

ARCHÆOLOGICAL REPORT.

BY DAVID BOYLE.

To the President and Members of the Canadian Institute:

GENTLEMEN,—As I have been employed during the past year on work that prevented as much time as I could wish being devoted to the archæological field, and as the council has consented to exhibit a typical selection from our cabinets at the World's Columbian Exposition to be held in Chicago during the present year, the occasion seems opportune to review in a very general way what has been accomplished since the Canadian Institute undertook the formation of an Archæological Museum.

It is true that almost from the establishment of the society by Royal Charter in 1852, one of the most cherished objects of the leading members was to collect information regarding places throughout the Province that were in any way connected with the Indians, and to bring together, for preservation, specimens of aboriginal tools, weapons, utensils and ornaments.

This purpose was no doubt mainly influenced by a very general movement among the most advanced nations in Europe along archæo-anthropological lines. In France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and our own Mother Country, attention had been for some time directed to the study of early man, in so far as such study might be prosecuted by an examination of his relics, and by comparing those of one country with those of another.

Only mention need be made of Dr. Schmerling's discoveries in the Belgian caves in 1833; of the pre-historic human remains found in the Dusseldorf cave; of the Danish Kitchen-middens and the Swiss Lake-dwellings; of the important discoveries made by M. Boucher de Perthes at Abbeville, and of the numerous evidences collected relative to early man in the valleys of the Thames, the Seine, the Somme, the Rhine, and in many other localities in widely separated portions of Europe.

In view of this great intellectual movement it was inevitable that its influence should reach America, and we accordingly find that in 1854 the council of the Canadian Institute issued a circular asking for such particulars as might be in possession of non-members with regard to the existence of village sites, burial places, etc., but there is no reason to suppose that the results were very encouraging. The nucleus of an archæological collection was formed, but as no case-room was provided (the specimens being simply placed on open shelves) the relics in possession of the Institute in 1886 were neither numerous nor valuable. In that year a small private collection was presented to us, and cases were supplied for future accessions.

With the consent of the council, your curator decided to specialise his efforts archæologically, on the ground that, with the advance of settlement, traces of early occupation would speedily disappear, and that, in any event, it was high time to preserve for the examination and study of our own people such evidences of aboriginal life as too many persons seemed anxious to deport to the museums of foreign countries.

As soon as the success of the project appeared to be assured, application was made to the Provincial Legislature for assistance on the exceedingly valid plea that while the work would be carried on by the Canadian Institute, it would be, in character and scope national, not local.