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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

**REPORT OF THE COUNCIL**  
OF THE  
**LITERARY & HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
OF QUEBEC,  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JANUARY 5,  
**1840.**

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THE Council, in laying down the trust reposed in them, submit, according to custom, a Report on the present state of the Society, and its proceedings during the past year.

The admissions into the Society since the last Annual Meeting, are one Honorary, two Associate, and two Corresponding Members. Any very considerable accession was not to be expected, as the Society already embraces a large proportion of the resident inhabitants, who from their tastes or pursuits might be inclined to give it their support. The removal of the Civil Government and Military Staff has deprived us of the personal services of some efficient members, and withdrawn from us a source whence many accessions to our number had been hitherto derived.

The Society has this year sustained the loss of one of its oldest and most distinguished members, in the death of the Honorable Jonathan Sewell, L. L. D., late Chief Justice of Lower Canada, and Speaker of the Legislative Council.

This gentleman was born at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1766. His father, who was Attorney General of the Province, was an

able and zealous adherent of the Royal Cause, during the troubles that ended in the American revolution. The success of the colonial party obliged him to retire with his family to England in 1775. Mr. Sewell was educated chiefly at the Bristol Grammar School, and afterwards entered Brazen-nose College, Oxford, but did not remain long at the University ; for a prospect of advancement opening in New Brunswick, he sailed for St. John's in 1785, and commenced the study of the law under Mr. Chipman, afterwards Chief Justice of that Province. On completing his Clerkship in 1789, he considered that Canada offered a better field for his talents, and removed to Quebec, where he rose rapidly in his profession, being appointed Solicitor General in 1793, Attorney General in 1795, and Chief Justice in 1808. In the year following his appointment as Attorney General, he was returned to the Provincial Parliament by the Borough of Sorel, which he continued to represent for many years ; and by his official station at that time, and subsequently by his seats in the Executive and Legislative Councils, he acted a conspicuous part in the history of the province. In 1832 an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by Harvard University, the oldest and principal seat of learning in his native country.

Chief Justice Sewell was an original member of the Literary and Historical Society, at its foundation in 1824. At one of its earliest meetings he read as an Inaugural Address, an " Essay on the Juridical History of France, antecedent to the erection of the Sovereign Council of Quebec in the year 1663." This paper is prefixed to the first volume of the Society's Transactions. To the second volume he contributed two papers :—one on the causes of the extraordinary dark days which occasionally occur in Canada—the other on Russian Stoves, by the introduction of which into these Provinces he conceived that great economy of fuel might be effected. He took an active part in promoting the union of the Literary and Historical Society with the Society for the encouragement of Arts and Sciences ; and filled the office of President of the united body for three successive years. When impaired health, and the pressure of official duties obliged him to decline a further con-

tinuance in this station, he still embraced any opportunity that occurred for promoting or recommending the interests of the Society. He was endowed with talents of a high order, with a persuasive eloquence, and great command of temper. He was indefatigable in his application to business; and shewed great sagacity and quickness in unravelling the most intricate subjects. He was always easy of access, and courteous in his intercourse with men of all ranks in society. He cultivated a taste for literature, science, and the liberal arts; and was ever ready to encourage those pursuits in others.

The following Report from the Treasurer shews a balance in favour of the Society of £17 9s. 6d., but a much larger sum will be necessary to meet an account for printing the first and second parts of the third volume of the Society's Transactions, due to Messrs. Armour, of Montreal. It appears that this account has been held back until the present year, from some mistake in Messrs. Armour's books.

RECEIPTS FOR 1839.

Balance in hand, January, 1839, .....	9	4	6
Amount of Subscriptions, 1839, .....	69	15	0
Amount of Arrears received in 1839, .....	24	15	0
Legislative Grant, .....	50	0	0
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	£153	14	6

EXPENDITURE.

Printing and Binding, .....	£36	18	8
Library and Museum, .....	35	0	0
Assistant Secretary, .....	30	0	0
Insurance, .....	5	0	0
Keeper of the Rooms and Firewood, .....	14	5	0
Contingencies, .....	15	1	4
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	136	5	0

Balance in hands, Jan. 1840, .... £17 9 6

Errors excepted.

R. SYMES,  
TREASURER.

January 3rd, 1840.

