

The chief special collections which have been added during the past year, besides the plants of the neighborhood, which are constantly being collected by Mr. Buchanan, are specimens illustrating the botany of the Hot Lake and North Taupo Districts, which have been reported on for the Department by Mr. Kirk.

An almost exhaustive collection of the botany of the Chatham Islands has been obtained by Mr. H. Travers; ten sets of which will be available for exchange as soon as they have been reported on by Baron Von Mueller, to whom a complete series has been sent in duplicate for this purpose. The only foreign collections of dried plants received during the past year have been of Sandwich Island plants, from Dr. Hillebrand, and a collection of British Algæ, prepared and presented by Mrs. J. E. Gray.

The Herbarium now contains an addition to the Colonial flora—a very complete set of British flowering plants and ferns, also ferns of new Hebrides, Sandwich Islands, and Fijis.

The chief desiderata necessary to make the Herbarium sufficiently complete for the New Zealand student, are the plants of Eastern Australia and Tasmania.

For convenience of reference, a complete set of New Zealand and British plants is being mounted in books and placed in the library.

LABORATORY.

The attached Schedule shows in the usual form the analyses which have been performed during the year by Mr. Skey, to the number of 285, making a total of 1,233 analyses entered in the Laboratory books.

The publication of these in a complete form, as promised in last report, has been delayed longer than was anticipated, owing to the amount of fresh material that had to be incorporated, but the work is now in an advanced state, and will, it is hoped, form a useful guide to the mineral wealth of the Colony.

In addition to the analysis of minerals and ores of various kinds, it is necessary to point out that a very large portion of the Analyst's time is occupied with examinations of samples submitted by the Secretary of Customs under the Distillation and Gold Duty Acts; and I may also add that the responsible duty of verification of standards, required under the Weights and Measures Act, is also performed for the Colony in connection with this department.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FIELD WORK.

Attention has been chiefly directed during the past season to the development of the coal deposits, in accordance with the Public Works Act; the examination of the coal fields on the West Coast of Nelson having been undertaken by myself; those in the Southland District and in the North of Auckland by Captain Hutton; while the coal deposits on the eastern side of the South Island, in Canterbury and Otago, have been examined by Dr. Haast. The chief practical results of the surveys have been published through the Public Works Department, but the extensive additions they have made to the general geological survey of the Colony will be found in the various reports issued from the department for the current year.

DRAFTSMAN'S WORK.

During the past year sixty lithographic plates have been prepared to illustrate the various publications issued by the department; and about thirty-three original drawings made of objects of natural history and fossils, with a view to future publication.

A general geological map of the Colony, on a scale of twelve miles to the inch, is also in progress.

The small-scale geological map, referred to in last year's report, has now been printed off and distributed, 150 copies having been sent to Professor Owen, at his request, for incorporation with a work which he is publishing on the Extinct Struthious Birds of New Zealand.

COLONIAL INDUSTRIES.

A large amount of correspondence under this head falls to the department, the letters received, and despatched relative to the *Phormium tenax* alone amounting to 460. The information collected regarding that and other industries which are being established in the Colony, will be found in official reports, and in a pamphlet specially devoted to the *Phormium*.

METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

During last year there have been two new stations established, namely, at Wanganui, in the Wellington Province, and at Queenstown, in Otago, making thirteen stations in all.

There has been no alteration in the other stations, except at Mongonui, where the observer, Mr. Grover, having gone to England on leave for a year, his place has been temporarily filled by Mr. Patieson.

The statistics for 1871, in the form required by the Registrar-General, were furnished from this department on 19th April, and published on 5th July last.

The monthly abstracts of the thirteen stations are all checked and corrected at this office, and continue to be published in the *Gazette*, but owing to the late date at which some of the returns are received, they do not appear as early after the expiration of each month as is desirable.

A return of the daily observations taken in Wellington and most other stations is also published regularly each month in the local newspapers.

All the published returns are sent to the following Observatories, in exchange for their published results, which are filed for reference in the Museum:—The Meteorological Department, London; Observatories at Kew, Greenwich, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, Tasmania; Scottish Meteorological Society; *Meteorological Journal*; Smithsonian Institute, U.S.; Meteorological Society, St. Petersburg; and the Meteorological Department, Bengal.