

EIGHTH MEETING: *20th September, 1897.*

E. Robertson, M.D., President, in the chair.

Professor F. D. Brown delivered a popular lecture, illustrated by experiments, on "The Ether."

NINTH MEETING: *4th October, 1897.*

Mr. James Stewart, C.E., in the chair.

Papers.—1. "Tuhoë Land," by Elsdon Best. (*Transactions*, p. 33.)

2. "The Influence of the Ideal," by E. A. Mackechnie. (*Transactions*, p. 109.)

TENTH MEETING: *18th October, 1897.*

E. Robertson, M.D., President, in the chair.

Professor A. P. Thomas gave a popular lecture on "Corals and Coral Reefs."

ANNUAL MEETING: *28th February, 1898.*

ABSTRACT OF ANNUAL REPORT.

The number of members on the roll at the present time is 167, of whom twelve are life-members and 155 annual subscribers. Five new members have been elected during the year, and eleven names have been removed—five from death, three from resignation, and three from non-payment of subscription for more than two consecutive years.

The Council are sorry to state that the list of deaths contains the names of several gentlemen who have taken a prominent part in the affairs of the Institute. Mr. J. C. Firth joined the Institute in the year after its foundation. He was President in 1875, and for several years subsequently served on the Council. He was a frequent contributor to the *Transactions*, his last communication appearing in the volume for 1896. During the whole period of his membership he was an active supporter of the society; and in the early part of its history, when its position was struggling and ill-assured, his frequent and liberal contributions to its funds materially aided its progress. It is only due to his memory to mention that at his own request the particulars of several of these benefactions were never made public. By his death the Institute loses a sincere and zealous friend. The Rev. Canon Bates was also for many years a member of the Council, and a frequent contributor of papers or lectures. His loss is a severe one, both as a man of broad and liberal views and as an earnest supporter of any movement tending towards the social or educational progress of Auckland. The other members removed by death are Mr. T. Ball, Mr. L. Ehrenfried, and Mr. C. J. Leaf.

The financial position of the Institute must be regarded as satisfactory. The total revenue of the working account, excluding the balance of

£164 17s. 10d. in hand at the commencement of the year, has been £1,176 7s. 6d. Last year the amount was £1,207 7s. 8d., so that there has been an apparent decrease of £31 0s. 2d. But, as pointed out in the report for 1896-97, the receipts for that year were swollen by the payment of some arrears of interest which should have been paid during the previous twelve months. Making due allowance for that, it will be seen that the revenue really shows a considerable increase. The interest yielded by the invested funds of the Costley Bequest has been £413 0s. 4d., while the Museum endowment has contributed in rents and interest on investments £619 15s. 11d. The members' subscriptions have amounted to £127 1s., a sum slightly below that received in 1896-97. The total expenditure has been £1,201 10s. 5d., leaving a credit balance of £139 14s. 11d. in the Bank of New Zealand. The invested funds of the Institute now amount to £13,280, showing an increase of £65 during the year. With the exception of a few hundred pounds, the whole of this sum is invested in mortgage on freehold property, and it is believed that the securities are exceptionally good and stable.

The Crown Lands Board have not been able to do much in the way of utilising the remainder of the endowment. A few township allotments have been sold and the proceeds handed over to the Institute for investment. The Tihitihi Block, at Whangarei, the largest of the rural endowments, has been divided into small grazing-runs and leased. In the future it will bring in a small though regular income. The Waikanae Block, near Coromandel, which was taken up for mining purposes a couple of years ago, has yielded a very satisfactory income; but, as several of the leases have been abandoned, it is hardly probable that the amount received during the coming year will be so large.

Ten meetings have been held during the year, at which fourteen papers were read and discussed.

There has been a satisfactory attendance of visitors at the Museum. The register kept by the attendant on Sunday afternoons shows that 13,093 people entered the building on that day, or an average of 251 for each Sunday. This is a slight increase on the number for the previous year. The largest attendance was 388 on the 25th April, and the smallest thirty-seven on the 3rd October. On week days the visitors can only be occasionally counted, and accurate statistics cannot therefore be given, but the average attendance may be safely estimated at one hundred. Taking this number as a basis for calculation, the approximate week-day attendance would be 31,300, and the total for the whole year 44,393. The greatest attendance recorded on any one day was 403, on the 24th May (Queen's Birthday).

In last year's report the Council stated the reasons that had induced them to arrange for an enlargement of the Museum. Since then the new addition has been completed, and was opened to the public for the first time on the 19th October. It consists of a hall 50 ft. square adjoining the eastern side of the ethnological hall, with which it is connected by an archway. In structural details it agrees with the ethnological hall, being built of brick, with a concrete floor and iron and glass roof. The contract price was £800, to which, however, has to be added the cost of gas-fittings, architect's commission, and a few extras. The funds required for its erection have been temporarily borrowed from the Costley Bequest, with the proviso that the amount shall be gradually repaid by instalments from each year's income; and in fulfilment of this agreement £100 has just been paid into the Investment Account. The primary reason for the erection of the hall was to accommodate the Russell collection of plaster casts from the antique. This collection, which is in many respects an admirable one, was altogether buried in its former location in the centre of the main hall. It is now well placed and well lighted, and when the final colouring of the walls is completed will be seen to great

advantage. The new hall will also be used as a meeting-room until the funds of the Institute are sufficient to warrant the erection of a properly equipped lecture-room, and some expenditure will shortly be incurred in providing a movable platform, and other necessary conveniences. The space gained in the main hall by the removal of the statues will ultimately be devoted to the exhibition of groups of the larger mammals, suitably arranged in glass pier cases. This is a work, however, which can only be slowly accomplished, unless some generous friend of the Museum will largely supplement its scanty resources.

