

MY DEAR DR HAAST:

Transcriptions of selected letters from Robert Langley
Holmes to Julius Haast between 1864-65 and 1868-70

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Geoscience Society of New Zealand miscellaneous publication 133C

October 2012

Published by the Geoscience Society of New Zealand Inc, 2012

Information on the Society and its publications is given at www.gsnz.org.nz

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Geoscience Society of New Zealand miscellaneous publication 133C

ISBN 978-1-877480-22-5

ISSN 2230-4495 (Online)

ISSN 2230-4487 (Print)

We gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the Brian Mason Science and Technical Trust which has provided financial support for this project.

This document is available as a PDF file that can be downloaded from the Geoscience Society website at: <http://www.gsnz.org.nz/information/misc-series-i-49.html>

Bibliographic Reference

Burns, R.; Nathan, S. 2012: My dear Dr Haast: Transcriptions of selected letters from Robert Langley Holmes to Julius Haast between 1864-65 and 1868-70. *Geoscience Society of New Zealand miscellaneous publication 133C*, 53 pages.

MY DEAR DR HAAST: Transcriptions of selected letters from Robert Langley Holmes to Julius Haast between 1864-65 and 1868-70

Introduction

Robert Langley Holmes, born in Ireland in 1833, spent eleven years in New Zealand between 1859-1870 before settling in Fiji. During his stay in New Zealand he worked directly under two of the giants of the colonial scientific community: Julius Haast¹ in Canterbury and James Hector in Wellington. Holmes wrote to Haast frequently between 1864 and 1887. He was an enthusiastic correspondent, who eagerly reported back to Haast the latest social and scientific gossip, and his letters are a delight to the historian. Heinrich von Haast quotes from the letters in the biography of his father, *The life and times of Sir Julius von Haast* (1948).

The letters in this collection, selected as background material for a forthcoming biography of James Hector, focus on two episodes:

- The New Zealand Industrial Exhibition held at Dunedin in early 1865, which Hector was involved in organising. Holmes was sent to Dunedin in late 1864 by Haast to set up and oversee the Canterbury display, and returned a few months later to dispose of the exhibits.
- The period from 1868-70 when Holmes was employed temporarily by Hector and the Colonial Museum in Wellington. Holmes was given a variety of clerical tasks, including preparing the first two volumes of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* for publication.

The original letters are part of the Haast Family Papers, deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (Ms-Papers-0037, folders 086-095), and are available on microfilm. Each sheet of paper in the collection is individually numbered, so that a transcript file of a letter will often reference several “sheets” (to borrow Holmes’ own phrasing). In checking through the letters we discovered that several were out of order, while an end folder (MS-Papers-0037-095) includes unidentified fragments. In the transcriptions we have reordered some of the letters, and noted these corrections in the footnotes.

We have supplemented these letters from the Haast family papers with a small number written by Holmes to Hector and R.B. Gore at the Colonial Museum, which are held in the archives of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Rowan Burns is responsible for the primary transcriptions, and for preparing the introductory sections, but we both checked and discussed every letter. Holmes’ handwriting is legible, so there were few problems in transcribing the letters. In a few places words that are illegible are shown by -----, and uncertain transcriptions are indicated by [?]. Holmes’ original spelling has been maintained.

¹ In 1875 Julius Haast was awarded a hereditary knighthood by the Emperor of Austria, which entitled him to use the prefix von before his surname. As this collection predates the award, we refer to him as Haast.

Who was R.L. Holmes?

*Robert Langley Holmes was born in King's Country, Ireland, in 1833, and educated in England and Germany, and spent one year in Dublin University. On leaving, he came out to Victoria in 1852, spending six years on the goldfields, mining. He was for two years dairy-farming, leaving for New Zealand in 1859. He spent some time in Government positions. Coming to Fiji in 1869, he purchased his present estate, Delanasay, in Bua ... He returned for a short time to New Zealand, finally settling in Fiji in 1871 ...*²

This quotation from the *Cyclopedia of Fiji* gives a brief overview of Holmes' life in the colonies, quickly brushing over his eleven years in New Zealand. Concerning this period, we know that Holmes was working for Haast from at least 1862 onwards.³ He began work as a companion on Haast's geological expeditions in the Canterbury Province, assisting with the fieldwork and the collection of botanical specimens.⁴ He accompanied Haast on his six-week expedition which resulted in the discovery of Haast Pass.

Holmes had been engaged as a meteorologist in Canterbury, and at the end of 1863, once Haast had secured funding for the Canterbury Museum, he appointed Holmes custos, or clerk/custodian. As well as classifying the collections in the Museum and performing general office duties, Holmes acted as Haast's personal assistant, drawing down his salary and handling his personal accounts.

Upon the termination of his contract with the Canterbury Provincial Government in 1868, Holmes moved to Wellington to work at the Colonial Museum under Hector. He was employed as secretary to the New Zealand Institute, and oversaw the publication of the first two volumes of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, amongst other miscellaneous tasks such as producing meteorological returns.

Holmes stayed in Wellington until 1869, when he visited Fiji. He briefly returned to New Zealand in 1870, then settled permanently in Bua Bay, Fiji, where he grew crops and continued to make meteorological observations. He published abstracts of these observations in the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, in 1874 and again in 1877, as well as in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society* in 1881 and 1887. In addition he wrote an early work on cyclones, published in 1905 in the *QJRMS*. In 1868 he was made a Fellow of the Meteorological Society (London). He continued to write to Haast and send him Museum specimens until Haast's death in 1887.

The letters by Holmes in this collection are only a portion of the group held in the Haast family papers. They have been selected based on their relevance to James Hector, the Dunedin Exhibition, the Colonial Museum, and the New Zealand Institute. Researchers into the history of Canterbury in the 1860s and life in Fiji in the late 19th century will find much of interest in other letters that have not yet been transcribed.

² 'Mr Robert Langley Holmes', *The Cyclopedia of Fiji*, Sydney, Cyclopedia Company of Fiji, 1907, reprinted by the Fiji Museum, Suva, 1984.

³ Letter from John Tyndall to Julius Haast, 17 September 1862, quoted in H.F. von Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, Wellington, 1948, p. 254.

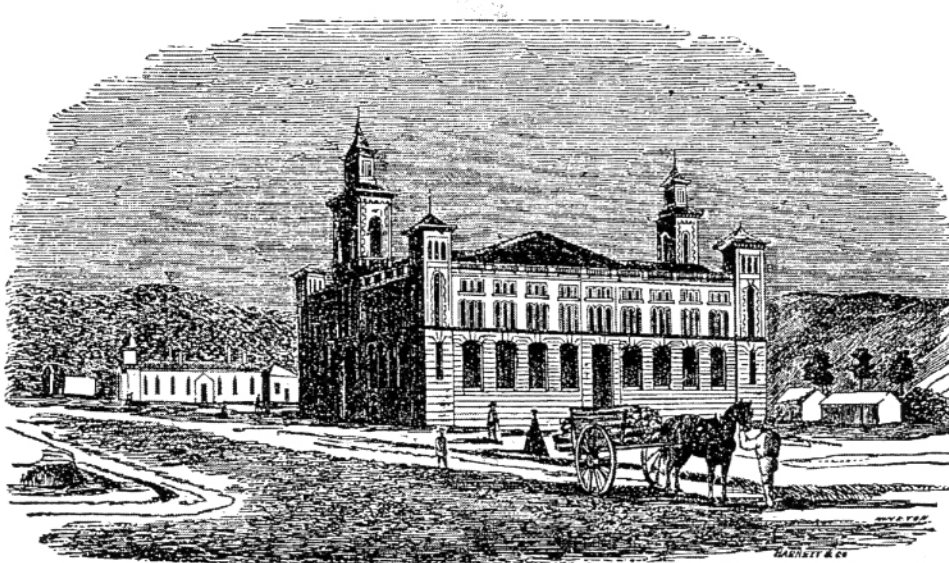
⁴ 'Important Discovery of an Easy Pass to the West Coast', *Lyttelton Times*, 8 April 1863, Page 2.

Part 1: The New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, Dunedin, 1865

In 1865 Dunedin was the largest town in New Zealand. The discovery of payable gold in Otago in 1861 transformed the Scottish Free Church settlement into a vibrant boom town, and the attendant wealth that followed allowed for the enactment of a number of public works. Among them was to be New Zealand's first International Exhibition, to showcase the industrial products of the colony alongside similar fare from Europe.⁵

Hector toured New Zealand in mid-1864 to drum up support from the other provinces for the Exhibition, and to commission several essays on aspects of New Zealand to be published in tandem with the exhibition. In Canterbury he secured from Haast the promise of an essay and the contribution from the Canterbury Geological Survey of a selection of geological and botanical specimens, maps and sections. In advance of the Exhibition's opening Haast dispatched his assistant, Holmes, to Dunedin in charge of the Canterbury collections in December 1864. Haast joined Holmes in Dunedin at the end of January 1865, just as Holmes was putting the finishing touches to the Cantabrian displays. The work complete, Holmes moved back to Christchurch, returning to Dunedin at the close of the Exhibition to pack up the Canterbury specimens.

The letters start in December 1864 when Holmes was about to depart for Dunedin.



The New Zealand Exhibition building, Great King Street, Dunedin
Otago Witness, 27 August 1864

⁵ Hocken (2007, Chapter 4) gives a detailed account of the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition

1. Holmes to Haast, 14-12-1864

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 1, with MS-Papers-0037-095, sheets 13 & 15 inserted.

Park House
Dunedin
December 14th 1864

My dear Dr Haast,

I take advantage of the first Northern mail to send you an account of my safe arrival with all the goods in Dunedin. Altho I promised to see you on Saturday morning last before leaving I found it impossible to do so, as after despatching five dray loads of goods I had barely time to catch the last train 11AM which would enable me to reach Lyttelton before the office closed at 2PM. I got all the goods into a lighter the same night and the *Lord Ashley* could not come alongside the wharf and on Sunday morning they were shipped on board, we sailed at 11 ½ AM and reached Port Chalmers at noon on the day following, where they had to be again transhipped into a small steamer and landed on the jetty here whence they were carted to the Exhibition Buildings, where they now lie, safe as far as number and appearance goes but whether the cold chisel will disclose any grievous fracture or damage among them a day or two will shew, as yet I have not opened any of them. Considering the rough usage they had to undergoe I shall be agreeably surprised to find all the glass is safe. The *Lord Ashley* is, I may say, unfortunately, one of those which load & unload by steam; any one who has seen that work going on knows what the chances of breakage are, which of course I endeavoured to lessen as much as possible by entreaty and I fear a little swearing. There were five parcels which I never let out of my sight or where possible out of my hands viz: your two cases of plants and maps, Mr Bullers⁶ cases of birds and Woodford[?] Electric Instruments, the rest for the greater part had to take their chances, you must remember there were ninety four articles of all kinds under my care, including of course a great deal of railway stuff from Lyttelton. The tonnage according to Miles & Co. measurement was a fraction under twenty two tons (measurement, not weight) for which I paid as freight to Port Chalmers & back £46.17.0 lighterage to Dunedin 10/ per ton more. Cartage from Ch.Ch. to Lyttelton £1.5.0 per ton; and lighterage in Lyttelton, the account for which could not be made out in time for me to settle, the cartage from the wharf to the Buildings, some two or three pounds concluded that part of the outlay, as you are not the Provincial Secretary I suppose you do not care much about all those expenses, the account of which may however interest some enquiring member of the local Committee. The whole of yesterday I was engaged getting the goods safe from the wharf to the Buildings so as yet I have not had much time to look about and make enquiries. Immediately on my arrival⁷ in Dunedin I presented myself before the Commissioners then sitting. Dr Hector received me very kindly also the others including Dr Eccles⁸ with whose signature as Hon. Sec. I am pretty well acquainted. They gave me every

⁶ Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906) was a New Zealand-born ornithologist. Julius Haast recommended his expertise to Hector for inclusion in the Exhibition (letter from Haast to Hector, 9 May 1864, Te Papa MU000198/001/0031). Buller wrote an unsolicited essay on New Zealand ornithology, which impressed Hector to the extent that it was published alongside the other Exhibition Essays in the first volume of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* (1868).

⁷ MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 1 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 13 inserted.

⁸ Alfred Eccles was one of the key organisers of the Exhibition. Several of his photographs, showing the exterior of the building and the interior court, are held by the Hocken Library, Dunedin (P11-021/3).

assistance in their power, including a general Pass to the Buildings at all times & to all parts until the opening. I was not long in taking advantage of this latter, to inspect the much talked of N.Z. Exhibition to be. As you do not know this town I need not describe the locality, but I was much pleased with the general appearance of the Building, indeed it is a splendid piece of work, a credit to the town and to the architect. You have seen the photograph which is of course very like, it is quite complete – externally, but inside there is much to do before the organ now being erected gives forth its notes of welcome at the bidding of Sir G. Grey. The Building (which cost £10,000) without any annexes) is I think a perfect square, at least it looks so, is divided into compartments, or courts as they are termed, by nothing more substantial than chalk lines with here & there a pillar supporting the very ---- gallery.



I have shaped a few lines to give you some idea of the part allotted to us, not very promising considering that most of our exhibits require wall space; in fact there is no such thing in our part at all if I except the two or three pillars which you will observe are included by the dotted line, as the windows reach down to about 4 feet of the ground and lie almost close together. To ensure uniformity and not to spoil the building for whatever it is intended

hereafter⁹ it was decided, I think wisely, to let each Province erect whatever partitions it would require for wall space which could afterwards be pulled down; but it will add greatly to our expense. The Commissioners are stewing[?] against Auckland who have not yet sent their goods, through some accident it is believed as they were known to be ready some time ago, they are anxious that all the Agents should meet to arrange on one system of marking, ornamenting &c. which is of course very desirable, but the great anxiety is the non arrival of the *Ramsay* and *Celaeno* from England with the Indian & English &c. goods on board, the first started the 21st Sept the latter the 31st August, therefore overdue but they will not delay the opening on their account, and preparations will now be pushed on night & day. There is much to be done, an enormous open court so to say, has to be subdivided fittings, counters, tables &c. &c. erected, in fact I can scarcely see how all can be done by the 3rd of January, to say so here is High treason. *nous verrons*. The Building is strictly tabooed except to pass holders, but very¹⁰ few things are as yet unpacked, the most forward of any by far are Dr Hector's collections, which are very large, I cannot imagine where they all came from. Mr Hackett is busy arranging them in very fine cabinets & showcases. I did not like prying so can not give you any insight into their contents, in my next I shall endeavour to tell you more on the subject. There is wonderful little talk here, all things considered, about the Exhibition, people allude to it now & then in conversation – that is all. I hope it may turn out a good speculation for it deserves it, but many people express doubts on the subject.

