Sir,

The undersigned [lovers of science and ?] beg to draw the attention of the H.M. Government [s] present state of the Public Records of the Colony.

There are in the Third Puisne's Judge Chambers more than three hundred Folio volumes (many of those very [large] thick) containing the Manuscript original Records of this Colony from [the] its foundation [of the Colony] in 1652, [up] to modern times. These important documents Lhad at that] had been given by the Colonial Government into the [charge] care of the late Mr. Justice Watermeyer, who took an especial interest in these matters. He had them arranged, and many of them rebound, and took every precaution for their proper preservation. [After] By his death, these important documents, which when once the colonists shall have time to study their early old history, will to them be worth more than their [worth] weight in gold [have been left] lost their [most] good excellent custodian and conservator - as none of his successors in the office of judge have been especially put in charge of the Records. They [merely] are for them merely lumber occupying room in their Chambers and [not even an index] they cannot consider themselves in any way responsible for their safety. [Yet that] [under these circumstances].

That abstractions from these Records have [been] taken place, and [in fact] have been made in the most public and unblushing manner, the following facts will show. More than thirty years ago there were published [by Mr. Donald Moodie (the compiler] here at Cape Town "Specimens of the Authentic records of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope,

BCA157 Pp felo BC157 DRAFT OF LETTER BY DR. W.H.I. BLEEK

Approx. 1870 or later

In Dr. Bleek's handwriting. Some corrections in another handwriting, probably Mrs. Bleek. Parts crossed out by Dr. Bleek are given in square brackets []; underlining and round brackets () as in MS. of Dr. Bleek; ? where words are illegible.

relative to the aboriginal tribes". [This volume had ?] Each copy of this [volume] publication [(and several hundred copies appear to have been printed published)] contained besides (?) a good deal of print matter one leaf [container] cut out from the original manuscript Records. How many of these leaves of the original records were in [that way] manner taken away is impossible to say, but it is probable that (?) there were several hundred. [as a] A good number [of the] the copies of this publication were still in the publishers' hands in 1858, and [in order to save that] were offered for sale at the time to Sir George Grey. [About 30 copies] the most valuable of these were [picked] selected out, and about thirty were purchased by Sir G. Grey in order to preserve the valuable [doc] leaves contained in them, for which he gave about [2] s.] 2/6 a copy. The 32 leaves thus preserved date from a few days after the arrival of Van Riebeek 9 April 1652 to the 23 June 1700, and contain [many] fragments of many documents, [of which] with a good number of autographs, amongst them that of Van Riebeek. [So] As far as our enquiry has enabled us to see [?] no other copies of these [documents] portions of the Records are to be found at the Cape; and thus a number of [probably] documents are most likely lost.

Under those circumstances it is the earnest prayer of the undersigned that H.M. Government will be pleased to take such steps as [will] shall place these documents, as well as any other Records which may be found elsewhere in [to] proper safe custody. BCA-157 46.60.0

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Approx. 1870 or later

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