

# The Canadian Journal.

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Address of the President of the Canadian Institute.

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*Messrs. Vice-Presidents and Gentlemen of the Canadian Institute.*—I cannot but regard it as a compliment that you have placed me a second time in the office of President, though I confess I had difficulty in persuading myself that I ought not peremptorily to decline it, for reasons which I stated on the last similar occasion, and which I need not now repeat.

It was my expectation, and (if I may take the liberty of saying it) my hope that you would have found it possible this year to nominate a gentleman to pre-side over your proceedings, who, having some leisure time at his command, which I have not, would possess the further qualification, which I equally want, of being able, from his previous pursuits, to apply his leisure usefully in aiding your exertions for the promotion of science. That you have not found it convenient to relieve me has arisen, I suppose, from some impediment not yet explained; but let me take the liberty of intimating that, whenever the time shall come (and I think it cannot be distant), when you can make a more satisfactory arrangement, you need not allow yourselves to be embarrassed, in making the change, by any scruples as regards myself, for that would, I assure you, be an obstacle altogether imaginary.

In the mean time, you will allow me to bring before you a few considerations which have occurred to me respecting the condition and prospects of the Association.

The last annual report, read at a late meeting by the Secretary, gave a favourable view of the state of the Canadian Institute, both in regard to the increasing number of its members, and the condition of its finances.

It appears that in the last two years the number of members has increased from 112 to 333, of which 135 joined in the year 1853, and 86 in the last year.

This is certainly a very encouraging progress; and it seems not too much to say that the number of members thus early attained, is such as to afford a reasonable assurance of the efficiency and stability of the Institution. and to give good ground of hope that, by an united exertion, its affairs may soon be placed in a condition that will afford to its more active members additional facilities, and enable the Association to attract to itself more general countenance and support.

Of course, whatever hopes may be indulged of good to be accomplished, and the reputation to be acquired by the Canadian Institute, the extent to which such hopes can be realized must wholly depend upon the talent and knowledge to be found among its members, and the use which they may be able and willing to make of them in promoting the interests of science. The inducements to voluntary exertion in so honorable a cause, are the same here that exist in other countries, and the field for exertion is neither more limited nor less interesting. There are, indeed, in Canada, at the present time, some peculiar inducements to the prosecution of scientific inquiries, which need not be pointed out.

No expense is grudged, and no labour spared, in cultivating

the minds of the youth of the Province of all ranks, and such are the efforts which are being made to this end, that it does not appear extravagant to say that we may expect, in a few years, to find ourselves living among a people, who, to speak of them in the mass, will be as able as any other that can be named, either ancient or modern, to comprehend the nature and value of discoveries that may be made in the arts and sciences, and to adopt and improve upon such suggestions as may be thrown out by men of superior genius and attainments.

If the system of Common School education which pervades all parts of Upper Canada, shall continue to be maintained in full efficiency, which there is no reason to doubt, the number of those who can enter with pleasure and profit into discussions upon subjects of science will be immensely increased; and those whose generous aim it may be to enlighten and improve others by communicating freely the results of their own researches and experiments, will find abundance of hearers and readers able to understand and reason upon their theories.

There is good ground, too, for the expectation that, with the advantage of the public libraries, selected as they are with care and judgment, which are being formed within the several counties, and even within each school section, a spirit of inquiry will be fostered, and an ambition excited to be distinguished in scientific pursuits, which we may hope will in time add largely to the number and variety of interesting contributions to the Institute.

It is a most gratifying circumstance that the Legislature, at the suggestion of the Government, has, within a few weeks, added to its usual grant of £250 for the general purposes of the Association, a further sum of five hundred pounds expressly towards providing a building for its accommodation. This generous act of encouragement is of great importance, because it seems to insure the early accomplishment of the object which it is intended to assist, and it denotes a confidence in the proceedings of the Association, as well as an interest in its success, which cannot fail to supply additional motives to exertion. It gives, also, good ground for hope that as time advances, and as the benefits which may be derived from this Association become more and more developed, the Legislature will not be found wanting on their part in affording such further aid as may seem necessary, provided they find that their grants have been judiciously applied, and have been made the means of conferring a corresponding benefit upon the community.

The grant which I have mentioned will be found sufficient, it may be hoped, to enable the Society to proceed in erecting a building without delay, especially as no part of it will be required to be expended in purchasing a site—a charge from which the Institute will happily be relieved by the generous liberality of the late Secretary. If durability, convenience, and neatness of design be principally consulted in the style of building, without sacrifices being made to architectural ornament, to which our funds will be unequal, the Association need not, I hope, be long without enjoying a home of its own; not one by any means adequate to what we may venture to suppose its purposes will in the course of time require, but one in most respects better than the temporary home, which, by the kindness of the Government, we are at this moment occupying.

It will be no difficult matter, I suppose, with the assistance which the professional knowledge and good taste of many of our members will supply, to devise a plan of such a building as will admit of extension, from time to time, by additions which will be in harmony with the main design. The first step will natu-