The First Year
of the Prince Edward Island Natural History Society

In the absence of an existing society and in response to public pressure "... a meeting was held at the Education office on Tuesday the 26th of March (1889) for the purpose of instituting a natural history society for P.E.I.

Present - Hon. D. Laird
Dr. Dawson
Dr. Lemming
John Newson
John McSwain
D. Montgomery."

(Natural History Society Minute Book)

On April 1, 1889, a second meeting was held at the Education office and the following list of members was read and approved:

"1. David Laird - Charlottetown
2. Malcolm McLeod - do
3. D. Montgomery - do
4. J. Hunter Duvar - Alberton
5. Edward Bayfield - Charlottetown
6. Dr. Leeming - do
7. Dr. Dawson - do
8. John Newson - do
9. Francis Bain - North River
10. Geo. E. Robinson - Charlottetown
11. Thomas May - do
12. Wm Mc N. Simpson - Hamilton, Lot 18
13. John McSwain - Charlottetown
14. D. Ferguson - do
15. Dr. Johnston - do
16. Fr. C. Harris - do
17. Neil McLeod - Summerside "

(Natural History Society (N.H.S.) Minute Book)

A subcommittee was appointed for "a plan of work for the society" and on April 27, 1889 they made the following report:

"... each member take up some special subject relating to the work of the society and promote its objects by giving a summary of the principles of some department of Natural History or by collecting specimens, identifying them, and giving information as to their habits and habitat...
In pursuance of this plan papers have been promised by -
Col. Duvar: on the Fishes of the Island coast
Dr. Leeming: on entomology, with special reference to Island specimens.
John McSwain: our Ferns and how to identify them."

(N.H.S. Minute Book)

The embryonic society went public on July 2, 1889 at McLeod's Hall.

"The first public meeting of the Natural History Society was held this afternoon at 4 o'clock, the President (Hon. D. Laird) in the chair. There were present His Honor the Lieut. Governor J.J. McDonald and Mrs. McDonald, R.R. Fitzgerald, the Rev. Mr. Gordon, the Rev. Mr. Lloyd and several other ladies and Gentlemen.

The president gave a short address explaining the objects of the society. He was followed by Mr. Bain who read a very instructive paper on the study of Island Botany. After a short discussion, a hearty vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Bain." (N.H.S. Minute Book)

On Nov. 14, 1889, the fourth public meeting of the society was held in the Philharmonic Hall and the following minutes were recorded.

"The attendance was large. Amongst those present were - Ex-Governor McDonald, Hon. Mr. Bentley, Charles Palmer, Chas. Gardiner, Dr. McLeod, Dr. Beer, Dr. Leeming, M. McLeod, Q.C., Rev. Mrssr. McDonald (St. Dunstan's College), Gregory McDonald and Cahil, A.A. Bartlett and Mrs. Bartlett.