

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, JUNE, 1904.

The monthly meeting of members of this society was held in the society's room at the Museum on the evening of Monday, June 13. His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Dodds, K.C.M.G., C.J., presided, and amongst those present were the Private Secretary (Mr. F. Dodds), the Chief Secretary (Hon. Dr. McCall), Mr. R. M. Johnston, I.S.O., Dr. Gerard Smith, Mr. B. Shaw, Mr. G. E. Moore, and the secretary (Mr. A. Morton). Apologies for absence were intimated from Colonel Legge and Mr. E. A. Counsel.

His Excellency said: Before I call upon Mr. R. M. Johnston to read his paper, I propose to perform a very pleasant duty that has been entrusted to me. I have been asked to express, on behalf of this society, of which Mr. Johnston is a vice-president and distinguished member, the gratification with which it received the announcement that his long and most valuable services to the State had been recognised by his Sovereign, who had conferred upon him the Imperial Service Order. This Order was instituted by King Edward VII. on June 26, 1902, with a view of recognising faithful and meritorious service rendered by members of the administrative branches of the Civil Services of the various parts of the Empire. It consists of the Sovereign and the Prince of Wales and 425 companions, 200 for the Home Civil Service, and 175 for the Civil Services of the colonies and Protectorates. If we just think that of the enormous number of persons employed in the various colonial Civil Services throughout our great Empire, only 175 can become Companions of the Order, we shall realise how great is the distinction that Mr. Johnston has won for himself. The badge of the Order is a medallion of gold and enamel, bearing on one side the Imperial and Royal cypher, and on the reverse "For faithful service," both executed in dark blue enamel on a plaque, or shield, of gold, surrounded by a wreath of laurel, surmounted by the Imperial Crown. We are very glad indeed that Mr. Johnston has received this proud distinction, because we know how justly it is deserved. Mr. Johnston's services to this State rank amongst the highest, because, in addition to their intrinsic value, they have been unceasing and patriotic. Coming to Tasmania nearly 35 years ago from Scotland, that country which has given so many splendid men to the service of the Empire, Mr. Johnston has devoted himself since with unflinching zeal and energy to the advancement of the interests of this State. He has thrown himself into his work with a disregard for all personal considerations, and his example of unselfish devotion to his duties and his high character have

exercised a beneficial influence in the service to which he belongs. Tempting offers of more lucrative employment in other States have been refused by him. He has been true to Tasmania, and faithful to her service in the highest degree. The simple, yet expressive legend, "For faithful service," inscribed on his Order, most aptly recognises his merit. But Mr. Johnston's labours have not been confined to the routine of his official work. He has been indefatigable in the cause of science. No member of this society, from its inauguration in the year 1843, has contributed a greater number of original papers than Mr. Johnston, many of them being most valuable. He has taken us over a wide range of scientific knowledge, and has treated of natural history, botany, geology, palaeontology, economics, and other subjects. Probably his greatest achievement is the splendid work, entitled "The Geology of Tasmania," the first complete treatment of the subject ever published. It gives us the result of years of patient investigation of the geological formations of the island, and is a monument of the author's untiring industry and proficient scientific knowledge. On its publication it was most favourably received by leading English, European, and American geologists. Professor Judd, one of the most eminent of living English geologists, thus speaks of this important work in the pages of "Nature":—"But, quite independent of the scientific value of the work, which, as we have seen, is certainly very great, we think the Government and people of Tasmania are to be congratulated upon the character of this remarkable and handsome volume. It aims at being, above all things, of practical use, and its great object is to direct the attention of colonists to questions of pressing interest and importance. It is not often that the wants of the general public and of the scientific specialist have been so admirably met, or that a book has been produced which is at the same time accurate and thorough in its treatment of technical questions, while it is not wanting in the more elementary details required by those who have not had the advantage of a scientific training." This being the kind of service rendered, is it not fitting that the society that has received so much from him should ungrudgingly express its pleasure at the distinction to which he has attained. I have not mentioned Mr. Johnston's personal qualities, because it is unnecessary. They are widely known and appreciated, but I should like to say that the actions of his life appear to me to be governed by those principles of justice and kindness towards others which God has established as the only

true guides of human conduct. Mr. Johnston, I offer you, on behalf of the society, its most grateful thanks for all you have done for it, and its warmest congratulations on the honour that has been conferred upon you. (Applause.)

Mr. R. M. Johnston briefly returned thanks.

Social Equality.

