

THE DOMINION MUSEUM.

General.—The year 1921–22 has witnessed the steady and continuous growth of the Museum in usefulness. Although it is unmarked by any conspicuous gifts or accessions by purchase, many additions have been made to the existing collections. The exhibits, particularly those of the natural-history sections in the upper galleries, have been overhauled and reclassified, and are now being relabelled. The ornithological collections are being enriched and extended by specimens drawn from store.

Libraries.—The representations made by the President of the New Zealand Institute and Wellington Philosophical Society after the outbreak of fire in the Museum led to arrangements for the removal of the Carter Collection to the Turnbull Library, and the accumulated scientific works to Victoria College University.

Publications.—During the year two important works—viz., Manual No. 2, "Wild Life in New Zealand: Part I, Mammalia," and Bulletin No. 2, "The History of the Portobello Marine Fish-hatchery," were published. Both are by the Hon. George M. Thomson, M.L.C., and each has received not only highly appreciative Press reviews, but has been dealt with in leading articles. Over nine hundred copies of Manual No. 1, "New Zealand Plants and their Story," by Dr. L. Cockayne, have now been sold, and this edition (the second) will probably be exhausted within a comparatively short date. Manual No. 3, "Geomorphology of New Zealand," by Professor C. A. Cotton, is now in the hands of the printer and will be published very shortly.

Bulletins Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9 have been completed by Mr. Elsdon Best, who is now engaged on No. 10, "Maori Myth and Religion," a work of considerable importance, in which is given an exhaustive account of the cosmogony, anthropogeny, mythology, religious beliefs and practices of our Native folk. To permit the publication in convenient form of a number of shorter papers, a new series—Dominion Museum Monographs—has been designed, and the first four written by Mr. Best are now in the press. The titles of these are: No. 1, "Some Aspects of Maori Myth and Religion"; No. 2, "Spiritual and Mental Concepts of the Maori"; No. 3, "Astronomical Knowledge of the Maori"; No. 4, "Maori Division of Time."

Museum Lectures to School-children.—Classes in charge of their teachers have visited the Museum in larger numbers than before, and talks followed by an inspection of the exhibits have been given. During March last Mr. Joseph Keele, Ceramic Engineer of the Mines Department, Ottawa, Canada, gave an address here on "Clays and the Ceramic Industry" to an audience of students from the Training College, the Girls' College, and others.

Ethnographical.—Work done during the past year has consisted of the preparation of further material for the series of Museum Bulletins dealing with Maori ethnography, and also the compilation of the major work authorized some time back. In addition to these, two general works on the old time life of the Maori were authorized. One of these was to be a small work that could be sold to tourists and others at a small price, a class of publication that is much needed. This work has been completed, and is in the hands of the Government Printer, awaiting authority for publication. The larger work is one for the use of students, and such a work as this is also needed in view of the interest now being displayed in Polynesian ethnology. The highly interesting aspects of Maori cosmogonic myths, religious beliefs, &c., his strange conception of a supreme deity, his singular institution for conserving esoteric lore, together with the inner meaning of his mythological concepts—all appeal strongly to anthropologists. It is the inner meaning of such things, the superior knowledge of the Maori, that sadly needs to be recorded; of bald translations and inferior folk-lore we have had an abundance. The following divisions of this work have been written: 1, Cosmogony and Anthropogeny; 2, The Homeland of the Polynesian Race; 3, The Polynesians as Deep-sea Voyagers, Explorers, and Colonizers; 4, The Maori School of Learning; 5, Maori Mythology; 6, Maori Folk-lore; 7, Religious Beliefs of the Maori; 8, Social Customs; 9, Customs pertaining to Birth.

Other papers written during the past year are as follows: 1, The Maori Division of Time; 2, Asiatic Polynesian Parallels; 3, The Settlement of the Wellington District; 4, Notes on the Early History of New Zealand.

Herbarium.—Several valuable additions in plant-specimens have been made during the year. The greater part of the work on the herbarium has been the classification of the large collection presented by Mr. Aston last year, involving the examination of ninety boxes of specimens representing about 1,050 species.

Zoological Collections.—Early this year a start was made at classifying the zoological collections on view in the Museum, and good progress has been made.

Reptiles and Batrachians have now all been collected in two cases at the north end of the gallery. Additions during the year include a collection of lizards and frogs of the Western United States, received from the Californian Academy of Sciences, San Francisco. A few specimens from South Africa were presented by Mrs. E. Stairmand, and a specimen of the Australian slowworm, found in Taranaki Street, Wellington, by Mr. P. Scoringe. Six specimens of the Stephen Island frog (*Liopelma hamiltoni*) were obtained.

Echinoderms.—A collection is now on view, amongst which is a large-branched brittle-star, the first to have been taken in New Zealand waters.

Cetacea.—A complete overhauling of the bones of cetaceans belonging to the Museum resulted in identifying a skeleton of the rare whale *Mesoplodon bowdoini* in the storeroom at the back of the Museum. The only other skeleton known is in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Expedition to Stephen Island.—A visit to Stephen Island last January disclosed that tuataras were plentiful and apparently increasing. The rare frog *Liopelma hamiltoni* is still to be found in one locality. Specimens of each were obtained, and brought to the Museum.

Entomological.—A series of typical insects has been prepared, in a form convenient for exhibition in the Museum hall, and arranged so that the various orders and classes may be compared at a glance.