

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

Mr. Chancellor:

By authority of the Senate, I have the honour to present to you Henry Foss Hall. A veteran of service in World War I with the 42nd Battalion, R.H.C., of Montreal, he was later educated at McGill, Eastern and Harvard Universities, and at the Montreal Diocesan College, of which institution he is now a member of the Board of Governors. He has been continuously associated with Sir George Williams College since 1926, and is now under appointment as its Principal. He was the first full-time student counsellor in any Canadian university, was at one time headmaster of Sir George Williams High School, has been Dean of the College since 1935 and Vice-Principal since 1954, and, as Professor of Natural Sciences he instructs over five hundred students annually in a basic undergraduate course. Outside the College, he carries responsibility with the Montreal Centre of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, The Montreal Council of Social Agencies, The Counselling and Placement Association of the universities, and The National Council of the Y.M.C.A. He has seen the institution, of which he is now to be the head, grow in size, in public acceptance, and in breadth of curriculum until it has become a hive of academic activity unique in Canada, its swarming numbers being now housed in a great new building, recently opened. It is the desire of this University to honour him for his successful, devoted and sustained service in the fields of education and of human betterment. I therefore present, that you may confer on him the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, Henry Foss Hall.



May 21st, 1956.

G. P. Gilmour.

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

February 2, 1956

Dean H. F. Hall,
Sir George Williams College,
1441 Drummond Street,
Montreal, P. Q.

Dear Dean Hall:

A few of us who are on the Honorary Degrees Committee of this University would like to recommend your name to the remainder of the Committee and through them to the Senate of McMaster University for the honorary degree Doctor of Laws, to be conferred at our Spring Convocation in Arts and Science on Monday May 21. The honour which we would like to give you is based primarily on your own achievements and influence in educational work, but it is also intended to be a recognition of the remarkable growth of the work of Sir George Williams College.

The penalty attaching to the invitation is that you would be expected to deliver the Convocation Address, which should be between twenty and twenty-five minutes in length. The subject is entirely within your own discretion, and I am sure you can present the necessary mixture of the grave and the gay that is suitable for an occasion when at least two hundred young people are receiving their degrees in the presence of their relatives and friends. Our Spring Convocation involves an audience of about fifteen hundred people. We plan at this particular convocation to confer only the one honorary degree.

I am sure you understand that I am writing only an exploratory letter. I have no authority to make a firm offer of the honorary degree until the committee has met, which it may not do in the next three or four weeks. In the meantime, I would like to make sure that you are available for May 21 and that you would be willing to undertake the task of the address. When that is clear, I can pretty well stake my own position on the decision of the Committee and the Senate. But I must observe scrupulously the courtesies of the situation.

In hopes of a favourable reply, and with warm personal good wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,



G. P. Gilmour

GPG/JM
Signed in Dr. Gilmour's absence

February 6, 1956.

Dr. G.P. Gilmour,
President & Vice-Chancellor,
McMaster University,
Hamilton, Ontario.

Dear Dr. Gilmour:

Your kind letter of February 2nd is a great surprise to me. The possibility of being honoured by a Canadian university with the standing of McMaster has never occurred to me and I am quite sure that such an honour is not deserved. I have a high regard for McMaster and for you personally and am therefore touched that you should think of me in this connection. Incidentally, I appreciate your kind reference to this College and the fact that you were the speaker at very short notice at our first Convocation.

I fully expect to be free to be with you on Monday, May 21st, and would be pleased to be with you quite aside from the honour which you suggest.

I quite appreciate your final paragraph regarding the tentative and exploratory nature of your letter.

With sincere personal regards,

Yours faithfully,

Dean.

HFH:dmc

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

April 16, 1956

Dr. Henry F. Hall,
Sir George Williams College,
Montreal, P. Q.

Dear Dr. Hall:

The Senate of McMaster University on April 13 formally approved of the recommendation of its Honorary Degrees Committee, and I am therefore writing to say that the honorary degree Doctor of Laws has been authorized in your case, to be conferred on Monday afternoon May 21. It will give me a great deal of pleasure to present you to the Chancellor that day.

There will be no need for you to bring academic costume with you. We will present you with the hood, and will lend you a ceremonial gown for the afternoon. There will be a Governors' luncheon preceding Convocation and a garden party for graduating students following it. The proceedings will be over by dinner time, since the Convocation commences at three and the garden party is usually concluded by six o'clock. I hope that it will be possible for Mrs. Hall to accompany you. It will be an added pleasure for us if she can come.

Will you please send at your earliest convenience your curriculum vitae and a shiny photograph for press purposes. The announcement will be made in the press almost at once, and you are entirely at liberty to let the matter be known among your friends before the official announcement.

Please let us know if there are friends to whom you would like invitations to Convocation to be sent.

