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# Charles De Kempeneer (c.1852–1884), preparator: one of Auckland Museum’s earliest employees

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## Abstract

Henry Ward, the American businessman and trader in natural history specimens, visited Auckland Museum in 1881 and subsequently helped the museum to recruit a preparator. Correspondence between Ward and the museum’s curator, Thomas Cheeseman, shows that the first preparator sent by Ward was the Belgian, Charles De Kempeneer, who had worked previously for about seven years at both the “Royal Museum”, Brussels, and at Ward’s establishment in Rochester, New York State. De Kempeneer started at Auckland Museum in July 1882 for a trial period of about three months until October 1882, the museum having insufficient funds to pay him for longer. He then got work with the Macleay collection in Sydney (Australia) but negotiated with Cheeseman a permanent position at Auckland Museum, whose finances had been improved by the Costley Bequest of 1884. De Kempeneer returned to Auckland to commence work but died on arrival, a tragic loss of a talented young man. By virtue of his short-term engagement, De Kempeneer ranks as one of Auckland Museum earliest employees and the museum’s archival record of the Cheeseman correspondence has enabled a memory of him to be recovered.

## KEYWORDS

Henry Ward, Thomas Cheeseman, William Macleay, museum history, biography, taxidermy, New Zealand, Australia.

## INTRODUCTION

Thomas Frederic Cheeseman (1845–1923) was curator of Auckland Institute and Museum from 1874 until his death, and was responsible for greatly developing and professionalising the organisation. For much of this time Cheeseman was assisted only by a caretaker-janitor and the museum could afford to employ no other staff. Cheeseman’s priority for a second professional position at Auckland Museum was for a taxidermist. After a donation from a benefactor and some special fund-raising, the museum was able to employ Andreas Reischek as taxidermist for part of the period 1880–1881 (Gill 2008). The museum’s *Annual Report* for 1882–83 (Anon. 1883: 7) gave indication of a second, but unnamed, preparator:

“From [want of funds] it has been impossible to retain the services of a taxidermist, and with the exception of *a temporary engagement with a competent osteologist* [italics added], through which a few excellently prepared skeletons have been added to the collections, little has been done towards working up the large number of specimens received by exchange during the last few years, and now lying packed away in drawers”.

H.A. (Henry) Ward, a natural history collector and dealer from Rochester, New York State, visited Auckland in 1881 and met Cheeseman. Ward was well known as an advisor to museums (Kohlstedt 1980, 1985), and his correspondence with Cheeseman shows that he undertook to help recruit from America a taxidermist for Auckland Museum. He recommended the Belgian, Charles De Kempeneer (Figs 1 and 2), who had been working at Ward’s establishment for many years. Cheeseman, with limited funds, was able to employ De Kempeneer for a few months in 1882. De Kempeneer then got work in Sydney. Meanwhile, Auckland Museum received the Costley Bequest and Cheeseman negotiated to employ De Kempeneer on a full-time permanent basis. The young man returned to Auckland early in 1884 but died before he could take up his job at Auckland Museum. Ward then recommended another experienced taxidermist from his own establishment. This was Charles Francis Adams who started work at Auckland Museum in January 1885 (Gill 2014).

The purpose of this paper is to record details of the employment of De Kempeneer at Auckland Museum and to restore knowledge of him to the museum’s memory.



Figure 1. Two studio portraits of Charles De Kempeneer presumably taken around 1875 to 1882 while he was employed at Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Rochester, New York State. Photos: Ward Project, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

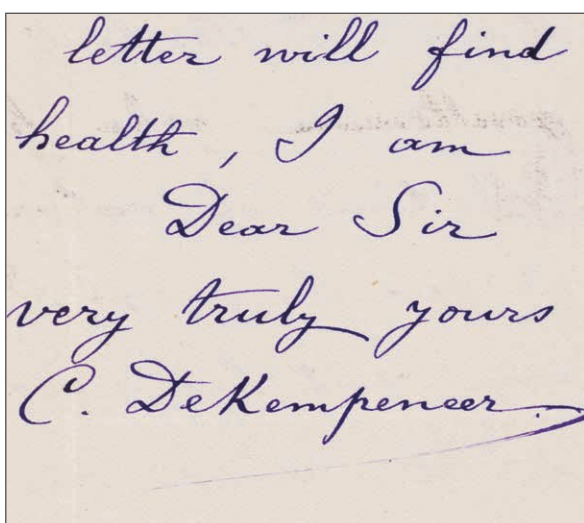


Figure 2. Charles De Kempeneer's hand-writing and signature from one of his letters to Thomas Cheeseman (MUS-1995-38-70).

