

EDITORIAL - The 5th Biennial Conference.

Vic Fisher is busy preparing to move the Auckland Museum ethnology collections into new quarters and has asked me to write the editorial. Modelling myself on the New Zealand Herald editorial column and Susan, here it is. Since the last newsletter Museums in every part of the country have begun new buildings or alterations. The Auckland Art Gallery has been altered considerably and is now one of the most attractive in the country. The Museums at Auckland, Napier, Canterbury and Otago have been enlarged and the Museum at New Plymouth has begun a new building. In view of this activity the organising committee of the 5th Biennial Conference, held at the Auckland Art Gallery in April last, asked Peter Middleton, Senior Lecturer in Architecture, University of Auckland, to speak on "The Architect and the Museum."

There are many people who regard a Museum as a fine building with an ever growing collection arranged inside it, but I question the soundness of this concept. No matter how rich the collection, the Museum will not be effective unless it exercises research and display functions. Informed intelligence is needed to interpret the collections, creative intelligence is required to give form to them. A successful example of this combination of talents was described in the Conference talk "The Canterbury Museum Bird Hall." The speakers were Graham Turbott, Assistant Director, Ralph Jacobs, Taxidermist and Preparator and Ralph Riccalton, Assistant Taxidermist and Preparator, Canterbury Museum, and they gave a modest description of their work. The talk provided an opportunity for members of the Association to pay tribute to a remarkable team effort which has provided what is undoubtedly the finest exhibition of birds in the country.

Since 1903, when Sir James Hector ended his efficient but autocratic control of science in New Zealand, teamwork has become increasingly necessary in most academic concerns. In museum development, no one man can, or should, assume responsibility. It is, or should be, the responsibility of the entire museum staff, for it means developing, or fostering the growth, of every branch of display, research and what for lack of a better name I term "other services". This was the theme of an able Conference talk by H.C. McQueen, Chairman of the Dominion Museum Management Committee.

Three elements of museum development transcend all others in importance:-

1. The provision of conditions that are adequate to maintain a happy family of able research, display and 'other services' men and women. This was the subject of Presidential addresses by Vic Fisher in April, 1958 and Dick Dell at the recent Conference. Both speakers indicated clearly that no man expects to make his fortune in a museum, but he is entitled to expect reasonable opportunities.

In the last analysis the Museum finds its purpose in providing accurate information to those who seek it. The degree to which this service can be provided depends to some extent on the buildings and

equipment, to some extent on the size and quality of the collections, but their importance is as nothing compared to the most fundamental concern, the quality of the individuals making up the staff. The talks by McQueen and Dell are so timely and appropriate that I have reproduced them in this newsletter in preference to other news. Accounts of recent happenings are to be found in the 1958 and 1959 Annual Reports of which we have a stock of extra copies for anyone who wishes to read them.

2. The second element of museum development is the creation of an environment favourable to the museum. Much of the responsibility for achieving a favourable atmosphere has fallen on the shoulders of the Museum education officers at the larger centres, but all staff dealing with the press and public play a part in enhancing the Museum's opportunities for growth. The employment of an extension service officer at the Auckland Museum is an experiment in public relations that will be watched with interest by all members of the Association. The field for this new kind of museum activity was the subject of a talk by Derek Shouler, Secretary of the National Commission for Unesco in New Zealand, and a dozen copies or more of the Unesco report on Museums were distributed at the Conference. I hope members will read this report and pass it on to others interested, for despite its length, and strange title, the text merits close study.

Among the most promising of the recent activities of the Association has been the attempt to create an atmosphere favourable to the growth of folk or pioneer museums. At the opening of the 4th Biennial Conference at the Dominion Museum, Wellington, in April 1957, Peter Tomory, Director of the Auckland Art Gallery, regretted that there is no national folk museum in New Zealand, and that so little had been achieved in the active preservation of early settler material. At the final plenary session the Conference resolved that Council should conduct a serious enquiry into setting up folk museums, and a report of the findings of a sub-committee of Council was given in the 1959 Annual Report. The organising committee of the 5th Conference asked Professor Keith Sinclair of the University of Auckland to talk on 'Pioneer Museums' and his passing criticism of Waitangi Treaty House had considerable publicity in the press. The Ethnology Section of the Conference framed a series of remits on the subject of pioneer material and these are so important that I have included a portion of the minutes of the final plenary session in this newsletter. Again I think it will be obvious to members that the major barrier to pioneer museums is not the provision of edifices to contain them, or the lack of material with which to fill them, but the wherewithal to secure competent trained people to carry out the pioneer museum ideal.

