

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

DESPATCHES

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE GOVERNOR OF NEW ZEALAND.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Right Hon. Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH to the OFFICER ADMINISTERING the GOVERNMENT of NEW ZEALAND.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 10th August, 1878.

I have the honor to transmit to you for your information the accompanying copies of a letter which has been received from Sir J. Hooker, respecting the “*Flora Australiensis*,” a work specially devoted to the botany of Australia, the completion of which is now announced; and of my reply to that letter.

I have, &c.,

M. E. HICKS BEACH.

The Officer Administering the Government
of New Zealand.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Sir J. D. HOOKER to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Royal Gardens, Kew, 24th July, 1878.

It is with peculiar pleasure that I call your attention to the publication, during the present year, of the seventh and concluding volume of the “*Flora Australiensis*.”

I believe that this work occupies a unique place in botanical literature. I am not aware of any other which, treating of the vegetation of so large a portion of the earth’s surface, has been successfully brought to a conclusion.

For the last sixteen years it has engaged the unremitting attention of its author, George Bentham, Esq., F.R.S., late President of the Linnæan Society of London, who has carried on the studies necessary for its elaboration in the Library and Herbarium of the Royal Gardens so largely enriched by his own munificent gifts.

The utility of the work, in describing in a uniform manner and in easily intelligible language the plants of a country so rich in vegetable products, cannot be over-estimated, and it is a matter of daily experience that without such a work these plants could not be accurately discriminated, and could not therefore be turned to useful account with any certainty.

In a scientific point of view the “*Flora Australiensis*” is of inestimable value. It records the nature of the great bulk of the flora with all the knowledge and skill of one of the greatest living systematists, and this while the natural conditions of the country can still be easily distinguished from the inevitable changes which must follow agricultural occupation and the operations of a wide-spread commerce.

The accumulation in London, and principally at Kew, of the important botanical collections made by successive travellers and explorers, from the date of Captain Cook’s voyage to the present day, have made the preparation of the “*Flora Australiensis*” in this country a matter of necessity. The labours of these men are bound up with the history of the Australian Colonies, and the mere barren enumeration of Australian plants, apart from the names of their first discoverers, would be an ungrateful obliteration of much that Australians will always hold in respect. Nor must it be forgotten that many species obtained through the industry of these early collectors have never been gathered since.

1—A. 2.