

when the habits and conditions of the Maoris were largely dissimilar from those of the European colonists, so that it was preferable to base all rates and averages on the population, exclusive of Maoris.

The system of omitting Maoris has persisted to this day, partly for the sake of comparison with earlier years, and partly on account of the different treatment of Maoris in the census enumerations and in the registration of births and deaths. In neither of these important branches of statistical information has it been possible for the wealth of detail obtained in regard to the general population to be ascertained regarding the Maoris.

The time is fast approaching, however, when it will be possible to treat Maoris on the same basis as Europeans, both in regard to the census and for purposes of vital statistics—indeed, Maoris in the South Island were enumerated in 1916 and 1921 on the same schedule as the European population. Certainly there is no longer any valid reason for omitting Maoris when computing *per capita* rates, and Cabinet has recently given instructions for the inclusion of Maoris in the statistics wherever possible.

Publications.—It is gratifying to be able to record that the standard time set for the publication of the Year-book—viz., January—was again slightly improved upon with the 1924 number, the first copies of which were available about the middle of December. There should be little difficulty in maintaining the standard for future issues. The second numbers of the various Annual Statistical Reports also appeared in general somewhat earlier than the corresponding reports of the previous year.

The biennial "Municipal Handbook," the 1921 number of which had unfortunately to be omitted on the ground of cost, will shortly reappear, revised to the end of the financial year 1922-23. This publication finds a ready sale, and the 1919 and 1917 numbers have long since been out of print.

Additional copies of the 1924 Year-book to the number of 2,500 were printed for distribution at the British Empire Exhibition, and 500 additional copies of the "Municipal Handbook" are being printed for the same purpose.

A schedule of the publications of the Office was recently distributed to a number of business firms, and resulted in a considerable number of sales. It is obvious that the existence, or at least the scope, of the statistical publications is not widely known, even in New Zealand, and the system of publicity could no doubt be extended with advantage both to the Office and to the public generally.

Registration of Aliens.—Consequent on the passing of the Registration of Aliens Suspension Act, 1923, this branch of work was discontinued during the year. The Dominion and district registers and files have been stored away for use if ever again required.

DOMINION MUSEUM.

The past year is one in which has been fully manifested the interest and support of prominent and public-spirited citizens in stressing the urgent need of a new museum building in which to house the valuable collections now in the possession of the Dominion Museum, and the decision of the Government to secure a temporary fireproof place of exhibition for the Maori collections has been greatly welcomed. The work of removal and the installation of the exhibits in their new quarters has occupied the attention of the Museum officers and has been carried forward satisfactorily.

It is a subject of congratulation also that the Government has decided to allocate the sum of £75,000 towards the cost of a new building provided an equal sum is contributed by the public.

Publications.—Museum Monographs No. 5, "Polynesian Voyagers," and No. 6, "The Maori School of Learning," both by Mr. Elsdon Best, have been published during the year. Section 1 of Bulletin No. 10, "Maori Mythology and Religion," has been printed, and will shortly be issued. Bulletin No. 7, "The Maori Canoe," is in the printer's hands.

Herbarium.—The mounting of specimens has been proceeded with as time permitted. There have been no important additions to the collection.

Manual of the New Zealand Flora.—When Mr. Cheeseman, Curator of the Auckland Museum, died in October last a portion only of his Flora had been printed off, and the bulk of the manuscript was still in his possession. In December Mr. W. R. B. Oliver visited Auckland and obtained the manuscript and all notes which it was thought would be of use in completing the work. The whole of the first copy of the manuscript was handed to the Government Printer, the second copy being kept in the Museum. The matter of continuing the checking of the proofs was referred to the Board of Science and Art in January last, and it was decided that the work be placed in Mr. Oliver's hands. An immediate start was made and the work has progressed steadily since.

Ornithology.—During the year two large collections of New Zealand and Australian bird-skins have been acquired by the Museum. The bird-collection has also been added to by a donation from the American Museum of Natural History of six skins and six eggs from Suwarrow Island.

Entomology.—Two show-cases representing the principal orders of insects are now on view in the Museum. The treating of the collection for mould, primarily a result of damping at the time of the Museum fire in 1921, still occupies a considerable amount of time. The number of insects in the Museum collection is now upwards of forty thousand. Donations have been made by Dr. J. Allan Thomson, Miss E. Richardson, Messrs. J. G. Myers, H. Hamilton, H. W. Simmonds, and A. V. Wilson. The Department is indebted to Mr. G. V. Hudson for his generous assistance in the identification and verification of specimens in all orders.

Ichthyology.—The examination of the specimens in the Dominion Museum has been continued, with the result that many points, especially with regard to the sharks, have been cleared up. Donations include examples of the family Galaxiidae sent by Mr. A. Burrows and apparently belonging to an undescribed species.

Conchology.—The main portion of the New Zealand collection of shells is now displayed in the Museum. Cataloguing of the specimens has proceeded apace.