

ROYAL SOCIETY.

JULY, 1866.

The monthly evening meeting of the Fellows was held on Tuesday, the 10th July, T. Giblin, Esq., in the chair.

W. J. B. Jenner, Esq., who had been previously nominated by the Council, was, after a ballot, declared to be duly elected a Fellow of the Society.

The following returns were laid on the table:—

1. Visitors to Museum during June 510.
2. Ditto to Gardens ditto 796.
3. Tench supplied ditto 27
4. Time of leafing, flowering, and fruiting of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
5. Plants and seeds sent from Gardens during June:—
 - a. To Mr. Patterson, Sydney, N.S.W., 25 plants.
 - b. To S. Hannaford, Esq., Launceston, 500 white mulberry plants for Public Gardens.
 - c. To Colonel Chesney, for Macquarie-street entrance to Queen's Park, 63 trees, shrubs, &c.
 - d. To E. M. Lloyd, Esq., R. E., 10 oaks for Military Barracks.
 - e. To W. R. Falconer, Esq., for decoration of public places in Hobart Town and Launceston, 116 plants, and two varieties of bulbs.
 - f. For the grounds of the Queen's Orphan Asylum, 119 plants.
 - g. To A. Verschaffelt, Ghent, Belgium, 3 large tree ferns.
6. Plants and seeds received at Gardens:—
 - a. From A. Verschaffelt, Ghent, 32 plants of which 18 were dead on arrival.
 - b. From Dr. Mueller, Melbourne Botanic Gardens,—tree and shrub seeds, 164 papers; Herbaceous and Annual, 675 ditto; Grass, Wheat, Oats, Maize, Gourds, and Ricinus, 335 ditto; Palm, 2 ditto. Total varieties of Seeds 1,178, of Plants 185.

As to this large and valuable presentation from Dr. Mueller, the SECRETARY read the following letter from Archdeacon Davies:—

“I enclose a list of plants, which have been forwarded by Dr. Mueller, to the Royal Society's Gardens. Another case, if not already received, will arrive by the next Southern Cross. Dr. Mueller has also promised a very large supply of Fir Trees, for the new Cemetery, and he offered me, or through myself, 500 Tea Trees to any person who will take the trouble of preparing a suitable piece of ground to plant them in. Under these circumstances, I think some acknowledgment is due to Dr. Mueller more than the usual receipt for plants received.”

The following memorandum, attached to his usual monthly return by Mr. F. Abbott, Superintendent of the Gardens, was also read:—“With reference to Dr. Mueller's splendid donation, I think the thanks of the Society are due to that gentleman for his liberality, not only on the present occasion but on many previous ones. In the present collection, which consists of 185 Plants and 1,178 papers of Seeds, although there are some more of botanical interest than otherwise, there are many useful and ornamental varieties.”

Mr. M. ALLPORT then moved that a special vote of thanks should be given to Dr. Mueller, and he had the greatest pleasure in doing so, not only for the splendid and valuable donation, for which the Society had become indebted, but for the extreme attention Dr. Mueller had invariably shown when application had been made to him for information on any subject connected with horticulture or botany. On all such occasions we were certain of receiving a most prompt and courteous reply.

Mr. JOHNSTON seconded.

The CHAIRMAN was glad that such notice had been taken, not only of this magnificent presentation, but of the great courtesy which we had invariably experienced in our communications with Dr. Mueller, who, he might further remark, had also promised to furnish us at all times to the utmost of his ability with any shrubs and plants (not being in our own collection) which we might wish to procure for our gardens, or other places of public resort.

The motion was carried unanimously, and the Secretary was requested to transmit a copy of it to Dr. Mueller.

Meteorological Returns :—

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.
 - a. Table for June.
 - b. Summary and analysis of observations for ditto.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.
 - a. Table for June.
 - b. Reading of Government's schooner's barometer for ditto.
3. Tamar Heads, from R. Henry, Esq.

Tables for May and June.
4. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.

Table for June.
5. Ross, from M. Duncanson, Esq.

Tables for March, April, and May.

The following remarks by E. S. Hall, Esq., on the meteorology of the month were read :—

“The deaths during last month are not yet all registered, therefore I have not been able to complete my tables, and consequently cannot send my usual monthly report. The deaths registered, however, considerably exceed the June average of the previous nine years. There were only six children died under five years old, while the deaths at all ages above 60 were 24.

“Atmospheric pressure attained the highest maximum ever recorded, and the month range was only exceeded once in the last 25 years—i. e., in June 1851. Never before was there so windy a June. The highest previously had little more than one-third of this year's. Temperature was above the average, with a daily range above the 20 years' mean. Rainfall was within a trifle of the 20 years' mean; cloud the same. Ozone was more abundant than in any June recorded, except last year's. Catarrhal affections have been almost universal. Many persons call it influenza, and imagine the visitation to be the same, and as severe as in 1861. The atmospheric peculiarities of the two periods were quite distinct, and 1861 almost the reverse of what 1866 has had. It is remarkable that in June this year there is not a single record of 'positive electricity.'”

