

St. John, N.B., Dec. 31, 1887.

Sir William Dawson,  
President, McGill University,  
Montreal.

Dear Sir William:-

I have just running through the press a catalogue of the birds found in Canada, - embracing the entire Dominion, - and in the preface I refer to the lack of material from which a satisfactory account of the distribution of the species can be produced, and say:-

"I am quite aware that this opinion of the limit of our knowledge regarding the birds is opposed to that held by some of our leading scientific men, who consider that all that can be learned of our fauna is now known to science." Proceeding I give it as my opinion that this "indifference of our leaders in scientific affairs is one reason why ornithology has not made the advance in Canada that it has in other countries."

On reflection, it has occurred to me, that this statement is rather sweeping; may cover more persons than were in my mind when penning it. I know that some of our leaders hold this opinion, for I have had it direct from them, but I think that the reader may possibly interpret my remarks to include others, of whose opinion on the subject I know nothing - yourself among the number.

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Now while I am quite aware that saying I might say would be a

matter of perfect indifference to you, yet I would not feel comfortable with the thought that I had done you any injustice; and I should very much like to know your opinion on this subject, that I may correct my apparent error, should it be necessary.

In my preface I have quoted extracts from letters of several prominent naturalists, supporting my opinion, and if you will write me something to add to their testimony, I shall be very much pleased to insert it - indeed a letter from you would be of great help to me, for I am striving to stir up more interest in the study of our birds and mammals. I hope to get Dr. Selwyn converted to my views, looking to the addition of a specialist on the staff of the survey. If myself, why so much the better for me, - but somebody, for the credit of the survey and the interest of the science.

The naturalists whose letters I have quoted are Dr. Elliott Coues, Prof. J. A. Allen, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Mr. Robert Ridgway, and Mr. William Brewster, all eminent as ornithologists.

I am, Sir William,

Respectfully yours,

*M. Chisholm*

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*Chamberlain*  
*April 1894*

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