

During the absence of the Government Astronomer and Seismologist at the solar eclipse, Professor D. M. Y. Sommerville had general charge of the Observatory, while Captain G. Hooper, F.R.A.S., was in charge of the time service, and Dr. J. Henderson was in charge of the seismology. To all these gentlemen, who gave their services without charge to the Observatory, hearty thanks are tendered.

THE DOMINION MUSEUM.

General.—It is with sincere regret that I have to again record the absence of the Director, Dr. J. Allan Thomson, through ill health. During his absence Mr. J. McDonald has filled the position of Acting-Director and Joint Editor, with Professor C. A. Cotton, of the *New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology*. Messrs. Jenkinson, Birks, and Dr. Marsden have also assisted largely with the editorial work. The activities and operations of the Museum during the year have very fully occupied the attention of officers, and the demands upon their time have been more exacting than hitherto. With the passage of time problems of museum development constantly arise, and so far as the Dominion Museum is concerned these cannot at present satisfactorily be solved. The position may be summed up in the statement that until such time as a new building is provided it is practically impossible either properly to care for or display the unique collections now in the possession of the Museum.

Gifts.—Recent gifts are acknowledged of American birds and Philippine ethnographic specimens from the State University of Iowa, U.S.A.; by Colonel R. W. Tate, ex Administrator of Samoa, of specimens of over three hundred species of island mollusca; by Dr. D. Petrie, of Auckland, of his extensive and very valuable herbarium collection. An offer is just to hand from the National Museum of Ethnography, Copenhagen, to exchange Eskimo and Danish material, and from the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, of Indian material, for New Zealand specimens.

Visiting Scientists.—During August, 1922, a party of scientists from the State University of Iowa, U.S.A., visited New Zealand under the leadership of Professor C. C. Nutting, and carried out investigations in their respective fields of zoology, botany, entomology, ornithology, and geology. With the assistance and guidance of Museum officers and others in various parts of the Dominion their stay was made a pleasant and profitable one. As a result of their work here lectures on New Zealand have been given throughout Iowa and other States. During the month of January the Wellington meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science brought many Australian scientists to the Dominion, and Museum officers took an active part in the proceedings.

Lectures.—Last year over one thousand seven hundred school-children and their teachers were entertained with talks by Museum officers, and afterwards shown the collections. With the knowledge and encouragement gained from the experience it is hoped, now that the Museum lecture-hall has been remodelled, to provide lectures illustrated with lantern-slides.

Publications.—A welcome addition to the literature on the Maori is the series of Monographs, Nos. 1 to 4, published during the year. These monographs, from the pen of Mr. Elsdon Best, contain the matured thought and definite conclusions of one who has delved deeply into the mentality of our Native race. Monograph No. 1 deals with Maori myth and religion, and although it is not, in the strict sense of the term, a monograph, yet it is a comprehensive although condensed survey of the subject dealt with. In Monographs Nos. 2, 3, and 4 the author deals with the spiritual and mental concepts of the Maori, the Maori division of time, and the astronomical knowledge of the Maori. These publications are finding a ready sale. Monographs Nos. 5 and 6, in which Mr. Best gives the story of the Polynesian voyages and the Maori school of learning, are now in the hands of the Government Printer, and will be published within the next few months.

Paintings, &c.—The removal of the library of the New Zealand Institute has provided space in the Museum lecture-hall for the large canvasses of French battlefields and a number of the original sketches done by the official New Zealand Expeditionary Force artists. Space has also been found for the V.C. portraits and sundry other portraits and pictures by New Zealand artists.

Herbarium.—Dr. D. Petrie, of Auckland, presented his collection of plants to the Dominion Museum, for which the Minister on behalf of the Government has expressed sincere thanks. It is one of the most extensive of New Zealand flowering-plants and ferns brought together, comprising an excellent series of almost every species. The collection is estimated to consist of fifty thousand specimens. Dr. Petrie is going on with the work of placing printed labels on the collection and generally getting it ready for reference. When received it will ensure the Museum having a very valuable national collection, and, when housed so as to be available for reference, students and others interested in the native flora should feel truly grateful to Dr. Petrie for his magnificent gift.

Bird-sanctuaries.—Secretary Island, in the Sounds district of Otago, and Fanal Island, one of the Mokohinau Group, have been gazetted as sanctuaries.

Entomology.—A good collection of Lepidoptera was made at Arthur's Pass, and some two hundred specimens were added to the Museum cabinets. Donations were made by Miss E. Richardson, Messrs. R. A. Wilson, J. R. Harris, G. V. Hudson, and others. It is observed that an increasing number of amateur coleopterists are making use of the Museum collections for purposes of reference.

Ornithology.—A work of considerable magnitude undertaken during the year was the overhauling of the New Zealand bird-skin collection, which was packed in zinc-lined cases during 1915. The collection was found to be in excellent order and free from insects and other pests. The labelling of the exhibited collection of foreign birds is being given attention. The task of rearranging the