### MATERIALS

Auckland Museum's *Annual Report* recorded minimal indications of De Kempeneer's employment and supplied no name. Instead, his identification and details of his employment in Auckland were discovered principally from manuscript collections in Auckland Museum Library (ZAR). MUS-1995-38-70 has seven letters from Charles De Kempeneer to Cheeseman written (in English) from Sydney. It also has two letters from Charles De Kempeneer's father (P. De Kempeneer) to Cheeseman written (in French) after his son's death. MUS-1995-38-158 has letters from H.A. Ward to Cheeseman, five of which mention Charles De Kempeneer. MUS-1996-6 (letter-books) has copies of four letters from Cheeseman to Charles De Kempeneer and three letters from Cheeseman to Ward that mention De Kempeneer.

The Ward Project ([wardproject.org](http://wardproject.org)) of the Rush Rhees Library (University of Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A.) has 18 letters from Charles De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, written (most in French) between 1880 and 1884 from Rochester, Berlin, Brussels, New York, San Francisco, Sydney and Melbourne. There is also one letter from Charles De Kempeneer's father to H.A. Ward (June 1884; in French).

## SHORT ENGAGEMENT IN AUCKLAND, 1882

In 1881 H.A. Ward set out on a year-long collecting tour to Australasia and South-east Asia (Anon. 1881). He sailed from San Francisco on 14 February 1881 and reached Auckland on 9 March to spend about a month in New Zealand before proceeding to Australia. Ward met Cheeseman at Auckland Museum, and understanding the museum’s need for a taxidermist was able to recommend one of the young staff members of his own establishment who was keen to travel. After returning home, Ward wrote to Cheeseman on 24 May 1882 (MUS-1995-38-158):

“Eight years ago when at Brussels the Director of the Royal Museum there [now Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences] gave me a very high recommendation of a young man – Charles De Kempeneer – who had been in their Museum for 7 years engaged in work upon skeletons. Seeing his work and liking it, I then and there (with the Director’s assent) engaged Mr De Kempeneer to come with me to America. He has now been with me for seven years as a trusted and valuable Employi [*sic*]. His work has been mainly mounting skeletons of all kinds and of all sizes, both with natural and with artificial ligaments. At this he has extraordinary ability – making most beautiful preparations. ...

I naturally want to keep him with me. But he has long had in mind visiting Australia. I have postponed him for a year and now let him go reluctantly (for my own interests), yet cheerfully as a long-trying, faithful workman. I am anxious that he shall find friends and a good position promptly after reaching your country. Do you not want him for a longer or shorter engagement at your flourishing Museum? He will mount your skeletons (Moas included) and put up Crustaceans or other things requiring skill and nice manipulation in an excellent manner. He has been stuffing a few mammals lately, and is already an average taxidermist with assurance of excelling with practice.

If you need an assistant for work as above mentioned I can most heartily and unqualifiedly recommend to you (for skill and for character) Mr. Charles De Kempeneer. I think that he will follow by next steamer to [the] one taking this letter, and he will (I so advise him) get off at Auckland to try a little of New Zealand. He will call on you, and this letter I send ahead as his introduction.”

De Kempeneer arrived in San Francisco on 14 June 1882 (De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, 17 June 1882, Ward Project), where he attempted to acquire seals and other specimens for Ward. He sailed for Auckland on 1 July 1882 (De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, 1 July 1882, Ward Project) and would have arrived later that month. On 26 August 1882 a local newspaper (*N.Z. Herald* issue 6482: 5) reported that:

“Mr. T. F. Cheeseman has had mounted the skeleton of a python, which is set out on a black ground and

shown to great advantage. The preparation and mounting has been very artistically performed by M. De Kempeneer, osteologist, at present on a flying visit to Auckland.”

The python was said to be 12.5 feet long (3.8 m). I realise now that this was the derelict item I discovered in a disused stairwell at Auckland Museum in 1984 (Gill 2016: 6). The skull and a selection of vertebrae and ribs were saved (LH644, Figs 3 and 4). The snake (*Python sebae* from West Africa) had been received on exchange from the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle (Paris) in 1878, probably as a roughed-out dry skeleton that De Kempeneer had to macerate and clean as well as articulate and mount.

