

A letter was received from the Trustees of the British Museum advising that a first set of duplicate specimens obtained by the British Antarctic Expedition would be forwarded to the Government for distribution to the museums of the Dominion. The Hon. Minister was asked to convey the thanks of the Board to the Trustees.

A Museum regulation was approved affirming that the making of private collections by any officer of the Museum or National Gallery, or the sale by any such officer of any specimens to the Museum or Art Gallery, without the consent of the Minister, is prohibited.

The reports of the committees on collections and on the National Historical Collection (referred to below) were adopted.

STAFF.

In December, 1916, Mr. H. Hamilton, Museum assistant, volunteered for and obtained a commission in the British Naval Motor-boat Patrol, and was granted the usual leave of absence. His position has been temporarily filled by Mr. W. J. Phillipps, who commenced duty on the 18th May, 1917.

Mrs. W. Turton has acted since the 26th June, 1916, as temporary clerical assistant in connection with the National Historical Collection.

As in previous years Mr. Elsdon Best has devoted his whole time to ethnological research on the Maori, and Miss Castle has been wholly occupied with the care of the insect collections, which are now in a much better condition for reference. A considerable portion of Mr. Hamilton's time before his departure was taken up with supervising the rearrangement of the New Zealand Lepidoptera and Coleoptera. The remaining Museum work has been shared between Mr. Hamilton, Mr. J. McDonald, and myself.

Opportunities for continuing my work on the classification of the Tertiary Brachiopoda have been smaller than in past years owing to the increase of work in other directions. During the year the following papers were published in scientific journals: "Stage Names applicable to the Divisions of the Tertiary in New Zealand"; "The Flint-beds associated with the Amuri Limestone of Marlborough"; "Additions to the Knowledge of the Recent and Tertiary Brachiopoda of New Zealand and Australia"; "The Classification of the Terebratellidae."

Mr. E. Phillips Turner, Inspector of Scenic Reserves, Lands Department, and myself were appointed a committee by our respective Departments to advise on matters of bird-protection, and drew up a comprehensive report dealing with the whole avifauna to serve as a basis for future action.

MOLLUSCA.

The services of Miss E. Mestayer were secured for part of February and March, 1917, to work on the New Zealand Mollusca. The collections are being divided into (1) the type collection, (2) the exhibition collection, and (3) a reference collection for handling in study and determination of new specimens. It is intended to withdraw from the exhibition collection not only all type specimens in accordance with modern museum practice, but also all shells which are too small to be properly seen without handling, and to place the latter in the reference collection. The Tertiary fossil Mollusca will be placed alongside the Recent specimens in each case, in order to show the close relationship existing between the fossils and the Recent specimens. Miss Mestayer has brought together and carefully marked and labelled all the type specimens that could be recognized as such, and in addition named a number of hitherto undetermined specimens. It is hoped during the coming year to relabel the exhibition collection in accordance with the most recent nomenclature, and to build up the representative collection. For this purpose it is desirable to obtain Miss Mestayer's services for a further period.

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COLLECTION.

During the year the scheme for a general appeal for materials for a National Historical Collection was perfected, and the names and addresses of some fifteen hundred descendants or relatives of early settlers were searched out. In February the appeal was issued in the form of a letter from the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs addressed directly to these relatives, and of a circular explaining the object of the appeal addressed to a much wider circle, including the chairmen of all local bodies throughout the Dominion, Mayors, and newspaper editors.

Since that date the matter has been kept alive by Press activity and by direct correspondence as well as by a constant search for and identification of persons and officials likely to possess information. The answers to the appeal prove the existence of a widespread feeling that a National Historical Collection is both needed and desired. Already a very encouraging response has been made, and a fair amount of material, mostly of books and printed papers, has been donated. Several valuable manuscripts have been located, and in some cases have been promised to the collection.

A collection such as is desired cannot be formed all at once, and requires continued watching and effort. Probably the best results will not be obtained until the existing material can be displayed in a suitable building; but the matter should be kept before the public constantly, and the flow of gifts kept up by suitable publicity.

A collection illustrating the history of New Zealand's part in the present war is a natural outgrowth of the National Historical Collection, and will receive increased attention during the coming year.

ACQUISITIONS.

Besides the insects and mollusca mentioned above there have been few zoological acquisitions of importance, the most interesting being two rare fish. A large series of Tertiary fossils and rocks have been collected by myself from North Otago and South Canterbury, which will afford material for representative collections and for exchange.

The ethnographical collections have shown a satisfactory growth. Several large collections have been offered by auction in Wellington during the year, at which it has been possible to