

1911.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE BULLER COLLECTION:

OFFER OF SPECIMENS OF THE WORK OF THE ANCIENT MAORI, BY MR. W. LEO BULLER.

Laid upon the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

SIR.—

Wellington, 12th October, 1911.

My father, the late Sir Walter Buller, in addition to his natural-history studies, took a deep interest in the Native race of this country, and during three-quarters of a century lost no opportunity of acquiring the best specimens of the work of the ancient Maori, in all branches of industry, for his collection. A great deal of time and money was expended by him in obtaining detailed information concerning the specimens in the collection, and this is on record in the manuscript catalogue which was intended to form the basis of a descriptive work on the collection. Photographs for this purpose were taken, and the negatives are safely stored in England.

The collection, as you will gather from the short description of the general scope of the collection appended to this letter, is probably the most important that has ever been brought together in New Zealand.

I now desire to offer the whole of the collections to the Dominion of New Zealand, to be preserved in the National Museum. I do not desire to attach any conditions to the gift, but I should wish to see the collection properly installed in a proper building, and that it shall be known as the "Buller Collection."

I believe that in giving the collection to New Zealand I am carrying out the wishes of my late father, and I also have a patriotic desire to benefit the country of my birth, and I think that it will be the means of attracting other collections which may eventually form a museum of the arts and industries of the Maori race, which will be renowned for all time to come not only in this but in other lands.

I have, &c.,

To the Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, Bart., K.C.M.G.,
Premier of the Dominion of New Zealand.

W. LEO BULLER.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTIONS.

The collection includes—

A large and representative collection of valuable historic greenstones, including both personal ornaments and weapons;

A number of house-carvings;

The large pataka Te Takinga (at Papaitonga);

A large carved war-canoe with all its ornamental fittings;

A small beautifully modelled light canoe (also at Papaitonga);

A collection of stone tools, adzes, &c., including the largest and finest stone adze at present known;

A specially valuable collection of Maori garments, two of the dogskin cloaks in a perfect state of preservation, acquired in 1838.

Weapons in stone, bone, and wood are well represented, and include many of historical interest and importance.

All the other branches of Maori workmanship and crafts are represented by selected specimens.

In addition to these specimens, the collection will be completed by sending out to New Zealand the specimens now in the Imperial Institute in England collected by my father.

W. L. B.

DEAR SIR,—

12th October, 1911.

It is with much pleasure that I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day's date, in which you offer as an unconditional gift the unique collection of specimens of the work of the ancient Maori acquired by your father, the late Sir Walter Buller.

I cordially accept, on behalf of the Government and people of the Dominion, your generous and patriotic offer of a collection which was gathered by the late Sir Walter Buller at so great a cost of labour and money. I personally appreciate very highly your action, which is worthy of the warmest commendation.

I shall use every endeavour to have effect given to your wish that the collection be properly installed in a suitable building, and that it shall be known as the "Buller Collection."

Yours faithfully,

J. G. WARD,

Prime Minister.

W. Leo Buller, Esq., Wellington.

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