

1028/80/4

CUST 7/80.4

Philadelphia  
J.U.C

Requester's notes

J  
copy other  
see original

A vacancy having occurred in the Chair of Clinical Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in the spring of 1884, the Medical Committee of the Trustees recommended to the full Board that a named member of the existing teaching staff should be elected to fill the vacancy. At a weekly meeting of the Editorial Staff of the MEDICAL NEWS held shortly afterward, upon the conclusion of the routine business, the members engaged in general conversation and the first and uppermost topic naturally was this recent nomination to the Board of Trustees. There were present at the meeting Doctors Hays, Bartholow, <sup>S.W.</sup> Gross, Parvin and Tyson. Surprise was expressed that the Committee had not gone further afield and taken a wider view of the available material before making its recommendation and ~~the name of~~ Dr. Osler, of Montreal, was mentioned ~~by Dr. Hays~~ as ~~that of~~ one ~~who was~~ eminently qualified to fill with marked ability the duties of the Chair, but his name, so far as ~~he~~ known, had not been even given consideration in connection with the filling of the vacancy.

Dr. Osler was then known to the gentlemen present only by reputation and by his writings. Upon the organization of the MEDICAL NEWS as a weekly magazine several years before, ~~Dr. Hays had invited~~ <sup>had been invited</sup> Dr. Osler to become its Montreal special correspondent, and the duties of this position he fulfilled with great acceptability. Dr. Tyson, a prominent member of the University Faculty, while recognizing Dr. Osler's capacity to fill the Chair with conspicuous ability, seemed to think that it was now too late to move in the matter, and

when

-2-

he further urged that Dr. Osler and his qualifications and abilities as a teacher were unknown to the Faculty and Trustees. In reply it was strongly urged upon him by those present that as the election had not been consummated, ~~and~~ that the situation was not irretrievable, and that full information upon the points upon which further information was desired, could easily be obtained from Dr. R. Howard Palmer, of Montreal, who was well and favorably known to the Philadelphia profession and <sup>from</sup> other members of the McGill College Faculty.\*\*\*

~~Dr. Hays emphasized the view that the interests of Philadelphia as a medical centre urgently demanded the appointment of the ablest and best equipped man available for the position and that every effort should be made to obtain that man. Dr. Osler was at that time in Europe, and this seemed to still further complicate the situation.~~ The other members of the Staff strenuously concurred in the views expressed and, recognizing their force, Dr. Tyson finally said that he would immediately take up the matter with his colleague, Dr. Horatio C. Wood, who was then still in town - most of the members of the Medical Faculty being away on their summer holiday. The suggestion appealed very strongly to Dr. Wood and, with his characteristic energy, he at once journeyed to Montreal to learn at first hand more concerning Dr. Osler's attainments and qualifications for the position.\*\*\* He conferred with Dr. Howard and other members of the Medical Staff of McGill College and brought back a highly favorable report.

After a consultation with such of his colleagues in the Faculty as he could readily reach and having obtained their enthusiastic concurrence in an effort to secure the

appointment of Dr. Osler, Dr. Wood entered into correspondence with Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who was Chairman of the Medical Committee of the Board, and who at that time was also in Europe. Dr. Mitchell was impressed with the statements made to him by Dr. Wood and telegraphed at once to Dr. Osler, who I think was on the Continent at this time, to meet him and after a conference with him he was so highly impressed with his attainments and qualifications for the position that he wrote to his colleagues on the Medical Committee recommending them to withdraw their Report to the Board of Trustees, so as to substitute the name of Dr. Osler for that of the gentleman previously agreed upon. This the Committee declined to do, but the election was deferred until autumn. In the meantime Dr. Mitchell entered into correspondence with his fellow Trustees and urged upon them the selection of Dr. Osler notwithstanding the recommendation of the Medical Committee, of which he was the Chairman, to the contrary, and when the Board met in the autumn Dr. Osler was promptly elected to the Chair of Clinical Medicine and immediately afterward entered upon its duties.