

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE ACCOUNTS FOR 1892-93.

<i>Receipts.</i>		£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>		£	s.	d.
Balance in hand, 29th August, 1892	..	86	10	1	Printing Vol. XXV.	..	388	9	0
Parliamentary grant for 1892-93	..	500	0	0	Printing Parts V., VI., and VII. of "New Zealand Coleoptera"	..	179	16	8
Sale of volumes	..	59	4	0	Expenses of library, and miscellaneous	..	38	2	3
Contribution from Wellington Philosophical Society	..	22	9	10	Balance in hand	..	61	16	0
		£668	3	11			£668	3	11

WM. THOS. LOCKE TRAVERS,
Honorary Treasurer.

11th July, 1893.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE, BEING AN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED 19TH JULY, 1893.

THE first scientific society in New Zealand was founded in 1851, the first President being Sir George Grey, K.C.B., D.C.L. It was named "the New Zealand Society," and was located in Wellington.

In 1862 a second society was established in Christchurch, as the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, the first President being Mr. Julius Haast (since Sir Julius von Haast, K.C.M.G., Ph.D.).

Much useful work was done by these societies, but they met at very irregular intervals, and the funds collected were inadequate for the proper publication of the papers that were communicated by the members. They therefore languished owing to their being merely local societies, not having the sympathy of the colony.

The Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1865 brought prominently before the public the advantage of a more general organization for the development of the resources of the colony, and, soon after the establishment of a scientific department by the General Government, the New Zealand Institute Act was passed in 1867, and its administration was placed under the Director of the Geological and Natural-History Survey.

The New Zealand Institute has now been in operation for twenty-five years, which is a sufficient period in the history of a new country to indicate how far the practical results obtained by the working of one of its institutions have fulfilled the anticipations of its original promoters. The object sought was to foster public interest in the collection and discussion of original observations respecting the resources and natural history of this country. This is done to the best effect by the organization of a scientific society; but it was obvious that the geographical circumstances of the colony precluded the formation of any strong central society, capable of stimulating and directing such investigations by frequent meetings of its members, as can be done in other colonies possessing a chief centre of population, where all social institutions become naturally concentrated. The constitution of the New Zealand Institute was therefore intended to provide for the combination of local efforts in this direction by enabling the joint publication of papers read and discussed before local societies.

Experience has shown that in old countries the subscribed funds are generally insufficient for the proper publication of the transactions of small societies, and this drawback is still more felt in the countries where the number of members is small, while the field for original research is large; so that in a few years such societies languish after accumulating much information in manuscript that, if published, would be of great assistance in advancing the interests of the community.

Each member of the scientific societies affiliated to the New Zealand Institute receives a share of the parliamentary grant in the form of an annual volume of the transactions for the year of all the various societies. The presentation of this volume is regarded as a substantial equivalent for the subscriptions, and the fund which is created by the subscriptions is applied locally towards the maintenance of public museums in the different centres of population.

The educational effect of this organization can hardly be overestimated as a means of cultivating a love of knowledge, and in disseminating information. To the influence of the Institute must in some degree be attributed the demand which is now expressed throughout the colony for elementary instruction in science, and the general recognition in New Zealand on the part of the public that it is necessary to obtain, as a branch of elementary education, the qualifications required for the comprehension and the utilisation of the scientific literature that is so characteristic a feature of the present age.

The Institute commenced with four branch societies in 1869, and only 258 members, but there are now eight societies affiliated, and the number of members increased to 1,327 in 1881, but has since fallen off to about 950, each of whom pays one guinea a year, which may be considered as a voluntary tax for an educational purpose.

There have now been 1,765 original communications, published in twenty-five volumes of the Transactions of the Institute, nearly all of which relate directly to the colony, and place on record matters of fact and observation that otherwise might not have been published. Of these papers, 412 are on miscellaneous subjects chiefly relating to the ethnology of the aboriginal races, or connected with the industrial resources of the colony; 671 are descriptive of the zoology of New Zealand; 229 refer to its botany; 117 are on metallurgy and chemistry in its relation to the colony; and 229 are on its geology and physical geography. In addition to these papers, which are published at length, abstracts of about 1,076 different communications are given in the Proceedings of the societies. The total number of communications to the Institute has thus been 2,841. Besides which a number of popular lectures are given each year under the auspices of the various societies, of which no record is kept.