

Royal Society of Tasmania.

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS.

APRIL 10th, 1911.

The first monthly general meeting of the Society was held at the Museum on Monday evening, April 10th, 1911. Mr. R. M. Johnston occupied the chair.

Mr. L. Rodway read a paper on "The Hymenogastraceæ of Tasmania." It was stated in Cooke's work on Australian fungi that Tasmania was poor in fungi of this kind, but it was really the richest country in the world in them. He had personally discovered 40 or 50 new species, besides others which were common to other countries as well. A description was then given of the characters of this family of fungi, and the various species which it contained.

Dr. Fritz Noetling read a paper on "Percussion Marks on Siliceous Rocks," describing the methods by which stone implements were detached from the parent boulders of which they originally formed part, and pointing out how, from the character of the markings upon them, they must be due to human agencies.

The Chairman said that Dr. Noetling had done masterly work in regard to our native flints, but he did not think that they should be prepared to accept all the markings that had been described as due to human agency. While supporting Dr. Noetling in the main, he was not prepared to follow him to the full conclusions he had arrived at.

Dr. Noetling explained that the appearances he had described in stone implements could be produced in any homogeneous substances by a smart blow.

Mr. R. Hall read a paper in regard to the feather tracts of *Sphenura*, a bird found only in South-West and South-East Australia. Two species were found in each place, and the position of the birds scientifically was somewhat uncertain. It was hoped that a study of the feather tracts would enable their relationships to be better understood.

Amongst the specimens exhibited was a fine piece of agate from Broadmarsh, and a small fish, which is occasionally found round the Hobart wharves. Locally it is known as the "blue-eye." It has been identified as *Trachynops teniata*, hitherto regarded as a N.S.W. species.

MAY 8th, 1911.

The general monthly meeting of the Society was held at the Museum on Monday evening, May 8th, 1911, Hon. G. H. Butler, a vice-president, in the chair.

Mr. R. Hall read a letter from Professor Orme Masson, of the Melbourne University, president of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, requesting him to take steps to form a Tasmanian sub-committee to assist in the collection of funds for the Antarctic expedition to be undertaken by Dr. Douglas Mawson.

Mr. T. Stephens moved that a committee be appointed for the purpose named.

Professor Flynn seconded the motion, which was carried without discussion.

The appointment of the committee was allowed to stand over until next meeting, the secretary stating that he would be glad to receive subscriptions in the meantime.

Mr. J. A. Johnson moved that there be added to rule 42 a sub-section E—Psychology and Education. He did not think it necessary to weary the Fellows present by explaining that psychology and education, either separately or together, formed a science coming within the objects of the Royal Society. In his opinion, the greatest revolution which had taken place in the last 20 years in any department of scientific work was that which had taken place in regard to education. It was as great as that which took place in regard to physical science, when we learnt that this world of ours was not the centre of the solar system. In arguing on behalf of psychology he wished his hearers to understand that he was not arguing on behalf of metaphysics, but for the study of the simpler facts of mental phenomena on which all were agreed, and facts bearing on the work of education. That, he proposed, should be the work of the new sub-section. He knew several engaged in the work of education who would be glad to take part in the work of the society if subjects such as these were included.

Mr. Herman Ritz supported the motion. He considered it too late in the day now to deny that the training of the human mind was scientific work, and for that reason it came well within the scope of the society.

Mr. T. Stephens said that he had the fullest sympathy with the objects of the mover, but he thought they should consider whether such subjects as education and psychology came within the original scope of the Royal Society. The original founders of the society contemplated as its scope physical science and natural philosophy, and it was many years before any attempt was made to introduce innovations. As a member of the profession of education for over half a century, he agreed with everything that Mr. Johnson had said, but he considered that education and psychology were big enough subjects to have a society of their own. There was a good deal to be said in

their favour, however, if the majority of Fellows desired them to be introduced as the subjects for a new section of the Royal Society. At the same time, he thought they should be regular. No individual member had the right to propose such a motion as this; it must come from the Council.

The Chairman: It has been before the Council, and the Council brought it up to-night.

Mr. T. Stephens said he would move as an amendment that the proposed new section be given a trial for the current year. If it proved beneficial to the society, it would then be easy to move for its continuance.

Mr. A. O. Green thought that some better reason should be found than the one that these subjects were outside the scope of the society. If they were, they should be included within it as soon as possible.

