

2.—The Royal Society of Canada.¹

The Royal Society of Canada owes its inception to the interest in the literary and scientific development of Canada shown by the Marquis of Lorne during his tenure of the office of Governor-General of Canada. On his initiative, a meeting of men prominent in Canadian literature and science was held at Montreal in December, 1881, and at this meeting the society was organized, its first regular meeting being held at Ottawa in the May following (1882).

The aims of the society, as set forth in the Act of Incorporation, passed by the Dominion Parliament in 1883 (46 Vict., c. 46), are: (1) to encourage studies and investigations in literature and science; (2) to publish original papers by members of the society and documents relative to Canadian affairs that are deemed worthy of publication; (3) to offer prizes and other inducements for papers of merit on subjects relating to Canada and to aid in bringing promising researches to completion; (4) to aid in the formation of a Canadian museum of archives, ethnology, archæology and natural history.

In fulfilment of these aims the society holds an annual meeting in May at Ottawa, for the reading of papers and discussion, occasionally adjourning to other cities such as Toronto, Montreal or Quebec, the meeting of 1924 having been held in the last-named city. For convenience, the society is divided into five sections, of which section 1 is devoted to French literature (including history, archæology, etc.); section 2 to English literature (including history, economics, archæology, etc.); section 3 to the mathematical, physical and chemical sciences; section 4 to geology and mineralogy; and section 5 to the biological sciences. Membership in the various sections is strictly limited, being fixed at forty for sections 1, 4 and 5, and at fifty for sections 2 and 3, and candidates for membership must be nominated by three members of the section to which they desire election and must set forth fully their qualifications for membership. Election is determined by a majority vote of the members of the section concerned, subject to ratification by the council of the society.

Beginning with 1882, the society has published annually a volume of proceedings and transactions, in which are included the papers presented each year to the various sections. By exchange of the transactions with other learned societies and by donations, the society is rapidly accumulating a valuable library.

For financial reasons the society has been unable to carry out to any considerable extent the third of its aims, as stated above. It receives annually a grant from the Dominion Government, but this barely suffices to pay the expenses of publication and leaves nothing for the subvention of promising investigations. At the last annual meeting, however, the society received, through the generosity of Sir Joseph Flavelle, an endowment for a gold medal to be awarded for meritorious achievement in literature or science, and it is thereby placed in a position to manifest its appreciation and encouragement of outstanding work.

The question of a national museum has seriously engaged the attention of the Society, but so far, for various reasons, little progress has been made towards the realization of such an institution, so important a factor in the general education of the community and so valuable an aid in the investigation of the natural resources of the country.

¹Contributed by Prof. J. Playfair McMurrich, M.A., Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.S.C., Past President of the Royal Society of Canada.