

Since 1904, also, the Geological Survey has commenced the formation of a library by exchange and purchase, and these books are housed in the temporary offices of the Survey. Many of the sets of journals in the latter library are continuations of those housed in the old Colonial Museum Library. There are also considerable numbers of scientific books in the Parliament Library and in the library of the Victoria College.

The majority of books in the above libraries, with the exception of that of the Wellington Philosophical Society, have been acquired by the expenditure of public funds, supplemented in the case of the New Zealand Institute by the voluntary research work of its members, which has made its publications valuable for purposes of exchange.

It is obvious that if all these various libraries were brought together as far as possible not only would a vastly more efficient scientific library be available, but considerable economy in administration would result. The New Zealand Institute has taken steps towards this end by offering to deposit its library in that of the Dominion Library under certain conditions, and the Wellington Philosophical Society is taking steps in the same direction. A similar association of museums and learned societies is found effective in many parts of the world.

But even if all the scientific books of all the above-mentioned libraries were gathered together into the Dominion Library, large sums of money would be necessary to make it adequate to the scientific needs of the Dominion. This is owing to the fact that so great a part of the above libraries was built up by exchange, whereas very large numbers of scientific books and magazines cannot be obtained by exchange, but must be purchased. Many such books and magazines have increased greatly in price since the date of their publication, very largely owing to the demand created by the growth of scientific libraries in America.

For the formation of an art library there is little material in any of the above collections, except in the Dominion Museum and the Parliament libraries. It is for Parliament to decide whether there are to be one or two libraries in Wellington devoted to this purpose. The same applies also to the formation of an historical library; but in this case the Carter collection of the New Zealand Institute also enters into the problem.

If the provisions of the Science and Art Act, 1913, are given effect to by the establishment, within or adjoining the Dominion Museum, of a Scientific, Art, and Historical Library it is manifestly desirable that a due balance shall be preserved between the different sections of the library by the provision of a definite income for each section.

## VI. MUSEUM STAFF.

### *General Considerations.*

“A museum without intelligent, progressive, and well-trained curators is as effective as a school without teachers, a library without librarians, or a learned society without a working membership of learned men.

“No investment is more profitable to a museum than its salary fund, for only when this is liberal may the services of a permanent staff of men of established reputation be secured. Around the nucleus of such a staff will naturally grow up a corps of volunteer assistants, whose work, properly assisted and directed, will be of infinite value.

“The museum which carries on explorations in the field as a part of its regular work has great advantages over other institutions in holding men of ability upon its staff, and in securing the most satisfactory results from their activities.

“Each member of a museum staff should become an authority in some special field of research, and should have time for investigation and opportunity to publish its results.

“A museum officer or employee should, for obvious reasons, never be the possessor of a private collection.”\*

### *Honorary Curators.*

Many museums, both large and small, are fortunate enough to benefit by the services of honorary curators, who are frequently university professors. Such men have an official status in the museum, and have their own rooms in the museum buildings. While the number of resident scientists who might be induced to act in such a capacity is small, the Dominion Museum would benefit greatly by associating with itself specialists from various parts of New Zealand as honorary curators, in return paying their travelling-expenses for such times as they visited Wellington on Museum business. When the Dominion Library is established it will act as a magnet attracting the scientific specialist to Wellington, and the position of honorary curator would then be valued.

### *Museum Guides.*

While a museum must rely principally on its printed labels for explaining its collections to the general public, it is a matter of experience that few visitors take the trouble to read many of these labels, and do not carry away with them a very accurate idea of what they have seen. To remedy this defect many museums have now adopted the policy of employing official guides, men of good education who have been specially supplied by the curators of departments with accurate information concerning the exhibits. These guides personally conduct small parties around the museum during given hours, and the results have in most cases proved very satisfactory.

Without undertaking too ambitious a programme, the Dominion Museum might well experiment in this direction by the use of university students as guides. For their services for a limited number

\* C. Brown-Goode, *loc. cit.*