If there was no Exhibition at all I should strongly advise you, and others who have not seen Dunedin to pay it a visit. It is a wonderful place considering its age, you could hide Ch.Ch. in a corner of it. It is beautifully situated on the Bay with lovely walks in every direction, always supposing you are not afraid of hills which meet you in every direction, the views from some of the hills at the back is really splendid. The Dunedinites are a go-a-head race decidedly, their new Postoffice now commencing will be a magnificent Building if it is ever finished, but as you are coming down so soon it is no use giving you a description of the place. I have not yet had an opportunity to give your Report to Dr Hector. I visited Mr Gore¹¹ (Meteorological) today, he is overworked just now, among other things preparing under Dr Hector's direction a Diagram of the Atmospheric waves over all N.Z. since the first records were taken, this was Dr Knight's work by rights but he could not get time to do it. He tells me Dr H. commences his duties as General Govt. officer in March next, it is not unlikely that he will be also Director of Metl. Stations for N.Z. if so we shall see some changes, in that Department. I have had very little talk with him, he is very busy and harassed, he asked very kindly and particularly after you & Mrs Haast, & the young stonebreaker.

I have as yet had scarcely time to look about me he[re] so must defer sending you further details until next mail. I hope you will be able to forward me your remaining maps &c. soon, also that Mr Dobson will send his things. I should like greatly if he could come down here himself, to arrange about his little railway & other exhibits. that extraordinary package of his which came from Andersons & which weighs about fifteen hundred weight made some of the sailors &c. say a good deal more than their prayers at times, however it now lies snugly in the Court of the building, whence no one will run away with it I guess. I

⁹ Following the close of the Exhibition, the building was used to house the Dunedin Hospital. Hector was to revisit the site in 1891 as part of a damning Inquiry Commission into hygiene standards (*AJHR*, 1891, H-1).

¹⁰ MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 13 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 15 inserted.

¹¹ R. B. Gore had been on Hector's staff since 1862, and was to remain in his employ when Hector took up the post of Director of the Colonial Museum and Laboratory at Wellington in 1865.

nearly forgot to tell you that Mr Hobson met me in the Heathcoate valley when I was coming away and gave me a geological specimen to exhibit for him among yours, viz. a splendid gold nugget (Ballarat), some three or four pounds weight, it will see off one of your show cases well. He also very kindly gave me introductions to two gentlemen here who will be able to give me much advice on about my work. I hope Locke has not come to a dead lock with his observations. I shall send him a few lines shortly. With kind remembrances to Mrs Haast,

Believe me I remain
yours very truly
RL Holmes.

2. Holmes to Haast, 20-12-1864

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheets 2 & 3

Park House
Dunedin
December 20th 1864

My dear Dr Haast,

You will have probably seen by that newspaper that the Exhibition has been put off for a few days as the Governor has written to say that he can not be here until the 12th January when he will come down in the *Harrier* and do the needful & preside at the opening on that day. You will be glad of it I dare say as it gives you a little longer to prepare your Essay.¹² I have got a carpenter at work making the necessary fittings in the Building. I wrote to Locke a few days ago on account of the safe arrival of all the goods with a few trifling exceptions, which can easily be repaired. Mr Bullers birds are much admired, they arrived without a feather being displaced. I need hardly say that Dr Hector & the Commissioners are particularly well pleased with your exhibits altho' they have as yet had only a glimpse of them. I have not as yet unpacked any of the specimens waiting until the show cases are ready to receive them. Dr Hector is anxious to have your drawings of Alpine scenery, those that were painted by Mr Gully¹³ of Nelson, he saw them at Bonningtons when he was in ChCh & was much struck with their beauty. He suggests that it would be very desirable if you could get them from Bonnington for exhibition, they would add much to the attraction of the place. Could you not send them down? They would travel quite safe if well packed. He wishes to

¹² Haast's Exhibition Essay on the geology and physical geography of Nelson and Canterbury was finished in early 1865 but, like the rest of the Exhibition Essays, was not published immediately. By 1868, when the Exhibition Essays finally saw publication in the first volume of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, Haast's ideas on New Zealand geology had changed sufficiently that he asked Hector to either return his essay for revision or to not print it at all (letter from Haast to Hector, 12 May 1868, Te Papa MU000147/002/0342). It appears that no copies are extant (H.F. von Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, Wellington, 1948, pp. 360-61).

¹³ John Gully was a landscape artist working as a draughtsman for the Nelson provincial survey office. The paintings in question were twelve watercolours of South Island mountains and glaciers which Gully had made to illustrate Haast's 1864 lecture on the mountains and glaciers of the Canterbury province to the Royal Geographical Society, London. (DNZB biography, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1g25/1>).

have the Fine arts gallery as well furnished as possible & hopes that through your intercession there may be still some gentleman in Canterbury who would forward paintings &c. for the purpose. The Commissioners also request me to say that they will not refuse goods that should be sent even up to three or four days of the opening. Would it not be advisable to to[sic] get the papers to state that people may still send any thing suitable they may have prepared. Of course you could not attend to all this, but in the absence of Mr Tancred¹⁴ the chairman, you might perhaps appoint Mr Locke to canvas a few people, as he could be remunerated for so doing out of our ample funds.

The Auckland Nelson & Wellington goods have been pouring in since I arrived at a great rate. I wish that Canterbury had been better represented, more depends upon it than people at first imagine, if some of the members of the Committee had been a little more energetic, we would not have been so far behind some of the other Provinces as we are likely to be in the Exhibition. I have heard nothing of Mr Daynes models & surely they must be finished long ago! I suppose in his absence there was no one to see about them & get them forwarded. I have ordered the frames for Mr Dobsons drawings so they will be ready whenever he chances to send or bring them. If I thought Mr Tancred was in ChCh I would write to him as so duty bound & tell him of the wishes of the Commissioners to have any goods forwarded that may be procured, worthy of exhibition, but I suppose he has not yet returned from Auckland.

I have several letters to write therefore pray excuse my hasty scrawl. I will write more fully in a few days

Yours very sincerely
RL Holmes

Please address to: Care of Mr Geo. Smith, Park House, Dunedin.

¹⁴ Henry Tancred was a member of the Legislative Council and was in Auckland in December 1864.

3. Holmes to Haast, 24-12-1864

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 4

Park House
Dunedin
December 24th 64

My dear Dr Haast,

The *Airdale* leaving here for Lyttelton this afternoon gives me an opportunity to send you a few lines, altho' I have nothing very particular to relate. I wrote to you on the 20th Inst. at the suggestion of the Commissioners to endeavour to procure if possible some more exhibits which the postponement of the opening until the 12 Janry would enable the local Committee to have forwarded in time. Dr Hector was particularly anxious that you wd. send down some of your drawings of Alpine scenery either those you possess or could get from Bonnington. Would it not be possible to get some photographs of ChCh & neighbourhood. Elesby has some very pretty ones coloured, I dont think there are any in the exhibition could surpass them. Talbert[?] could easily send a frame or two of the buildings, local celebrities &c. of Canterbury. Pictures of all kind are in great request. English or any other country to furnish out the Fine Arts court.

I hope you will be able to send me down the rest of your maps &c. immediately, the construction of wall space in our division is very puzzling, to avoid shutting out the light, closing passages &c. I am anxious therefore that all your things shall have a good position, which a long delay will prevent. I should also like to get the labels for the specimens without delay.

Concerning which I would suggest that if possible the names of your Geol. specimens should be visible without raising the lid. What will be the good of the names at all, if they are hid under the specimens? Dr Hector made a remark on the subject. his names are I think all visible if they were written on very small slips of paper (just the number & name, without the locality) they could be guessed on without hiding the specimens, add much to the appearance and interest they would create, and be in every way more satisfactory to the public.

I have got all the rocks arranged and will commence the fossils immediately. goods keep pouring in to the Buildings, but the non arrival of the *Ramsay* is a sore point to the Commissioners, she has most of the Indian and English goods on board. Auckland will make a very fine show but Nelson will be small compared to theirs (Auckland) or ours, notwithstanding the promises they held out of larger ----- Do you think you will be down for the opening, there will be a great ceremony, and full with George Grey & a large staff to preside. I am rather hurried just now so must conclude, my object in writing was to ask for information on the above subjects. Please direct to the care of Mr Geo. Smith – Park House – Dunedin.

Yours sincerely
R.L. Holmes

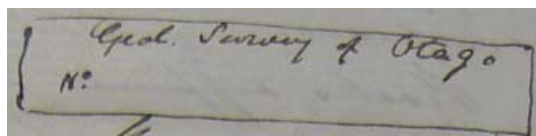
4. Holmes to Haast, 28-12-1864

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheets 13 & 14

Park House
Dunedin
December 28th 64

My dear Dr Haast,

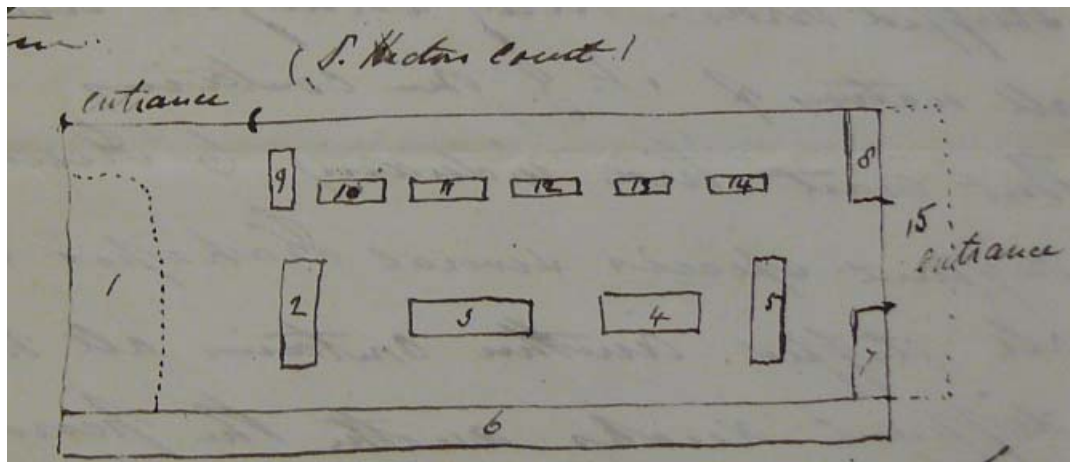
Yours of Decr. 23rd reached me yesterday and also a package of letters from Locke. I am glad that you have been able to make such a fine collection of tunnel specimens,¹⁵ I have ordered two showcases for them as you directed, on consideration I thought it best to get them made exactly like these I brought down, the difference in price between cedar and pine was not very great and they will be useful by and by in the Museum or in your office. I have written a short letter to Mr Dobson asking him what goods he has still to send which will require floor space. I am in doubts about his model of the tunnel, as he did not mention anything about it when I was leaving, neither do you in your last and I have been keeping a good position for it which could otherwise be occupied, it will require I believe (if it has been made) a table 12 ft by 5 ft. I wrote to you a few days ago asking about the manner you would like the labels attached to the specimens. Dr Hectors look so nice that I almost wish you had followed the same plan small slips of paper are attached to each specimen visible through the glass, in which is printed



the number & the name is written quite small but very neatly, the locality and so forth can be ascertained on looking at the catalogue. I had a good look at his collections in the Buildings yesterday, they are very extensive, a small plan will perhaps give you the best idea of them.

[diagram on next page]

¹⁵ Constructed between 1860 and 1867, the railway tunnel linking the port of Lyttelton with the city of Christchurch was notable for being the first such to run through an extinct volcano. The construction presented a unique opportunity for geologists, and Haast took regular specimens of rock as the work progressed.



1. Specimens from the gold fields, work dist. rocks &c.
2. Auriferous rocks, specimens of gold, valuable minerals &c. of Otago.
3. Fossils of Otago, mostly tertiary.
4. English collection of fossils & minerals.
5. Rocks & minerals of Otago.
6. Table of hand specimens.
7. Metamorphic rocks.
8. Granite & other rocks from West coast.
9. Native woods, polished with dried specimens of the flowers, leaves &c. attached.
10. Collection of Maori relics, -----, greenstone ornaments &c. &c. & Moa bones.
11. Fossils of Otago tertiaries, a few secondary & carboniferous.
12. 13. 14. Rocks different formations
15. Models of mining machinery &c.

From 2 to 5 are handsome double show cases, glass tops & sides. 6 is a long open table. 7 & 8 are tall cabinets, and 9 to 14 also high cabinets, double all the back parts looking to the centre of the building is filled with stuffed birds! nicely arranged and all natives of N.Z. one contains That[?] exact birds, including 6 Kiwis different species, several Kakapos &c. all stuffed. Another contains all the different ducks, another the parrot tribe and so on. but one of the most interesting specimens lying about is a case containing the leg & foot bones of a moa, sent in lately by a gentleman from Oamaru I think, it is fully six feet long! the two measuring at least 12 inches of course it beats any thing in Canterbury of that sort. Dr H. is also getting a skeleton of a moa put together which will be about as large as your cast. There is of course besides the above list an endless collection of large blocks of stone, coal, wood &c. ranged in different positions, so you may perceive that that part of the Building will be well furnished and be most interesting. I hope it will impress some of our Canterbury visitors, MPC's &c. with a proper respect for science, and the benefits which result from such collections.

No praise can be too much for Dr Hector, he is a person of extraordinary energy, his whole soul is wrapt up in his profession, and nearly all his income spent in advancing it. Every one speaks of him with respect and admiration, his manner is so particularly amiable and gentlemanlike. I dined with him last night and enjoyed myself much, he has such a pretty

bachelors home surrounded with a small but tactfully laid out garden surrounded by native shrubs, also a well stocked greenhouse &c. There were several gentlemen there in the evening, you were often mentioned & some of your theories discussed but I am not sufficient geologist to tell the result. your glacial theory on the formation of Lakes does not I fancy quite correspond with Dr Hectors. I hope that in time you will be able to convince him. Dr H. and many others look forward with pleasure to meet you on your visit to Dunedin which I hope you will be able to make about the time opening. There will be some fuss made about the reception of the Governor, but his stay here will be very short, I hear he has promised to to[sic] be in Ch.Ch. at the Champion races. I see some Ch.Ch. faces in the streets lately, I suppose the came in expectation of the Exh.on opening on the 3rd they will be greatly disgusted at the delay.

There is still a great deal to be done in the Buildings. No sign of the *Ramsay* yet, very provoking if she does not bring the rest of the Indian & English goods in time. Please to let me have the rest of your exhibits as soon as possible. If they are addressed to me or to the Commissioners on the Bill of lading or proper authority sent to me, they will arrive safe. I shall write a few lines to Locke. I want a list of the Canter.y. local Committee for the Commissioners, which I forgot to bring down with me. I shall write again shortly.

Yours very truly.
R.L. Holmes.

