

Herbarium.

The Herbarium still remains in the Museum annexe, and for want of space many of the specimens are still unpacked from their original cases. When examined and classified the importance and magnitude of this collection will be realized.

GEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS.

Few additions have been made during the year except in Cretaceous and Tertiary molluscs and brachiopods, of which I obtained a large number from the Weka Pass and Waipara districts. Mr. F. G. Gibbs, of Nelson, presented some very fine specimens of dunite and rodingite.

ETHNOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS.

Few additions to the Maori and Moriori collections have been made. Eleven carved house-timbers, some interesting stone adzes, and greenstone pendant are the chief items. Of foreign specimens a valuable series of Samoan and Fijian stone adzes, two Samoan octopus-traps, and a Fijian club were procured for the Museum by Corporal J. B. Fleck. Mr. A. C. O'Connor presented a Fijian wooden drum; while, as a result of the parliamentary visit to Samoa, a very fine and large pile of tapa, and an inlaid kava-bowl, were added to the collections. Mrs. M. A. Seed bequeathed two Chinese vessels, and Mr. T. Richards a Chinese lady's shoe. By exchange a series of thirty-nine Tasmanian stone artifacts was secured.

Mr. E. BEST reports as follows on his ethnographical work:—

The most noteworthy occurrence in the way of ethnographical work during the past year is connected with a visit paid to Rotorua by Messrs. McDonald and Andersen and myself. As our sojourn at Rotorua occurred at the time of the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, we encountered a very large number of Natives, and witnessed some remarkable illustrations of pre-European usages. Many of these scenes were enacted not as a spectacle for the Royal visitor but in connection with the reception of successive parties of Native visitors arriving from other districts. Messrs. McDonald and Andersen were enabled to produce a large number of photographs and moving pictures of old Native games and occupations, among which that of the generation of fire by means of the primitive "fire-plough" of Polynesia is the most interesting. Mr. Andersen collected a considerable number of string games, and a fair number of songs were recorded on the dictaphone. As the Rotorua district is remarkable for the number of carved Native houses it contains, the opportunity was taken to obtain a considerable number of photographs of such illustrations of Maori art. The so-called model pa at Te Whakarewarewa, although of modern design (a gun-fighter's pa), supplied some very good details for photographing. The party was indebted to Te Kiwi Amohau and Captain Gilbert Mair, N.Z.C., both of Ohinemutu, for much kindly assistance, and to Major P. Buck and Captain Vercoc, of the reception camp, for help in many ways.

My own work during the past year has consisted of two main tasks—the translation, collection, and explanation of a quantity of matter pertaining to Maori mythology, and the compilation of a work describing Maori life as it was in pre-European times. The latter is assuredly needed, but the heavy cost of printing at present leaves no hope that the work can be brought out for some time. The same may be said of the series of Museum bulletins, the printing of which is very far in arrear. The matter describing old Native myths, concepts, and institutions throws curious and interesting light on the development of modern cults and institutions, hence its interest to English and American anthropologists. In illustration of this interest it may be mentioned that we have lately received two requests for works on Maori ethnography, to be published at the expense of applicants. One of these emanated from a London publishing firm, the other from a university. It is not proposed to accede to either, owing to other activities.

Two special papers were compiled during the year—one on cultural anthropology and the other on the Polynesian method of generating fire.

A request from the American Geographical Society for reviews on all important works on Pacific ethnology, &c., as they appear was refused, for several reasons.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION.

Mr. J. McDONALD reports as follows upon the photographic work of the year:—

Besides the photographs made for the scientific papers published by the Director, for the Hon. G. M. Thomson's manual, "Wild Life in New Zealand," and of Museum specimens, a considerable increase has been made in negatives of historic and ethnographic value. During October, 1919, while on my annual holiday leave I visited the Bay of Islands, and at Russell, Paihia, Waitangi, Kerikeri, and other places secured about 150 negatives. Few parts of the Dominion are so interesting historically.

In April last a visit was made to Rotorua by Messrs. Elsdon Best, Johannes C. Andersen, and myself, and at the reception camp for the Maori welcome to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales an extensive series of photographs, moving pictures, and phonographic records was secured. Here Mr. Best met old Native friends of the Tuhoe Tribe, and from them many of our best records were obtained. The ancient Maori method of making fire by friction was demonstrated by Rangiuia, one of the younger men of the party, and a complete cinematograph record of his remarkably smart performance was secured. A number of new string games were recorded and photographed. In addition to the work done at the reception camp visits were made to Whakarewarewa and Ohinemutu, where photographs were taken of Maori carvings. Of special interest are those of the lizard, probably one of the oldest world-wide symbols to be found in the decorative art of pre-historic peoples. Mr. Best is of the opinion that in Maori carving the lizard represents Whiro, one of the offspring of the primal parents Rangi and Papa, and in Maori myth is the personified form of darkness, evil, and death. He has in view a paper on the subject, and the photographs will be of value as illustrations. The mural decorations of the new Maori church