In reply to Ward’s letter of 24 May 1882, Cheeseman wrote on 9 September 1882 (MUS-1996-6-2: 44):

“I noted your remarks about Mr de Kempener [*sic*]. I have given him a short engagement, but fear that our funds will not allow me to keep him long. I like his work very much.”

On 12 October 1882 the *N.Z. Herald* (issue 6522: 4) reported that the S.S. *Rose Casey* had arrived in Auckland with a swordfish 12 feet long (3.7 m) including the “sword”. “Captain Somerville at once sent the monster to the museum, where it will be prepared for exhibition by M. de Kempeneer.” On 14 October 1882 (MUS-1995-38-158), Ward wrote to Cheeseman:

“I am glad that you gave Mr. De Kempeneer a trial. He is a first-class Osteological workman. I write him by this mail offering him an increase of salary and advance of money for his passage if he will come back to me for 2 or 3 years.”

## NEGOTIATIONS WHILE AT SYDNEY

With no further paid work in New Zealand, De Kempeneer moved to Australia. He reached Sydney on 6 November 1882 and wrote to Cheeseman on the 29th (MUS-1995-38-70). De Kempeneer called on Edward Pierson Ramsay (1842–1916), curator of the Australian Museum, seeking work. “I saw Mr Ramsay and gived [*sic*] him your Kind letter, and after reading it, he said that he was willing to give me work about the 1<sup>st</sup> of January next, that he could not get money before that time, but that if I wished to have some work before, that I could go and see the Hon. Wm. Macleay, a wealthy gentleman who has some large collections of natural history. A few days ago I saw that gentleman and he gived [*sic*] me some work, at £4-0-0 a week, which is rather good, considering that I have to work only 39 hours a week.” William Macleay’s family collection is now the Macleay Museum of the University of Sydney (Stanbury & Holland 1988, Stacey & Hay 2007). De Kempeneer was at a boarding house at 109 William Street, Woolloomooloo. He liked Sydney but found the sun rather hot.

De Kempeneer had no reply from Cheeseman, so wrote again on 21 March 1883 (MUS-1995-38-70).



Figure 3. Surviving bones from the skeleton of a 3.8 m python (LH644) that De Kempeneer mounted for display at Auckland Museum in 1882. It was assembled originally in a sinuous shape, the snake viewed dorsally but elevated (tilted 90 degrees) onto a vertical black board.



Figure 4. Skull of the python (LH644) that De Kempeneer prepared.

"I am still working for the Hon. Wm. Macleay, and the prospects are that I will have work there for quite a while yet. I have stuffed a large *Cervus Canadensis* [deer] and an American rocky mountain sheep, and Mr Macleay is much pleased with it.

Mr Ramsay is gone to Europe as representative of N.S.W. at the International Fisheries Congress, and also to visit the different large Museums of Europe to find out which are the best glass cases for specimens. The government [*sic*] has voted four thousand pounds to renew all the glass cases in the Sydney Museum. Mr Ramsay told me that he expects to stay away about five months and intends to come back by the way of America, and said that I would probably not have a billet [i.e. appointment] at the Museum before he gets back. Since he has gone I heard that the government [*sic*] has given him 9 months leave of absence.

Prof. Ward has written to me several letters and wishes me to go back to Rochester for a three years engagement. I have not accepted [h]is offer because I wish to stay several years in these colonies.

In December last I had an other [*sic*] offer. The Director of the Hobart Town Museum (Tasmania) had written to Mr Ramsay and asked to send him a taxidermist to stuff a collection of fishes for the London Exhibition. Mr Ramsay thought that gentleman would hardly pay me the same as I have here and was not willing to pay my passage neither [*sic*], so I naturally refused.

Please be kind enough to write me a few lines to know how prospects are at the Auckland Museum."

Cheeseman wrote on 9 July 1883 (MUS-1996-6-2: 118):

"Since I last wrote you the Institute has been bequeathed a large sum of money – probably nearly £10,000. We have not yet received it, for the estate has to be wound up, the property sold, etc, and this will take a few months."

This was a bequest of £12,150 from Mr Edward Costley that the museum received in 1884 (Powell 1967: 80).

Cheeseman continued:

"If you are still disengaged, you might write me a line or two stating what salary you would expect for an engagement as taxidermist and osteologist to the Auckland Museum. I do not think that it will now be long before we are in a position to employ a properly qualified person, and I should like to know what your terms are before making an actual recommendation to our committee. In any case I hope you will not take a permanent situation in Australia until after you have written to us on the question. I have not yet brought the matter before our committee, but will do so as soon as I receive your reply."

