

2. "Contributions to a Knowledge of the Geographical Distribution of the New Zealand Land and Fresh-water Mollusca," by H. Suter. (*Transactions*, p. 151.)

3. "Maori Origins," by Elsdon Best. (*Transactions*, p. 467.)

4. "Why not prepare Students for Technical Schools," by James Adams.

TENTH MEETING: 29th October, 1900.

Professor H. W. Segar, President, in the chair.

Professor F. D. Brown gave a popular lecture, illustrated by numerous carefully prepared experiments, on "The Surface of a Liquid."

ELEVENTH MEETING: 12th November, 1900.

Professor H. W. Segar, President, in the chair.

*Paper.*—Mr. J. A. Pond read a paper "On a Hot Spring in the Rotomahana Rift," and showed some lantern-views of geysers and hot springs in the vicinity.

ANNUAL MEETING: 25th February, 1901.

Professor H. W. Segar, President, in the chair.

*New Members.*—A. Hunter, C.E., C. E. Smith.

ABSTRACT OF ANNUAL REPORT.

Seventeen new members have been elected since the last annual meeting, a number considerably above the average of the previous eight or ten years. The losses have been by death four, and otherwise ten. The number on the roll at the present time is 155, being three more than in the previous year.

The Council have much regret in announcing the death of Mr. E. A. Mackechnie, who for many years has been intimately associated with the affairs of the Institute. Mr. Mackechnie became a member in 1870, and from the time of his election took a steady and consistent interest in the welfare of the society. He was elected to the Council in 1880, and served as President in 1882. In 1886 he was appointed a trustee of the Institute, a position which he occupied up to the time of his death. He has contributed numerous papers or lectures to the meetings of the Institute, many of which have appeared in the *Transactions*. The Council are specially desirous of expressing their high appreciation of the many services he has rendered to the Institute, and the advantages which it has derived from the soundness of his judgment and constant devotion to its best interests.

In the balance-sheets appended to the report full details are given of the financial position of the Institute, but it is perhaps advisable to give a brief synopsis here. The total revenue of the working account,

excluding the balance of £61 6s. 1d. in hand at the beginning of the year, has been £897 7s. 4d., a very close approximation to last year's amount, which was £900 18s. 2d. Examining the separate items which make up the year's income, it will be seen that the receipts from the invested funds of the Costley bequest have been £436 5s., as against £328 5s. for the previous year, the apparent increase being mainly due to the receipt of interest, which, if paid in time, would have appeared in last year's accounts. The Museum endowment has yielded £333 11s. 7d., the amount for 1899-1900 being £444 1s. 4d. The decrease has been caused by the paying-off of several mortgages, which have not yet been reinvested. The members' subscriptions stand at £118 13s., precisely the same amount as that credited last year. The total expenditure has been £822 11s. 11d., leaving a balance of £186 1s. 6d. in the Bank of New Zealand. The Council have no change of importance to report respecting the capital account of the Institute, the total amount being the same as last year—£13,590. A few mortgages have expired, and have been paid off, the funds now waiting reinvestment. There is every reason to believe that the invested funds are in a satisfactory condition, and the securities good and ample.\*

No change has taken place under the head of Museum Endowment. The interest on the capital sum invested has been regularly received, and from time to time the Crown Lands Board have paid over the rents received from those endowments that are leased. How to utilise the remainder of the endowment is not an easy question to solve, there being little demand for country lands except under perpetual lease.

Eleven meetings have been held during the session, at which nineteen papers were read.

