

VISITING APPOINTMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, NIGERIA

The following letter was written to Dr. Ganong on June 28, 1977:

Dr. William F. Ganong
Department of Physiology
University of California
School of Medicine
San Francisco, California

Dear Dr. Ganong:

Re: Secondments to the new Medical School to be established at Calabar.

I have been in touch recently with a former colleague of mine, Dr. A. Olufemi Williams who is now Dean of the new Faculty of the University of Calabar, Nigeria.

He is seeking help in staffing the new institution and is specifically asking for secondments from established medical schools for periods of 6 months to a year (or longer if feasible).

The following are the relevant details:

1. The Medical School is to open on August 15th, 1978. Teaching will commence 1st October, 1978.
2. The medical course is to be a four year course, more or less on traditional lines as practiced in the United Kingdom, that is to say Department based rather than systems teaching, with a good deal of streaming rather than block teaching. The first year — which I have been particularly asked about — will deal with anatomy, physiology and biochemistry — which will include those subjects which have established themselves here in independent departments, namely histology, cell biology, elementary genetics, statistics.
3. Number of students per year — is aimed at 100 who will enter medical school direct from high school having attained the equivalent of the British 'A' levels. I think the nearest equivalent here would be grade 13 with a strong concentration on the sciences, namely Physics, Chemistry, Zoology and Botany — sometimes with advanced mathematics, but always with mathematics at 'O' level.
4. Secondees will be paid as follows:

Full professors	— N. 12,000 p.a.
Senior lecturer	— N. 10,000 p.a.
Lecturer	— N. 9,000 p.a.
exchange rate	— N. 1.0 = \$1.60

A full professor is a full professor in any language. A senior lecturer in the Nigerian University sense equates to an Associate Professor (however, since there are fewer full professors proportionate to the total faculty than in America, the real equivalence may be somewhere between associate and full professor). In the British system a Senior Lecturer is a respectable career grade to aim at from the start. A lecturer equates roughly to somewhere in between Associate and Assistant Professor.

Arrangements have been negotiated for the upgrading of the salaries of U.S. citizens so that their salaries can be paid in full

on the home based rates, partially from Nigerian sources which cover the local rates, partially from U.S.A. I.D. sources which cover the balance. There are no such arrangements yet for Canadians. The best present compromise is to arrange the secondment in terms of a sabbatical leave if this can be done, balancing the usual rates from the home University with local sources.

5. Other benefits. Subsidized housing will be available. 144 housing units are approaching completion. These comprise mainly bungalows with two bedrooms (sometimes three), a study, convertible to a bedroom if need be, a large lounge cum dining room, a verandah which in itself is a very agreeable lounging area, kitchen and, as the saying goes, the usual offices. As I understand it a rent of N. 50.00 will be charged.

I have no information about cost of electricity or other charges.

Cars — a generous car allowance is offered. Also, if needed, car advances for the initial purchase of cars. I cannot speak for to-day, but my own experience in the past was always that the purchase of cars was relatively cheap however you did it. Gasoline, however, was expensive, as was insurance.

6. The secondees will be encouraged to visit other centres, especially in the north where they are particularly short of staff in their new medical schools.
7. Climate. I have no official information, only a rather unreliable memory. Calabar is a place I have visited twice, before the civil war. It was a fascinating place situated on the Cross River. It is said that the Cross river was the original river of Sanders of the River and that Calabar was the unmentioned headquarters to which the ocean liners came. Certainly it is a deep water port, though well inland. To me it is the only part of Nigeria which looked in the least like Edgar Wallace and Hollywood would have us believe Nigeria should look. It is a thickly forested land, hot and humid for much of the year with a heavy rainfall in season. It is a land which has seen much misery in its day. It is still not hard to visualize the slave hulks lying off-shore, replaced in more enlightened days by ships dealing in the palm oil trade. Nor was all the brutality from outside. There were fierce relentless spirits in the forests and the courage of the missionaries in facing them is something never to be forgotten. Mary Slessor, a name that shines among many, is buried in Calabar. In more recent times there was the cruelty of the civil war and the destruction was sad to behold. But one thing should be remembered about this war and that is that on its conclusion there were no pogroms, no slaughter of anyone, innocent or otherwise. There was a remarkable all round forgiveness and coming together. Conqueror and rebel are now together and have done a remarkable job of rebuilding a torn country. Calabar, neutral politically, but physically remote from Lagos and its protection suffered terribly but is now rebuilding fast. The people of Calabar are a charming folk and a delight to deal with.

Let us, however, not forget that once this was the white man's grave. "Beware, beware the Blight of Benin, where few come