

MCGILL STANDS STILL

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In the last number of this paper, there appeared a rather flattering article, written by Mr. Pitts, of the part McGill, and her graduates, were playing in the national life of Canada. At first sight, by accepting Mr. Pitts appraisal at its face value, it would certainly seem that McGill was fulfilling the traditions and ideals, of a fine and liberal nature. But nothing is more dangerous than a superficial praise of oneself and when one analyses the grounds for Mr. Pitts' congratulations, one is inevitably drawn to a less appreciative conclusion, and to a qualified pessimism about the immediate future.

To begin with -- and this is comparatively insignificant, owing to the arbitrary nature of the choice -- let us take the list, which Mr. Pitts supplied, of those men who are said to have done so much to realise the "function and ideal of McGill to make men". Of that number, three are included one is forced to believe, merely because they are, or were, the principals of the institution, as if that were enough of itself, to confer greatness of ideals on any one of them. If one is capable of divorcing one's intellect from one's reverence for established authority, one is at least justified in doubting whether any of those three has achieved, in himself, any degree of academic, or kindred, distinction, sufficient to merit for him the title of great. Though one is, of course, a well known soldier. The truth is, however hard it may look on paper, that the principal of McGill is chosen for his administrative qualities, and for his capacity in dealing with those rather fractious sources from which McGill draws its fresh capital. A "hard-won independence" carries