The Museum has been open to the public throughout the year during the usual hours—from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on week-days, and from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sundays. The attendance has been satisfactory. Visitors to the Museum on Sundays have been regularly counted, the total number being 12,371, an average of 237 for each Sunday; the total for the whole year being estimated at 43,671. The greatest attendance on any one day was 520 on the 24th May (Queen's Birthday). The chief work done in the Museum during the year has been the rearrangement of the greater part of the Invertebrata. The New Zealand shells have been remounted and relabelled, and a considerable number of additional species placed on exhibition, the collection being now as complete as any in the colony. The foreign shells have received considerable attention, with the view of rendering the collection tolerably representative of the chief families. Several minor pieces of work have been carried out in the mineral and ethnological departments, and at the present time good progress is being made in overhauling and relabelling the collection of New Zealand birds. The donations received during the year have been numerous and valuable, as may be seen from the appended list, but few of them require special mention in the body of the report. One of the most interesting is a specimen of the rare and curious mole-like marsupial *Notoryctes*, from the deserts of Central Australia, obtained in exchange from the Melbourne Museum. Colonel Seton-Karr has very liberally presented a series of prehistoric stone implements collected by him a few years ago in Somaliland, being a set similar to those which he has contributed to the chief European Museums. From Mr. Elsdon Best the Museum has received a further consignment—the third—of Maori ethnological specimens, obtained in the vicinity of Ruatapuana and Lake Waikaremoana, most of which are very acceptable additions.

The growth of the Museum, satisfactory in some respects, is in others

\* For full details of finance, see pamphlet issued by Institute.

much hampered by the small and insufficient funds available. The zoological department is practically at a standstill from the inability of the Institute to employ a taxidermist. Another serious matter is the slow growth of the whole of the New Zealand collections. The primary object of any local museum of natural history should be to obtain, and to exhibit in as full a manner as possible, a complete series of the natural productions of the country or district in which it is situated. But, with the exception of the birds and shells, small progress has been made in this direction. Take, for instance, the fishes, where it is highly important that there should be a good named collection, especially of the edible species. But the cost of preserving and mounting the larger varieties, and of the glass jars and alcohol required for the exhibition of the smaller ones, has effectually prevented a proper advance from being made. Hardly anything has been done towards forming a collection of New Zealand insects, and this is altogether due to the want of proper cabinets for their reception, for several collectors would gladly assist if there was a reasonable prospect of their specimens being placed in safety. How these checks to the progress of the Museum can be removed is not at all obvious. In the past the Museum has benefited so largely by private liberality that the Council entertain the hope that its further development may receive some assistance from the same source.

About fifty volumes have been added to the library by purchase during the year, a full list being given in the appendix. The usual exchanges and presentations from foreign institutions have also been received. The importance of extending the library, and of rendering it more useful to students and scientific workers, is fully recognised by the Council, and it is hoped that means may shortly be available for the purchase of another instalment of books.

The management of the Little Barrier Island as a reserve for the preservation of the avifauna of New Zealand still remains in the hands of the Institute, the Government contributing an annual grant to defray the necessary expenses. The curator, Mr. Shakespear, reports that no attempt has been made to interfere with the birds, and that no unauthorised persons have landed on the island. The usual annual inspection was made a few weeks ago, when everything was found in a satisfactory condition. The secretary reports that birds are everywhere plentiful, and are apparently increasing in numbers. During the course of a week's stay he observed the whole of the species recorded by Professor Hutton and Mr. Reischek. Now that the visits of collectors have ceased, and the birds are not molested, they have become much tamer, and frequent the lower parts of the island, which was not the case four or five years ago, when the Institute first assumed control. Several were even noticed nesting in close proximity to the curator's house. Altogether there is every reason for believing that the island will long remain a secure home for the avifauna of New Zealand.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1901.—*President*—J. Stewart, Esq., C.E.; *Vice-presidents*—Professor H. W. Segar and J. Batger; *Council*—C. Cooper, H. Haines, A. Hunter, C.E., E. V. Miller, T. Peacock, J. A. Pond, Dr. H. Swale, Professor Talbot-Tubbs, Professor A. P. Thomas, J. H. Upton; *Secretary and Treasurer*—T. F. Cheeseman; *Auditor*—W. Gorrie.

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