

501-K-27-4

1831
W. W. W. W.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LITERARY & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF

QUEBEC,

DELIVERED BY

The Hon. Chief Justice SEWELL, President,

AT THE

Anniversary Meeting,

27th January, 1831.

(Printed by Order of the Society.)

T. CARY & Co.

FREE-MASONS' HALL.

Quebec.



ANNUAL REPORT, &c.



The ANNIVERSARY MEETING for the Election of the Officers of this Society was held on Thursday in the LITERARY ROOMS, UNION BUILDINGS, HIS HONOR the CHIEF JUSTICE, in the Chair, who, after some preliminary business had been gone through, read the following REPORT :—

GENTLEMEN,

The Council being now about to retire from the offices which they have respectively exercised during the last year, we have the honor to lay before you, and to submit to your consideration, a report of the execution of the trust which you were pleased to repose in us, and of the actual state and condition of the Society.

During the past year the number of members has increased from about 70 to nearly 130 and we have solid ground to believe that in the future progress of the Society, the number will continue to increase. The disposition of the public to approve, and to advance our views, has been plainly indicated, and ought to operate as a stimulus to renewed exertion on our part, whilst it encourages us to expect a perfect reward for all our labours, in the ultimate success of the instituton.

The departure of Sir James Kempt from the Province, and his consequent resignation of the office of Patron to our infant establishment, we cannot but deeply regret ; at the same time we have the satisfaction to state that his Excellency the Lord Aylmer, in consequence of the resignation of Sir James Kempt, has done us the honor to become our Patron. His Lordship's conduct and example have already evinced the most cordial disposition to further the views, and to promote the best interests of the Society—and we cannot but look forward to the happiest results, while we continue to act under his Lordship's auspices.

The liberality of the Legislature in the last Sessions of the Provincial Parliament has enabled us to add several instru-

ments of science to those which were before in the possession of the Society ; among these are a pair of globes 21 inches in diameter, a transit instrument, an electrical machine, a Chemical Cabinet, a magnetic apparatus, a solar microscope, an universal microscope, an air pump with a barometer gage, Leslie's experimental apparatus for freezing, with all the articles which usually accompany the instruments and apparatus which have been mentioned, and a variety of others which will be found particularly enumerated in the Appendix No. 1.

It is impossible to advert to this donation without the liveliest feeling of gratitude, it bespeaks the confidence of each branch of the Legislature, in the intentions and endeavours of this institution, and we cannot but express our hopes that it will animate the zeal and quicken the activity of every member, urging them to shew by future efforts that the confidence of the legislature is not misplaced, and that their disinterested donation is not unmerited.

We have to report as an object of primary importance, that no answer having been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, respecting the promised Charter for the incorporation of the Society, it was thought expedient in May last to transmit a duplicate of the charter, and of the letter formerly transmitted, of which a copy will be found in the appendix to this report under the number 2. And we beg leave to add that we have every reason to expect that the charter will be received in an early day.

We have further to report several additions to the Library, which have been effected in some instances by purchase, in most by donation. The whole are particularly enumerated in the appendix No. 3 ; and among them will be found a valuable folio volume of one hundred plates, exhibiting the costumes of the various inhabitants of the shores of the Mediterranean, presented by Madame Germain, of Quebec. We have further to report several additions to the Hortus siccus

of the Society, amongst which are some new plants from the Island of Anticosti, and the north shore of the Saint Lawrence below Quebec; these will be found enumerated in the appendix No. 4. We have further to report several additions to the geological and mineralogical cabinet which are enumerated in the appendix No. 5; among these is a small cabinet containing one hundred and twenty specimens of the most costly and most beautiful marbles of Italy, presented to the Society by Francis Durette, Esq. of Quebec. We have also to report several papers of acknowledged worth, among which are a complete grammar of the Huron Language; and various tracts containing geological and topographical information respecting the hitherto (comparatively) unknown parts of Canada, which we have directed to be inserted in the forthcoming volume of the Transactions of the Society; the whole of the papers received, during the last year, are enumerated in the appendix No. 6. In addition to the gifts which have already been mentioned, the Society has been favoured with a variety of miscellaneous donations; in noticing these we must not omit to mention the excellent acromatic telescope presented to the society by our late Patron Sir James Kempt. To the generous donors of all the articles that have been received, we have returned thanks on the part and in behalf of the Society.

We have also to report the establishment of a general, yet peculiar, geological and mineralogical cabinet, to be composed of specimens, exclusively, the production of British America; this cabinet has been commenced under the direction of the members of the society, who stand so eminently distinguished for geological knowledge, and indefatigable research. A separate collection of duplicates of these specimens classed and arranged by reference to their localities, in the several districts of the British Provinces in which they were found, has also been commenced under the superintendence of the same members. The two collections will reciprocally tend to illustrate the geology and mineralogy of

British America, both generally and locally, and we trust will be found to be equally useful.—In obedience to the rules of the society we lay before you the report of the Classes which will be found in the appendix No. 7.

