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REPORT.

The Committee appointed to inquire into the matters and things set forth in the Petition of THOMAS BARNETT, and to report how far the Museum of the Petitioner has contributed to promote the knowledge of Natural History in Canada and on the Continent of America, and how far the science would be advanced by enabling Mr. BARNETT to establish a system of exchange with foreign countries of specimens peculiar to Canada for those of other countries, beg leave to report as follows :—

Upon consultation together, it appears that all the members of your Committee have had occasion to go through and examine the Museum of the Petitioner. They have also availed themselves of the evidence of scientific and professional gentlemen, who recently, at the request of your Committee, visited it and minutely examined its contents.

The Niagara Falls Museum has been established about twenty-five years. It is an extensive and valuable collection, and must have required a very large expenditure of time, labor and money.

It contains about one hundred and fifty native Canadian birds, from the humming bird to the eagle.

One hundred and seventy-five mammals, comprising the different varieties, from the smallest mouse to the elk and moose, to be found between Eastern Canada and the Rocky Mountains.

Four hundred and ninety specimens of foreign birds, comprehending specimens of the richest plumage to be found on the globe.

Thirty-eight foreign mammals, among which there is a fine Barbary lion.

Thirty-eight specimens of fish, one of which, the green bass, is not to be found in any other collection. Large sums have been offered for it by other institutions.

There are forty-two specimens of reptiles.

In Entomology there is a fine collection, numbering over eight thousand specimens.

In Conchology there is a large collection of specimens, packed in boxes and but partially visible, but apparently the collection is extensive and very valuable.

There appears to be a large and rich collection of eggs, but, like the shells, they are packed in boxes and but partially visible. This is a new feature in Zoology. Mr. Couper says no Museum can be complete without such a collection.

There is a collection of ancient and modern coins, from the most remote periods, which Mr. Barnett represents to be the finest in America.

There are miscellaneous articles, such as Indian antiquities, specimens of art from other countries, &c.; also a fine collection and a great variety of Egyptian antiquities, amongst which are two mummies and the remains of others, which, combined with Chinese and Indian relics, are very numerous and interesting, and of great use to schools and students generally.

The witnesses describe the Museum as containing excellent specimens from foreign countries of mammalia, and particularly of birds, of which there are some very rare and rich specimens; but they state, that it is principally a Canadian collection, and the more valuable on that account. The number of skeletons of various animals is large, and exhibits the gradation of classes.

The collection of reptiles is very good, an important branch of Zoology, particularly in Canada, where so little is known of them.

There are the remains of two specimens of the gigantic mastodon, which are particularly interesting; the tusk of one measures nine feet in length.

There are also several specimens of living animals, among which are two buffaloes, male and female, which Mr. Barnett has had for fifteen years.

Professor Hincks states, that, notwithstanding the favorable impression made upon him by the evidence of the other witnesses, which he had perused previously to his recent visit to the Museum, at the request of the Committee, the collection exceeded his expectations. He represents the number of valuable objects as great; that they appear to be carefully preserved, and displayed in an instructive manner, and that the extent of the collection is such as to excite surprise at its having been formed and thus far sustained by private enterprise. He considers the Niagara Falls Museum as a most useful and interesting institution, affording great public benefit, and deserving of encouragement, as a source of widely diffused and valuable instruction. He adds that a portion of the animals, birds and other creatures of this country are very beautifully exhibited, accompanied by good and valuable specimens from other countries. Professor Hincks was particularly impressed by the size and beautiful exhibition of some of the principal species of Canadian birds and mammalia, greatly exceeding in some instances what he himself had been able by great exertion and expense to procure for the Museum of the University of Toronto, under his care, shewing at once the advantages of many years prolonged exertions, and the skill and taste displayed by Mr. Barnett.

Dr. Ryerson states that he was surprised at the extent and the variety of Mr. Barnett's Museum in Natural History, especially in some of the largest species of Canadian birds, and some fine specimens of our forest animals. He thinks that every possible encouragement ought to be given by the Legislature to an undertaking of this kind, which, from its very nature, can very rarely be undertaken, and cannot be adequately remunerated, though of great permanent interest and value to the country.

Dr. Ryerson also concurs in the views and opinions expressed by the other witnesses.

The witnesses are unanimous in declaring that the building which now contains the Museum is much too small and too frail to hold securely or to exhibit to advantage so instructive and valuable a collection. Mr. Couper, who has visited all the Provincial Museums, and has made this branch of knowledge for several years his particular study, practically and theoretically, states that progress has already been made with a new building which Mr. Barnett has begun to construct, that it is well adapted for the purpose, being large and substantial enough to hold the present collection in good order and safety. He says that the plan for admitting light is something novel to him and different from any he has ever seen for such purposes, and he deems it a most admirable one.

