

July 18th, 1944.

Wing

Dear Colonel Currie,

In further regard to our earlier correspondence on the subject of the Montreal Neurological Institute, we had a meeting yesterday of a special committee set up by the Board of Governors to consider the whole situation. I reported to that committee the gist of my conversations with yourself and Colonel Mackenzie, as well as Colonel Mackenzie's statement that hospital accommodation for service patients would be urgently necessary in the early autumn.

In view of this urgency, and of the fact that the cost of constructing a satisfactory permanent wing to the Neurological Institute is now estimated at a much higher figure than was anticipated (very largely because of the substantial increase in building costs which have occurred), the committee decided that it would not be appropriate for the University to undertake the cost of constructing such a permanent wing at the present time.

As an alternative measure, which is of some long-range benefit to the University but, in our judgment, of even greater short range advantage to the Army Medical authorities, it was decided that the University should undertake such internal reconstruction of the existing Neurological Institute Building, particularly on the fifth floor, as will increase the facilities of the operating theatres, the radiological equipment and the electro-encephalographic equipment. These improvements, including the purchase of new equipment, will involve an expenditure approaching \$100,000, but I am assured by Dr. Penfield that they will make it possible for the Montreal Neurological Institute to assume responsibility for the active treatment of a larger number of patients by removing some of the existing bottle-necks.

The Board of Governors does not suggest that the Dominion Government should bear any part of the cost of this proposed reconstruction which, as I have already said, is of long-range benefit to the Institute and to McGill University. The Board does, however, feel that the Dominion Government should assume full responsibility for the erection, on land adjacent to the Institute, of such temporary hospital building as will provide accommodation for the military beds that are needed and the incidental services essential thereto. It is our feeling that the Government can carry out such construction much more expeditiously than the University, and since this temporary accommodation is specifically required for war casualties, it seems natural to us that the full cost of erecting and maintaining the temporary structure should be a Dominion Government expenditure.

In a sense these temporary structures represent a variation of the Field House scheme to provide increased accommodation

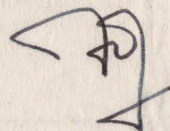
p.t.c.

without any permanent construction. It is my opinion, however, that a new temporary structure on land adjacent to the Montreal Neurological Institute would be vastly more satisfactory than the utilization of the Field House. In the first place I do not think that it would be more expensive; in the second place its facilities could be more closely integrated with those of the Montreal Neurological Institute and, in the third place, there would be less difficulty about the continued use of the temporary structure during the immediate post-war period than would arise in the case of the Field House which would be urgently necessary for athletic purposes as soon as the war is over.

In response to his request, I have already informed Colonel J. C. Mackenzie by telephone of this decision, and I am hopeful that you will be able to let me know within the very near future the final decision of the Dominion Government in regard to this problem. Whatever we do should be done promptly if we are to obtain any benefit from it during the autumn of this year.

With renewed good wishes to you as always, I remain,

Cordially yours,



Colonel George Currie,
Deputy Minister of National Defence,
Ottawa, Ont.

Copy to Colonel J. C. Mackenzie
Dean Fraser
Dr. Penfield
The Chancellor