

proposed a reform of the Constitution in 1884, but it came to nothing. Hector tended to be the Government's apologist, the buffer between the enthusiasm of science and the caution (or parsimony) of the state. It was the increasing vigour of the scientific community that really led to a change. The incorporated societies wanted more share in control, and when Hector retired in 1903 the ink was barely dry on resolutions of regret and gratitude for his great services before a deputation from Canterbury, supported by Otago, asked for an amended Constitution. That it was achieved so promptly implies a good deal of advance preparation.

The 1903 Act gave control of the Board to representatives of the incorporated societies, whose members became by statute the members of the New Zealand Institute. It also established an elected President. The reformers consciously severed the too close link with Government and for this we applaud them. But from that day till now the Institute and the Royal Society of New Zealand have had no home, depending on charity from the Museum, the Government, and lately from Victoria University for accommodation for meetings, offices, library, and stock rooms.

### MID-CENTURY CHANGE

But the reconstituted Institute of 1903 thrived. The representative Board of Governors was far more active, publishing its minutes for the world to see, passing resolutions, participating in international science, establishing memorial funds and prizes to encourage high standards in research. In 1919 a limited Fellowship was formed, though many years passed before it had responsibilities. In the same year a New Zealand Science Congress was organised, the first of 11 stimulating landmarks in the history and development of New Zealand science.

By 1930 the Institute was no longer the only body for the promotion of science. The Polynesian Society was formed in 1892 for study of Maori ethnology, history and culture. Medicine and Engineering founded their own institutions in 1896 and 1914. Between 1920 and 1930 there were founded societies for Astronomy, for Dairy Science, an Institute of Foresters, and a New Zealand branch of the Royal Institute of Chemistry. Fifteen more societies for special branches of science had been founded by 1960. Many of these national bodies had roots in the New Zealand Institute, and the Institute's policy was to help and welcome them as signs of vigorous growth of national science. But their desire for formal liaison with the senior scientific body remained an unresolved constitutional problem until the present decade, and sometimes the lack of it led to misunderstanding and to criticism.

The challenge to provide leadership for New Zealand scientists led to a good deal of heart-searching by the Board of Governors. One outcome was the suggestion, originally from Clinton Coleridge Farr in 1930, to incorporate the word "Royal" in the title—at first it was to be the Royal New Zealand Institute—to emphasise that "the Institute aspired to stand at the head of more specialist scientific societies and institutes as it welcomed them to the scientific scene". In other words, the Institute accepted that one of the functions of a Royal Society of New Zealand was to repair some of the rents in that seamless garment of learning I mentioned before.

### ROYAL TITLE

Eventually an Act of 1933 reconstituted the Institute as the Royal Society of New Zealand, by gracious approval of King George V. It restricted the objects to science; the incorporated societies became Member Bodies and most of them were later re-named as "Branches" of the Society; and the Board of Governors became the Council. The constitutional structure, however, was not substantially altered, and it cannot be said that the change materially improved relations with the specialist societies; that came much later, in the 1960's.