

Conclusion.—I wish, in concluding my report, to record my appreciation of the zeal and attention my colleagues—Mr. Waters and Dr. Marshall—have displayed in conducting the work of their several departments, and for the willing help and co-operation accorded me in all matters relating to the welfare of the Mining School.

JAS. PARK, F.G.S., Director.

The Chancellor of the University of Otago.

REPORT OF THE CURATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM.

The work in the Museum during the past year (1901–2) has been of an unobtrusive character, as no conspicuous or very important additions have been made to the collection. Nevertheless, a considerable number of small specimens have been added, and a still greater number have been remounted and relabelled; while many old ones have been replaced by better examples.

During the summer I overhauled the reserve collection of New Zealand fossils stored in the cellar, as they had become much disarranged. Each fossil has now been placed in a small cardboard tray, with its name and locality attached. The trays have been arranged according to localities, and each drawer of trays has been roughly catalogued. I intended to have made up an exhibit of our fossils arranged in stratigraphical order, but find that our collection is not sufficiently extensive to allow me to carry out my plan. But it appears to me that there ought to be, either in the Museum or at the School of Mines, a collection both of New Zealand fossils and a representative collection of European fossils, illustrative of the recognised geological periods. Such a collection is essential for the study of palæontological geology. At present, however, lack of room and lack of specimens prevent the realisation of this scheme.

During the past year I obtained from Maketu, one of the New Hebrides group, a number of ethnological objects, amongst them two examples of ceremonial skulls, plastered and painted. These I have placed, together with cognate objects, such as masks, in a case by themselves.

A coloured picture of the recently-discovered giraffe-like beast from the forests of Central Africa has been placed in the Museum.

To our collection of New Zealand invertebrate, preserved in alcohol, exhibited in the first gallery, about twenty new specimens hitherto unrepresented have been added; while about twenty-five specimens of one kind and another have been added to the foreign collections.

Formerly many of the small alcoholic specimens were exhibited in stoppered bottles; these have now been remounted in cylindrical jars with flat glass tops. Specimens preserved in alcohol naturally require continual attention; they are liable to deteriorate in time, owing to bleaching or to evaporation of the alcohol. Such specimens have been replaced by better ones or remounted. About fifty such remounts have been carried out in the foreign collection, and about twenty-five in the New Zealand collection.

Several skeletons, both of mammals and of birds, have been taken to pieces, cleaned, and remounted in a manner superior to that formerly adopted, and the plan commenced in 1900 of mounting loose skulls and other parts of skeletons on black boards has been continued, and is practically completed. This not only exhibits the specimens to a better effect, but renders removal to the lecture-room safer and more convenient.

The old dug-out canoe, hitherto lying in the open air, has been conveyed to the cellar.

During the summer the cellar and various store-rooms have been cleared of much of the lumber of old packing-cases, &c.—the accumulation of years; the rooms have been rearranged and cleaned out. The specimens preserved in alcohol in the store-room, many of which have been hitherto preserved in corked bottles—allowing much evaporation of alcohol—have been transferred to stoppered bottles, which prevent this loss to a much greater degree. The stoppers have been greased and the specimens labelled.

Our reserve stock of birds' skins has been overhauled and catalogued; hitherto we have had nothing beyond the memory of the taxidermist and Curator upon which to rely as to the existence of duplicates, or the lack of them, for purposes of exchange.

A commencement has been made in the cataloguing of reserve birds and fishes of New Zealand, preserved in alcohol.

Finally, the usual number of repairs to skeletons and other objects used in class-work has been carried out. The taxidermist has cleaned and tidied every case in the Museum, renewing where necessary the naphthaline.

D. B. BENHAM, Curator.