

Minutes of a report on the foundation project for a scientific collection specific to the Ecole Normale

Paris, July 10th, 1859

Dear Inspector General,

The purpose of this report is to bring your attention to the usefulness of the elaboration of a collection with the purpose of gathering the works of the former students of the School in the Order of Science. The collection would also include the memoirs of the lecturers even though they would not have belonged to the School in [?]. It could be called: "Annales scientifiques de l'Ecole Normale" (Scientific Annals of the Ecole Normale).

This publication would offer many advantages. The Ecole Normale, together with the University would make their mark in the scientific movement. The School's name would be carried throughout scholarly Europe. We would be included amongst the great scientific establishments in France at the same level as the Ecole Polytechnique, the [?], the Ecole des Mines, the Observatoire, who all already have [*decided*] to gather their respective [*knowledge*] in special publications. The memoirs of the lecturers from the Ecole Normale [?] of the collections outside the University and the common glory [?] is offered to the eyes of no-one in its unity and its strength. We hardly know our illustrations and our illustrations barely remember us. The esprit de corps, so different from the esprit de [?] is unknown to us. Our traditions do not exist; there has never been any means of fixing them.

The more I have [*discussed*] this question, dear Inspector General, the more I have been dedicated to it, the more I have been encouraged to submit it to you. [*The example*] of the other scientific establishments would suffice to suppress any hesitation.. The Ecole Polytechnique had only existed for a few months when, in 1795, the first books were published and its journal continues to this day. This publication, which is much esteemed by surveyors, only comprised for many years works on mathematics. The Ecole Normale's collection would offer a more general interest. It would include memoirs in mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural sciences, that is to say all the sciences taught in the School and in all the secondary and higher education establishments.

At the time when the [?] received with [*in the name of*] the organization he has kept since, the [*papers*] of this establishment [?] a periodical publication a great [?] especially during the first 30 years of this century when this collection was telling the scholarly world about the [?] studies of [?] the zoological and paleontological research of [*life*] the development of [*natural fusion families*].

The Ecole des Mines has had an information journal, and when the observatory took in the past few years a [?] under the hard-working and fruitful direction of Mr. [*Le Verrier*], the name of this beautiful establishment was attached to a publication of great value.

Should one fear that the Ecole Normale may not be able to fuel a similar collection to those we have just cited? Asking such a question is solving it. [*In the same way that*] the School is a hothouse of teachers, it is a hothouse of scholars. One only needs to review the scientific journals of the last ten years to ensure which former pupils of the School have published numerous memoirs of physics, chemistry, mathematics and natural sciences. I shall recall the names [?] [*Delafon*], [*Janin*], [*De la Frororaye*], [?], [*Hébert*], [*Virder*], [*Lory*], [*Lillafour*], [?], [*Briol*], Bouquet...

The research [*of these*] lecturers would significantly contribute to enriching the School's [*annals*]. What an honor [?] in the past few years such a collection [?] by publishing for the first time the [?] of the research by Mr. [*Derolle*] on aluminum.

The nature of the works that would be admitted into the School's scientific annals is quite appropriate. Nothing in it would not be useful, [?], honorable for the School and the [*University*]. "In collections of this kind, there should only be that which retains a durable interest, that which, once consigned in writing remains an integral part of science" said [?]

It is [?] that a publication of this nature must have the support and the patronage of the [*Imperial*] authority. The costs of printing and copywriting could only be supported by the ministry. They could, for instance, be charged to the [*budget*] for higher education and the revenue from the sale of each volume would [*make up for*] these costs.

The [*compulsory*] subscriptions of the School, of [?] secondary schools, of the main libraries in the Empire, would cover part of the expenses.

An editing committee, selected amongst the School's lecturers, would preside over the distribution of the subjects in each volume. However, the overall direction of the work should be entrusted to one person [*who could only, I believe, come from scientific studies*].

A volume of four to five hundred pages in a quarter format published each year ([?]) would be sufficient to gather all the truly remarkable work. The first volume would usefully begin with a brief historical note on the School's scientific teaching.

It may also be advisable that the first volumes [*include*] something to the glory of the teachers of the first Ecole Normale, that, for instance, the admirable lessons by [*Laplace*] and [*Lagrange*] be included. They were especially designed by great science [*scholars*] to train the future teachers of the youth. Many passages from these lessons prove it and the teaching [*to get there*] [*the most*] [?].

I do not think I am mistaken, dear Inspector General, in believing that the project I have the honor of presenting to you will be consistent with your generous views and the brilliant future that the Minister asks of the School.

L. Pasteur