The approbation of our endeavors marked by the Legislature in continuing to us the annual grant of £50, calls for our warmest and most grateful acknowledgements. The greater part of this sum has been laid out in purchasing for the Library valuable works on Science and Literature, which could not be readily found in other collections. Among these a complete set of the Transactions of the Society of Arts in London, has been procured, a work containing a great variety of useful matter. The purchase of it was suggested, in consequence of a reference to some of its volumes being necessary for information concerning the culture of Mountain Rice, which was undertaken by the Society at the request of His Excellency Sir John Colborne. A complete copy of the Journals of the House of Assembly, presented by W. B. Lindsay, Esq., forms another valuable addition to our Library. These, and various other works, obtained by purchase, or as presents, required new book cases to receive them. A set has therefore been prepared, and is large enough to receive any further additions that are likely to be made to the Library for some time to come.

The Council has the pleasure of announcing to the Society the arrival of the valuable collection of shells, the present of the Earl of Gosford, noticed in the report of last year. They are now arranged, after La Marck's classification, in handsome cabinets prepared for the purpose; and, according to the intention of the noble donor, will serve as a basis to which the shells already in our possession, and any donations we may receive in future, can be advantageously joined. Several other donations have been made to the Museum, which have been announced in the reports of the meetings; among these a valuable collection of shells from the Irish coast, and some geological specimens from Samuel Wright, Esq. of Cork.

One donation, however, calls for special notice—the portrait of the founder of the Society, elegantly framed—presented by his son, the present Earl of Dalhousie. The print of Lord Dalhousie, purchased last year, has been removed to make place for this more valued one, which now forms a principal ornament of our rooms.

Much inconvenience having arisen from the want of Catalogues of the Library and Museum, the Council has taken measures to have them prepared ; and the gentlemen in charge of these departments, are now engaged in arranging catalogues of the various subjects under their care. It is intended that they shall be printed and published as soon as they are ready.

In January last, His Excellency Sir John Colborne transmitted to the Society a parcel of Mountain Rice, in order that they might institute experiments as to its fitness for cultivation in Canada, and endeavor to ascertain whether any benefit was likely to be derived from its introduction into general culture in these Provinces. The parcel was accompanied with the copy of a letter from Lord Glenelg to His Excellency, which stated that the grain had been raised in Nepaul, at the foot of the Himmaleh mountains, in a climate considered to resemble that of the Canadas very closely ; and referred for information respecting the mode of cultivating it, to papers in the Transactions of the Society of Arts, as already mentioned. Small quantities of the rice were distributed to several gentlemen interested in agriculture. It was sown with, and without previous preparation ; in green houses, and in the open air ; in flooded soils, and in ordinary ones ; but in no instance did it show the least sign of germinating. The grain seems to have been spoiled in some way ; and new experiments with sound rice are necessary before its suitability for this country can be determined on.

The Council received in November, through W. B. Lindsay, Esquire, a proposal from the Chief Secretary to take temporary charge of the specimens of Natural History in the House of Assembly. The Council, in the name of the Society, readily undertook the charge, and appointed a Committee to take proper steps for restoring and preserving this valuable collection. The Report of the Committee gives every reason to hope that the principal part of it will be preserved from the destruction with which it was threatened.



The Committee on Historical Documents has prepared a second small volume, which is now printed and ready for distribution. It consists of the manuscripts presented to the Society by the Earl of Durham, and the Rev. Mr. Holmes. They are eight in number, and contain new and interesting information on the state of Canada under the French Government, which will serve to fill up some lacunæ in the early history of these provinces.

The Council regrets that the meetings of the Society for literary purposes have not been so well attended as on previous years—neither have there been many papers contributed. The numerous subjects proposed for prize essays have not elicited a single paper. Two pictures only were offered—one a historical piece, the other a landscape. To the former (the landing of Wolfe, by Mr. D. Thielke,) a first class silver medal was adjudged. In the disturbed state of the province, the all engrossing subject of politics seems to have carried away mens' minds from the peaceful pursuits of science and literature. With restored tranquillity, however, we may reasonably hope for a return to pursuits, which, while they tend to enlarge the minds of those engaged in them, give offence to none, and are more or less for the benefit of all.