

ROYAL SOCIETY.

APRIL.

The first monthly meeting of the session of 1891 was held on Tuesday evening, April 21. The President His Excellency Sir R. G. C. Hamilton, K.C.B., presided, and there was a good attendance of Fellows. Lady Hamilton and a number of ladies were also present.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER.

Rev. F. R. M. Wilson, Kew, Victoria, was elected a corresponding member.

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

Mr. MORTON stated that he had received a list from the hon. secretary of subscriptions in aid of the Antarctic expedition, showing that the following sums had been subscribed:—Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victorian Branch), £200; Mr. J. S. Gotch, of Messrs. Gordon and Gotch, £100; Professor Kernot, £100; E. C. Merewether (President N.S.W. Branch of Royal Geographical Society of Australasia), £100; Royal Society of Tasmania, £50; Royal Society of Victoria, £100; Dr. Agnew, £100. He (the Secretary) had placed Dr. Agnew's name on the list as having subscribed from Tasmania.

His EXCELLENCY said that a few days ago he had received a cablegram from Baron Von Mueller, stating that New South Wales had placed £2,000 and Queensland £1,000 on their annual estimates in aid of the proposed Antarctic exploration. He asked whether the Tasmanian Government would place £500 on the estimates for the same purpose. He had handed the cablegram to Ministers, but had not as yet received any answer.

GIFT FROM DR. AGNEW.

The SECRETARY said that the Society was indebted to Dr. Agnew for another munificent gift. Some years ago back the Society obtained 12 parts of the Birds of Asia, by J. Gould, F.R.S., a rare and expensive work. The complete work consisted of 35 parts and Dr. Agnew had instructed him (Mr. Morton) to complete the set, which he had done through Trübner and Co., of London, at a cost of £75.

His EXCELLENCY referred in appreciative terms to the interest Dr. Agnew had shown in the Society, and the practical effect he had given to that interest by many valuable presents. He asked them to join with him in carrying by acclamation a hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Agnew. (Applause.)

AUSTRALASIAN SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

Mr. MORTON said—Your Excellency and members of the Council of the Royal Society of Tasmania; having been appointed in conjunction with Mr. C. H. Grant as a delegate of the Royal Society of Tasmania to the meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Christchurch, New Zealand, during the week commencing January 15, 1891, it becomes my duty, in the absence of Mr. Grant, who is out of the colony, to report to you on matters relating to the meeting. At the first general committee meeting, held at the Canterbury College, January, 15, Sir James Hector, K.C.M.G.,

President-elect for 1891, proposed that His Excellency Sir R. G. C. Hamilton, K.C.B., be the President for the fourth meeting, to be held at Hobart in 1892; a motion that was enthusiastically received and unanimously adopted. The other officers then elected for the Tasmanian meeting were Mr. James Backhouse Walker as local treasurer, and your delegate as general secretary. The New Zealand meeting, which lasted seven days, was a great success. The sections one and all were largely attended, and the deepest interest was taken in the many valuable papers read. The members attending the New Zealand meeting were most hospitably entertained by the Christchurch residents. The thanks of the association are largely due to Professor F. W. Hutton, F.G.S., the general secretary, for the New Zealand meeting, for the great attention paid by him to all members attending the meeting. As soon as possible after my return the Tasmanian Local Executive Committee, consisting of the Hon. J. W. Agnew, M.D., Messrs. James Barnard, C. H. Grant, R. M. Johnston, J. B. Walker, and myself, had a meeting with the object of taking the necessary steps to appoint Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Secretaries to the different sections and to arrange other matters for the fourth meeting. The committee decided that the 1892 meeting shall commence on Thursday, January 7, 1892. The rules are that presidents of the various sections must reside out of the colony in which the meeting is held; vice-presidents and secretaries are to be residents of the colony. It is gratifying to know that the presidents in nine sections out of ten are already appointed:—Section A, Astronomy, Mathematics, Physics, and Mechanics, Professor W. H. Bragg, M.A., Professor of Mathematics, University of Adelaide. Section B, Chemistry and Mineralogy, Mr. W. M. Hamlet, F.C.S., F.I.C., Government Analyst of New South Wales. Section C, Geology and Palæontology, Mr. C. S. Wilkinson, F.G.S., Government Geologist of New South Wales. Section D, Biology, Professor W. Baldwin Spencer, M.A., Professor of Biology, Melbourne University. Section F, Economic Social Science and Statistics, Mr. R. Teece, F.I.A., of Sydney. Section G, Anthropology, Rev. Lorimer Fison, Queen's College, University, Melbourne. Section H, Sanitary Science and Hygiene, Professor W. H. Warren, M.I.C.E., Professor of Engineering, University of Sydney. Section I, Literature and Fine Arts, E. E. Morris, Professor of English, German, French languages, and Literatures, Melbourne University. Section J, Architecture and Engineering, Mr. C. Napier Bell, C.E. of New Zealand. Section E is therefore the only section without a president, but His Excellency Sir William Macgregor, Governor of New Guinea, has been asked to accept the presidency of this section, and his reply is daily expected. Satisfactory arrangements have been made with all the Australian railway authorities and steamship companies for members travelling to attend the meeting. The Railway Commissioners will allow all members to travel at single fare for double journeys, and the steamship companies 20 per cent. off ordinary excursion rates. The Tasmanian Government and the Mount Bischoff Railway Co. have agreed to grant similar concessions to those granted on the New Zealand railways, viz., members to be allowed to travel half single fares during the months of January and February. The Municipal Council have generously placed the large room, and as many other rooms as can be spared, of the Town Hall buildings at the disposal of the association, and the Chamber of Commerce have consented to do likewise with their room. A large gathering from all the colonies is expected, and numerous promises of papers in different sections have already been received. From the outlook at present the fourth meeting of the Australasian Association bids fair to be the most successful yet held.

