

He said he remembered his own surprise in the early sixties, when first exploring such caves, at finding, as Mr. McLeod had done, bones of sheep and cattle mixed with fossils of a period generally supposed to be remote. The animals had fallen into the cave, and flowing water had carried the bones into strange company. The caves at Martinborough were geologically recent; others, notably at Takaka, in Nelson, were of far more ancient date. Hundreds of these caves had never been properly examined, and they were full of valuable material for the scientific investigator. He was glad that one of our members had devoted serious attention to the subject. Some of the secret caves of the Maoris in the North Island in particular would hereafter be mines of treasure for the archaeologist. For ages the natives had been in the habit not only of depositing therein the bones of their great chiefs, priests, and warriors, but their most treasured heirlooms, in the way of greenstone ornaments, &c., which were practically imperishable, and were the sole remaining relics of native art of prehistoric times.

Sir James Hector exhibited the skeleton of a young female whale of a rare species—*Mesoplodon hectori*, Van Beneden—which, with its mother, was captured last March at Titahi Bay.

Only four specimens of this species had, he said, been met with. The first two were fragments only. The adult specimen on this occasion the Museum, unfortunately, had not been able to secure, and this was, therefore, the only perfect skeleton available. Strangely enough, the two other specimens had been found in the same little bay. The *Mesoplodon* might be regarded as a miniature species of the family of which the great sperm whale was the type. A northern species was known, differing in several points from the New Zealand species.

Sir James Hector directed the attention of the meeting to a collection of some forty or fifty out of a large collection of water-colour drawings of our native fishes by the late Mr. F. E. Clarke, a member of the Society.

He said Mr. Clarke's knowledge of fish was minute and accurate, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the beauty and scientific fidelity of his drawings. A special value attached to these drawings inasmuch as some represented rare and others absolutely unique specimens which had come under Mr. Clarke's observation—one of these, notably, a large shark of a kind which Sir James had never seen, and which was undescribed save by Mr. Clarke, while it differed remarkably from any other known species. At some distant day, perhaps, these valuable drawings might be reproduced and issued in book form—that was, if they could be secured for the Museum; as it was, they were in danger of being lost or dispersed. Mrs. Clarke was willing to dispose of them, and he hoped the collection would be purchased in its complete form by the colony.

The meeting expressed its concurrence.

Sir James, in continuing his remarks, said that something more than accurate delineation of our fishes was needed. We had still much to learn of their habits and life-history, though we knew far more about them than might be supposed from occasional reports published at public expense, in which, it was not too much to say, a great deal of nonsense might be found. One fact we could not escape—that New Zealand was an island, and that the surrounding hundred-fathom limit within which fishing operations could be conducted was a narrow one. It was impossible, in the absence of breeding-grounds, such as the North Sea or the banks off Newfoundland, that New Zealand could ever establish a great fishing industry. He then called attention to some curious facts