Perhaps the Association could play a greater role in telling friends and potential friends of the work of New Zealand museums and of the obvious needs that exist. Peter Tomory has made a beginning in this field in compiling an attractive Guide to Art Galleries and Museums

of New Zealand and Graham Turbott has suggested that we prepare a well illustrated handbook of local Museum activities.

3. The third element of Museum development is the acquisition of the financial resources to provide the material fittings for display halls, storage rooms and staff quarters. In my concept however, museum development means not merely seeking and receiving money and articles, but at the same time undertaking activities that merit the continuing generosity of our public. A museum is not really an important thing. What is really important is what is going on in the community around it. Only if the Museum helps there will it begin to pay for its building, lighting and cleaning. And it cannot help there if it has not an adequate, competent and loyal staff.

Robert Cooper.

SOME RECENT TRENDS IN NEW ZEALAND MUSEUMS.

R. K. DELL

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, 1959.

1. It is my intention to outline a few trends in Museum practice and development as seen by a younger worker. Throughout I shall use the term "Museum" to refer to Museums and Art Galleries although my examples will of necessity be mainly drawn from the field with which I am most familiar - the Natural History and Ethnological Museum.

There is one aspect of our work and philosophy that I believe we must make special efforts to maintain, and that is our integrity. As I see it we are one of the few types of institution which can completely retain our integrity in the modern world. I would not stress individual integrity but rather institutional integrity, though this must be based in large part upon the attitudes and actions of our individual members. I wonder if our younger staff members always realise, and I am sure that all of us sometimes forget, the absolute and utter reliance that is placed upon our utterances by the public at large. The lunch-time phone caller who asks, "What does the Siberian brown bear eat?" or "What is a sea hare?" is usually completely satisfied with our answer, short and disgruntled though it may sometimes be, and all too often places complete confidence in it. We must be aware of this attitude of blind faith and seek to justify it.

In the present day world there are all too few institutions where one can seek unbiassed truth. Many sections of Government departments are concerned with implementing a policy, others dare not commit themselves. The Press, as we know to our cost, is concerned with the rarest, the largest, or the first, in other words the sensational. Even the dwellers in the "ivory towers" of our Universities are not always averse to over-emphasizing a theory or their own departmental activities. Good public relations perhaps but is it always "Truth" or "Science?" The Radio can tell us that four brands of tea are the best within the space of half an hour.

By no means all institutions are freely open to the public; with our fellows in reference libraries we often seem to bear the brunt of supplying unbiased, accurate and inclusive information to the public in the fields in which we deal. We must remember too that such information is not given solely by word of mouth. Our publications and our displays reach a much wider public and our duty to maintain a professional integrity through these is not always so obvious. Every Museum worker who has had to prepare a label that is not a young book knows how difficult it is to condense without making unwarranted general statements or leaving hidden loopholes. We tend to fall back on the old saving phrases of "usually", "more or less", "in most cases", "as far as we know" etc. Our labels are written for the present and we must guard against leaving them to be read for too long after they cease to be accurate. As an extreme example, do any of us still display references to Piltdown Man?

We cannot always be sure just what people will deduce from our displays. Do we show clearly that the birds or shells that we display are only a selection from the total fauna? I am surprised to find that many of our visitors believe that we do have a complete coverage of our fauna on display. Do we make the effort to show that many of our Maori carvings have been worked with steel tools? Do our ship models show a scale or do we leave an impression that a Roman galley was larger than a modern battleship? Do we always make a clear distinction between fact and inference? We must I believe be constantly on guard lest our displays lead the uninformed astray. This is an immense responsibility.

But above all we must maintain our integrity of purpose as well as our integrity of action. We carry out our daily tasks of guarding our material, adding to it, building up our collections, displaying part of them, and writing in semipopular or professional vein and as we do so we must strive not only to live up to our own ideals but also those for which our public believe we stand. We must justify their faith as well as our own.

Several times within the past year I have been forcibly reminded that no two of the institutions within our Association are administered in the same way. I have also detected a marked lack of sympathy in a number of quarters with the problems we face because of these differences. Those of us within the museum movement are well aware that there are good reasons for the present state of affairs in the historical backgrounds of each institution, our almost invariable parochial beginnings, and the diverse ways in which new institutions are still arising. Much of our development is the result of regional competition, healthy up to a point but militating against complete co-operation at times and of course fatal to the development of an adequate nation-wide Museum service. Questions are being asked on this theme. Why do we not have interchangeability of staffs, adequate training schemes for specialised museum staff, equity of salaries, adequate coverage in all

provincial districts and adequate coverage of all proper fields of museum endeavour?

