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## THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF AGRICULTURE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

BY

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*(This is the fourth essay in this series. Previous articles were published in the August and September issues of this Journal.)*

### 4. THE AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT OF THE MACQUARIE PERIOD (1810-1820).

#### THE TOWNSHIP OF SYDNEY.

The Port Jackson settlement of Macquarie times was a curious mixture of grim realities, picturesque settings and hopes for the future. Predominantly it was urban in character, its vitality centring in the town and its shipping contacts with overseas, not with the country. Over the mountains, there were the legendary plains of the limitless interior, but as yet the sheep were just picking their way—the flood was to come later. It was perhaps inevitable that the town should have been the centre of affairs, for from the earliest days “fear, hunger and discipline had kept the settlers all huddled together” (1). Trade was concentrated in the town, and so were the amusements. Pickings were there for the clever; hardship the probable reward in the interior. By the sea a man did not feel so isolated, for there were the ships, the trappings of officialdom, the buildings which indicated progress and confidence, but beyond the boundaries of the town stretched the endless grey-green expanse of the bush, and nature after the Australian pattern was oftentimes inclined to be cruel.

In the Sydney of 1820 were concentrated 12,079 men, women and children, constituting more than half the total population of the settlement (2). There were more people in the town than there had been in the whole settlement at the time of Macquarie's arrival. The town was a shabby and mean little place, but no worse than the hideous insanitary new towns that were simultaneously rising in England. Foveaux had warned Macquarie on his arrival that Sydney was slovenly, the streets impassable, main roads in disrepair, bridges dangerous, and that it had not yet been possible to rid the main thoroughfares of stumps (3). It had been given a new face in the ten years of Macquarie rule, but its heart was still hard. There were in 1820, 1,084 buildings in Sydney, and thirty-one of these were Government owned. Of the total, sixty-eight were built of stone, and 259 of brick; the rest

were wooden, with a few survivals of clay and mud reinforced with boughs of wattle (<sup>4</sup>). There were some two-storied houses in the town itself, owned by such men of wealth as Simeon Lord,\* Riley, Robert Campbell,† Reiby, all of whom were merchants, Isaac Nichols the Postmaster, and Robert Howe the Printer (<sup>5</sup>). None of these, however, were men who had made their wealth on the land. By late Macquarie times the town was a feverish hive of building activity, for the Governor was a man of grandiose ideas with housewifely proclivities for tidying, and he was in close association with the unlucky Greenway, architect of resource but an unfortunate who had been caught up in a matter of personal bankruptcy in England, and in turn had been transported as a convict. New streets were being made; barracks, a branch of the Mint, a Fort, churches built; and there was even a racecourse. Here were the headquarters of Government, the office of the Secretary to the Governor, the printing house of the *Gazette*, the slaughterhouse, the wheatmills, the breweries, the main store of the Commissary, the wharves at which was unloaded produce from the upper reaches of the Hawkesbury and the

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*\* Simeon Lord, merchant prince of the early New South Wales colony, is remembered by the streets and roads named after him in various suburbs of Sydney, "Lord's Place" at Orange, and various by-ways at Port Macquarie and East Kempsey. Lord arrived as a convict in the Third Fleet in August, 1791. He was first assigned as a servant to an officer and in due course installed in a shop which he conducted on behalf of his master. His term of transportation expired in 1798, whereupon he commenced trading on his own account and as a customs agent for ship masters. Lord acquired ships of his own and set up as a public auctioneer. The early numbers of the "Sydney Gazette" contain innumerable advertisements for his firm. Under his hammer came such things as farms, ship cargoes, houses and stock. Lord dabbled with exports of whale oil and seal skins, was interested in New Zealand flax, sandalwood, minerals, tanning and cloth manufacturing. Before 1810 he had built a fine house in Macquarie Place, which stood until 1908. In payment for lands surrendered in Macquarie Place, Lord was in the 1820's given grants at Cowra, Canowindra, Crookwell, Orange, Blayney, Penrith, and the Kanimbla Valley. In the County Cumberland, he owned the Brighton Estate where Enfield now stands, the Dobroyd Estate at Petersham, 700 acres at Botany Bay, where he had a clothing factory, and 600 acres at Minto. He died a very rich man at Banks House at Botany in January, 1840.*

