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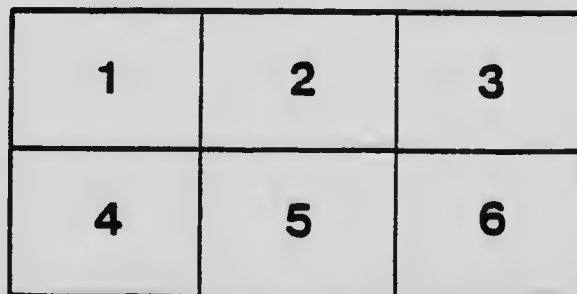
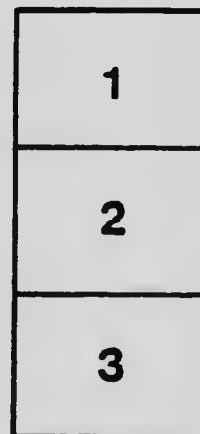
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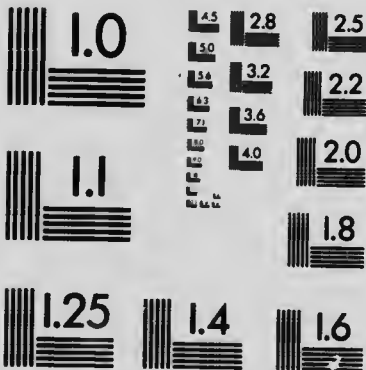
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SUBJECT TO REVISION.

Journal of the Canadian Mining Institute, part of Vol. VIII.

THE NEED OF A PROVINCIAL MUSEUM IN ONTARIO.

By DR. W. A. PARSONS

Montreal Meeting, March,

In bringing this subject to the attention of the Institute it is not my intention to present a dissertation on the question of museums in general, but to attempt to interest the members in the hope that some action may be taken towards the establishment of a museum in the province of Ontario. The great value of a systematically arranged and properly displayed exhibit of the natural products of any country is thoroughly appreciated when a great exposition is engrossing public attention. The governments of Canada and of Ontario have spent considerable sums at different times to present to the eyes of the world a representative series of our natural products. Why should not the same attention be directed to the preparation of permanent exhibits of the same kind?

It is with pleasure that we notice the Dominion Government moving in the right direction. The valuable collections of the Geological Survey will soon be housed in a suitable building under proper management. The museum at Ottawa will fill a long felt want, but it can scarcely be expected to answer all the demands of the different provinces. The mere distance alone makes it necessary for each province to possess a museum, in part a duplicate of that at Ottawa, but more especially representative of local products. Professor F. A. Bather, in an address to the Museums' Association at Aberdeen, in 1903, states that a museum fulfils three functions: Investigation, Instruction, Inspiration. The first of these functions consists in providing material for the special investigator, the research student, the savant. The second consists in presenting the natural history of the country to the eye of

the college student and of the people in general. The third refers to the effect which must be produced by the contemplation of the *best* in any given line of exhibit. To these three functions might be added a fourth, that of downright utility to the miners and manufacturers.

Toronto is the capital of Ontario, it is the great centre of population, it is the heart of the educational system of the province, it is the point where all of Professor's Bather's objects can be best achieved, yet the capital of the banner province of Canada is without a museum. There is no material for the investigator, no arranged series for the student and no inspiration for the general public.

The writer would not be narrow in regarding the future provincial museum, he would have it embrace the whole field of human activity and all branches of geological and biological science. An ideal museum should reach from chemical manufacture to the fine arts and from petrographic collections to archaeological curiosities. Before this Institute, however, the claims of such a museum would be out of place; we must confine our attention to that branch of museum work with which we are especially concerned. From our point of view the subject might well be presented under familiar heads:—

MINERALOGY.

For reference, for comparison and for study a complete collection of minerals is imperative. This should be supplemented by a collection of Canadian minerals, kept constantly up to date. Small cabinet specimens are not the only ones required; but large, rough pieces with the accompanying rock. We all know that beautifully crystallized cabinet specimens are not the kind of material commonly found in the field; the mining man and prospector would like to see the impure, dirty ore and rock that he encounters in his work. Material of this kind arranged on an economic basis, and above all, kept up to date, would be of incalculable benefit to the mining men of the province.

PETROGRAPHY.

The rocks of the various geological formations should be arranged so as to exhibit their petrographical characters, and in addition, a second series should present the succession of these rocks in natural order and should be accompanied by labels pointing out the thickness of the various strata. Such material would be most valuable to oil and gas operators and to all engaged on the stratified series.