These questions are being asked too by those we approach for assistance in forming new museums, agricultural, technological, historical and folk museums for example. And these questions are in fact unanswerable. We can explain why the situation has developed, why a national museum service does not exist but these reasons do not excuse us. Our historical associations, our diverse origins and different paths of development and our friendly competitive rivalry may have sufficient force to make a logically designed nationwide service impracticable. If this is so we must be prepared to provide the services such a concept envisages within our present framework. Because I am sure that the demand for such a service will grow and I for one believe that it is ultimately necessary.

In fact I believe that considerable progress to this end has already been made although such progress seems slow at times. It is foreshadowed by a change in attitude. The first thought is no longer always, "Oh, old Smith has just got down on that large Maori collection of Brown's", but perhaps, "Thank goodness old Smith rescued that Maori collection of Brown's before his grandchildren ruined it"; not "Oh, the Dominion Museum has beaten us to that insect collection of Robinson's"; but "Thank goodness Robinson's insect collection is now available to any museum worker or to any serious entomologist." We may be backsliders now and then but we show signs of a change of heart. We are growing towards the ideal of a National Museum service with the larger museums helping the smaller and the newer institutions but I think the day will come when these new museums can expect financial aid once they have proved that they are necessary, when in fact a National Museum service exists. Just how it comes depends perhaps on us - the present generation of museum workers, - whether such a service grows naturally or is forced on us from outside.

From the staffing viewpoint, I believe we fail on three scores:-

1. We have no general, adequate policy of staff recruitment.
2. We have not yet achieved a uniform salary scale with the result that
3. There has been a tendency to shuffle senior or key staff members amongst our various institutions without too much influx of new members.

There can be little doubt that we are not recruiting staff in a rational fashion. The Universities supply us with young scientists with basic academic training. Some of our technical staff such as librarians and photographers can come to us from the outside world but some of our technical workers are unique to museums. This is true largely of taxidermists, modellers and preparators. Are we training any taxidermists in New Zealand? It is fairly certain that no-one else is - either.

Worse still few of us can afford to train understudies for our key personnel even when we know they are soon to retire. Our

replacements all too often arrive months after their predecessors have left. We are all thoroughly aware of this of course but can do little about it.

The lack of a uniform salary scale has already had some peculiar effects. A.G.M.A.N.Z. has in the past endorsed two successive salary scales for Museum staffs. These have been largely implemented by some of our larger institutions and not by others. The result so far has been that those museums which are on the new scales have been able to attract the staffs of other institutions to fill their vacancies. To some extent this is inevitable and the long term effect can only be to ensure that we will all come on to a uniform scale. The short term effect is rather unsettling to the staffs themselves and of course there is a period when the museum service as a whole does not function so efficiently.

In addition we still face the difficulty of competing for young qualified staff with Universities, Government Departments and in some cases with commercial firms. In most cases the salaries we can offer are lower. As an immediate result we end up with a small permanent staff whom I can possibly call dedicated and a rapidly changing group who for various reasons are not prepared to remain in museums. The term "dedicated to the museum ideal" is a romantic one but these people are dedicating their wives and other dependents to the same ideal and the work "sacrificing" explains the situation equally well. For how long should we rely on a dedicated or sacrificial few?

Apart from salaries how well do we treat our staffs? Our scientists have as much freedom of research as do the Universities, certainly more than do members of some University departments. They can seldom afford elaborate equipment nor extensive travel, and the researches of museum scientists have usually been directed along lines where such aids were not required. One result is that our scientists become experts on one group of organisms and may become identifying machines for workers outside the museums who have greater facilities for ecological research for example. We do fail to supply our scientific staffs with adequate secretarial and technical assistance. This is false economy. That a highly qualified scientist with an imposing list of publications to his credit should have to spend hours and hours on the most lowly forms of indexing and similar occupations is undoubtedly misdirected use of qualified personnel.

Technical staff fall into two main categories; those who follow normal everyday occupations much the same within museums as they would be elsewhere, the photographers, librarians and cabinetmakers, and those whose occupations are specific to museums. The first group can always escape from our walls and we can replace them comparatively easily. There will tend to be a fair amount of change amongst such personnel and this in effect we do get. We should, however, aim to make the job content and conditions of such appointments attractive enough to retain those of this group who wish to make a career in museums.

Some of our workers in these groups rate very highly indeed within their general fields.

