

(No. 19.)



1874.

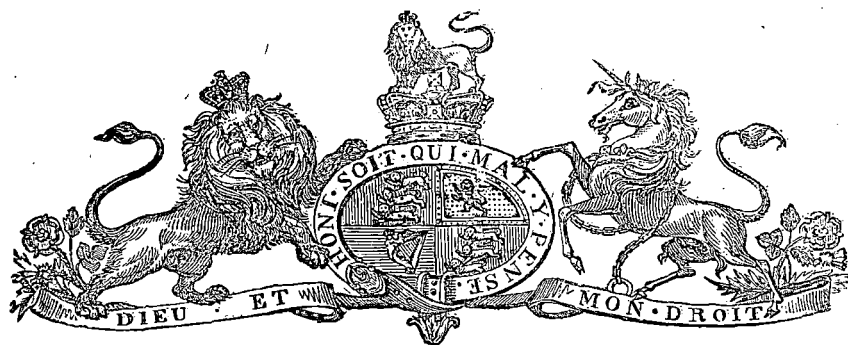
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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

REPORT FOR 1873.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Chapman, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
July 21, 1874.



REPORT of the ROYAL SOCIETY of TASMANIA for the Year 1873.

THE Session of 1873 was opened by the Bishop of Tasmania, who gave an Address on "Natural Science, in connection with Dr. Carpenter's inaugural address at the late meeting of the British Association."

The following papers were read at the various subsequent meetings:—"The transit of Venus in 1874," by F. Abbott, F.R.A.S., F.R.M.S.; "On the Weaver Bird (*Ploceus baya*) of Ceylon," by Lieut. Legge, R.A., F.Z.S., M.R.A.S.; "Notes on the Mersey Coal Measures," by T. Stephens, M.A.; "Regarding the composition and extent of certain tertiary beds in the neighbourhood of Launceston," by R. M. Johnston; "Additional contributions to the phytography of Tasmania," by Baron F. von Mueller, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S., F.L.S., &c.; "Notes on Ancient Symbolisms, naked eye observations, and Modern Astronomy," by F. Abbott, F.R.A.S., F.R.M.S.; "The Law of Weather and Storms," by the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Tasmania."

In addition to the regular papers, communications on the following subjects have also been received, discussed, and published:—"The Tasmanian Aborigines, their weapons, implements, &c.," from R. Gatenby, Esq., James Scott, Esq., M.H.A., R. Thirkell, Esq., J. Rollings, Esq., and Dr. Story; "The destruction of Rabbits on the estate of Lowes' Park," from J. Wilson, Esq.; "On King's Island," from J. E. Calder, Esq.; "Fijian Pottery," from Rev. J. Hutchison, &c., &c.

The Meteorological Observations have been regularly carried on at the various inland stations. Of those taken at the light-houses and coast stations, abstracts for 1872 have been prepared and will shortly be in the hands of the printer.

As will be seen by the list appended, many valuable presentations of books have been received from various scientific institutions at home and abroad. To the Trustees of the British Museum the Society is specially indebted for a very large number of valuable works on Natural History. America has been a most liberal contributor to the library by presentations from the Surgeon-General's Office, the United States Naval Observatory, the Coast Survey Office, the Smithsonian Institution, &c., &c.

The thanks of the Society are due to Messrs. W. Crosby & Co., Messrs. Macfarlane Bros., Messrs. Belbin & Dowdell, Mr. H. B. Evans, &c., for the carriage, free of cost, to England and various Colonial Ports, of packages of specimens, publications, &c.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. Welch & Sons for the distribution, without charge, of the Society's "Papers and Proceedings" to country Members.

Four corresponding, and thirteen ordinary Members (of which number two are ladies) have been elected during the year.

COUNCIL.

No vacancy has occurred during the year. The list of retiring Members has, as usual, been posted in the Library for the last fortnight.

FINANCE.

