

C/- Auckland Institute and Museum,
Private Bag,
Auckland.
NEW ZEALAND.



A. G. M. A. N. Z. NEWSLETTER NO. 40

May 1968.

CHANGE OF AGMANZ ADDRESS

Dr. Robert Cooper is retiring as Hon. Secretary and Editor. The name and address of the new Secretary is Mr. John Maynard, Director, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, P.O. Box 647, New Plymouth.

CAPITAL SUBSIDIES

At a meeting held at Dominion Museum, Wellington, on 8.4.68, AGMANZ Council decided to invite Institution Members to describe their applications for capital subsidies, to select one case with "press appeal", and to support it as strongly as possible. Will any Institution Members interested in this approach to the problem, please send details of their applications to the Hon. Secretary, AGMANZ, P.O. Box 647, New Plymouth.

The Council also decided to ask for definite replies from the Director of the Arts Council, and to seek the opportunity to make representations to the Tourism Committee of the National Development Conference on the role of Galleries and Museums in Tourism.

MEMBERSHIP

The following have been elected to Ordinary Membership:

Mr. A. B. Stephenson B.Sc., Marine Biologist, Auckland Institute and Museum.

Mr. John B. Turner, Photographer, Dominion Museum, Wellington.

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

Mr. Hamish Keith, Keeper of the Gallery, has been selected as the Labour Party candidate for the Remuera electorate in the 1969 General Election.

AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM

Dr. A. W. B. Powell FRSNZ, FMANZ, Assistant Director, retired on 4th April, 1968. He began his association with the Museum as a boy, when T. F. Cheeseman was Curator, and served on the staff for more than 40 years. His beautifully illustrated Native Animals of New Zealand has been a best-seller since 1947, and his contributions to conchology have earned him recognition in New Zealand and overseas. He joined AGMANZ in 1948, served as a Councillor in 1954-5,

and was elected to a Fellowship in 1956. In his retirement, he will continue researches on the mollusca.

WANGANUI CONFERENCE 1969

The Conference will be held at Wanganui Public Museum from the morning of Tuesday 18th to midday on Thursday 20th March, 1969. It will be the 10th Biennial Conference held by the Association.

DUNEDIN PUBLIC ART GALLERY

Mr. James Mack, Director, Palmerston North Art Gallery, has been appointed Assistant Director of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT
DOMINION MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, AT 10.30 a.m. ON
TUESDAY, 9th APRIL, 1968.

PRESENT: Dr. R.R. Forster (President), and 60 members and delegates.

APOLOGIES: were received from:
Mr. Rigby Allan, Director, Taranaki Museum, New Plymouth,
Sir Gilbert Archey,
Black's Point Museum Trust Board, Reefton.
Mr. C.S. Fraser, President, Waikato Museum Society, Hamilton.
Mr. John Hogan, Director, Museum of Transport & Technology,
Mr. G.I.C. McDouall, President, Wanganui Public Museum,
Mr. H.C. McQueen, Chairman, Management Committee, Dominion Museum,
Mrs. M.J. Neilson, Secretary, Manawatu Museum Planning Committee,
Mr. D. Simmons, Ethnologist, Auckland Institute & Museum.
Southland Museum Trust Board,
Mr. E.G. Turbott, Director, Auckland Institute & Museum.

DELEGATES: The Secretary was notified of the following:

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| Aigantighe Art Gallery | - Mr. C.A. Brunsdon |
| Auckland City Art Gallery | - Mr. Gilbert Docking and Cr. W. Horton |
| Auckland Institute & Museum | Dr. R. Cooper and Mrs. W. Horton |
| Canterbury Museum | - Dr. R.S. Duff and Mr. R.H. Riccalton |
| Dominion Museum | - Dr. R.K. Dell and Mr. B.G. Hamlin |

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Mr. John Hogan, Director, Museum of Transport & Technology,
Mr. G. I. C. McDouall, President, Wanganui Public Museum,
Mr. H. C. McQueen, Chairman, Management Committee, Dominion Museum,
Mrs. M. J. Neilson, Secretary, Manawatu Museum Planning Committee,
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| Dominion Museum | - | Dr. R. K. Dell and Mr. B. G. Hamlin |