Technical staff with unique museum skills are in an unenviable position. The longer they work in museums the less chance they have of transferring to outside positions. Their inherent artistic and creative skills and their acquired knowledge of the uses of materials give them occasional openings in the outside commercial world in their earlier years, but fewer openings occur as they become more specialised. Along with our specialised scientific staffs they are museum people purely and simply. We should not play upon this situation and must make ample provision not only for salary increases but for greater responsibility for both classes. I believe that Museums should accept a very definite responsibility to such people and while we recognise it to specialised scientific staff I do not think that we have always recognised it to specialised technical staff.

Relationships between Museums and other scientific institutions are changing very definitely in New Zealand. The genesis and development of other institutions which impinge upon our fields in one way or another definitely calls for an evaluation of relationship. Some institutions are very definite competitors for material, staff and finance with our natural history museums. At times our natural history curators must feel figuratively that they are almost fighting for their continued existence. There are government institutions which now claim at times to be the national research institutions for botany, entomology, marine biology, wild-life research, fisheries and fresh-water biology. What is left is perhaps to be the preserve of the natural history museum. It doesn't take a highly qualified biologist to see that there is very little left indeed. In some cases these institutions guard their new preserves very jealously and some of them are becoming well endowed for the care and acquisition of collections.

Some amongst the museum world may still believe that we can renounce our research function and concentrate solely upon the educative side of our work. Such a recasting of our function could have very deep repercussions and indeed could result in the disappearance of our institutions as we know them.

None of the natural history museums at present have adequate scientific staff and I see little hope of the position improving in the near future. By adequate I mean adequate from the national scientific level. Unless we can secure additional finance to remedy this situation our position as the guardians of national research collections may be in jeopardy. The only source of such additional funds would seem to be the government and this is perhaps an avenue we would do well to explore. Whatever our individual response to the challenge may be, at least we should realise that the problem exists.

If I may sum up what appear to me to be some of the most urgent needs in the museum field today, I would say that we should aim:-

1. To maintain our integrity.
2. To develop a national museum service.
3. To maintain staff recruitment.
4. To achieve a uniform salary scale.
5. To accept a deep responsibility for our specialists, particularly technical staff.
6. To remain aware that many other groups are impinging upon our scientific fields.

A LAYMAN LOOKS AT MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION

H. C. McQUEEN

CHAIRMAN, DOMINION MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

Introduction

2. In presenting this paper I should like to draw your attention to two words in the title, so that you may be clear about my status in presenting it. First, as far as the natural sciences go, I am a layman. Second, I am only looking at administration. There is a double purpose in the use of the word; I have not made a careful study of the facts of museum administration - I've just taken a look at them, and I'm trying to stand away from museums and look at their administration. My paper is therefore speculative, not scientific, and I expect to be corrected as to facts during the discussion that I hope will follow.

In a modest way I may claim to be a social scientist, and one of the things that it's necessary for a social scientist to do is to declare his assumptions, and so indicate his biases. Knowing them, other people can make allowances in their interpretation of what a social scientist tells them. One of my biases is obvious - I'm a Dominion Museum man. Another is my fondness for democratic control; I am against autocracy. Perhaps others will appear as I go on.

Obviously, too, most of what I shall say will be concerned with museums and not with art galleries. As will appear shortly, I conceive museums as having certain functions which art galleries cannot have, and consequently, although some of my remarks may incidentally apply to art galleries, my main thesis is concerned with museums. Again, my remarks will concern mainly the larger museums with their professional directors and staff. True, some things are true for all museums, whatever their size, but other things, for example, control of staff, do not really arise in small museums.

To end this introduction, may I say that I do not think I am going to say anything original today. But the exercise of organising my thoughts about administration has been useful for me. I hope that in presenting my material in an ordered sequence I may be useful to you too.

THE FUNCTIONS OF MUSEUMS.

All administration is a means, not an end. Hence we must look at the end we seek when we concern ourselves with administration. What, then, is a museum for? I propose to skip any historical treatment, and to deal with New Zealand museums as they are today. My answer to the question is: a museum is primarily a research institution concerned with the organisation and furthering of our knowledge of the external world. New Zealand museums have concentrated their activities on zoology, botany, geology and anthropology, and a very high proportion of papers published by museum staffs have dealt with various aspects of these four main categories of natural science.

A secondary concern of museums is with the public. Though there are scientists who could well do without the public, yet scientists are dependent entirely on the public for their financial support. Whether that support comes from the taxpayer, the ratepayer or the private or institutional donor, it is money from laymen - the public.