De Kempeneer was pleased at this news, and replied on 31 July 1883 (MUS-1995-38-70). "About taking an

engagement to the Auckland Museum I have thought that matter over and as I suppose that you will need a permanent person I would be willing to go back to Auckland to teach such person during about twelve months at £25 a month. Should I be accepted at those terms I could not possibly be in Auckland before the end of this year or the beginning of the next. If possible [I] would like to receive an answer within two months." On 5 September 1883, De Kempeneer wrote to Ward about shark specimens but also copied out Cheeseman's letter verbatim. He told Ward he was happy in Sydney and reluctant to return to Auckland which he found more expensive than Sydney and lacking in amusements (De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, 5 September 1883, Ward Project).

Cheeseman made a counter-proposal (4 September 1883; MUS-1996-6-2: 145).

"About taking an engagement at our Museum. I should much like to arrange with you, but I don't think the plan you propose – to teach a person for say 12 months at a salary of £25 per month – would suit our views[?]. In the first place, I don't suppose that a likely person would come to be taught unless he was also paid a salary, and that, in addition to your own, would make it very expensive to us – in fact would make the cost more than we could afford, unless we starved other departments. Then again, £26 per month (or £300 per annum) is a rather large salary compared to what the other taxidermists in the Colony are receiving. My views in writing you were these. That perhaps we might obtain your services (alone) at about the same salary that is paid at the other Museums in the Colony, which I believe is from £200 to £225; or, if you were indisposed to take a permanent engagement, that we might have engaged you for a year or two until we could get someone from England or America. I have not put the matter before our committee, for unless it could be put into some shape similar to the above, I don't well see what we could do. But I should be glad to hear further from you on the Subject. It will probably be six months before we are in possession of funds to do anything."

De Kempeneer (now at 191 William St., Woolloomooloo) replied to Cheeseman on 3 October 1883 (MUS-1995-38-70).

"I would have written sooner but all this time have been so undecided about what to do, all on account of prospects here being rather good, however as I now have decided to remain in Australasia longer than I at first thought of staying I have decided to accept an engagement at the Auckland Museum for 2 or 3 years or perhaps longer, at £240 per year and work 44 hours per week or if the Institute could not afford to pay such a salary would be willing to do it for £225 per year but then work as I actually do here 38 hours per week, and also would want to work alone."

Cheeseman replied promptly (29 October 1883, MUS-1996-6-2: 155).

“I received your letter some little time back, and it was considered at a meeting of our committee held the other day. The proposal you make – to accept an engagement for a period at the rate of £240 per annum – was considered to be more within the means of the Institute than your previous idea of working with an assistant, and I think that the committee are favourably inclined towards it. But it was not possible to come to a decision at that meeting, as we are still somewhat in the dark as to when we shall receive our share of the bequest made by Mr Costley, although it cannot be [?]long. I was requested to write and ask you when you could come to Auckland provided it was decided to engage you. In asking this I should say that we shall probably not be ready at the end of the year – although I think we shall be by March or April. You might send me a line by the return of mail, and it would probably be in time for the next committee meeting, to be held about the middle or later part of November. At this meeting the matter will be again discussed.”

De Kempeneer wrote back on 6 November 1883 (MUS-1995-38-70).

“... I was somewhat surprised that the committee had not yet come to a definite conclusion with reference to my proposal, as it is necessary that I should give due notice to my present employer, and as I would like, if possible, to visit those Australian colonies that I have not yet visited, I would feel extremely obliged if they would come to a decision as soon as possible.”

He could be in Auckland in March or April after a visit to other colonies.

Cheeseman concluded the arrangements on 14 December 1883 (MUS-1996-6-2: 166).

“I am now to inform you that the committee will accept your offer of an engagement at the rate of £240 per annum, working 44 hours per week. The engagement would be for one year certain, after which three months notice might be given by either side. In reference to this, I should say that it is our intention to employ a taxidermist permanently, so that in all probability we should wish to keep you much longer than the year, if you yourself were agreeable. The engagement might commence any time after April 1st next [1884], before which time we could hardly be ready.”

De Kempeneer was pleased (2 January 1884, MUS-1995-38-70).

“... I will now be in a position to tell to Mr Macleay, (as soon as I see him), the precise time I shall have to leave Sydney. Please accept my best thanks

for your kindness and courtesy and also for your exertions on my behalf.”

