

L. A. August Labouche, 11

6 /

TWENTY-FIFTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

OF

MONTREAL,

DELIVERED BY THE LATE COUNCIL,

AND

READ AT THE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,
30TH MAY, 1853.



MONTREAL:

PRINTED AT THE SUN OFFICE, 20 ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET,
BY MOORE, OWLER & STEVENSON.

1853.

ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT

STATE

The following is a list of the names of the members of the Board of Directors of the State of New York, for the year ending December 31, 1900.

Name	Residence
John A. King	New York
John B. King	New York
John C. King	New York
John D. King	New York
John E. King	New York
John F. King	New York
John G. King	New York
John H. King	New York
John I. King	New York
John J. King	New York
John K. King	New York
John L. King	New York
John M. King	New York
John N. King	New York
John O. King	New York
John P. King	New York
John Q. King	New York
John R. King	New York
John S. King	New York
John T. King	New York
John U. King	New York
John V. King	New York
John W. King	New York
John X. King	New York
John Y. King	New York
John Z. King	New York

R E P O R T, & c .

TO THE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF MONTREAL,—

The period of your Annual Meeting having arrived, it becomes the duty of the Council to lay before you a *resume* of the past year's proceedings, which they are happy to regard as having been characterized by so much more than ordinary interest, as to give rise to the anticipation that ere long this Society will resume the proud position of a leading Scientific Institution of Canada—in a literary sense,—as well as from having been the pioneer in this country of the development of its Natural history.

The measure of assuming the occupancy of the whole of this mansion, the property of the Corporation, for its own purposes, has been carried out; and the Society may congratulate itself upon the entire success of this step, notwithstanding the anxiety and doubt of many of the Members upon the discussion thereof.

The building has been repaired, and in a manner renovated, and the hall entrance altered and greatly improved. The principal story is devoted to the business purposes of the Society—a Hall of Lecture, Library and Reading Room, and Committee Room, and apartments for the Assistant Curator.

The two upper stories are now devoted entirely to the purposes of the Museum; and, from the increased amount of the property of the Society, are by no means too capacious. The arrangement of this portion of the Society's property, as far as it has been accomplished, reflects the highest credit upon the Cabinet Keeper, Dr. Gibb, who carried out the same, involving, as it did, a considerable amount of time and labor.

In referring to the transactions of the past year, your Council experience some difficulty in selecting those of the most interest; but they would be wanting in due regard to the general feelings of the Society, were they to refrain from asking especial attention to the very valuable services of our President, Major R. Lachlan, who succeeded to the chair in October last, conse-

quent on the removal from the city of its former occupant, Dr. Sewell. Your President has been indefatigable in his endeavors to resuscitate the Society; his personal labors in connection therewith have been unremitting, and the value thereof is fully substantiated by, among other advantages, the greatly increased subscription list, the success of the first *soiree*, held on the evening of 12th April last, and the prospect of a volume of Transactions being published ere long. The Council are quite convinced that the Society will fully recognize and acknowledge the merits of its Chief, who has contributed so much in reinvigorating the character of its proceedings, and giving an impetus thereto, which, it is sincerely hoped, no untoward circumstances may arise to arrest or retard. Unanimity and energy on the part of our Members must contribute as well to their own advantage as to that of the Society. The Council have, therefore, to regret that unexpected circumstances should have prevented the proposal, also introduced by the President, of imparting to the Anniversary of the Society a more attractive character than a mere meeting for the election of office-bearers, by associating with it a Special Literary Soiree on that evening—a decision upon which stands recorded in the proceedings of the Society, so as to be carried out the next year with, the Council trust, effective *eclat*.

The annexed Reports of the Librarian and Cabinet Keeper will exhibit the state of the Library and Museum. The donations to both during the past year have been very numerous and valuable, as the detailed recorded lists fully show; but the particulars of which are omitted, in order to avoid too extended a Report. The Council, however, trust it will not be considered invidious in making special reference to the extensive donations of Dr. Gibb, one of our members, consisting as they do of above 300 specimens in various departments of Natural History and comparative Anatomy, and an equally large collection of miscellaneous and rare articles, from all quarters of the Globe, and of which a detailed list has been furnished by the donor,—making altogether, a most important addition to the Collection of the Society, and demanding from it, in the opinion of the Council, a more direct mark of consideration, especially when coupled with the fact of the valuable services rendered to the Society by the donor, who is now about leaving this country, to take up his abode in the United Kingdom.

The Council have also much pleasure in calling attention to the unwearied exertions of the Recording Secretary, Mr. Dutton, in the discharge of the, of late, greatly increased laborious duties of his office.

The separate statements of the Treasurer, with the Report of the Finance Committee, exhibit a full detail of our resources, which are so far satisfactory as exhibiting the Society in possession of real estate, books, and objects of Natural History, to the value of at least four thousand pounds, with current liabilities not one tenth of that amount ;* but the property of the Society necessitating considerable annual outlay, although not producing any returns, and the Annual Subscription having of late years been reduced to the very low rate of ten shillings per annum, affords an income altogether too limited to meet the reasonable current expenses of the Society, and far less to admit of effectually carrying out the objects of its Incorporation, or of taking the steps necessary for the dissemination of scientific knowledge, so highly important to the good of our country in the progressive age in which we live. Seeing this, and trusting that the Government would regard our embarrassed state with patriotic liberality, your Council last year, addressed urgent petitions to the three branches of the Legislature, praying for *emergent* aid, in addition to the annual small sum of fifty pounds hitherto granted ; but in this they have as yet been much disappointed, after having been led to indulge confident anticipations of a favorable result, from the circumstances of the members of the Canadian Institute of Toronto having been allotted a sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, and the Athenæum of the same city a sum of one hundred pounds. It would therefore unfortunately appear that our society is less worthy in the eyes of the Administration, than some of its western brethren, or many of the various Educational Institutions in our own section of the Province. It is further to be deplored, that this utter want of funds has for some years past precluded the purchase of a number of works highly requisite for the Library, as likewise the offering of medals for Prize Essays. The Council are, however, happy to state that the number of volumes in the Library is now upwards of 1500 ; but regret to add that 150 still continue missing.