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| Gisborne Art Gallery & Museum | - Mr. W.H. Way |
| Hamilton Art Gallery | - Mrs. Ruth Davey |
| Hawke's Bay Art Gallery & Museum | - Mr. & Mrs. J.S.B. Munro |
| Hocken Library | - Mr. M. Hitchings |
| National Art Gallery | - Mr. John Ritson and Mrs. E.M. Northmore. |
| Nelson Provincial Museum | - Mr. J.R. Eyles |
| N. Z. Oceanographic Institute | - Mr. J. W. Brodie |
| Otago Museum | - Dr. R.R. Forster |
| Palmerston North Art Gallery | - Mr. J. Mack |
| Robert McDougall Art Gallery | - Mr. W.S. Baverstock and Cr. P.J. Skellerup |
| Sarjeant Art Gallery | - Dr. H.D. Robertson |
| Taranaki Museum | - Mrs. Audrey Gale and Cr. A. J. Reeves |
| Waiuku Museum | - Mr. Brian Muir |
| Wanganui Public Museum | - Mr. F.E. Smith and Mr. Chasemore James. |

SCRUTINEERS: Miss J. Goulding and Mrs. N. Munro were appointed.

MINUTES: of the last Annual Meeting, circulated in Newsletter 33 of April 1967, were taken as read and confirmed (Mr. Munro/Mr. Riccalton).

ANNUAL REPORT: Mr. Docking moved and Mr. Baverstock seconded: that application be made for a licence of \$40,000 for the licencing year 1968/9 and, at the time application is made, a case be submitted for the elimination of licencing on works of art for public Galleries and Museums. Carried.

Mrs. Gale moved and Mr. Munro seconded: that a letter be sent to the Education Department regretting that Education Officers cannot attend meetings of AGMANZ. Carried.

Cr. Skellerup moved and Dr. Duff seconded: that the Association make a strong plea to the Education Department for the secondment of Education Officers to public Art Galleries. Carried.

In moving the adoption of the Annual Report, Dr. Duff commented that the museum movement has never been more vigorous or in better shape. Government Departments however, seem unaware of what we are doing or what we represent. Galleries

and Museums represent a very large investment in popular art, science and education. We must tackle the problem of the negative attitude of Government to our work. Capital subsidies will be discussed tomorrow but the general problem should be reiterated now. Mr. Eyles seconded the motion to adopt the Annual Report, and it was carried.

ACCOUNTS:

Mr. Hamlin moved and Mr. Munro seconded: that the Statement of Accounts be adopted.

Carried.

ELECTION OF
OFFICERS AND
COUNCIL:

The President declared the following to be elected as nominations did not exceed the vacancies:

President: Mr. Gilbert Docking, Director, Auckland City Art Gallery.

Vice-President (Art Galleries): Mr. W.S. Baverstock OBE, Director, The Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch.

Vice-President (Museums): Dr. R.S. Duff, Director, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R.H. Riccalton, Asst. Preparator, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. John Maynard, Director, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.

Following a secret ballot, the President declared the following members elected to Council:

Mr. J. W. Brodie, Director, N. Z. Oceanographic Institute, Wellington.

Mrs. Ruth Davey, Council Member, Hamilton Art Gallery.

Dr. R. K. Dell, Director, Dominion Museum, Wellington.

Mr. J. R. Eyles, Director, Nelson Provincial Museum.

Dr. R. R. Forster, Director, Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Mrs. A. N. Gale, Chairman, Executive Committee, Taranaki Museum.

Mr. B. G. Hamlin, Botanist, Dominion Museum, Wellington.

Mr. J. Moreland, Zoologist, Dominion Museum, Wellington.

Mr. J. S. B. Munro, Director, Hawke's Bay Art Gallery & Museum, Napier.

Professor K. W. Thomson, Vice-President,
Palmerston North Art Gallery.

Mr. E. G. Turbott, Director, Auckland Institute
& Museum.

The President moved and Dr. Dell seconded:
that Mr. A. C. Felton A. P. A. N. Z. be re-appointed
Hon. Auditor and thanked for his services.

Carried.

The President thanked the retiring Secretary for
his services.

