

room, and the large ore-pieces from Tasmania have been placed on shelves fixed in the large lecture-room wherever access and sufficient light could be secured for their inspection. A great nuisance in this room is the quick and persistent accumulation of dust coming through the open cracks in the walls and ceiling. Papering of the room would, no doubt, in a great measure mitigate the nuisance, which primarily is due to the corrugated iron roof and sides of the building.

The Chancellor, University of Otago.

I have, &c.,

G. H. F. ULRICH, F.G.S.,
Director, School of Mines.

REPORT OF THE CURATOR OF THE OTAGO UNIVERSITY MUSEUM.

ON my arrival in Dunedin at the end of May, 1898, I formally commenced my duties as Curator of the Museum, but my work in connection with the University classes prevented me from doing any serious Museum work till the long vacation.

My first desire is to make as complete a collection as possible of our New Zealand animals of all classes. The birds and the few marine mammals that frequent our shores are well represented, but the invertebrates require many additions.

In order to exhibit as prominently as possible our marine mammals, I had to make certain alterations in the disposition of some of the skeletons in the centre of the main hall. Those of the ungulata I transferred to the ethnological annex, so as to make room for those of the cetacea and the seals that occur round the islands. In order to effect this change, it was necessary to remove from the annex the cumbersome geographical models of the islands, which appeared to me to be occupying a space quite incommensurate with their value, either as objects of interest or of education. Other minor alterations in the arrangement of some of the cases not only allowed me room for the change, but, it appears to me, made it possible to exhibit the objects in these cases in a better light and to better effect.

These changes effected, I transferred all our skeletons of the hoofed mammals to the centre of the annex; and I gathered together from various corners of the main hall all our skeletons of seals and whales, and have arranged them in the central enclosure. The stuffed specimens of these animals are grouped near at hand. I am on the look-out for such specimens as we do not already possess.

The skeleton of the sea-elephant (*Macrorhinus leoninus*), collected some years ago by Mr. Hamilton on the Macquarie Island, has been set up and placed in the inclosure. Although it lacks one fore-limb and one hind-limb, it is of sufficient value and interest to be exhibited, and I am using efforts to obtain the limb-bones from the Macquaries. Drs. Colquhoun and Roberts most kindly brought over the limb-bones of a young specimen recently, but they are too small for our skeleton.

The most noteworthy addition, however, is the complete specimen of the nearly-extinct bird the Takahē (*Notornis hochstetteri*), that has been most generously presented to the Museum by the Government. The specimen has been stuffed and placed in the collection. The skeleton and organs of digestion are in the store-room.

Two specimens of the egg of the moa have also been acquired. One, considerably broken, has been deposited by Mr. Turton; the other is absolutely complete, and is thus unique—the only complete moa's egg known to exist. This egg was obtained during the working of a gold-dredge on the River Molyneux. Mr. A. Black, a citizen of Dunedin, and one of the proprietors of the dredge, very patriotically obtained it from the finder for the small sum of £50, contributing £5 towards its purchase. The balance was paid by the Otago Institute, and the egg is deposited by the Council of the Institute until the University has repaid that body.

A series of rare native invertebrate animals was presented by Dr. Dendy, who collected them on the New Brighton beach after a storm. A considerable number of invertebrates has been added to the collection, chiefly the result of my own collecting expeditions along the coast, in the harbours, at Kaikoura, in the s.s. "Plucky," and elsewhere. Perhaps the most interesting is a specimen of *Lepas fascicularis*, presented to me by the light-keeper at the Nuggets during my recent visit. Mr. Richard Henry has, too, collected several very interesting forms at Resolution Island, some new to New Zealand. Amongst them I may mention an illuminating fish of the genus *Lampranyche*, and a flashing shrimp, *Nyebiphane*.

The trawling expeditions of the s.s. "Plucky" resulted in the discovery of several new forms of animal life, belonging to the groups of gasteropods, dorids, holothurians, starfish, and annelids. Most of them have been mounted, and are on exhibition.

Amongst the "foreign" animals I may mention the addition of a stuffed specimen of the gavia, from the Ganges; and of a tortoise from Australia, presented by Mr. G. M. Thomson. I have, quite recently, acquired the body of a baboon that died in a menagerie. I have, too, added to the specimens of stuffed mammals the skulls of many genera not hitherto represented, so as to exhibit the dentition of the more important members of the various groups.

A series of animals has been purchased from the Naples Zoological Station, partly for Museum purposes, partly for work in connection with the classes. A series of decapod crustacea has been received from the Turin Museum, in exchange for a series of New Zealand crustacea that I collected for the purpose.

I must not omit to refer to a collection of opal in matrix, presented by Mr. D. Theomin, who obtained the series from the White Cliffs, N.S.W. These have not yet been placed on view. Further, the Museum has received from the Trustee of the late Dr. Stuart a snuff-mull, originally belonging to Robert Burns. This, together with a small case to hold it, is now placed in the Ethnological room.

A good deal of work has been done in connection with storing our duplicate specimens. Hitherto all our spirit specimens were accumulated in the large cellar below the Museum. I have,