

been able properly to arrange the specimens, afford greater facilities for study, and be more instructive to the general public than it has hitherto been. The change of the general geological collection has been made in order to gain the additional space which has been so much required for the better display of the purely New Zealand exhibits; but ere long more space still will be required for them if the natural history, geology, botany, and ethnology of the colony are to be represented with the prominence they demand. It may be necessary, therefore, at no distant future, to change the ethnological room into the New Zealand room, and *vice versa*. A great authority on museums has lately drawn attention to the definition of a well-arranged museum as a series of instructive labels illustrated by well-selected specimens. Towards the attainment of such a well-arranged museum my attention has been chiefly devoted during the past year. In most of the galleries, not only duplicates, but an excess of specimens illustrating the various subjects, have been exhibited. Two great evils at least result from this state of things: the young student is confused instead of being enlightened by the multitude of objects he has to observe; and the surplus specimens are meanwhile rapidly deteriorating from the effects of dust and light. Both in the general and in the New Zealand collections of birds, I have greatly reduced the number of set-up specimens. Those that have been removed from the cases, after being relaxed and dismounted, have been deposited in drawers where they may be studied by any one who desires to examine them more closely than can be done in the galleries. The laborious but essential task of writing clear and sufficient labels for the specimens has been proceeding slowly during the past twelve months. As nothing in the shape of a catalogue of the contents of the museum was left by my predecessor, the difficulty of correctly labelling the collections is enormously increased and becomes more felt as I proceed; but years must elapse before the work can be overtaken. For six weeks I had the assistance of Mr. H. Suter in labelling and cataloguing the New Zealand fossils. His careful and neat-handed work deserves to be specially mentioned. It is to be regretted that the funds of the museum were too limited to continue his valuable services. Indeed, the sum of £200 for the maintenance and for the general expenses of the museum, as well as for the purposes of exchange, is too small for so extensive an institution. In the mammal-room in the New Zealand gallery, and in the ethnological room, the cases, re-formed from those which stood in what has now become the geological room, has been set up; but from want of funds they cannot be finished, painted, or varnished, and will have to remain in their present state for the next six months.

The repairs to the roof of the ethnological room have proved fairly satisfactory. There still exists now only one small leak; other leaks have appeared in the roof of the tower and of the picture gallery, otherwise the state of the buildings calls for no remark.

To the library has been added during the year an instalment of the Scientific Reports of the "Challenger" Expedition. A number of books (between forty and fifty volumes), which for the last ten or fifteen years had been erroneously supposed to be the property of the museum, have been returned to the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, to whom they rightly belonged. This has materially depleted the already poor library of the museum of some of its most necessary books. I regret to report that this still insufficiently-equipped library has during the period covered by this report been a great hindrance to efficient work. Many books already named and pointed out to the Committee, which are essential to the working-library of a museum, have long been in the reference department of the Public Library, an institution under the Board. The works I refer to are almost valueless to the general reader, and especially so in their present situation. They do not appear to have been consulted with any frequency by the public, as they are as unsullied as when they left the publishers. They are nearly useless even to the zoologist or botanist, apart from the specimens he may be referring to. In the museum library they would be as open to the public for consultation as at the reference library; and the consultation of books in the museum, and not in the reference library, is of daily occurrence, and, moreover, be of much greater use there to any one who may consult them, as he has the chance of having specimens near him, or he may ask for such as the museum possesses to be brought to the table where he is studying. The temporary loan of one volume at a time brought from a distance is of little use for museum purposes, as I need scarcely assure the members of the Board, who know what is required for the identification of species. As reference works for museum purposes must be always at hand, and all at hand together, I would suggest again to the Board the great advantage to be derived to the museum by the transference of the books referred to from the reference library to the museum buildings. These expensive works must otherwise be sooner or later obtained for the museum.

No additions have been made to the Art Gallery during the year. The representatives of Mr. Justice Johnston have, on the other hand, removed the deposits of pictures and china made by them. It is with regret that I have to report that Jourdan's large picture of "Leda and the Swan" has begun to show signs of deterioration, in the cracking of the paint in many parts of the picture. Whether this proceeds from the effects of the atmosphere in the Museum or of defect in the pigments used by the artist it is difficult to say. In this connection I have to draw the attention of the Board to the necessity for in some way heating the Museum during the winter months. During this season the temperature within the buildings is constantly so far below that of the outer air that it is impossible for visitors or the staff to remain in the rooms without great discomfort for any length of time, or without catching cold. Besides this consideration, the specimens in many cases are suffering from the humid atmosphere which constantly prevails inside.

The exhibits lent to the executive of the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition have nearly all been safely returned to the museum.

Several cases of larceny occurred during the year, but only in one case was the offender secured; a conviction was obtained, and since then there have been no further acts of theft.

Throughout the year, and, as was to be expected, especially during the continuance of the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition, visitors to the museum from America, Australia, and especially Europe were largely in excess of last year. Many of these were scientific men who were attracted by the fame of its collections, principally those of the birds, of the fossils, and of the