" extraordinary proceeding was singular enough. The Legislature, determined not to be
" annoyed by any more petitions, passed an act making it a criminal offence to present
" a petition asking for any change in the government or the settled order of things,
" unless approved of by the Grand Jury at the Quarter Session or by three or more
" magistrates. It would seem from this that election frauds are not a modern invention,
" but flourished in full vigor in the eighteenth century and among a people whom we
" have sometimes been taught to regard as examples to be followed.

" With reference to my work in Fredericton, which is now practically completed, I
" may say in a general way that I have made lists of all documents that I have been
" able to reach and had them placed in such a position that they will be available for
" the students of Canadian history. Nor am I without hope that the Provincial govern-
" ment may at some not distant day establish a department of Archives and gather all
" these precious documents together in some building where they will be safe from fire
" and be properly cared for.

" The work that remains to be done in the Maritime Provinces is to obtain a list of
" the historical documents possessed by the Government of Prince Edward Island, and
" to visit each county seat for the purpose of obtaining the details of the historical material
" there. Add to this the discovery of documents in private hands, the examination of
" Church registers and the copying of inscriptions on ancient tombs where they relate to
" the leading incidents of a man's life and enough will have been said to show that there
" is still much work to be accomplished before our records will be complete."

An examination of the archives has been commenced in Western Canada by Mr.
Laidlaw, a member of our staff, with the able assistance of Dr. Bain of the Toronto
Public Library. It is desirable however, that more extensive operations should be con
ducted in every part of the Dominion, because this enquiry has the effect of directing
attention to the importance of preserving both public and private records.

The number of historical enquirers is increasing ; and it may be that we are begin-
ning to feel the influence of the activity manifest by the people of the United States in
everything which concerns their history—a history which for many years runs parallel
with our own. Or, possibly, we may trace the revival of interest in our midst to the
more ample leisure many now enjoy as a result of the general prosperity of the country.
To whatever cause we attribute the movement, it is evident that there is a taste for a
higher order of historical literature, and that scholars are turning their attention
towards the construction of history on scientific principles. This is a most hopeful
sign. But, before our students can reap the full advantage of the splendid heritage
bequeathed to them by departed centuries, a great work has to be undertaken by the
State, the magnitude of which is not at present realized. The volumes on our shelves,
accessible to the public, are inadequate, either for the purposes of general history or of
constitutional archaeology, not only in number, but in the nature of their contents. It
has been our custom to pay little attention to documents that do not relate to matters
within our present territorial limits. We cannot, however, treat Canada merely from
the standpoint of the local historian. The scope of our research needs to be enlarged so
as to bring together all the records illustrating every phase of our history. We find
little in our Archives concerning the remarkable growth of the colonies, which at length
provoked the jealousy of the two leading powers in Europe, and brought about the col-
onial struggle between England and France ; and yet this period is of absorbing inter-
est, and it affected our national development long before the history of the United
States had a coherence of its own.

It is true that the archives of various countries have been only partially explored
on our behalf, even within the limitations I have mentioned. There is, possibly, a