

Interview with Dr. Alan Gregg
at 61 Broadway, New York City,
April 8th 1932.

*56 down to 50. thousands and
budget to begin June 1932*

Dr. Gregg explained about the meeting of the executive committee at which they had taken up the proposal for McGill. It was suggested by some person that the amount of the yearly budget be reduced from fifty-six thousand to forty-five thousand as that would be in accordance with their other bequests at the present time. After some discussion it was determined to raise this amount to forty-nine thousand which was the amount he mentioned when telephoning to Dr. Martin. The members of the committee asked whether Montreal would be willing to accept this and he therefore telephoned to Dr. Martin who informed him that he had discussed the matter with Sir Arthur Currie and with Dr. Penfield. Dr. Gregg said that they had now decided to make this fifty-thousand a year which corresponded with an endowment of one million dollars. The other contributions were to be as before.

Dr. Gregg pointed out that he had explained to the members of the executive committee that at the present time certain funds in my control were being used to defray the routine expenses of the research department, and he felt that these monies should be reserved for some other purpose if possible. He therefore intended to recommend that the contribution to the budget be started in June 1932 with the expectation that this would make it possible for me to carry on the activities of the department and to devote any other money to such purpose as I thought fit.

He suggested that the trustees might perhaps propose postponement of the gift inasmuch as there are at the present time such a large number of requests from universities for undertakings which are on the point of being abandoned because of the financial situation. I pointed out to

him that because of possible changes in the political situation postponement might endanger the contribution from the province and from the city.

Dr. Gregg suggested that in the organization of the clinic I might find it difficult to find the proper neurophysiologists, with which I agreed. He then stated that Dr. Stengel had indicated to him that there was a rumour of my dissatisfaction with the arrangements in Montreal, and that the University of Pennsylvania had in mind to make a second proposal if the present arrangements on foot went astray. Dr. Gregg stated that so far as I was concerned I could always change my mind but that if he knew of any likelihood of the scheme not going through as planned, then he would have to hold up matters. I told him that I was entirely satisfied to live permanently in Montreal provided the undertaking at hand went through to a successful termination. He said that that was the only reassurance he needed and that the Foundation did not usually build a plan about one man but that in this case it had been done to some extent.

In discussing his recommendation of beginning the contribution to the departmental budget at once he said that it was his personal opinion ~~the~~ ^{his} university would be working under a considerable financial embarrassment for the next three years at least.

I pointed out to Dr. Gregg that the contact and interchange of ideas with clinics in the United States were already established and could be easily promoted, but I asked his advice with regard to what measures could be taken to promote exchange of thought and contact

with British institutions. One thought in asking this question was to impress upon him the possibility of influencing both British and American medicine from McGill in a way in which institutions in either Britain or the United States could not do because of certain national prejudices.

He replied that during his tenure of office in Paris he had seen the late effect of lectureships in the United States such as the ^eHarter lecture. He found that when a foreign professor was asked to go on such a lectureship he was very apt upon his return to his home university to send young men over to the university to which he had been invited, because of the fact that it had been brought home to him that certain things were done very well there. Also when young men were sent from that university to his laboratory they were much more apt to be received hospitably. He suggested that if McGill were to establish an annual lecture in neurology or a lectureship which recurred regularly at longer periods the men who came to deliver such a lecture would become acquainted with the work being carried out in neurology at McGill and that this would promote interchange of thought and personelle between British or continental universities and departments at McGill. I asked him how much money was necessary to create a lectureship and he felt that from five to eight hundred dollars was sufficient, part of this being used for travelling expenses and part for honorarium.

The remainder of the conversation which lasted one hour and a half ~~was~~ not concerned with McGill's project.

(Signed) Wilder Penfield.