So museums have galleries, exhibits, show cases, and hours when they are open to all. They have an education service, designed to help schools in their teaching of natural science, and to help make children aware of the resources of the museums. They make themselves available to inquirers, who want a bird or a bug identified. They help the Press with stories of new and interesting discoveries.

Museums, tertiarily, are depositories of things of historical or sentimental value. Thus they accumulate ceramics, furniture, technological material, war relics, Antarctic relics, photographs, coins. They do not maintain full-time specialists in any of these, and they frequently have conflicts, when rooms are wanted, over their duties to science, their duties to history and their duties to sentiment. The time will come, no doubt, when museums devoted entirely to natural history will exist, with historical, technological, and war museums as separate institutions.

My impression is that the smaller museums in New Zealand are concerned mainly with the public and historical functions I have mentioned, with scientific work largely a hobby activity of such staff as they have, and of a few amateurs.

WHAT IS ADMINISTRATION?

Having now summed up the functions of museums, let me now turn to some discussion of administration and administrators. I propose to deal first with professional men dealing with the internal and external affairs of museums, and to come later to the part played by governing bodies of museums.

There is a vast literature on administration, there are journals that deal regularly with it, and there are university courses and diplomas in it. Since this is not a "scholarly" paper, I have not sought documentation for what I'm saying today, but it is quite clear

to me at least that my scattered readings in administration have influenced the preparation of this paper.

One thing those readings have done is to convince me that "administration" as a subject is a grossly inflated one. You need not fear, therefore, that I shall be recommending courses in administration to our directors or potential directors, let alone to the lay members of the governing bodies. In this I am following the British belief that administration is learned by experience, and denying the American belief that administration can be taught.

Let me now turn from "administration" to the "administrator", for a time at least. What are the qualities required in a good museum director, or assistant director? In answering the question I shall end up as I often do by describing a paragon of all the virtues. If anyone here then thinks I have taken him as a model - but I'll leave the rest unsaid. A good administrator, then, needs:

- (1) To be intelligent, that is, he must have brains. He must also have learned how to discern principles, so that he can make decisions quickly, without allowing himself to be cluttered up with detail.
- (2) To be able to get on with people. First, with his staff, and second with all the non-staff he has to deal with - in short, the public. He will find that museum policy is much easier to carry out if the staff are with him, and his temper will be much less often tried. Obviously, a lot lies in the selection of staff to begin with. Specialists are often queer souls, queer because they think only in terms of their special field, and to be able to humour them and yet keep them under control is a quality of a good administrator.
- (3) To be able to delegate responsibility. Delegation of responsibility is a lot more talked about than practised in administrative circles, and yet it is the main secret of successful administration. If one delegates, one must do so completely. The person who is given responsibility should know clearly the limits of that responsibility and be left quite free to carry on within those limits. Museum directors start with an advantage in this matter, because clearly they cannot be specialists in all the fields of work in a museum. They must leave scientific work in several fields completely in the hands of the men or women concerned. These people, of course, if they have any sense, will take care to see that the director knows what they are doing, and get his support for their research plans. It is in delegation of non-scientific responsibility that directors probably have to overcome most difficulties. It takes courage to let a young man have his head in a display project, for example. Then, too, there is a lot of paper work in running a museum, and I wonder whether or not some of that could be passed on to members of the staff. Need a director, for example, sign all letters replying to inquiries?

(4)

To be humble. Humility, as I conceive it, means knowing one's limitations, recognising other people's strengths, and deferring to them. Only a man properly humble can work with other people, and can delegate responsibility. I am satisfied that it adds to a man's reputation, and does not detract from it at all, if he lets his staff take credit where it is due, if he lets them get a share of the limelight. He will certainly have then a loyal staff, because they will recognise the virtue he shows in bringing them forward instead of holding the stage himself.

Let me turn now to another aspect of the administrator's work, and instead of describing him directly, do it indirectly by looking at what he administers. He is concerned with people, paper, and things.

(1) People. I've said earlier quite a little about the people in a museum. To deal with them adequately a director needs to be urbane, well-informed, and clear-headed. If I may explain what is meant by "clear-headed". A museum should have a policy, or a set of policies. A director needs to judge everything in terms of those policies, and his dealings with staff handled appropriately. If he is clear in his own mind, he will have no difficulty in conveying a "No" to one of the staff.

