AUGUST 15th, 1906.

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Royal Society was held in the Society's room at the Museum on August 15. His Excellency the Governor, who was accompanied by Mr. Geo. Browne, I.S.O., Private Secretary, presided.

The following new members were elected:—Hon. N. K. Ewing, Mr. J. A. Johnson, M.A. (principal of the Training College), Mr. H. J. Spencer (electrical engineer), and Dr. F. W. Noetling, Ph.D., who has for many years been connected with the Palæontological section of the Indian Survey Department, and has contributed numerous articles to various publications on palæontological and other subjects.

The Tasmanian Emu.

Colonel W. V. Legge's paper on the Tasmania Emu (species Dromiaus) was read, in the Colonel's absence, by the Secretary (Mr. Alex. Morton). "In connection with the interesting discovery of emu bones on King Island some little time since," wrote the colonel, "and the recent trip of the Director of the Museum to the site of their exhumation, a few remarks about the Tasmanian species may be opportune. I had the pleasure of inspecting the bones, in company with Mr. Morton, and was struck with the small size of the femur, which would represent a bird a little more than half the size of D. novæ hollandiæ, and the impression came to my mind that the bones might not improbably belong to the smaller insular form, the Black Emu (D. ater), of Kangaroo Island, S.A. This species existed there in the beginning of the last century, and specimens were captured and sent to Paris by Peron. The bird was afterwards exterminated by the settlers, much in the same way that the Emu in Tasmania was—chiefly by being run down and caught by dogs. It is reasonable to suppose that D. ater extended its distribution to King Island, being, in fact, the insular form of the continental species." The paper concluded with a suggestion that some of the King Island bones should be sent to the Florence Museum for a comparison by the Director with the skeleton of D. ater which was there.

The Cucumber Herring.

A paper by Mr. C. H. Harrison, assistant secretary of the Northern Tasmanian Fisheries Board, was read by Mr. R. M. Johnston, I.S.O. It was entitled "Some notes on the propagation of the cucumber herring from the captive fish." Mr. Harrison, who has taken a great deal of interest in this branch of science, was successful in hatching a large number of eggs of this interesting herring, which was at one time plentiful in our Southern waters, though for some years they have been extinct. The result of the experiment at the Waverley ponds in Launceston clearly demonstrates that this fish, like the salmonidæ, can be dealt with, and it is to be hoped that not only the Northern, but the Southern and other rivers will be stocked.

Aboriginal Stone Axes.

A paper on a recent discovery of some Tasmanian aboriginal stone axes on Tasman Island by Mr. J. E. Philp was read by the Secretary (Mr. Alex. Morton). On a recent visit to Tasman Island, Mr. Philp found, near the summit, a large number of chipped stone implements, clearly showing that at one period the now extinct aboriginals of Tasmania visited Tasman Island, whether in search of mutton bird or crayfish it is difficult to say; but they must have made use of their very rude canoes, known to have been used by them on the East Coast, to go from the mainland to the adjacent island. It would be interesting to follow this matter up, and see if any shell middens, as found on the mainland, exist on Tasman Island. Professor Edward Tylor, F.R.S., of London, in a very interesting paper published in 1893, entitled "On the Tasmanians as Representatives of Palæolithic Man," wrote:—"The Tasmanians up to the time of the British colonisation in the present century habitually used stone implements shaped and edged by chipping, not ground or polished. These belong, notwithstanding their modern date, to the order of the very ancient palæolithic implements of the Drift and Cave periods, from which the later implements of the neolithic order are distinguished by greater form and skill of finish, and especially by the presence of grinding or polishing. The comparison of the Tasmanian stone implements," wrote Professor Tylor, "with those of the ancient world impresses on us the fact that the rude modern savage was content to use a few forms of implements for all purposes of cutting, chopping, etc., these being flakes as struck off the stone, and such flakes, or even chance fragments, trimmed and brought to a cutting edge by striking off chips along the edge of one surface only, whether completely or partly round. Such stones are known to the Stone Age of the old world. The Tasmanian, though using types of implement not unfamiliar to palæolithic man, is not known to have attained to making any implement approaching the characteristic palæolithic pick, chipped into sym-

metrical form, and edged and pointed by chips taken in order from both surfaces. If," says Dr. Tylor, "it may be taken that the information from Tasmania is conclusive in this respect, it will appear that the savages there, within this century so miserably erased from the catalogue of the human race, were representatives of Stone Age development, a stage lower than that of the Quarternary period."

At the request of the secretary, Dr. Noetling, who is an authority on the Stone Age, spoke on the subject, and said he had been greatly struck with the likeness of the Tasmanian stone (specimens of which were shown in a case) to the eolithes of Europe, which were of artificial origin, and were shaped between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago, when our European ancestors were in about the same state of cultivation as the Tasmanian aboriginals were. He agreed with Dr. Tylor that the latter were in the same state as the palæolithic men of Europe.

Schouten Peninsula.

The most interesting item of the evening was a lecture by Mr. J. W. Beattie, beautifully illustrated with 50 specially-prepared lantern slides, on "Schouten Peninsula: its adaptabilities as a natural reserve for the protection of the native flora and fauna of Tasmania." Mr. Beattie's suggestion that this place should be reserved as a sort of national-park has been dealt with by the society on several occasions. At the June meeting in 1904 Mr. J. F. Mather read a very interesting paper on this subject, and the proposal last night met with the warm approval of the society. The views embraced the whole of the coast line from Denison Canal to Freycinet Peninsula, and gave a very realistic idea of what sort of a place the proposed reserve is. Mr. Nat Oldham managed the lantern with his usual skill.

Mr. Morton said that Tasmania was the only State which had not a reserve for the preservation of the fauna and flora. It was high time that some steps should be taken to acquire one, and none better could be found than the one proposed.

After a short discussion on the paper, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the speakers, on the motion of the chairman, after which the proceedings terminated.