5. Holmes to Haast, 29-12-1864

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 5

Park House
Dunedin
Decembr. 29th 64

My dear Dr Haast,

You will be surprised to see my handwriting so soon again, as I wrote to you by the steamer which left this morning which letter I hope you have received. My object at present is to ask you whether you would not like to exhibit the Moa caste, and I do so at the suggestion of Dr Hector. We were talking about it today, and he said what a pity it was that you had not sent down so interesting a specimen. I really do not think there would be any danger of an accident happening to it, the breast bone & ribs are the only ones at all liable to damage if well packed, & surely an unlimited quantity of tow[?] or flax would guard against that. You may depend on my putting it up all right and in a good position. Dr Hector seems very anxious that it should be sent. I am sure Locke would assist in taking it to pieces &c. and despatching it. Of course if you decide on sending there is no time to lose.

I have got plenty of space if I had only the goods for it.

My neighbour, the Nelson agent, offered one part of his superfluous room which I should like greatly to occupy, if only to keep that corner of the Buildings to ourselves, but the Otago Committee are throwing sheeps eyes at it continually, as their court is sure to be overcrowded. So send anything or everything you like, only "stand not upon the order of your sending but send at once". I have completed the arrangement of your specimens, there are about half a dozen only which have but their labels (nos.) and when the catalogue arrives I will put them all right with the assistance of Dr Hector.

Hoping to hear from you soon

Believe me I remain
Yours very sincerely
R.L. Holmes

Dr J. Haast
Prov. Geologist.

6. Holmes to Haast, 24-1-1865

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheets 6 & 9

Park House
Dunedin
Janry. 24th 1865

My dear Dr Haast,

As the *Omeo* leaves here for Lyttelton today, I send you a line but consider it probable, from what you stated in your last, which I have just received, that you may already have started for this town; I hope you have & that I shall meet you before the week is over. I had almost determined to start for ChCh by the *Airdale* tomorrow, having nothing whatever to do here now, but I shall now wait for two or three days longer. Any working man could of course arrange the tunnel specimens, under your direction in a couple of hours, so that I really do not see that I can do much good by waiting. I arranged the N. Island specimens in one of the new showcases and the Moa bones in the other, & attached labels to them, they look very nice. I also got the fossils boxes painted black as you directed but instead of leaving them freshplastered I covered the broken parts with coloured paper which looks very well. I really do not think it worth while ordering two more cedar showcases for the tunnel specimens, for this reason almost all the Provinces have sent a large collection of minerals &c., but with very few exceptions they are arranged on the tables without any covering whatever, they look quite as well, and when very valuable minerals even gold & pigments are there placed, I think simple rocks are safe enough, however when you come down it is easy to get them made in a day or two if you like; The *Ramsay* goods are being brought up & will be arranged all probably before the end of next week. Many thanks for the compliments & kind expressions you send me. I am glad that so far I have done nothing against the wishes of the Commissioners, but[?] as regards praise I cannot see that I deserve the least for carrying out the object in view, & for which I am getting well remunerated.¹⁶

I am curious to know whether the Govt. will proceed with the Museum immediately. I shall certainly not long remain in their employ with the duties of Meteorologist only it is rather absurd to think I should, after being nearly 13 years in the Colonies one naturally hopes for something more than £100 a year – Another terrible fire here last night, many persons injured, & a large number of fine houses burnt including the Bank of Otago, a stone building something like our Bank of Australasia, this is the third large fire here since I came down, as usual a little wind last night would have been most disastrous! The weather seems clearing a little at last, we have had continual rain or showery days since the new year. As I shall see you so Soon, & I am in a great hurry to catch the *Omeo* mail I must conclude.

Remember me to Mrs Haast & Believe me I remain
yours very sincerely

R. L. Holmes

¹⁶ MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 6 ends, MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 9 inserted [the description of the fire mentioned matches reports in the *Otago Daily Times* of 24 January 1865].

7. Holmes to Haast, 29-4-1865

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 8, with MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 10 inserted.

Christchurch
April 29th 1865

Dr J. Haast
Provl. Geologist
Hokitika

My dear Dr Haast,

I take advantage of a mail which leaves here this afternoon for the West coast to send you again a few lines. I wrote to you about a fortnight ago, which letter I hope you received all right. My chief item of news this time is to inform you that I am to go down to Dunedin next Thursday to bring back the Canterbury goods. I received official notice that the Exhibition would be finally closed today (the 29th April). I could not well have been in time to see the closing, as I thought it best to complete my monthly returns &c. before starting, so I wrote to Mr Webb to be kind enough to cover up all our things until I arrive at the end of next week. I found it very hard to get anyone to take the Observations but at last arranged with a brother of Mr Denham, chief clerk in the Registry office, who seems to be a nice young fellow, and will I am sure be quite as good as Locke, who by the way returned to town a few days ago, as the work on the Hurunui track is discontinued and all hands discharged he seems to expect to be immediately set to work again with Blake on the Waimakariri road. At all events he does not seem to regret not going with you, for reasons best known to himself.

I am surprised that not a word has been yet published by the Commissioner about the results of the Exhibition, it is possible they may have arranged to declare the prizes &c. at the closing ceremony. I believe such was done at the great Exn. at home. They are very ill pleased with the attendance from the other Provinces so it is just possible they may rush through the rest of their work in the quickest and the cheapest way they can. I hope to be back here again before the month (May) is out. I will write to you of course when I get to Dunedin and let you know all the Exhibition business &c. There have been no letters or other parcels left here except one little billet which looks so like an account that it is not worth sending all the way to the West coast. There is very little ChCh news and of that I am sure you are kept well informed.¹⁷

G.A.E. Ross is Prov. treasurer since Sale left.¹⁸ Fitzgerald and Co. returned from an unsuccessful exploring party, leaving Harman & Browning to continue the search at the head of the Rakaia but the Govt. have so far determined as to put a large party of men on the track across "Arthurs" pass (I think) at all events the Hurunui road is quite given up, the expediency of which I question very much. Today's paper says that arrangements have been

¹⁷ MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 8 ends, MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 10 inserted [the expedition to the Rakaia took place in mid-April 1865].

¹⁸ George Samuel Sale was provincial treasurer for Canterbury from June 1864 until April 1865 when, upon the discovery of gold in the West Coast (then still a part of the Canterbury province) he was despatched as commissioner at the West Canterbury goldfields. See <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s1/1>

completed with G. Holmes & co. for making the railway as far as the Rakaia, work to be commenced at once; where the cash is to come from, it does not say.

The town is full of Bishops (5) and clergymen &c. come to attend the general Synod. I think they have let you alone in the papers since you left. I have not seen your name once except the short report from Lake Sumner which was published; I suppose we will soon get another from you. Moorhouse has been getting it hot and strong from the "Press" lately, desperate paper war between it (the *Press*) and the *Times* aided by Ollivier all about the £5000 gratuity, neither side seem to have lost or gained much by their ----- . There is no known opponent to Moorhouse for the Superintendency in the field at present, since Rolleston declined to stand in ----ed terms. The English mail has not yet arrived, it is very late, but it always is this month tho not so late as this (29th). Otago papers speak of forming a road across "Haast" pass. It is amusing to read the account how they have sent a surveyor to explore a route from l. Wanaka and talk of sending drays? over in no time, entirely ignoring all your reports on the subject. I should not be surprised if they took credit for discovering the pass by and bye. I shall perhaps favour them with a few remarks on the subject. There is much distress in Ch. Ch. just now, numbers of returned diggers half starving, in fact many have taken to begging as work of course cant be got for all. Your office is exactly as you left it, this day month. I hope two more will see you back again safe & sound. I must conclude now as this has to be posted directly, wishing you every happiness and comfort?

I remain
yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

P.S. your salary of last month was placed to your credit at the U.B.A. and I will attend to this months before leaving. R.L.H.

8. Holmes to Haast, 8-5-1865

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 10

Park House
Dunedin
May 8th 1865

My dear Dr Haast,

The above direction will show you that I have already arrived in my old quarters having come down to Dunedin by the *Otago* yesterday, and as the *Omeo* leaves for Hokitika tomorrow I thought best to send you a line at once, altho I have not much to report. The Exhibition closed finally on Saturday last, the day I left ChCh so of course I was not present. I expected of course that the report of the jurors &c. would be forthcoming at the closing ceremonial, but they have not yet completed their task, and therefore the most interesting part of the affair (to exhibitors) is yet a mystery. I was in the Building today, everything looks just as I left it three months ago quite safe and uninjured. I saw Dr Hector and others; they will not allow me to begin packing yet, until the jurors have finished their examination, but hold out hope that I may set to work in two or three days. I stated in my last letter to you that I feared they might hurry over the work, but it seems to be the contrary, they are taking very great care indeed, their great difficulty having been to find suitable jurymen. I send you a paper (the *Daily Times*) of today, containing an account of the closing ceremony and the preliminary report of the Commissioners, read by the Secretary. The success of the whole affair may be declared as very fair, considering all things, I believe there remain a small balance in hand after clearing the expenses, the total attendance was nearly 30,000, the receipts about £2,200, average attendance 270 per diem, greatest in one day 1400. Out of 700 exhibitors over 300 are considered worthy of obtaining certificates of merit. I do not think there will be any gold medals, at least there is no talk of such, nothing more precious than silver & bronze. I hope they will not keep me here idle any length of time, but I have great fear of it; I believe there will be an auction and I am anxious to get rid of some of the bulky goods at it such as, ploughs & harrows, churns, wool &c. to lessen the expense of carriage.

I suppose if you return to Ch.Ch. sooner than you expected, you will leave word to have your letters sent after you so there will be no risk in my writing always to the Hokitika until I hear to the contrary. I lodged your April salary at the U.B.A. before leaving. I had no difficulty whatever in getting it. Wishing you may keep free from Rheumatism[?] and all such ills of the West coast.

Believe me I remain
Yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

9. Holmes to Haast, 30-5-1865

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 11

Park House
Dunedin
May 30th 65

My dear Dr Haast,

I daresay you will be expecting to hear from me again about this time. I wrote to you soon after I arrived here from Ch.Ch. telling you all I know about the Exhibition &c. I have since completed all the packing of the goods, and will return to Canter. by the next steamer of the Panama Co. which however very awkwardly, does not sail until the 15th prox. You will be surprised to hear that even yet the Commissioners have not made public the Juries Awards. They first determined to reopen the Exhibition for a day or two with the awards attached to the successful articles, but changed their minds and now the Building is being rapidly emptied and no one knows who are the lucky competitors. The auction commences in a few days when there will be a large amount of goods for sale; the Catalogue is now being prepared. I have got all your specimens very carefully packed and directed, also all the other things without the slightest mishap. I hope to sell the ploughs, churns, wool, timber & such like bulky articles at the auction & so lessen the cost of carriage. Some few hints have been let fall about who will get medals &c., but of course nothing to be depended on. Keetley's[?] (Kaiapoi) ploughs are by far the best shown except perhaps one Scotch one, which is one feather in our cap. The Juries were greatly puzzled about Class 29 (of yours) it was so very extensive, but Dr Hector went round with them and explained everything, so that I have no doubt you will find a suitable acknowledgement in their Report. I believe they will distribute their awards pretty freely. There is some hope of their being published in a week or so. The Essays &c. are in the Press. But the concluding Report of the Commissioners will be withheld until the very last, probably for two or three months. Dr Hector is very hard at work, he is stopping here (at Park house) to be near his office, it will be sometime before he is ready to go to Wellington for good. Gore, Skey & Buchanan will accompany him, another Meteorological officer has been appointed, and the Govt. have got instruments for four or five extra stations up the country. McNeil the Govt. Surveyor who was dispatched to find a pass from the Wanaka to the W. Coast has returned with his tail between his legs, he said he took the wrong side of some river (what river?) ran short of provisions & so forth, I mentioned him I think in my previous letter.

[No signature, copy possibly terminates prematurely]

10. Holmes to Haast, 11-6-1865

ATL MS-Papers-0037-086, sheets 12 & 11

Park House
Dunedin
June 11th 1865

My dear Dr Haast,

You will be surprised to hear that I am still in Dunedin but I have been unable to get away as yet. I shall leave however on Thursday next in the *Otago* (D.V.) there has been a gap of nearly three weeks without a vessel of the "Panama Co." sailing from here north. I was not sorry of the delay, as it gives me an opportunity of disposing of some of the heavy goods at the auction which concluded yesterday, moreover I am little or no extra expense to the Comtee. I am glad of the opportunity to send you a letter which I hope you will receive soon. Dr Hector and I or rather I should say Dr H. alone has been fighting a little battle for you here, the apple of desire being the 'Haast Pass'. I mentioned in a previous letter to you that I expected there would be a little paper war on the subject, and so it came to pass. The enclosed slip of a newspaper will explain partly how matters were brought about. I told you how a Mr O'Neill was sent to explore a route from the Wanaka to the West coast utterly oblivious of the fact that such a thing had long since been accomplished by you. It seems almost incredible, but Dr Hector sais it is just like what the Chief Surveyor Mr Thompson¹⁹ is so fond of doing, in spite of Brownings map, your report &c. &c. &c. Then[?] O'Neill came back and published the report which I enclose! Is it not a beautiful production? had he endeavoured to ascend Mt Cook he could not have failed more thoroughly. Of course Dr Hector was up in arms at once and as he said he had tried fair words on similar subjects with Thompson he would now try the Press. Accordingly he got me to draw up a map of your route, enlarged from Brownings map and also to write a short account of it. This was published directly and I send you a copy of it in the *Daily Times*. Dr Hector first intended to apply the lash pretty strongly on Thompson but afterwards, & wisely I think, wrote very mildly; he also requested me to confine my remarks entirely to the bare facts, which I have done as you see, I hope I have not used your name too freely or in any way you may not approve of. Dr Hector sais that the tracing left at Vogels office brought down the Govt. folks instantly including O'Neill & Thompson of course. He thinks that there will be another party sent off at once to see whether the road can be easily made, it will be advantageous to each Province & therefore I threw as little cold water on the subject as possible. I pity any party however that goes and gets caught W. of the Clarke when the spring freshers commence. there will be time enough to accomplish²⁰ much before that time.

In the same paper which I send there is a preliminary list of successful exhibitors at the Exhibition, it was published about a week ago, but if slow in appearing, it is not very short, and as you may observe the Canterbury exhibitors figure pretty freely, about twenty five of them have gained an Honorary Award! You will see that you receive two of such for

¹⁹ John Turnbull Thomson was Chief Surveyor for Otago – see <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t97/1>, and had firm opinions about how geographic features should be named. He and Hector had previously argued about the naming of features in west Otago.