The following presentations to the Museum were brought under the notice of the meeting :—

1. From J. Maclanachan, Esq. A hen Golden Pheasant.
2. From Mr. Willing. A bittern (*Botaurus Australis*).
3. From M. Allport, Esq. Specimens of *Echidua setosa*, and Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*).
4. From F. Sharland, Esq. A Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax Caledonicus*).
5. From W. Johnston, Esq. A limestone fossil (cast of Pecten), from Huon Road.
6. From Mr. R. Wood. Five do do.
7. From F. Cox, Esq. Specimen of iron ore from Brighton.
8. From H. M. Hull, Esq. Specimens of Tasmanian shells.
9. From Mr. G. Smith, Old Beach. Head of fowl with malformed beak. (With a letter.)
10. From H. B. Tonkin, Esq., a seed from Queensland.
11. From Mr. Cummins, a 20 dollar Spanish note.
12. From His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne, a bottle of petroleum from New Zealand.
13. From Mr. Smith, specimens of granite and iron ore from River Forth.
14. From R. C. Read, Esq., Redlands, sample of charred grain, found on ploughing up a field which had not been under cultivation for 40 years. The form of the grain (barley) is perfectly preserved.

15. From C. B. Wilkinson, Esq., section of an Armstrong Segment Shell, with time and concussion fuse as fixed before firing.

Mr. M. ALLPORT read a "Report on the present state of the fry of the salmon and salmon trout at the Plenty, and of the taking of the first spawn from the brown trout."

After reading the paper, Mr. ALLPORT further remarked that of the first batch of the brown trout (now about two years old) there were still in the ponds probably two hundred; and it was noticed that the proportion of males to females was that of three of the former to one of the latter. In all cases of artificial fish-breeding at home—at least as regarded the genus *Salmo*—this proportion was found invariably to exist.

Mr. ALLPORT, sen., thought this ratio was perhaps a general one, and was probably intended to provide an excess of the milt, large portions of which were of course liable to be swept away by the streams or currents in which the spawning took place.

Dr. OFFICER was very happy in being able to confirm the statement in Mr. M. Allport's report as to the percentage of healthy-looking ova in the late shipment. Every individual present when the boxes were opened calculated that, at the very least, 40 per cent. of the ova were healthy, but no one could say how many of these were unimpregnated, or in how many the seeds of death already existed. The wonder was that we obtained so many living fish. Six thousand salmon promising to arrive at maturity, constituted a great success. He thought great numbers of the ova had died very recently, and had the voyage been prolonged only a very few days he feared the mortality would have been so great as to have seriously imperilled the entire success of the experiment. From frequent visits to the ponds he could testify that everything which zeal and energy could accomplish had been done by Mr. Ramsbottom, and the general arrangements were now so perfect that he did not think any improvement could be made. The experiment has been the greatest, and the most promising as to its results of anything of the kind that had ever hitherto been accomplished, and the achievement was certain to obtain the greatest possible credit from the whole of the scientific world. For the valuable, lucid, and temperate paper just read, he thought our best thanks were due to the author, and he begged to move accordingly.

The motion was seconded by Mr. JOHNSTON, and carried unanimously.

Mr. M. ALLPORT returned thanks, and, in answer to a query, observed that Mr. Ramsbottom did not expect the salmon to return from the sea till fifteen months after they had reached it. In this opinion he quite concurred, although the belief in their return in a much shorter period was held by many men of the highest scientific repute at home. Mr. Ramsbottom's opinion, he might mention, had been considerably strengthened by a circumstance which had come under the observation of his brother. He (Mr. Ramsbottom's brother) was engaged in Ireland some time ago in stocking with salmon a river which previously contained none. On this river falls existed which prevented the fish coming up from the sea. He therefore placed ladders on these falls, and stocked the upper waters with the fish. In due time they were able to descend to the sea, and to return by means of the artificial assistance rendered to them; when it was found that the time of the return of the first fish was fifteen months from the date of the downward voyage.

Mr. F. ABBOTT read some notes on the "Abstract Tables of 25 years' Meteorological Observations taken at Hobart Town," recently presented by him to the Society, and a copy of which he laid before the meeting.

Discussion ensued, and a general opinion was expressed that these valuable returns should be printed for distribution with the least possible delay.

The SECRETARY mentioned that at the request of the Council he had written to Government on the subject. The Council were very anxious that the abstracts should have been in type before the time fixed for the Intercolonial Exhibition, where their importance could not fail to have been appreciated. He feared, however, that the Government printing-office would be so fully occupied during the session of parliament that there was not much probability of their being printed till after that period, except it was thought advisable that considerable expense for extra labor should be incurred.

Mr. ABBOTT thought they had a claim on the Government for the printing of these returns in time for the Intercolonial and Parisian Exhibitions. In

most Governments expensive observatories were kept up, with highly salaried officials. Here all the meteorological observations were taken without any outlay whatever to the colony; and it was little to ask that a record involving so large an amount of care and trouble should be printed at public expense. He could vouch for the accuracy of the tables, and if, on their distribution over the world, they did nothing more, they would, at all events, show that no colony of Great Britain possesses a climate equal to that of Tasmania.

Mr. DAVIES, having heard what had fallen from Mr. Abbott and the previous speaker, thought the Society could do no less than record upon the minutes of their proceedings their sense of the patriotism and zeal exhibited by Mr. Abbott in the compilation of these valuable tables for scientific and public use, and moved that the thanks of the Society be given to Mr. Abbott accordingly.

Mr. JOHNSTON having seconded,

The CHAIRMAN, in putting the resolution, passed a flattering eulogium on Mr. Abbott, for the pains he had taken in the compilation of the records. He had no doubt they would soon be printed, when the public would reap the advantage of Mr. Abbott's valuable labors.

The motion having been unanimously carried,

Mr. Abbott in returning thanks hoped that his remarks about salaries, would not convey the impression that he wished for any remuneration for his trouble. No such idea had ever entered his mind. What little he had been able to do, was done from no mercenary motive, but from a pure love for a science in which he had always taken the deepest interest.

The usual vote of thanks having been accorded to the donors of the various presentations, the meeting terminated.