

*Remarks to Board on Presentation of  
Tax Survey.*

MUSEUMS

In the 16 museums now at McGill University I believe we have a treasure house the value of which we know not. It is certainly many hundreds of thousands; it might be millions; I do not know.

If knowledge of the money value is meagre to a degree, it is equally certain that their value as instruments of education has not begun to be appreciated. Britain could pay her war debts to the United States by transferring to that country the possession of the contents of her museums and art galleries; but such a suggestion would be unequivocally and unanimously condemned.

We are an educational institution, and yet we shamefully neglect to use as we can and should the most potential educational force in our possession. People do not remember 25% of what they read; but it is asserted that we remember 70% of what we see. Probably all of us have read much about the battle of Waterloo, have been entertained while reading, but we have largely forgotten. To those who have seen the field itself, the memory cannot fade; and how much a large scale model of the field would help us! How much better educated in Canadian history the children of Montreal would be if all of them could visit the McCord Museum, if all the exhibits were set out as they should be, and if a scholarly curator were in charge of all our museums.

We have not even begun to use museums in this country as they can and should be used; neither have we used them as they are used in the United States, in Great Britain, France and Germany. The degree of civilization to which any nation, city or province has attained is best shewn by the character of its public museums and the liberality with which they are maintained. There is no other form of social or educational service that possesses such an effective key.

The backwardness of a community is very effectively shewn by the neglect of museums, and by the neglect to use such museums as we have. You do not find museums among uncivilized or backward peoples.

I know of no more effective contribution that McGill could make to education than to use her museum material, and such material as would come to her, as it could be used. I believe that for the sake of that possible contribution, for the sake of the enjoyment and satisfaction not only of themselves but of their children, for the sake of their own self-respect, the citizens of Montreal should help McGill to put up a proper museum.