



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 57/36 . THE CHALLENGE OF SOVIET TECHNOLOGY

An address by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker at McGill University Convocation, October 7, 1957.

The honour conferred upon those associated with me today and upon me is one that is deeply appreciated by us all.

McGill University, for so many years by its contribution to learning having made Canadians in every province its debtor, makes the honour all the greater and more significant.

The bonds between Saskatchewan, my Alma Mater, and McGill, have been close and fruitful. Many of our graduates have come here to do post-graduate work, and among those who have come from the staff have been President James Thomson and the late Dr. Ira Allan McKay.

Indeed, the exchange of students and professors among the universities has resulted in Canadian universities becoming essential instrumentalities in the promotion of Canadian unity.

On occasions such as this it is natural to look back on the past. How vast have been the material changes since the founding of McGill is revealed in "Its Story" published in 1921:

"In the days of James McGill, Montreal was a small town of from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants ... One-third of the houses were wooden huts ... In 1813, the year of James McGill's death, only nine vessels entered Montreal from the sea, and their total capacity was but 1,589 tons ... Slavery was not unknown, and a sale advertisement towards the end of the century included in the articles to be sold 'A stout, healthy negro man about 28 years of age - an excellent cook, and very fit for working on a farm'. A mail for England was dispatched about once a month. It went by way of New York and took from three to four weeks to reach that city".