

# LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUEBEC

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*Annual general meeting : 8th January, 1896*

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## ANNUAL REPORT

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The annual general meeting was held at the rooms of the Society, on Wednesday morning, 8th instant, and 10 o'clock. The reports which it was unanimously agreed to publish were those of: I, The Council, II, The Librarian, III, The Treasurer.

### I.—REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

Although the present position of the Society ought to be known by this time to every member, yet in order to prevent any possibility of misunderstanding, the Council wishes once more to lay a summary of it before the members.

The Society exists firstly as a learned society, secondly as a reference library, thirdly as a circulating library, and fourthly as a reading room for periodicals. Now if we take these four forms of our existence separately we shall be able to see exactly how we stand with regard to each one, and so better appreciate all the blessings of our general standing.

Our standing as a learned society has always hitherto been among the very first. We are the oldest of all Canadian

societies, were the first to receive a Royal charter of incorporation and the first to receive an annual grant from the Government. As the continuance or withdrawal of this grant has been a burning question for some years past, it may be stated again—and stated confidently, without any fear of valid contradiction—that the grant was always given by successive governments, quite irrespective of political considerations, for the purpose of enabling the Society to publish Proceedings and Transactions dealing with all subjects of Canadian historical or other research; and, it may also be stated again with equal confidence, the trust reposed in the Society by many governments throughout so many years was never once abused. A reference to the long series of our publications will convince any competent judge of the truth of this assertion.

For many years the relations between the Society and the Government were of the most harmonious kind; but with the successive arbitrary attacks made by the late Government a disastrous change began. The whole history of this period is set forth in detail in the minutes of the monthly meetings: the gist of the matter is this: the Government gave a reduced grant at first, then seized seventeen invaluable historical manuscripts, under the specious pretence that they ought not to remain in private hands and finally went on reducing the grant till nothing was left.

The Council under their able and energetic president, Dr. George Stewart, resisted this spoliation to the utmost but were forced into giving a most reluctant consent under the

strongest protest to the temporary removal of these volumes from the vaults of the Society to the Library of Parliament whilst maintaining intact the Society's absolute claim to every manuscript taken.

The present Government, unfortunately, have not as yet been able to see their way clear to a renewal of our grant ; nor have they yet come to any decision with regard to our claim of \$4000 as compensation for our loss.

Thus as a learned Society we stand to-day unable either to acquire new materials or to publish those which we already have, it should be clearly understood that our existence as a learned Society is entirely dependant upon some certain source of income other than that derived from members subscriptions. It is necessary to repeat this again and again, since some have refused to subscribe to an endowment on the plea that they will not aid a Society to do work in which its members do not show a sufficient pecuniary interest.

As a matter of fact the inadequacy of popular annual subscription has been recognized from the beginning, and the recognition of this fact was shown in the old annual Government grant of \$750, and if it is objected that we ought to carry on our publications now, in spite of having no grant in aid, we can only ask such objectors to kindly point out a method by which a society can safely expend twice as much money as it receives : or to give their solution of this problem in proportion :—If a society of over 400 members requires a grant of \$750, what would be an adequate grant for a society of less than 200 members ?

The independant income we require must certainly not be less than \$500 a year : towards obtaining which we have the chance of a Government grant, the further chance of Government compensation and the chance of raising a sufficient endowment. The endowment has at all events some present certainty about it for the amount of subscriptions already promised is approaching \$3000 : but then, it must be remembered, that in raising money by public subscription the general experience is that the first steps are by far the easiest to make. If we take the hopes of a renewed grant from a Government that used to give us from \$500 to \$750 annually the expectations of receiving \$4000 as compensation for the loss of our priceless manuscripts and the possibilities of expansion in an endowment fund which has nearly reached \$3000 in a single year, and if we place these three chances in a favorable light, perhaps it may seem to the members here assembled that this report ought to be a more cheerful one than it is : however this may be, the facts are now before the members, who, it is confidently hoped, will no longer lack sufficient data from which to draw their own conclusions.