But that desirable situation comes about only when the director takes the staff into his confidence. I do not think he should have regular staff meetings; such affairs become empty and boring very easily. But he should have some staff meetings. Not all the staff at one meeting, either, unless there is some broad matter of general policy to convey to them. But a group of specialists in kindred fields, when something is afoot that concerns them all to some degree. And at those meetings he should not merely be the director telling them what will be done. If he has a change of some sort in his mind, he should discuss it with the people concerned early in the piece. Moreover, he should come to the meeting well prepared, indeed so well prepared that he is ready to abandon his scheme if the staff give good reason for him to do so. A proper humility, to repeat my earlier phrase.

In dealing with people, an administrator must have a reputation for fairness. I recall Kipling's "Stalky & Co.", where the head of Westward Ho! was described, by the boys, as a beast, but a just beast. I do not think that museum directors should ever deserve to be called "beasts", but they should deserve the word "just". In other words, play no favourites, and conceal your dislike of the poor type until you can get rid of him.

My category of "people" also includes the public. There are always some cranks, some bores, some bees in bonnets to be coped with. The accessibility of a museum man then becomes important. Some men like people to feel that they can always

get through to the top without hindrance; I think they consider it democratic. Others have some kind of screen, a secretary or telephonist who can find out whether the person wanted is free, or busy, or just "too busy to be interrupted". In my judgment, anyone with administrative responsibilities should not as a rule answer his own phone, or have people walk straight in on him. He has his duty to other people and things; frequently a more important duty than dealing with a dear old soul whose only interest in life is Shetland shawls or what have you. However, when people do phone or call, they deserve at least an answer, which cannot be given if the administrator is out, or somewhere about the building. It is, in my opinion, more courteous to all to have someone always there, even if it is sometimes to turn away the importunate.

As for governing bodies, I shall come to them later.

(2) Paper. Administration means paper - lots of it.

Generally speaking, the wrong ones are kept, and the important ones lost; and so I am in favour of destroying administrative paper as soon as possible after the subject it deals with is closed. But there are three kinds of paper with which the administrator must deal:

(a) Correspondence. There is a wide range of correspondence concerning museum work. I think answering it should be delegated to as many of the staff as can be used without interfering with their scientific work. There should, too, be a clerical type on the premises who has authority to deal with all the odd bits of paper about supplies and so on.

(b) Reports. A director has to provide reports on general and special activities, generally for his governing body, but occasionally for others. Here again some delegation of responsibility is in order.

(c) Finance. I do not think a museum director should be involved in details of finance. Decisions on an annual budget should be made by his board on his advice, and he should know at least each month how the various funds stand. Day-to-day finance should be in the hands of the clerk mentioned above, with, if the machinery provides, a lay treasurer as a signer of cheques and general overseer of finance.

Mr. S.T. Barnett, apropos of delegation of authority, once told me that on his first day in office as Assistant Undersecretary for Justice, the first document brought to him was an authority for the expenditure of £5 on a lower denture for a prisoner. He said "I put my pen down, and I said to myself: 'Am I paid this fantastic salary in order to buy bloody false teeth for prisoners?'"

It is that kind of trivial signing of things that a

good administrator gets rid of as soon as he can.

I haven't mentioned registration and records. These are certainly things that should be in other hands than the director's.

(3) Things. Here we come to the whole structure and content of a museum. He is lucky if building matters are not left to him, but he is bound to suffer frustrating delays if other people take the responsibility for the fabric of the museum. Still, he should not become a clerk of works.

Display is a major function of the public side of a museum. Here the director has full scope for dealing with principles, for handling people, and for delegating responsibility. Yet his ideas, if not his hand, should be in everything.

The basic function of a museum is the preservation of collections, and making them accessible to persons interested. The director is thus very much concerned with "things", and he needs to have a clear policy about this important function. Maintenance of collections, additions to them, accepting or rejecting gifts, advising on purchases, buying equipment - all these parts of museum work must concern the administrator - distantly if possible, because within budgetary limits his staff should have most of the say.

I have made no reference at all to the administrator's own scientific work, because that falls outside his scope as administrator. But in the meantime I assume it to be essential that he should be pursuing his own lines of research. The time may come when a museum is large enough to have a non-specialist director, with a team of specialists working with him - you notice I said "with him", not "under him". That time would be when administration alone would occupy a man full time. A museum education officer of the future might well qualify as such a non-specialist, or perhaps some specialist willing to drop his own line would take up the work. His contribution to science might in the end be greater in the team of specialists he administered than through his own contribution in his special field.

GOVERNING BODIES.

