

ship, but inclusive in that it offers its benefits to all. It is somewhat surprising, at first sight, and indicative of the crude state of public opinion in such matters, that we sometimes find it stated that a society so small in its membership will prove too select and exclusive for such a country as this; or find the suggestion thrown out that the Society would become a professional one by including the more eminent members of the learned professions. If we compare ourselves with other countries, I rather think the wonder should be that so many names should have been proposed for membership of this Society. Not to mention the strict limitations in this respect placed on such societies in the mother country and on the Continent of Europe, we have a more recent example in the National Academy of Sciences in the United States. That country is probably nearly as democratic in its social and public institutions as Canada, and its scientific workers are certainly in the proportion of forty to one of ours. Yet the original members of the Academy were limited to 50, and though subsequently the maximum was raised to 100, this number has not as yet been attained. Yet public opinion in the United States would not have tolerated a much wider selection, which would have descended to a lower grade of eminence, and so would have lowered the scientific prestige of the country.

Science and literature are at once among the most democratic and the most select of the institutions of society. They throw themselves freely into the struggle of the world, recognise its social grades, submit to the criticism of all, and stand or fall by the vote of the majority; but they absolutely refuse to recognize as entitled to places of importance any but those who have earned their titles for themselves. Thus it happens that the great scientific and literary societies must consist of few members, even in the oldest and most populous countries, while on the other hand their benefits are for all, they diffuse knowledge through the medium of larger and more popular bodies whose membership implies capacity for receiving information though not for doing original work, and the younger men of science and literature must be content to earn their admission into the higher rank, but have in the fact that such higher rank is accessible to them, an encouragement to persevere, and in the meantime may have all their worthy productions treated in precisely the same manner with those of their seniors.

Finally, we who have been honoured with the invitation to be the original members of this Society have a great responsibility and a high duty laid upon us. We owe it to the large and liberal plan conceived by His Excellency the Governor-General to carry out this plan in the most perfect manner possible, and with a regard not to personal, party or class views, but to the great interests of Canada and its reputation before the world. We should approve ourselves first unselfish and zealous literary and scientific men, and next Canadians in that widest sense of the word in which we shall desire, at any personal sacrifice, to promote the best interests of our country, and this in connection with a pure and elevated literature and a true, profound and practical science.

We aspire to a great name. The title of "Royal Society," which, with the consent of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, we hope to assume, is one dignified in the mother country by a long line of distinguished men who have been fellows of its Royal Society. The name may provoke comparisons not favourable to us; and though we may hope to shelter ourselves from criticism by pleading the relatively new and crude condition of science and literature in this country, we must endeavour, with God's blessing on earnest and united effort, to produce by our cultivation of the almost boundless resources of the territory which has fallen to us as our inheritance, works which shall entitle us, without fear of criticism, to take to ourselves the proud name of the Royal Society of Canada.

The Vice-President, Hon. Dr. Chauveau, then spoke as follows :—

Excellence, mes chers confrères, Mesdames et Messieurs,—Il ne s'est pas encore écoulé un demi-siècle depuis qu'à la suite d'événements politiques, qui furent alors regardés comme désastreux, les deux provinces que la constitution de 1791 avait créées furent réunies en une seule : à peine trois lustres ont passé sur l'union fédérale des colonies anglaises de l'Amérique du Nord, qui succéda à l'union législative du Haut-Canada et du Bas-Canada : cependant si j'entreprendrais d'exposer, en détail, tous les progrès qui se sont accomplis dans les deux périodes que je viens d'indiquer, il me resterait à peine le temps de parler de notre passé littéraire et de la nouvelle institution que nous inaugurons aujourd'hui et qui, tout nous porte à l'espérer, est elle-même un grand progrès, le complément de tous les autres.

Le pays s'est couvert en tous sens de canaux et de chemins de fer, d'immenses et lointaines régions ont été rapprochées de nous et livrées à la colonisation, les communications postales et télégraphiques ont été multipliées, des mines de toute espèce ont été découvertes et exploitées, notre