We cannot close this part of our report without adverting to the animated address to the public which has been issued by the Learned Chairman of the class of Natural History. It is our earnest hope and expectation that this address will produce the effect which he contemplated, and as it affords us the opportunity, we request permission to recall to the recollection of the society that among the objects of our establishment the attainment of historical information is one which stands prominent. In the port folios of many gentlemen in this province, and probably in other parts of America, there are to be found original documents and papers, with other manuscripts (letters for instance) which united in one collection would form and preserve the most authentic materials for the future historian of Canada.

We venture, therefore, to cite the example of the address made to the public by the chairman of the class of Science, in the hope that the society, or the class of History may be induced to follow it, and if they should we feel assured that many important papers would be deposited in our archives for the future benefit of Canada, which will otherwise perish and be lost to the world.

The statement of the accounts and the report of the Committee to whom they were referred, we lay before you in the appendix No. 8, and we beg leave to request that the society will notice the contents of these documents. It will be seen that we have been disappointed in our attempts to realize the outstanding debts of the society, and we cannot but call your attention most pointedly to this circumstance.

Having been anxious to excite a taste for scientific studies in the youth of this Province, by the introduction of Lectures upon some branch of science in which they might become interested, we engaged Mr. John Finch, to read a course of Lecture

upon Geology, and Mineralogy, under a guarantee on our part individually of a certain sum—which we have the pleasure to add has not only been realized, but greatly exceeded by the amount of the subscriptions to his Lectures. Mr. Finch has fulfilled his engagement with equal credit to his talents and attention. It was our intention to follow up the Lectures of Mr. Finch, by an elementary course of Chemistry, to be delivered by some of our own members upon terms which would be merely sufficient to defray the actual expence of the materials used in the experiments.

A proposal however on the part of Mr. Finch, to read a general course of Lectures on Chemistry, has induced us to lay aside our projected undertaking for the present. The elementary course which we proposed, should it be deemed expedient, may be carried into effect at some future day, by the officers of the society who may be appointed to succeed us in our respective stations, and we beg leave to recommend it to their attention.

Before we conclude we have yet to trespass upon your patience for a short period. It is said to be the pride of science, that her votaries know no party distinctions, of any description, and that they have but one disinterested and common object of pursuit. Ample testimony of the truth of these observations has been furnished even in the infancy of our institution: We were originally two societies, we are now one, we are all fellow labourers in the field of science, and cherish one and all and equally, a common desire to render our labours beneficial to the land we inhabit, either as the place of our birth, or as the country which we have maturely chosen and adopted, as a home for ourselves and for our children. We have a common interest, in the benefits to be derived from our united endeavours, and even in the difficulties with which we are surrounded, we pursue one common object in our attempt to improve the state of science in Canada, to aid her in the discovery and display of her native riches and her internal resources, both mental and material. We seek to serve her

inhabitants, her sons by birth, and her sons by adoption, without distinction of any kind. It is our aim and we strive to excite in all, and especially in the rising generation, a thirst for knowledge, intending, until more extensive and more perfect establishments shall arise under the fostering care and protection of the Government and the Legislature, to encourage and assist them, by the formation of Cabinets by public Lectures, and by the publication of treatises and other papers, in the volumes of our transactions, to prosecute a course of study which shall qualify them to enter the lists of science, with advantages as nearly equal to those which are enjoyed by the European and American students, as we can procure. To make them acquainted with the latent powers of their own minds, and to enable them ultimately to assign to Canada her rank in the scientific world, which their own exertions must determine, and maintain.

Such being our views may we not confidently look for a continuation of the assistance, encouragement, and support which we have hitherto experienced?

The Officers elected for the ensuing year are,—

President, HIS HONOR the CHIEF JUSTICE of the PROVINCE.—1st. Vice President, WILLIAM SHEPPARD, Esquire.—2d. do. Honble. Sir JOHN CALDWELL Bart:—3d. do. ANDREW STUART, Esquire, M. P. P.—4th. do. Honble. A. W. COCHRAN.—Recording Secretary, WILLIAM HENDERSON, Esquire.—Corresponding Secretary, J. WJERTELE, Esquire, M. P. P.—Treasurer, ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esquire.—Librarian, J. MORRIN, M. D.—Council Secretary, W. LYONS, M. D.—Chairman of the Class of Literature, JOHN C. FISHER, L. I. D.—Of the Class of Natural History, W. KELLY, M. D. R. N.—Of the Class of Science, T. LLOYD, M. D.—and of the class of Arts, the Reverend Mr. HOLMES.