ELECTION OF
HONORARY
MEMBERS:

The President:

Pursuant to a Resolution of the Council dated the
13th November, 1967, Mr. V. F. Fisher F. M. A.
N. Z. is nominated for election to Honorary
Membership. (Mr. V. F. Fisher M. A. joined the
staff of the Auckland Institute and Museum in 1930
and retired as Ethnologist in January 1968. He was
a Rockefeller interne at the Buffalo Museum of
Science in 1938-9, and a member of the 2nd NZEF
in the Pacific in 1942-4. He was Hon. Secretary
of the interim committee of ICOM which led to the
formation of AGMANZ in 1947, and has served the
Association continuously in various capacities. He
was Hon. Secretary from 1949 to 1952, Council
Member from 1952 to 1955, Vice-President
(Museums) in 1955, President from 1956 to 1958,
Vice-President (Museums) in 1958, and a Council
Member from 1959 to 1967. He also served as Hon.
Editor of the Newsletter from 1953 to 1956, Acting
Hon. Secretary and Treasurer as required, and as
the representative of the Association of the New
Zealand Historic Places Trust from 1955 to 1963.
He was the "moving spirit" in instituting a Fellow-
ship scheme and was elected to a Fellowship of the
Association in 1956.)

In accordance with Rule 7C, no seconder of the nom-
ination from Council is required.

The motion: that Mr. Fisher be elected to Honorary
Membership was carried unanimously.

The President:

Pursuant to a Resolution of the Council dated 13th
November, 1967, Mr. H. C. McQueen is nominated
for election to Honorary Membership.
(Mr. H. C. McQueen M. A., Dip. Ed., Dip. Soc. Sci.
was Research Officer of the New Zealand Council
for Educational Research from 1937 to 1947, and
helped to administer the fund of 50,000 dollars pro-
vided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in
1936 to further the educational work of museums and
art galleries in New Zealand. An account of the ex-
periments, written by Mr. McQueen, was published

in 1942. On the nomination of the Royal Society of New Zealand, he became a member of the Management Committee of Dominion Museum in 1945, being appointed Chairman in 1957. He was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1952. He served the Association as a Council Member from 1959 to 1961 and again in 1966-7; he was elected President for 1962-4 and Vice-President (Museums) 1964-5. He was a member of the Salaries Committee 1959-60, reported on the need for technological museums 1959, represented AGMANZ in discussions with the Minister of Science on the National Research Advisory Council Bill 1963, reported on the Association's Fellowship scheme 1964, was convenor of a committee to initiate the Small Museums Fund in 1965, represented the Council at meetings called by Unesco 1964-7, and presented our case for exemption from rates to the Parliamentary Local Bills Committee 1967.) In accordance with Rule 7C, no seconder of the nomination from the Council is required.

The motion: that Mr. McQueen be elected to Honorary Membership was carried unanimously.

GENERAL:

Mr. W. H. Way: suggested that AGMANZ consider the possibility of arranging exhibitions to mark the Bi-centenary of Captain Cook's Voyages. Displays might deal with different aspects of naval history and the voyages, the conquest of scurvy, or medicine in the Navy. The Wellcome Foundation, Greenwich Maritime Museum and Royal Society of London could be asked to assist.

Dr. Duff: suggested that AGMANZ originate an exhibition of good quality on the native arts of the places visited by Cook. The Council has set up a Committee to report on the matter.

Mr. Brommelle: said that the centenary was of importance to Britain and the Arts Council of Great Britain might be invited to hold an exhibition.

Dr. Duff: The success of the exhibition will depend on the support given by member institutions. He moved, and Mr. Way seconded: that this Annual Meeting approves in principle the collaboration of its institution members in an exhibition of island material, to be toured at the time of the Cook Bicentenary. Carried.

Dr. Dell: A large exhibition will be staged at Dominion Museum by National Publicity Studios in collaboration with the Museum. Small exhibitions may be circulated to some of the minor centres. Larger centres should make their own arrangements. A photo record of Cook material is being obtained, and it will be possible for members to refer to original sources.

Dr. Duff: Someone competent in the field of archives is needed for the AGMANZ Committee. After discussion, Mr. Murray-Oliver agreed to serve. Mr. Docking moved and Mr. Smith seconded: that proposals for a Cook Bicentenary Exhibition be submitted to the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council with a request for their support. Carried.

Mr. Docking moved and Mr. Gregg seconded: that a committee including members concerned with the sciences, arts, archival, historic and Maori material, be formed by Council to investigate the Historic Articles Act and similar legislation in Australia, and to report on them. Carried.

