

Copys
memo
attached
where *to* *marks*

March 8th, 1932.

Professor R. de L. French,
Faculty of Engineering.

My dear Professor French,

I was very interested in the proposals made by you at the meeting of the Faculty of Engineering yesterday afternoon with reference to the improvement of the English of your students. I wonder if it would be possible for you to loan me about twenty samples of the worst English you have encountered? I feel that I must make some reference to this matter at the meeting of the Protestant Committee next week. I would also like to have from you the outline of the proposed new course.

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal

**MCGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL**

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Samples of poor student English
returned to Prof. French May 20/32

March 14th, 1932.

Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., LL.D.,
Principal.

Dear Sir Arthur:-

After receiving your letter regarding the question of English in the Faculty of Engineering, I discussed the matter with the Dean and we decided that the best form of answer would be a memorandum stating the problem and conditions which confront us.

We have therefore prepared the enclosed statement which explains what we have in mind. This will enable you to understand our ideas and will serve your purpose better than an outline of a course of study, which may be misunderstood. We enclose also a brief statement of what may be included in such a course, with a few examples culled from our essays and examination papers to show that we have reason to desire a change.

Please return the examples of students' work when you have done with them.

We shall be glad to answer any further inquiry you may wish to make.

Yours faithfully,

R. D. French.

File English department 1936 *copy* *11/7/36*

Memorandum on "English" as it affects the Faculty of
Engineering.

This memorandum is an attempt to state briefly the problem of "English" as it affects the Faculty of Engineering, because this is vital to a proper understanding of some of the problems which confront us. Experience shows that a considerable proportion of our students have a limited command of English, either written or spoken. Evidence of this is found in their essays, reports and examination papers. Inability to select and use words so that a definition, or a phrase of a specification, may be clearly expressed and the meaning not open to doubt, is also very noticeable. This can be ascribed partly to loose thinking, and partly to lack of facility of expression.

Engineers engaged in professional practice and those in charge of the personnel departments of our large industrial organizations, constantly stress the importance of a student acquiring a fuller knowledge of English. Our own graduates, after a few years' experience, not infrequently express a wish that the courses in English could be strengthened. The Faculty recognizes that there is great room for improvement, and during the past three or four years instruction has been given in the First and Second Years with the hope of effecting a change.

The problem is an extremely difficult one, the engineering student in general being what a doctor would describe as a "bad patient" when so-called "cultural courses" are prescribed. This does not mean that he is of a lower mentality than those in other faculties or professions, but that he is of a distinctly

different type. He deals largely with inanimate things, and expresses the results of his thoughts in blue-prints and drawings, or by models made to scale. Frequently this is the best, even the only method he can use. Our social and industrial organization is changing however, and it is necessary that the engineer of to-day, no matter what branch of the profession he is following, should have clear fundamental ideas on subjects which may be classed broadly as "non-technical". These constitute a general background for a proper understanding of our social structure, towards which the technical skill of the engineer has contributed so largely. To this end, interest must be developed in such subjects as the following:-

- (a) The general history of mankind, particularly with regard to the evolution of modern social and industrial conditions.
- (b) The principles of political science and economics.
- (c) Modern industrial organization, in the broad sense.

We believe that a great forward step will be made if the natural curiosity of the student can be directed along proper channels, and to this end his interest in English, both as a tool of his profession and as a means of acquiring the desired kind of knowledge of the subjects outlined above is of primary importance and must be stimulated.

Begin here
Experience has shown that the regular courses given by departments devoted to such studies, fail in some measure to attain their objective. The engineering student seems to establish a barrage or smoke-screen which those who do

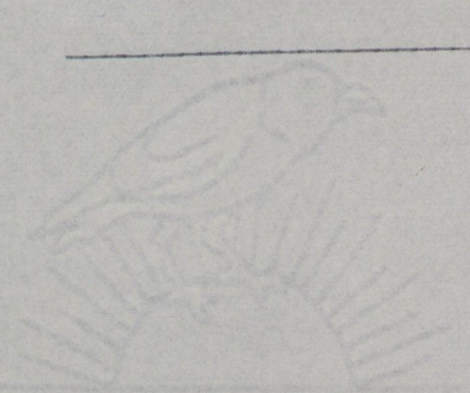
not clearly understand his outlook and method of approach, find it difficult to penetrate. We believe that more can be accomplished if a well-planned effort is made by the teachers of engineering subjects and by engineers in practice to bring home to the student the vital importance of such studies. In a word, we must try to enable him to see over and beyond the wall which technical study alone tends to set up around him.

