

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DOMINION MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee met four times during the year.

## STAFF

The staff has been considerably reduced owing to transfer to the Armed Forces and auxiliary organizations. Those now serving in these national services are Mr. R. R. Forster, Mr. H. J. Allen, Miss M. Sutherland, Miss D. King, and Miss H. Turnbull. The Educational Officer, Mr. D. W. McKenzie, has been transferred to the Education Board, but is attending the Museum regularly to supervise the circulation of exhibits to schools. The Librarian, Miss L. M. Thorne, resigned in July, 1942. With the occupation of the building for national purposes, two of the attendants have been attached to the Museum staff. Two junior assistants, Miss B. Topp and Miss F. M. Sadler, have been temporarily appointed to the staff for the duration of the war.

## OCCUPATION OF MUSEUM

The greater portion of the ground floor and part of the exhibition galleries have been taken for national purposes in connection with the war. In consequence, it was necessary to transfer to the Museum galleries the whole of the reference collections with the exception of those in the basement, Maori room, and strong-room. The move was commenced on 8th June and took about a month to complete, after which the rearranging of the collections and library, involving the erection of much of the shelving from the ground floor, occupied the staff for nearly two months. The Museum is closed to the public and there has been a decrease in some of the work, but decreases in the staff have more than balanced this, so that much routine work, especially on the library and botanical collections, has had to be suspended.

## MAORI COLLECTION

A catalogue of the Maori material is in course of preparation and several sections of the collection have been reclassified, details of specimens being entered on specimen schedules and index cards. Some important information regarding the Maori-house carvings in the Museum collection has been obtained from East Coast sources; and records have been obtained of hitherto unrecorded former carved houses of this area. Additions to the collection include a bone toggle collected by the late Mr. B. D. Mantell and presented by the Geological Survey Branch, a collection of Maori adzes presented by Professor H. B. Kirk, a stone pestle from Mr. P. J. Shakesby, and a tekoteko from Miss E. B. McGregor.

## BIRD COLLECTIONS

A number of specimens have been added to the collections from three sources: various accidentally killed New Zealand birds sent in by correspondents, birds that have died in captivity forwarded by aviculturalists, and specimens received from the Curator of the Newtown Zoo.

In February, 1943, the Director and the Taxidermist visited Tarakohe, near Takaka, for the purpose of excavating a limestone cave containing moa bones. In this work two local residents, Mr. H. C. Schultz and Rev. D. Martin, gave considerable assistance in the digging-out of the bones. The cave was a very difficult one in which to work, and the bones, unfortunately, were not in good condition as they were embedded in wet clay. A number, all belonging to the species *Pachyornis elephantopus*, were brought back to the Museum. Bones of four species of moa from the Takaka district were presented to the Museum by Mr. F. W. Hufham, of Motueka. Mr. W. M. Fraser, of Whangarei, donated bones representing seven species of moa from the North Auckland Peninsula. A skeleton of *Megalapteryx didinus* found many years ago at Cromwell was purchased. The head and upper portion of the neck still has the dried flesh and skin attached, but the feathers all have been rubbed off.

## FISH COLLECTIONS

Owing to war conditions the large reference collection of fishes has been stored. Important accessions received during the year include the following: A rare eel, *Gnathophis hebenata*, from Island Bay, presented by Mr. A. C. Kaberry; a hammer-head shark, *Sphyrna zygaena*, from Castlepoint, presented by Mr. A. Paino, New Zealand Fisheries, Ltd.; a carpet shark from Ninety-mile Beach, presented by Mr. F. M. Begley; and a globe fish, *Tetraodon richiei*, from Paraparaumu, presented by Mrs. R. Hill. The following papers have been published by Mr. W. J. Phillippo in *Records of the Dominion Museum*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 48–54, 1942: (1) "The Occurrence of *Aspasmogaster hectoris* in Cook Strait"; (2) "New Records of Bathypelagic Fishes from Cook Strait."

## ENTOMOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

The work of rearranging the insect collections has been continued, a start having been made with the Orthoptera and the Coleoptera. In spite of the prevailing difficult conditions, considerable use has been made of the collections during the year, and inquiries and identifications have been continued as in previous years. With the closing of the Museum, work on the preparation of new exhibits has been slowed down.

*Accessions.*—By exchange: From Mr. G. Howes, Dunedin, thirty-three specimens of rare New Zealand Lepidoptera; from Mr. L. R. Gillogly, California, United States of America, two collections of North American insects comprising about eight hundred specimens.

By gift: From Mr. M. Laird, Wellington, a collection of approximately one hundred and twenty specimens of New Zealand beetles.