



Geography at the British Association, Toronto, 1897

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GEOGRAPHY AT THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, TORONTO, 1897.

THE success of the meeting of the British Association in Canada is not to be gauged by the number of members in attendance, which was comparatively small. Of those present, however, a much larger proportion than usual was composed of active members who took part in the proceedings of the sections. A large number of British visitors made the journey to Canada, including several who had been present at the Montreal meeting of 1884. The authorities of McGill University, Montreal, gave a very hearty welcome to the members arriving in the Allan line steamer *Parisian*, on which most of the sectional presidents and officials travelled. This was a foretaste of receptions in many towns; and the feeling that the Dominion of Canada as a whole welcomed the Association made itself felt everywhere.

The meeting was opened in Toronto on Wednesday, August 18, by a formal afternoon reception in the Horticultural Pavilion, presided over by the mayor, and open to the public. Several speeches were made, and this innovation seemed to produce an excellent effect, by letting the townspeople feel that they had all a part in receiving the Association.

The sectional meetings were held in the fine buildings of the University of Toronto, Section E—Geography—being housed in the University library. The large reading-room was prepared at great labour and considerable expense as a lecture-room, provided with a powerful electric lantern and all possible appliances, the utmost credit being due to the Toronto committee for the successful efforts they made to provide accommodation of the most convenient possible kind.

The section was constituted as follows :—

President—J. Scott Keltie, LL.D., SEC. R.G.S.

Vice-Presidents—Rev. President Burwash; E. G. Ravenstein; Prof. A. Penck; F. C. Selous; Coutts Trotter.

Secretaries—Colonel F. Bailey, SEC. R.S.G.S.; Dr. H. R. Mill (Recorder); J. B. Tyrrell.

Committee—Prof. Marcus Baker; W. M. Beaufort; Dr. W. T. Blandford, F.R.S.; Rt. Hon. James Bryce, M.P.; Prof. W. M. Davis; Prof. R. E. Dodge; Dr. H. O. Forbes; General A. W. Greeley; Otto J. Klotz; Prince Kropotkin; G. E. Lumsden; Prof. John Milne, F.R.S.; Prof. Willis L. Moore; E. Delmar Morgan; Sir G. S. Robertson, K.C.S.I.; A. Laurence Rotch; Sir John Swinburne, Bart.; J. White.

Altogether thirty-three papers and reports were presented, and the section met on five days. It was a matter of regret that the only Canadian Geographical Society, that of Quebec, was not represented at the meeting, especially as it has recently published a volume of

transactions, inaugurating, it is to be hoped, a period of renewed activity in its history. Several papers of great interest were presented by Canadians, and a special feature of the meeting was the participation of a number of the eminent geographers of the United States, and the communication of valuable reports from what may for the moment be termed the geographical departments of the Governments of Canada and the United States. The various subjects under discussion are enumerated below, and fuller details of most of the papers, with the complete text of some, will duly appear in the *Journal*.

Thursday, August 19.—The President's address, delivered at twelve o'clock so as not to clash with Dr. Dawson's address to Section C (Geology), was listened to by a large audience, who highly appreciated the series of maps shown by the electric lantern as a summary of its main features. The address is printed in the *Journal* for September, p. 308. A vote of thanks was proposed by President Burwash, and seconded by Mr. Ravenstein.

Sir G. S. Robertson gave a paper on Kafiristan and the Kafirs, which was perhaps the most popular of those read to the section, if one might judge by the large audience with which the hall was crowded.

Mr. Ravenstein presented the Sixth Report of the Committee on the Climatology of Africa, the main features of which will be recorded in the *Journal*.

Mr. Delmar Morgan described the recent work done by Russians on Novaya Zemlya, referring especially to the recent expedition of Chernysheff. The results ascertained are that the views of von Baer and other earlier explorers that Novaya Zemlya is geologically connected with the Pai-hoi are correct only as regards the southern part and Vaigats; the northern part of the southern island, including both sides of Matochkin strait, show a north-westerly strike of the strata, therefore corresponding, not with the Pai-hoi, but with the Ural. The folding process in Novaya Zemlya coincided with the Palæozoic epoch, and from that time denudation forces have been at work. In this way the system of cross-valleys has been developed and the well-known Matochkin-shar formed. The glacial period in Europe was contemporaneous with that of Novaya Zemlya. This was followed by its submergence beneath the ocean, together with vast tracts of Northern Europe, Asia, and America. This submergence reduced the extent of the glaciers in the north or mountainous region, entirely obliterating them in the south, while the formation of deltas dates from the same period. Novaya Zemlya is now undergoing a new process of glaciation, which will convert it into an icy wilderness.

A paper by Mr. Leigh Smith was communicated, in which he recalled the circumstances of his first arctic voyages, when in 1871, 1872, and 1873 he cruised round the coasts of Spitsbergen and made numerous

temperature observations, discovering the fact that the water at a considerable depth was warmer than that near the surface.

Friday, August 20.—Prof. R. E. Dodge read a suggestive paper on Scientific Geography in Schools; and the Report of the Committee on Geography Teaching in the British islands, drawn up by Mr. A. J. Herbertson, was submitted to the meeting. A short discussion on educational geography followed.

Colonel Bailey read a paper on Forestry in India, in which he sketched the growth of the present system of forest conservation as practised there, and explained the special dangers which have been successfully guarded against, concluding by pointing out the great importance of placing the forests of Canada under a similar administration.

Dr. H. R. Mill suggested a scheme for the classification of geography primarily for bibliographical purposes, the details of which will appear in the *Journal*. A lively discussion followed, in which General Greely, Prof. Davis, and others took part.

Mr. Vaughan Cornish presented a most valuable contribution on the Distribution of Detritus by the Sea, in which he treated the question of the movement of gravel and sand by water in a manner similar to his recent discussion of the movement of dry sand by wind (see *Journal*, 1897, vol. ix. p. 278). The complete paper with illustrations will shortly be published in these pages.

Prof. Milne, F.R.S., gave an account of submarine changes involving earthquakes, and insisted on the importance of establishing seismological stations in all parts of the world.

The work of the day concluded with the reading by Mr. Ravenstein of an important historical paper on the explorations from the Congo to the Cape of Good Hope between 1482 and 1488, containing the results of some recent discoveries amongst old maps which throw fresh light on the character and attainments of Martin Behaim.

Monday, August 23.—The whole of this day was devoted to papers on the North American continent, most of which we hope ultimately to publish in full. At present it is sufficient to record the authors and titles: Prof. Marcus Baker on Institutions engaged in Geographical Work in the United States; Prof. F. H. Newell on the Hydrography of the United States; Dr. T. C. Mendenhall on the Geographical Work of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey; Prof. W. Morris Davis on the Coastal Plain of Maine; Mr. C. E. Lumsden on the Unification of Time at Sea; Mr. J. B. Tyrrell on the Barren Lands of Canada; Prof. Willis L. Moore on the Daily Weather Survey of the United States; Dr. Charles D. Walcott on the Geographical Work of the United States Geological Survey; Mr. J. White on the Topographical Work of the Canadian Geological Survey. Prof. Davis, Mr. Lumsden, Mr. Tyrrell, and Mr. White read their papers personally; the others

were kindly brought before the meeting by General Greely and Mr. W. J. McGee, representing the National Geographic Society of Washington.

Tuesday, August 24.—The proceedings opened with a crowded joint-meeting of the sections of Geography and Economics, to hear a paper by Mr. F. C. Selous on the Economic Geography of Rhodesia. At the conclusion of the paper, Mr. James Bryce said that if he differed from Mr. Selous in reference to any of his statements he would hesitate to express his opinions, because of the much greater experience which Mr. Selous had gained in his travels up and down the country from 1872 to 1896. He thought it right to tell the audience that some years ago Mr. Selous had formed a resolution not to kill more wild animals than necessary for the safety of life. This resolution was, he thought, commendable, and he wished others would follow the example, as he regretted that the wild animals which made the African forests and plains so interesting are in danger of extinction. Mr. Selous had justly laid especial stress upon the question of health, which is of vital importance in a country, because without health it would be useless to expect British settlers to go there. He was confident that before long it would be found that at all points 3500 feet above the sea-level the European settler would be able to locate with comparative freedom from fever. He was not without hope that such advance would be made in medical science that malarial fever would be overcome by inoculation or some other means. Regarding the prospective agricultural progress, he agreed with Mr. Selous that for the present at least there is no probability of that country exporting grain, although it may be able to supply all the food required by the people, but when the country has been restocked with, he hoped, a better breed of cattle, it will become a meat-exporting country. When the gold-mines run out, as they will probably do within thirty years, a very great stimulus will have been given to progress.

Mr. J. L. Myres gave an account of his recent journey in Tripoli, in the course of which he was led to form an opinion as to the age of the ancient buildings differing from that held by Mr. Cowper.

Prince Kropotkin read a valuable paper on the Prevailing Directions of the Mountain Ranges in Asia, and Prof. Penck discussed the importance of Potamology (the science of rivers) as a branch of geography.