²⁰ MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 12 ends, MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 11 inserted.

your collections and I have very little doubt a medal also, but the list of those has not been made public yet, nor can I hear who will receive them. I do not like to appear too inquisitive. The Book of Essays will not appear for two months or so if so soon the 'Report of the Jurors' on all the exhibits will appear about the same time, it will be a lengthy affair, your Essay is in the printers hands I think, but these gentry have run short of paper & it will be some time before they can get any more. Dr Hector is staying here (at Park House) you know Foreman smashed, and is now performing a little dance through the Insolvent Court, his place is to be relet &c.; Dr H. is very busy; he is buying largely at the Exhibition for the General Govt. Museum, having been commissioned to do so. He will remove North shortly, but I think you will receive a letter from him by this mail. Another week and the Exhibition building will be nearly empty again. The goods for all the Northern Provinces I think will go in the *Otago*, what glorious confusion there will be on board. I shall²¹ keep a sharp look out for our things you may be sure. I tried a little begging for some things for our Museum, but tho' many most interesting and valuable things could be purchased at a very low figure, there were none to be given away, and our economical Govt. have lost a chance which will not come again for many a day. What an assortment might have been got for £50 or £100. Of course it does not concern me in the least, as affairs stand at present. I believe the Prov. Council of Canterbury has been again prorogued, not to meet until after the General Assembly in two or three months. John Ollivier is appointed Speaker he was proposed by Mr Tancred!

I have got a beautiful little set of Alpine Thermometers for you a gift from Dr Hector. I am glad that your good opinion of the diggers is being confirmed; the news from there is very encouraging. Your letter of May 18th was forwarded to me lately from ChCh I was sorry I could not send the copies of your Report to the persons you mentioned, of course I could not get them here as it was not copied into the local papers (of Dunedin). If it is not too late, when I return I will endeavour still to procure them but I fear there will be little chance. I suppose you will return to ChCh soon, I am sure you must have had a hard time at the coast but one which will bear good fruit. My next letter if any will be addressed to you from your old office, which I hope to see again in four or five days. As you have still got my letter in the newspaper to read I shall now conclude and

Believe me I remain
Yours most sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

Dr Julius Haast
Prov. Geologist
Hokitika.

²¹ MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 11 ends, MS-Papers-0037-086, sheet 12 inserted.

Part 2: R.L. Holmes in Wellington, 1868-70

In early 1868 Holmes' salary from the Canterbury Provincial Government was slashed from £250 to £150 a year, and he promptly resigned his positions as meteorologist and custos to the nascent Canterbury Museum. In April 1868 he wrote to R.B. Gore, Hector's administrator at the Colonial Museum in Wellington, asking for a position under Hector. Gore had been on Hector's staff since 1862, and he and Holmes had worked together during the New Zealand Industrial Exhibition in Dunedin in 1865.

Holmes' application was successful, and within three months he had arrived in Wellington, presented himself to Hector, and had been set to work "the very next morning". His chatty letters to Haast from this period illuminate Wellington of the late 1860s, the early meetings of the New Zealand Institute and the Wellington Philosophical Society, and the problems of publishing the first two volumes of the Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute. They are also the only source of information about the life of James Hector about the time he was married.

11. Holmes to Gore, 29-4-1868

Te Papa MU000147/001/0147

Government Office
Christchurch
April 29. 68

My dear Gore,

You will be surprised to hear that I am about to leave the Provl. Govt. service, my reason is simply a great reduction in my salary from £250 to £150 per an. The latter sum which is now offered to me I consider to be far too little for the work required, namely to continue the Meteorology as heretofore, and do all the work of the Museum. I declined at once, but accepted the terms until end of June next, until when I shall receive some extra pay from Dr Haast to do what else is required in the geological department. At the end of June Dr Haast completes his contract and retires I believe from Govt. service also.

My reason for informing you of this is to ask if there is any likelihood of my getting work in Wellington under Dr Hector or otherwise. I should be much obliged to you for your opinion, and hope you will excuse my taking this liberty.

I am not particularly anxious for Govt. employment, that is to say Provincial, seeing the way I have been treated after nearly five years of experience, but owing to the frightfully dull state of things here for some time past it is exceedingly difficult for any to turn their little property, land and so forth into cash, so as to start at anything else on one's own hook. An early answer will oblige.

Yours very truly

RL Holmes

P.S. Your old acquaintance Fuller²² has been engaged in my place to look after the Museum and stuff animals &c. in his leisure time, at the above salary (£150). Govt. have not yet got any one to do the meteorology, I fancy they want someone to do it for nothing! I hope they may find him!

RH

²² Frederick Richardson Fuller worked as Haast's assistant and taxidermist for next eight years. See <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/publications/richmanpoorman/frederickrichardsonfuller/>

12. Holmes to Haast, 30-6-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 13

Christchurch N.Z.
30th June 1868

Dr Julius Haast F.R.S.
Provincial Geologist
Canterbury

My dear Dr Haast,

I beg to acknowledge with sincerest thanks your very kind letter of this day accompanied by a beautiful breast pin – a parting gift on my leaving your employ – which I shall ever retain amongst my most valued treasures.

To your kind and considerate regard I owe very much indeed, not only for my advance in life since we first met, but also for all the knowledge I possess of Geology, and other branches of science, and thus giving me, wherever my path may lead, an amount of interest in all places and events.

I have been now about five years in your employ, partly in the field exploring in the backcountry or surveying the different passes, partly in office, and I cannot call to mind in the trying circumstances of the former, or in the daily routine of the latter, one unkind look or expression towards me, although indeed I am but too well aware I was often deserving of both.

No one can know so well as I do the amount of perseverance and anxiety you have displayed in prosecuting your work as Geologist in this Province, and in endeavouring to establish that great source of pleasure and improvement, a Provincial Museum, for which there are now such large and valuable collections made entirely by yourself. I trust to hear very shortly of the erection of a suitable building for that purpose and that thus you will have a better opportunity of displaying the results of your labour in New Zealand, and the satisfaction of assisting to create an interest in scientific pursuits amongst the public.

The high honour you have attained in Europe is proof that there at least your efforts have been properly appreciated.

Wishing you every success and happiness
I am dear Dr Haast
yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

13. Holmes to Haast, 19-7-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 14 & 20, with MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 1 inserted.

Wellington
Sunday
19 July 68

My dear Dr Haast,

I arrived here by the *Lady Bird* last Thursday and lose no time in sending you a few lines, although I am not sure when there will be a mail for the South. We had a very unpleasant trip, as the sea was rough and the vessel crowded to excess. I was very sick, and glad to get on shore again. By a friends advice I put up *pro tem* at the Queens Hotel which I find exceedingly comfortable and quiet. There are here besides myself, Mr Curtis the Super. of Nelson, Barff of Westland, Armstrong of Akaroa, all M.L.A.s and several other bigwigs.

I lost no time in presenting myself to Dr Hector, who set me to work the very next morning: just such work as I expected, working up returns of one sort or another. I am now reducing the results of observations on the rivers and sea in and about N.Z. with regard to the salmon affair.²³ What comes next I do not exactly know but think it will be something for the N.Z. Society. There is nothing determined about my having a permanent situation, that will depend on many things, and I can wait patiently as long as I get employment of some kind. The Govt. certainly are in no humour to vote extra salaries, but the contrary. Dr Hector has been fighting your battle well, but I fear he is not very sanguine of success. He tells me he got strict orders from Stafford²⁴ to reduce his staff and all expenses connected with the Geol. Survey to the lowest, in fact Stafford said he must be able to shew some reduction in all the departments. I asked whether it would be advisable for you to come up to Wellington but Dr Hector thinks it would not but on the contrary might do harm. However you have of course received full particulars from the Doctor himself, I only mention so much as I believe you wished me to make some enquiries, or at least to keep my eyes and ears open to all that concerns the great stonebreaking business. Dr Hector showed me over the Museum, and I certainly was agreeably surprised with all I saw. I do not wish to make any disparaging remarks, but it seems to me that those who consider the Ch.Ch. collections at all equal in value or interest to the Colonial Museum are under a strange mistake. First, the building was represented to be simply hideous, a shed and nothing more, but really the wing that is complete looks very²⁵ well, the second portion lately completed and arranged has of course a blank wall in front, to be hidden by and bye with the front and principal part of the structure, and when the fourth and last wing is added it will look exceedingly neat and appropriate, as may be seen by the design, framed and glazed inside. The offices are numerous and convenient. There is no question but that you carry the day in some particulars, birds for instance, and type rocks and minerals; but there is such a variety here that any one may pass half an hour pleasantly who does not know one iota about geology. The two Moas have been set up and placed in the new wing along with the former "*giganteus*", and a skeleton of an

²³ Hector was heavily involved in the import and acclimatisation of salmon. The returns referred to by Holmes are probably those printed in: 'Papers Relative To The Introduction Of Salmon Into The Colony', *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1869 Session I, D-02.

²⁴ Edward Stafford was Premier. Although generally sympathetic to the Geological Survey, he had been elected on a platform of reducing government expenditure.

²⁵ MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 14 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 1 inserted.

Emu. You saw of course the Moa egg with the chick, and alongside the eggs of ostrich, emu &c. There is a large collection of bird skins and much more are stuffed than I expected to see, it appears there is a man here who stuffs, and very fairly too. Mr Buller's Exhibition cases are also shown. There are not many mammals stuffed, but the native dog is a remarkable object. Mr Mantell has certainly contributed largely, also Sir G. Grey and Governor Bowen. The extensive wall space comes very appropriate, and a large part of it is covered with Barraud's watercolours, drawings, photos &c. There appear to be a large quantity of native weapons, from here, Africa, Australia &c, handsomely arranged. The models of bridges, machinery and gold workings also assist to make up a good effect. I suppose you saw the cases containing the specimens of telegraph cables, native and foreign woods (in cubes, from Balfour) with his testing apparatus. Also the Indian collection of silks and stuffs, vegetable products such as cotton, teas &c, which we saw in Otago. The system of distinguishing the locality of shells by the colour of the border on the glasses is very good, tho' the number of shells is not very great. By the bye, I think many light coloured objects, such as bleached bones, eggs &c. look very well on black paper, where there is good light from above as here. Gold also shows well on the same ground. The Maori house, with beautiful carving is now completed, and is connected with the Museum: it is worth coming a long way to see. I hope I have not been saying too much in favour of the Colonial Museum, had I always heard it praised up before I came here, it is more than probable I should have abused the whole affair. The weak point is decidedly the naming of the fossils and rocks very little indeed has been done in this respect, except distinguishing the formations, there seems to be²⁶ a large and fine collection of both, particularly tertiary (pliocene) fossils. Lastly I have not the least doubt that if you had equal opportunities as Dr Hector such as a proper building, Mantells, Greys,²⁷ and particularly a Genl. Govt. treasury at your back, you would very soon make a Museum to be at least compared with ours here.

I like the appearance of this town very much; it is greatly changed since I was here 8 years ago, as well it might, and shows as if it made a great stride since the Genl. Govt. was removed here. Coming from Ch.Ch. the scenery is fine, or indeed coming from anywhere, many very pretty walks, overlooking the harbour, sea &c., and through the bush; but of course I have not made many discoveries in that way yet. I took my first walk out of town this afternoon with Bob. Dobson, out by Kaiwara along the Porirua road. I met B.D. the day I landed, looking very well, and in excellent spirits, no homesickness there, he likes the telegraph office very much, and will I am sure get on well. He is very economical, as well he need be. There is not so much excitement here as one would imagine about the Chatham escape, or the Patea affair.²⁸ They are trying to raise 200 volunteers to go to Patea but not with much success. It is wonderful how many people speak in favour of the Maoris; it seems more than likely there will be any amount of fighting yet. In fact it is the greatest nonsense to talk of the war being over. I shall write again soon but must now conclude as I have several other letters to write to Ch.Ch. and elsewhere. Give my kind regards to Mrs Haast, and

Believe me

yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

²⁶ MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 1 ends, MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 20 inserted.

²⁷ Walter Mantell, a member of the Legislative Council, and Sir George Grey, who had recently completed his second term as Governor of New Zealand, assisted Hector greatly in the establishment of the Colonial Museum.

²⁸ On 4th July 1868 Te Kooti led a prison escape from the Chatham Islands. In June 1868 fighting flared up between Pakeha and Ngāti Ruanui under Titokowaru, at Patea.

A letter addressed to the Colonial Museum will be sure to find me. I shall be glad to get a few lines whenever you have a spare moment to write.

RH.

20th. Dr Hector requested me today to ask you to let him know as soon as convenient whether the Phil. Society has come to any decision about joining the N.Z. Institute. I suppose it has been settled long ago. Will you also be kind enough to tell your Hon. Sec. Mr Fraser to forward to Dr Hector a copy of the Laws, and a list of the members of the Society. He is anxious to get this information immediately. A mail for ChCh tomorrow.

RH.

14. Holmes to Haast, 5-8-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 16, 17 & 18

Wellington
Augt. 5 68

My dear Dr Haast,

I received your short reply to my note a few days ago. There was another mail from the South today by the *Gothenberg* but it did not bring me anything, although several Ch.Ch. folk owe me a letter. I send you with this a paper giving the Governor's inaugural address last evening at the N.Z. Institute.²⁹ The affair went off with immense success, as may be supposed when the Governors secured His Excellency to do the speechifying. Dr Hector arranged everything splendidly; the Museum was all lit up and seats placed in the old wing. There must have been between four and five hundred persons present, in fact when the speeches &c. were over there was scarcely room for the visitors to move about. There were a great many ladies, indeed nearly half of those present, & almost every one who was any one in & about Wellington was present; I have never seen so influential a gathering in N.Z. before. The Assembly adjourned in the midst of the most exciting debate of the season, and were most of them present also. Fox, whose speech is unfortunately not given in the *Advertiser*, as it was a most excellent one, replied to the address. Lady Bowen and her three little daughters sat next to the Governor, and was afterwards escorted by Dr Hector all over the place. She was dressed as if going to attend a Levee, most gorgeously. The handmaiden of the Institute, the W. Phil. Society held their first meeting of the season also last week, it too was a great success; instead of drooping for want of nourishment in the way of Papers, discussions &c. the contrary seems to be the case, as they could only get through a portion of those laid on the table, although they were clipped short in the reading. I sent you a newspaper about it, your Paper on *Dinornis* was read and the Moa bones displayed, that is a part of the paper for of course all the measurement could not be read. Mantell spoke a little about it, but nothing particular, he is anxious to know all you go on to determine the different species. He was replied to by Hector & Travers. There were about 40 members present at the meeting which was held in the Maori House, a splendid place by the way in every respect. The Museum makes progress daily, under Dr H's indefatigable exertions, there is never a day

²⁹ Later printed as 'Inaugural Address of the Governor Sir George Ferguson Bowen, G.C.M.G., to the New Zealand Institute, As its first President', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol I, 1868, pp. 3-9.

without some thing or other being presented or deposited and the number of visitors is very large, today there must have been at 150 there. By the bye I notice that Dr Hector is particularly careful to attach the donors name to every article. It has often and often struck me in Canterbury that unless that is done it is utterly hopeless to expect people to contribute, and I see Dr H. is of the same opinion. I think much might be done in this respect to improve your museum in Ch.Ch.

