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The National Library has established a fellowship, to be awarded annually, to mark the opening of the National Library building. The fellowship is intended to encourage scholarly use of the collections of the National Library and the production of publications based on them, and is open to persons resident in New Zealand or overseas. The fellowship is tenable for twelve months and has an annual value of \$35,000. Applications close on 30 October 1987 for the inaugural year and thereafter on 1 May each year. Full details are available from the National Librarian, National Library of New Zealand, Private Bag, Wellington.

Request for information: Early references to large lizards

A recent paper by Bauer & Russell (*New Zealand Journal of Zoology*, v.13, 1986, 141-148) describes a new species of gecko with a total length of 622mm and a snout-vent length over half as big again as any previously known in the family. The description is based on a single, mounted specimen in the Musée d' Histoire Naturelle de Marseille in France. The specimen has absolutely no collection data with it and museum records give no indication of how or when it was acquired other than that it was presented in 1902. It was possibly obtained during the period 1833-1869 when the museum records were known to be inadequate. Features of this animal's morphology and osteology place it in the genus *Hoplodactylus* which is so far known only from New Zealand. Furthermore, its general appearance, size and colour closely resemble those of large lizards reported from the northern part of the North Island last century, and the habitat and behaviour ascribed to those large lizards are not inconsistent with them being geckos.

It would be extremely valuable to tie the Marseilles specimen to a New Zealand source and to confirm the nineteenth century reports of large lizards in the North Island. The more obvious published and unpublished material relating to New Zealand zoology has been searched without finding any reference to large lizards being collected. However, it is possible that such a reference exists somewhere among manuscript or published works which deal with the non-zoological aspects of New Zealand's history.

Therefore all those working with such material are asked to report any references to large lizards, especially any that were collected. This request applies particularly to those working with French expeditionary manuscripts as it is conceivable that the specimen may have been carried to Marseilles by a crew member of one of the French exploring vessels.

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