Yours sincerely,



G. P. Gilmour

GPG/JM

April 20, 1956.

Dr. G.P. Gilmour,
President & Vice-Chancellor,
McMaster University,
Hamilton, Ontario.

Dear Dr. Gilmour:

It is with sincere gratitude and considerable humility that I write to thank you for your kind letter of April 16 notifying me that the Senate of McMaster University has approved the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws to be conferred on me on May 21. Needless to say I realize that the primary suggestion in this case no doubt came from you and I appreciate your interest and goodwill.

As suggested I am enclosing a brief statement and a photograph. I am also enclosing a brief biography which appeared in a YMCA publication some time ago. I do not envy you the job of writing a citation.

I hope that my wife will be able to go to Hamilton with me for this occasion and she is looking forward to it very much. It was kind of you to invite her. With regard to invitations to the Convocation, I would appreciate having one sent to my son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Hall, Park Street, Delhi, Ontario.

If you have any suggestions regarding some emphasis which might be made in my address I would appreciate having any suggestion which you might care to make.

Mr. Hodge has kindly given me copies of the excellent publication entitled "McMaster Alumni News" for December 23, 1955 and March 29, 1956. I have read these with much

Dr. G.P. Gilmour,
April 20, 1956,
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interest. Incidentally, I feel all the more honoured after learning that at your last Convocation for the purpose of installing the Chancellor, honorary degrees were conferred upon the Prime Minister of Canada and the Mayor of Hamilton.

Again my sincere appreciation and thanks,

Yours faithfully

Dean.

HFH:dmc

Address by Henry F. Hall

at Convocation of McMaster University

May 21, 1956.

My first word to you must be one of sincere appreciation and thanks for the great honour which you have so graciously awarded me today. I could say much which might seem fatuous. May I simply say, Mr. Chancellor (and I do so in all sincerity) that there is no university in Canada from which I would rather receive this honour than from McMaster. I am proud and happy to add my pledge to that of McMaster's own sons and daughters that I shall endeavour henceforth in my life and work to be worthy of the trust and confidence of this great university.

May I add, Mr. Chancellor, that I bring the members of this university the greetings and good-will of the Governors and the Faculty of Sir George Williams College.

I must add also, and I am very happy to do so, that we are delighted to note that your distinguished President will be in Montreal in a few days to receive an honorary degree from McGill University. This is a matter of great satisfaction to us as I am sure it is to you his colleagues and friends on this campus.

This day and this occasion belong primarily to those who see in it the achievement of long cherished dreams. We must not confuse degrees and diplomas with education and development. I am always a little suspicious of the prospective student who places the emphasis on the degree rather than on the education. I am sure that you at McMaster are more concerned with education than you are with pieces of paper called diplomas or with letters after your names called degrees.

In spite of this, graduation is a great symbolic event. The historic task of graduation speakers seems to be to prolong the event, either by making pontifical pronouncements about the state of the world in general, or by giving advice (sometimes surprisingly good) to new graduates now said to be "going out into the world." In considering these two alternatives I am inclined to the latter as being closer to my more familiar role. So I fear that you will be subjected to what might be called some random thoughts on the peaceful uses of educational energy. I was recently introduced as an educational theorist and it is said that educational theorists go down deeper, stay down longer and come up dryer than anyone else! I promise you that I shall not go down very deep nor stay down very long. Freedom from dryness, however, I cannot guarantee.

You who graduate today have obtained through your own efforts and those of your teachers and parents, the basis of a good education. Now you face the critical period. You have a good solid foundation of an education and there are two things which can be done with a foundation. One is to neglect it and allow it to disintegrate and the other is to build upon it. A former teacher of mine once said that "Nothing, except perhaps religion, disintegrates as fast as education once the seeking for it stops." This I believe is true for education does not exist

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apart from persons. It has no reality apart from personality, apart from ability, apart from character. Of course books may exist apart from persons but books become only waste paper if people do not read them and understand them.

Therefore I seriously warn you that your education can and may disappear "if the seeking for it stops." These diplomas which you and I quite rightly prize so highly today may become only old pieces of paper in the top bureau drawer if what they now stand for is not maintained in our own lives and by our own efforts. Abilities and skills so often fade; information becomes hazy and critical and exact thinking is replaced by clichés and platitudes. In education as in other things it is easier to go down than up and to stand still is to regress. In fact, like the Red Queen and Alice, we sometimes have to go as fast as we can to stay where we are.

The cold storage theory of education -- that the educational process consists of filling the mind with knowledge (as a jar is filled with water) finds expression in the Latin proverb "Ipsa scientia potestas est" (Knowledge itself is power). Of course knowledge is power but not knowledge itself but ability to use knowledge. I am sure that you new graduates are aware of the need not only of keeping your education alive but also of keeping it working. Francis Bacon wrote that "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability."

