

of Science—the Prince Consort was his successor—he was at the peak of his career as both a scientist and a statesman of science. The Moas which had been so exciting a decade earlier had already been surpassed in both value and interest. By the 1860s, although the occurrence of moa bones still excited interest—commercial and otherwise—they were commonplace. Samuel Butler, for example, in his account of his first year in Canterbury, 1859-1860, wrote lightly of the mystique which surrounded the Moa and of the fruitless search for its living representatives ‘on the west coast, that yet unexplored region of forest which may contain sleeping princesses and gold in ton blocks, and all sorts of good things.’<sup>64</sup> The market had become flooded.

Undaunted by the lack of a response to his offer, Haast tried again. Having completed the Nelson Survey and now under contract to Canterbury Province as Provincial Geologist, and thus the first professional scientist in the Colony, Haast sent Owen a copy of the Report.<sup>65</sup> ‘As your name is closely connected with the Natural History of New Zealand,’ he wrote, ‘I did myself the pleasure of naming a mountain range and a river after you, as a small and just tribute to one, whose name is not only known to every scientific man in the civilised world, but is also in the mouth of every Colonist here, even the most uneducated, associating Prof. Owen with Moa bones.’ Advising him that he was sending a small miscellaneous collection of natural history specimens like those already sent to correspondents in Europe, he continued with some information which was more apt to whet Owen’s scientific appetite: ‘From a description given to me by an intelligent settler, I am led to believe that there are skeletons of large & small Saurians in limestone in the banks of the Waitaki, a river wither [sic] I intend going next spring. A pleasing anticipation for one, who has devoted all his energy to Geology and who is only too happy to contribute his mite towards its extension.’<sup>66</sup>

Owen’s response was friendly and appreciative. Written almost immediately after the receipt of Haast’s letter and report, and undoubtedly stimulated by the offhand reference to fossil reptiles, it suggests what had become a more interesting area of investigation. Although he would ‘greatly desire to possess the bones of the “large Kiwi” to which you refer’ and although ‘the reports, from time to time, in your local newspapers of footprints of still larger birds are exciting [and lead him to hope that he] may still live to see the “last of the Moas” if the species yet lingers in the Mid-Island,’ he was intrigued by the fossils from a much more ancient period. ‘I received this year from J.H. Hood Esq. of Sydney, N.S.W.,’ he wrote, ‘some fossil remains of a *Plesiosaurus*, “from the Middle Island of New Zealand.” They were in a matrix closely