ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, JUNE, 1903.

A meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held at the society's room at the Museum on Tuesday evening. His Excellency the Governor presided.

Exhibits.

Amongst the exhibits laid on the table was a memorial volume of the late J. B. Walker, published under the auspices of the Royal Society of Tasmania. The volume contained all the papers read by the late J. B. Walker before the society. Another volume on view was "Notes on Early Life in New Zealand," by the Rev. Geo. Clarke, presented to the society by the author.

New Members.

The following were elected members of the society:—Messrs. E. D. Dobbie, E. H. W. Wolfhagen, M. M. Ansell, E. Hawson, and N. Oldham.

Discussion.

A paper previously read by Mr. A. O. Green on "Tasmania from a Manufacturing and Immigration Point of View, and her Natural Advantages," was discussed.

Mr. R. M. Johnston said he was in accord with Mr. Green in his view of the possibilities and natural advantages of Tasmania, and approved of his caution with respect to the class of immigration that should be encouraged. Great caution must be exercised in the number of immigrants introduced at any one time, and attention must also be paid to the class of immigrants. Although a very large number of persons emigrated annually to the United States, it formed a very moderate proportion in comparison with her population of 64 millions. If the same proportion came annually to Tasmania, it would mean only 1,132 persons a year. He agreed with Mr. Green that unless the immigrants were drawn from the agricultural class, the annual introduction of such a number would have a bad effect on the local labour market. The standard of living in Australia was higher than in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, United States, etc., and still a smaller number of days was absorbed in Australia in earning that higher standard of living. The purchase of power in Australia was, therefore, greater, but the cost of living was high. Mr. Johnston then quoted the chief articles of food used in each country, and gave the prices of each article. The success of a young colony depended largely on the extent of land opened for settlement, and success also depended to a great extent on such things as the agricultural, pastoral, and mineral industries. A young country passed through three great successive predominating stages. The first was the pastoral stage, the second was the agricultural industry, and the last the manufacturing stage. This last stage was still far off, as far as Australia was concerned. The pastoral and agricultural industries could not support many people to the square mile. For every 1,000 additional labourers that could be placed on the land, nearly 7,000 additional persons could be kept in the State. Referring to the question of population, Mr. Johnston said in the last century the United Kingdom could only double its population in 71 years, Australia in 11 years, and Tasmania in 16 years. During the last decade the increase of population was such that it would take 93 years for the United Kingdom to double its population; it would take Australia 39 years instead of 11, and Tasmania 42 years instead of 16 years. The serious decline in the increase of population was a strong reason for caution being exercised in forming any estimate of the likely growth of population in the present century. If the present increase of population was maintained, Tasmania, that now had a population of 177,000, would in 2002 have a population of 900,810 persons. It was possible that such a growth would be maintained, having regard to the fact that America in 30 or 40 years time would, instead of absorbing the surplus population of the United Kingdom and Europe, be really augmenting the immigration to Australasia. Supposing that the present rate of increase in population in Australia was maintained, there would be in the Commonwealth in 2002 a population of 21,585,000. The mass of the people in Tasmania lived in a better condition than in the United Kingdom, and the fact that fewer families lived in one room conduced to a healthier life..

Mr. T. Stephens also offered a few remarks on Mr. Green's paper, and pointed out that the suitableness of the soil in Tasmania for potato-growing applied only to certain districts. It was astonishing in a country like Tasmania, where hundreds of tons of apples wasted every year, that more cider was not made. He thought lecturers should go through the United Kingdom, giving the people accurate information of the prospects that awaited them in Tasmania.

His Excellency, in calling upon Mr. Green to reply, said he had understood that gentleman to state that in England mutton could be obtained at 2½d. per lb. That was quite contrary to any experience of his, and he would be glad to hear how Mr. Green had been so fortunate as to obtain his mutton in England at so low a price. (Laughter.)

Mr. Green expressed pleasure that his paper had drawn such useful information as that advanced by Mr. Johnston. The mutton to which he had referred as being purchasable in England at 2½d. came from New Zealand, and he had been informed that it could be purchased as low as 2d.

Mount Elephant.

Colonel Legge read a paper on "Mount Elephant and its Limestone Beds," and also made reference to the coal obtained in the vicinity.

The paper was discussed by Messrs. R. M. Johnston and T. Stephens, after which Colonel Legge replied.

Rainfall at Great Lake.

Colonel Legge read a paper, written by himself and Mr. Kingsmill, on "The rainfall and water supply of the Great Lake." The paper stated that the character of the country at the North was totally different from that at the South. Attention was paid to this feature, owing to the widespread idea that the Great Lake had no feeders, and that the outflow through the Shannon at the south end was compensated for by the influence of springs at the bottom of the lake. Reference was made to the extent of the rainfall between the south end of the lake (Swan Bay) and the Little Lake at the north. The difference in the fall of rain at the two places was caused by the proximity of the north end of the lake to the high mountains of the Western ranges, which caught all the rain coming from the west and north-west. The extent of the fall of rain in various parts of the neighbourhood was explained, and attention directed to the effect exercised by the adjacent mountains on the precipitation of rain around the head of the lake. It was thought that, though there were no large feeders at the north of the Great Lake, the rivulets that did exist carried a large body of water to the lake after heavy rain, and the climate was so wet that the discharge from the surrounding mountains was of frequent occurrence throughout the year. The conditions which affected the water supply of the Great Lake were—A wet climate at the north end; a watershed of mountain rivulets; repeated heavy falls of rain; melting of snow; the normally small outflow at the south end.

Votes of thanks were accorded the writers of papers.

Discussion of the paper was postponed until next meeting, and His Excellency was accorded a vote of thanks for presiding.

JULY MEETING,

Owing to heavy rains the meeting lapsed.