

Annual Report, 1947

The Annual Meeting was held in the Society's Room, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, on the 27th February, 1947.

His Excellency the Governor, President of the Society, presided.

The following Office-bearers were elected:—

Vice-President: Under the Society's Rules, Mr. Henry Allport retired from the office of Vice-President, and Mr. W. H. Hudspeth was appointed in his place (retiring 1949).

Hon. Secretary and Librarian: Dr. Joseph Pearson.

Hon. Assistant Secretary: Mr. D. C. Pearse.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. S. Angel.

Hon. Auditor: Mr. H. J. Exley.

Council: Under the Rules Mr. A. L. Meston and Mr. R. G. Brett retired from the Council and the following members were elected to the Council in their places:—

Professor S. W. Carey (retiring 1950).

Mr. L. W. Miller (retiring 1950).

Also one member was required to take the place of Mr. W. H. Hudspeth, who was elected Vice-President, and Mr. J. L. Somerville was elected for two years. As Dr. Gordon was leaving Tasmania, Mr. J. W. C. Wyett was elected for the remaining one year of Dr. Gordon's period of office. The names of the full Council for 1947 are given on the previous page.

The Council made the following appointments at its first meeting:—

Assistant Librarian: Miss H. Taylor.

Standing Committee: Dr. W. L. Crowther, Professor V. V. Hickman, Mr. W. H. Hudspeth, and the Hon. Secretary.

The Council elected the following two members of the Society to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum and Botanical Gardens:—Professor V. V. Hickman and Mr. W. H. Hudspeth.

Nine ordinary meetings and one special meeting were held during the year (see Proceedings for abstracts of papers). In addition scientific papers were submitted for publication and have been printed in the present volume.

Library

During the year 780 volumes (this number includes the Clive Lord Memorial volumes which had not previously been entered in the accession book) were added to the Library in addition to a number of reports and pamphlets from British and foreign institutions and learned societies. The number of institutions on the Exchange List for the year was 291, and new exchanges were arranged with the following institutions:—The British Council, London; New England University College, Armidale, University of Sydney; New Zealand Department of Agriculture; Studia Botanica Cechoslovaca, Prague; University of New Mexico; Facultad de Agronomia y Veterinaria, Buenos Aires; Uniwersytyet Marii Curie-Sktodowskiej, Poland. The Library now consists of 22,165 volumes.

Cataloguing the Library

During the year Miss M. Griffiths, B.A., Cataloguer from the University of Tasmania's Library, commenced work on cataloguing the Society's Library and classifying it under the Dewey System of Classification. This arrangement was made with the University on condition that in return for Miss Griffiths' services, a duplicate author catalogue should be made available to the University Library.

Membership

The Society consists of the following members:—

Honorary members	2
Corresponding members	2
Ordinary members—	
Class A.	176
Class B.	116
	— 292
Life members	16
Associate members	19
	— 331

During the year 15 names were removed from the list of Members owing to deaths, resignations, etc., and 27 new members were elected, one of these being a life member, 21 ordinary members, and five associate members. (Also one ordinary member became a life member.)

Deaths

The Council regrets having to record the deaths of the following members during the year:—Mr. H. Amos (1944), Mr. F. L. Brownell (1907), Mr. T. A. Gepp (1942), Mr. E. H. Kirby (1927), Mr. E. L. Piesse (1902), Dr. A. Jefferis Turner (1927), and Mr. E. H. Webster (1930).

Edmund Leolin Piesse, LL.B., B.Sc., will be remembered by senior members as Honorary Secretary to the Society during 1913-14, at a time when its fortunes were at a very low ebb.

Mr. Piesse, thorough and systematic in method, during his term of office prepared an authentic paper on 'The Foundation and Early Work of the Society, with some Account of other Institutions of Early Hobart' (Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania, 1913), and commenced the cataloguing of the Library.

At the outbreak of the 1914-18 War he was in practice as a solicitor in Hobart, but in 1916 he left to serve in the Intelligence Branch of the Commonwealth Defence Department at Melbourne. Leaving the army, Mr. Piesse joined the Prime Minister's Department in which he became, eventually, Director of the Pacific Branch.

It was his custom to come to Tasmania occasionally for a summer vacation, but, as the Royal Society was not in session at those seasons, he made contact with only a few of his old friends. Nevertheless, he retained his membership until the end and his services to the Society will be gratefully remembered.

