

1893.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE:

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT, WITH A MEMORANDUM THERETO.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEETINGS of the Board were held during the past year on the following dates: 30th August, 1892; 11th January, 13th February, and 19th May, 1893.

The following members were elected by the incorporated societies as Governors of the Institute, in conformity with the Act: Mr. J. McKerrow, Mr. S. Percy Smith, and Sir Walter Buller.

The members who retired from the Board in conformity with clause 6 of the Act are the Hon. Mr. Robert Pharazyn, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, and Mr. W. T. L. Travers. His Excellency had reappointed the Hon. Mr. Mantell and Mr. W. T. L. Travers, and appointed Mr. E. Tregear in the place of the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn.

Since the publication of last report the Institute has lost one of its distinguished honorary members by the death of Sir Richard Owen, K.C.B., D.C.L., F.R.S.

The members now on the roll of the Institute are: Honorary members, 29; ordinary members—Auckland Institute, 187; Wellington Philosophical Society, 147; Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, 75; Otago Institute, 106; Westland Institute, 70; Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society, 116; and Nelson Philosophical Society, 35: making a total of 765.

The volumes of the Transactions now in stock are: Vol. I. (second edition), 255; Vol. V., 22; Vol. VI., 23; Vol. VII., 112; Vol. IX., 114; Vol. X., 144; Vol. XI., 35; Vol. XII., 40; Vol. XIII., 40; Vol. XIV., 63; Vol. XV., 177; Vol. XVI., 175; Vol. XVII., 178; Vol. XVIII., 154; Vol. XIX., 166; Vol. XX., 168; Vol. XXI., 98; Vol. XXII., 98; Vol. XXIII., 178; Vol. XXIV., 180; Vol. XXV., not fully distributed.

The volume (XXV.) just published was issued in June, and contains seventy-six articles, together with addresses and abstracts of papers which appear in the Proceedings. The volume contains 612 pages of letter-press and 55 plates. The following is a comparison of the contents of the present with those of last year's volume:—

	1893.	1892.
	Pages.	Pages.
Miscellaneous	134	246
Zoology	260	358
Botany	82	44
Geology	36	28
Chemistry	6	—
Proceedings	50	48
Appendix	44	45
	612	769

The cost of printing Vol. XXIV. was £385 13s. 9d. for 769 pages, and that for Vol. XXV. £388 9s. for 612 pages, but this latter includes the sum of £33 18s. 9d. for a portion of the lithographic work which should have been charged to Vol. XXIV.

During the year the Board have published, at a cost of £179 16s. 8d., Parts V., VI., and VII. of the "Manual of the New Zealand Coleoptera," by Captain Thomas Broun, in continuation of the former parts which were published by Government. This work now comprises 1,504 pages, and describes 2,592 species of beetles.

The Honorary Treasurer's statement of accounts shows a balance in hand in current account of £61 16s.

The amount devoted to the printing of memoirs and postponed papers (in accordance with resolution of May, 1885) is now £700.

Approved by Board.

THOMAS MASON,
Chairman.

JAMES HECTOR,
Manager.

11th July, 1893.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE ACCOUNTS FOR 1892-93.

<i>Receipts.</i>	£ s. d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>	£ s. d.
Balance in hand, 29th August, 1892	86 10 1	Printing Vol. XXV.	388 9 0
Parliamentary grant for 1892-93	500 0 0	Printing Parts V., VI., and VII. of "New Zealand Coleoptera"	179 16 8
Sale of volumes	59 4 0	Expenses of library, and miscellaneous	38 2 3
Contribution from Wellington Philosophical Society	22 9 10	Balance in hand	61 16 0
	£668 3 11		£668 3 11

11th July, 1893.

WM. THOS. LOCKE TRAVERS,
Honorary Treasurer.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE, BEING AN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED 19TH JULY, 1893.

THE first scientific society in New Zealand was founded in 1851, the first President being Sir George Grey, K.C.B., D.C.L. It was named "the New Zealand Society," and was located in Wellington.

In 1862 a second society was established in Christchurch, as the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, the first President being Mr. Julius Haast (since Sir Julius von Haast, K.C.M.G., Ph.D.).

Much useful work was done by these societies, but they met at very irregular intervals, and the funds collected were inadequate for the proper publication of the papers that were communicated by the members. They therefore languished owing to their being merely local societies, not having the sympathy of the colony.

The Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1865 brought prominently before the public the advantage of a more general organization for the development of the resources of the colony, and, soon after the establishment of a scientific department by the General Government, the New Zealand Institute Act was passed in 1867, and its administration was placed under the Director of the Geological and Natural-History Survey.