This session of the Annual Meeting ended at noon with a vote of thanks to the retiring President and outgoing Council Members for their services and a vote of thanks to the Director and staff of Dominion Museum for their hospitality.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dr. Forster said that the recent opening of a large number of small, inadequately-financed museums must be a cause for concern. Many of these museums are established in towns which are too small to support them. When initial enthusiasm dies away, they will deteriorate, and give the whole movement a bad name. He suggested that members give thought to ways of holding an inquiry to ascertain needs and determine the best way to use the limited resources available to museums. Probably members would find the conclusions of such an inquiry most unpalatable, but they should accept the findings of an independent, competent committee.

Mr. Mack: applauded the address, which could be the theme of the 1969 Conference. It is most desirable to kill emotional and parochial amateurism and institute genuine professionalism.

Mr. Brommelle: In Great Britain, a Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries investigates their needs and reports to Government. Members of the Commission are interested in the arts and sciences, but are independent, and report with objective authority. A similar sort of commission seems desirable in New Zealand where there is a curious lack of liaison between museums and Government.

Dr. Duff: Government disinterest in museums is not due to any failure at the local level. There we are doing an excellent job. We fail dismally at the national level, at meetings such as this. Why isn't the press here?

Mr. Hamlin: A reporter just left the room.

- Dr. Duff: A committee such as that envisaged already exists in the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand.
- Dr. Forster: The Arts Council is not an independent body; it must look to the Government for funds.
- Mr. Hitchings: Perhaps the N. Z. Council for Educational Research would be a suitable body.
- Dr. Dell: Museums are concerned with science, history, the arts, and so on, as well as education. Museum activities could be of interest to a number of different Government Departments. An independent commission might explain our difficulties to Government.
- Mr. Brommelle: It is a good thing to have a Minister of Culture. Many countries have such Ministers. It is also worthwhile to have regular visits from parties of Members of Parliament.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m. with a vote of thanks to Dr. Forster for his address.

Tuesday, 9th April, 1968, 2 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. BROMMELLE

(Mr. N.S. Brommelle, Keeper, Department of Conservation, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, visited New Zealand from 15th March to 11th April 1968, under the joint auspices of the United Kingdom and British Commonwealth Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, and the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand. His tour, which was arranged by the British Council, included visits to the principal museums and art galleries where he had discussions and delivered lectures about the problems of restoration and conservation of collections. He is Secretary-General of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, and he has been closely concerned with the problems of restoration of art treasures following the disastrous floods which occurred in Florence two years ago.)

I am most grateful to the Gulbenkian Foundation and AGMANZ for providing the funds for my visit to New Zealand. First, I must say that I have found no "howlers" in conservation here. There is, however, a noticeable lack of instrumentation. Light and humidity can be measured precisely and, in certain cases, records should be kept over 12 months to determine the conditions to which material is exposed. Adequate instrumentation is badly needed.

I have noticed a defeatist attitude which is not warranted. The problems with which you are faced are not very complicated, are common to most museums, and are solvable. In fact, solutions have been published for most of them. Your dust problem is slight, you have no SO₂ damage, and insects and mould can be

controlled. You can always obtain funds for conservation work if you try hard enough.

In restoration, problems of aesthetics or good taste arise. The public expects complete restoration, but it may not be desirable. It is good practice to indicate in some discreet way the extent to which an object has been restored. Much of Maori art is static, and it seems reasonable to replace a flax article completely rather than show a tattered remnant.

There is ample scope for a central institute of conservation, and it would be more economic to equip a central institute with a reasonable range of scientific equipment than to open several laboratories throughout the country. The central idea exists already in the conservation service provided by the Auckland City Art Gallery. Many members have asked me to send them further information, and it would be easier if I could send specialist advice and literature to a central institute for distribution.

This visit has formed a link between the Victoria and Albert Museum and New Zealand Museums, and I hope that it will continue. At the V & A we are prepared to accept students for training, and you could take advantage of this. I think that AGMANZ should do more to obtain funds for the purpose from overseas foundations and, perhaps, you could appoint an officer to pursue grants.

The international Institute of Conservation publishes three journals that cover most of the questions I have been asked. New materials are described, and solutions of most problems have been published. Institutional membership costs eight pounds, and I suggest that your larger museums should join. At present the Institute has three members in New Zealand: Mr. Lloyd is a senior and Miss Maitland and Mr. Dowling are junior members.