This is a difficult task, but we believe that if the inertia of the student can be overcome, he will be enabled to do much for himself, and will do so through his own reading. We propose therefore to use the experience gained in the past three or four years with the First and Second Year classes in planning a broad course of supervised study extending over the four years of our course. We believe that in many cases proper methods of study are not followed, and that much may be accomplished by an effort to teach a student how to study, and how to develop those habits of thought and expression which make for clearness of perception and the exercise of sound judgment. Many of these points can be well illustrated and the attention of the student arrested, by reference to the procedure which should be followed in the collection of data on subjects in which he is interested professionally, and in the preparation of technical reports. Opportunity will also be provided for writing concise descriptive papers and simple specifications, and for practice in speaking before the class.

A series of talks on the development of engineering and allied sciences, and on our social and industrial structure, will be given by members of our own and of other Faculties, and by outside speakers. We shall seek to establish more personal contacts with the students through group criticism and discussion, and proceeding by methods which may appear somewhat unorthodox, try to meet what we believe to be the special needs of our students. The active interest and participation of all departments will be needed in this effort to broaden the outlook of students, and to create an attitude of mind which will react favourably on all our work.

The content of such a course cannot be stated in terms as definite as those applicable to subjects like mathematics, electricity or mechanics. It is impossible to write "ideas" into a bald summary of any course. The attached outline of our plans will therefore be meaningless from our standpoint unless it is viewed in the light of this memorandum, and will appear to cover work done in the schools. Our experience shows, however, that students can be almost immune to some courses of instruction, not excluding those of a technical nature for which the teachers of the Faculty are responsible. Possibly they may be immune to the efforts which we propose to make, but we are encouraged to try the experiment.

Some examples of bad English, and of things that could have been better expressed otherwise, are also appended. These are all taken from essays, reports or examination papers of engineering students.



G. Brown
R. H. French

March 14th, 1932.

EDINBURGH BOND

1. The economic value of English to the engineer.
 2. A brief history of the language.
 3. Some odd facts regarding words.
 4. English in college, taking notes, laboratory reports, etc.
 5. The writer's tools,- dictionaries, etc.
 6. Letters,- physical make-up, conventions, composition, etc.
 7. Engineering reports, methods of collecting and presenting data.
 8. Descriptive papers, the summer essay, etc.
 9. Specifications.
 10. Making your own handbook.
 11. \ Short speeches on non-technical subjects.
 12. Reading for information and for pleasure.
 13. || Careful criticism of work submitted by students.
|| Correcting work; especially with foreign-language students.
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MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean,
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.

*Thos in Brown
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October 25th, 1932.

Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,
Principal.

Dear Sir Arthur:-

I enclose a statement showing some details of registration in the Faculty of Engineering for the current session.

You will note that in the School of Architecture the registration is almost identical with that of last session, and the distribution of students indicates that the registration is likely to be maintained for the next two or three sessions.

In the Engineering courses 333 students are registered as against 335 last session. You will note a considerable decrease in the I Year entry, the figures being 82 as against 108 last session. This decrease has been largely offset by increased registration in the higher years, notably in the IV Year. Several graduates have returned to take additional courses, and are registered in IV Year subjects. In addition, 3 students are taking partial courses. This registration of graduates and partial students reflects the industrial conditions. The men concerned are not proceeding to higher degrees, but are taking such courses as they need in view of the work in which they have been engaged.

There are usually two or three withdrawals about this time, but the figures submitted are substantially correct. The disconcerting feature is the large reduction in registration in the I Year Engineering Course, as this will be reflected in the entry in the upper years in the succeeding sessions. Our graduates of the past two sessions have found great difficulty in obtaining employment, and the number of graduate engineers, having several years experience, who are now out of employment is continually increasing. In view of these conditions it is natural that our entry should be checked, and while it is likely that some graduates will



MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean,
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.

Sir Arthur Currie.

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return for further courses during the period of depression, there is good reason to believe that our total entry will not increase, but rather decrease.

I have examined our records, and find that of the students registered in I Year last session 18 have failed to register this session. Of these, 2 withdrew before the end of the first term in 1931-32, and 4 whose records were very unsatisfactory, were told that we could not accept their registration during the current session. Of the remaining 12, 5 were ordered to repeat the work of the year, but have not returned. The remaining 7 were eligible to proceed to the II Year, some of them having only minor conditions, but only 1 of the 7 sat for supplemental examinations and having failed to pass, he decided to remain out of College. All these 18 students come from different parts of Canada, the majority being from Montreal. The additional fees charged to non-British students has therefore not been effective in any of these cases.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Registrar for his information.