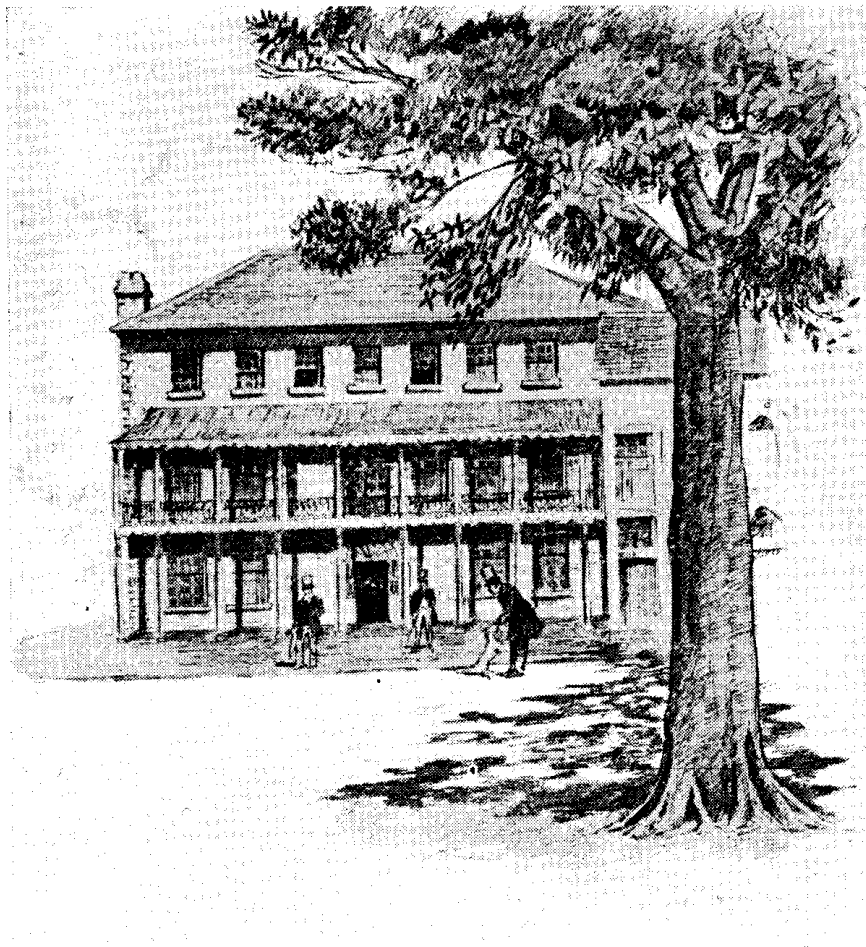
*† Robert Campbell has been called "The Father of the Mercantile Industry in Australia." Born in Scotland in 1769, Campbell joined the merchant house of Campbell Clark and Company at Calcutta in 1796. Campbell first arrived in Sydney in June, 1798. Eighteen months later he returned to Sydney with a full cargo of merchandise, and subsequently received the sanction of Governor King to continue trading as an importer of goods for the Colony's needs. Campbell made trial exports of coal to India, imported cattle and grain from India on Government behalf, erected warehouses on the west side of Sydney Cove, and built "Campbell's Wharf," for long an historic Sydney landmark. By 1804, Campbell and Coy. held at Sydney stock to the value of nearly £50,000. In the same year their first ship, "The Perseverance," was launched. Campbell then entered into the export trade with seal skins and whale oil and was the leading agitator in the Colony against the East India Company trade monopoly. In the 1830's Campbell received grants of land on the approximate site of the present city of Canberra, and the name of his estate, "Duntroon," is now perpetuated by the Royal Military College. The suburb of Ashfield in Sydney was another estate owned by him. He was also concerned with the establishment of the King's School at Parramatta, and instituted the first Savings Bank in Australia in 1819, with which he remained concerned until 1833. He died at Duntroon in 1847.*

Parramatta. From here in official splendour, the Governor was accustomed to periodically set out on his ritual tours of the farming lands, to shape plans for the "new country," to inspect the roads, receive deputations and exhort the settlers. Macquarie loved these tours. In disgrace, such a tour was his last refuge from the implacable Bigge, persistent in his delvings into the details of the Governor's administration.