A grand feature here is the number of paintings drawings &c. last night one of the Halls looked like a picture gallery; besides a great many of Gully's and Barrauds, private persons sent contributions including a large number of Hon. Johnstone's who is quite an artist, and during his recent visit to Europe took some fine watercolours of scenes in Greece, Palestine Egypt &c. I am working away steadily at present engaged on the yearly report for the Museum and Laboratory. It will be about the same length as last year, but this time it will be endorsed "New Zealand Institute".³⁰ It will be completed and laid on the table of the House in a day or two, the tables of Analysis &c. are troublesome to make out but they are in a fair way towards completion: these will contain the results of the Analyses of all the tunnel specimens, that is all the typical ones: there is a good deal also about the Kawa Kawa coal of which such favourable reports have been given by those who tried it on the steamers. Nothing has yet been arranged about my permanent employment, but there is such a quantity of work to be done, I can not see how it is possible for Gore to do it all were he to work twice as hard, as Dr Hector has besides the Museum and Laboratory, to supervise the N.Z. Institute, the Meteorological and a host of offices. He has to be running about continually from one thing to another and its certainly wonderful how he gets through it all.

I went to a grand Ball on Monday, one of four to be given while the Assembly is sitting. It was a great success and a great crush, the Governor and Lady Bowen were there and they had a raised dais at one end of the Hall for them to return to when not dancing, along with the great ladies of the place. I was of course a great stranger but managed to get a few introductions principally through the Travers. There were a few other ChCh ladies there including Mrs Tancred, Mrs Col. Reader (Miss Lillie that was) Miss Alice Hawdon &c. The Wellington ladies came out very strong in the fashions and on the whole were certainly very nice looking, indeed it is a common remark that Wellington contrast most favourably to Ch.Ch. in female beauty, there are really a great number of very pretty girls here. As we have here a company of the 18th regiment, there were a few red jackets in the room nearly all the officers being present besides a French Lieutenant in the navy. I think I told you I had taken permanent lodgings, very comfortable rooms at the head of Willis St near St Pauls church. Frank Ollivier and I live together and we get on very well indeed. He is Travers only clerk, he Mr T³¹. lives at the Hutt in Mr Ludlam's place, I hope to walk out there shortly, I must cultivate the few friends I have. Well I must stop for want of news. Anything occurring here which I think will interest you will be quickly communicated. Kind regards to Mrs Haast

yours very sincerely
R.L. Holmes.

³⁰ The New Zealand Institute Act (1867) vested the New Zealand Institute with the management of the Colonial Museum and Laboratory.

³¹ W.T.L. Travers was a prominent lawyer and politician with a strong interest in natural history, who was one of the founders of the New Zealand Institute. His son, Henry, was a contemporary of Holmes, and is often mentioned in his letters.

15. Holmes to Haast, 19-8-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 19, with MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 2 inserted.

Col. Museum
Wellington
19th Augt. 68

My dear Dr Haast,

I received your letter of 17th this morning and have done what I could to execute your little commissions. I send by Book Post a copy of Buller's Essay, also the Address of the Governor in pamphlet form. Dr Hector has only one copy of Gunther's essay on the Mud fish, so there is no possibility of your getting one from here for some time, if at all. The Moas have never been photographed, when done you will of course get a copy, but I do not see that there is any likelihood of its being done just yet. Since I wrote to you there have been great doings in the N.Z. Institute. Dr Hector gave his first lecture on the Geology of N.Z. one of four to come off within a month or two. It was well attended, he spoke from notes only, which he prepared in the interval between dinner at 6 and ascending the platform at 8! The illustrations consisted chiefly of sections through the various provinces and a large table covered with rocks &c. He did not go into the principles of the science at all, as becomes such a scientific society, but confined his remarks chiefly to the present formation of the country, explaining about the coal & gold fields &c. In future lectures he will give details of the principal features which I look forward to with interest. Last night Fitzgerald gave a lecture on "Art", and as you may suppose he handled the subject in a masterly manner, in fact many say they never heard anything like it in N.Z. He spoke most eloquently, he had the address written, but knew it all by heart and only referred to it occasionally, interleaving of course a great deal which will not appear in print. A good deal was rather stiff for the majority of the audience, but he made up for that by many pleasant sayings and even jokes, which he understands so well how to apply. There was a most distinguished audience, of nearly 300, quite a third of them ladies; The Governor took the chair with Bishop Selwyn & Abrahams on either hand. It was held of course in the Museum³² which is prepared for such meetings in the afternoons by drawing aside the cases &c. When this is done completely, there is room for quite 500 persons, & really looks like a lecture hall with all the mural decorations &c.

Thanks for the paper with the account of the earthquake wave. I read your excellent letter with much interest, for once Wellington, the headquarters of such freaks of nature, escaped scot free, in no Province was there less disturbance, there were a few slight shocks, but I in common with most others did not know they had occurred till informed by others. On Saturday I did duty for Dr Hector at the wharf measuring the rise & fall of the water every few minutes, the greatest rise I observed was 15 inches in 4 minutes, it did no harm whatever.³³ I suppose on account of the position of the town in a land locked harbour & so far from the heads. Every one fully believes that we shall have a great shock some time soon, and you may see people putting away delicate chimney ornaments &c. till the worst is past, if it does come at all. The Assembly is dragging on slowly, not a word of the Budget being

³² MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 19 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 2 inserted.

³³ See Hector's account of the tidal changes: 'On the recent Earthquakes and Wave Phenomena observed in New Zealand', *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol. 1, 1868, pp. 93-98.

brought down yet, it will doubtless be a very long session. The Govt. hold their own at present, but I have heard members say that altho' they gained the day on Fox's motion, others will follow on the same tack and yet others after, until some leader is found on whom the opposition can place full confidence. However you are doubtless as well or better informed on these matters than I.

I am working away steadily, the Museum report has gone in to the Govt., I suppose it will be printed shortly. I am just now preparing a catalogue of the books in the N.Z. Society and Museum Library, there are now about 1200 vols. mostly deposited and principally by Dr Hector; some of them are capital works of reference. Dr Mantell will give the next lecture the week after next, on "the Moa, and the Natives of N.Z." It is expected to be very interesting.

The Museum is immensely popular and so in particular is Dr Hector, he is looked to for information on every known subject, and is always kind and courteous to every one, no matter who. Farewell for the present. Will write again as soon as there is any news, & send any papers which I think will interest you.

Yours sincerely

RL Holmes.

P.S. Sorry to hear the children are still unwell, dont you think they would benefit by a trip to a warmer climate such as Wellington, with Mrs Haast to take care of them. Kind regards to the latter. RH.

16. Holmes to Haast, 10-9-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 24, 25 & 26

Wellington
September 10 – 68

My Dear Dr Haast,

There is no mail advertized for the south till the 18th but I feel disinclined for reading this evening so take up a pen in your behalf.

You know of course that the long expected Estimates were brought before the House last week, and you will be anxious to hear what provisions the present Ministry propose making for the Geological Depart. I saw a copy of that formidable looking publication and made a memo. which however I fancy Dr Hector may have already communicated to you. At the risk of repetition here is the total amount given for 1868-69:

	1868-9	1867-8
Director		800
Clerk (Gore)	300	300
Draftsman (Buchanan)	300	300
Laboratory Asst (Skey)	300	300
Messenger &c. (Rayer)	150	150
Field Expenses &c.	800	1000
Laboratory	50	50
Contingencies	200	500
	2,100	3,400

The N.Z. Institute Act provides now for Dr Hector (800£) also 500£ for general expenses, and 50£ for repairs &c.

You see therefore that the Stafford Ministry are not anxious to have a resident Curator, and therefore the chances of my working under my old master here are reduced to a minimum. In fact, although you may perhaps think me meddlesome in saying so, it appears to me from what I have learnt on good authority (not Dr Hector) that there is not the remotest chance of your being offered employment under the Genl. Govt. I mention this because I know you will feel unsettled till that is finally arranged, and because I am sure you would like to hear any information bearing on the subject. The field expenses and contingencies have been reduced one third, from 1500 to 1000, tho' the Salaries remain the same, but Dr H. thinks they will be cut down. His own you know is secured by an Act of Genl. Assembly. As regards my own prospects they are satisfactory but not yet determined. Dr H. proposes that I should receive the same as the others namely 300 per an. thus 150 as Sec. to the N.Z. Institute 50 as Sec. to the Wl. Phil. Society, and the remaining 100 for miscellaneous work mostly geological, meteorological &c., what he pleases in this respect he can I am pretty sure accomplish, so I do not trouble myself much about it. I suppose with the Estimates all these affairs will be settled. Of course all this is private, I mean as far as Dr H. is concerned, he might not like my getting it all cut and dried in this fashion. I am glad you succeeded at last in getting the Phil. Inst. to join but there is no sign of the papers &c. from Mr Fraser, and the pile of manuscripts for the Proceedings is otherwise all ready or nearly ready for printing. It

My Dear Dr Haast

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will make quite a respectable little volume; the Auckland Society seem very industrious under Capt. Hutton, they have a large number of interesting papers to print, but they have not yet come all to hand, we expect them by next steamer. Mantell's lecture was put off till next Saturday it is expected to be very good, he will deal with the natives as well as with the Moa. I will of course send you any part of it that is printed. Finsch's review was supposed to be read at a late meeting, and ordered to be printed, at least as much of it as the Governors think fit. You know I suppose that Buller read it and replied, his notes will be printed as well as is only fair, I have not yet read them, I believe he goes into a good deal of detail principally interesting to a professed ornithologist. Your brother in law is all right, I saw him yesterday, and told him to write oftener to his belongings, he declares he is a model correspondent, and sends any quantity of letters to Canterbury. He keeps such curious hours in the telegraph office that we very seldom meet. Henry Travers was preparing for a great expedition, had he not been laughed out of it by Hector, he proposed going to Stewart Island and W. Coast of Otago in a little vessel of about 20 tons with one other companion! A Naturalists voyage simply to collect specimens, I suppose the father would have found the ready, but I can hardly imagine his sanctioning such a madcap expedition. H.T. now proposes to go to Kapiti, Massacre Bay &c. on dredging business, and so far, he can act right and may make a good thing of it. I went out last Saturday with him in a whale boat dredging in this harbour. We dredged nearly all the way to Some's Island, the dredge worked well, but brought up very little, simply because there was little below, a few Spatangi and shells none of them new, with some curious sea worms and lowly organised things like the *Holothuriidae* &c. We propose next Saturday to make a longer excursion to the heads if it is fine, and camp out, returning on Sunday evening. There is good fishing there, say if there are no good shells – T. has the use of a boat for as long as he likes, so I intend to explore the harbour above & below, as F. Ollivier and I go out for a pull or a sail occasionally as well. Great fuss about Sir G. Grey, at last he is off, after all kinds of mishaps the day or two previous, first the Panama boat would not come in till all the farewell addresses were presented, and they had to go through the farce of putting him on board the *Airedale*, and taking him a mile up the harbour and then land him on another wharf, next day when he went on the little steamer at the wharf, the order was given to start, the cannons blazed away, and the boat stuck in the mud for half an hour, when she did start she ran into another steamer, and all sorts of rows ensued, lastly came the news of the disastrous affair at Patea, just for Sir G. to cogitate upon on his homeward journey. So farewell Ge Ge – Fox is going in heavy for it again, it is very hard to say how it will end, but the telegraph will inform you by before this reaches Ch.Ch. He had another grand ball last Monday week, and next Monday there will be another, the third of the series of Assembly balls. Nothing very wonderful has been added to the Museum lately. Dr H's 2nd lecture on geology not yet given, Mantell's will be delivered first. Dr H. is as busy as ever, works about 23 hours a day or thereabouts, at every conceivable thing. It is getting on to midnight and I very seldom commence a fourth sheet not being yet engaged, when they say people have no difficulty in filling forty.

With kind regards to Mrs Haast I remain
yours very sincerely

R. L. Holmes.

17. Holmes to Haast, 21-9-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 27 & 28

Colonial Museum
Wellington
September 21 – 68

My dear Dr Haast,

You asked me to tell you all about Mantells lecture on the Moa. After being put off several times for reasons best known to himself it was delivered on Saturday evening. As I had made an engagement to go on a dredging & fishing expedition on that day and sleep out I was not present, but judging from the remarks of those that were I did not lose much. He could not complain of the audience however, for the Museum was crowded with the fashion of Wton. and the Governor presided. Mantell spoke from notes only so the affair will never be printed except the notes collected from memory by Dr Hector and sent to the *Independent* for publication in tomorrow's paper, and of which I shall send you a copy.³⁴ There was very little original in his lecture, nothing of course that you did not know long ago.

He was very careful not to commit himself by theorizing, rather cut up those who did so, which you will understand when he dealt with the Moas as a whole unwilling even to hazard an opinion about the genera. He appears to think that even Owen is groping in the dark, and that measurement is no guide whatever to the different genera or species. Altogether the address may be pronounced a failure, tho' possible it would be hard to persuade him so, as he seems to have pretty good opinion of himself.

We have received all the Papers & Proceedings of the Auckland Institute, so there is nothing to delay the printing except those from your Society. Dr Hector seems rather impatient and no wonder at the delay in sending them up, would it not be better to decide one way or the other at once; it is certainly not matter for printing that is required for if half the papers now lying on the Table be printed they would make a respectable volume. Besides Inaugural addresses and lectures &c. there are some 50 papers some of them very long ready to select from, still all that are of sufficient interest will be printed, I suppose, that come from the three affiliated Societies. I suppose Mr Fraser knows that extracts from the minutes of meetings, list of members & office bearers, rules &c. will be required as well.

I have no news to communicate, the tiresome assembly drags along slowly and chance of the estimates passing for some time are small, many of the members seem to think it will end in a dissolution, in other words in a defeat of the Ministry for it will come to the same. H. Travers & I and two others went out on one of our little boating excursions last Saturday, but owing to the weather we did not do much. We dredged a little on Saturday evening and got a few shells &c. and slept in a cave on Ward's Island. Next morning it came onto blow hard and on leaving the shelter of the island found ourselves in rather a fix as we could make no headway in the proper direction but were driven right down channel and only made the coast near the heads, where we had to leave the boat, which was nearly swamped once or twice, in fact if it had not been a good whaleboat once used by the pilots, it might have been an ugly

³⁴ 'New Zealand Institute', *Wellington Independent*, 24 September 1868, Page 4.

business. The weather is still too cold and unsettled for fishing, and we have not yet found a good dredging ground, that there is such there is very little doubt from the number and variety of shells thrown up but it will take some looking for. I am glad to hear that the collections in the Museum are increasing I wonder where you can stow away such things as a sea leopard.

When in the Museum here I often think it a great mistake of the Govt. in Canterbury to hold on to the idea of Stone Building when there are no funds, why not put up a wooden one for say 600 or 800 £, make it as ugly as they please, like this was before the new wing was added, and yet see how unanimously popular this one is, but I am raking up old grievances. The Panama mail seems late this time we are hourly expecting the cannon shot announcing its arrival.

Yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

18. Holmes to Haast, 25-10-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 21, 22 & 23

Colonial Museum
Wellington
25 Oct 68

My dear Dr Haast,

Hoping the *Ahuriri* will take a mail south tomorrow as advertised, I send you a few lines in return for your long and interesting letter of 18th inst.

