

Sir R. Stout paid a visit to the school in December, and saw the students at work. The Art Master, who was in attendance, explained the instruction, and submitted the general work of the school for inspection. The Premier expressed pleasure and surprise at the extent and quality of the work. A new prospectus of the school has been prepared, in which the stages of instruction have been revised. Landscape from nature has been introduced, and additional courses of lectures added to the former work of the school.

MUSEUM.

During the year many donations have been received both from persons in New Zealand and in foreign countries. The appendix to the Director's report gives the lists of the donations made to the Museum and published at the end of every quarter. Most work has been done in the ornithological, skeleton, ethnological, and antiquity rooms, where numerous additions have been made to the previously-existing collections. Much has also been done in the matter of arrangement, and the taxidermist is at present occupied in setting up some animals from India. In consequence of the heavy rains this winter several repairs have had to be made in the glass-work of the Museum, and the stonework will need repointing in the spring. The number of visitors to the Museum during the year 1885-86 was 79,207, the week-day attendance being 54,984, the Sunday 24,223. In January, 1886, the Director received a year's leave of absence, and proceeded to England as Executive Commissioner for New Zealand at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, which was opened in London at the beginning of May, arrangements having been made to carry on his work during his absence. The Board of Governors have granted a sum of £150, in addition to the usual grant, to be placed at the disposal of the Director, to enable him to visit the Continent and obtain collections for the Museum, and for the expenses connected therewith. This opportunity of adding to the already valuable collections will doubtless render this popular institution more useful and attractive than hitherto, both to the scientific man and to the general public.

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The system hitherto in force of ordering monthly parcels of books from London has been discontinued, and an arrangement has been made with a Christchurch firm to supply books for the circulating library to the value of £10 per month, thus affording to the Committee an opportunity of selecting the books. The same firm has also received an order for about 90 or 100 volumes, which are required to fill up gaps and complete works, parts of which are already in the reference library. New shelving, affording space for over 1,800 volumes, has been erected in the circulating library. This accommodation was very much required for proper classification. The periodicals previously sent from London are now purchased in Christchurch; this is also a great improvement, as two copies of several of the more popular ones are obtained for the same price as was before paid for one copy, owing to the saving in postage. It is still a matter of regret that the number of subscribers is so small, as the want of funds prevents the purchase of many books which should be on the shelves of such an institution; but, owing to the necessary expenditure, the receipts do no more than meet the annual outlay, and this is only accomplished by exercising the greatest economy. The monthly ticket, instituted last year, has proved to be a success, as it is the means of inducing people to become regular subscribers.

The number of books in the circulating library is 9,609, made up as follows:—

	Vols.
Architecture and mechanics	374
Biography	825
Fiction	3,950
History	796
Literature (general)	616
Miscellaneous	598
Periodicals (bound).. .. .	451
Poetry and drama	253
Science (general)	624
Travels	1,122
	9,609

The number in the reference library is 7,174.

Twenty-one periodicals are taken in, and seven English newspapers, forty-three New Zealand, one American, and four Australian newspapers.

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

During the past year five students, viz., Messrs Allen, Burt, Gabites, Gray, and Piercy, have gained final certificates. The school has been attended by thirty-five students, who came from the following places: Auckland, four; Canterbury, thirteen; England, two; Hawke's Bay, four; Nelson, one; New South Wales, three; Otago, three; Southland, two; Wellington, three. These numbers show a falling-off compared with previous years, but the fact may in a measure be attributed to the existing depression, and perhaps, to a certain extent, to the raising of the fees from £46 10s. to £65 per annum. This step was found to be necessary. At the present rate the fees (which include all expenses to the student) do not cover the cost of boarding, education, &c. The regulation under which the steamer fares once a year of resident students are paid to and from the nearest port to their homes in New Zealand is still in force; also that providing for payment to the students for work done on the farm. There have been no changes in the teaching staff of the school since the last annual meeting. The past year has been an exceptionally dry one, and the crops on the farm were lighter than usual. Although the feed was