

Of the future of our own Society I shall say little. Much must depend on a judicious selection of officers, much on the liberality which the public may extend to us, much on the earnest efforts which our working members may put forth, and this not merely in the pursuit of new truths, but in cultivating in others a desire for that knowledge which we know from our own experience to be in itself one of the richest treasures which the world affords.

It is a matter of deep regret to us on this occasion that a recent Act of the Dominion Parliament renders it possible that the Geological Survey of Canada, which has since its commencement had its domicile in this city as the centre of commerce and practical science in the Dominion, may within one or two years be removed to Ottawa. That this, should it be carried into effect, would be a serious loss to this Society, the large number of papers and lectures contributed by members of the Survey, and the active part they have taken in the management of its affairs as officers and members testify. The removal of the Survey would also have its effect on the University, and on the interests of the numerous students who resort to this city for education, as well as on those of gentlemen connected with the numerous mining and similar enterprises which have their centre here. Nor would such removal be without injurious influence on the Survey itself. This Society was the first public body to urge on the Government the undertaking of a scientific survey. The Natural History Society, the University and the citizens generally, have always supported the interests and aided the work of the Survey, and have in many ways promoted its efficiency. Nor can an institution possessing a Museum and Laboratories which are the growth of so many years, be hastily removed without serious loss, only to be repaired by renewed effort and the lapse of time.

But to my mind these local considerations are overborne by the change in the constitution of the Survey which has been made, rather, I fear, in the spirit of a narrow bureaucracy than of an enlightened regard for science. Hitherto the Survey, while nominally under the control of an Ottawa Department, has been in reality an independent institution, recognized as such abroad. Its directors and principal officers have been men whose reputation has far transcended that of the gentlemen who temporarily occupy departmental offices at the seat of government. It is now to be a branch of the Civil Service, a mere appendage