When I come now to discuss governing bodies of museums - I shall call them all "boards" for simplicity - I should like to repeat what I said at the beginning of this paper. I have made no study of the existing boards, and am acquainted only with that concerned with the Dominion Museum. Therefore if in what follows I take a few wild swings in my generalisations, it will be an accident if I slap someone

on the face, or indeed on the back. But I have had a good deal to do with various kinds of boards, and I am sure that one can generalise about boards and be fairly near the truth most of the time.

Boards always represent "interests." Some members are there because the nominating body finds money for the board. Some are therefore prestige reasons - no board is complete without the well-known public figure X. Some are there from scientific bodies, to watch that science (with a capital "S" - one of my bugbears) gets its due. Occasionally there is one man who represents no interests, who is a humble pursuer of some research, and who is museum-minded. Such a man is worth all the "interests" in the administration of a museum.

Some boards are just a collection of stuffed shirts. They are called together as rarely as the director dares, and are amused with newly acquired artifacts and curios. They go on to rubber-stamp the director's decision about staff and acquisitions. They frequently have pressing engagements with more important boards, and have no time even to glance at the galleries.

Such a board is not performing its duty, and its museum will go downhill. Partly because the members are not watching what goes on, but mainly because the director, being a puller of wool over the board's collective eye, is also less than honest in his administration of the museum. (I don't mean dishonest financially - I mean he looks after himself most of the time.)

I don't propose to sketch the opposite extreme of the highly efficient board that approves of every new style of label and so on. You can imagine it for yourselves. But in between the extremes is, of course, the ideal board.

What is the board for? It represents the public, the public who pay for the museum, the public who visit it, the public who like to boast about it. It is concerned with broad policy, not with details. If, for example, a board decision is necessary to authorise expenditure on vacation staff, it should accede at once, provided that budgetary provision was originally made. But if a senior staff position falls vacant, the board should have its part in selecting the new appointee. It must rely heavily on the director's judgment in such a matter, but at least a sub-committee of the board should sit with the director for the final interviews. Why? First, I think, to let the world see that a just appointment was made; and second, to remind the director that he is himself after all a servant of the board.

The handling of a board by a director is a good test of his administrative ability. To keep the board informed, to see that it gets kudos when it deserves it, to establish such confidence in himself that it will accept his say-so on administrative matters, but at the same time to keep it away from professional matters, and from pettifogging detail - these tasks take real skill.

A skilful director can use the board as a buffer against criticism. He should take it into his confidence over anything likely to be sticky, and get it to make the decision, in the full knowledge that if there is trouble it will bear the trouble itself.

So also the board, or its chairman for preference, should be brought in to assist in disciplining staff, when such unpleasantness has to be tackled. If a director has persevered with an unsatisfactory staff member and still feels he (or she) should go, I think the board should make the final decision, communicated through its chairman.

It doesn't matter if the board members see through the director's careful management of them. If they are satisfied that all that he does will conserve the interests of the Museum, they will play along quite happily with their eyes wide open.

I think a director's severest trial must be when members of his board begin lobbying for some particular member of the staff. I suppose it must occur when the director has not got the complete confidence of the staff, or when he has failed to get around the workrooms frequently to talk shop with the staff. So perhaps he deserves his ordeal of lobbying.

Much depends on the chairman in these cases, but I shall not wander on to a talk on the duties of a chairman.

One idea that helps in board meetings is to see that, when the agenda is light, some special visit is made by the board to one or more of the workrooms, or to an exhibit in course of preparation in the galleries. Our board, I might add, prefaces its meetings by morning tea with the staff in the staff room. The staff see us at least once every two months that way.

So, the layman has looked at museum administration. I'm sure he's left out some important things, and has perhaps overstressed some unimportant ones. But he emerges from his look convinced that running a museum is an arduous job today.

3.

REMITTS FROM THE ETHNOLOGY SECTION.

5th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE HELD AT THE AUCKLAND ART

GALLERY IN APRIL, 1959.

Mr. Fisher moved and Dr. Duff seconded the following:

(a) "That relics of the European settlement in New Zealand in what might be called the colonial period represent an extension of the material record of Maori settlement of this country and should, as a matter of urgency, be collected as systematically as the latter in all districts of New Zealand."

CARRIED.

(b) "That the existing museum service is well suited to the collection, preservation and display of what might be distinguished as the domestic or household relics of European colonial settlement, notably costume and apparel, furniture and furnishings and household effects generally."

With the consent of the proposer and seconder the following words were added at Dr. Falla's suggestion: "and that this principle be affirmed without prejudice to the establishment of any historic house or museum".

