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TASMANIA.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ROYAL SOCIETY:

REPORT FOR 1877.

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REPORT of the ROYAL SOCIETY of TASMANIA for the Year 1877.

THE Session of 1877 opened on March 13 with a Paper "On some South Australian Polyzoa," by F. W. Hutton, Esq., F.G.S., communicated by Professor R. Tate, F.G.S., of Adelaide, a Corresponding Member of the Society.

The following Papers were brought forward at the various subsequent meetings during the year:—"A Census with brief description of the Marine Shells of Tasmania and the adjacent Islands," by the Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods, F.L.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., &c.; "Notes on a curious Confervoid substance from the Cascades Reservoir," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "On 'Aliens,' or Plants which have been introduced into Tasmania and naturalised," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "On Plants as Insect Destroyers," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "The Modern Progress of Astronomy," by F. Abbott, F.R.A.S.; "On the occurrence of 'Ergot' on Rye Grass at Kingston," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "On the Hobart Town Storage Reservoir," by T. Stephens, M.A., F.G.S.; "Notes on the Flora of Tasmania," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "On Tasmanian Siphonaria, including a new species," by the Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., &c.; "On Silk and Silk Producers," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.; "On some new Tasmanian Marine Shells," by the Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., &c.; "On the present stage of the Salmon Experiment," by M. Allport, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.; "On Insect Parasites," by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A.

In addition to the Papers above referred to, communications on the following subjects were brought under notice during the Session:—"Fossils from Darling Downs, Queensland," from G. Bennett, M.D., F.Z.S., &c.; "The occurrence of species of *Belemnites* and *Salenia* in the Middle Tertiaries of South Australia," from Professor R. Tate, Adelaide; "The Islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and the Duke of York Group, their Natural History, and the Language, Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants," from the Rev. George Brown, Wesleyan Missionary; "The alleged Sanitary Influence of the Blue Gum Tree (*Eucalyptus globulus*)," "Difference in the Time of Leafing of English Trees in the Colony and in England," "The Screw Bean (*Prosopis pubescens*)," "The Origin of the Potato known as the 'Brown's River Black,'" "Fossil Fruits from Gulgong, New South Wales," &c., &c.

Mr. Abbott and Mr. W. E. Shoobridge (New Norfolk) have been indefatigable as usual in carrying on the Meteorological Observations, and the various Lighthouses have supplied their monthly tables regularly. The "Simultaneous Observations" are still taken by Mr. Abbott, and are forwarded to the Meteorological Department, United States, where they are incorporated with observations of a similar character taken at various stations throughout the world.

Our usual thanks are due to Messrs. W. Crosby and Co., and Macfarlane Bros., for the transmission of parcels free of expense to England and elsewhere; also to Messrs. Walch and Sons for the gratuitous distribution of the Society's publications to Members resident in the country.

Fourteen Fellows and seven Corresponding Members were admitted. Four have been lost by death, and three by resignation. Of the resignations two were due to the circumstance that the Members have gone to official positions on the northern side of the Island.

COUNCIL.

One vacancy which occurred, owing to the retirement of Mr. T. Giblin, was filled by the election of the Rev. W. W. Spicer. The list of Retiring Members has been posted in the Library for the last three days, in accordance with No. 33 of the Amended Rules of the Society.

FINANCE.

The income from all sources was as follows:—Government grant in aid to Museum, £200; ditto Gardens, £400; subscriptions, £168 10s.; from Marine Board, £20; sale of Plants, &c. at Gardens, £88 6s. 8d.; this, with £30 12s. in the hands of the Superintendent of the Gardens for the payment of wages and arrears of subscriptions, £50, will give a total of £957 8s. 8d. The expenditure and liabilities as per balance-sheet amounted to £1024 8s. 10d., leaving a balance to debit of £67 0s. 2d.

Large and unusual as the outlay for printing was last year, it has, owing to the great value and interest of Papers read at the meetings, been exceeded by nearly £30 this year. The result has been an increase on our debt to this amount. As the printing account, however, is not likely to be again so large, it is expected that a great portion of the debt will disappear during the ensuing year.

GARDENS.

The gates which were ordered from England last year are now being erected; and when this work is complete, and the general approach to the gardens properly laid out, the present mean and discreditable entrance, which has long been an eye-sore, will cease to exist. To all who are interested in the beauty and well-doing of the Gardens, it must be a matter of congratulation that the grant in aid has been increased by the annual addition of £200. By means of this timely assistance the workmen can now receive fairer wages, and the deserts of the zealous and most efficient Superintendent will be more adequately recognised.

The principal new work executed consists in the extension of the sea-wall, completion of reclaimed flat at lower part of Gardens, trenching, and forming paths on new ground intended for an arboretum. Efforts will be made to complete this work forthwith in order that more attention may be given to many general works of importance which have hitherto, from want of means, been neglected.

A quantity of peat soil has been received from Port Arthur for the purpose of forming a Rhododendron bed, in which about seventy varieties have been planted. This gives promise of great success, many of them having already flowered freely.

Many new Plants have been introduced, the following being a few of the most noteworthy:—Orchids and Palms, from Mons. J. Linden, Ghent, Belgium; Fruit Trees and various Plants, from A. Van Geert, Ghent; North American Plants, from Mr. C. Moore, Director Botanical Gardens, Sydney; Seeds of the Mesquit Bean (*Prosopis pubescens*) and of the Algaroba Bean (from which Plants have been raised), from His Excellency the President. In addition to these, contributions have been received from Mr. A. Simson, George's Bay; and from Mr. L. Bernays, Queensland, &c.

The grant from Government has, as usual, been supplemented by a gang of prison labour, which has been of great service in carrying out new work, and in performing the rougher operations. Without this, indeed, it would not have been possible to maintain the Gardens in anything like fair condition.

The number of visitors has been estimated at 55,880, being nearly 8000 more than last year.

MUSEUM.

In addition to the new Shell Cases acquired last year two new ones have been added, and all the available space in the room is now fully occupied. Mr. Legrand is making progress with the arrangement and display of our shells, 450 species of which have been mounted and named. Among these are included the type specimens of the new species described by Rev. J. E. Teuison-Woods. The thanks of the Society are due to Mr. Legrand, not only for the work in the Museum, but also for his valuable assistance in correcting the proofs of the Conchological Papers which have passed through the Press, and for his liberality in presenting many specimens from his private collection. Our thanks are also due to Mr. W. F. Petterd for numerous presentations, many of them unique, to this Department.

In this place it is due to Mr. R. C. Kermode and to Mr. P. T. Smith to record that the special thanks of the Society have been given to the former for a very liberal donation of Tasmanian Insects in a valuable cabinet; and to the latter for his generosity in presenting a first-class Microscope (by Ross) furnished with many accessories and mounted objects.

Mr. A. Simson has also been a donor of numerous mineralogical and other specimens from the George's Bay District.

For the past six weeks the Museum has been thrown open to the public on Sundays for a few hours in the afternoon. The experiment has been attended with marked success. The attendance has been very large and orderly, and many who have hitherto been prevented by their avocations from visiting the Museum have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity now afforded them of doing so.

The number of visitors to the Museum was 22,463, being an increase of 3737 on that of 1876.

J. W. AGNEW, *Hon. Sec.*