He continued:

“I need hardly say that it will be my constant endeavour to give entire satisfaction and to advance the interests of the Museum. I entirely consent with the conditions stated in your letter. They are liberal, and will suit me nicely. In order that I might not incommode Mr Macleay (who has at present a large number of specimens on hand, sufficient to keep a taxidermist constantly employed for some months at least) I have resolved not to leave Sydney before the middle or latter part of April. I shall therefore, in all probability, be in Auckland by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. In consequence of this, I have determined to forego my trip around N.Z., etc, for the present however.”

The situation changed, and by the end of the month (De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, 30 January 1884, Ward Project) Macleay had indicated that he wanted no more specimens prepared as there was no space at the museum to store them. De Kempeneer had about three months before he was due in Auckland and resolved:

“... in about ten days I expect to sail for Melbourne, then Tasmania and New Zealand, where I expect to visit the main towns and the hot springs ...”

He left Sydney on 15 February 1884 and reached Melbourne on the 17th, expecting to sail for Tasmania around 4 March (De Kempeneer to H.A. Ward, 27 February 1884, Ward Project).

Auckland Museum’s *Annual Report* for 1883–84 (Anon. 1884: 7) expected a happy outcome from the De Kempeneer negotiations:

“In anticipation of an increased revenue, arrangements have been made for the employment of a permanent taxidermist; and a thoroughly competent workman has been selected, and in a few months will arrive in Auckland”.

The last letter from De Kempeneer in the Auckland Museum archive (6 February 1884, MUS-1995-38-70), however, was short and ominous. He reported that during the last few weeks he had not been in very good health, but: “I think that a change of air will do me good, and, expect to be ready for work by the first of May next [1884]”.

## RETURN TO AUCKLAND, 1884

On 19 April 1884, in a section headed “Local Gossip”, the *N.Z. Herald* (issue 6996, suppl.: 1) carried a detailed but anonymous tribute to the Belgian preparator:

“I opened my paper the other morning and was startled and made inexpressibly sad by seeing the announcement of the death of poor M. de Kempeneer. ... I believe I am the only one here

[Auckland] who knew him intimately. ... I bade him *bon voyage* fifteen months ago on his departure for Sydney [that would be January 1883, but in fact De Kempeneer reached Sydney in November 1882] ... For some short time before he left for Sydney he was engaged at the Auckland Museum preparing specimens. He was an osteologist by profession, and possessed great skill and experience, partly acquired in Brussels, his native place, and partly in America ... Unfortunately he found his services here of no use by reason of the impecunious condition of the various colonial museums. His abilities and high testimonials were appreciated by all competent to judge of them, but “no funds” was the answer he got wherever he applied. It was the same in Sydney. But Baron Macleay found him out, and for some time he was engaged in arranging and fixing his large and valuable collection of natural history. The intense heat, however, was too much for him. After wandering about Australia he returned to New Zealand, and the Auckland Museum being at last in funds, was returning to resume his duties here, when his health gave way, and he reached Auckland only to expire. ... He had a passion for travel, and it was his intention to visit Japan, China, and India before returning to Belgium. ... He was a quiet and singularly unobtrusive man, a most pleasant companion, and altogether a good fellow.”

On 24 or 28 April 1884 (second day-numeral illegible), Cheeseman wrote to Ward (MUS-1996-6-2: 198–201):

“I have sad news to tell you about poor De Kempeneer. As you know, we had offered him a year’s engagement in the Museum, and he was to have been here in time to commence work on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He left his engagement in Sydney some time back, intending to spend some time in Australia & the southern part of New Zealand, travelling. He reached Dunedin all right, but was taken ill there, but not thinking much of it, took his passage to come on to Auckland. He got rapidly worse during the voyage, and when the steamer arrived was in a nearly comatose state. The Steward of the boat took him up to the Hospital, and a message was sent to me asking me to come and see him. Unfortunately I had just left the Museum for the day, and heard nothing of it until the following morning – when it was too late, as he died during the night. Poor fellow – I have felt very sorry for him, dying alone and among strangers. The cause of his death was acute inflammation of the kidneys. We found nothing among his effects giving a clue to the address of his friends in Belgium; so that if you know this I should be extremely obliged if you would write and tell them the sad news.”

