

PREFACE.

THIS volume is intended as a special memorial of the completion of the first fifty years of the history of The Canadian Institute. The introductory article by Sir Sandford Fleming deals with the origin and early days of the Institute, and is of special interest as a record of affairs in which he was an actual participant; affairs as to which he can more than any other now living say, *quorum pars magna fui*. He brings the record down to 1853, when the Institute had passed the critical stage of infancy and was fairly launched on a career which, with the vicissitudes which attend all mundane things, has on the whole been satisfactory. It is not intended to detail the subsequent history of the Institute; that would be too tedious, and would possess but little interest, except perhaps to a few. It may be well, however, in this place to note a few facts by way of summary.

In 1855 took place the union with the Toronto Athenæum. This brought a considerable accession to the membership, and the books belonging to the Athenæum were the nucleus of a library that has now become, perhaps, the most nearly complete scientific reference library in the Dominion.

In the same year the Hon. G. W. Allan presented the Institute with a site for a building on Pembroke Street. It was gratefully accepted but was afterwards re-conveyed to Mr. Allan and the present site on Richmond Street was purchased in 1863. Plans for a building were at once prepared, but the Institute did not find itself financially able to proceed with its construction until 1875, when the work was begun and carried to completion in 1876, very largely through the persistent efforts of Professor Loudon, now President of the Toronto University.

It is somewhat curious to note that in 1859 there was a proposal to change the name to The Royal Society of Canada, or The Royal Academy of Sciences of Canada. The Governor-General did not look on the proposal favourably and it was dropped.