

SEPTEMBER.

The monthly evening meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held at the Society's room, Museum, on Tuesday, September 12th. Hon. C. H. Grant presided, and there was a good attendance. Apologies were received from the Hon. Sir Jas. Wilson Agnew, K.C.M.G., M.D., M.F.C., and Mr. Jas. Earnard, Vice-Presidents.

PROTECTION OF NATIVE FAUNA.

A letter was received through the Premier (Sir Edward Braddon) from the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Adelaide, enclosing the report of the committee appointed to make recommendations for the protection of native fauna, and asking that Tasmania would assist in carrying out the recommendations of this committee. Among other suggestions, the report urged that the Schouten Main (Freycinet Peninsula) should be set aside as a national park for Tasmania, that the Victorian and Tasmanian Governments should be requested to draw up a joint Act for the protection of the Cape Barren goose on those islands on which it is found in Bass Straits; that existing game laws should be strictly enforced, and that in all Game Acts provision should be made for the proclamation of districts, comprising both Crown lands and private property, wherein particular species may be absolutely protected for indefinite periods.

The SECRETARY (Mr. A. Morton) said that this communication and report had been submitted to Mr. Bernard Shaw, who had dealt with the points raised. Concerning the recommendation that Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island should be used as a national park he (Mr. Shaw) had received opinion from Mr. John Meredith, of Cambria, Glamorgan, who considered that while the Peninsula was unsuitable for a national park, owing to its geological formation, etc., Schouten Island would be a suitable spot. With regard to the protection of the Cape Barren goose and the mutton bird, these birds were already protected by Acts of Parliament in Tasmania, and the inhabitants of the islands were generally credited with obedience to the provisions of the game laws, and the constable stationed there exercised supervision over them. The suggested provision for absolute protection of certain species by proclamation for indefinite periods already existed in Tasmania as regarded native game birds, but not as regarded animals.

Bishop MONTGOMERY said that there were a great many mutton birds in the Straits, and not long ago he had seen a large number of Cape Barren geese there. On the whole, although some instances of ruthless slaughter occurred, the Cape Barren geese were being well protected. He favoured Cape Portland as a place where the native fauna of the colony could be preserved.

Mr. MORTON complained that although there were close seasons certain birds ran a risk of being exterminated by their wanton slaughter by so-called sportsmen.

The CHAIRMAN considered that the birds of the island were very well protected. As regarded the animals, he did not see how they could be preserved in a park unless of a very large area, as some of them preyed on others. However, it would be as well to keep the matter before them, and if an opportunity occurred they might obtain land for a national park.

PROTECTION OF THE FUR SEAL.

The SECRETARY, after apologising for the absence of the president of the Fisheries Board (Mr. M. Seal), introduced the matter of the

protection of the fur seal in Bass Straits and Macquarie Island, and said that the Government of Tasmania had unfortunately decided that there should be no close season for these animals.

Bishop MONTGOMERY was sorry that the Government should have arrived at such a conclusion, for unquestionably if there were no close season there would not be a seal left in two years time. On the score of humanity and for the preservation of the sealing trade, some protection was necessary. The islanders were in favour of a close season of about 10 weeks. He moved,—“That the following be a deputation to wait on the Chief Secretary *re* the protection of the fur seal:—Sir J. W. Agnew ; Messrs. C. H. Grant, M. Seal, A. G. Webster, Curzon Allport, and the mover.”

Mr. F. J. SALIER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

ORTHOGRAPHY OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

Mr. T. STEPHENS drew attention to a circular which the Government had received from the Royal Geographical Society of England on the orthography of geographical names. The circular advocated the adoption of a system of orthography for place names which would be simple enough for any educated person to master with the minimum of trouble, and which would at the same time afford an approximation to the sound of a place-name such as a native might recognise. No attempt would be made to change names which had acquired an established standing, but it was considered that in new names it would be better for the appearance of the words to give some idea of the pronunciation. As far as Tasmania was concerned, very little attempt had been made in the early days to preserve the native names, and the few there were seemed to have been selected at haphazard from a vocabulary without reference to their suitability to the places to which they were applied. He believed, however, that the Lands Department had taken some pains to make a collection of native names which would be applied to new places which might arise. He thought it would be as well for the Society to assist in every possible manner the object of the Royal Geographical Society, and moved,—“That a committee be appointed to consider and report on the circular issued by the Royal Geographical Society of England as follows:—Sir J. W. Agnew ; Messrs. J. B. Walker, C. H. Grant, Bernard Shaw, and the mover, with power to add to their number.”

Mr. B. SHAW seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

VOYAGES TO PAPUA.

Mr. J. R. McClymont, M.A., read a paper on “Early voyages to Papua, 1511 to 1545,” which he illustrated by references to a map of the world and other charts. The paper treated the subject exhaustively, and was closely listened to.

Owing to the lateness of the hour, Mr. Robert Henry's paper on a new method of dropping the time ball was postponed till the next meeting of the Society.

The CHAIRMAN having briefly thanked Mr. McClymont for his paper and gentlemen for their remarks, the meeting closed.