Mr. Routh states that when the present collection is removed into the building in progress of erection, together with the specimens now expected from England, Egypt, Australia and South America, the Niagara Falls Museum will be second to none in the Province.

Professor Hincks also says that the new substantial appropriate building is

needed in order to secure to the public the benefit arising from this collection, and that the character of this building and the ingenious and most successful method of lighting the cases must command the admiration of every competent judge.

The original letters and correspondence produced by Mr. Barnett from foreign institutions and persons of distinction, requesting an exchange of specimens, shew conclusively the estimation in which his museum is held, and also how much the science of Natural History in Canada would be promoted were he in a condition to accede fully to their proposals.

Some of the witnesses have passed a very high eulogium upon the liberality of Mr. Barnett, in the management of his Museum. It is stated that, of the many annual visitors to his exhibition, very many are admitted free of any charge, and others at half-price, and that it is a standing rule to admit teachers and pupils of all schools free, and that they very freely avail themselves of the privilege. Instances are given, also, of Mr. Barnett's humanity and benevolence. Whenever he has been called upon to contribute to any fund for the relief of the destitute he has always most nobly responded to the call by giving the proceeds of admission for a fixed time towards such fund, at the same time publicly advertising such purpose, and calling on the public to assist him. Among these instances, particular mention is made of his contribution to the fund for the relief of the houseless and destitute in the City of Québec, upon the occasion of the calamitous fires by which 1800 buildings were destroyed in 1845; and also, by a similar contribution to the Crimean fund:

We have thus presented to us the case of a gentleman who has by uncommon industry, and at great labor and expense, during twenty-five years, enthusiastically devoted himself to the formation of what may be termed a Canadian Natural History Institution, which is not only a credit to himself, but of which the country in which he lives may well be proud.

The forests of this vast continent are fast disappearing before the progress of the axe and the husbandman, and many kinds of animals that were once plentiful are becoming so scarce as to be considered almost extinct. It is, therefore, of great importance to Canada that there should be a repository of native specimens, in order that they may be therein preserved after the species has ceased to exist. It is most manifest that it would not be creditable to the country were such a laudable object left to the unaided enterprise and means of a single individual.

From the great advantages (in the opinion of the very competent and eminent gentlemen examined as witnesses in this case) to be derived from this institution, in the promotion of the study of Natural History and the general cause of education, your Committee unanimously and respectfully make an appeal to your Honorable House to consider the propriety of recommending to the Government the grant of some aid to Mr. Barnett, to enable him to effect the exchange of specimens solicited by other institutions, and also to facilitate the completion of his new building for the greater accommodation of the public.

Your Comitée deem Mr. Barnett to be fairly entitled to share in the bounty of the Legislature towards all institutions which tend to promote the cause of science and education, and the gratification of the public desire for exhibitions which combine useful knowledge with rational amusement. The aid, whatever it may be, to be given to Mr. Barnett, to be upon such conditions, restrictions, and privileges as the Government may attach to it.

All which is most respectfully submitted,

G. McMICKEN, Chairman.

Committee Room,
Legislative Assembly, 14th April, 1859.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Thursday, 24th March, 1859.

COMMITTEE MET.

Ordered,—That Professor Hincks, Toronto; Mr. Couper, Naturalist, Toronto; and Mr. Routh, of Drummondville, be summoned to give evidence before the Committee.

Adjourned to the call of the Chair.

Tuesday, 29th March, 1859.

COMMITTEE MET.

The Petitioner was present, and produced a statement of the different specimens that make up the collection in his Museum. Mr. Professor Hincks, Toronto; Mr. Couper, Naturalist, Toronto; and Mr. E. A. Routh, Drummondville, also appeared to give evidence before the Committee.

Professor *Hincks* called.—As he had not visited Mr. Barnett's Museum lately, he preferred reading his schedule of specimens before making any remarks. Mr. *William Couper* called and examined:

(By Mr. *McMicken*.)

1. Have you visited Mr. Barnett's Museum? If so, please state to the Committee what you know of it?—I visited Mr. Barnett's Museum last week, have seen all the Provincial Museums, amongst which the Museum of Natural History, Montreal, and the Museum of the University of Toronto; have made this branch of knowledge my particular study for several years, practically as well as theoretically. I examined Mr. Barnett's collection, on my recent visit, very minutely; it is principally a Canadian collection, and the more valuable as such. It contains excellent specimens, from foreign countries, of mammalia, and particularly of birds, of which there are some very rich and rare specimens. There are a large number of skeletons of various animals, shewing the gradation of classes; there is also a good collection of reptiles, a very important branch in zoology, especially in Canada, where so little is known of them. I consider a fair commencement has been made in forming a collection of the fishes of this country, there being now from thirty to forty specimens. The remains of the two specimens of mastodon are particularly interesting, and, in my opinion, it is well worth a person's time and trouble to go to Niagara to see them, believing them to be the only remains of this extinct animal in this Province.

