

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, APRIL, 1901.

The monthly evening meeting (the first of the 1901 session) was held on Monday, April 29th, in the Tasmanian Art Gallery, the President (His Excellency the Administrator, Sir John Dodds) presided.

Apologies.

The senior vice-president, the Hon. Sir James Agnew, K.C.M.G., M.D., etc., and the Hon. C. H. Grant, M.E.C., sent an apology regretting their inability to be present.

New Members.

Mr. F. G. Simpkinson-De Wesselow, R.N., who, since the last session, had presented a number of water colour sketches to the Society, was unanimously elected an honorary member of the Society. Messrs. Frank Allwork, L.S.A., of New Norfolk, and P. J. McLeod, B.Sc., were elected Fellows of the Society.

Her Late Majesty.

Sir John Dodds, who was received with applause, said that this was the first occasion this year of the Society's meeting. They were all aware that Her late Majesty was the patron of their Society, and they were all honoured in the person of that patron. It was, therefore, fitting that on this occasion they should record their sense of the loss which the nation and this Society had sustained by the death of Queen Victoria. For more than 60 years Her late Majesty had exercised a personal influence for good which had made itself felt throughout the whole of the Empire. There was no feeling comparable in intensity with the feeling which Her late Majesty had engendered in the hearts of her subjects, and it would be idle for him to attempt in any way to describe the loss which the nation had sustained, and he thought it right to invite them to agree in expressing their deep sorrow for the loss of a sovereign, perhaps the greatest one they had ever known in their history. Let the example of her noble life abide with them as a people, and stimulate them to greater efforts. (Applause.)

Mr. Alex. Morton said an address to the Duke of Cornwall and York had been prepared on behalf of the Society.

Mr. Osborne Greene suggested that the use of the Society's rooms might be extended for the presentation to be made to Her late Majesty's grandson. Sir John Dodds thought that the suggestion might be conveniently referred to the Council of the Society for consideration, but pointed out that Government House had been fixed as the place for the presentation of addresses to the Royal visitors, and he ventured to think that that would be more acceptable.

Papers.

Sir John Dodds then said he had much pleasure in introducing to the Society Mr. Wm. Heyn, of the Timber Department Admiralty — Harbour Contract Works, Dover, England.

In the absence of the authors, the secretary read the following papers. (a) Description and analysis of a new species of mineral, "Petterdite," a new oxychloride of lead, by Mr. W. H. Twelvetrees, F.G.S., Government Geologist. The author said this apparently absolutely new chemical combination occurs in attached crystal groups in a quartz gangue containing disseminated pyrites, in the form of somewhat thin hexagonal plates, which are usually minute in size (about 5 millimetres in diameter), but occasionally reach 9 min. dia., and still more rarely a larger size. It was, says the writer, evidently rare, and, so far as known, confined to the locality mentioned. The specimen, of which a slide was thrown on the screen, was remarkably fine, containing about 200 perfectly-formed implanted crystals. Mr. Twelvetrees said the mineral was a very attractive specimen, and was easily distinguishable from the more abundant sulphate and carbonate of lead, and was occasionally associated with fine groups of campylite. He had great pleasure in dedicating it to Mr. W. F. Petterd, of Launceston, who had done so much in the work of Tasmanian minerals.

The next paper was by Mr. W. F. Petterd, who gave a description of a meteorite from the Castray River, Tas-

mania. The writer said that considerable interest invariably attached to the discovery of meteoric substances, and he therefore assumed that a few remarks concerning the recent acquisition of a small but reliable meteoric stone, fully authenticated as having been unearthed in this State, would be of interest. The specimen, of which a lantern slide was shown on the screen, displayed the second of these stones which have been discovered in Tasmania, bringing the total number recorded up to date as having been found in Australasia to about 33 examples. Those recorded from Australasia weighed from three to four tons, to that now described, which was the smallest so far obtained. Mr. Petterd said it was beyond doubt that many had been overlooked. To the average observer they were very unattractive, and it was only when they fell into the hands of mineralogists that their nature was revealed. The description of the Castray meteorite was:—Type, siderite; weight, 51 grains; size, length, 18 m.m.; greatest breadth, 10 m.m.; locality, Castray River, N.W. Tasmania. It was originally obtained, with two others of like size and character, by a miner in 1899, when ground-sluicing the auriferous drift on the banks of the Castray, and afterwards, direct from the discoverer, came into the possession of Mr. T. Birkett, the well-known mine manager, by whom it was presented to the mineral collection of Mr. Petterd.

Mr. Heyn, before reading his paper, thanked the Administrator (Sir John Dodds) and the Premier (Hon. N. E. Lewis) for the help afforded him in his work here, and forgave Mr. Alex. Morton for his indefatigable importunity to induce him (Mr. Heyn) to come before them that night. The people of Hobart, possessing one of, if not the finest harbour in the world, could scarcely conceive what the want of it meant in the English Channel. It was to find the piles necessary for the temporary staging used at Dover (England) harbour construction, to enable the laying of 42-ton concrete blocks, that he had come to Tasmania, where he had succeeded in getting magnificent blue gum piles, ranging up to 100ft. in length, and 20 inches square, at Norfolk Bay and Port Esperance. Oregon timber of the same dimensions could have been procured,

but the best blue gum suited the submarine works at Dover better, on account of its greater specific gravity, durability, and comparative imperviousness to ravages of the "terrida navalis," or common sea-worm. From a cargo sent them by Messrs. Gray Bros. they had seen at Dover that this was the most suitable. The process of utilising the logs was illustrated by lantern slides, prepared by Mr. Beattie. Mr. Heyn congratulated Tasmania on having thus additionally contributed towards the defences of the Mother-Country. He strongly recommended the use of blue gum or stringly bark to pave a street as a specimen of what could be done with it. He emphasised the necessity of all timber being cut at the proper time of the year, and properly seasoned, before exportation or use, as he preferred natural to artificial seasoning. He doubted whether our blackwood and Huon pine could be profitably exported to England, as equally good wood in black walnut or bird's-eye maple could be purchased there at very much lower prices. On entering the bush here he had felt indignation and sorrow at the wanton waste and ruin which ignorance and recklessness had caused in destroying thousands of splendid trees. He attributed this to ignorance of the first principles of forestry, and his remedy for that would be a School of Forestry and Agriculture, modelled on the plan of the most successful ones on the Continent. Our youth could attend them at the same time as the ordinary schools. He dwelt upon the necessity of reserving Crown lands, and, where young trees were coming up, the desirability of planting firs, and finally insisted upon the urgent necessity of acting at once. Otherwise, in a few years, our timber would be exhausted, and our fruit trade perhaps lost. Norwegian timber which he saw was being imported into Tasmania would grow to perfection in its own soil. When back in England it would always be a pleasure to him to do anything he could in the interests of Tasmania. (Applause.)

In the discussion that followed,

Hon. E. Mulcahy remarked that Mr. Heyn seemed to know more about our local timber than many of our local men did. Tasmania had had to face the fact of the important market of Victoria

being closed against her by duties, which practically shut her out; but that obstacle would be removed. It was, no doubt, a sin the way timber was destroyed, but to avoid it there was no choice unless the farmers had not only a market open, but means of transit to get the timber to it. The Government had not lost sight of the necessity of planting trees, and already had an order given for samples of seeds of certain trees. He moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

Mr. Heyn, in reply to Mr. Target, promised to send particulars of what some Governments made out of forestry.

Mr. Thomas Stephens, M.A., said that some two years ago, when in England, he inquired as to the chances of an export trade from the colony, and was told that some shipments previously had arrived so twisted and warped that no one would look at them. The West Australian woods were then coming into repute there. All competent judges said there was an opening for our timber in England, but it must be taken up by people with a proper knowledge and sufficient capital. He hoped that what Mr. Heyn had said would stimulate people to get the knowledge that would develop the trade.

Mr. Bernard Shaw differed from the lecturer in regard to what the pioneers had had to do to clear land for homesteads.

Mr. E. A. Counsel (Surveyor-General) agreed that timber destruction was unavoidable in the past, but now was the time to take steps against it.

Mr. Heyn replied that he had seen large quantities of land where, for want of knowledge of forestry, the only thing it could produce had been destroyed. He had not alluded to where homesteads with cereals had replaced the trees. He had seen blue gum trees destroyed where the soil would produce nothing else, and that it could not do so should have been ascertained before destroying. It had been done in the last few years.

Sir John Dodds could not help agreeing with a good deal that Mr. Heyn had said regarding clearing; but it must be remembered that if settlements were to be made, and population spread over the country, there must be a destruction of timber. It would be a good thing if the attention of Ministers were given to the matter of bush fires, with a view to the conservation of what, in the future, might prove a very large asset.

Votes of thanks to the authors of the papers were carried.