

S O U T H L A N D I N S T I T U T E .

FIRST MEETING. *5th July, 1880.*

J. T. THOMSON, F.R.G.S., President, in the chair.

New Members.—Henry G. Mussen, Norman Prentice, T. Brodrick, Thos. Denniston, Hanan.

The President delivered an inaugural address.

ABSTRACT.

In inaugurating a Scientific Society in this most remote city of Her Majesty's Dominions, it becomes me to say something of the rapid and successful progress of similar Institutions in New Zealand, which will be an incitement for the members of this one to persevere.

The Wellington Philosophical Society was incorporated with the New Zealand Institute on the 10th June, 1868; the Auckland Institute on the same day and year; the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury on the 22nd October, 1868; the Otago Institute on 18th October, 1869; the Nelson Association for the Promotion of Science and Industry on the 23rd September, 1870; the Westland Institute on the 21st December, 1874; and the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute on the 31st March, 1875. Our incorporation we have taken steps to accomplish.

All these Societies have done good service by promoting intellectual enquiry, and by the bringing of persons engaged in the same studies and observations together, who would otherwise not meet; also, by the discussion of subjects of utility, or of special and general interest,—a record of the proceedings of which is to be seen in the twelve volumes of "*Transactions of the New Zealand Institute.*"

The papers published in these volumes are of a diverse nature, but few can be considered out of place, and many display deep reflection, and laborious investigation; altogether the establishment of such a medium of communication between local as well as distant practical and scientific workers in the colony may be said, to the thoughtful enquirer, to be one of the most auspicious events in the social history of our colony.

That this city should now become a centre for meeting, and for the interchange of thoughts and ideas, as well as for the illustration of applied science in the several and many projects and industries, is not too early. Its ready promotion by so many respectable citizens is confirmatory of this sentiment, and we have a large field before us in the extensive and fertile district to which we geographically belong. Nor need our members' range of investigation be confined to the land, our extensive sea-board, and outlying islands, yet but little explored, abound with interest for the several branches of scientific enquiry, and if we look beyond this, seeing that we are the nearest city to the Antarctic Continent, it may yet be our fortune to assist in the unravelling of the mysteries of that unknown land; a glimpse of which was given us by Sir James Ross, over thirty years ago.