

With regard to our future prospects, it is of course premature to speak with confidence. I think, however, that I see indications of increasing activity amongst our members, several of whom, from different parts of the Dominion, continue to send us the fruits of their labours. I take it also as a favourable sign that our membership is being largely extended; and in this connection it is a promising feature that the additions are being derived not only from those who are professionally engaged in the pursuit of Science, but also from those who, though employed in other occupations, seek relaxation in cultivating some particular branch of knowledge. I may be permitted to express the hope that we may continue to derive an increasing support from the cultivated classes of the community. Even the sympathy of such men is not without its value to us; and, moreover, amongst them are to be found many of high culture and great influence who are peculiarly fitted to discuss philosophical questions of general interest. It is with a view to enlist such support as this that it has been proposed to institute before long popular courses of scientific lectures entirely distinct from the disquisitions which characterize our ordinary meetings. In initiating such a scheme, however, the Institute does not in the least contemplate a departure from her proper objects, which, as I have endeavoured to point out, should continue to command our increasing attention. On the contrary, the Council are of opinion that the institution of such lectures and the enlargement of our library would have the effect not only of spreading a knowledge of Science, but of creating in certain instances a taste which may assist in advancing the higher aims of the Institute. The promotion of Science and the cultivation of an independent spirit of research must continue to be our aim in the future as it has been in the past. The new home within whose walls we are now assembled for the first time, whilst it is a fit subject for present congratulations, should remind us that the work of building up Science has but commenced in this country. The position which this Society has already won may serve as the foundation. For the building up of the superstructure it is to be hoped that neither material means shall be wanting, nor ample stores of intellectual strength and persevering effort. Under such conditions in the future, our seats of learning will prove true foci of illumination, from which shall emanate an active intelligence and a spirit of inquiry worthy of the most enlightened age.