The boundaries of the town finished at the bush. It sprawled over a sizable area, rough hewn from forest and brush. Communication between the country and the town was never other than hazardous and expensive. From time to time the attention of the town was forced to focus on the country, but this was only when a flood or drought appeared, imports were not immediately available and food supplies were endangered.

Everything tended towards a town emphasis. There was "the perpetual presence of every species of temptation to vice," and opportunities were limited to the town (<sup>6</sup>). Macquarie's passion for building concentrated large numbers of convicts, ex-convicts and free citizens in the town, for it took time to clear land, and meanwhile buildings could be gone on with, surplus labour absorbed. Moreover, there was the property of the Government to plunder, lusts to satisfy in the stinking hell of "The Rocks." The buildings gave at least a semblance of prosperity and progress, and in consequence, as most of the male convicts arriving were town bred, on receiving their freedom or ticket of leave, they preferred staying in the town, even if unemployed, to going to the country (<sup>7</sup>). Thefts and bashings could be but feebly checked by the police. The town gave encouragement to acquire property in houses and tenements, and the "stimulus to industry that it excited was also accompanied by an encouragement to steal the materials where they could not be otherwise acquired" (<sup>8</sup>). Many of the ex-convicts who had built houses in the town had been enabled to do so by the theft of materials. The property and stores of Government were perpetually robbed, and the propensity to thieving grew as the building programme accelerated in the last years of Macquarie, and control of labour became more complex (<sup>9</sup>). Settlers, also, repulsed or bankrupted by the strangeness of the country, or its droughts and floods, were often ready enough to sell or abandon their grants and return to the town. Numbers were also increased by a floating population of sailors, and a few soldiers on furlough from India. The country could not yet feed the town and this further separated the two. In the early years of his governorship, Macquarie was sending to Bengal for wheat, and at the end of it, entreating the Home Government to send salted meat. The town acquired the habit of looking abroad for its supplies (<sup>10</sup>).

Of its inhabitants little need be said. There is this description of the types of convicts arriving in the settlement, from the pen of the observant Commissioner Bigge: "It is generally observed that the convicts from London are found to be more seriously affected by scurvy, debility and pneumonic diseases than those



• SIMEON LORD'S MANSION, MACQUARIE PLACE, SYDNEY.  
(From a pencil sketch by Sydney Ure Smith.)

*Simeon Lord's real estate illustrated well the complaint of certain "pure merinos" or "exclusionists" in the early Colony, that the emancipists had been lavishly treated in the way of land grants. Lord's first portion of land was one acre, seven perches, leased to him by Governor King, in what is now called Macquarie Place. This lease Lieut.-Governor Foveaux converted into freehold in February, 1809, at a "quit" rent of 2s. 6d. a rod, as a reward for "an excellent dwelling house, extensive store and other substantial buildings erected thereon."*

*The front stretched back to the tank Stream and its southern boundary was the present Bridge Street. On it Lord erected his substantial mansion, said to have been the very best in the town, built of stone with cedar fittings thereto. Behind it stood his warehouse. The house was known by various titles—"Lord's Mansion," "The White House," etc., and it survived until 1908.*

*Lord's mansion became a boarding house, run by a Mrs. Butler in the late 1830's. In the 'fifties it was the Star Hotel under Mrs. Suzannah Williams' management. In 1883 it became professional offices and finally Macquarie Place stand on the site of this old residence.*

