

## OFFICERS' REPORTS ON COLLECTIONS.

*Report on the Rearrangement of Ethnographical Specimens and other Exhibits, by J. McDonald, Art Assistant.*

During the past two years a series of alterations has been made in the arrangement of the Museum exhibits, which has permitted of the more complete grouping of the specimens representing the art, industry, and culture of various parts of Melanesia. Collections from the Fiji, Admiralty, and Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, and British New Guinea have been arranged and displayed at the north end of the Main Gallery, in the cabinets formerly devoted to the specimens of New Zealand and Canadian timbers and minor agricultural products.

Inadequate display-space and faulty lighting have not afforded the opportunity of displaying the specimens to the best advantage, but the rearrangement has enabled us to group them in more orderly sequence. In this section a collection of Native baskets and other articles from Ceylon have also been placed on exhibition. A large number of specimens representative of Polynesia and Melanesia are packed away in the Museum store in Sydney Street, and until such time as greater exhibition-space is available must remain hidden from public view.

The collections of Egyptian antiquities from the tombs of the Pharaohs at Abydos, consisting of pottery, alabaster vases, kohl pots, beads, bracelets, clay tablets, scarabs, lamps and tomb sets, of the pre-Dynastic and Ptolemaic periods, received from the Egypt Exploration Fund, have been brought together and placed on exhibition beside the mummy-case in the entrance hall. The specimens of the fictile art of pre-Dynastic time, and the votive pots of later periods, are relics of the devotion of old Egyptians to the *manes* of their most ancient kings in the holy land of Osiris. From these and the finely decorated mummy-case of Petisiris, a priest of the thirty-third dynasty of the Ptolemaic period, a picture may be formed of what the funerary art has been in Egypt from early times. To this collection there has recently been added an alabaster head found by a member of the Main Expeditionary Force, Private J. Watson, of the 6th Hauraki Regiment, while digging trenches near Heliopolis. This is a fine specimen of Egyptian craftsmanship, and probably represents one of the Egyptian kings.

The small collections representing the arts and crafts of India, China, and Japan have been rearranged and displayed in the entrance hall, to the greater convenience of visitors to the Museum.

The large model of H.M.S. "New Zealand," presented to the Dominion by the officers after the visit of the battleship to New Zealand waters, has been placed with the full-rigged model of a frigate in a well-lighted portion of the North Gallery. These models, representing the wooden walls of England of Lord Nelson's day and a grim defender of Britain's realms of our own day, are a constant source of interest to Museum visitors, particularly so to the juvenile portion at the present time.

The bronze busts of notable Maori chiefs and Native types modelled by the Australian sculptor, Mr. Nelson Illingworth, and the sketch-model of two figures in the General Post Office group, have been placed in positions facing the entrance to the Main Gallery, where they make an effective artistic contrast to the many fine examples of Maori arts and crafts around them.

The paintings, drawings, engravings, and photographs which were hanging in different parts of the Museum have been taken down, thoroughly cleaned, and rearranged in more suitable spaces on the walls of the stairways leading to the library and lecture-hall.

A number of pictures considered to be of little or no interest were withdrawn, and others substituted. The pictures, which may now be studied more closely and to better advantage, have recently been supplemented by the addition of forty sketches from the Chevalier collection, for which space could not be found in the Parliamentary Buildings.

These sketches of different parts of New Zealand visited by the artist while accompanying H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh on his memorable tour of the colony in 1866 are of considerable interest to Museum visitors. Artists and art-students also greatly appreciate the opportunity of seeing the work of so excellent a draughtsman. It is a matter for congratulation that so much of the work of this eminent artist has, through the generous action of Madame Chevalier, become the possession of the Dominion. It is to be hoped that at no very distant date the collection will be exhibited in its entirety, and under more favourable conditions.

During the winter months of last year an exhibition was held in the library and lecture-hall of over seventy water-colours and sketches by General Robley, author of "Moko," the most complete work on Maori tattooing that has yet been published. During the Maori War in 1865-66 General Robley, then a Lieutenant in the 68th Regiment, saw active service in the Bay of Plenty district; and the pictures acquired by the Museum represent the skilful work of his hands during the lulls of fort-building and fighting. The exhibition proved to be of much interest, and greatly increased the attendance at the Museum. To many veterans who had seen active service in the Bay of Plenty operations the scenes depicted by General Robley recalled interesting memories of stirring times in the early history of the Dominion, and gave the younger generation an idea of the difficulties and dangers that faced the settlers of half a century ago.

Large and properly lighted galleries are required for exhibiting the accumulated collections of oil-paintings, water-colours, drawings, etchings, engravings, and other objects of art which form the nucleus of a national collection, and are now contained in the Dominion Museum, Parliament Buildings, and the gallery of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts.

Further reference to these collections and matters relating thereto are contained in a special report.

*Report on the Photographic Section, by J. McDonald, Art Assistant.*

Since my reappointment to the Museum staff in 1913 the number of photographic negatives has advanced from three thousand five hundred to over five thousand, the increase being mainly due to the acquisition, by transfer from the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, of nearly one thousand plates of Maori life, art, and industry made by myself during my term of office in that Department.