

ABSTRACT OF ANNUAL REPORT.

Eight meetings of the Council and seven general meetings have been held. The membership of the Institute now stands at 116.

Early in the session the colony suffered a great loss in the death of Mr. T. Kirk, F.L.S. At the close of the session we have to note with regret the death of Mr. John Buchanan, F.L.S., another eminent botanist, and pioneer in scientific work in New Zealand; and last, but not least, the Right Honourable Sir George Grey, first President of the New Zealand Institute, and original President, in 1851, of the New Zealand Society—the first scientific society founded in New Zealand.

A committee has been set up to recommend books necessary for the library, and they have reported to the effect that monographs of the principal groups in the animal kingdom are specially required, and they have decided to take a separate group each year.

The Council trust that no time will be lost in making suitable arrangements for the completion of the work on the New Zealand flora, left incomplete by Mr. Kirk, as for many years the work has been urgently required.

The Council desires to recognise the satisfactory progress made by the New Zealand Institute in the publication of the valuable work by Mr. A. Hamilton on "The Art and Ethnology of the Maori."

Since the last annual meeting matters have been almost at a standstill *re* the marine fish-hatchery at Purakanui, but we hope we shall soon be able to report favourably on the near prospect of the establishment of the proposed hatchery.

On the 8th December last, in reply to a letter from Mr. G. M. Thomson, the Secretary to the Marine Department wrote to say that the sum of £750 was placed on the supplementary estimates, and voted for "Fish-hatcheries and expenses of Expert Ayson to Canada and America, but that nothing will be done by the Government in the matter of establishing hatcheries pending the return of the expert." Before his departure for America and Europe, Mr. Ayson came down to Dunedin and met some of the members of the committee and of the Otago Acclimatisation Society. As we understand that he has made excellent use of his time in visiting the principal hatchery establishments and biological stations of the Northern Hemisphere, and generally in obtaining information on the subject, we anticipate that he will be able to give a very full report of what is being done. As the amount asked by us from the Government as a subsidy was £500, and as Mr. Ayson's expenses would considerably exceed the extra £250 voted last year, we are glad to notice that an additional sum of £250 has been voted this session.

On the 22nd September the area indicated at Purakanui in our last report was gazetted as a reserve for a fish-hatchery.

We regret that no further communication has been received from the Scotch Fishery Board in regard to the experiments to be undertaken on behalf of this Institute in the retardation of fish ova. In reply, however, to Dr. Chilton, who made direct inquiry on the subject, Dr. Fulton, the scientific superintendent of the Scotch Board, stated that the delay was due to the transference of the Board's hatchery from Dunbar to Aberdeen, and that he would shortly forward a communication to us on the subject.

The receipts for the year ended the 7th November, including a balance brought forward of £27 9s. 3d., come to £86 5s. 3d. The expenditure during the same period came to £42 11s. 3d., leaving a balance in the Union Bank of £43 14s.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1899. — *President* — F. R. Chapman; *Vice-presidents*—Dr. Scott, A. Bathgate; *Council* — Professor Benham, Dr. Hocken, Dr. Shand, G. M. Thom-

son, B. C. Aston, E. Melland, Crosbie Smith; *Hon. Secretary*—A. Hamilton; *Hon. Treasurer*—J. S. Tennant; *Auditor*—D. Brent.

Address by the President, Mr. F. R. Chapman.

ABSTRACT.

The President thanked the members of the Society for his re-election, but remarked that he supposed he had been proposed for a new term in consideration of his not having performed the duties during the past term. He also felt he had cause for thankfulness on account of his colleagues who had been elected. He proposed in his opening address, which he had not had time to prepare, to speak upon a subject which was becoming more and more one of general interest to all civilised communities—the conservation of scenery and of the natural objects connected with scenery. The subject, he remarked, was one that had received attention in all parts of the world, but up to a comparatively recent period it had not been deemed worthy of being included in the programme of State policy. The speaker spoke of the scenery of Switzerland and Alaska and Australia and New Zealand, referring to the means which were adopted for the conservation of natural beauties and places of interest. One of the greatest acquisitions in this colony was the national park acquired by the colony in the centre of the North Island some years ago, which had been a gift to the people by the Maori owners. There was in almost every county in New Zealand, the President remarked, some object worthy of preserving, and he wished to add his testimony to that of others as to the usefulness and attractiveness of such objects, and to urge upon people everywhere to prize and take care of little pieces of scenery in their own districts. It seemed to him, for instance, that such a place as the Nuggets should have been preserved. It seemed to him a pity that a considerable area had not been reserved there, as being the nearest place where they could get permanently and easily preserved a perfectly rough piece of ground as a park for an outlet for the people of Dunedin. It was not possible to conserve the bush in the hills here, because settlement must, as a matter of necessity, go on, but at the Nuggets there was a good deal of land that might have been preserved in its natural state. Whether or not the land was all alienated from the Crown he did not know, but if any was left it was certainly desirable to preserve some part of it as a national park between the Nuggets and the nearest point of Catlin's Beach. Local parties should form committees and local bodies sub-committees to take an interest in preserving places of natural beauty for the public and from destruction.

Mr. A. Bathgate expressed regret that the Water of Leith Valley had not been preserved for the public. At the present time picnic parties could not go to any suitable spot near Dunedin without trespassing on private property.

Mr. J. Allen, M.H.R., suggested that societies such as the Institute should bring under the notice of the Government spots that ought to be preserved as national parks, and that something should be done to recover suitable areas round about Dunedin for the enjoyment of the people.

Mr. Chapman, in his reply, said that the scenery on the West Coast, to which reference had been made, was indestructible—the Sounds could take care of themselves; but there was not occasion to alienate land there, for when settlement did go there it would be purely fishermen's settlements. As to reserves near towns, he had thought a good deal about that question. The only way to get them was to pay for them. Unfortunately, the land was alienated, and the process of destruction was going on. There was still a beautiful bush area under Flagstaff,