*(cf. Simeon Lord by E. C. Rowland—Journ. and Proc. Royal Aust. Hist. Society. Vol. XXX, Part III, 1944, pp. 157-195.—By courtesy Mitchell Library.)*

of more robust habits, and who have been accustomed to agricultural pursuits; and it is equally observable that the moral habits of the first of these classes of convicts are more depraved, and that they are consequently less easily controlled than those from the country . . . . The convicts embarked in Ireland generally arrive . . . in a very healthy state, and are found to be more obedient and more sensible of kind treatment during the passage than any other class . . . . The aged and infirm convicts frequently suffer so much from debility and the use of salt provisions that the surgeons find it necessary to support them with a constant diet of preserved meat and other medical comforts . . . and unless such convicts have received sentences of transportation for life, it seems to be a great aggravation of their bodily sufferings, as well as great augmentation of expense, to send them . . . for any shorter periods" (11). On disembarkation, these convicts were housed either at the Barracks at Sydney, Parramatta or Windsor, or in other establishments, such as the Carters Barracks at the Brick Fields (12). One of two alternatives were before Government in disposing of these importees, either to assign them out as servants or, otherwise, retain them in Government employ. Of the latter, Bigge had this to say: "The system of Government labour . . . presented only a choice of evils. The only stimulus to active labour amongst the convicts was created by their hope of temporary and luxurious indulgence. It was neither subject to regulation nor capable of being controlled. Where by means of task work attempt was made to increase production, it was more than counterbalanced by the careless manner of the performance. The system likewise considered as a part of punishment was equally defective. It proceeded upon the principle of making skill and sudden exertion rather than uniform and tried good conduct the steps to temporary reward. By this means the skilful and immoral man was indulged and rewarded, and the inexpert and ill-rewarded made uneasy and discontented. On the other hand, where all stimulus to labour was withdrawn, coercion became necessary. But it was impossible to exactly apply it. Coercive labour, although operating as a punishment, became an instrument and a pretext for vexation and oppression" (13). The lack of discipline, the absence of rewards, were two of the reasons why the convicts preferred living together, rather than retiring from the town to lead lonely and separate lives in the bush. Major Druitt told Bigge that the convicts transported for life were more irreclaimable than those transported for shorter periods, while Hutchison, the overseer of convicts, maintained that those transported for fourteen years or for life conducted themselves well, but that those transported for seven years began to be disobedient and refractory as their period of service drew to a conclusion (14). There was uncertainty in this, as in most other things dealing with the convicts. Bigge thought that no less than a period of two years was required to make them sensible to even the minimum of control. In the course of these years and subsequent to it, their dispositions to theft were but feebly checked by the police or by confinement in barracks or by flogging and chain gangs (15). With these materials, Macquarie was building the town, and the roads, and bridges, to so many of which he has left his name. He kept the good

mechanics in Government employ. Mostly the poorer elements were sent out as servants. Gregory Blaxland told Bigge: "I once applied to Governor Macquarie who gave me an order for four farming labourers . . . I received four men, two of whom were ruptured, one was a cripple and very old, and the other too old to work" (16). It was all rough and tumble even in the town.

Considering the balance between the town and the country, Bigge's final conclusions were that, "The improvement of the communications between the more populous parts of the settled districts, and the reduction of the price of mechanical labour in the colony by a relaxation of the practice of retaining all good mechanics for the service of Government, will probably have the effect of withdrawing from the town of Sydney that disproportionate share of the population that has hitherto been attracted to and fixed in it. It appeared to me, during my residence in Sydney, that any measure that had these effects was prejudicial to the moral habits of the convicts, and tended to divert the other portions of the community from pursuing those paths of agricultural industry to which the climate and the natural resources of the soil so evidently point and which must eventually constitute the solid foundations of their prosperity" (17). Even so early in the Colony's history there is then to be noted this drift to the city, a centralising of communications and over-emphasis upon town attractions.

Early Sydney is, however, another story. Other studies have been made of its people, its architecture and its affairs. It is sufficient to thus briefly note its relationship to the country.

### THE COUNTRY.

Surrounding the town on all sides except the east and Pacific Ocean was bush, saving where roads and holdings had been cleared. It was a wilderness. The Rev. Mr. Cowper got lost one time returning to Sydney from Parramatta, where he had been conducting a funeral (18). The far outskirts of settlement were bounded, or virtually bounded, on the west by the Nepean and the Hawkesbury; on the south, by George's River; whilst to the north it faded out into a forest within a few miles from Sydney.