Turning now to our existence as a reference and circulating library, we are brought face to face with quite a set of different circumstances, here we exist simply and solely for our own convenience and the gaps on our shelves simply represent corresponding gaps in our paying membership. There are many indispensable works of reference which we have, such as the last Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica and others, which we are still receiving, such as the

successive volumes, in the International Scientific Series; but there are many great works to which we are unable to subscribe at all, for instance the new English Dictionary and the Dictionary of National Biography. As for the works more suitable for the purposes of a circulating library, it would be idle to say much while we can do so little; but works are added whenever possible and when our friends will allow us, every effort shall be made to fill existing gaps according to the general wishes of the subscribers. It is a matter of some congratulation that we are at present out of debt; but it has required a combination of great generosity on the part of our creditors, with a special effort on the part of a few subscribers to bring this about—we cleared a debt of over \$700 by raising a special debt fund of \$370. For 1896 we are safe provided that we confine our attention to running expenses of management, rent, heat, light and the purchase of periodicals. Beyond these items we cannot go very far; but something towards the purchase of new books or additional periodicals might be done if members would only be a little more regular in their payments. As a reading room for Periodicals we may be satisfied with our prospects for 1896, and if a four dollar subscription entitled a member only to access to our periodicals it would hardly be said to be yielding an inadequate return, whilst giving him the reading of between thirty and forty of the best serials—monthly, fortnightly and weekly. It is hoped that even this number may be increased possibly, in the first instance by adding to our Canadian periodicals the Canadian Magazine and to our French *La Revue des Sciences* (we already receive the

*Revue des Deux-Mondes*) and by subscribing to the new and successful venture in international publication "Cosmopolis", a monthly Magazine numbering among its contributors the best names in England, France, Germany and America.

But stationary as it is in respect of publication, the Society has much to offer its membres besides the reading of thirty or forty popular periodicals; it has its general library of over 12,000 volumes, and a Collection of Canadiana which has been used again and again by historians, such as Parkman abroad, and more than we can here set down at home, which has been in part published to the learned world entirely by the Society's use of the Government grant, and which still includes unique manuscripts only awaiting a renewal of the grant to reveal the wealth of their historical material. Besides our own long series of Proceedings and Transactions which are eagerly sought for in many places, we continue to acquire each year an immense series of the publications of other Societies in every part of the world, and besides these again we receive regularly many invaluable Government publications from all parts of Canada and the United States, from the United Kingdom, from India and from elsewhere. All these publications are of great value, they cover every department of knowledge—literary, historical, naval, military, scientific and artistic, and, if we were able to resume publication, we could greatly increase probably even double the number of our exchanges and thus not only make known to the honor of Canadian research, that part of Canadian unpublished history to which we hold the key, but also obtain for our old

and respected Society, for our ancient city and for our country, a world of information in return—which, otherwise, not twice our whole expenditure would bring together for our reading. But let it be remembered that our Exchanges will soon drop off and that unless we publish within the next eighteen months at latest, all our sister societies will take it for granted—and with good reason—that we have passed from the state of suspended animation to that of death.

WILLIAM WOOD,  
Secretary.

The report of the Council refers to : 1st the seventeen manuscripts removed by the late Government; 2nd the periodicals already paid for in advance for 1896, and 3rd the exchanges received from other learned Societies. Members will find these three lists in full in the library. In the report of the Treasurer, no mention is made except of amounts actually passing through his hands, Mr. Geggie, however, drew the attention of the meeting to the great generosity of the creditors whose long standing debts were paid off last year, and it was unanimously resolved that this generosity should be here publicly acknowledged. It should not be allowed to pass without notice that an account equal to the amount of the second largest special subscription was privately paid by a gentleman who, for two years past, has held the office of President to the great acceptance of all; and, in this connection, it should be added that three gentlemen whose names do not appear among the special subscribers, have each put down their names for \$10.

The Council unanimously re-appointed its efficient officer, Mr. Strachan, as custodian and assistant Librarian for 1896. The meeting which adopted the reports presented without division was followed by an auction sale of periodicals for 1895 and 1896.