Alteration of Rules

A special meeting of the Society was called on 5th August, 1947, in order to consider certain alterations to the Rules. Details regarding these alterations are given in the Abstract of Proceedings (p. 169).

Financial Position of the Society

For some years the Council of the Society has been greatly concerned about the Society's financial standing. As time has passed expenses have increased and the income has remained more or less stationary. This problem was solved to some extent by the increase of the subscription of ordinary members which came into force in the year 1945. However, this relief proved to be only temporary and the time has come for the Society to take stock of its position. The Society's income from all sources is about £450 and the whole of this money is expended on essential services but there is no margin for paying an adequate salary to the Assistant Librarian or for making provision for a second assistant. It is necessary, too, that provision should be made for the purchase of an adequate number of text books and journals. The cost of publishing the Papers and Proceedings has increased considerably with the passing of years and although the Government has been good enough to increase their grant to £200 a year this sum has proved to be inadequate to meet the cost of printing the journal. During the year under review the financial position of the Society has been examined very carefully by the Council. It was felt that the time had come when the State Government should be asked for financial assistance and it was decided to seek the advice of the Chief Justice, the Hon. Sir John Morris. Accordingly the Hon. Secretary was instructed to arrange a meeting with the Chief Justice in order to discuss this question and a conference took place on the 11th July, 1947. The Hon. Secretary placed before Sir John Morris the financial problem and it was then pointed out that the Society and its Library had exerted a considerable influence on the life of Tasmania during the last one hundred years. As a result of this conference it was decided to approach the Government for a grant of £750 per annum in order to enable the Society to maintain services which it had given to the community. In return for such financial assistance the Society might be prepared to offer certain privileges and concessions to special groups of people who were not members of the Society but who were serious students of some branch of literature or science. The Chief Justice offered to accompany the Hon. Secretary to discuss this matter with the Premier. Accordingly a meeting took place on 18th September, 1947, in the Chief Justice's Chambers. Previously the Hon. Secretary had drawn up a memorandum which was presented both to the Chief Justice and the Premier and this memorandum formed the basis of the discussion which took place at that meeting. The Premier expressed sympathy with the desire of the Society to obtain adequate financial support in order to carry out its programme of work, but he stated that it was then too late to include any provision in the budget for the financial year 1947-48, but that consideration of the matter might be made during the next financial year. The Premier added, however, that he saw no reason why the Society should bear any part of the cost of producing the Papers and Proceedings and as a direct outcome of this discussion a letter was received from the Premier on 13th October, 1947, in which the State contribution to the cost of printing the Society's journal was increased from £200 to £300 per annum.

Meeting with the Northern Branch

On the 22nd August, 1947, a conference was held between the Council of the Royal Society of Tasmania and representatives of the Northern Branch of the Society. The meeting was held in the Society's room at the Tasmanian Museum.

Eight members of the Council and four representatives of the Northern Branch were present. Amongst the matters discussed at this meeting were the following:—

- (a) Definition of Northern Branch membership.
- (b) The proportion of Northern Branch subscriptions to be returned to the Branch.
- (c) The right of the Northern Branch to administer any property bequeathed to it.

Acting upon the feeling of this special meeting the Council had a meeting on the 3rd September, 1947, and decided upon the following definition of membership of the Northern Branch, namely:—

‘Any member nominated and elected by the Northern Branch shall be recognized as a member of that Branch irrespective of his place of residence.’

It was further agreed that in future the present number of members who were attached to the Northern Branch, namely 32, should be regarded as the basic number and that in respect of this number of members the Northern Branch should receive one-third of the subscriptions of such members as appear in this ‘Basic list’ and that in respect of all such members over and above this basic number (‘Subsidiary list’) the Northern Branch should receive the following proportions of subscriptions:—

£1 10s. members—17s. 6d.
£1 1s. members—15s.

It was to be understood, however, that the basic number should be maintained at 32 and that any vacancies which occurred in the basic list should be filled by transfers from the subsidiary list.

With regard to the responsibility of the Society’s Council regarding any property bequeathed to the Northern Branch it was decided that—

- (1) The terms of any bequest made to the Northern Branch would be strictly observed by the Council.
- (2) Any property acquired by the branch should remain in its custody during the existence of the Branch.
- (3) In the event of the Branch ceasing to exist, the Council would hold all such property referred to under (1) and (2) in trust until such time as the Northern Branch would be re-established.
- (4) The rights of the Queen Victoria Museum in any property held jointly by the Museum and the Branch to be recognized.