The main road was along George-street to the Parramatta-road, whence it wound its way to Parramatta. The road had been one of Macquarie's first concerns. It existed, but was unsafe for traffic in the earlier days. By convict labour and at considerable expense, he had it set in order. It became a good road except in bad weather. The market at Sydney always reflected such happenings, for then there was a temporary dearth of perishables. It and all of Macquarie's roads was of earth cleared and levelled, with the stumps removed (19). It was narrow and here and there dressed with crushed stones. On it Macquarie set a toll to defray prime cost and upkeep. All the land bordering this road was either granted or in active use by Government in 1821 (20). A barracks had been constructed in the latter part of 1819 at the Brick Fields, on the entrance to the town from Parramatta. It was capable of holding 180 convicts. The purpose was "to fix

those who were employed in taking care of the horses, carts and bullocks near the place where they were kept," and it was called the "Carters Barracks" (<sup>21</sup>). Attached to this building were stables for ninety horses and "offices of every description." To Commissioner Bigge, this was the tidiest and best conducted convict establishment in New South Wales. Two miles further on, the road came to a Government property, the "Grose Farm" (<sup>22</sup>). This consisted of 280 acres and had been granted by Governor King to trustees for the benefit of the female orphans, but it had been later surrendered by the trustees to Government in exchange for another grant. At first, it had been used by Government for grazing the horses and working oxen employed at Sydney. Later, and particularly from the early part of 1819, the land, which was of very poor quality, had been gradually cleared, farm buildings put up and old dwelling houses enlarged. Much pains had been taken to form a series of tanks, by deepening and widening the course of a small creek which crossed the farm, and by making a reservoir at the lowest part where it adjoined the road. Vegetable gardens had been established for the use of the convicts. In 1819, attempts had been made "to demonstrate on the farm several of the processes of English husbandry, and no means had been spared either by the selection of the best labourers or by the most abundant supply of implements, materials and manure, to ensure their success" (<sup>23</sup>). The farmers were under the immediate superintendence of a convict, Ebenezer Knox, who had acquired some knowledge of agriculture in the southern counties of Scotland, but the direction of operations was wholly in the hands of Major Druitt, the Chief Engineer of the Colony. The produce of the farm chiefly consisted of green feed for the horses and draught cattle. The farm was of some use for this purpose, and of further value in exhibiting an improved system of agriculture, although Bigge thought that the intrinsic value of these "operations (had) been diminished by the injudicious precipitancy with which they had been conducted" (<sup>24</sup>). In 1820, Druitt in evidence had praised the work of Knox in handling his convict farm labourers. Five months later, however, it was found that Knox had been falsifying his returns and appropriating to himself for sale the extra rations. He had, moreover, been found drunk by Bigge on one of his visits to the farm and the earlier recommendation by Druitt was of necessity expunged from the records (<sup>24A</sup>). The farm remains of considerable interest, for it was, under Druitt, the *first Government Experiment Station and School of Agriculture*. Here a new method of destumping, by covering the stumps with green sods and slowly burning, was invented and practised (<sup>25</sup>). (The farm became Victoria Park and Druitt's reservoir the University Lake.) An ancillary farm was Canterbury, somewhere in the present district of that name. It had been cleared for the purpose of affording a larger range of pasture and better feed for the draught cattle of Government. It was a small property of fifty acres, on which, after clearing, some white clover had been sown. It was rented at a cost of £50 per year. In 1820, "nearly forty tons of very good hay had been made on the cleared land, and considering the number of horses and cattle employed at Sydney and the difficulty of feeding them at certain



periods of the year," the establishment at Canterbury was useful. The rental of the property ceased in May, 1821 (<sup>26</sup>). The employment of convicts in the cultivation of land on public account had been discontinued in the Colony since the breaking up of the early establishments at Castle Hill and Toongabbie, until the necessity of providing feed and pasture for the draught cattle rendered a renewal imperative. Under Major Druitt, in particular, real efforts were made to grow sufficient fodder. Macquarie always entertained doubts of the success of any attempt to conduct agricultural enterprises upon any principle by which the profits of the labour should be made to balance its expenses (<sup>27</sup>).



