

Is New Zealand a Zoological Region?

In your issue of January 11, Mr. H. Farguhar wrote drawing attention again to the incongruity of associating New Zealand with Australia in a zoo-geographic sense. He correctly insists that the New Zealand fauna is *not* most closely allied to that of North-east Australia (Queensland). It is significant that those writers who advocate the alliance of New Zealand to Queensland have not seen either country, while those who deny such relationship have studied or travelled in both or either areas. No observer who had a first-hand knowledge of the two countries could agree with Dr. Sclater that "it is probable that the whole fauna of New Zealand has been originally derived from" Australia.

In the following number (p. 273), Dr. A. R. Wallace, writing in support of his own and Dr. Sclater's views, does not demonstrate or reaffirm their accuracy, but merely lays stress upon the inconvenience of an opposite view.

That an error is convenient is no good reason for its maintenance. Regardless of the direction in which they point, our first care must be the accuracy of facts and deductions.

But, as Dr. Wallace implies, there may be fairly laid upon destructive critics the burden of restoring by constructive work the effects of their ravages. "If," says Dr. Wallace, "antipodean naturalists restrict the 'Australian Region' to Australia and Tasmania, what shall be done with the remainder of his own Australian Region?" I have proposed (*Journ. Malacology*, iv. 1895, p. 55) that New Zealand, New Caledonia and neighbouring groups (inclusive certainly of the Solomons, perhaps of New

Guinea) might be collected into a Melanesian sub-region, and subordinated to the Oriental Region. Since I have elaborated these views in another place, I will here limit my argument to a couple of supporting references.

(1) When Dr. Wallace first returned from his Eastern travel his impression of a natural region was one "extending from the Nicobars in the north-west to San Christoval, one of the Solomon Islands, on the south-east, and from Luzon on the north to Rotti, at the south-west angle of Timor, on the south" (Report British Assoc. 1863, *Trans.* p. 107).

(2) Dr. W. Botting Hemsley has stated: "There is no doubt that the combined Fijian, Samoan and Tongan flora is eminently Malayan in character" (*Journ. Linn. Soc. Botany*, xxx. p. 211).

To map New Zealand thus as an extreme and impoverished outlier of the Oriental or Malayan Region would express but a part of her affinities, since it would ignore the Antarctic relationship. But zoo-geographic problems are too complex to be expressed in terms of colour on a map. If, however, New Zealand and related areas must be forced into one or other of the recognised divisions, then I submit that this arrangement would do less violence to nature than that accepted in the text-books.

Australian Museum.

CHARLES HEDLEY.