

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

There was a large attendance of Fellows and ladies at the meeting of the Royal Society on Tuesday, 12th September. The following telegram was read from Lord Gormanston's Private Secretary:—"Governor regrets that he cannot preside at meeting to-night." Sir Lambert Dobson was therefore voted to the chair.

Sir R. G. C. Hamilton, K.C.B., LL.D., a distinguished patron and promoter of the objects of the Society, was elected an honorary member. Mr. Robert Kidston, F.R.S.E., F.G.S., of Edinburgh, was elected a corresponding member. Messrs. W. A. Harvey, M.R.C.S.E., and J. N. Propsting were elected Fellows.

NOTES ON MOUNT LYELL.

"Notes on the Mount Lyell mine." By E. D. Peters, jun., M.E., M.D.

Some remarks on the paper were made by Messrs. R. M. Johnston, W. F. Ward, A. O. Green, C. H. Grant, T. Stephens, and the Chairman. All agreed that the paper was able, highly interesting, and very valuable. Mr. Johnston found a difficulty in reconciling Dr. Peters' statement that the mineral deposits at Mount Lyell were effected by small streams when he did not allow that pyrites were soluble. Mr. Grant urged that the commercial value of Mount Lyell should not be over-rated, and pointed to its comparative unfavourable position for economic working.

The SECRETARY (Mr. A. Morton) drew attention to some specimens of ore from Mount Lyell, and read the following result of three days' work at the mine on August 28, 29, and 30, the information having been forwarded to the Treasurer (Hon. John Henry), whose Parliamentary duties prevented his presence:—"Raised 21 tons 3cwt. ore; assayed 1,432oz. silver and 24 per cent. copper, equal to 32,288oz. silver and 4 tons copper in the 21 tons 3cwt. of ore; worth roundly £4,000 for three days' work. The rich vein is now 6ft. thick."

TAXATION AND COST OF LIVING IN TASMANIA.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON read an elaborate inquiry as to the varying proportions of food and other articles embodied in "Cost of Living," in relation to average income; together with observations relating to the proportion which taxes on food and other articles bear in relation to the total taxation of various countries. He said that the cost of living in every country was almost as variable as the widely varying fortunes of classes and individuals. It varied with the average wealth and standard of living of countries as well as of individuals. Mulhall estimated the average income per head of 18 great countries at £20 8s. per inhabitant. The average absolute cost of living in Tasmania he estimated at £11 10s. 7d. per head, or 32·14 per cent. above the average. As a doubt had been expressed recently by a very accomplished thinker whether sugar and tea contributed less to local taxation than clothing, a careful re-examination of the matter had been made, with the result of confirming unmistakably, so far as Tasmania was concerned, that not only was the amount of taxation per head in Tasmania less for tea and sugar than for clothing by 21·98 per cent. on an average of three years, but that also the total cost of tea and sugar, including taxes (cost of living) on the average only amounted to £1 13s. 7d. per head, or 3·53 per cent. of average income per head; while clothing, as an important and more necessary element in the "cost of living," averaged about £6 19s. 10d. per head in Tasmania, or 14·72 per cent. of average income per head, viz., it exceeded the total cost of tea and sugar together by £5 6s. 3d., or fully four times the amount. The question was thus narrowed

down to a small issue, viz., whether it would be more easy, for the poorer classes, to impose an additional tax of 6s. per head on clothing, raising it to 14s. per head. or to impose an additional tax of 3s. 11d. on tea and sugar, raising the existing tax to 10s. 2d. per head? It was clear, if no other qualification could be established, that the *ad valorem* tax in its effect on clothing would take about 2s. 1d. per head more from the poorer classes than the alternative tax upon tea and sugar. The paper was accompanied by a series of tables, illustrated by a diagram, and concluded with a hope that the facts set out might be of service to all practical economists and statesmen who might have to deal with matters affecting "the cost of living" of the people of this colony. He allotted Tasmanian expenditure based on the mean of three years, as follows:—Sugar and tea, £242,308; other food, £1,421,523; total food, £1,663,831; clothing, £1,009,064; rent, houses, £665,241; drink, £544,219; tobacco, cigars, £72,158; sundries and residue, £2,885,555. Total expenditure, £6,840,068.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. T. STEPHENS' paper, giving additional information respecting coniferæ planting in Tasmania, was postponed, but Mr. Stephens produced specimens of the celery-top pine, also two other specimens to demonstrate the difference between the King William pine and the red pine.

Mr. A. O. GREEN also produced a specimen of the celery-top pine, as well as others of local hardwoods sunk for years in the railway bridge at Bridgewater, to prove their durability.

Votes of thanks to the contributors of papers terminated the proceedings.

October meeting was not held.