

he is the patentee. Mr. S. Steele, B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering, has returned from the Wanganui Technical School to occupy the position vacated by Mr. Cull. I have also to record with regret the resignation of Mr. R. J. McKay, B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering, who has left to engage in the practice of his profession.

MUSEUM.

(Curator, Mr. Edgar R. Waite.)

In my report last year I drew attention to the fact that no additions had been made to the Museum buildings for the past thirty years, as a result of which the collections were, in many cases, in a very crowded condition. I now have the honour to report that the buildings have been considerably extended, but as these extensions were designed to accommodate absolutely new collections, they afford no relief to the congestion referred to. The suggested gallery to the Ethnological Room should be erected as soon as the necessary funds are available, but the cost of the skeleton of the Okarito whale and its mounting will be a heavy charge against next year's income.

Reports.—Several special reports were furnished during the year, the most important being one on the proposal to materially enlarge the Museum, and to redistribute the collections. Plans were prepared for three additional rooms, also for a gallery round the Ethnological Room. As the Canterbury Museum is an object of great interest to tourists and therefore a distinct asset to the country, and as the institution has never received financial assistance from the Government, it was felt that the Premier might be approached on the subject. His reply was not encouraging, but later he placed the sum of £400 at the disposal of the Board, and the generous action of the Government is much appreciated by the people of Canterbury. An exhaustive report on fire risks and methods of prevention was also prepared, but, in view of the municipal scheme for a high-pressure water-supply shortly to be inaugurated, it was not deemed necessary to carry the recommendations made into effect. I also reported on the unsatisfactory condition of the Museum grounds, and the employment, as suggested, of a gardener has done much towards keeping them in order.

Staff.—The Board having provided me with a personal assistant, Mr. R. D. Barker was added to the staff; I was thus relieved of much purely routine office-work. After nearly forty years' service you have granted Mr. W. J. Sparkes six months' leave of absence as from March, 1909. You have also had under consideration the creation of a new position in the Museum—namely, that of Assistant Curator, and you will probably make an appointment early next year.

Collecting Tours.—In February last I went to the West Coast accompanied by the taxidermist, in respect to a large whale reported to be stranded near Okarito, and 100 ft. in length. I found it to be a huge blue whale, and careful measurements showed the actual length of the skeleton to be 87 ft. Though I was, at the time, unable to secure the bones, they were afterwards obtained, as will be mentioned below.

In conjunction with the taxidermist I spent the month of July in the North Island, and obtained a very fine and valuable collection of articles connected with the Maoris, including thirty magnificent panels of *tukatuka*, *mere*, bone-handled axes and adzes, *taihai*, *patiti*, net-sinkers, bird-snares, preserving-pots with carved tops, pounders, examples of matting, *kūikiti*, kumara-pit door, also many choice slabs of carving, canoe-prows, *tekoteko*, &c. At Awaho we were fortunate in securing a whare formerly occupied by the famous chief Te Kooti. The carvings of the *koihi* are older, more ornate, and in every way much superior to those of the existing house. The principal Maori settlements visited were as follows: Several in the Hawke's Bay District, at New Plymouth, Rotorua, and the Bay of Plenty, including Whakatane, Opotiki, Opopi, Omarumuta, Torere, Tauranga, &c.

My annual leave of absence was spent on the West Coast Sounds, where I obtained collections of fishes and other zoological specimens for the Museum.

Structural.—The strong-room mentioned in my last report was completed early in the year, and the British war-medals, &c., presented by the Imperial Government, for the nightly housing of which the strong-room was principally erected, were shortly afterwards exhibited to the public. They prove to be of great attraction to visitors.

As above mentioned, an old whare was purchased at Awaho, and the beautifully carved *koihi* was erected in the Maori house, which was enlarged specially to accommodate it.

A large shelter is now in course of construction to receive the skeleton of the Okarito whale, the ground area of the new building measuring 2,800 square feet.

Museum Work.—A thorough revision of the collections in the Maori House was the principal work undertaken during the year, and advantage was taken of the acquisition of cases purchased at the close of the Christchurch Exhibition to greatly extend the casing of the room; this enabled me to display some of the collections to better advantage, and the educational value of the exhibits was much enhanced by the introduction of descriptive labels, in place of the mere names previously employed. The fine examples of *tukatuka* obtained during the North Island excursion were placed round the Maori House in the correct position, and have greatly improved its appearance; formerly this characteristic lattice-work was represented in the Museum by a small piece about 1 ft. square.

Casts of Assyrian objects with cuneiform inscriptions, standing in the Antiquity Gallery, were formerly being constantly defaced, presumably by boys; in order to prevent this, and to avoid trouble of renovation, I have had them enclosed by glass, some of the cases purchased from the recent Exhibition being admirably suited to the purpose. A special case to protect the cast of the sarcophagus of Queen Anknesraneferab was built, and I have pleasure to report that the whole of these interesting replicas are now adequately protected. Jourdain's picture, "Leda and the Swan," the canvas of which was broken some years ago by falling plaster, was successfully repaired by Mr. McGregor Wright. Four cases specially designed and labelled for children were placed in the foreign entomological series, and the displayed collection of insecta commenced the previous year was completed. Opportunity was