2. What do you think of the Entomological collection?—It is very fair; the Egyptian antiquities, amongst which are too mummies, and the remains of others, combined with Indian relics, are very numerous and very interesting, and of great use to schools and students generally. There is also a very large collection of Conchological specimens, at present packed in boxes awaiting room to place them in the new building, and only partially visible, but, as far as I could judge, the collection is extensive and a very valuable one.

3. Is there a good collection of eggs?—Yes, and I may remark it is a new feature in Zoology; there appears to be a rich and large collection, but being packed in boxes like the shells, I could not particularize them; in my opinion no museum is complete without such a collection. I noticed in the museum a very fine collection of ancient coin, also some Chinese relics grouped with the Egyptian antiquities, which I deem well worth attention. The gardens and grounds with fish-ponds and living animals form together a highly attractive, interesting and useful feature connected with the museum.

4. In what condition did you find the museum building, upon your recent visit?—In my opinion the present building is entirely too small to contain, and too frail to hold securely so very valuable a collection as Mr. Barnett has; judging from what progress has already been made with the new building, it is well adapted for the purpose, being large enough to hold the present collection in proper arrangement, and from its substantial character is capable of keeping the collection in good order and safety. The plan for admitting light is something novel to me and different to any I have ever seen for such purpose, but I deem it a most admirable one.

5. Have you seen the abstract statement made by Mr. Barnett of the number and variety of specimens said by him to be contained in the museum, and judging from what saw, do you believe it to be correct?—I have, and I should say it was correct. I would also add, that among the living animals were two buffaloes, male and female, which Mr. Barnett says he has had for fifteen years. In looking over the "Register of visitors" to the museum, I found the greater majority to be composed of persons from foreign countries.

6. Judging from the Register, what number of people do you suppose visit the museum annually?—I should say about 20,000.

Mr. Routh called and examined:

(By Mr. McMicken.)

7. Are you acquainted with Mr. Barnett, and have you visited his museum at the Niagara Falls. Please give the Committee what information you can respecting it?—I am well acquainted with Mr. Thomas Barnett of the Niagara Falls Museum, having known him for nearly, if not quite, twenty years; during a portion of that time I have had many opportunities (from my fondness for the study of Zoology), of being more intimately acquainted with the contents of his museum; his manner of conducting it, and his own enthusiasm in his profession, than I otherwise could have had; I have no hesitation, therefore, in saying that Mr. Couper's testimony, which I have just heard, is quite correct, and as he is a practical naturalist, I shall not trespass on your time, by giving opinions less valuable, but shall at once proceed with my remarks upon the general management of the Institution.

The Niagara Falls Museum has been established about twenty-five years. It is open to visitors at all seasonable hours during the week, at a charge of twenty-five cents for each ticket of admission; season tickets being at the same charge. The number of visitors during the last year could not have fallen far short of twenty thousand. It must not be overlooked, however, that of this large number, very many were admitted free, and many others at half price. It is a standing rule to admit the teachers and pupils of all schools free; and the members of picnics and excursion parties half price. So far as the schools are concerned I am pleased to be in a position to say that this privilege is very freely used. The revenue derived from visitors would at the first glance appear to be sufficient to support the Institution, but when the immense expense attending the collection and arrangement of specimens is considered, it will be apparent

that nothing but the strictest economy could have brought the Institution to its present condition. Mr. Barnett has had his son in Egypt, and other parts of the old world, collecting and sending home curiosities and antiquities of the most valuable description, and has now, I understand, a gentleman collecting for him in the East. Mr. Barnett's enthusiasm is such that he expends every farthing he receives in either enlarging his collection or beautifying his grounds. I have again and again heard him assert that his greatest pride was to make the institution worthy of the country, and that he had labored more for his country's credit whilst making the collection, than his own. The remarks in the visitor's book of many of the first naturalists of the age, lead to the supposition that they at least deem the institution provincial. I need scarcely add that the remarks referred to are couched in most flattering language. When the buildings now in course of erection are completed, and the present collection removed from the several buildings it now occupies into the one intended for its reception, together with collections now on their way from England, Australia, South America, and Egypt, the Niagara Falls Museum will be second to none in the Province. I would take the liberty of mentioning a difficulty which, to my knowledge, the proprietor of the Niagara Falls Museum has had to encounter, and in several instances failed to surmount, it is the difficulty of procuring exchanges from other museums supported by, or the recipients of Government aid or protection. The proprietors of such institutions naturally look to the want of this "notice" on the part of the Government of the country, as an implied want of respectability. This has a most baneful influence upon Mr. Barnett's success as a practical naturalist and collector. Allow me to add that when ever Mr. Barnett has been called upon to contribute to any fund for the relief of the destitute, &c., &c., he has always most nobly responded by giving the proceeds of admission tickets to his museum for a fixed time, advertising the same and calling on the public to assist him. I will only call attention to the two instances, his contribution to the fund for the relief of the houseless and destitute, caused by the St. Rochs' fire, Quebec, and the Crimean fund.