PALAEONTOLOGY.

A most urgent need is a complete exhibit of the fossils of the province. The value of such a collection to the scientific student is at once apparent. From our essentially economic standpoint it is important that mining men should have a means at hand to identify the age of the strata encountered. This can only be accomplished by giving them access to a well named and properly arranged series for comparison.

MINING AND METALLURGY.

The crude products of the mine should be supplemented by material to show every stage in the process of metallurgical treatment. Carefully prepared explanatory notes should accompany such an exhibit so as to present to the eye of the student, the miner and the metallurgist an illustrated compendium of the industrial treatment of ores and other products of the mine. This particular part of the work might be made to include certain phases of chemical manufacture, and I would suggest that the co-operation of the Canadian Society of Chemical Industry be asked in the matter.

Much as we might like to see the biological sciences and the fine arts represented, and represented they will be in time, our immediate concern is to take some steps towards the establishment of a museum of geology and mining in the Province of Ontario.

The greatest want is a suitable building. Once given a home and proper provision made for support, much valuable material could at once be put in position. The Bureau of Mines is possessed of valuable collections of economic minerals. The School of Practical Science has within its walls

much of value. The University of Toronto possesses an excellent series of minerals (the Ferrier Cabinet), a growing collection of fossils and considerable petrographic material. The Education Department is rich in archaeological specimens and curios. The department of biology of the University has a considerable collection of material in its especial field. Directly or indirectly all this material is the property of the government, yet it is so ill-housed, so separated and under such diverse control that its value is largely destroyed. In fact, instead of being an inspiration and a valuable exhibit of the resources of the country, the breaking up of specimens into little groups restricts their use to the persons immediately interested. Could the province do better than to erect a building for the proper reception and display of all this material? Could anything be of more value to the geologist and to the active mining man? Could a better inspiration be found for the creation of future generations of mining engineers? I need not fall back on the somewhat unpleasant argument as to what other countries have done in this matter; we are rather tired of hearing of the advance of this state or that along some particular line. Let us not fall so far behind in the matter of museums that the term may be used as a reproach to us.

The creation of an adequate provincial museum is not a small matter or one that can be accomplished all at once. The details of any scheme of development would require much time and thought. Briefly, I may be permitted to state my ideas as to the general lines along which development would be the easiest. A building should be designed to fill the requirements of all branches commonly interested in museum display. This building should be so designed that it could be built in sections. The first section built should be that of geology and mining. The various departments should be under the control of the professors of those departments in the University, thereby saving the expense of especial curators.

At the present moment the Department of Geology has more material than can be housed in the University buildings.

A museum will positively have to be built, the matter is already before the government. As a member of the teaching staff of the University of Toronto I feel the absolute need of this building, I feel that we must have it, but I should be overjoyed to see a large provincial museum take the place of a merely departmental and academic one.

Ontario is a rich province, its population is nearly half that of the whole Dominion, its natural resources are enormous. It is high time that the example of all progressive states were followed and a thoroughly complete provincial museum established. In this connection it may be permitted to quote from the presidential address of Mr. B. E. Walker to the Canadian Institute in 1899. After a strong plea for increased expenditure on Dominion and Provincial surveys Mr. Walker says:—

“And as to public museums, the Dominion Government at Ottawa and each province, at its city of chief importance, should have a museum belonging to and supported by the people. These museums should contain exhibits of the metallic and non-metallic minerals of the country, both those of economic and merely scientific value, the forest trees, with the bark preserved, in say six feet sections, cut also and partly polished, and each specimen accompanied by a small map showing its habitat; the fresh water and sea fishes, mounted after the modern methods; the fur-bearing animals, the game birds, and the birds of our forests, fields and sea coast, many of them mounted so as to tell a child their habits at a glance; the reptiles, crustaceans, insects, plants, indeed as complete a record of the fauna and flora of the country as possible; the rocks of stratigraphic importance and all the varieties of fossils which can be gathered in this country; the archaeological and ethnological evidences of the races we have supplanted in Canada, and much more that does not occur to me at this moment. I should not like to suggest a limit of expenditure on such museums. I can only repeat that we are rich enough to bear the cost with ease, but we are not intelligent enough to see our own interest in spending the money.”

Gentlemen, I have endeavoured to present a plea for a provincial museum in Ontario, because I know Ontario best, the same remarks will apply equally well to the other provinces. I know that these notes are rambling and disconnected, but I shall be satisfied if some discussion is stimulated and I should much like to see the Institute take some action towards bringing the matter before the provincial authorities.