Some further impressions: I think that you have suitable material for a large open-air museum such as they have in Scandinavia: it does seem incongruous to instal a large meeting house inside a museum building. Also, you have a great deal of Maori material, and I suggest that you are a little selfish in keeping so much of it in New Zealand. There is a trend to develop museums as cultural centres, attracting young people with lunchtime concerts and similar activities. I have been impressed with the work of some of your young curators, and do hope that you will expand on the cultural centre idea and get some of your museums "swinging".

New Zealand culture seems to me to be inward looking. New Zealand artists are working in a vacuum. The main stream of European culture, which is developing and changing rapidly, is ignored. Maori art, on the other hand, is static.

In the presentation of works of art, little is done to educate the public regarding the background history of the works. In the 19th century this approach was most successful. Art reporting in New Zealand is accurate in a superficial way, but generally deplorable. Your newspapers are not as sensational as the British press, but lack the scholarly approach of The Times and Guardian. These impressions are from a very brief visit, and may not be accurate.

I have said that your conservation problems are limited

and solvable. They could be handled without difficulty by a central institute. For example, a solution has been found for the problem of water-logged wood. Large tanks are needed, and a knowledge of wood technology is essential to cope with wood movement. I understand that you have an institute concerned with wood technology at Rotorua. There are also solutions for mould and insects, and there is no excuse for not stopping damage by these agents. Textiles suffer most from dirt, and should be washed. It is quite easy to contrive apparatus to hold the textile while it is being washed. Feathers suffer mainly from excess light, which causes fading and decay. Light is also the worst agent in paper decay. Plenderleith's book is excellent on the subject of paper, and every museum should have a copy. (Plenderleith H. J. The conservation of antiquities and works of art: treatment, repair and restoration. Oxford University Press. 1956. 373p. illus.)

All chemicals used for conservation are poisonous to some degree, and the disregard of safety precautions in New Zealand Museums has appalled me. For example, smoking in the presence of paradichlorobenzene is foolhardy...

Following questions, and the discussion of a carving recently restored by Mr. C.I. Tuarau, the President, Mr. Gilbert Docking, thanked Mr. Brommelle for his advice and patience.

The meeting ended at 4.50 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING (Continued)

Wednesday, 10th April, 1968.

Mr. Gilbert Docking (President), members and delegates met at 9.30 a.m. A hurricane raged over Wellington, preventing some members from attending and, from time to time, interrupting the meeting.

Capital Grants: Dr. Forster said that this was one of the problems that could be investigated by an independent Government Committee, as suggested in his Presidential address.

Mr. Brommelle: In Great Britain a "Commission" is appointed by the Queen; a "Committee" is appointed by a local authority, trustees, a Government Department, etc.

Dr. Duff: The essential part of Dr. Forster's proposal was the suggestion that an independent body make the inquiry. Could UNESCO do the job?

Mr. Docking: It was suggested yesterday that the N. Z. Council of Educational Research would be a suitable independent committee for such an inquiry.

Mr. Gregg: It may be better in the long run to have an independent committee which is permanent and reports to Government.

Dr. Duff: The meeting needs clarification of the committee's terms of reference. Parliament is to be asked to appoint a committee to do what?

Mr. Brommelle: AGMANZ would do well to study the terms of reference of the British Standing Commission on Museums. The Association could report on the British system and ask the N. Z. Government for something similar.

Dr. Forster moved and Mr. Smith seconded: that this meeting approves in principle the idea that the Association urge Government to set up a committee to report on the circumstances of museums and art galleries in New Zealand and bring down recommendations for the better use of resources.

With the consent of the proposer and seconder, the motion was amended to read: that this meeting asks Council to investigate the idea that the Association urge Government to set up an independent Committee to report on the role and general problems of museums and art galleries in New Zealand, and bring down recommendations to Government for the better use of resources.

Carried.

Mr. Hitchings: The N. Z. Council for Educational Research may be found, after investigation, to be a more effective body to report to AGMANZ. Their Act (1947) provides for this kind of research and report. The motion may prejudice Council's actions and, in particular, an inquiry by NZCER.

Dr. Duff moved and Mr. Smith seconded: that the previous motion be without prejudice to Council's freedom to approach the N. Z. Council for Educational Research or any other body it thinks fit.

