

6 University Terrace,
Delfast.

13. 7. 44

Dear Mr. Higgins,

In the rush of the coming holiday I have neither notepaper, your advertisement, or anything else relevant to the new project. However, if the Board want me, I am willing to come to Magherafelt. It has been difficult to decide on the sacrifice of all that I have achieved in town, but I do it for one reason, I believe that, if all co-operate, with diligence and patience we can achieve in Magherafelt ultimately a better service and a higher standard of surgical excellence than is possible in present conditions in a large city, other factors are relatively unimportant.

I have never applied for a post in my life and shall therefore, if you require them to proceed to collect testimonials and so on. My various degrees and diplomas are probably about my house. I haven't seen them for years - but can unearth them when you want them.

I have tried to recall some "personal history" - and attach it hereto. If references are required I suggest any of the Professors in the Medical School at Q.U.B. whom you wish to choose. They all know me intimately. Besides these there are many known Surgeons, such as George McPadden, H. P. Hall, or there is Dr. James Boyd of the Ministry of Health and Local Government.

I'm sorry - I miss my typewriter - but hope that this will satisfy. It's main intention is to signify my willingness to help you, should you want me.

About when I could take up duties, naturally the sooner the better for my own personal choice. But I should prefer this to be settled, say, by the Ministry in consultation with the local Medical War Committee. This is morally necessary as I am still officially a volunteer for H. M. Forces but have not been released by this Committee because of the needs of the civilian population here.

Yours sincerely,
Wilfred. M. Brannen.

Academic.

- 1923 Entered R.E.A.I on scholarship. Kept my-self with scholarship till leaving.
Junior and senior certificate exhibitions. Special prize from Duke of Abercorn as first boy in school's history to take prize in every subject, repeated this till leaving.
- 1930 Head of School R.E.A.I.
Entered Q.U.B. with scholarship in Classics, and several exhibitions.
- 1930-35 Medical Student: several scholarships and distinctions.
- 1935 Qualified in M.B, B.ch., B.A.O. (Honours) - with the Magrath Clinical Scholarship (£120) the premier award on graduating.
- 1935-36 House Physican, R.V.H. to Professor of Medicine, Professor. W.W.D. Thompson.
House Surgeon R.V.H to Professor of Surgery - Professor P. T. Campbell.
- 1936-37 At request of Prof. of Surgery & Prof of Pathology, worked between the two departments at Surgical Pathology, and did research (the first of its kind here) in Experimental Surgery.
- 1937 Appointed Clinical Assistant to wards and outpatients in Surgery at R.V.H., and Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Also part-time Demonstrator in Anatomy Q.U.B.
- 1938 Took (at first attempt) primary examination for F.R.C.S in Ireland.
- 1938 Appointed Surgical Registrar R.V.H. and have since held this post.

1939-44

Q.U.B, a post which I still hold. The Tutor is the Professor's only assistant and helper.

At outbreak of war, offered myself for service, but was reserved.

Appointed as Acting Visiting Surgeon (in place of Mr. McNeenan) to Belfast City Hospital.

Appointed to take over out-patients and in-patient work at Belfast Hospital for Sick Children in place of Mr. Ian Frazer. Similarly at Belfast Hospital for Sick Children took over duties of Mr. Craig, and have since done all the tonsillectomies etc there.

Appointed as assistant to Mr. Calder, Ards District Hospital as Visiting Surgeon.

Many smaller items need hardly be mentioned. For example, six-monthly work at beginning of war, helping to re-organise Massereene Hospital. Also member of Surgical Mobile Unit in E.M.S.

As Summary: at present doing two out-patient mornings at R.V.H. and B.H.S.C. Perform 2000/3000 major operations annually. Teach students everyday - for several hours.

Social

original member of First Scout Troop. There were four of us, now there are three separate troops, numbering over 100 annually. Became Rover Scout, Scoutmaster etc. Started Rover Scout Group in Q.U.B. and organised annual summer camps for unemployed workers.

Drama

For 5 years Secretary of Dramatic Society at Q.U.B, acted also with Instonians Dramatic Society, Northern Drama League, B.B.C.

Music

Started musical society and Madrigal Society Q.U.B. Still exist.

Sy. John

Ambulance Brigade. Have been Divisional Surgeon, County Surgeon for Belfast, District Surgeon for N. Ireland and am now Acting Commissioner for the whole Brigade in N.I. Also County Representative for Belfast for Ulster Joint War Organisation of B.R.C.S and S.J.A.B. member A.J.W.O. Committee N.I. representative for Pre-Armistice Relief Service in Europe etc. etc.