Then too we have Mr. Dooley's theory of education. Most of you are too young to remember Mr. Dooley, the homespun American philosopher, who once said that "it doesn't matter what you teach a boy so long as he doesn't like it!" The extreme opposite of this would be I suppose that no one should ever learn anything that he did not like and to this I am equally opposed. Surely, however, the great secret of the educational process (if it be a secret) lies in the concept of interest.

Louis Bromfield, the American author who died recently, wrote that his grandfather's theory of education was to him the best one. He said that there are a few people in the world who seem early to develop an absorbing interest and these will get an education in spite of environment. Then there is an opposite group who never seem to be really interested in anything. However, most people form a great group in between. They are waiting to be stimulated; like dry tinder a spark of light may set them afire with a flame of enthusiasm. If we teachers could only find the right spark then students would educate themselves which, of course, they have to do anyway.

And so, new graduates of 1956, whatever may have been your experience in the past, today you take over the responsibility for, and the direction of, your own education which to me at least means your own life. This I believe is true whether you go on to graduate or professional training, as I am sure many of you will, or particularly if you go now to a new job and, therefore, in a very real sense to a new kind of life. Edouard Spangler, the German philosopher, recently told a graduating class that we should study not so much to learn some thing as to be somebody. I am sure that my students get tired of my dictum that "we become the sort of people we practice being," but I am sure that it is true.

It sounds, I know, trite and platitudinous for me to say to you that this is a great country and a great time in which to be graduating but this also is true.

I think it was Harry S. Truman who was asked, when retiring from the Presidency of the United States, if he had any regrets. He said that his greatest regret was that he was 68 instead of 18 or 28. Likewise some of the older of us here no doubt feel at least a slight twinge of envy when we realize the challenge and the great opportunity which lies before the splendid young men and women here who today receive their first university degrees.

In practical terms what is this challenge -- what is this opportunity? In the first place no doubt there is the opportunity of a job -- a profession or occupation. This is a primary and serious matter. All of us want to get on in the world but surely we also want to make our contribution to the community, the country and the age in which we live. Any honest constructive job is an opportunity for service, as well as an opportunity for making a living and I would not place one occupation above another. Yet many thoughtful people are concerned about this matter. The increasing demand for technically trained and highly specialized experts is reinforced by the simple and obvious fact that the world of our day, divided as it is into two different and opposed ideological camps, is engaged in a technical race. That we need more and better technical training is obvious. However, we must not sell out those precious values of our whole cultural heritage which are the spiritual core and heart of what we call our way of life. It is said that an interviewer in a large company when interviewing applicants for executive posts asks "What can you do that an electric brain can't do better?" and it is perhaps a good question. The Director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (Dr. J.R. Kidd) said the other day that the confusion of the claims of the technical and the cultural reminds him of the story of the cowboy at the Calgary Stampede who was having a particularly tough time riding a vicious bronco. The horse, while tossing wildly, caught its foot in the stirrup. At this the cowboy jumped off shouting "All right, if you're getting on, I'm getting off!" We must not let the horse do the riding too.

I, like others, am seriously worried about the relative lack of able and devoted young people who are entering the "service professions." The need for an increasing number of such educated young people in the ministry of the church, teaching, social work, nursing and the like is just not being met. I am pleased to learn that among the graduates of McMaster there is still a high proportion who are preparing for these and similar professions. Twice in the lifetime of the older of us here we have heard the call go out across the land, "Your King and Country need you." And twice have we seen the great majority of Canadian youth offer their service and, if need be, their lives. Yet the problem remains that, while many are willing to die for their country, fewer seem willing to live for it.

However, above and beyond the question of mere occupation is that of quality of life and finally I come to challenge you, young men and women of McMaster -- youth of Canada -- to what ideal will you give yourselves? What above all is to be henceforth the governing purpose of your lives?

We are told in the New Testament that Jesus went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is the Kingdom which He prayed might come, "on earth as it is in Heaven." This is the Kingdom which He said is "within you" and surely the greatest ideal we know is so to live that the Kingdom of God shall be a reality in us, in our little community and in the world.

There is, I fear, abroad in our own day a concept that the Kingdom of God is really the kingdom of man -- a materialistic, humanistic theory that all we need to do is to make a better political system, to apply science to the welfare of man and the Kingdom will come on the earth. As for me it is my faith that there is a Power above and yet within, without which not one cell can divide to make two and without which we, with all our ingenious wit, can avail nothing of lasting worth. Surely we must test our lives against the highest and best we know and our society against the ideal of an eternal Kingdom, "whose maker and builder is God."

May I humbly leave with you the great words of Cecil Spring-Rice:

"And there's another country, I've
heard of long ago --
Most dear to them that love her,
Most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies,
We may not see her King,
Her fortress is a faithful heart,
her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently
her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness
and all her paths are peace."