

collection of the indigenous vascular plants of the Dominion. (2) A collection, comprising about three thousand specimens, mainly of alpine plants from various localities in the South Island, purchased from Mr. H. H. Travers. (3) A number of specimens have been contributed by myself, besides many gathered during the past summer in the vicinity of Wellington and of the Barrier Island.

"Accommodation for the herbarium as the arrangement of specimens proceeds is being found in the Museum. This will suffice for some time, and allow for a fairly large reference collection. By this means encouragement should be given to the study of the New Zealand flora, as collectors will be able to make free use of the herbarium either by bringing in or sending specimens to be identified, while it is anticipated that the Museum in return will benefit by gifts of specimens. There is reason to believe that one or two large private collections will be acquired by the Museum as soon as arrangements are made to place them in systematic order. This will be possible when shelving is provided for the boxes now being used for the specimens.

"An essential part in the formation of a comprehensive national herbarium is the collection of specimens and the detailed investigation of selected localities. Each flowering season, therefore, besides local excursions, a collecting-trip of a few weeks' duration should be made to some district where a variety of plant communities is found. It is hoped also that collections from the Cook Islands and Samoa will be formed and placed in the Dominion Museum herbarium. Niue Island has never been visited by a botanist, and its vegetation is almost entirely unknown. The gain to the Museum by the accumulation of material is not to be measured simply by the quantity of such material, but also by exchanges which are thus enabled to be made, and the knowledge acquired and circulated. The Museum library contains very few general works on botany. The need of more literature has been felt on more than one occasion recently when exotic plants have been referred to me for identification.

"The following papers have been written by me during the past year, and will appear in the forthcoming Volume 53 of the 'Transactions of the New Zealand Institute': 'Notes on Specimens of New Zealand Ferns and Flowering-plants in London Herbaria'; 'Variation in *Amphineura*'; 'Occurrence of the Crab-eating Seal in New Zealand.'

BIRD-SANCTUARIES.

Mr. W. R. B. Oliver reports as follows:—

"Little Barrier Island and Pouto Point were visited in February–March last. A full description of these sanctuaries and a report on the bird-life has already been submitted. The following brief summary will therefore suffice here:—

"*Pouto Point*.—The principal part of the sanctuary consists of Lake Mokeno and the large swamp adjacent. For water-birds the food is abundant and the cover good, whilst the isolation of the area in an expanse of sand-dunes gives the seclusion necessary for a breeding-ground. The following species of birds are found in the sanctuary: Grey duck, white-eyed duck (widgeon), black swan, pukeko, dabchick (diver), bittern, pied stilt, shoveller-duck (spoonbill). In addition there occur several sea-birds on the coast, and a few land-birds in the manuka-scrub land.

"*Little Barrier Island*.—Almost entirely covered by bush, this island is fitted only for bush-birds. The cover is good, a variety of bush habitats being provided, while food is ample for a large bird population. Enemies are few, cats perhaps doing the most damage. The following birds breed on the island: Tui, bell-bird, stitch-bird, wax-eye, North Island wood-robin, North Island tomtit, grey warbler, pied fantail, ground-lark, whitehead, rifleman, kingfisher, kaka, red-fronted parakeet, yellow-fronted parakeet, pigeon, morepork, harrier, bush-hawk, brown-backed shearwater, allied shearwater, Cook's petrel, North Island mutton-bird, black petrel, pied shag, little blue penguin, dove petrel, black-backed gull. A number of other birds regularly visit the island, but have not been detected breeding. The brown kiwi and Haast's kiwi have been transferred from the mainland, and both appear to have thoroughly established themselves."

NATIONAL WAR-PORTRAIT COLLECTION.

Mrs. K. F. Phillips reports that during the year 216 portraits have been received, and 613, including those left over from the previous year, have been framed for exhibition.

Photographic Section.—The exhibition of official war photographs shortly after hostilities ceased was accompanied by numerous requests for prints, and the addition since of the original negatives has enabled us to supply orders. Arrangements are being made for a more general distribution of albums containing specimen prints, and a large increase of orders may be expected. Loans of lantern-slides have been made to lecturers. The negatives and cinematograph-films secured on the expedition to the Wanganui River add materially to our collection. The co-operation and kindly assistance of the older Natives, who were genuinely interested in the preservation in the Museum (to them the *whare wananga*, or house of learning and higher knowledge) of records of their arts and crafts, and the willingness of the younger ones to help, gave zest to our mission and enabled us to secure many pictures hitherto unobtainable. In addition to over three hundred still photographs, about 5,500 ft. of cinematograph-film was exposed. It is proposed to print positives of the films, and others secured on previous expeditions, and dispose of them to film-exchanges. Photographs to illustrate Mr. Best's paper on "The Lizard in Maori Carvings," and further papers by Mr. Andersen on "Maori String Games," have been completed. Over one thousand photographs of the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales were prepared. Sets of photographs of selected war-memorial designs were also prepared and distributed for exhibition in outlying country districts. The official war films received during the war period have been safely stored in one of the outbuildings.

J. McDONALD, Acting-Director.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington.