

Royal Society of Tasmania.

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, APRIL, 1903.

OPENING MEETING OF THE 1903 SESSION.

The members of the Royal Society of Tasmania held their opening meeting of the 1903 session on Tuesday evening, the 14th April, the President, His Excellency Sir A. E. Havelock, G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., presiding. His Excellency was accompanied by Lady Havelock, C.I., Captain Sheppard, R.A., Private Secretary, and Lady Havelock's brother, Mr. W. E. Norris. There was a large attendance of members and friends present, including His Lordship the Bishop of Tasmania and Mrs. Mercer, Mr. J. H. Barber, of Ceylon, who was a judicial officer there during the time that Sir Arthur Havelock was Governor; Sir Jno. Dods, and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Delany, Bishop of Laranda. On arrival, Lady Havelock was presented with a handsome bouquet (with the Havelock colours), as was also Mrs. Mercer.

Correspondence.

The Secretary (Mr. Alex. Morton) read the following letters:—

"Cullenswood House, Cullenswood, 7th April, 1903. Dear Sir,—I much regret, that owing to my having to be present at the opening of the St. Mary's produce show on Wednesday, the 15th inst., in my capacity as president, I shall not be able to come to the opening meeting of the Society. I desire again to tender my thanks, as a member of Council, to His Excellency for the keen interest he has taken in the work of our Society, and to express the hope that His Excellency may see his way to continue that interest during the coming session. I would like to call attention to the very valuable acquisition to the Museum of the handsome and instructive series of coloured plates of Japanese fishes. They add considerably to the educational value of the institution, and will be especially interesting to visitors from the neighbouring States. I may mention that Mr. H. C. Kingmill, Meteorological Observer, and myself made a trip in March to the Great Lake. The result of our work will, I trust, add considerably to our knowledge of the physiography of Tasmania. We took exhaustive soundings of the Lake, and measured the inflow of the streams at the north end, we were there during two heavy falls of rain, and were enabled to observe the very large supply of water coming in from the ranges round Dry's Bluff. This supply is constantly renewed owing to the wet climate at the north end, the rainfall being three and a half

times what it is at the south end."—I am, etc. (Signed) W. V. LEGGE, Member of the Council."

Letters from Sir Adye Douglas, Mr. R. M. Johnston, the Hon. N. J. Brown, Mr. Russell Young, and the Hon. Dr. Butler, regretting, that, owing to their absence from Hobart, they were unable to attend, were read.

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS.

His Excellency then delivered the following opening address:—

Vice-presidents and Fellows of the Royal Society,—For the second time there devolves upon me the honourable and agreeable duty of presiding at the first meeting of the annual session of the Royal Society of Tasmania. On this occasion, as on that of the opening of the session of last year, the Council have decided that our formal proceedings shall be short, and that our meeting this evening shall take the pleasant form of a social reception, rather than the more serious character of a scientific conference. The agreeable recollection of last year's first meeting will, I am confident, reconcile you to this programme.

Review of Last Session

I think it fitting that I should pass in review, and I will do this as briefly as possible, the work of the session of 1902. The Charter of the Royal Society lays down as its leading objects the investigation of the physical character of Tasmania, and the illustration of its natural history and productions. The records of the society show that a wide interpretation has been given to this enactment. One of my predecessors, when opening the session of 1887, in commenting on the extent of the range of the subjects dealt with by the society, remarked that its operations and investigations had covered so vast an area as to include such diverse subjects as the occultation of Jupiter and the Drainage of Hobart. The same distinguished president, when addressing the society, for the last time, in 1892, spoke as follows:—"The attention which is now being given on all sides to social and economic subjects has left its mark upon the work of our society for 1892; and the papers upon such subjects, and the discussions arising upon them, form a marked feature in this year's proceedings. While on the one hand, I myself should be very sorry to see the Royal Society of Tasmania so far depart from the original intention of its founders as to develop into more or less of a debating society on social and economic subjects, on the other, to exclude

a discussion of such subjects, from a scientific standpoint, would, in my view, be the greatest mistake this society could make."

In my humble opinion, this is as it should be. I believe the general views of the Council of the society on this point are in accord with mine; and the practice of the society, from its earliest days, has given proof of its acceptance of those views. Our proceedings during the session of 1902 give a conspicuous example of this comprehensive scope of the operations of our society.

PAPERS.

We find that while in the 22 papers presented to us, matters of more strictly scientific interest, such as Geology, Mineralogy, Astronomy, Botany, Ichthyology, Conchology, and Entomology, were brought before us and discussed, subjects of a more practical business character, such as the capacity of Tasmania as a manufacturing centre, the comparative value of its timbers, the preservation of forests, and drainage and sewerage, received a large measure of attention. The paper which was read before us on the advantages possessed by Tasmania for manufacturing industries brought into prominence and suggestive notice our vast available water power. The papers presented to us on Tasmanian timbers illustrated and emphasised the value and vastness of our yet imperfectly worked reserves of timber. The papers on forestry which have been put before us, and the discussions upon them, have contributed much expert knowledge on the subject, and also proposals of considerable practical importance for the organisation and working of a system of preservation and renewal of our forests. Our treatment of the pressing matter of drainage and sewerage has, I feel sure, helped to spread much information, and to remove many misconceptions on the subject. Under the heads I have mentioned the society has planted and nurtured a tree of knowledge, which has, we may flatter ourselves, already borne fruit, and which I am fain to believe will yet yield still richer crops. On the more specially scientific side of its work, the society has added considerably to its already rich stores of intelligent research. I think we may regard with satisfaction the results of the session of 1902.