And to begin I am going to give you some bother, and accept your kind offer about Hooker's *Flora*. As I am very anxious to obtain a copy I suppose I must just give what Hughes asks tho' certainly £2.s8 does seem an absurd price to pay for it here. Another gentleman here is desirous of also getting a copy, and has asked me to order two when I am about it, would you therefore be so kind, next time you pass Hughes, to ask him to send me up the two copies, I suppose they must come by post, it is not likely Hughes may know of any one who could be asked to bring them. I am getting some other books from Hughes, so I will send him cash for the lot when I get the bill, so do not mind paying; of course it will give me and the other party pleasure to hear that H. has curtailed his unreasonable demand, but do not bother much about that either. I take for granted the work is complete, in 2 vols.

What you say with regard to all your expected movements, and people, is of course "private & confidential" as you request. It will give me great pleasure to hear that you have got into settled work again; probably in the next session of the Council matters may be arranged satisfactorily; I see it will meet very shortly.

You were quite misinformed about the *Hatterias*³⁵; there is only one in the Museum here, preserved in spirits. Some time ago, some one left two live specimens there for a while, but they went home to England with Sir G. Grey, so we are not much better off than you are, it is very difficult to get any.

There is not a copy of Thames Miners Guide to be bought here, and I have never seen any except Dr Hector's, sent him from Auckland, where I suppose you will have to send to. Concerning your paper on the Earthquakes, it has not yet been put under the pruning knife, and of course as it is your wish it will be either printed *in extenso* or omitted altogether. What you say about the Governors meeting here to discuss what Papers ought to be printed is right enough, provided there were any papers to be dealt with, belonging to the Incorporated Societies; but Auckland sent all their MSS with instructions to the Governors here to deal with them exactly as they thought fit; the same may be said of the local Weln. Society; the Westland Socy. have not I believe yet produced any articles, tho' they also are taken under the wing of the Institute. So there remains as far as I can judge only your solitary paper on the Earthquakes. I can hardly think the remaining two papers belonging to your Society will be printed as they are some three or four years old, and the subject of one of them "Fever" is not an inviting one. However I have not heard an opinion expressed on the subject, and my opinion is worth very little.

By the way your secretary (who from your account has done such great things for the Society since he was appointed) has not yet sent up the List of Members, Office Bearers, and similar information required for the printer. Unless he does so directly he will be too late, as I hope before this week is over a very Considerable part of the Transacn. will be in type: Dr Hector is just now in communication with the Govt. respecting the use of their Press, which the Governors are willing to pay for, but I fancy the work will have to be done by contract elsewhere, several offers for which have already been tendered.

You have of course heard about Dr Hector's intended marriage with Miss Monro; It was made public only about ten days ago, but I believe he has been some months engaged, probably he kept it secret until near the close of the Session. As you were so long in Nelson you must have met the family; her father is Sir David M. Speaker of the House. I know nothing more about him. She is rather a handsome girl, of, the ladies say about 19 years of age, very young you will say for Dr Hector. I have never been introduced to her but saw her frequently at balls &c. and of course lately she drives or walks about with him continually. He leaves for Nelson in about ten days, where after doing some geol. work in the interior &c. he will be married about the middle of December. People do not seem at all surprised at the match, but some were out in their calculations as it was for some time reported that he was very sweet on Miss Featherston. I wonder will there be such an attendance of young ladies in the Museum for the future?

Your brother-in-law Bob. D.³⁶ will leave Wellington again in a few days, which you of course know all about: he is well pleased at the prospect of a change, like all young fellows, I question if he will like Dunedin as well as this place. Nothing new worth

³⁵ Now known by the Maori name of Tuatara.

³⁶ Bob Dobson.

mentioning in the Museum, the Session of the Institute meeting was brought to a close by a very dull lecture from Felix Wakefield on “Progress of Geographical discovery” a fine subject frightfully mutilated. It was in fact a misnomer altogether as 9/10ths of the address was on his experiences in Egypt and Palestine, what he saw and what he thought there. It was a mixture of Ancient History with add leaves from his own journals; but about all the geographical discoveries ancient or modern, not one word. The Governor was of course there, and a host of ladies as usual.

Wellington is now nearly clear of all the Assemblyites who have gone North and South to gather in their wool, after being so completely shorn themselves by Stafford & co. I am getting to know a few nice people here, a few days ago I spent a very pleasant evening at the Dometts, they are great swells here. That donkey Palairret was up here lately with his bride. Miss Little that was. I suppose he has since returned to work and to repentance, that is if it is possible to repent being united with the “finest singer in N.Z.” – We have had frightful weather for weeks and weeks, until yesterday, gales and torrents of rain, till everyones temper is quite soured I should think. Three sheets are as much as you care to read I fancy of my scrawl, so Adieu.

With kind regards to Mrs Haast
Believe me
yours sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

19. Holmes to Haast, 12-11-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 31, with MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 4 inserted.

Wellington
12 Nov. 68

My dear Dr Haast,

A mail leaves for the south tomorrow so I send you a few lines tho I have little or no news to tell. I received your long & interesting letter of 29 ult. many thanks for the trouble you took about Hook. Flora I received a copy all right from Hughes, who seems absurdly touchy because I told him I thought it very dear, at £2.8. He always is however very thin skinned on such matters too independent altogether for his own good. I am making quite a little botanical collection, having already some 60 species nearly dry and named by Buchanan. I hope in the course of time, if I remain here, to get nearly all the plants about Wellington. Dr Hector has not yet started for Nelson, he will leave by the steamer which conveys the English mail there, about the 22nd. Miss Monro has gone home, so that we can engage his attention for at least a minute or two now & then to look after the work. He has any amount of work on his hands, so it is very good for all parties that Miss M. should have departed. I took a long ramble last Sunday with Buchanan & H. Travers across to the Ohario Bay on the west coast 12 ½ miles from here. We all brought back lots of Botanical specimens, as the season and place were favourable for collecting; any quantity of bush to go through and some very pretty views. At O. Bay there is an old Maori pah and burial ground with any amount of Maori bones knocking about, we kicked up a great number, some skeletons nearly complete, only the skulls were absent, sold I believe long ago to Europeans. H.T. wanted to bring back a load of the bones, but the distance was rather great, and we laughed him out of it; altho' I thought how glad you would be to get some. I mentioned to Travers Senr. about your advice with regard to his son going to Agassiz but he has long since been thinking of sending him to³⁷ Jermyn St Museum, London, he seems undecided what is best to do under the circumstances, and I suppose the son will just do pretty well what he likes. The printing of the Institute Proceeding has not yet been commenced as the Govt. printer delayed until two days ago sending in his estimate; he now says that he can not commence it for about two months. So today I received instructions to make an agreement with another party, who will proceed with the work at once. From your last letter I conclude you meditate an immediate trip up here, but as you have not yet made an appearance I suppose you have postponed it, and now there is little time for you to discuss geology with Dr H. before he starts on his geological (or bridal) tour. Bob. Dobson has left us, but as he intended only to remain in Ch.Ch. a few hours at most I suppose you did not see much of him. I see by the *Lyt. Times* you have got a number of new members for the Phil. Institute. The N.Z. Inst. has closed its proceedings for a while, which is certainly the best plan as members would otherwise get tired of the affair, and the business would get monotonous. Nothing like a good session now & then, short and sharp. I am curious to hear what the Govt. will do this year about your Museum. Rolleston at least is well inclined, but so was Moorhouse, and yet nothing came of it, I am inclined to put more faith in Rolleston than in M. however. Great excitement here of course about the Poverty Bay massacre, but I fear it will cool down again and nothing result beyond the pithy exclamations of "poor fellows" or

³⁷ MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 31 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 4 inserted.

“what a sad affair” &c.³⁸ I fear the affair will soon be beyond the power of the colonists to cope with, at least in outlying districts, without the assistance of the Imp. Govt. It is just midnight so Adieu.

Yours very sincerely
RL Holmes

There are a few birds in the bush here that you have not got, for instance *Pagonornis cincta*, *Mohoua albicilla*, *Petroica longipes*, the former is a beautiful bird. Further inland the North Island Crane[?], and Woodhens &c. are to be met with.

20. Holmes to Haast, 28-11-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 33 & 30

Colonial Museum
Wellington
28 Novr. 68

My dear Dr Haast,

Having an idle half hour in office I devote it to you, other I have very little news to communicate.

Dr Hector left for Nelson last Sunday, en route for the Interior of that Province, he talked however of being back here again in a month or so; his marriage is to take place in the first week of January so I question very much if we shall see him before that interesting event. It seems possible he may pay Ch.Ch. a visit, if his wanderings take him any where near the Hurunui. He has however probably told you about his intended movements, the more so as you appear to be meditating a trip here yourself.

There is nothing doing whatever in the way of meetings of the Phil. Societies, beyond the printing of the vol. of Transactions which is now in the press: a day or two ago I corrected the first few sheets, which work falls to my lot, altho I refer the proofs to one or other of the Governors before the final striking off.

I think the book will in every way be a success, the type is good and clear, and the illustrations very fair; of the latter there will be some 6 or 8 mostly referring to Auckland papers of Capt. Hutton's, geological, or topographical. A very fair view of Rapa to illustrate Capt. Vine Hall's paper has been already struck off the stone; Buchanan of course did the designing, the govt. lithographer did the rest. The printing is let to a private printing firm, and the cost will be pretty heavy, but it is uncertain how much it will come to yet. There will be some 300 p.p. of Royal Octavo, quite a respectable vol., besides the 5 Exhibition essays

³⁸ On 10 November 1868 Te Kooti led an attack on the township of Matawhero, killing approximately 60 people.

which will be bound up with it. The contract for printing binds the firm to complete the whole affair before Janry. 31, but another ten days or fortnight will be required for binding &c.

I was directed to write to Mr Fraser a day or two asking, once more for the particulars of your Society required for insertion in the Proceedings: viz list of office bearers, members &c, which information was promptly and fully supplied by the remaining 3 affiliated societies long ago. I had to fill in the³⁹ office bearers yesterday as the lists appear in the very beginning of the vol., and fortunately I had retained a copy of the *Lyt. Times* which contained a list of such, but whether correct or not, I can not say, it must remain as it is now in any case, I hope Mr Fraser will send the members list before it is too late, he appears to take little or no interest in the affairs, he ought to take a lesson from Kirk the Auckland Secy. I forgot to say that a long essay by Colenso on the Maori races⁴⁰ will also be appended to the vol., it will contain by itself some 100 pages of print.

We are to become a nation of Soldiers at last, all classes of militia have been called out, and the 1 & 2 are already sworn in, but not yet armed[?]. The Govt. get fearfully abused, but everyone agrees that the militia should have been enrolled long ago if only to show the savages (the word Maori ought to be dropped for the present) that we do not yet intend to see Carlyle's satyre carried out here, and have a Maori sketching the ruins of Wellington from the end of the Queen's wharf, and the last Pakeha making off through the Heads. It is however by no means impossible that the 1st Class may be sent to the Front, I rather hope they will, it would be a little excitement in these dull times, provided the officers are not duffers.

H. Travers went off to Nelson with Dr Hector, under whose wing he will work for a while, but be enabled to make collections for himself as well; he proposes to be away for about 6 months. Dr Hector is enlarging his House considerably, extending the sitting room back towards the Museum &c.

There is to be a small observatory constructed near the Museum at the back, and the time ball will be removed there, everything to be placed under Dr Hector's charge, the meteorological business, has been transferred back to this office, as Knowles gave it up, when they reduced his screw.⁴¹

Mr Travers has taken one of the nicest houses in Wellington, on the Terrace, near Domett's, formerly Ledger's, he will remove into it from the Hutt in about a fortnight, the lease of Fitzherbert's house expiring then. Ollivier his clerk, who is living with me tells me he is doing a very good business, a great deal of it being advice of one kind or another to all parts of N.Z. By the bye Miss T. seems to be a very nice girl, no nonsense or little exhibitions of temper; I must not however praise up the family to much to you. Kind regards to Mrs Haast.

Yours very sincerely
R. L. Holmes.

³⁹ MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 33 ends, MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 30 inserted.

⁴⁰ Can be viewed online at http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz_01/rsnz_01_00_002170.html. An unfortunate omission is the name of the author.

⁴¹ Hector became responsible for the Colonial Observatory in addition to his many other duties.

21. Holmes to Haast, 7-12-1868

ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheets 29 & 32

Wellington
7 December 68

My dear Dr Haast,

I wrote a letter to you only a few days ago, but one or two matters in yours of Nov. 24 since received require an answer. First, I am much obliged to you for your kind offer to give me a few alpine plants, I shall indeed be very happy to get them, to increase my store now amounting to over 100 species of flowering plants, all collected in the bush about here, or along the coast & hill sides, and named by Buchanan, a few of the Alpines would make them doubly interesting, particularly if named. They will bring before me old times, even if I never study their character closely, which I hope however to do someday. I think botany must be a most interesting pursuit, but certainly in the beginning the technicalities &c. are difficult to master, and I do not like to bother Buchanan too much. When we are looking through Hooker B. is always loud in your praise, saying how much you assisted him (H) in getting up the work. As regards the above subject, perhaps when you have a spare minute or two, you would pick me out a few of the Alpines or others, if any of them were gathered during our little excursion to Jackson's Bay they would be all the more interesting. I see by the *Lyt. Times* report of the Proceedings of the Phil. Socy. that Armstrong is requested to try and get up a little local Flora for Canterbury, the neighbourhood of Ch.Ch. I should say; a very good idea, it will do much to turn peoples attention to botany.

Next, about the Governors for the Institute, there is a little hitch in the business, as all the four incorporated Societies did not appoint a delegate each; I shall in all probability have to write to Mr Fraser officially on this subject immediately so must not further allude to it; ask Mr F. about it when next mail comes in, or with this mail if it is delayed here till Thursday. The reason I say this is that Dr Hector arrived here from Nelson this afternoon on some special Medical Board business, which could not be postponed, so they⁴² telegraphed for him; he will return to Nelson on Thursday or Friday, and will of course transact all little Institute affairs before then. Dr H. is looking very well, after his trip (not very rough this time) and is frisking about making the most of his time. He is to be married on the 29th - Thirdly about Locke, I can give no satisfactory answer, simply because I really could not make up my mind to go and ask Travers cooley whether he had received Locke's letter asking for his influence in getting him employment here, and if so why Travers had not replied to it. It strikes me that it is a case of inability on Travers part to assist Locke, and as L is a relation of T's he might not be too well pleased at my interference. About your earthquake paper I have not received any fresh instructions about getting it printed; at the last meeting of the printing committee, it with sundry others were put by themselves, as far as I know, because they appeared to be very long, considering the amount of original matter they contained, to print *in extenso*; This however is another question which will be decided probably while Dr Hector is here, and I am again drifting into business. About the birds which Dr H. promised I can give no information; I believe Dr H. proposes to visit Canterbury shortly, when you can speak to him like a parent on the subject. I saw by last Saturday's

⁴² MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 29 ends, MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 32 inserted.