Carried.

(The role of Museums in housing the Muses might be recognised by making the proposed enquiry musical or dramatic in form. The Chairman could open with "My Object All Sublime". Submissions would be varied: Transport Museums might wish to sing of "Wagon Wheels" or "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"; Historical Museums could add to the harmony with "Little Brown Jug" or "A Shanty in Old Shanty Town". Art Galleries might render "The Secret Gift" or "Whistler and his Dog" in felicitous manner. Certain it is that someone will offer "I'll Walk Alone". The musical possibilities are endless. Hon. Ed.)

The resolutions of the Outgoing Council regarding Capital Grants were read to the meeting, and Dr. Duff moved and Mrs. Gale seconded: that this Annual Meeting of the Association urges Council to continue its efforts to resolve the impasse over Government acceptance of the principle of capital subsidy grants for museums and art galleries by:

1. requesting the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council to inform the Prime Minister and this Association quite specifically that it cannot meet capital grant applications from museums and art galleries, and
2. approve in principle Council's intention to support the application of a particular institution as a test case.

Carried.

Mr. D. R. Simmons article "Museums and their role" in

Newsletter 35:

As Mr. Simmons was unable to attend, Mr. Gregg described small museums in Great Britain, and asked Mr. Brommelle to comment on their staffing, which seemed to be the main problem.

- Mr. Brommelle: In Great Britain national museums pay far better than provincial museums: the difference is alarming.
- Dr. Duff: A uniform salary scale should be adopted in New Zealand. Metropolitan museums should encourage small museums in their areas. The small museums should be able to call on the "parent" museum for specialist advice as a right.
- Dr. Forster: Large museums find it difficult to help small ones owing to shortage of finance and staff.
- Dr. Duff: AGMANZ could draw up a new salary scale. Approaches to museum boards for better salaries would be much easier if the Association made strong recommendations regarding salaries.
- Mr. Brommelle: Adequate payment of museum staff is most important and should be fought for by museum associations. Museums are staffed by "dedicated people", who are often grossly underpaid.
- Mr. Way: The standard of work done in small museums should not be judged too harshly: the Auckland Institute and Museum began in a small room without paid staff.
- Dr. Forster: The number of museums in New Zealand is too large for so small a country. Collections grow, while local support gets less and less. Some form of control is necessary.
- Mr. Mack: Museums should operate within the confines of a definite policy: collections should be specialised and limited.
- Dr. Forster: Small museums spring up overnight, without consulting the metropolitan museums regarding their policies. There is no rational approach to the provision of museum services.
- Mr. Brommelle: In Britain there is a system of "out-station" museums; perhaps small museums here could be "adopted" and helped by the large museums.
- Dr. Forster: This is difficult in New Zealand because the large museums have not the finance to assist small museums. If the small institutions had an income, they could ask large museums for professional help and pay for it.

- Dr. Dell: A characteristic of New Zealanders is independence. Many small museums wish to be independent of the large institutions.
- Dr. Duff: AGMANZ can only suggest policy to small museums; it cannot direct them to proceed on rational lines.
- Mr. Docking: The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, and the Palmerston North Art Gallery have adopted definite policies for their collections, and appointed professional directors. These moves benefit art gallery development; their importance cannot be over-estimated. Small museums might obtain and study copies of the policy statements.

Mr. D. R. Gregg's article in Newsletter 38:

Mr. Gregg read the following statement on biological type specimens:

"One of the traditional responsibilities of a natural history museum has been the housing and safeguarding of type specimens. The institution which accepts custody of these truly priceless specimens has undertaken a tremendous archival responsibility - an obligation to preserve them for posterity and also to make them accessible for study by qualified specialists.

In New Zealand most species discovered before the 1860's were described by European workers and the type specimens were deposited in famous national (or perhaps international) museums, such as the British Museum. But it was not long before taxonomic work was being done in New Zealand and, with the establishment of Provincial Museums and the Colonial Museum, these became the logical places to house type specimens.

In subsequent years, with the breaking up of the Colonial Museum collections in 1903, with the establishment of other government research institutions (notably within D. S. I. R.), and with the development of the universities, the number of institutions acting as repositories for type specimens has multiplied. Some university departments have continued to deposit types in their local public museum, others are retaining types in their departmental collections.