KINDRED SOCIETIES.

The early part of the last year was made memorable by the holding in Tasmania of the ninth meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and by a session of the Australasian Medical Congress. These great scientific bodies

are allied in respect of aim and of method with our Royal Society. Their proceedings and achievements, followed by the busy and prolific programme of the Royal Society itself, made of the year 1902 a veritable jubilee of scientific festivity—I might almost say an orgy of science. The year 1903 may fall short of its predecessor in brilliant and striking events, but I feel sure it will not fail to leave a record of much work of interest, of value, and of usefulness. Varied and copious as have been the contributions to research of the society, during its life of sixty years, so inexhaustible is the scope of physical and natural science, in its multiform branches that there is no visible end to the task of its investigation and study.

OBITUARY.

During the past year, death has, to our deep regret, removed Mr. Mault, a member of our council—an accomplished man and an earnest worker of the society. Mr. Mault's place on the council has been filled by the appointment of the Bishop of Tasmania.

TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.

At the opening meeting of the sessional year, the recent additions to the Museum and Art Gallery were declared open. And thus the commodious room in which we are now met has become available for the purposes of the Royal Society, and for the reception of its valuable library. These advantages are, I believe, much esteemed by the members of the society. One of our vice-presidents, Hon. Nicholas J. Brown, the speech which he made in welcoming me as President of the society, called attention to the desirability, in the anticipation that Tasmania is destined to become an important manufacturing and distributing centre for Australia, of the organisation and equipment of a Technological Museum. I am happy to be able to observe that a beginning has been made towards the establishment of such a museum.

General Remarks.

The operations of our Fisheries Commission cannot fail to be of great interest to the Royal Society. Mr. A. G. Webster, one of our vice-presidents, who is also President of the Fisheries Board, returned last December from a visit to Europe and America, bringing with him nearly 500,000 ova of the American Quinnet salmon, the gift of the United States Fisheries Commission. It is gratifying to know that this shipment of ova has been successful—nearly 400,000 young fry having been liberated.

An honour has been conferred on the Royal Society by the Executive Council of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, in their selection of Colonel Legge and Mr. Twelvetees, two members of the Royal Society, to be presidents, respectively, of the Biological and Geological sections of the Association, whose next meeting will be held at Dunedin in January, 1904.

The munificent gift by Mr. Carnegie of the sum of £7,500 for the purposes of a Free Public Library in the city of Hobart, cannot fail to be a matter of interest and of rejoicing to the Royal Society. The choice of a site for the library is a subject of anxious consideration. We all trust that an early decision will be made, and that the building of the new library will then be at once taken in hand.

CENTENARY OF TASMANIA.

On the 12th September, 1803, the first settlement of our Island State was planted by Lieutenant Bowen, of the Royal Navy. On the 14th October, 1843, the Royal Society came into being, under the auspices of the then Governor, Sir J. E. Eardley-Wilmot. Thus, during the present year, the centennial jubilee of Tasmania and the diamond jubilee of the Royal Society will all but synchronise. The hundred years of Tasmania's life have seen her people grow into a healthy and vigorous community, showing perhaps a less rapid rise and achieving perhaps a less brilliant position than her neighbours, but attaining a happy and healthy state of social and industrial development. I believe that the Royal Society, working with the community at large, along parallel and sound lines of progress, has contributed in no small degree to this propitious end. May Tasmania and her Royal Society ever continue to co-operate in the promotion of the welfare and enlightenment of the people of this favoured land.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. T. Stephens said he had prepared a small paper on a purely business subject, but the circumstances of the evening impelled him to ask His Excellency to excuse him from reading it on that occasion.

The Bishop of Tasmania said that his pleasant duty would commend itself to all present. It was to propose a vote of

thanks to His Excellency for his presence and the address that had been delivered. He wished to felicitate the Society upon having His Excellency as president, as they had reason to be proud of the real interest Sir Arthur Havelock took in the Society. It was gratifying to think that Tasmania possessed such a Society. Their library was, indeed, a magnificent one. He desired to return thanks for having been elected a member of the Council, and he would do his best in the interests of the Society. With regard to the scope of the Society, if it was to be tied down to its original charter, the membership would be small indeed. It was, therefore, essential to give a wide interpretation to the charter. It was his opinion that they should be liberal in their interpretation of the terms of the charter. One of the objects of the Society should be to advance the interests of Tasmania. In Tasmania there was everything that nature could endow the State with, and still there was only a handful of people here. He hoped that in the study of social and economic questions, consideration would also be given to the development of Tasmania.

Bishop Delany seconded the motion. He was delighted to hear such encouraging words as Bishop Mercer had used, and of his desire to make the island progressive. When he first came to Tasmania, he had been struck with the need of more progress being made, but in response to all inquiries on the subject, he was simply told "it could not be done." (Laughter.) However, he hoped that the time had now arrived when the State would progress, and the removal of inter-State barriers would surely conduce to that end. He thanked His Excellency for the address delivered, and hoped he would long take an interest in the Society.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

On the motion of Mr. A. G. Webster, a hearty vote of welcome was accorded Mr. W. E. Norris and Mr. J. H. Barber.

His Excellency returned thanks for the kind vote that had been accorded him.

Light refreshments were then served in the trophy room, which was nicely fitted up for the occasion, a suite having been lent for the purpose by Messrs. T. Whitesides and Son. The other rooms of the Museum and Art Gallery were also lighted up during the evening.