Canterbury Times that the liberal amount of £170 was voted for the Museum in the fresh estimates, but the consideration of the Museum Building had been deferred until the Supplementary Estimates would be brought forward. I am curious to hear the result; my opinion is that it will be a new verse to the old tune: Cant afford it.

Mr Travers will be in Ch.Ch. shortly, about Xmas I think, on law business I believe. I gave him the address of Dr Hooker which you sent me. I think I told you that he had taken one of the finest houses in Wellington he removes into it from the Hutt, tomorrow week, they will just get settled before Xmas. I have struck up great friends with the family of Dr Knight, my old meterol. Boss, Dr K. has gone to England with Sir G. Grey, leaving Mrs K. and her two daughters to keep house alone, so I often look in, just to see if they want anything you know. Well so long. Kind regards to Mrs Haast.

yours very sincerely
R.L. Holmes.

22. Holmes to Haast, 10-12-1868
ATL MS-Papers-0037-088, sheet 34

Col. Museum
10 Decr. 68

My dear Dr Haast,

Mr Skey has just asked me to find out from you some particulars of the rock named by you Palla, the green rock, from (Gawlor's downs?) He says he has searched in every book on mineralogy or Geology in the place, and their name is legion, but nowhere can he find the name Palla. He thinks you must have taken it from some German work or authority.

Please describe the locality and the general character of the rocks associated with Mr Palla: just in half a dozen words, I mean, Mr Skey thinks the rock a most interesting and beautiful specimen.

An early answer wd. oblige
yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes

P.S.

Dr Hector has been here for a day, but leaves within the hour by *Lord Ashley* for Nelson. He speaks of being back here again in about 6 weeks.

RLH

23. Holmes to Haast, 26-1-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheets 1 & 2

Col. Museum
Wellington
Janry. 26 – 69

My dear Dr Haast,

I fear you have set me down as a very bad correspondent, it is so long since I wrote to you. I must first congratulate you on the establishment of a Museum at last; at least I suppose I may, tho' there may be a slip somewhere yet. I hope your appeal to the public for assistance to supplement the Govt. grant was successful. I certainly was very much surprised to hear that the Council gave in with such a good grace, and without even a debate. The darkness of their understanding was enlightened in the 11th hour. You have a large task before you, before every thing is arranged after the building is erected. Dr Hector has returned with his bride, looking as well and jolly as possible. Gore says he looks ten years younger. I have had but little chat with him since, and that confined to business exclusively. His house since the additions were completed, looks highly respectable, neat and of course well furnished. I suppose he will entertain a good deal, after all the hospitality he enjoyed in his bachelor days. He will now have a comfortable place to accommodate you and Mrs Haast when you next pay the capital a visit.

The principal part of my work still consists in attending to the printing of the Institute Proceedings. The work was delayed for some time owing to the want of paper, but now it is making rapid progress. The principal paper of yours printed as yet is "the *Dinornis* measurements" given *in extenso*. I send you a copy, which I hope will meet your approval, as it seems to do every one else's. It was found impossible to send proofs to distant authors, as the printers are very short of type, and could not be delayed; I usually correct the proofs first, and then submit them to one of the Governors; lately, in the absence of Dr Hector, to Mr Travers. The first pages (up to 77) of the book are taken up by the Proceedings – Minutes of Meetings – Preface – Index – Inaugural Addresses, &c. There are twelve illustrations, all finished except one, now on the stone. I send you copies of four, in one of which you are directly interested.

There are two others – besides the one I send on Rapa, to illustrate Capt. Vine Hall's paper. The paintings for Mantell's little article on the Moa look mysterious; and the meaning of them is still very little understood. Mantell hazarded the opinion that they represented 1. design for tattooing [*Superscript: (2?)*] 3. fishes, 4. a dog, 5. a Moa, cut in two, 6. a chief's mark. The botanical section belongs to a paper of Dr Hector's. I have been living in hopes of getting a letter from Mrs Haast according to what you said in your last. I have an idea that all ladies are good correspondents, so the plea that she does not like letter writing falls to the ground.

I hear from Mainwaring, my best Ch.Ch. correspondent (except yourself) that Mr Dobson has made up his mind to leave N.Z., I presume with his family. I was sorry to hear it, and the Province will sustain a loss, not easily replaced. Moreover I am sure Mrs Dobson, and still more Miss Dobson, will not content themselves long in England, if that be their ultimate destination. So you imagine me to be a second Don Juan, thanks for the compliment,

I really feel quite flattered, I have grown three inches taller in my own conceit; unfortunately, however, the decision is arrived at from my own accounts of my very mild dissipations in this good city. In one respect I plead guilty, I go a good deal more into society here than ever I did before in N.Z.; I have become quite intimate with two or three very nice families, where I am always welcome, and generally spend one or two evenings a week, at least, in their company. To refute your insinuation, I may add that I can hardly include the Travers in the above list, lately, as I have had no invitations from them since they came to town; they are so terribly grand that nothing but Governors and judges and such like are expected to stretch their legs under his mahogany. And as Mr T. is doing a capital business, they can well afford to entertain. Your permission that I may marry a certain young lady is therefore useless, a petty clerk in Govt. service, could not venture to raise his eyes to such a height. For all that, as I said before, Miss T. is a very nice girl.

I hope you liked *Bombastes Furioso*, our Governor, when in Canterbury, if so your taste differs considerably from most people here. Dont you admire his classical quotations, and his look of importance when addressing a meeting? I suppose you received a copy of the annual report of the Museum & laboratory; it is the only paper lately published, except a long affair on salmon: temperatures of rivers &c. that is now just coming out of the press, prepared mostly by Dr Hector.

Wishing you every success with the Museum; and with kind regards to Mrs Haast. I remain

yours very sincerely

R.L. Holmes.

24. Holmes to Haast, 28-1-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 3

Wellington
Janry. 28 – 69

My dear Dr Haast,

Dr Hector has been carefully considering your paper on earthquakes before having it printed, and wishes me to make a few remarks about it with reference to the following facts. I presume you have a copy of the *Lyt. Times* of Oct. 3 to refer to; we have only one copy here and can not spare that to send down.

The volume threatens to be so much larger than anticipated, and will exceed the amount set apart for the purpose of printing, that it is a matter of great importance to reduce the papers to the lowest number compatible with fairness to the different societies and authors. Your paper was for a long time absolutely in danger of being set aside entirely, as it is so very long, and contains so much which is not altogether original, but culled from various works published. I have therefore to suggest to you that the part of it concerning 3rd paragraph “It is universally admitted” to say, a column on: “The first sign of disturbance experienced in Ch.Ch.” be omitted. Also the part referring to the Chatham Islands which is mostly a repetition of what has already been given by Dr Hector. Near the end there is a Table showing velocity of the earthquake vibrations, commencing “Napier to Ch.Ch., 1 ½ minute”. Will you please look this over very carefully, I think there is something in it requiring modification.⁴³ Dr Hector did not fully explain, but put his finger on it, and directions to draw your attention to it. I think there is something in it he does not like as unscientific, as regards the vibrations radiating from various points at once. I fear I can not explain myself, but I have no doubt my bringing it to your notice is sufficient; A careful revisal of the whole paper is well worth the time, as the volume will doubtless have a wide circulation among scientific societies. One thing is especially desirable, make it as short as ever you can. Mr Dobson’s Address on “Applied Science” will be printed. The rest of the Cantby. papers to be printed are – *Phormium tenax* by Mr Travers, Your notes on the Chatham Isld. rocks & Henry Travers letter on the same place, to his father. We are making the best we can of the very small selection from Canterbury at our command. Please write by return of post answers to the above.

Yours sincerely
R.L. Holmes

P.S. A few lines to Dr Hector on the subject would be advisable if you can spare the time, only please be cautious as to the allusion which I have made. I wrote to you two days ago. Since then I received your last which I will reply to shortly.

in haste, Excuse crossing

R.L. Holmes.

⁴³ Paper was published and noted to be abridged: ‘On the recent Earthquakes on Land and Sea’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol. 1, 1868, pp.196-202. See next letter (8/2/1869) for Holmes’ explanatory notes.

25. Holmes to Haast, 8-2-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheets 4 & 5

Wellington
8 February 69

My dear Dr Haast,

I was surprised and pleased to get, so soon, an answer about your paper. I showed it to the Doctor, who has given me instructions to print the whole of the paper just as it stands, except the parts near the beginning, about which I spoke to you, namely the matter treating of earthquakes as a whole, the theory &c; and some about Chatham islands, which is mostly a repetition of previous notices.

There would be no time to send you your notes on geol. specimens from Chathams to revise, as you would prefer, but Dr Hector has seen it, and will correct proof. It is hardly likely you would be able to add much to it; perhaps some day you might visit the islands (a part of you Province I believe?) and give a first-rate description of it to the Society &c., its geology, natural history &c.

Gore will send you copy of Museum report by this mail, I believe, as no one out of Wellington have got copies yet, he says you must not complain; but I cannot see why they could not have been posted some weeks ago. I congratulate you most heartily about the Museum, I am curious to see a list of the subscribers, some must have behaved very handsomely, to make up £400 to supplement the Govt. grant. I have not the least doubt that the whole affair will be a great success, as you will have sole control. The whale is an interesting addition, I expect Fuller had some greasy work cleaning the skeleton. There will be a conversazione in the Museum tomorrow night here, combined with the annual meeting of the Ph. Society; the first business of the new year; there will not be much to attract the public however, but as it is a novelty now, there will doubtless be a good attendance. I regret I cannot just now, send you any more of the Transactions, whenever I get together a few pages, they are sure to be snapped up by the Doctor, to post off somewhere; and the printer loses patience at having to break into volumes, for the sake of supplying odd sheets, more than the orthodox No. for reference &c. in the office. However I hope to see the whole affair out of hands in a month at farthest, of course you will get slips of your own papers when ready. So the Dobsons are off for good. I had great hopes of seeing them here en route, but by the South is of course the quickest way to Melbourne. The Province has sustained a loss in Mr Dobson. I sincerely trust he may meet with every success and happiness wherever his lot may be. I have your letter of 23 still unanswered, tho' I just acknowledged the receipt of it in my last. I am sorry that you thought for a moment that I had been offended at your remarks about a certain subject. O dear no, not in the least, I rather like to be quizzed about matrimony, I suppose it is a bad sign, and means that I am a confirmed old bachelor. Not indeed that it is my wish to be such, but I would be an old bachelor a thousand times over, rather than marry a girl into poverty, for what is two or three hundred a year, all I shd. have to fall back on, if I had no appointment. Let my situation be but confirmed and permanent, and you will soon see your old clerk do the correct thing. *Nous verrons*. Moreover I have far too sincere a regard for you, the best friend by far I have met in N.Z., to take huff at so small a matter. I did not write so often, as there was no news to communicate. You surprise me, in turn, about T. but perhaps you are right, and the party in Ch.Ch. knows more of his private affairs than his clerk, with whom I am living. One thing is certain, he is doing a good deal of law business, equal to (I have the best authority for saying some 1200 to 1500 £ a year.) But

then who knows what debts there may be that O. knows nothing about. Dr Hector is very jolly and well; he goes about the business of the Museum &c. just as formerly, but then his house is alongside, and so he need never be very long absent from his better half. They appear to be a very loving couple indeed. I have now got 175 species of plants collected about Wellington, not including about 25 of the more remarkable sedges, rushes and grasses. Just 200 flowering plants and some 40 ferns, not so bad for one short season, Buchanan says it is nearly as good a collection as has ever been got by one person about here in so short a time. I have duplicates of nearly (very nearly) all, which I would be glad to send to you, but as I look on them as very precious, you must not think hard of me, if I ask a considerable number of Canterbury plants in exchange. Alpines I want mostly, and ferns. Let me know if you feel inclined for a deal. My specimens are small, but well preserved. I can send you a list if you like. They are all named. No more to say just now. I hope to write again soon.

Your very sincerely
R.L. Holmes

P.S. Could you send me a list of plants you could give in exchange? I do not expect to be able to get just yet more than fifty ferns about Wellington, of 43 or 44 I have duplicates, none of them are very rare, but perhaps they are not all very common in Canterbury.

RH

26. Holmes to Haast, 27-2-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 6

Col. Museum
27 Febry. 69

My dear Dr Haast,

I enclose herewith copy of your earthquake paper, as printed for the Transactions. I hope it will meet your approval. Only those portions, already mentioned, were left out, together with a few lines of unimportant matter here and there, kept back so as to allow the paper to be printed on the sheet, which it now does, as you see to a letter. A few more words or sentences would have necessitated a great deal of extra work and some expense, as the Paper closes the Transactions proper. Part III will be Essays, many (5) of them have been already been[sic] printed, but 3 (on botany) are now in the hands of the printer. After the essays comes Colenso's "Maori races" then an Appendix &c. In all about 500 p.p. Your little article on the Chathams, and H. Travers long one, are included in the enclosed; also Mr. Dobson's Address, by no means the most uninteresting part of the volume. I think you have one of the little maps of Chathams, as lithographed to be appended to these papers, I need therefore not send you another. Dr Hector sent you a copy of your notes (Chatham) but not hearing from you when it was ready for the press, he concluded that you had nothing further to add on the subject, so it was printed off.

I suppose you have seen Dr Hector on his way south, I hope he will soon be back here again. He will give you all the Wellington news. I have nothing more to add just now.

Yours very sincerely

R L Holmes.

27. Holmes to Haast, 7-4-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheets 7 & 8

Col. Museum
Wellington
7 April 69

My dear Dr Haast,

Thanks for your's of April 1 just received. I did not write to you lately, knowing that you had gone to Mt Cook, having been so informed by Mainwaring. I was glad to hear you had been so successful in every way, the only drawback being the weather during the last few days. I am very much obliged for your generous offer about exchanging plants. I send with this a list of all those I have now in stock; there are a few more flowering plants which Buchanan could not name without some trouble, and I think I have trespassed on his kindness to a very great extent in getting him to name so many. There are a few of them, but only a very few, of which I have not good duplicates, and which I could not therefore send you, but I can send a very fair set of the others, specimens not very large, but well dried. About the ferns, I have good duplicates of all those marked thus ✓ those marked with a cross x I have only single specimens of, begged, borrowed or stolen from somewhere, some of them very small, but still, valuable until I can get others. In the Museum collection here there are several rare ferns I cast longing eyes on, several spare specimens, but I have not asked for them waiting for Dr Hector's return, and in hopes of being able to give something in exchange. Those in the list without any mark I have been unable to get yet, and shall feel very thankful for any contribution very nearly all those marked ✓ I have myself collected in the neighbourhood of Wellington, say within 20 miles. There are two *Gleichenias* at the upper Hutt, also *Hym. pulcherrimum* & *minimum*, and *Leptopteris superba* with one or two others, but I have not yet come across them tho' I spent Good Friday and following day hunting the hills in that locality; *Gymnogramma leptophylla* & *Botrychium cicutarium* grow near here, each in one little spot, tho former has not yet appeared above ground & the latter is not yet in seed. I can get them by and bye. So much for botany; I believe the pleasantest days I spent in N.Z. were passed hunting up these collections; for some time I was seized with a mania for hunting, and passed every spare hour in the Bush or on the hill side.

