

DISSENT AND PROTEST BY DR HAY FLEMING.

(See p. 10.)

*To the President and Council of the
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.*

In my own name, and in name of all the Fellows of the Society who adhere to me, I dissent from and protest against the decision of the Society, at its adjourned General Meeting on the 15th instant, in favour of the opening of the National Museum of Antiquities on the Lord's Day, because :—

1. No section of the community has ever publicly expressed a desire to have the Museum opened on that day.
2. Such opening is quite unnecessary.
3. The Council has not sufficiently, if at all, considered the propriety of opening the Museum on the evenings of week-days, although, prior to October 1890, fully two hundred and twenty-six thousand visitors patronised it between 7 and 9 o'clock on the Saturday evenings, during twenty-nine of the years that it was housed in the Royal Institution.
4. The public will have more than ample opportunity of inspecting the Museum if it is opened on week-day evenings.
5. The national desire has long been to have the first day of the week preserved (except for works of necessity and mercy) as a day of rest.
6. This is our impression, which was not contradicted at the Meeting, that one of the reasons for wishing to have the Museum opened on the Lord's Day is to obtain from the Treasury an increase of wages for the *employés*, who would naturally expect special pay for "Sunday" labour. If these men are at present underpaid, this should be met on its own merits.

7. Being neither a work of necessity nor of mercy, the opening on the Lord's Day would, on the part of the attendants, be a direct breach of the fourth commandment; and, although the present *employés* may have no religious scruples in the matter, when successors have to be appointed the most suitable and reliable men then eligible may, on conscientious grounds, refrain from applying.
8. This proposed opening on the Lord's Day, never mooted in the Society until now, has introduced discord; and, if persevered in, is likely to disturb seriously the harmony which has prevailed for more than a century.
9. Those who, on conscientious grounds, are opposed to the opening on the Lord's Day may withhold donations from the Museum, or, although possessed of excellent qualifications, may decline to join the Society.

The statement made by Lord Guthrie, on behalf of the Council, that the proposed hours of opening on the Lord's Day (from 2 to 4, or 2 to 5, in the afternoons) would be so carefully restricted that there need be no fear of further encroachment, is, on the face of it, fallacious. This is the thin end of the wedge. Successors in office may extend the hours, and introduce other innovations, such as a public lecturer on Museum objects, lantern displays, and refreshments.

It is hoped that this Dissent and Protest, with the reasons thereof, will be printed in the *Proceedings* of the Society.

(Sgd.) D. HAY FLEMING.

19th December 1913.