Yours faithfully,

Dean.

McGill University,
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.

REGISTRATION.

School of Architecture.

	<u>1932-33.</u>	<u>1931-32.</u>
I Year	13	16
II "	11	10
III "	9	6
IV "	6	10
V "	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Total registration</u>	50	51

Engineering.

I Year	82	108
II Year Chem. Eng.	18	
II " Engineer.	69	
II " Partial	<u>1</u>	82
III " Chem.	13	15
III " Civil	10	12
III " Elect.	25	30
III " Mech.	24	14
III " Metallurgy	1	3
III " Mining	8	
III " " Part.	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
	9	79
IV " Chem.	13	9
IV " Civil..	18	
IV " "(G)..	<u>1</u>	25
IV " Elect.	24	
IV " "(G)..	<u>1</u>	18
IV " Mech..	12	
IV " "(G)..	<u>4</u>	6
IV " Metall....	3	1
IV " Min....	3	
IV " "(G)..	1	
IV " "(P)..	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
	81	66

Total Registration in the
Faculty of Engineering..... 383 386

Graduate

(G) = ~~Registered in the Faculty of Engineering.~~

(P) = partial student in Faculty of Engineering.

October 25th, 1932.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

October 5th, 1929.

Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., LL.D.,
Principal,
McGill University.

Dear Sir Arthur,

In accordance with your request I am forwarding herewith a copy of a letter which I propose to send to the Secretary of Corporation, regarding the application of the Montreal Women's Club for the admission of women students to the Department of Architecture. I am also enclosing a copy of the Faculty Minute.

Of course I shall not forward the letter unless and until it receives your approval.

Yours faithfully,

H. W. Mackay

Dean.

Encl.

Copy for the Principal.

October 5th, 1929.

J. A. Nicholson, Esq., LL.D.,
Secretary to Corporation,
McGill University.

Dear Dr. Nicholson,

Your letter stating that Corporation has received a communication from the Montreal Women's Club, asking that women students be admitted to the courses in Architecture, was placed before the Faculty of Applied Science at its last meeting.

In approaching the consideration of this question the Faculty finds:-

1. That the accommodation in the Department of Architecture is now taxed to the utmost, and that additional students cannot be admitted unless more room is provided.

2. That it is impossible to provide additional accommodation for the Department in the present Engineering Building because all the remaining space in the building is urgently required for the regular work of the Engineering Departments housed therein.

3. That the Engineering Building was designed for male students exclusively. No cloak room, common room or rest room is available for women, and owing

Dr. Nicholson2.

to the layout and construction of the building, and lack of available space, it is practically impossible to provide such accommodation.

4. The drafting rooms are open to architectural students until 10 p.m., and an important part of the work is done in the evening. From 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. there is no staff supervision, discipline being maintained by the students themselves. This plan has worked admirably, but the advent of women students would obviously require the supervision of a member of the staff during the evening hours. As no member of the staff is now available for such duty a new appointment would be necessary.

For these reasons the Faculty feels that it cannot recommend to Corporation that women be admitted to the Department of Architecture under present conditions.

Yours faithfully,

Dean.

Extract from Minutes of a meeting of the
Faculty of Applied Science, held October 2nd, 1929.

"Professor Traquair stated that the question had been thoroughly discussed; it has been concluded to be impracticable to admit women for various reasons, among which he mentioned the following:-

- (1) Women are not admitted to the Faculty of Applied Science, and the School of Architecture is an integral part of that Faculty.
- (2) There are no provisions in the Engineering Building for the accommodation of women students, and it would be an expensive matter to provide these.
- (3) At present the School of Architecture has a registration of forty, and there is no accommodation available for additional students.
- (4) Much architectural draughting is done at night, the main drawing-room being open until ten o'clock. The responsibility for the maintenance of discipline in the evening is assumed by the students themselves. If women students were admitted, it would be necessary to provide staff supervision during these evening drawing periods, and such supervision would require additional members of the staff and put the School to extra expense for which it has no funds.

Professor Traquair further remarked that the exclusion of women from the School of Architecture had no bearing upon their exclusion from the profession in this Province, inasmuch as admission to the profession is controlled by the Province of Quebec Association of Architects and not by McGill University.

Professor Traquair, seconded by Professor Nobbs, moved that this Faculty does not consider it possible to admit women students to the School of Architecture. The motion was carried."

October 8, 1929.

Dean H.M. MacKay,
Faculty of Applied Science,
McGill University.

Dear Dean MacKay:-

The Principal asked me to say that he quite approves of your letter and that he thinks it should be sent at once.

Yours faithfully,