The ballot for the members of the Council for 1896 resulted as follows :

COUNCIL FOR 1896

- President*..... The Very Revd. the Dean of Quebec.
- Vice-Presidents*..... P. B. Casgrain, Esq., W. Hosack, Esq., J. M. LeMoine, Esq., G. G. Stuart, Esq.
- Recording Secretary* . . . . . T. A. Young, Esq.
- Corresponding Secretary* . . J. F. Dumontier, Esq.
- Council Secretary* . . . . . William Wood, Esq.
- Treasurer*..... James Geggie, Esq.
- Librarian*..... P. Johnston, Esq.
- Curator of Museum*..... F. D. Tims, Esq.
- Curator of Apparatus*.... Wm. Clint, Esq.
- Additional Members of Council*.—A. Campbell, Esq., C. Tessier, Esq., E. Pope, Esq., G. R. Renfrew, Esq.
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The Treasurer in account with the Society for the year  
ending 31st December, 1895 :

*Dr.*

Balance in hand 1st Jany. 1895 .....	\$ 81 39
Members subscriptions—1894 .....	24 00
“ “ —1895 .....	388 00
Transactions sold .....	54 25
Papers sold .....	18 95
Special subscription to pay off accumulated debt :	
V. Boswell, Esq. ....	200 00
J. Douglas, Esq. ....	50 00
W. Hossack, Esq. ....	10 00
G. R. Renfrew, Esq. ....	10 00
P. Johnston, Esq. ....	10 00
C. Tessier, Esq. ....	10 00
W. Wood, Esq. ....	10 00
P. B. Casgrain, Esq. ....	10 00
Jas. Geggie, Esq. ....	10 00
Balance due Treasurer .....	0 21
	<hr/>
	\$ 886 86
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*Cr.*

Messrs. Cummings' account .....	\$ 22 80
Dawson's " .....	89 75
Lafrance's " .....	15 00
Foote— <i>Morning Chronicle</i> .....	59 16
Sampson .....	8 00
Perry .....	13 50

Messrs. Cook—Morrin College.....	\$ 150 00
Periodicals for 1895.....	125 52
Salary assist. Librarian 10 months.....	200 00
Binding.....	5 25
Gas.....	2 53
Electric Light.....	36 00
Sundries and Postage.....	27 89
Periodicals for 1896.....	131 40
	<hr/>
	\$ 886 80

(Signed),                    JAMES GEGGIE,  
   Treasurer.

REPORT OF LIBRARIAN FOR 1895

I regret I am not able to submit a more encouraging report. However we are in a much better position financially than we were last year.

At last annual meeting of this Society in consequence of the absence from town of the Librarian, there was no written report and I now compare the issues of this year with those of 1893. You will notice that there is a considerable difference in the number of periodicals and books taken out :

	1893	1895
Periodicals.....	<u>528</u>	<u>665</u>
History .....	196	128
Fiction.....	351	231
Unclassified.....	<u>412</u>	<u>402</u>
	1480	1426

We are still, I am sorry to say, not in a position to invest largely in new books and I think, in the coming year we should make an effort to increase the number of books purchased. So far, in the past year we have only bought a limited number of books, we have received in donations 12 bound volumes and 127 unbound pamphlets. During the year we have lost by death four of our oldest members—namely : —L. H. Dunn, C. Judge, Major Tapp, and J. R. Young, five of our members have also resigned and six have left the city, we have however received ten new members ; I think if an earnest effort was made we ought to be able to increase our membership.

I am happy to say our exchanges continue to come to hand, amongst the most valuable of them being those of the Smithsonian Institute and Geological survey of the U. S. A., also the Ethnological Society's publications and those of the Royal Societies of London, Dublin and Edinburgh, beside many others ; of course this will not continue very long if we have nothing to give in return—I hope, however, another effort will be made to increase our endowment fund, and in any case, I trust the Government may see the justice of our claim against them, and come to our aid so as to enable us to issue our publications as formerly.

P. JOHNSTON,  
Librarian.





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# TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

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# LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF QUEBEC



No. 23

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SESSIONS OF 1898 to 1900

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QUEBEC

FRANK CARREL, PUBLISHER

1900

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[Faint, illegible text]





TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
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OF QUEBEC



No. 23

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SESSIONS OF 1898 to 1900

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FRANK CARREL, PUBLISHER

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