The chief additions made to the Museum during the year have been in the department of ethnology. The Council would draw special attention to a collection of Maori carvings and other articles obtained by purchase from the East Cape district. Among other things it contains two huge *tikis* or carved figures of a type now extremely rare and difficult to obtain; a beautiful example of the carved central post of a large whare; a large carved doorway of an unusual pattern; and an antique *paepae* or carved threshold of a house, probably considerably over a hundred years old. The Council have also been able to obtain the carved figure-head of the well-known canoe Taheretikitiki. It belongs to a peculiar type of figure-heads known as *Toiere*, and is believed to be the only specimen in a public collection. A large number of small articles of Maori workmanship have been obtained during the year, partly by purchase and partly by donation. Some of these are specially valuable, and arrangements are now being made for their suitable exhibition. In foreign ethnology the most interesting addition is an unusually fine example of an inlaid canoe from the Solomon Islands. It is about 15 ft. in length, and is beautifully inlaid throughout with pearl shell, and adorned with drawings of birds and fishes. Such canoes are only made on the Island of Ulawa, and are now extremely difficult to procure. The thanks of the Institute are due to the Rev. R. B. Comins and the Rev. W. G. Ivens, through whose good offices the canoe was obtained.

In the zoological department several additions of importance have been made. A fine mounted skeleton of an ostrich has been obtained in exchange from Professor Ward, of Rochester, U.S.A. It will be useful for comparison with the moa skeletons. An interesting collection of Chatham Island birds, including several rare species, and notably *Sphenæacus rufescens*, has been acquired. Several small lots of New Zealand bird-skins have been received. There are also many minor additions.

In last year's report the Council stated that Mr. T. Russell, C.M.G., had most liberally promised to expend the sum of £100 in some desirable addition to the Museum. During a visit to New Zealand, made shortly after the last annual meeting, Mr. Russell decided that his presentation should take the shape of a mineral collection to illustrate the resources of the Hauraki Mining District. At the request of Mr. Russell's agents the Curator has made a tour of visits to most parts of the district, collecting a full suite of specimens, Mr. Russell defraying the whole of the expenses. Over fifteen hundred specimens have been obtained, and have been catalogued and roughly determined. In a few weeks' time the collection will be finally arranged and placed on exhibition. It will include a series illustrating the general geological structure of the whole district; also local collections from the smaller districts, or from groups of mines, showing the character of the "country" rock and the various lodes traversing it; and, finally, selected specimens of the various minerals occurring in the lodes or elsewhere. The Council consider that the thanks of the whole community are due to Mr. Russell for providing funds for a purpose that cannot fail to be of immense practical importance.

An expenditure of about £70 has been incurred in the purchase of

standard scientific books. It was mentioned in the previous report that the Imperial Government, acting on the advice of the Royal Society, had decided to present to the library a complete set of the publications of the "Challenger" Expedition. This has been received during the year, and forms an addition the importance of which can hardly be overestimated. The usual exchanges and presentations from foreign societies have been received, together with a few miscellaneous donations. The Institute also continues to subscribe to several of the leading scientific periodicals and magazines.

The bare and uninviting appearance of the library has often been represented to the Council. Steps will shortly be taken to renovate and furnish it in an appropriate manner. By a comparatively small expenditure it can be converted into an attractive and comfortable room.

A large amount of consideration has been given to the maintenance of the Little Barrier Island as a reserve for the preservation of the flora and fauna of New Zealand. Yielding to the urgent representations of the Council, the Crown Lands Department authorised a special grant of £250 for the erection of a suitable residence for the curator. The material was conveyed to the island by the "Hinemoa," and the house is now completed. With respect to the avifauna, the presence of a resident curator and the removal of the Maoris appear to have altogether checked the surreptitious collecting previously carried on, and the birds have remained unmolested during the year. Mr. Shakespear, the curator, reports that with one exception he has noticed all the species observed by Mr. Reischek, many of them being present in considerable numbers. Wild cats and other vermin are not so numerous as was supposed, and are being destroyed whenever opportunity offers. With proper care and attention—and this the Institute hopes to give as long as the island remains in its charge—there seems to be no reason why many of our rarer birds may not find a secure home on the island for very many years to come.

In conclusion, the Council have to thank the members and others for the assistance and encouragement which they have given to the objects of the Institute, and which it is hoped will be again rendered during the coming year.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1898.—*President*—Professor H. A. Talbot Tubbs; *Vice-presidents*—E. Robertson, M.D., D. Petrie, F.L.S.; *Council*—G. Aickin, J. Batger, W. Berry, Professor F. D. Brown, C. Cooper, E. A. Mackechnie, T. L. Murray, T. Peacock, J. Stewart, C.E., Professor A. P. Thomas, F.L.S., J. H. Upton; *Trustees*—E. A. Mackechnie, S. P. Smith, F.R.G.S., T. Peacock; *Secretary and Curator*—T. F. Cheeseman, F.L.S., F.Z.S.; *Auditor*—W. Gorrie.