Appointment of Government Archivist

During the year the Council appointed Dr. W. L. Crowther, Mr. W. H. Hudspeth, and Mr. A. L. Meston to meet the Chief Secretary in order to discuss with him the appointment of a fully qualified archivist. In due course the deputation met the Minister who promised that before an archivist was appointed the members of the deputation would be consulted regarding the suitability of candidates.

Dr. George Mackaness—Franklin Brochure

During the year Dr. Mackaness published his brochure on Lady Franklin based upon certain letters which are the property of the Society and, in accordance with an agreement already entered into, one hundred copies of the brochure were acquired by the Society at cost price and will be available to members who wish to purchase them.

Clive Lord Memorial Lecture

The Clive Lord Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr. Harold Thompson on 'Fish Welfare', on 11th November, 1947, and he was presented with the Clive Lord Memorial Medal. After the lecture a conversazione was held. At that meeting Dr. J. C. Jaeger was presented with the Lyle Memorial Medal on behalf of the Australian National Research Council.

Knopwood Diaries

(a) During the year the Society acquired from the Mitchell Library microfilms of the Knopwood Diaries, 1814-1838, consisting of eight volumes (1600 pages).

(b) The last 90 pages of Knopwood's Diary made on board H.M.S. Resolution and H.M.S. Calcutta, 1801-1803, making a total of 1690 pages in all.

Enlarged photographic prints from these microfilms are being made by the Government Photographic Department and one complete set is being presented to the Society's Library by the State Government. The second complete set will be printed for the use of the State Government.

Nevin Hurst Papers

The Council has to report the acquisition of a valuable set of papers which had been brought together by the late Nevin Hurst, I.S.O., formerly Secretary for Lands. These papers throw light upon contemporary history of Tasmania and the gift was made possible through the generosity of Mr. Hurst's widow. During the year Mr. W. H. Hudspeth very kindly compiled a list of contents of these papers.

A. N. Lewis Memorial Fund

After the death of Dr. A. N. Lewis in 1943 a number of friends subscribed a sum of £414 2s. 8d. It was decided to utilize this money:—

- (a) To publish Dr. Lewis' paper on 'The Geology of the Hobart District'.
- (b) The residue to be handed to the Royal Society of Tasmania to establish a memorial in the Society's Library.

During the year under review a sum of £232 17s. 11d. was handed to the Council of the Royal Society by the A. N. Lewis Memorial Committee under the following conditions:—

'The net money remaining after having paid the charges and all incidental expenses incurred by the Committee, shall be used to establish a Fund which will be handed to the Council of the Royal Society of Tasmania to administer. This Fund shall be held in trust by the Council and the interest arising from the investment of the Fund shall be used by the Council to purchase geological and other scientific books for the Society's Library. Each book so purchased to have a special book plate showing that the book is part of the A. N. Lewis Memorial Library.'

It was agreed to accept this sum on the above stipulations and accordingly a sum of £200 has been invested in the new security loan and the balance of £32 17s. 11d. has been placed in the Hobart Savings Bank.

Additional Chairs

During the year twenty new chairs were acquired for the Society's room, half being presented by the Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum and the cost of the remainder was met from the Society's funds.

Gifts to the Society

The following is a list of gifts to the Society during the present year in addition to the numerous exchanges received from British and foreign institutions:—

Nevin Hurst papers (already recorded).

Professor L. F. Giblin—40 copies of Papers and Proceedings, several catalogues and reports of the Royal Society, and seven books.

Mrs. C. N. Atkins—Swanston and Derwent Bank Letter Books—

Three Swanston Letter Books, 1831-1847.

Three Derwent Bank Letter Books, 1829-1854.

Mr. J. A. V. Denny—Society of Chemical Industry Journal, 1946 numbers; Chemical Society Journal, 1946 numbers; and British Abstracts, 1946 numbers.

Dr. P. A. Maplestone—58 medical books.

Mr. E. Rodway—19 books (formerly the property of the late E. Rodway).

Miss V. Mace (through Mrs. W. H. Hudspeth)—The Colonial Magazine, 1840, and The Penny Magazine, 1832.

Hobart City Council—City of Hobart Plan.

Gifts were also received from Miss G. Adams, Miss M. G. Rouse, and Miss G. Mitchell.

Printing of Papers and Proceedings

Mention has been made of the State Government's very generous contribution towards the printing of the Papers and Proceedings. The Council wishes to record its appreciation of this assistance.