

Letters between the University of London and J B S Haldane

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23rd July 1957

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of July 18th. Whilst I appreciate the kindness of the Senate in conferring the title of Professor Emeritus upon me, I should have refused such a title had I been consulted beforehand, for the following reasons.

I have not been superannuated. I have resigned my chair here to take another one elsewhere. I do not think it is usual to confer the title of Professor Emeritus on a London professor taking up a post in Oxford, Cambridge or McGill. The Indian Statistical Institute, to which I am going, has a higher standard of research and teaching than these universities, and it seems somewhat discourteous to it to suggest that I can in any sense be said to be retiring on accepting a post there.

Further, I am leaving London prematurely because promises made to me over the last twenty years both by the administrative authorities of the University and of this College, have been systematically broken. As the result of one such promise I refused an offer from another British University where there is now a flourishing department of genetics. I am quite aware that many of these promises were made and broken as the result of promises made and broken by Government officials to the University. But I know that courtesy costs nothing, and that it is not an adequate substitute for the provision of space and equipment. Others are in a similar position to my own, except that they are not so fortunate as to have found posts elsewhere in the British Commonwealth. It is on their behalf that I write this letter. Further, in the past, the University systematically behaved as if it found me an embarrassment, which may well have been the case.

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To take one example, a colleague junior to myself was chosen as its official representative at the last International Genetical Congress. The University had a perfect right to do this, but as it did so it appears inconsistent to confer a title on me on my departure.

I should be glad if the Senate could see its way to withdraw their conferment of the title on me. I fully recognize that my colleagues on the Senate were unaware of the position, and I do not wish to seem discourteous to them. But I trust that they may see the validity of some of the arguments which I have brought forward.

Yours faithfully

Dr D. W. Logan,
University of London,
Senate House, W.C.1

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

SENATE HOUSE

from THE PRINCIPAL



LONDON, W.C.1

PERSONAL

18 July 1957

Dear Sir,

I write to inform you that the Senate have conferred upon you the title of "Professor Emeritus of Biometry in the University of London" in recognition and appreciation of your distinguished services to the University and to your subject.

Yours faithfully,

A.V. Logan

Professor J. B. S. Haldane, M.A., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.,
Department of Biometry,
University College,
Gower Street, W.C.1.