Am president of various societies, including Q.U.B. Swimming Club and Hockey Club, Irish University Swimming Association etc. Member of British Medical Association and served as member of M.I. Council.

Member Ulster Medical Society.

Chairman, Socialist Medical Association.

Sport.

1930

Captain School's cup-winning Rugby XV - R.B.A.I.

Captain Ulster School's cup team which defeated Leinster. various swimming, boxing and athletic teams at school and after.

1930-38

Eventually played many years for Instonians 1st XV and was on Senior Cup-winning teams.

Broke some minor records in athletics and swimming and achieved Medallion for life saving etc.

Interested myself in sculpture, painting, photography, British Music Society, Royal Society of Arts, British Mythological Society, am a member of Fitzroy Avenue Presbyterian Church, Married with two sons.

Finally, in general, have travelled a fair amount in Europe and N. Africa - and also on our native heath as one of original members of Youth Hostel Association.

During undergraduate holidays, worked as bus-driver, cloak-room attendant, seller of vacuum-cleaners etc so have fair ~~amount~~ notion of how my present patients live.

These are random notes - I am not at home where I could refresh my memory from records - but perhaps they will serve to indicate what manner of person I am. What I have achieved

OFFICER CH.

Meeting of the Board of Magherafelt District held on Friday evening the appointment of a Officer for the hospital. Mr. Davison, J.P. (chairman) present, and other members present were — Mrs. Brackenbury, Mrs. Thompson, Messrs. Joseph Davison, J.P., L. J. Kiroe, J.P., R. J. Strahan, Hugh M'Cann, F. Kelly, J.P., P. Quinn, J.P., R. Crawford, J.P., R. D. Sloan, J. T. Glover, Hugh M'Master and R. Scott, J.P.

The Clerk (Mr. J. A. Higgins) read a letter from the Ministry sanctioning a proposal of the committee to appoint a medical officer at a salary of £1,000 per annum, and agreeing with the terms of the advertisement which set out that the person appointed would be permitted to engage in consultation practice, but not in general practice. It was also stated that the person appointed must possess the qualifications of Fellowship of one of the Royal College of Surgeons of Great Britain or in Ireland.

There were five applicants for the position:—Mr. Wilfred N. Brennan, M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., Belfast; Mr. Vincent P. M'Allister, M.B., B.Ch., M.Ch., Dublin; Mr. C. C. D. Martin, M.B., M.Ch., M.S., Whitehead; Mr. Patrick D. Moloney, F.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.I., L.M., Lurgan; and Mr. Owen Wilson, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.E., Nelson, Lancashire.

The Chairman said the Committee had decided to appoint the best man as medical officer, and the success of the hospital depended on the appointment they were about to make.

Mr. F. Kelly said when they made the appointment they made or marred the hospital. In his opinion the Committee should send two or three names to the Ministry who would select the best qualified.

The Chairman said the Committee would proceed with the appointment.

A BRILLIANT SURGEON.

Mrs. Thompson said it was a difficult time to make the appointment when so many doctors were with the Services. They were lucky, however, in that they had five applicants, all of whom appeared to be highly qualified. There was one whose name was outstanding. She referred to Mr. Brennan, and she proposed him. She knew Mr. Brennan personally. His brilliance in surgery was known to all the doctors in Northern Ireland. He had a strong conscientious sense of duty and never spared any effort to save life. In the past five years he had performed between 2,000 and 3,000 operations. It was a surprise to her that he would come to Magherafelt as he had built up an important consultation practice in Belfast; but he felt that in a hospital of his own he could prove of greater service to mankind if the Committee decided to appoint him. This, she added, is the most important appointment ever made in the district. Mr. Brennan could operate very successfully, and he was equally clever at diagnosis.

Mr. P. Quinn, seconding the motion, said when the next appointment came up he hoped the Committee would give his side of the house similar consideration.

Mr. Hugh M'Cann said his daughter on the Nursing Corps knew Mr. Brennan well, and she recommended him. He thought the Committee would be guilty of a dereliction of duty if they failed to appoint the best man.

Mr. Brennan was unanimously appointed.

The Chairman thanked the Committee, and said there was nothing like starting off well.

It was decided that the medical officer should take up duty at an early date.

Mr. Joseph Davison said Mr. Brennan would have difficulty in getting a house.

The Clerk said he did not know of any suitable house vacant, but the day might not be far distant when the Committee could build a house as the hospital progressed.