The Council beg to refer to the elaborate alphabetical list of the members of the Society, whether honorary, corresponding or ordinary, from the foundation of the Society to the present time, which has been prepared and presented by L. A. Latour, Esq., and for which (as well as other general useful services always cheerfully rendered) that gentleman is entitled to its warmest thanks, the framing of which having necessitated considerable labor and research.

* The liabilities of the Society, besides fulfilling the terms of the Summerville legacy, amount to £275 balance due on mortgage, and about £100 outstading miscellaneous debts, or about £375 in all.

By the above list it appears that the Society has altogether on its roll the names of 490 members, of whom about 100 have died, and that at present they consist of:—The Earl of Elgin, Governor General, Patron; 37 honorary members; 129 corresponding members; and 129 ordinary members.

The Lectures delivered during this Session, have been as follows:—

1. 2nd February. The Introductory Lecture, by the President. Subject:—The beneficial influence of Scientific Associations and popular lectures on a country; and the encouragement which they ought to receive from the Public.

2. 9th February. By Dr. Sutherland. Subject:—Water.

3. 16th February. By J. C. Baker, Esq. Subject:—On Colonization; the ancient and modern systems.

4. 23rd February. By Dr. D. C. McCallum. Subject:—The mutual relations of forces; physical, vital, and psychical.

5. 2d March. By Thos. M'Ginn, Esq. Subject:—Atmospheric Influence and the Aurora Borealis.

6. 9th March. By Auguste Delisle, Esq. Subject:—Botany; its history, utility, and attractions. 1st Lecture.

7. 16th March. By Joseph Dutton, Esq. Subject:—The Fine Arts; their origin, object, utility, principles, manipulations, and present circumstances and prospects.

8. 30th March. By Auguste Delisle, Esq. Subject:—Botany. 2d Lecture.

9. 6th April.—By the Rev. W. Hutchinson. Subject:—Physical Geography.

In addition to which a paper, on the delusive expectations of finding Coal in Canada, was read by the President, at the Soirée on the 12th ult.

The Council have to congratulate the Society upon increased interest having been shown towards these Lectures, as evinced by the more numerous attendance thereon; and the gentlemen who thus so ably assisted the Society, are deserving of its warmest thanks. But there is one event requiring particular remark, from being now first introduced into this Society, namely the Soirées, (already alluded to). This step, after much consideration, was finally resolved on, and its success, under

all circumstances, was fully equal to the most sanguine anticipations, in the number and respectability of the attendants, and in the lively interest evinced in the subject matter of the evening.

There is no doubt, whatever, therefore, that similar *reunions* would be of the utmost advantage to the well-being of the Society, as tending to bring together its members in a social circle, and admitting of the general discussion of subjects, in a manner requiring much less time than the preparation of an *Essay* or *Lecture*, whilst it at the same time affords an opportunity of general participation. A very moderate expense would certainly render these literary reunions highly attractive ; and it therefore becomes a question for the consideration of the members, seeing the very limited means of the Society, how far they may deem it desirable to contribute specially towards such an object, independent of the annual funds of the Society. In view of these circumstances, the Council are again constrained to express their regret, that the reduction of the Annual subscription to so small a sum as ten shillings should ever have been established. The Council have also to regret that, in consequence of the limited attendance at a late special meeting, called for the purpose of taking into consideration the engrafting of an Historical branch of the Society, so desirable a measure remains undecided, and the more so, as it would probably have increased the funds ; but we trust it will ere long meet with that attention which its importance deserves.

The Council have, during the past year made the essay of throwing open the museum to the public, on particular occasions ; which movement was crowned with complete success, from the large number of visitors who have been gratified, without the least damage to the property of the Society. The last occasion was to the soldiers of the XXth regiment.

The Council have made a conditional arrangement, with the present Assistant Curator for the current year, upon the same terms and conditions as the past. The memorandum of agreement embodying the same, is laid upon the table, the same being subject to the approval of this meeting.

In resigning their charge into the hands of their successors, the Council would beg to impress upon them, the necessity of the most zealous, unremitting exertions on behalf of the Society, which requires all possible assistance from its office-bearers and friends, in order to secure that proud position, at which it aims, the promotion of the study of natural history, and

general science and literature ; and it is to be sincerely hoped that the onward step taken during the past year, may be continued and extended, so that each succeeding Annual Meeting may exhibit progress and improvement,—for the attainment of which all and every one of the members of the Society should consider themselves pledged, and none more so than the members of the Council, upon whom so much responsibility devolves whether for progress or retrogression.

JOHN OSTELL,
Chairman of Council.

Committee Room, Natural History Society, }
May 18, 1853. }

