement of my application, and also testimonials from the Governor General of Canada, from the Chancellor of this University, and from the Minister of Public Instruction for the Province of Quebec. The originals of these have been sent to the Lord Buxton, who has also received letters from Sir C. Lyell, Sir R. J. Murchison, Sir W. Logan and Prof Ramsay, and probably also from other friends. These I cannot print, not having copies of them.

In regard to general literature, while I cannot claim to be an honoris man in Classics, and have for the last twelve years been too actively employed in other pursuits to give much attention to literature, I have sufficient knowledge of Greek and Latin for the purposes of the

Biblical and Scientific studies in which I have engaged; and I have also given some attention to the study of Hebrew. In illustration of this I send to you by this mail a copy of my work "Archaica", and also a biographical sketch by a well known Canadian litterateur. I may add that in this country at least, I have that kind of reputation for aptitude to please the public as a speaker, which leads to demands on my time more flattering than convenient.

With regard to social position, I may say that Mrs Dawson and I enjoy the acquaintance of all whose acquaintance is congenial to us. As Christians, and as placed in a responsible position with reference to young men, we have avoided gay society, except in so far as the interests of the community might seem to require, and have endeavoured rather to make our house a place of agreeable resort to those who agree with us in tastes, and to those students and graduates to whom our hospitality might seem to be of value. I enclose two slips, containing an invitation which we have been in the habit of issuing with the

latter object.

My income here is rather larger than it has been stated to you. It is equal to £800 sterling, with a good residence pleasantly situated in the College grounds. My private patrimony, after deducting those losses sustained by the failure of two Canadian banks, is now about £300 per annum. The salary in Edinburgh would be about £200 less than that which I receive here including the residence. I would however hope to add to it the income of a chair of Geology, and also that the very reasonable applications now being made for an increase of the salary of the Principal would be granted by the Government, more especially should it be found that the duties of the office were efficiently and zealously performed by me.

With regard to religious connections, I enclose a testimonial from the Ministers of the Church of which I am a member, and if I have time shall try to obtain one from an eminent clergyman of the Church of Scotland as well. There are two large bodies of Presbyterians in this country the "Canada Presbyterian Church," which is the larger of the two, and represents the Free

* I must mail this next week, as I have not been able to find time today

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and U. P. Churches, and the "Presby-
terian Church of Canada" connected
with the Kirk of Scotland. I am
connected with the former, to which
my father (one of the Dawson of Burnshaw)
belonged, but have always been on
friendly terms with the Ministers and
Members of the latter, in which my
mother (a daughter of the old family of the
Rankines in Shropshire) was brought up.
In my position here I have been
called to mingle on intimate terms with
persons of all creeds, and have taken
part in most of the general religious
enterprises of the day.

I may state frankly that
I have the strongest sympathy with
those who would make the appointment
of a Principal useful in the promotion
of science = education, and in the res-
toration of the eminence of Edinburgh
as a school of Science, in so far as
this may be possible without interference
with other interests; and also with
those who would make it a means
of promoting true Christianity among the
students, in connection with the old
Presbyterianism of Scotland, but without
antagonism to other Churches. There

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considerations alone would induce me to leave my present position, knowing as I do something of Edinburgh, and making all allowance for the peculiarities of a colony, I believe that the experience I have had here for the last twelve years should constitute a good apprenticeship for the office which I seek, more especially as here the duties of a Principal are necessarily of a much more varied character than in the Mother Country.

I have written without reserve, and trust that I have answered most of the questions in your letter, though this might no doubt have been done much more satisfactorily by oral communication.

May I ask of you the favour should the Decree on the 18th June be favourable to me, to give early intimation of the fact to Mr Davidson, Bank of Scotland, or should he not have returned, to Mr Bell & Co of Glasgow Place, either of whom will send a message by Atlantic Cable which will give me an additional fortnight to make ar-

arrangements in this country, more especially with reference to the continuation of the work in which I have been engaged in "The geol.", which I would wish to leave in the most efficient state possible. I have directed Messrs Allen & Boyd to send to your address, so soon as published, the second edition of Canadian Geology.

Again thanking you for your very valuable letter,

Yours sincerely
 W Dawson

P.S. As I infer from the tone of your letter that you are disposed to give to this appointment the careful consideration which its importance demands and to weigh the claims of convenience fairly, with reference to the interests of the community, I think I may venture to ask that you will have the kindness to direct the attention of the Hon. Curators (who may give the matter up thought and) & whom I have not written except formally, any information contained in the above that may seem to be of importance. I shall send a duplicate and the testimony next week.

W.D.

Letter to
Chairman of
Committee
1888

