



CANADA
DEPARTMENT
OF



NATIONAL PARKS
BRANCH

NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA

c/o The Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,
Kew, Surrey, February 3, 1955.

Dr. O. H. Frankel, Chief,
Division of Plant Industry, C.S.I.R.O.
Box 109 City, Canberra, A.C.T.

Dear Dr. Frankel,

On January 22, 1953, following an exchange of letters, we forwarded for study and examination by Miss N. T. Burbidge, then at the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, a collection of 1753 Australian plants collected by von Mueller. Of this lot 1282 were from the George Lawson Herbarium acquired by the National Herbarium of Canada, in 1950, while the balance were mounted and numbered sheets originally obtained by purchase or exchange by the National Herbarium of Canada.

During a brief meeting with Miss Burbidge in Paris last summer I understood her to say that she had been unable to do very much with the collection, beyond ascertaining that the material did contain a number of types and that it merited further study and comparison which might well be done at the herbarium at Melbourne. In a letter dated October 8 she assured me that the material would be most acceptable to your herbarium at Canberra, should we wish to dispose of it.

As stated in my original letter to Miss Burbidge, it is unlikely that anyone in Canada will ever be able to make full use of the von Mueller plants. While, perhaps, one of the larger herbaria in the United States might like to have the collection, and in exchange offer us plant material that could be of immediate use to us, I personally feel that the von Mueller plants ought to be in Australia where they might well be of real value to Australian botanists, and that the entire collection, therefore ought to be transferred to Canberra as a gift or as exchange. Inasmuch as the possibility of a permanent transfer was dealt with before the collection was sent to Kew, and particularly because 471 numbered sheets are part of the National Herbarium of Canada, I shall have to obtain authorization when I return to Ottawa, in May. It may well be that for practical reasons it will be easier to arrange a permanent transfer on an exchange basis than as an outright gift.

not
H. H. H. H. H.
Miss Burbidge

I'd like to know more about this -
can we keep this collection or have to state herbaria? CHAT

21 FEB 1955

In the event of the first alternative you might at some future date be in a position to offer a return exchange; this might be in the form of a synoptical representation of Australian plants which would be most useful and acceptable to us.

On the assumption that this is acceptable to you, the entire von Mueller collection is being forwarded to your herbarium through the Australian Scientific Liaison Office in London.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Mr. W. Ives, Chief Scientific Liaison Officer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. E. Porsild". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

A. E. Porsild,
Chief Botanist,
National Herbarium of Canada.

NO to :

The Chief
Division of Plant Industry
C.S.I.R.O.

Mueller specimens from the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa

A letter regarding these was forwarded to Canberra from Kew in December 1952 (see file V3/28). The specimens were apparently acquired by Lawson through personal exchange with Baron von Mueller during the 1880's and 1890's.

Following exchange of letters with Dr. Porsild I consented to try to check the material at Kew and it was accordingly forwarded to me there. On arrival it was found that, apart from the mounted specimens (471) referred to in the recent letter, the collection consisted of loose specimens, often 4 or 5 together in loose folders. For this reason it is difficult to estimate the full number involved or their exact value. A considerable number were sorted out and checked against Kew material. In most cases this involved the check of the status of the specimen and the question of its name under modern nomenclature. The work was slow and laborious owing to the mixture in the folders, which commonly included a number of families widely spaced in the herbarium. The time required to complete the job seemed to be more than could be spared from other activities and only about 2/3 of the collection was dealt with. It was considered that much of the work ~~xxx~~ could be as easily done at Melbourne in the event of the collection being presented to us.

My impression, both from letters and conversations in Paris, was that the higher the value we placed on the collection the less likely it was that Dr. Porsild would feel free to present it. While, as has been stated above, it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of its value it is felt that the material is not only of value but is likely to be far more important to Australian Botanists in Australia than to some American herbarium where it would have little more than "curiosity" value. Accordingly I informed Dr. Porsild that we would appreciate receiving it at Canberra and he gave me to understand that the matter could be easily arranged when he passed through London on his return journey to Canada.

I would suggest that we accept them on the exchange basis outlined by Dr. Porsild. At present Canberra is the only Australian herbarium with no Mueller material and the specimens include many that are still completely unrepresented in our collection. It will be necessary to check much of the material at Melbourne and it is possible that we can then assist them by filling in any gaps in their sets due to loss or deterioration. In the event of duplicates being available some could be offered to State herbaria.

