

undoubtedly become the depository of family papers of this nature, which it is most improbable would ever be sent to the Library. In the absence, therefore, of such a depository as that of the Archives, most valuable materials for history would be entirely lost. On this point I may be permitted to repeat what I stated in last year's report.

"There must be, in the hands of those who have occupied positions of a public nature, either as responsible advisers of the Crown, or as representative men in various capacities, correspondence which would be of immense service in a historical point of view, but which there is every probability will be destroyed, or lost in the course of time. Here, where the children of the men of to-day are, politically speaking, the nobodies of to-morrow, or else who have moved away to other localities than those in which their fathers were known, it is impossible to preserve such papers, as has been done with old family records in Great Britain. There the researches of the commission on historical documents have unearthed papers, letters, charters, &c., dating back to the sixth and seventh centuries, which throw a flood of light on the early history of the country. Here, it is well known, valuable collections have been destroyed by the care of the tidy house-keeper getting rid of them as rubbish. I venture to suggest that, could they be obtained from leading men, or their representatives, such collections, the contents of which it might be at the present moment improper to make public, might be packed up in air-tight boxes, marked with the names of the depositors, and sealed up for a certain length of time, to remain in safe keeping in the vaults appropriated for the custody of the Archives. By this means they would be kept in safety, and available at the time when, without breach of propriety, their contents could be used by the historian."

It is not necessary, I conceive, to enter more fully into this subject, further than to remark that, in so far as regards the history of British North America, every document relating to it should be found in the Archives Office, even such as at first sight may appear to have with it only a remote connection, following in this the example of the British Museum. The field covered by that institution is much wider, but the system pursued in it may be studied with advantage.

The Archives Office must, of necessity, be of the nature of a Library, but one purely of reference on one special subject, and, therefore, all the works relating to that subject should be there. But, beyond that, it must also do the work to a certain extent of the Public Record Office, especially that part of it which the organization of the Historical Manuscripts Commission in the United Kingdom was designed to promote. The assistance of local historical societies, in this latter object, might be most valuable, and the attention of the members may very properly be directed to the importance of the work to be accomplished by the establishment of a central place of deposit for papers of the character I have had the honour to indicate.

Without a list of the documents relating to the colonies to be found among the State Papers, of at least the United Kingdom and of France, such as I was entrusted to make of the manuscripts in the British Museum, it is manifestly impossible to conduct the work either in a systematic or satisfactory manner. Copies of parts of collections of State Papers have been obtained by different Provincial Governments and Societies. Excepting those at Halifax and the three series of papers containing the correspondence of the French Government and documents relating to Canada and other French Colonies, from 1504 to 1778, deposited partly with the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and partly in the Library of Parliament, to which I beg to direct attention, they are not in any respect complete. Lists of them, therefore, even if they could be obtained, would be of comparatively little use. I beg respectfully to express the opinion, that the only safe way of proceeding, is to obtain copies of papers from the originals. Everyone, who is conversant with the subject, knows the ever increasing liability to error, in copying from copies, the errors to be found in these being transferred to new copies with, very probably, other errors added. This is on the supposition, besides, that copies are accessible on this side of the Atlantic. It may be remarked that such as have been obtained, were got for