The New Zealand Institute has now been in operation for twenty-five years, which is a sufficient period in the history of a new country to indicate how far the practical results obtained by the working of one of its institutions have fulfilled the anticipations of its original promoters. The object sought was to foster public interest in the collection and discussion of original observations respecting the resources and natural history of this country. This is done to the best effect by the organization of a scientific society; but it was obvious that the geographical circumstances of the colony precluded the formation of any strong central society, capable of stimulating and directing such investigations by frequent meetings of its members, as can be done in other colonies possessing a chief centre of population, where all social institutions become naturally concentrated. The constitution of the New Zealand Institute was therefore intended to provide for the combination of local efforts in this direction by enabling the joint publication of papers read and discussed before local societies.

Experience has shown that in old countries the subscribed funds are generally insufficient for the proper publication of the transactions of small societies, and this drawback is still more felt in the countries where the number of members is small, while the field for original research is large; so that in a few years such societies languish after accumulating much information in manuscript that, if published, would be of great assistance in advancing the interests of the community.

Each member of the scientific societies affiliated to the New Zealand Institute receives a share of the parliamentary grant in the form of an annual volume of the transactions for the year of all the various societies. The presentation of this volume is regarded as a substantial equivalent for the subscriptions, and the fund which is created by the subscriptions is applied locally towards the maintenance of public museums in the different centres of population.

The educational effect of this organization can hardly be overestimated as a means of cultivating a love of knowledge, and in disseminating information. To the influence of the Institute must in some degree be attributed the demand which is now expressed throughout the colony for elementary instruction in science, and the general recognition in New Zealand on the part of the public that it is necessary to obtain, as a branch of elementary education, the qualifications required for the comprehension and the utilisation of the scientific literature that is so characteristic a feature of the present age.

The Institute commenced with four branch societies in 1869, and only 258 members, but there are now eight societies affiliated, and the number of members increased to 1,327 in 1881, but has since fallen off to about 950, each of whom pays one guinea a year, which may be considered as a voluntary tax for an educational purpose.

There have now been 1,765 original communications, published in twenty-five volumes of the Transactions of the Institute, nearly all of which relate directly to the colony, and place on record matters of fact and observation that otherwise might not have been published. Of these papers, 412 are on miscellaneous subjects chiefly relating to the ethnology of the aboriginal races, or connected with the industrial resources of the colony; 671 are descriptive of the zoology of New Zealand; 229 refer to its botany; 117 are on metallurgy and chemistry in its relation to the colony; and 229 are on its geology and physical geography. In addition to these papers, which are published at length, abstracts of about 1,076 different communications are given in the Proceedings of the societies. The total number of communications to the Institute has thus been 2,841. Besides which a number of popular lectures are given each year under the auspices of the various societies, of which no record is kept.

The average size of the annual volume of Transactions and Proceedings is 640 pages and about 40 plates.

The funds at the disposal of the Board of Governors of the Institute have consisted only of the annual grant by Parliament of £500, an annual contribution from the Wellington Philosophical Society as an equivalent for rent of the library-room and the use of the lecture-hall, and a small sum arising from the sale of volumes. Nearly the whole of the funds are spent in the printing of the volume of "Transactions," only a very small amount being devoted to the maintenance of the library in the way of binding books. Nor is the information contained in these volumes confined to the colony, as they are widely distributed to the chief libraries in all parts of the world.

Forty-seven of the most distinguished men in science and literature, who have rendered special service to New Zealand, have been elected honorary members, while there are seventy-five corresponding societies and institutions that exchange their publications with the Institute. About 300 volumes per annum are acquired in this manner, a great number of which are placed in the General Assembly library.

The Board, having in view the publication of certain important memoirs relative to the natural history of New Zealand, the production of which will require a larger expenditure for proper illustrations than can be fairly charged to the annual income, have succeeded in saving up a small sum every year for the purpose of meeting this charge without interfering with the publication of the current work.

If the vote of Parliament is reduced to an amount that will not cover such current expense, the Board will find it necessary either to reduce the size of the volume by rejecting papers, or to make a call on the societies, which will give great dissatisfaction, as it will draw on funds that are at present locally applied in a most useful manner.

Considering the success of the Institute, and the great influence it has exercised in giving New Zealand a prominent name among scientific workers in all parts of the world, it might be injurious to the colony if the work of the Institute were seriously crippled.

Under these circumstances, the Board earnestly trust that the full amount of £500 will be voted as hitherto.

Wellington, 24th July, 1893.

JAMES HECTOR,
Manager.

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