The specimens, being at Kew, were left packed ready for transport to Australia pending further instructions from Porsild. A note on the subject was left with A.S.L.O. London. Mr. Ives has also been in touch with Dr. Porsild (see file V3/28)

A letter regarding these was forwarded to Canberra from Kew in December 1952 (see file V3/28). The specimens were apparently acquired by Lawson through personal exchange with Baron von Mueller during the 1880's and 1890's.

Following exchange of letters with Dr. Porsild I consented to try to check the material at Kew and it was accordingly forwarded to me there. On arrival it was found that, apart from the mounted specimens (471) referred to in the recent letter, the collection consisted of loose specimens, often 4 or 5 together in loose folders. For this reason it is difficult to estimate the full number involved or their exact value. A considerable number were sorted out and checked against Kew material. In most cases this involved the check of the status of the specimen and the question of its name under modern nomenclature. The work was slow and laborious owing to the mixture in the folders, which commonly included a number of families widely spaced in the herbarium. The time required to complete the job seemed to more than could be spared from other activities and only about 2/3 of the collection was dealt with. It was considered that much of the work ~~xxx~~ could be as easily done at Melbourne in the event of the collection being presented to us.

My impression, both from letters and conversations in Paris, was that the higher the value we placed on the collection the less likely it was that Dr. Porsild would feel free to present it. While, as has been stated above, it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of its value it is felt that the material is not only of value but is likely to be far more important to Australian Botanists in Australia than to some American herbarium where it would have little more than "curiosity" value. Accordingly I informed Dr. Porsild that we would appreciate receiving it at Canberra and he gave me to understand that the matter could be easily arranged when he passed through London on his return journey to Canada.

I would suggest that we accept them on the exchange basis outlined by Dr. Porsild. At present Canberra is the only Australian herbarium with no Mueller material and the specimens include many that are still completely unrepresented in our collection. It will be necessary to check much of the material at Melbourne and it is possible that we can then assist them by filling in any gaps in their sets due to loss or deterioration. In the event of duplicates being available some could be offered to State herbaria.

The specimens, being at Kew, were left packed ready for transport to Australia pending further instructions from Porsild. A note on the subject was left with A.S.L.O. London. Mr. Ives has also been in touch with Dr. Porsild (see file V3/28)

15.ii.55

Nancy T. Burbidge

*Mr Mackay draft a suitable
letter for me to sign
OTM*

JHEM. BH

H1/8

Refer.: H1/8

28th March, 1955

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Guy B. Gresford,
Acting Secretary (Agricultural & Biological
Sciences),
C. S. I. R. O.,
314 Albert Street,
EAST MELBOURNE VIC.

MUELLER SPECIMENS FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
CANADA, OTTAWA

During her recent visit to Kew, Miss Burbidge spoke with Dr. A. E. Porsild regarding the desirability of transfer of the Mueller collection from the National Herbarium of Canada to Australia.

We have since received and accepted an offer from Dr. Porsild for the transfer of this material on an exchange basis. We enclose copies of the relevant correspondence for your information.


(O. H. Frankel)
CHIEF OF THE DIVISION.



H/1/8

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

BEM/SJW

ADDRESS OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE SECRETARY

CABLES AND TELEGRAMS: CORESEARCH, MELBOURNE

TELEPHONE: JA 6611

314 ALBERT STREET.

EAST MELBOURNE. C.2.

B30.

12th April, 1955.

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr. O.H. Frankel,
Chief, Division of Plant Industry,
P.O. Box 109, City,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

The Executive was pleased to learn of the arrangements to secure the Mueller specimens from the National Museum of Canada, mentioned in your memorandum of the 28th March. Mr. Butler has suggested that Dick Brock, the sub-editor of the Journal of Australian Institute of Agricultural Science, discuss this matter with Miss Burbidge in order that a news item may be prepared for the June issue of the Journal.

Guy B. Gresford

Guy B. Gresford,

ACTING SECRETARY
(Agricultural & Biological Sciences)

ONE

Miss Burbidge

Dr Brock

- discussed with ...

123 APR 1955