

handed over to Mr. Flower so that this gentleman may buy some collections in return for our embryo Museum which I am most anxious to advance.'⁷⁷ Owen apparently exercised his rights and those of what he also considered to be the 'national' museum, for on their receipt at the Hunterian early in July, Flower, after unpacking the box, wrote again with some tact: 'I wrote to Prof. Owen, asking him whether he would like to come here and see them as they lay on the table and select those he wished, but he preferred to have the whole of them at the British Museum, so I packed them up again & sent them to him, including those which you kindly present to this Museum, & which I hope he will return soon.'⁷⁸ It was almost a year later, that Flower was able to sell the whole collection for £30 including the £15 which the British Museum had paid for a 'first selection' which was picked out from different lots. With that fund he would buy a series of skeletons of typical animals for Christchurch, thus initiating a process of exchange and purchase which lasted until Haast's death.⁷⁹

So great a treasure transformed the Moa into a valuable colonial resource on the world scientific market. The trade in specimens both with the British Museum and other possible collectors was a continuing theme in the subsequent correspondence with Owen as Haast was unable to conceal the bitterness he felt when his own interests as a scientist and those of his 'embryonic museum' seemed threatened by Owen's authority and the British Museum's assumed imperial role, particularly as he came to see himself less as a collector and more as a scientist and New Zealand something more than a supplier of specimens for London's consumption. Nevertheless, Haast continued to regard Owen as the ultimate arbiter in matters relating to Moa taxonomy and anatomy and he continued to feel a responsibility to provide the British Museum with an adequate representation of the Colony's products. Both he and his sponsors, however, continually expressed bitterness at the inequity of the relationship.

To Owen's list of desiderata from New Zealand, Haast responded with his own request. 'I had an offer for the skeleton of *D. giganteus* of £150, from a gentleman going home & he would have paid me even £200, if only I had asked for it,' he wrote in one case; 'but I thought, & the Trustees of the Museum agreed with me, that you ought to possess it, in order not only to continue your classical publications on the subject, but also as a fine representation . . . in the National collections. . . . We should like principally not a quantity of objects of Natural History but rare objects which are not easily to be obtained.'⁸⁰ Responding to Owen's explanation for delay on the grounds that the British Museum had no duplicates, Haast remained firm. 'I had a full meeting of the Trustees