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# ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

OF THE

## Natural History Society of New Brunswick.

A year ago in this room we took stock and concluded that, as we were rapidly outgrowing our present limited quarters, we ought to move into a spacious and commodious building provided solely for our use by some benefactor or benefactors. But though we have waited patiently for a year the benefactors have not yet appeared on the scene. There is only a modest nucleus of a building fund subscribed by one of our members, and waiting in the bank for accretions.

Few persons realize how much such a local organization as ours, supported largely by private means and personal enthusiasm, is doing for the cause of science. In a commercial city, where comparatively few are interested in the objects of our society, its growth must necessarily be slow, if not tollsome. I read a little while ago with a feeling akin to envy, I must confess, the following in regard to an institution similar to our own, established thirty years ago at Davenport, Iowa, which city has a population not much more than half that of St. John, and this population is described as "commercial and unsympathetic." The historian of that society, on the approach of its thirtieth anniversary, has this record to make:

"From a membership of four meeting in an office, it (the society) has grown to one of scores, meeting in its own home; it has a neat building free of debt; it pays a curator a regular, if small salary; it has something toward a permanent fund; with six creditable volumes of Proceedings; it has a permanent invested fund of ten thousand dollars to perpetuate their publication; it owns a valuable museum, which is open free to the public, and acts as a constant incentive to develop scientific interest. And all this has been done by a society in a small town in the west,

without the assistance of any particularly wealthy patrons."

What an ideal position for a Natural History society to occupy! To be "in its own home" with a "permanent endowment" are conditions which appeal to our own longings and which we, too, would like to see realized.

Without instituting too close a comparison between our society and the Davenport, I may refer to some features that are alike. We are a little older than they, yet in the early days of our history a few choice scientific spirits met in offices and the homes of its members. Now we also number our members by scores. Dating from the present month we pay an assistant curator "a regular, if small, salary." We have a "valuable museum," which has been free to the public on occasions, but which this year will be kept open three afternoons in the week and which we hope will act "as a constant incentive to develop scientific interest." We have at least three modest "volumes of proceedings," made up from our yearly bulletins, which we have issued for the past sixteen years, and these reports serve to keep us in touch with the scientific world without, and present a record of work and original investigation from year to year, of which we have no cause to be ashamed.

But in the matter of a "home" and an "endowment" the Davenport society is in circumstances that we may term decidedly comfortable; and yet it is located in a city of only 26,000 inhabitants, while ours numbers 40,000; their town is commercial; so is ours, but ours has great aspirations with increasing facilities in the direction of commerce. We cannot say that our citizens are without sympathy in the aims and purposes of our society, for in many ways and at all times they have given to it substantial aid. We have additions to our membership every year of persons more or