

(No. 23.)



1875.

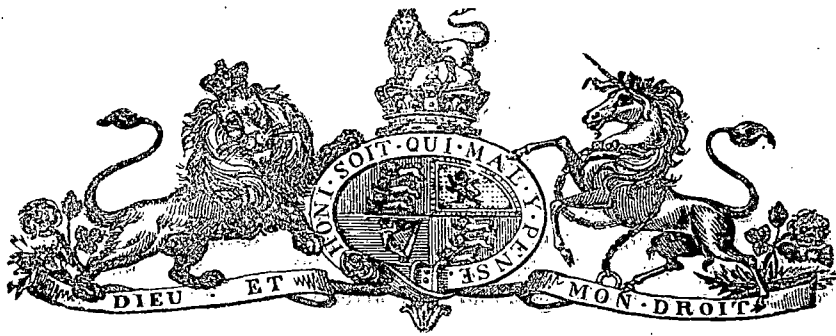
T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

R O Y A L S O C I E T Y.

R E P O R T F O R 1874.

Laid upon the Table by the Attorney-General, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 27, 1875.



REPORT of the ROYAL SOCIETY of TASMANIA for the Year 1874.

THE Session of 1874 was opened on the 10th March with a paper contributed by W. V. Legge, Esq., R.A., F.Z.S., M.R.A.S., on "The Lead-coloured Flycatcher," (*Myiagra plumbea*). This was followed by one from M. Allport, Esq., F.L.S., F.Z.S., C.M.A.I., entitled "Some further Notes on the introduction of Salmon into Tasmanian waters."

The papers brought forward at the various subsequent meetings were as follows:—"On the Angora Goat," by J. Swan, Esq., M.H.A.; "Notes on some Species of Tasmanian Birds," by Lieut. W. V. Legge, R.A., F.Z.S., M.R.A.S.; "Additional and Corrected Elements for the Transit of Venus, December 9th, 1874," by F. Abbott, F.R.A.S., F.R.M.S.; "Notes on the Physical and Zoological Relations between Australia and Tasmania," by the Rev. J. E. Tenison Woods, F.L.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., &c.; "The Launceston Tertiary Basin," (2nd paper), by R. M. Johnston, Esq.; "The Law of Storms," by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Tasmania; "Additional Notes on the Salmon Experiment," by M. Allport, Esq., F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.

In addition to the regular papers, communications on the following subjects have been received, brought under notice at the meetings, and published:—"The Angora Goat," from E. Pears, Esq., Constantinople, and G. Gatheral, Esq., the British Consul at Angora. "The Occurrence of Seals in Inland Lakes," by Dr. Günther, British Museum, &c.

The monthly meetings have been well attended throughout the year. On one occasion, Professor Harkness, of the United States Transit of Venus Expedition, delivered a very interesting address on the then approaching transit. As it was previously known that this address was to be given, a large number of Fellows and visitors were present, and at its close a special and cordial vote of thanks was accorded to the learned Professor.

Of the donors of books to the library, America, as usual, has been the most liberal. From the Trustees of the British Museum descriptive catalogues, supplementary to those formerly presented, have been received.

The Meteorological Observations have, as usual, been regularly carried on at Hobart Town by Mr. F. Abbott, and the results published monthly. Mr. W. E. Shoobridge has also furnished monthly tables of observations recorded by himself at New Norfolk, and the returns kept at the various lighthouses have been supplied, as heretofore, by the Marine Board.

The thanks of the Society are again due to several of our merchants and shipowners for the conveyance, free of cost, to England and various Colonial Ports, of parcels and plants, specimens, publications, &c. Among those who have favoured the society in this manner may be mentioned Messrs. Crosby and Co., Messrs. Macfarlane Bros., Messrs. Belbin and Dowdell, Mr. H. B. Evans, and the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. Walch and Sons for the distribution, free of charge, of the Society's publications to members residing in the country.