THE GEORGE STREET TOLL BAR IN 1820.

*The Toll House shown in this old print was erected by Macquarie in 1819. It stood on the present site of the tram waiting shed, Railway Square, approximately opposite Marcus Clark's existing premises.*

*This engraving was drawn ten years later from a spot which would be now part of the Central Railway building. The church with the steeple is St. James Church, also built by Macquarie, and standing in the present Queen's Square. The wind-mill to the left of it stood on the present site of the Grosvenor Hotel.*

(cf. C. H. Bertie—*Story of Old George Street*—page 31—  
by courtesy of Mitchell Library.)

Eight miles further along the Parramatta Highway was "Longbottom," another Government farm of 700 acres, running down to the Parramatta River, where a saw and a charcoal pit were operating, but no farming was here practised (<sup>28</sup>). The road then continued on to Parramatta. This was in 1820, a small township of 1,200 inhabitants, including the convicts, the orphans and a company of soldiers. The balance, Wentworth says, was "principally composed of inferior traders, publicans, artificers and labourers" (<sup>29</sup>). Twice a year, in March and September, a stock fair was held in the town. The road had twenty-seven bridges. There was a branch road leading to Liverpool, and on the corner of the crossroads, near the present Ashfield, was an inn, which in later times became a famous rendezvous where dealers went out to meet the incoming waggons from the interior, laden with wool.

The road ran west from Parramatta to Toongabbie, once a public farm and a place of secondary punishment, but in 1821 worked out and derelict.\* Further west lay Prospect Hill, and to the north, Castle Hill. Beyond Castle Hill was Pennant Hills. Here there was an establishment under an overseer, where wood and shingles were cut for building requirements. The land belonged to Messrs. John and Hannibal Macarthur<sup>(30)</sup>. After Prospect, the road became the western road. It crossed South Creek, a tributary of the Hawkesbury, and a name place often mentioned in the pages of the *Gazette* for its floods and the doings of its farmers, and then continued on to the river itself, the frontier of civilization. At Emu Ford the river was crossed, and the road then struck out over the mountains to the as yet, but little known western areas. At Emu Plains—Emu Island it was called—a Government farm had been established in 1819 to absorb the surplus convicts, for at that time more were pouring into the country than either the Government or settlers could profitably employ. It was a little colony in itself, cut off, so the Governor hoped, from temptation. The only contiguous signs of civilization were the nearby road to Bathurst and Sir John Jamison's estate of "Regentsville" across the river. The overseer at Emu Plains was an ex-convict, Richard Fitzgerald. He had been transported in 1791, when only seventeen years of age, but "His remarkable activity, regular conduct and honesty soon caused him to be appointed an overseer"<sup>(31)</sup>. He had superintended the establishments at Castle Hill and Toongabbie in 1792 and 1793<sup>(32)</sup>. When he had filled such stations for seven or eight years, "in a most exemplary manner," he had been promoted to be a superintendent with a salary from the Treasury. After ten years faithful service with successive Governors, he had retired to his farm. In 1810, Macquarie appointed him storekeeper at Windsor. He discharged this office until he was superseded by a commissioned officer from England, under a new system. He was then appointed to take the direction of the agricultural settlement at Emu Plains. Fitzgerald was one of the favourites of Macquarie who had a weakness for old faces around him. Fitzgerald's story is in itself a sufficient illustration of the shortage in the early colony of suitable men, capable of superintending agricultural operations. The pay was always small in Government service, and several offices might simultaneously be held by the one man. Thus in Fitzgerald's case, he was at the one time superintendent of the Emu Plains farm, Government Storekeeper at Windsor, whilst supervising also public works in the district<sup>(33)</sup>. He had his own farm and there raised stock. His several positions were such that he sold meat to himself in his capacity as Storekeeper, and then issued it again to himself in his role as Superintendent of the farm. Finally, and this was his main interest, he kept an inn, "The Macquarie Arms" at Windsor, and there retailed spirits. The licence was in the name of an emancipist Jew, but it was in reality run by Fitzgerald. It was all a curious hotchpotch of

