

The statement of accounts shows that the funds at the disposal of the Council for the year amounted to £172 13s. 7d.; that £57 4s. has been spent on the museum and in the purchase of books, and that there is a balance of £45 17s. 9d. to the credit of the Society.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1881.—*President*—James Hector, M.D., C.M.G., F.R.S.; *Vice Presidents*—Dr. Buller, C.M.G., F.R.S., and the Hon. G. Randall Johnson, M.L.C.; *Council*—W. T. L. Travers, F.L.S., T. Kirk, F.L.S., Dr. Newman, M.B., J. P. Maxwell, C.E., F. W. Frankland, R. H. Govett, Martin Chapman; *Secretary and Treasurer*—R. B. Gore; *Auditor*—W. M. Bannatyne.

Mr. Chapman then delivered a brief address on retiring from the Presidency.

ABSTRACT.

He remarked that colonists generally were too busily engaged in combating the forces of nature to have leisure for scientific investigation. Only a few had opportunity to labour in the immense field open here, and they were doing so under conditions which were daily becoming more difficult and expensive to obtain results of value. Certain branches of science, however, must be cultivated here, otherwise their cultivation elsewhere would not benefit us—such were geology and chemistry (especially in relation to mining), zoology, agriculture, and botany. Discoveries elsewhere in those subjects would not benefit us, unless we had observations here to compare with them. This had hitherto been recognized by the Government, who had maintained an efficient staff of geologists, chemists, meteorologists, etc. The expenditure on geology had enriched the country so as to recoup over and over the cost incurred. A great deal of scientific work was done in New Zealand by private persons, which would be barren were there not a society able to publish it, and so bring it into relation with similar work done abroad. A very large amount of the matter in the annual volume of the “Transactions of the N.Z. Institute” recounted new discoveries and recorded facts to be found nowhere else, and these volumes were highly appreciated by learned bodies in other parts of the world. A larger amount was published by the New Zealand Institute than by similar bodies in any other of the colonies, and the matter was not inferior. This colony now took a worthy place in the scientific world, and would so long as the Institute, with its affiliated societies, existed. It had been urged against them that their papers were wholly speculative and metaphysical, but the reproach was a most unjust one. The New Zealand Institute received a subsidy of £500 a year from Government. This money was expended in publishing the Transactions for all the societies, nine in number. Some of the societies maintained museums of their own, but the Wellington Society used the museum of the Institute, paying a sixth of its funds towards this purpose. Should the Government subsidy be withdrawn, it would be a most severe blow to scientific research in the colony. It would temporarily stop the publication of the Transactions, with a consequent loss in membership of the societies, and would sever their relations with kindred societies elsewhere. The geological record of the colony represented an amount of skill, labour, and adventure which few could realize. People seeing a number of neat labelled specimens little thought of the months of toil and hardship undergone in getting them. The work done in geological research in New Zealand reflected the highest credit on all engaged, and the same remark would apply to palæontology, and, to a lesser extent, to ethnology. The fields of

botany and zoology were so vast that a far larger number of workers than we had must be engaged before they could be fully explored. Meteorology was making great strides all over the world, and he was glad to see that soon New Zealand meteorologists would be able to co-operate with those of Australia. Until that was done they could hardly expect to reduce to laws the storms of these seas. He hoped soon every ship arriving in Australia would bring a record of all meteorological observations of the voyage, as was done with good results elsewhere. Pure and mixed mathematical sciences had yet no foothold here, but he hoped soon astronomy would here occupy the same status as it did in Australia. In conclusion, Mr. Chapman thanked the society for the indulgence with which he had been treated as president, and congratulated them on the selection made in his successor. Dr. Buller proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman for his services as president, and for his address. The year had not been so successful as it might have been, partly through Dr. Hector's long absence. Still the annual volume would be of great interest. Dr. Hector seconded. He thought the society was greatly indebted to Mr. Chapman for his services as president. Carried unanimously.

The following papers were read in abstract:—

1. "Alpine plants of Otago," by J. Buchanan, F.L.S.

Dr. Hector said this paper would describe the results of a botanical exploration of a district in Otago which he first collected from in 1862, and which then yielded many new and interesting species. He accordingly had sent Mr. Buchanan to join the geological survey party this season, which, under Mr. S. McKay, has been at work in this district. Mr. Buchanan had, with Mr. McKay's help, brought from the Otago ranges an enormous collection of 25,000 plants, many of which were wholly new, and about others very little was known. Among others there were some beautiful specimens of the alpine plants, which were brought alive, and were exhibited on the table. Dr. Hector explained these in a most interesting manner, they being a number of specimens of plants not higher than moss, but really miniature shrubs. Seen under the lens, they were remarkably beautiful, being covered with flowers. Dr. Hector said prior to this not five people had seen these plants alive, as they were only to be found in the Southern Alps, and were under the snow nine months a year. Among the plants brought Dr. Knight, F.L.S., had discovered a most interesting new species, of Lichen respecting which he furnishes a separate notice. (*Transactions*, p. 385).

2. "Notes on New Zealand Cetacea, Recent and Fossil," by Dr. Hector.

ABSTRACT.

Dr. Hector explained that the illustrations of this paper would not be ready for the forthcoming volume. The notes on the recent Cetacea give a detailed description of *Neobalena marginata*, two complete skeletons of which (adult and young) are now mounted in the Museum. The presence of 17 pairs of ribs and the permanency of the remarkable characters, afforded by the expanded and lammeller structure of the ribs and vertebral processes, thoroughly establishes the generic independence of this Whale as a form intermediate between the true Baleen Whales and the Rorquals.

*Kogia breviceps*: A cow and calf of this miniature sperm whale, cast ashore at Lyell's Bay, have been secured, and portions of the latter preserved in spirit for future examination.

*Orca*: Two examples of this genus have been obtained; the first ran ashore at Lyell's Bay, and the second, which appears to be a full adult example of *Orca gladiator*, was cast up on the beach near Wanganui.