Ordered, That Professor Hincks, Mr. Couper, Mr. Routh and Mr. Price, do attend before the Committee on to-morrow.

Adjourned until to-morrow at 10 30 A. M.

Wednesday, 30th March, 1859.

The petitioner was in attendance and produced several letters from different parties on the subject of his Museum.

Professor Hincks and Mr. Couper, Naturalist, were also in attendance.

Professor *Hincks*, examined:

(By the Chairman.)

8. Have you seen the evidence respecting the contents of Mr. Barnett's Museum? —Yes; and I have no doubt of its being a very valuable collection, and if properly arranged and named, an important source of instruction. I believe the encouragement of a taste for Natural History in a country to be a great means of advancing both its material, and its moral and social progress, and I have a very high estimate of the value of Museums easily accessible and well conducted. The evidence I have read respecting the conduct of Mr. Barnett's Museum shows it to be of a useful kind.

Ordered, That Professor Hincks be requested to proceed to Niagara Falls to visit the Museum, in order that he may be able to speak of it more fully.

Ordered, That Dr. Ryerson be summoned to attend before the Committee on Saturday next.

Adjourned until Saturday at 10.30 A.M.

Saturday, 2nd April, 1859.

COMMITTEE MET.

The Petitioner, Dr. Ryerson, Professor Hincks, and Mr. Couper, Naturalist, were in attendance.

Professor Hincks handed in a statement to the effect that he had visited the Museum, with his views respecting the same, and is, as follows:

I have now visited the Niagara Museum, and have examined with some care both the character of the collection and the plans for their proper display in the building which is in course of erection. Notwithstanding the evidence I had read, the collection exceeded my expectations. The number of valuable objects is great. They appear to be carefully preserved, and displayed in an instructive manner; and the extent of the collection is such as to excite surprise at its having been formed and thus far sustained by private enterprise; but it is manifest that they can neither be secured from injury nor displayed to any advantage in the present or any similar building, so that the new substantial and appropriate building is needed in order to secure the public benefit arising from them, and its character and the ingenious and most successful method of lighting the cases must secure the admiration of every competent judge. I cannot but consider the Niagara Falls Museum as a most useful and interesting institution, affording great public benefits, and deserving of encouragement as a source of widely diffused and valuable instruction. A large portion of the animals, birds, and other creatures of our own country are very beautifully exhibited and accompanied by many valuable specimens from other countries.

It occurs to me to add that I was particularly impressed by the size and beautiful exhibition of some of the principal species of Canadian birds, and mammalia, greatly exceeding in some instances what I have been able by great exertion and some expense to procure for the Museum under my charge, showing at once the advantage of many years prolonged exertions, and the skill and taste displayed by Mr. Barnett.

Ordered, That the same parties appear before the Committee on Tuesday next.

The Committee then adjourned until Tuesday next, at 10.30 A.M.

Tuesday, 5th April, 1859.

COMMITTEE MET.

The Rev. Dr. Ryerson, Mr. Couper, Naturalist, Toronto, and the petitioner, were in attendance.

Dr. Ryerson was called, and gave the following testimony:

I visited some time last summer Mr. Barnett's Museum, and was surprised at the extent and variety of his collection in Natural History, especially in some of the largest species of Canadian birds, and in some fine specimens of our forest animals. It must have required a very large expenditure of time, labour and money, to make the large and interesting collection contained in this Museum.

The buildings appeared literally unfit either for safety or convenience. The

new building was not far enough advanced to enable me to form any opinion of its merits.

I think that every possible encouragement should be given by the Legislature to an undertaking of this kind, which, from its very nature, can very rarely be undertaken; cannot be adequately remunerative, though of great permanent interest and value to the country.

I have read the evidence of the gentlemen already called before the Committee, and quite concur in their statements and views as far as I am capable of judging.
Adjourned until to-morrow.

Wednesday, 13th April, 1859,

COMMITTEE MET.

PRESENT :

MR. McMICKEN, Chairman ;

MR. SIMPSON,

MR. DUNBAR ROSS, and

HON. MR. MERRITT.

The Chairman presented the draft of a Report, which was approved of.
Ordered, That the Chairman report the same to the House.
The Committee then adjourned *sine die*.

2nd Session, 6th Parliament, 22 Victoria, 1859.

REPORT

Of Select Committee on Petition of Thomas
Barnett.

*Ordered, by THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, to be
printed, April 26th, 1859.*

Printed, April 27th, 1859.

(Mr. McMicken.)

TORONTO :

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