The income from all sources was as follows:—Government Grant in aid of Museum, £200; ditto of Gardens, £400; subscriptions, £154 10s.; from Marine Board, £20; sale of plants, &c., at Gardens, £87 1s. 9d. This with £30 12s. in the hands of the Superintendent of the Gardens for the payment of wages, £24 arrears of subscriptions, and £4 10s. in the hands of the collector, will give a total of £920 13s. 9d. The expenditure as per balance-sheet amounted to £923 15s. 10d.,—leaving a balance to debit of £3 2s. 1d.

As the balance to debit at the close of 1872 was £15s. 1s. 6d., it will be seen that the Society has at last almost emerged from debt. This is highly satisfactory, as several expenses of an extraordinary character have been incurred and liquidated since last Report. It will be noticed by the present balance sheet that arrears of subscriptions to the amount of £37 10s. have been received. The sum of £33 is, however, still due. Of this £24 have been fairly calculated upon as safe. It is earnestly to be hoped that Members will not allow these small arrears to remain any longer against their names. From neglect or carelessness in this matter the Society has for many years incurred a continuous loss in the item of interest on overdrawn account.

GARDENS.

The cutting in connection with the Main Line Railway through the Gardens has been completed during the year, and a substantial ornamental bridge has been thrown across it. When the slopes of the cutting are planted, and the ground contiguous to the line laid out, this promises to become not the least attractive portion of the Gardens.

In consequence of the gang of prison labour having been greatly reduced for many months, very little progress has been made with the new entrance. This work, however, is now in hand with a view to its speedy completion.

In the propagating yards two small and inexpensive houses have been completed,—one as a stove heated by a hot water tank, the other as an intermediate house. The conveniences for propagation have hitherto been but limited; and the erection of these two houses was undertaken to supply a want long felt. They have been of great service during the past few months, and will be even more so in future in facilitating the ordinary modes of propagation. Several lattice-work screens have also been erected with a view of affording protection to young and freshly potted plants during the summer months.

A plant of *Araucaria imbricata* (the Chili Pine) about eight feet high, but of stunted growth, has produced two cones, from which about one hundred seedlings have been raised. This fact is very interesting, not only on account of the smallness of the plant, but also because it is generally understood that the genus *araucaria* produces its male and female plants on separate plants, and that properly fertilised seed can only be obtained when the plants are growing in proximity to one another. In this case, however, we have a small isolated plant producing flowers of both sexes, and fertile cones from which seedlings have been raised. It is probably the first time *Araucaria imbricata* has produced fertile cones in the Australian Colonies.

Between three and four hundred new plants, many of them of considerable merit, have been introduced.

The estimated number of Visitors was 37,476, being an increase of 12,810 over last year. This increase may partially be accounted for by the interest taken in the construction of the Railway works in the Gardens.

MUSEUM.

In reference to the list of presentations it will be seen that many valuable and interesting specimens have been added to the collection during the year. The chief among these is the very fine skeleton of the "Moa" (*Dinornis giganteus*) of New Zealand, presented by Dr. Haast, the Director of the Museum at Christchurch. This has been articulated and mounted, with his usual skill and ability, by the Curator, Mr. Roblin, and forms a very striking addition to the Museum. Besides presenting the large skeleton, Dr. Haast has very kindly been at the trouble of preparing and naming a large collection of Moa bones, the property of the Society, forwarded to him at his request for identification of species. These have all been returned, properly named, and are found to comprise no less than nine species (of the Genera *Dinornis* and *Palapteryx*) of these gigantic birds.

It is almost unnecessary to add that the special thanks of the Society have been forwarded to Dr. Haast for his noble gift, and that he has been made a corresponding Member.

We are also greatly indebted to Mr. C. Gould for valuable contributions of mineralogical specimens from this and the neighbouring Colonies, and also Charts of Geological Surveys in New South Wales and Queensland.

Other contributors to whom we are much indebted are mentioned in the list of donations.

The large Tasmanian room has been cleared of all the unclassified material. Six additional cases have been erected and are already almost filled with specimens. Additional table cases are much wanted for the exhibition of our conchological collection.

The number of Visitors to the Museum was 16,147, being an excess of 1191 over that of 1872.

NOTE.

Audited and found correct,

JOHN MACFARLANE, } *Auditors.*
HENRY COOK, }

29th January, 1874.