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From  
The Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
McGill University  
Montreal.

October 1, 1931.

Honourable L. A. Taschereau, K.C., LL.D.,  
Premier of Quebec,  
Quebec, P.Q.

Re: Neurological Institute for Montreal and  
the retention of the services of Doctors  
Penfield and Cone in this Province.

My dear Premier,

Pursuant to our conversation of yesterday, let me once more outline to you the project for a Neurological Institute in Montreal.

I suppose there is no field of Medicine which offers more promise of development than the field of Brain Surgery. It is practically a virgin field. When our relatives or friends become afflicted with troubles arising from brain disturbances, too often have we put them away in the asylum or allowed them to die unnecessarily. At times, too, we were a little ashamed to acknowledge that our relatives were suffering from brain disorders. That was altogether a wrong attitude, for many of these cases could have been cured, and valuable lives saved. If progress is to be made, this part of medical science must have further facilities for research and for the training of men in this particular specialty.

For the past three years there has been established in Montreal, in connection with the English hospitals and with McGill University, a new and very successful Department of Neurological Surgery. This was made possible by bringing to Montreal two young, and yet experienced, specialists - Dr. W. Penfield and Dr. Cone - whose training in this special line of work had already placed them in the front rank of neurological surgery on the Continent. Montreal citizens, the Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University had gathered together about \$100,000 for this project, and success is already assured.

During the past year 372 operations - many of them of a major character - were performed, with brilliant results. The mortality among the major brain operations was as low as anywhere in the world, and the cures resulting have been astonishing. The team work of Doctors Penfield and Cone is admitted by American authorities to be the best on the Continent. Patients have come, not only from distant places in Canada, but from Colorado, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Mexico, Maryland and New York. There is no one in Canada to-day who is doing work comparable to theirs.

It is natural, therefore, that these men should be sought by other cities, and today we are faced with the fact that Philadelphia has offered them very generous inducements to go there to the University of Pennsylvania, where a neurological institute, fully maintained, will be



created and placed at their disposal (the prospective expenditure on their behalf in Philadelphia is approximately one and a half million dollars).

These doctors prefer to remain in Montreal. Both have acquired homes here, and Penfield has a country place near Magog. They enjoy and value highly their professional association here. Although attached formally to the Royal Victoria Hospital, they are now consultants to the Montreal General Hospital, and they also work in the closest cooperation with their friends among the French-speaking surgeons. They do not desire personal and material advantage so much as the opportunity to build up a neurological institute second to none in America. If satisfactory facilities are afforded in Montreal they will remain, but they have definitely stated that they must have some form of a neurological institute which will give them the necessary facilities to advance their work.

For this purpose, they will require a building which, I think, would cost in the neighbourhood of \$400,000. The budget to maintain such a building will amount, approximately, to \$50,000 a year, for maintenance, supplies, technicians and assistants.

I have already laid the situation before several prominent citizens of Montreal and received the assurance that they will help in the project, for the sake of keeping these men here and of the work they can do for our citizens, the fame they can bring to this City and Province. It is our intention, then, to ask certain institutions and hospitals, and also the City itself, to contribute funds to further the establishment of a neurological institute in Montreal.

Representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation are coming to the city in the near future, and they have assured us that although they have made, and will make, no definite promise to Philadelphia until they have surveyed the situation here, we have reason to believe that if they find the Province, the City and the community generally eager to establish such an institute, they will be sympathetic to the undertaking and ready to help us, but we are already informed that they cannot assist in the project without such pledges. We intend to ask them for assistance to the extent of \$500,000, or the equivalent thereof.

We believe that we can, with every reason, approach the Province of Quebec for an annual grant for the maintenance of this institute. The Province has shown, more particularly in recent years, its sympathy and practical support for any effort to improve the health and prolong the lives of our citizens. I hope that you can see your way clear to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 a year for this purpose. It will mean much to Quebec and Montreal to have the leading neurological institute of this Continent situated here (instead of in some American city). Our own people can be treated, our own young physicians and surgeons trained, and people from all over the Continent will come here for treatment.

To summarize briefly, may I say:-

1. It would be a tragedy of capital importance should Drs. Penfield and Cone be allowed to leave Canada, for their



work is such as to ensure the better care and safety of the public of this Dominion, and especially of this Province.

2. We will find the establishment of a neurological institute of the greatest significance to the standing of this community and Province, not only on this Continent but throughout the world, and both from the point of view of the treatment of the public and the education of the medical profession it will be a very significant advance.
3. The services of Doctors Penfield and Cone will be available not only for the English-speaking hospitals, but as consultants, where desired, among the French-speaking hospitals and the members of the French-Canadian medical profession, with many of whom they are already on very intimate terms.
4. This institute would attract patients, not only from elsewhere on this Continent, but post-graduate students and doctors from far and wide.
5. We will pledge ourselves that should such an institute be provided, Doctors Penfield and Cone will remain permanently in Montreal.

Ever yours faithfully,

A.W. Currie

Principal and Vice-Chancellor