Mr. R. M. Johnston, I.S.O., read a lengthy paper on "Observations Regarding Some Economic Aspects of the Eisenach Social Equality Programme." The conclusions arrived at from his figures, he said, showed that wealth available for consumption and enjoyment was more equitably distributed than was generally supposed; and whatever might be its existing inequalities and defects, it was immeasurably superior to any scheme of communism or collectivism that had ever been attempted or formulated. The programme of the trades' unions and the more intelligent of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom and Australia were antagonistic to all the extreme communistic ideals of socialists. They, of course, advocated an extension of the idea of State censorship of the more important branches of industry; but it was on individualistic lines strictly, and not communistic—liberty, responsibility, skill, effective labour, and reward in accordance with ability, had ever been ideals of the best representatives of labour in England and in these colonies.

Mr. K. L. Murray moved the postponement of the discussion on Mr. Johnston's paper till next meeting of the society. He said that socialism was very little understood, and if the paper just read were widely distributed, it would do much to spread a knowledge of the subject. It had very much increased his knowledge, and he was sure it would do the same for anyone who studied industriously.

Mr. A. O. Green seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

Preservation of Native Animals.

The Secretary read some notes forwarded by Mr. J. F. Mather to the Minister of Lands (Hon. C. Lyne) with reference to the reservation of Crown lands at Schouten and Freycinet Peninsula for the preservation of native fauna and flora. Mr. Mather wrote:—"The desirability of setting apart lands for acclimatisation purposes has frequently claimed public attention; but up to the present time very little thought has been bestowed upon the necessity for preserving our Tasmanian fauna; yet the emu is no longer found on the Tasmanian plains, and the forester is rapidly disappearing, whilst the black opossum has been so persistently hunted that it seems likely to also become 'a lost Tasmanian race.' In the interests of science, to say nothing of Tasmanian set-

timent, our Government should devote at least one portion of this island to the preservation of native animals. And seeing that we have now a Ministry composed of Tasmanian-born Britishers, the opportunity appears to be favourable for again pressing the suggestion for a Government reserve for the purpose above mentioned. There is one locality exceedingly well adapted for the end in view, viz., Freycinet's Peninsula and Schouten Island. Scarcely any of the land is alienated at present, and nearly every variety of existing Tasmanian fauna is there represented. Moreover, the lagoons near Hazard Island are breeding places for the black swan, and Schouten Island is the habitat of many kinds of opossum. The soil has very little commercial value, whilst for picturesque scenery, delightful walks, and opportunities for fishing, the position is unrivalled as a tourist resort. In order to ascertain how much fencing would be required to keep animals on Freycinet Peninsula, two members of a tourist party, on March 8, 1904, stepped the distance between Meredith Fishery Bay, on the western side, to Sleepy Bay, on the eastern side. Starting from a point on the sand bank, east from Swansea, the two tourists decided to walk a course east half north along the southern edge of a marsh, which was then practically under water. At 900 yards rising ground commenced, and there was a gradual slope until the saddle was reached at 1,300 yards, the probable height being 150ft. above sea level. Descending thence for 220 yards, the line terminates on the granite cliffs of a headland, about the middle of Sleepy Bay, which cliffs are about 60ft. high. From the point at which the line strikes Sleepy Bay Coast the Lemon Rock is S.E. one point S., and the northern head of Wineglass Bay S.E. by S. half S., whilst the northern head of Sleepy Bay lies due east. The termination of the line on Sleepy Bay may require about 6ft. of masonry to make this point quite secure, and from the starting place on Meredith Fishery Bay there may be necessary about 200 yards of fencing to the rocks, where the water is deep. It is proposed to put up a 6ft. wire fence, using two widths of 3ft. rabbit-proof netting. The line is not obstructed with timber, though there are plenty of trees suitable for posts in the immediate vicinity, and, apparently, there will be no difficulty in digging post holes along the line indicated."

The Secretary also read a reply from the Minister of Lands, in which he stated he was prepared to accede to Mr. Mather's request, and was giving the necessary instructions to the Secretary for Lands to arrange for the withholding from sale and selection the land mentioned. Mr. Morton added that this was the only State in Australia that had not taken steps for the preservation of its native fauna and flora.

Mr. J. F. Mather gave a description of his visit to Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island, and Mr. J. W. Beattie showed some excellent views of Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island.

Votes of Thanks.

His Excellency moved a vote of thanks to the gentlemen who had read papers,

and to Mr. Beattie for his interesting exhibition of views. He expressed the hope that the movement set on foot by Mr. Mather would be of a more permanent character than the effort made some years ago to establish a reserve for a similar purpose on Franklin Island.

The vote was heartily accorded, and the meeting terminated.