His death certificate shows that Charles De Kempeneer died on 8 April 1884 at Auckland Hospital, aged 32 years (entry 244 in register of deaths for Auckland District during the quarter ending 30 June 1884; scan provided by Department of Internal Affairs

25 July 2018). The cause of death was “Acute Bright’s Disease” (nephritis) and he was given a Church of England burial on 10 April by Rev. J. Shanahan. He was listed as having a personal estate under £50 in the “Notice of estates of deceased persons placed under the charge of the Public Trustee in April” (*N.Z. Herald* issue 7024: 4, 22 May 1884). His belongings were advertised for auction by Samuel Cochrane & Son (*Auckland Star* issue 4363: 4, 13 May 1884): “Estate of De Kempeneer (deceased): Taxidermist’s tools and utensils, trunk clothing, portmanteau and clothing, watches, globes, fancy goods”.

A few months after the death, Cheeseman received a letter (dated 12 June 1884; MUS-1995-38-70) from Charles’ father, Monsieur P. De Kempeneer of 32 rue Botanique, Bruxelles (Nord), an attaché in the Belgian Interior Ministry. He explained (translated from French):

“Professor Ward of Rochester, told me the sad news of the death of my beloved son Charles, who was engaged to work under your direction as natural history preparator at Auckland Museum. You will understand how much this news has distressed us, both me and all my family.”

The father continued:

“If this does not stretch your kindness, I will allow myself, professor, to ask you to tell me what of, and how, my unfortunate son died. It would please me to know if he was cared for in his last moments and by whom and how he has been buried.”

Unfortunately, a copy of Cheeseman’s reply has not been found in the Letter-books. P. De Kempeneer wrote again to Cheeseman on 11 July 1884 (MUS-1995-38-70), saying (translated from French):

“We can’t, my family and me, thank you enough, and for the big part that you take in the cruel loss that we have just had, and for the effort that you have given us in attending to the funeral of our missed Charles, in making sure that all went properly”.

## DISCUSSION

In 32 years as Curator of Land Vertebrates at Auckland Museum I can recall no reference to the name Charles De Kempeneer. This was partly because the names of preparators had never been recorded in catalogue records for individual land vertebrates specimens. The brief reference in the 1882–83 *Annual Report* to the “temporary engagement with a competent osteologist” was a mystery. Then, recently, I studied the correspondence between Cheeseman and Henry Ward, preserved in the Auckland Museum Library, and a full story unfolded of De Kempeneer as a preparator in Auckland. Ward’s letters gave the surname and that enabled discovery of the letters from son and father to Cheeseman.

It is clear now that Charles De Kempeneer was employed at Auckland Museum from July to October 1882. The newspapers show that during this time he mounted a large python skeleton (LH644), and probably worked on a large swordfish (not present in the current collection). He probably worked on other skeletons that survive in the collection, whether collected in 1882 or earlier, but these cannot now be identified. By virtue of this temporary engagement at Auckland Museum, De Kempeneer ranks as one of the institution's earliest employees.

De Kempeneer's death left Cheeseman once again without a taxidermist and in the same letter to Ward giving news of the tragic death (24 or 28 April 1884; MUS-1996-6-2: 198–201) Cheeseman asked Ward to find a replacement (who, as events turned out, was Charles Adams; see Gill 2014). In stating employment terms for the replacement, Cheeseman gave the hours of work, and these presumably would have applied to De Kempeneer's 44 hours per week. "The hours of work would be the same as in the other Museums in the Colony – from 8 to 5, with an hour for dinner, and half a day on Saturdays." "Dinner" in those days was a mid-day meal.

On 9 December 1884 a New Zealand newspaper (*Evening Star* 6770: 2) had an enigmatic comment:

"I see the New York papers refer mysteriously to the disappearance of a large sum of money supposed to have been in the possession of Mr Charles De Kempeneer, who died recently at Auckland".

The matter had been raised in the *Buffalo Courier* (Buffalo, N.Y., 19 September 1884: 2). B. Frank Enos, of Rochester, N.Y., had heard of De Kempeneer's early death, and, because De Kempeneer was a member of Rochester Lodge, Enos

"wrote a letter to New Zealand, addressing it to any master, secretary or member of a lodge of Masons located in or about Auckland, inquiring as to whether such a person as Charles De Kempeneer had died at that place".

James Slator, past grand secretary of a North Island lodge, replied from Auckland on 15 August 1884 giving details of De Kempeneer's death and offering to try to recover his Masonic papers. The *Buffalo Courier* article noted the rumour that De Kempeneer "was in possession of a considerable amount of money". "Whether this money was deposited in a bank at Sydney ... or whether it was with him at the time of his death, is not known".

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