CARRIED.

(c) "That agricultural and technological collections fall outside the scope of the existing New Zealand museum facilities, and that there is a case for state support for the establishment of separate museums to house and display these two categories above, namely.

1. Agricultural implements and machine, farm vehicles and farm machines.

11. The enormous and varied field of technological machines and appliances generally, including transport vehicles."

Dr. Archey expressed doubt as to the validity of the opening premise and suggested, with the consent of the proposer and seconder, that the following words be added to para (c)i: "without prejudice to the establishment by any community of an agricultural museum as a total museum."

Mr. McQueen referred to the recent establishment of two senior technical colleges and suggested, with the consent of the proposer and seconder, that the following words be added to para (c) ii: "and any such museums should be attached to institutions such as senior technical colleges".

CARRIED.

(d) "That attention be drawn to the need to establish a historic house (or houses) as a public museum and that the National Historic Places Trust be asked to support local or national efforts to acquire and furnish a house, (or houses) for such a purpose.

"That for the proper functioning of such house museums supervision by a curator with museum training and with some familiarity ^{with} ~~until~~ colonial history and material, is desirable."

CARRIED.

Mr. Tomory moved that the incoming Council finance the visit of two members to the Waitangi Treaty House to report on the contents thereof. Dr. Archey advised that the Board had decided to furnish two rooms of the Treaty House. He considered that Dr. Sinclair's criticism was unfair and tabled a published list of contents which showed that the

criticism was unwarranted.

With the consent of the Chair Mr. Tomory withdrew his motion and substituted:

"That the incoming Council consider the appointment of a Committee to report on the National historic collections at Waitangi Treaty House, not as a critical or investigating Committee, but to ascertain the facts and to make any proper suggestions for improvement that can be made."

Dr. Falla commented that this was the second occasion on which the subject had been raised at an Annual General Meeting of the Association and in view of the repeated criticism the Association might well ascertain the facts. He seconded the motion. Drs. Dell and Duff spoke in support and the motion was CARRIED.

THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS WERE ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING
AT THE AUCKLAND ART GALLERY IN APRIL, 1959.

- PRESIDENT: Dr. R.K. Dell, Zoologist and Senior Scientific Officer, Dominion Museum.
- VICE PRESIDENTS: Dr. R.A. Falla, Director, Dominion Museum.
Mr. P.A. Tomory, Director, Auckland Art Gallery.
- COUNCIL: Dr. T. Barrow, Ethnologist, Dominion Museum.
Dr. R.S. Duff, Director, Canterbury Museum.
Mr. G.E. Fairburn, President, Waikato Society of Arts.
Mr. V.F. Fisher, Ethnologist, Auckland Museum.
Mr. H. Grimson, Education Officer, Dominion Museum.
Mr. H.C. McQueen, Chairman, Management Committee, Dominion Museum.
Mr. J.B.S. Munro, Director, Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum.
Mr. M.J.G. Smart, Director, Wanganui Public Museum.
- HON. TREASURER: Mr. E.G. Turbott, Assistant Director, Canterbury Museum.
- HON. SECRETARY: Dr. R.C. Cooper, Botanist, Auckland Museum.
- HON. AUDITOR: Mr. A.H.H. Martin, J.P., Christchurch.

The Council has imported a few copies of the handbooks of the Museums Association, London:-

Handbook for Museum Curators.

Part B	5	Electrotyping, by A.A. Moss, 1956	3/6
	8	Identification of Metals, by A.A. Moss, 1956.	3/-
C	1 & 2	Archaeological Fieldwork, R.R. Clarke, 1958.	4/6
	4	Ethnography, B.A.L. Cranstone, 1958.	5/-
	8	Personalia, M. Holmes, 1957.	4/-
D	1 & 2	Pictures, T. Cox, 1956	3/6
	3	Costume, A. Buck, 1958.	5/-
F	3	Lectures, Film Shows & Concerts D.E. Owen, 1957.	3/6

Members wishing to obtain copies should send orders to the Hon. Secretary, A.G.M.A.N.Z, C/- Auckland Museum, P.O. Box 9027, Newmarket.

The Council has published a Guide to the Art Galleries and Museums of New Zealand. These are available at 1/- each, reducible $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ for 12 or more copies. To date only the Auckland Museum, the Auckland Art Gallery the Canterbury Museum and the Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum have purchased copies. They are an attractive item for Art Gallery and Museum bookstalls and Directors are urged to place orders with the Hon. Secretary.