During the past year the Society has had to lament the loss of one of its most distinguished members—William Archer, Esq., F.L.S. At a former period Mr. Archer acted for some time as Secretary to the Society. At all times an enthusiastic student of Natural History, he furnished during his life many valuable contributions to the botany of Tasmania. Dr. Hooker was very much indebted to him in the preparation of his great work on the Flora of Tasmania, and freely acknowledges the debt both in the body of the work and in the dedication which is affixed to it. About six months before his death Mr. Archer—ever mindful of the Society in which he took so great an interest—presented our library with a very valuable donation.

COUNCIL.

No vacancy has occurred during the year. The list of retiring members has been posted in the library for the last three days, in accordance with No. 32 of the amended rules of the Society.

FINANCE.

The income from all sources was as follows:—Government grant in aid of Museum, £200; ditto of Gardens, £400; subscriptions, £160 11s.; from Marine Board, £20; sale of plants, &c., at Gardens, £111 14s. 4d.; repayment, £1 3s. 6d.; this, with £30 12s. in the hands of the Superintendent of the Gardens for payment of wages, and £30 arrears of subscriptions, will give a total of £954 0s. 10d.

The expenditure as per balance sheet was £939 4s. 10d., leaving a balance to credit of £14 16s.

GARDENS.

The work in connection with the new approach to the Gardens has fully occupied the men at all times when they were not needed for routine operations. Considerable progress has been made, both with the earthworks and planting; and had it not been for the delay in obtaining gates the entrance would have been opened to the public, at the latest, with the advent of the present year (1875). Notwithstanding this delay it is hoped that a few months will see the work completed.

The plants introduced have probably exceeded those of previous years not only in numbers but in intrinsic merit.

From Mons. J. Verschaffelt, of Ghent, Belgium, we received a case containing a number of pictorial forest trees in a very good condition, also a small collection of Rhododendrons. These latter were sent for with the view of ascertaining whether they would live packed in a close case and placed in the hold of a ship. The experiment was very successful—thirteen out of sixteen having survived. From Mons. J. Linden, also of Ghent, was received a case containing palms, and a small collection of cool-house orchids, which arrived in excellent condition. A valuable case of plants was also received from Mr. H. Low, Clapton, London.

Great difficulty is experienced in finding suitable sites for the various introductions, which if planted out while small are invariably destroyed through the carelessness of the prisoners, on whose labour we are in a great measure dependent for the performance of all ordinary operations. It is to be regretted that this class of labour cannot be entirely employed on works of extension or permanent improvement, for which it is best adapted. Much of it now supplied is quite unfit for any work requiring the slightest exercise of care or thought.

The estimated number of visitors to the Gardens for the year was 38,508, or an increase of 1032 over last year.

MUSEUM.

The usual work of the Museum has been steadily carried on. Several large osteological specimens are in process of completion. In the early part of the year, Lieut. W. V. Legge, R.A., F.Z.S., M.R.A.S., kindly named our collection of Indian birds, and also presented a considerable number of beautifully prepared skins of our native birds, as the commencement of a type collection, to which further additions have since been made by various donors. Contributions to this branch of the Museum are still much wanted, and country members would add greatly to the scientific value of the collection by forwarding good skins or recent specimens. Specimens of our Fauna generally, indeed especially of the larger kinds, are urgently required, and as our funds do not enable us to make many purchases, we have again to appeal in this matter to the liberality of the Fellows.

In response to an application conveyed through our late Governor, Mr. Du Cane, the Home Government presented a valuable specimen of the armour of a past age. To a large portion of the public this is found to be an object of considerable interest.

The expenditure on the Museum account has been greater than usual, as some necessary repairs to the building had to be carried out. In last year's report the urgent need of table cases for the conchological collection was noticed. It is much to be regretted that our funds will still not allow us to provide these cases. Till they are procured the Tasmanian shells must remain unclassified and undisplayed.

The number of visitors to the Museum was 16,456.
