

## Expunged Islands.

WITH a view to exploring the Royal Company's Islands, said to be situate about 400 miles southward of Tasmania, and discovered about 1840, to ascertain their avifauna and the geographical distribution of certain birds, the Council of the Aust. O.U. has been in communication with the Admiralty authorities, to fix, if possible, the exact position of the supposed islands, or if they be non-existent to establish the fact, because the islands appear on some of the Admiralty's own charts as well as on many up-to-date maps. Consequent upon the correspondence the hon. secretary of the Union, Mr. D. Le Souëf, has received a letter from Mr. W. J. L. Wharton, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, accompanied with a copy of the following "Notice to Mariners":—

### ROYAL COMPANY'S ISLANDS—NON-EXISTENCE OF.

On old charts of the South Pacific Ocean, in the area south of Australia, a group of islands, named Royal Company's Islands, are marked as existing in lat. 50° 20' S., long. 140° 0' E. They have consequently been inserted for many years in the Admiralty publications.

These islands are not mentioned in any Sailing Directions, the original report of their existence cannot be traced, nor have they apparently been seen by any passing vessel.

Since 1890 the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty has been collecting data showing where ice and icebergs may be met with in the Southern oceans, and this has necessitated plotting the tracks of many vessels passing south of Australia, several of which have passed over or close to the position assigned to the Royal Company's Islands without seeing them, or any sign of land near them:—thus in 1892 the *Pakeha* passed 1 mile north of their assigned position; in 1893 the *Crusader* passed 5 miles north of them; in 1894 the *Rangatira* passed 15 miles north of them; in 1895 the *Maori* passed 2½ miles south, and the *Rangatira* 15 miles south of them; in 1889 the *Rangatira* passed 1 mile south of them, and the *Matatua* 2 miles north; in 1900 the *Matatua* passed over the position in which they are supposed to be situated; in 1901 the *Karamea* passed 40 miles south of them, and in 1902 the *Pakeha* passed 12 miles south of them.

As no certain information is available as to why these islands were originally placed on the charts, and as it is evident from the tracks plotted that no land exists in the locality in which they are marked on the charts, they have now been expunged from the Admiralty publications.

This notice affects the following Admiralty charts:—Atlantic and Indian Oceans, &c., No. 2,483; Pacific Ocean, Nos. 2,683 and 788.

By command of their Lordships,

W. J. L. WHARTON, Hydrographer.

Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, London, 2nd April, 1904.

## About Members.

MR. A. Mattingley (hon. treasurer Aust. O.U.), Custom House, Melbourne, has a duplicate copy of "The Birds of Australia," by G. J. Broinowski, comprising 300 full-paged coloured illustrations,



Wharton, W. J. L. 1904. "Expunged Islands." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 4(1), 32-32.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu904032a>.

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