Mr. L. E. Piesse said that the present constitution of the society was dated 1907, and in it the objects of the society were defined as the study of science in all its various branches. It could not be denied that education was a science nowadays. He would support the proposal, as he thought the influence of the society would be very much increased by the inclusion of these subjects, and that it would benefit by an increase of members.

The Chairman said that he thought that any good attempt to broaden the work of the society was one that they should support. They must broaden their work, and take in all sciences, so increasing the interest of the people in their doings, or else they would go into extinction altogether. He could not see any object in limiting the new sub-section to the current year, as the Fellows could always stop it if they wished to.

Mr. J. A. Johnson: If we cannot keep the section going it will die a natural death, and drop out.

Mr. T. A. Stephens: Then I will not move any amendment, but will support the motion as it stands.

The motion was carried.

The reading of Dr. Fritz Noetling's paper on "The Manufacture of the Tero-Watta" was postponed until a future meeting.

MAY 22nd, 1911.

A special meeting of the Royal Society was held at the Museum on Monday evening, May 22, 1911, for the purpose of considering the new rules drawn up by the committee appointed for the purpose at the last annual general meeting. Hon. Dr. Butler occupied the chair.

The rules were taken seriatim.

On rule 4, "The society shall consist of ordinary members, honorary members, and corresponding members."

Mr. T. Stephens said that it was proposed to do away with the title of "associate," and he had not heard any good reason advanced in the committee for doing so. Associates had only been admitted for three years, and there had only been one during that time, but it did not follow that there would not be many more in the future. He would object to the omission of the word "associate."

Mr. E. L. Piesse said that it was proposed to reduce the annual subscription to one guinea. The subscription now was £1 10s., and associates were admitted at one guinea. If the subscription was reduced to one guinea there would be no need to have associates.

Mr. T. Stephens said that it was also proposed to do away with the title "Fellow," and substitute "member." He was quite in accord with that, as there was no qualification for Fellows, but he did not think it could be done without the repeal or amendment of the Royal Society Act.

The consideration of the clause was postponed until the amount of the annual subscription was decided.

Rule 8, fixing the annual subscription at one guinea, was agreed to without discussion.

On rule 22, that the Council should consist of nine ordinary members, to be elected at the annual general meeting,

Mr. T. Stephens said that there was considerable difference of opinion in the committee in regard to this rule. He did not care whether the Council consisted of 12 members, as at present, or nine, as proposed, but he objected to the whole Council having to be elected at each annual meeting, as a number of men might be elected who knew nothing about the business of the society.

Dr. Crouch: What was this committee?

The Chairman: It was a committee appointed by the Fellows at the last annual meeting for the purpose of revising the rules.

The provision that the Council should consist of nine members was agreed to.

On the proposal that the Council should be elected annually, the meeting divided, with the following result:—Ayes, 15; Noes, 10.

The Chairman stated that several proxies had been received.

Mr. L. Rodway raised the question as to the legality of the proxies, as he did not think they had been laid before the Council as the rules required.

The Chairman said that two of the proxies had been irregularly made out, and he did not think that the others could be received, as they had not been considered by the Council.

After some discussion, it was decided that the proxies which had been handed in prior to the meeting should be received, as there had not been a meeting of the Council between the calling of the meeting and that evening.

When the proxies were added to the other votes, the rule was declared agreed to by a majority of one.

On rule 50, which proposed to do away with voting by proxies at any meeting of the society,

Mr. Rodway moved as an amendment that country members or others who were unable to attend should be allowed to vote by post. If only those who attended the meetings were allowed to vote it would tend to destroy the national character of the society.

After discussion, the proposed amendment was agreed to.

Mr. T. Stephens moved as a further amendment that Fellows resident not less than 10 miles from Hobart should be allowed to vote by proxy at special general meetings.

The amendment was negatived, and the rule as amended agreed to.

Postponed rule 4 was agreed to.

It was decided that the new rules should come into force on January 1, 1912, and that in the meantime they should be referred back to the drafting committee for arrangement in suitable sequence.

The meeting then terminated.

JUNE 12th, 1911.

The general monthly meeting of the Society was held at the Museum on Monday evening, June 12th, 1911.

His Excellency Sir Harry Barron, K.C.M.G., occupied the chair.

Messrs. G. V. Brooks, R. S. Dickenson, M.A., E. I. Gower, B.A., Robert Hall, C.M.Z.S., E. H. D. Keene, M.A., R. O. Miller, B. Sc., were elected Fellows of the Society.

The formation of a Biology Section was announced, which would hold its first meeting, to appoint office-bearers, during the month.