

is given to research as well as to publication. Here, we may be content in the first instance with the latter alone; but if the Society shall at first be sustained by the Government, it may be hoped that, as in older countries, private benefactions and bequests will flow in to it, so that eventually it may be able not merely to afford means of publication but to extend substantial aid to young and struggling men of science who are following out, under difficulties, important investigations.

In return for aid given to this Society, the Government may also have the benefit of its advice as a body of experts in any case of need. The most insignificant natural agencies sometimes attain to national importance. A locust, a midge, or a parasitic fungus, may suddenly reduce to naught the calculations of a finance-minister. The great natural resources of the land and of the sea are alike under the control of laws known to science. We are occasionally called on to take our part in the observation of astronomical or atmospheric phenomena of world-wide interest. In such cases it is the practice of all civilized governments to have recourse to scientific advice, and in a Society like this our Government can command a body of men free from the distracting influence of private and local interests and able to warn against the schemes of charlatans and pretenders.

Another object which we should have in view is that of concentrating the benefits of the several local societies scattered through the Dominion. Some of these are of long standing and have done much original work. The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec is, I believe, the oldest of these bodies, and its Transactions include not merely literature and history but much that is of great value in natural science, while it has been more successful than any of our other societies in the accumulation of a library. The Natural History Society of Montreal, of which I have had the honour to be a member for 27 years, is now in its 53rd year. It has published seventeen volumes of Proceedings, including probably a larger mass of original information respecting the natural history of Canada than is to be found in any other publication. It has accumulated a valuable museum, and has done much to popularize science. It has twice induced the American Association for the Advancement of Science to hold its meetings in Canada, and was the first body to propose the establishment of a Geological Survey. The Canadian Institute of Toronto, occupying the field of literature as well as science, though a younger has been a more vigorous society; and its Transactions are equally voluminous and valuable. The Natural History Society of St. John, New Brunswick, though it has not published so much, has carried out some very important researches in local geology, which are known and valued throughout the world. The Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science is a flourishing body and publishes valuable Transactions. The Institut Canadien of Quebec, and the Ottawa Natural History Society, are also flourishing and useful institutions. The new Natural History Society of Manitoba has entered on a vigorous and hopeful career. There are also in the Dominion some societies of great value cultivating more restricted fields than those above referred to, and of a character rather special than local. As examples of these I may mention the Entomological Society of Canada, the Historical Society and the Numismatic Society of Montreal.

Did I suppose that this Society would interfere with the prosperity of such local bodies, I should be slow to favour its establishment. I believe, however, that the contrary effect will be produced. They are sustained by the subscriptions and donations of local members and of the provincial legislatures, while this Society must depend on the Dominion Parliament, from which they draw no aid. They will find abundant scope for their more frequent meetings in the contributions of local labourers, while this will collect and compare these and publish such portions as may be of wider interest. This Society will also furnish means of publication of memoirs too bulky and expensive to appear in local Transactions. There should however be a closer association than this. It is probable that nearly all of the local societies are already represented among our members by gentlemen who can inform us as to their work and wishes. We should therefore be prepared at once to offer terms of friendly union. For this purpose it would be well to give to each of them an associate membership for its president and one or two of its officers, nominated by itself and approved by our council. Such representatives would be required to report to us for our Transactions the authors and subjects of all their original papers, and would be empowered to transmit to us for publication such papers as might seem deserving of this, and to make suggestions as to any subjects of research which might be developed by local investigation. The details of such association may, I think, readily be arranged, and on terms mutually advantageous, and conducive to the attainment of the objects we all have in view.

It would be a mistake to suppose that this Society should include all our literary and scientific men, or even all those of some local standing. It must consist of selected and representative men who have themselves done original work of at least Canadian celebrity. Beyond this it would have no resting place short of that of a great popular assemblage whose members should be characterised rather by mere receptivity than by productiveness. In this sense it must be exclusive in its member-