

year 1852-53: "It may be a consideration whether a growing country like Canada could not afford to anticipate what future importance may require in the nature of a national museum and at some future time not far distant, erect an appropriate edifice especially planned for the purpose."

In the meantime, the officers of the Geological Survey continued to collect for the geological museum. In 1856, Elkanah Billings, a palaeontologist, was added to the staff, the first of a number of specialists, and the legislation passed that year to continue the work of the Geological Survey specified the establishment of a geological museum, open to the public, to exhibit specimens, books and instruments.

In 1874, the practice of recording the number of visitors to the Museum was commenced; from May 1874 to April 1875 the number of visitors was 1,017 and by the year ended April 1896 it had reached 31,595. In 1874, the distribution of specimens of minerals, rocks and other natural history objects to schools was started with a donation to the Board of School Teachers of Elora, Ont. The first organized Museum lecture program was undertaken in 1912, with a series of lectures for young people after school; by 1915, Saturday morning lectures for children and evening lectures for adults—both features of the Museum program today—were in operation.

The scope of the Museum was enlarged in the "Act to make better provision respecting the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada and for maintenance of the Museum in connection therewith", of Apr. 28, 1877. In that Act the Survey was instructed "to study and report upon the flora and fauna of the Dominion" and "to continue to collect the necessary materials for a Canadian museum of natural history, mineralogy and geology" As early as the Act of 1856, the Geological Survey of Canada had been authorized "from time to time" to distribute publications relative to the Survey. From this authority developed the Museum's celebrated series of scientific bulletins presenting the researches of its staff.

The Act of 1877 established the Geological Survey and the Museum on a continuing basis and permitted the appointment of specialists in connection with natural history research. John Macoun was appointed to establish the division of biology in 1882. He was an eminent botanist who had accompanied the expedition of Sanford Fleming to explore Western Canada in 1871. Macoun's report of 1874 laid the groundwork for the establishment of western Canadian agriculture. He also published a catalogue of Canadian birds. In 1895 under the third Director of the Geological Survey, George M. Dawson, the Museum entered the field of Canadian anthropology.

Prior to 1880, the Museum occupied several buildings in Montreal but that year the Geological Survey moved to Ottawa, occupying the former Clarendon Hotel on Sussex Street. Construction of the Victoria Memorial Museum building was started in 1904 and the Geological Survey moved in in 1910. The Museum began an expanded program of research and exhibition under the direction of R. W. Brock, then Director of the Geological Survey of Canada. Unfortunately this program was curtailed during World War I because the burning of the Parliament Building, in 1916, forced Parliament to occupy the Museum building until 1919. Later, expansion of the exhibition halls was handicapped by the Museum sharing its building with the National Gallery of Canada and the Geological Survey of Canada. However, in 1927, the Governor General in Council gave authority "to designate the museum branch of the Department of Mines as the National Museum of Canada"; it is now part of the Department of the Secretary of State. During the past 20 years, particularly after the appointment of Dr. Frederick J. Alcock as Chief Curator, the Museum has increased its research, education and exhibition staff in order to play a more important role in the cultural life of Canada and perform the tasks properly assigned to the National Museum of Canada. A new National Museum building will be constructed in the heart of Ottawa within the next few years.

The responsibilities of a great museum include the collection, preservation, storage and study of objects related to the various disciplines that fall under its purview. The next