

succeeded, in the furtherance of his great schemes of colonization, in gaining a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company. The appearance of his colony on the Red River was the signal for a bitter contest, resulting well nigh in the destruction of the colony, while the ruin of the rival fur companies was only averted by their union in 1821. A considerable literature grew out of this emigration movement and its troublesome consequences. In 1805, the Earl of Selkirk published an able work on Highland emigration; for he had before that time sent 800 Highland peasants to Prince Edward Island. In connection with the emigration scheme by way of Hudson Bay and Rupert Land, there appeared "The Narrative of the Destruction of the Settlement of Red River in 1815," a *brochure* against the Earl of Selkirk by Bishop Strachan in 1816; "Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Country in 1817;" a letter of the Earl of Selkirk to Lord Liverpool in 1819; "Report of the Selkirk Trials," in two versions, in 1820; "The Red River Settlement Blue-book," published by House of Commons in 1819; and a "Book of Observations," upon the preceding published in 1820, of which only one copy is known to be in existence.

## VIII.

Covering portions of time in all these different eras, there remains to notice one department, most interesting in the present connection, viz., manuscripts or unpublished narratives known to be in existence. The following may be given as examples of these:—"Travels of Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1682;" "John Adamson's Voyages, 1746;" "David Thompson's Journal, 1796-'98;" "Henry's Journal, 1800-'16;" "Peter Fidler's Journey to Athabaska;" "Foundation of the Forts in the Yukon Country," by an officer in the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company in London has also given to the Society of which the writer is a representative the privilege of examining any papers, at their forts or offices in Canada, belonging to the period antecedent to 1821.

Enough has now been said to show that we have in Canada an indigenous early literature, most of it now very rare, and yet not deserving the oblivion to which it is fast hastening. Connoisseurs have their choice cabinets of these books, which they guard with miserly care, and some of our public libraries have a number of them; scarcely is there in Canada a complete collection. The writer has referred largely to works belonging to the field of the Society which he has the honor to represent here—the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba,—that field being the "country north and west of Lake Superior." No doubt other gentlemen could have found a considerable earlier literature for the Maritime Provinces, French Canada, and the more recent Province of Ontario. The study of this early literature is very important. We complain that so few devote themselves to the study and preservation of our early history. Surely it is the duty of this section of the Royal Society of Canada to stimulate research and facilitate the study of the records referred to. The question is: How can this be done?

I have the honor to propose one way, perhaps not the best, yet one having the promise of accomplishing something in this department. I propose that steps should be taken by which this Society, or some body associated with it, should undertake each year the publication of a number of books and manuscripts relating to the early portion of our