His EXCELLENCY said that when asked to become President of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science he at first refused, because he thought the position was one which ought to be held by someone who was distinguished in some branch of science. The matter, however, was again pressed upon him, and he was told from several quarters that it was desirable from many points of view that he take the position. It was a position which anyone might be proud to hold, and his hesitation in accepting it only arose from his thinking he could hardly be able to do justice to its duties. When he found, however, that it was the desire of the association that he should become President, he at once accepted, and having accepted, he meant to do everything in his power to make the meeting a great success. The first thing he did was to try to secure the presence of Professor Huxley, who some time ago contemplated visiting Australia. He wrote to Professor Huxley and had received a reply, in which the Professor said that he had very pleasant recollections of Tasmania 43 years ago, and it would interest him very much to re-visit the colony and compare the present with the past, but he regretted that the state of his health prevented him from accepting the invitation. He (President) was sure that they all regretted that Professor Huxley was unable to come, and that ill-health was the cause. Mr. Morton, in his report, had given a most satisfactory list of the Presidents and Vice-Presidents, and had mentioned the name of Sir Wm. McGregor as one who had not yet signified his intention to be present. He had written to Sir William, and pointed out to him the importance of the meeting. He had invited Sir William to be his guest at Government House, and he hoped he would come and lend that *eclat* which his great reputation and the great work he had done in New Guinea would bring to the meetings of the association. He had also written to two gentlemen in England, distinguished in the walks of science, asking them to come out to Tasmania and be his guests on the occasion of the meetings of the association. He hoped that both, or at least one, of these gentlemen would accept his invitation, and he had no doubt but that in the event of his being successful in announcing the names of those gentlemen as visitors to Tasmania, they would be received with the greatest satisfaction by the members of the association. He was glad to see so many present in this, the first meeting of the present session of the Royal Society, including their friend, Mr. Alfred J. Taylor, who had just recovered from a serious illness.

The RIGHT REV. H. H. MONTGOMERY, D.D., BISHOP OF TASMANIA, read a paper entitled "Some account of the Mutton Birds, or Sooty Petrels (*Nectris Brevicaudus*), as seen in their Homes among the Furneaux Islands, Bass Straits, Tasmania, from Notes taken during a visit to the Locality in March, 1891."

Mr. T. STEPHENS called attention to some specimens on the table:—1. A specimen of shale from near the Henty River, with *Glossopteris*, etc., and closely resembling the shale in which more than twenty years before he found the first impression of this fern in the Mersey coal measures. Like the Mersey coal, this shale occurs under marine fossiliferous beds of carboniferous age. 2. Pieces of coal from the flanks of Mount Manfred, north-west of Lake St. Clair, cropping out at a height of about 3,000ft. above sea level. 3. Silurian limestone from the site of a bore recently put down at Railton in search of coal, with a portion of core belonging to the same series from a reported depth of about 600ft. Mr. Stephens remarked that the lavish expenditure which had been incurred here in boring through strata, which are well known by all acquainted with the geology of the district as being, geologically speaking, below the whole of the Mersey

coal measures, was a startling instance of that enterprise of which Tasmania was supposed to be destitute. It was a pity that it was not more wisely directed.

The SECRETARY, in the absence of the author, read a paper, entitled "Notes on Mount Lyell District, Tasmania," by Mr. F. Danvers Power, F.G.S.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON replied briefly, when it was decided to postpone discussion until next meeting.

HIS EXCELLENCY proposed the usual votes of thanks to the contributors of papers, which having been carried by acclamation, the meeting adjourned.