Looking back at New Zealand from the other side of the world, during my travels last year, I realised that, for a small country with a small population, New Zealand has a most irrational distribution of type specimens.

The present, somewhat random, distribution of types has major disadvantages, but there are a few minor advantages which I feel I should mention, if only to forestall members of the audience. A major disaster (either natural or man-made) would be unlikely to destroy all our type specimens with their present decentralized distribution. The only other advantage I can see, but an important one at least for museums in the far south (that is anywhere south of Wellington), is that in holding an odd selection of types we will almost inevitably be visited by a few not easily discouraged scientists who would otherwise not penetrate to these regions. And it is very pleasant to have such visits. . .

This fragmentation of the distribution of type specimens is

rapidly becoming worse in New Zealand and I feel it is time for the Association to act.

One solution would be . . . to concentrate particular groups of type specimens in particular institutions. This is not likely to be a happy or permanent solution. The interests of institutions often depend very much on the present staff, and staff changes can bring great changes in research programmes particularly in smaller institutions.

A more revolutionary proposal, and the one which I favour, would be to strengthen the Dominion Museum so that it can fulfil its function as the National Museum of New Zealand, and its function as a national archive for type specimens. This would, of course, require more staff for the Museum and improved accommodation for staff, specimens and visiting workers.

If such a revitalized institution were to emerge I would hope that this Association would recommend to its member institutions that they deposit their collections of types in the Dominion Museum. It may be that institutions would wish, or be required, to retain legal ownership of the specimens. Many museums and other institutions would thus be relieved of the responsibility of looking after miscellaneous collections of types, the adequate curation of which is impossible with their existing staff and facilities. In my brief time working in a museum, I have become sadly aware of the deterioration of collections through inadequate, or non-existent, curation. The centralisation of types and the provision of adequate working facilities for visiting workers, would render unnecessary much of the present borrowing of types which inevitably, in spite of the greatest precautions, leads to damage and loss of specimens. . . "

Mr. Gregg moved and Dr. Fleming seconded:

That this meeting recommends that the Council of AGMANZ set up a sub-committee to investigate and make recommendations concerning the distribution of biological type specimens within New Zealand.

Mr. Brodie: Anyone holding types should look after them. Could AGMANZ publish a list of the types held by museums?

Dr. Fleming: It would be a good idea to publish a list of the museums holding types, as a first step.

The motion was carried. The meeting ended at 12.10 p.m, with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

FIRST AID FOR HISTORIC PACT:

It was suggested in Wellington yesterday that the original of the Treaty of Waitangi now in the Turnbull Library, Wellington, could do with a "really good scientific examination."

After that, if the money were available, the treaty could be "enclosed in an inert atmosphere, possibly nitrogen, to preserve it."

The suggestion came from the Keep of Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Mr. N.S. Brommelle, who was addressing the annual meeting of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand.

from The Dominion newspaper, 10th April, 1968.

LAST EDITORIAL

As this is written, I have retired as Hon. Secretary, and have only to end this Newsletter to finish my duties. The Secretaryship was interesting and a great deal of fun. During my term, Eric Westbrook, Vic Fisher, Dick Dell, Peter Tomory, Harry McQueen, Graham Turbott and Ray Forster served as Presidents with ability and distinction. Their advice and help were invaluable.

As editor, I was free to prepare newsletters as I wished, and I tried to give members a picture of the discussions, serious and amusing, that led to the decisions taken. Comparatively few members can attend Annual Meetings and Conferences, and the newsletters linked some of the isolated groups with the Association.

AGMANZ is made up of diverse elements: art galleries, historical groups, museums of ethnology, archaeology, natural history, technology and applied arts, the preparators, education officers, board members, and so on. If the interests we have in common were not strong, the Association would have fallen apart twenty years ago. If the discussions were not frank, vigorous, and often entertaining, members would have ceased to attend, long ago.

From time to time readers complain regarding items in the newsletters. This is an occupational hazard, but I have circulated controversial material whenever any was available. Generally, the themes are as old as time: amateur versus professional, staff versus administration, old versus young. I hope that my successor will continue to arouse our readers; I leave him the following useful excuses:

1. the item is factual and of general interest,
2. it stimulated readers and boosted circulation,
3. the clot said it, and
4. sorry, I slipped.

Exit

Robert Cooper.
