

“*Proposed Volcano Observatory for New Zealand.*—As a consequence of the visit of Dr. Jagger to New Zealand in 1920, proposals outlined by him for a volcano observatory for New Zealand have been submitted to the Government. The New Zealand volcanic district, extending from Ruapehu to White Island, is in constant activity at one or other of the numerous vents. Disasters entailing loss of life have occurred at Tarawera, Waimangu, and White Island, and future disasters of a similar kind are at any time liable to occur. The Tarawera eruption was exceptional in that, although on the volcanic ‘line’ from Ruapehu to White Island, there had been no previous eruption in this vicinity for countless ages. Had an observatory recording local earthquakes existed in the district, possessed of the knowledge now acquired of volcanic phenomena, it is certain that both the place and time of the Tarawera eruption could have been predicted, and the serious loss of life been avoided. Viewed therefore merely as a policy of insurance, the erection and maintenance of a volcano observatory in this district is more than justified.

“The selection of the most suitable site is a matter of considerable difficulty, owing to the distance between the ends of the ‘line’ Ruapehu and White Island. It is possible that an observatory situated about the middle, near Tarawera, would fail to receive the minor shocks and tremors originating at either end of the line. Before any site is finally selected it is desirable that preliminary experiments should be made at two or more points, such as Waimarino and Rotorua, to determine the strength and character of the seismic phenomena and the centres of activity.

“*Western Samoa.*—On the return journey from Hawaii I spent six weeks in Western Samoa, during which I circumnavigated the Island of Upolu in a motor-launch, calling in at the chief villages, and also visited the eastern side of the Island of Savaii, and the crater of the recently extinct volcano Matavanu. Specimens of rocks and shells were secured for the Museum, but efforts to procure old Native artifacts were unavailing. The majority of the old weapons and implements of the Samoans appear to have been removed from the islands years ago.

“Consequent on my visit I prepared a paper on the geology of Western Samoa, which has been published in the *New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology* (Vol. iii, No. 2), and also furnished a report on the urgent scientific problems of Samoa, which is all under consideration by the Department of External Affairs.”

MUSEUM BUILDING.

In former reports the urgent need of a new building to exhibit the valuable collections housed herein has been strongly emphasized. Serious attention must again be directed to the future. With the accumulation of collections the space for exhibiting them for the enjoyment and information of the people becomes a pressing problem—one, in fact, which cannot properly be solved under present conditions.

BOARD OF SCIENCE AND ART.

No meetings have been held during the past year. Prior to his departure for the Old Country and Europe Mr. H. F. von Haast tendered his resignation; and the loss by death of Mr. C. A. Ewen, who has always taken a keen interest in all matters relating to science and art, is recorded with regret. No new appointments have been made.

MUSEUM STAFF.

An addition to the staff was made in the appointment of Mr. W. R. B. Oliver, whose knowledge of zoology and botany materially strengthens these divisions, and enables work on the herbarium specimens to be proceeded with. The energies of the other members of the staff—Messrs. Best, Hamilton, and Phillipps, Miss Castle, Mrs. Phillips, and Miss Mestayer—have been devoted to their respective fields. Reports by officers are appended.

During the absence of Dr. Thomson I have filled the position of Acting-Director; and as Assistant Film-censor I have examined 456 films, totalling 1,028,000 ft. in length. Cuts ranging from a few feet to several hundred feet were made in seventy-seven, and sixteen were rejected as unsuitable for public exhibition.

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COLLECTION.

The papers, journals, books, and other historical material gathered since the establishment of this section have been transferred to the Turnbull Library.

NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM.

Four cases of Indian equipment, the “paying-off” pennant of H.M.S. “New Zealand,” a number of trench-rattles, a small case of hand-grenades and bombs, &c., and sundry models of battlefield areas, were transferred to Trentham Military Camp for storage.

MUSEUM ART COLLECTIONS.

Authority was given for the painting of portraits of all New Zealand Expeditionary Force men awarded the Victoria Cross, and also for portraits of two New-Zealanders on service in the Imperial Force and Navy, and one in the Australian Expeditionary Force. So far six portraits have been received, and the others are reported to be nearing completion. It is hoped that at a later date a publication containing reproductions of the portraits and an account of the exploits of the officers and men who have gained the coveted Victoria Cross will be published for sale. Portraits of commanding officers, large canvases of famous battlefields, and the sketches made by the official New Zealand Expeditionary Force artist (Captain George E. Butler) have been received and are being framed. Eighty-four large lithographs of Imperial war activities, by eminent English artists, have also been received and framed. It is proposed to hold an exhibition in the Museum as soon as the Victoria Cross portraits are completed, pictures framed, and the collection of 100 war posters suitably mounted.