I am glad you like Mrs Hector, you see Dr H. took the earliest opportunity to shew her to the N.Z. public. We are in hopes to see him back shortly, but his letters are strictly confined to business, and do not speak of his return. I am particularly anxious to see him again, the printing of the Transactions is nearly complete, merely wanting the Appendix, Preface &c., but these cannot be finished until he sends up the particulars or comes himself. He took away materials for a Preface, but has not yet licked it into shape unless I hear from him in a few days, the printers will have to be discharged pro. tem. tho. only wanting a few days to finish everything. I am heartily tired of the affair, or rather of having little or nothing to do lately, a few pages of proof to look over some time each day, just enough to compel me to stay about town. Besides the affair has been protracted months longer than I anticipated, and I am still as uncertain as ever whether it will lead to a permanent situation. I fear not, & the sooner I know for certain the better, unless something good and lasting offers I think I shall return to Australia. My friends are very anxious that I should, but I should be very sorry to leave Wellington.

There has not been much added to the Museum lately, tho' little by little the collections are increasing and the general arrangement and classifying pushed on. Buchanan is a capital hand, at almost every branch of Nat. History. Skey is also very clever in his line. Gore just dodges along as usual. Every eye is fixed on the flagstaff on Mt Victoria, expecting to see the *Galatea* signalled.⁴⁴ Very poor preparations are being made. The procession is great bosh, ditto the feasts for one class or other of visitors, a picnic is on the -----, also a Maori war dance, which will probably be the best thing on the card, except perhaps the ball, which promises to be a success.

Poor Prince, he should not come to such a bankrupt Sleepy Hollow as this. You will see all about the great doings in the papers. Please send back the lists at your earliest convenience, with such marks or remarks appended as you think fit.

Ever my dear Dr Haast
yours very sincerely
R.L. Holmes

P.S. Please omit the initials F.M.S. to my address for the present.
RH

28. Holmes to Haast, 18-5-1869

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheets 9 & 10

Col. Museum
Wellington
May 18 – 69

My dear Dr Haast,

I received your letter of May 10th yesterday and made all enquiries about your missing parcel, but in vain. The agents of the *Tararua* know nothing whatever about it, and cannot assist in any way to find it, as far as I can make out. I am much obliged for all the trouble you are taking to select some botanical specimens. I have yours all ready to go by first opportunity, I send specimens of all the ferns of which I have duplicates, 71 in number, if those you do not want you can throw away or give away. I also send many more flowering plants than you marked in the list; as I was going through my collections sorting out a set for the Museum here I laid aside specimens of most of them for you also, only where you did not want them particularly, I sent only middling specimens. I shall leave the lot with Gore as I am going away on a trip in a few days, with directions to send them to you as soon as ever he can. If you will oblige by sending the others to Gore also, I can pick them up on my return. You will not be much surprised to hear, after what I already told you, that my work with Dr Hector has ceased altogether for the present, he can only offer me employment for half my time, and no certainty of any thing permanent, indeed the prospect of that seems as remote as ever, and rather than commence another session of the Institute, and dilly dally half my time

⁴⁴ Flagship carrying the Duke of Edinburgh.

or more away for less than half a salary, I decided to hook it. I leave for Auckland next Friday, a place I often wished to see, I shall then see some old friends I hope, Young, Beetham &c. and if a chance offers, as I have been told there is, I shall take a trip to the Fijis; I have still got a great weakness that way, which has been much increased by what I have lately been told, and read. In any case the place is well worth a visit, seeing is believing; I shall take little more than my carpet bag, in any case intending to return here, in say two months or so. Dr Hector is growling at my going away, says he is very sorry and all that, and there it ends. On my return to N.Z. if nothing turns up immediately, I intend returning to Australia. So you see I am once more on what the diggers the wallaby-track. I anticipate much pleasure from a trip to the South sea islands.

I do not propose to make any collections, beyond a few curiosities, unless I am detained for a long time for want of a vessel. I know several people at Fiji, if I can only hit upon them, I shall in any case soon hear all I want to know, whether cotton planting promises to be as paying a game as is represented.

The Transactions are done at last, and the first batch went off to England & Australia by the mail yesterday. I suppose you will get yours in a day or two, there will be 100 copies ready for distribution tomorrow, and I suppose all the rest will be bound in a week or so. It makes a good thick volume, the Board of Governors have expressed themselves well pleased, and Dr Hector has given me a little soft soap in the preface. After giving each member of the four societies a copy (255 in all) and distributing a certain No. to Scientific Societies &c. &c., 400 copies will be placed in a booksellers hands for sale; the Board require 12/ each, and allow the seller to charge 15/ the first named price is about the cost of them. They seem very particular not to give any member more than one copy, unless he be a member of several societies, when of course he draws just so many.

I am glad to hear your new Museum is progressing well and that you got so many subscriptions. I see your earthquake paper is making a little stir among the societies at home. If you want any extra copies of the Trans. best communicate with Dr Hector so that they could go down in the box with the rest. It is no use your replying to this here, if I can do anything for you in Auckland, a letter addressed to the Post office there immediately may find me, provided a vessel is not just starting for the North from there.

I hear Sealey's photos. of Mt Cook are much admired. Well it is just midnight so Good bye, I may send you a line occasionally but wont promise, as I am a poor correspondent when travelling. Give my kind regards to Mrs Haast

yours most sincerely

R.L. Holmes

P.S. I enclose a list of the ferns I send you, those marked with a cross x are what you most require. A list of the other plants accompanies the parcel.

29. Holmes to Haast, 18-11-1869
ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 11

Col. Museum
Wellington
Nov. 18 69

My dear Dr Haast,

Just a few lines to tell you that I shall be a fixture here for a few months as Dr Hector has offered me such favourable terms for doing the same work as last year, namely seeing the Institute Transactions through the press. This is just what will suit me, as it will give me employment till March or thereabout, when it will be getting on the right season for starting to Fiji. I have already done some work at the Papers, but we cannot call for tenders for printing until it pleases Mr Fraser to send up the remainder of the Canterbury papers. Only a few of them have yet come to hand, and no Proceedings, or what is worse, the list of Office Bearers &c. &c. which appears in the very beginning of the vol: would you please jog his memory, all the others Societies have sent in everything some time ago. The volume will probably be about as large as last year, I see there will be plenty of work for me to do in preparing everything.

I have not yet touched my Fiji ferns beyond showing them to Dr H. & Buchanan who are much pleased with them. I handed over the most of the other things I brought back to the Museum, appending a memo. that duplicates of any that can be spared be given to you for your Museum. There is really very little. One or two little things I still have for you. Your col. of ferns I will sort out as soon as I can get time. The Museum is looking very well, many additions since I left, but I cannot give a list of any just now.

H. Travers is articed to his father, this is the secret of his engagement, he is to be married as soon as he passes which will be in about 3 years. Nat. Hist. is therefore put on the shelf in favor of parchment & love. I have got a host of letters to reply to so pray excuse this being so short.

Kind regards to Mrs Haast
Yours very sincerely

RL Holmes

30. Holmes to Haast, 27-1-1870

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 14

Wellington
Janry 27 – 1870

My dear Dr Haast,

I must send you a few lines if only to acknowledge yours of 17th, and to congratulate you on the results of your Amuri trip &c. Now that the horrible squadron is off we are beginning to settle down to work again, which was so much interrupted during the last week. The printing will now go ahead fast, about 35 to 40 pages a week. You know of course that your Whale paper was received too late for insertion in its proper place (Section I. Nat. Hist.) It will appear as the 1st Art. of the Miscellaneous, with an explanatory note at foot. The only paper of yours yet printed is the introductory notes to Mr Armstrongs: which by Dr Hectors directions I enclose a copy of. Please look over it, & if convenient it wd. be as well to let Armstrong see it also. Any serious errors (I do not think you will find many such) can be noted in the Errata. Tabulating the lists was rather troublesome, but I think it was labour well bestowed, besides compressing the matter into much smaller bulk: the Orders are not exactly according to Cocker (or Hooker) but as A. did not attend to that, it wd. have taken me too long to revise the whole of them. The illustrations are getting on nicely, I dare say you saw those of Mr Potts, Birds. I fear the printing will be done some time before the plates, as Buchanan has just now got some other work to attend to. Judging from the small contributions you received from here for your Art Union, I fear you will not quite cover all the walls of the Museum, but I trust it will be a success, and form one more little land mark in the upward progress of the Colony. Your Waipara papers are in Dr Hector's hands, I believe you have been corresponding about them, but do not know the result. A fortnight will be time enough to return Armstrong's paper, but not later, please. When he again writes out similar lists I trust he will refer a little to Hooker & not trust entirely to memory, as regards spelling the names, which were something awful. I hope to be in Ch.Ch. for a few days sometime in March before my final departure from N.Z. I hope however to hear from you often before then.

Yours very truly

R.L. Holmes.

31. Holmes to Haast, 31-3-1870

ATL MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 15, with MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 7 inserted.

Wellington
March 31 – 70

My dear Dr Haast,

I received your letter of 25th a day or two ago, and immediately went to the Te Aro native kaik to enquire about the canoe head. It seems Mr Stack was misinformed about there being one here for sale, but Hemi Parata has one at Waikanae, where he is himself at present. Waikanae is as you know on the west coast some forty miles from here. Of course I could do no more in the matter. There are no Maori curios to be got here that I know of, occasionally a mat or similar production is brought to the Museum, and bought up, but it is very rare. I fear you will have to take a trip among the Hau Haus before you get much for the Museum. My stay here is drawing to a close, three or four more days will complete my work, Dr Hector started for Auckland two days ago, he will probably be away a month, so I shall see no more of him, unless I come across him when I am up there, as I hope to be shortly, en route for Fiji. He expressed great regret at my leaving, but he could hold out no hope of a permanent situation, and indeed it would take a very grand one to keep me working longer under Govt.; I have had my nose under that grindstone far too long already. The book is finished as far as compiling goes, tho there are three or four ½ sheets still to be worked off at the printers; and precious glad I am to be done with it, it has taken me fully 6 weeks longer to get through than I expected, chiefly on account of the original 350 pages swelling out to nearly 500. It is a much better production in every respect than the last. There are 63 Articles instead of 23, besides 11 lectures or parts of lectures, very full Proceedings, 23 plates of illustrations &c. Secretaries of Societies can get extra copies for members at 10/- cheap enough goodness knows, below cost price, but the edition will be 750 instead of 500 as last year. I hope to be able to take a copy down with me, but fear the⁴⁵ bookbinder will not be able to manage it. I am in hopes of getting away about this day week. First for old Ch.Ch. once more to put my little affairs in order. As you were lately up country you will probably be working for a while in town, so I shall then have the pleasure of seeing you once more. Your boxes arrived just as Dr Hector was going off, he just peeped into one or two; they are making some improvements in enlarging the Museum, not building (except a lean to) but clearing out the old porch which projected so far into the main hall. I am curious to see your new building complete. I suppose I shall be much too late to get a peep at the Art exhibition. As I shall see you so soon I shall not add anything more now. Kind regards to Mrs Haast.

Yours very sincerely
RL Holmes

P.S. Buller has got a fresh article on Birds in the Appendix: a reply to Finsch; not a very long one, just to keep the ball rolling.

P.P.S. So you don't believe in Western Australia, so the papers say.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ MS-Papers-0037-089, sheet 15 ends, MS-Papers-0037-095, sheet 7 inserted.

⁴⁶ Haast had been considering moving to Western Australia, but decided to stay in Christchurch

32. Holmes to Hector, 9-4-1870

Te Papa MU000147/003/0078

Wellington
Col. Museum
April 9-70

Dear Dr Hector,

At last I am able to send you the remaining portions of Vol. 2. I enclose 3 copies of all the parts missing in the volumes you took away, including Dr Knox's reprint. The total No. of pages printed is 462 exclusive of errata slip and title page. In the estimate for the Board I set it down as a total of 466, so that the accounts will tally pretty well. In accordance with your wish I went over the errata again carefully, and have added a few to those you selected, even now the list printed is very insignificant. The Preface looks very well. I hope you will not discover any serious blunder in it, or in any portion of the work printed off since you left. The list of Governors, Office bearers &c. is different from last year, in the style of make-up, but still it is not quite the thing. For instance the contents of page x ought to be on p. xi and the remaining lists closed up more. These small matters however will all adjust themselves in future numbers.

I see by Mr Kirk's last letter that he is not a member of the Council, although so stated in former lists. He has himself to blame, if blame there is, for appearing as a member of that August Body, but indeed as Secy. he may be called such. I was very careful with the lists of members of Incorporated Societies, and as the lists were revised in every instance by the respective secretaries, a reference to those lists will show where the mistake if any occurs. Mr Buller has sent one erratum, p. 300, near bottom, for white-brested read white-crested. This is not included in the errata slips sent herewith (page ix) but will be on all the bound vols. Hughs cannot let me have even one bound copy to take to Ch.Ch. as I leave in about two days time, so I shall take down the office copy, just to show to Fraser, Haast and others, and then send it back to be put away. It appears Dr Fisher is indignant about the omission of M.D. after his name last year, I therefore inserted it now, since he may claim the title from a foreign diploma, but in other instances I followed the Medical register.

I revised my notes on the Waipara and added a few lines & a list of the specimens brought back, but really I am not sufficient a geologist to give any minute details, or throw much light on what seems to be such a knotty point as the age of the fossils; I stated briefly that I do not consider them to be in situ &c. I have put the library a little into order, but I find many of your books are missing, so that it was quite impossible to revise the catalogue. I have deposited a few books of my own, they are chiefly meteorological, and a Cyclopaedia of 23 vols., which will be useful. I have arranged all the letters and papers connected with the Institute, and explained to Gore the particulars about Hughes' contract. I do not think I have anything more to add, except that in throwing down the pen, my Government work being now completely finished, I must thank you very sincerely for the great kindness you have always shown me, and which I hope some day to be able to repay in part.

Yours very sincerely
RL Holmes

Ex. Asst. Sec. N.Z. Inst.

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Acknowledgements

Most of the letters in this volume are part of the Haast family collection, held in the Alexander Turnbull Library. We are grateful to David Colquhoun (Curator of Manuscripts) for assistance with access to both microfilm copies and the original letters, and for advice on sorting out problems. Jennifer Twist (Archivist) helped us find the letters from Holmes held in the Te Papa archives.

We thank the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa for permission to publish the transcripts of these letters.

We are most grateful to Rodney Grapes and Chris Hector for their helpful comments on the manuscript.