Mr. E. L. Corthell sent a paper on the Geographical Development of the Lower Mississippi. Mr. Otto J. Klotz gave an interesting and well-illustrated discourse on Alaska, exhibiting the photographic surveying instruments used in the survey of the boundary. Prof. H. B. Dixon, F.R.S., who had just returned from a mountaineering trip in the Selkirks, announced his ascent for the first time of Mount Lefroy and another summit which he named Mount Aberdeen.

Mr. O. H. Howarth concluded the proceedings of the day with a paper on Mexico *felix* and Mexico *deserta*, terms which he applied to the southern cool and fertile, and to the northern hot and arid, divisions of the Mexican plateau.

Wednesday, August 24.—The section met in the forenoon, when General Greely read a paper by Mr. Henry Gannett on the Material Conditions and Growth of the United States, illustrated by an extensive series of statistical maps and diagrams.

Dr. H. R. Mill, speaking on Geographical Pictures with lantern illustrations, said that, in view of the prominent place now taken by photography in the work of all travellers, it is necessary to urge the importance of taking pictures which are geographically as well as photographically "good." Such pictures must be truthful and representative, the utmost care being taken to avoid distortion, to supply some indication of scale, and to bring out the characteristic features. General views comprehending a considerable area are desirable for showing types of land-forms or sites of towns. Pictures on a larger scale are desirable for showing the detail of special features, such as varieties of architecture, means of transport, or agricultural processes related to certain geographical conditions. As far as possible, every geographical picture should show something distinctly illustrative of a natural feature or a local condition peculiar to the place where it was made, or at least characteristic of it. The handsomest house in a village, the rarest foreign tree in a park, or the prettiest view in a district, represents the sort of subject most often photographed, and they are precisely those of least geographical value.

Prof. Penck followed with a demonstration of school wall-pictures, illustrative of typical geographical features.

Prof. W. M. Davis, in a brief address, urged the importance of Geography as a subject of University Study, and outlined his method of treating geography as a means of higher educational training.

The usual votes of thanks brought to a close a meeting of great interest, during which numerous subjects had been treated of in a manner at once more scientific and more concise than has usually been the case in the section.

Many papers bearing closely on various branches of Physical Geography were read in other sections, the enumeration of which may be useful.

SECTION A, *Mathematics and Physics.*—Report of the Committee on Seismological Observations; Prof. A. Johnson on a Canadian and Imperial Hydrographic Survey; Mr. J. Hopkinson on Monthly and Annual Rainfalls in the British Empire, 1877–1896; Prof. Van Rijkevorsel on the Temperature of Europe; Prof. R. F. Stupart on the Climatology of Canada; Mr. F. Napier Denison on the Great Lakes as a Sensitive Barometer; Dr. J. Edkins on the Slow Refrigeration of

the Chinese Climate; Prof. Percival Lowell on Atmosphere in its Effects on Astronomical Observations.

SECTION C, *Geology*.—Mr. J. C. Branner on the Former Extension of the Appalachians across Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas; Report of the Committee for the Investigation of a Coral Reef; Prince Kropotkin on the Asar of Finland; Dr. G. K. Gilbert on Niagara Falls; Mr. J. B. Tyrrell on the Glaciation of North Central Canada; Report of the Committee for collecting Photographs of Geological Interest; and a joint discussion with Section H on the First Traces of Man in America.

SECTION D, *Zoology*.—Prof. Herdman on the Plankton collected continuously during a Traverse of the Atlantic. On the voyage of the *Parisian*, Prof. Herdman on one occasion treated the passengers to a plankton-stew, made up of the minute crustaceans caught in fine silk nets, through which sea-water was pumped continuously, as a demonstration of the unrecognized resources available for the nourishment of shipwrecked crews.

SECTION H, *Anthropology*.—Report on the North Dravidian and Kolarian Races of Central India; Report of the Committee on the North-western Tribes of Canada; Reports of the Ethnographic Surveys of Canada and of the United Kingdom; Prof. Putnam on the Jesup Expedition to the North Pacific, and a Report on the necessity of the immediate investigation of the anthropology of Oceanic islands.

On Saturday, August 21, there was an excursion to Niagara teeming with geographical interest, and on the conclusion of the meeting the Canadian Pacific Railway Company generously provided private cars and free passages for nearly one hundred members of the Association from Toronto to Vancouver and back. The party travelled in three cars on different days, stopping for twenty-four hours at several points, and were assisted in every way possible to form an opinion of the vast agricultural and mineral resources of the Dominion. The trips included a visit to the great nickel-mines at Sudbury, the new gold-fields of the Lake of the Woods, and of the Kootenay district, the coal mines at Nanaimo, and to ranches and experimental farms in several districts. The solid character of the great transcontinental railway, its luxurious equipment, and splendid management, impressed the visitors only less than the magnificent possibilities of the country, and the energy and order of those who are engaged in its development.