

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
NOVA SCOTIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

C. B. WELD

89th Annual Meeting. October 23rd 1950

Members of the Institute:

According to the constitution it is my duty at this time to review the progress of the Institute during the past year and to discuss such topics as I may deem conducive to the welfare of the Institute. I will be brief. At the outset I am happy to be able to say that, to the best of my knowledge, none of our members have died during the year. If I should be mistaken, please inform me of the fact in order that a suitable addendum may be made to this report.

We have had an active year, holding a full complement of seven meetings at which twenty-one papers were presented. Twenty-seven authors contributed to these and the programs were well diversified and the presentations of good quality. The average attendance at the meetings was forty, a figure that indicates a continued interest on the part of our members and guests. As usual the great majority of the papers originated in Dalhousie University laboratories. This is as it should be, perhaps, Dalhousie being our most central Academic body. We have welcomed a number of Oceanographic papers this year and we would like to have more from other laboratories, such as to name a few—the Defence Research Board, N.R.E., the Fisheries, the N. S. Research Foundation, N. S. Technical College, the new department of metabolism at the V.G.H., the new National Research Council, etc. We must not fail to persuade our Halifax members from laboratories other than Dalhousie and our Associate members outside Halifax to present the results of their researches at our meetings. This year not one of our associate members availed himself of our offer to defray at least a part of his expenses should he wish to present his work at a meeting of the Insti-

tute. We must be more persuasive in the future and make a real effort to bring in outside papers. One of our constitutional objects is the promotion of scientific research. We can not pay the expenses of the research but we can foster it by creating an atmosphere at our meetings in which people interested in research can exchange ideas and obtain encouragement, and for their good as well as ours we must persuade the shy and diffident individual to come and take part in the scientific discussions.

There is nothing I would like better than to see your Council having to wrestle with the problem of handling a great increase in the number of papers offered. Indeed, in view of the increased research activity in this area, we can be rather disturbed if the problem does not arise. The suggestion that we organize sectional meetings, either by laboratories or by subjects, has already been voiced in informal discussions. The holding of separate, perhaps concurrent, meetings for papers in the biological and in the physical Sciences, for example, would certainly allow more papers to be presented and it might conceivably result in freer discussion of the papers. However, in my opinion, the more likely result would be that the papers would become more technical and the discussion more restricted in its scope. It may be that some divided meetings will soon be tried, but there is strength in our full meetings and I hope that they are not lightly dropped. However this is a matter we may safely leave to the wisdom of the future Councils.

Our membership remains at about two hundred of which seventy-seven are ordinary members, ten are life members, and about fifty are student members. I believe that few scientific workers doing research in this area are non-members but there must be some in other parts of the province who are not members. We must remember that we are a Provincial body and that almost our only contact with the province as a whole is through our associate members. We should give thought to our science colleagues who might become interested associates and nominate them.

I must not enroach upon the reports of officers that follow but a few remarks may be in order at this point. The treasurer will report that we have spent more than our income. For some years the volumes of the Proceedings were very slim and our expenses small and in those years we consciously accumulated a reserve that would help us through more expensive years. These are now upon us: our Proceedings are fatter and printing costs are high. Our financial position is good but more funds may be needed soon and your Council is watching the situation closely. We do not want to curtail our publications. The Corresponding Secretary will report a very healthy condition of exchanges. The Editor now has the 1948-49 part of the Proceedings in the hands of the printers and the current number largely assembled. We are now only one issue behind. The Librarian is at last able to report that the library is well organized and catalogued and that any volume or paper is now accessible, even those in the oldest back files. All these officers, together with the Recording Secretary, have worked tirelessly and efficiently and they deserve our especial thanks.

During the year there have been ten meetings of your Council. It is always surprising how many relatively minor problems present themselves in the course of the year and it is amazing how much time they take. I must congratulate your council on its ability to discuss these matters patiently and yet without undue waste of time. Only two matters are being specifically left to next year's council. One is the minor but ever recurring question of whether we should provide some timing mechanism with which to warn speakers of the elapse of their allotted time. During the past year your Council has become increasingly conscious of the need for a simple device routinely and impersonally applied to all speakers. The other matter is new. Towards the end of the year, at the suggestion of Dr. Begg, Council discussed the possibility of encouraging our student members to present papers before us. We cannot commit the new Council but we are recommending

to them the establishment of two \$50. prizes for this purpose. The suggestion is that one prize be given to the biological sciences group and one to the physical sciences group, and that it be awarded on the basis of both its oral presentation and its manuscript. The manuscript should be submitted to Council for judging only. If publication should be desired it would also be submitted to the editor in the usual way. I am sure that comments from any member would be welcomed by Council as a guide to follow in the formulation of rules and procedure in this matter.

You will have received recently, new copies of our "Constitution and By-Laws." The last issue of this booklet was in 1940 and the issue is now out of print. Your Council felt that a revision of the constitution was not required but it did consolidate the previous By-Law revisions and review them as a whole. A sufficiently large printing has been made to allow a copy to be furnished to each member and to leave enough over to last us many more years.

The research activity in this community and the number of scientific workers is rapidly increasing. To the Institute this poses a problem. Unless we grow in numbers and in activity to a corresponding degree we are actually losing ground. I have already spoken of the need of new members and of the possibility of extra meetings: this is the reason. I personally hate to think of the Institute getting large and unwieldy but we must expand with our community or die. We have had an active year and apparently a successful one but we have not expanded and perhaps we should have. I will not be satisfied that the Institute is truly healthy unless the coming Council suffers growing pains.

In closing I wish to thank each member of Council for conscientious attendance at meetings and for unflinching interest in all the Institute's affairs. In the normal course of events my term of office as President will end this evening. Though I give up the office thankfully I do wish to express my thanks for the honour you have done me in making me your President.