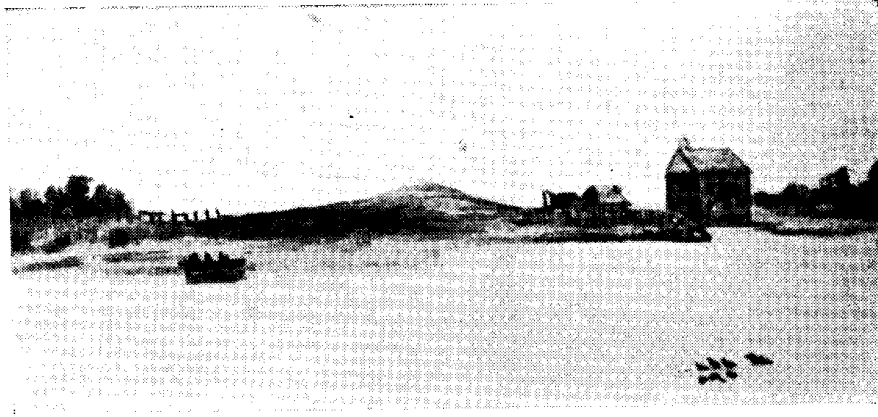
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\* NOTE.—It is interesting to note that in December, 1817, Macquarie wrote to Bathurst asking for a grant of 10,000 acres, including the derelict farm of Toongabbie. (M. Barnard—Macquarie's World, p. 4.)

confusion. Bigge found in his investigations that Fitzgerald seldom visited the farm more than twice a week <sup>(34)</sup>. In December, 1820, more than a year after the farm had been established, the only progress that had been made was in the shape of a vegetable garden for the use of the convicts, and the planting of a few tobacco seedlings. An ineffectual attempt had been made to grind by hand mill the wheat used on the farm. The convicts at the so-called Agricultural Station had been badly selected. In December, 1820, a party of fifteen convicts from the farm had surprised the small detachment of the Veteran Company, then located at the site of the first station on the road to Bathurst <sup>(35)</sup>. They had taken possession of the arms and ammunition of the detachment, and had afterwards wandered into the ravines of the Blue Mountains for five days, subsisting on the provisions brought with them, in the hope of making their way to the western coast of the Colony, where they believed they would find a Dutch settlement from which they could escape to India. They were captured and afterwards sentenced. Like all the public farms of the early Colony, neither the overseers nor the convict labourers could be relied upon for ability or trustworthiness.

To the south of Parramatta, there was another civilian township, Liverpool, situated on George's River. The road to Liverpool had been opened in 1814, and "His Excellency had travelled the whole of the distance in his carriage" <sup>(36)</sup>. It had been designed to "render incalculable benefits to the settlers there by enabling them to send their various produce to market by a safe and expeditious line of conveyance, instead of as heretofore harassing their cattle and breaking their carts through the rugged and intricate passes of the bush" <sup>(37)</sup>. It was meant, also, to be of great advantage to the new settlements of Airs, Appin and Bringelly on the Nepean, by rendering their distances from Sydney several miles shorter, and in many degrees better than by the road through Parramatta. The township itself was a ramshackle affair, its main claim to existence that it was the port of the Cow Pastures. Ships of two hundred tons burthen could reach it from Botany Bay up George's River, and from it sprang two important roads leading to Airs and the Cow Pastures. The land around Liverpool was poor, but in the divisions of Bringelly, Airs and Appin (the last named after the birthplace of Mrs. Macquarie), within the loops of the Nepean, it was considered good. In 1819, 4,000 acres had been granted in Airs, in Appin nearly 7,000 acres, and in Bringelly, after a common of 3,500 acres had been reserved, most of the good land had been allotted <sup>(38)</sup>. It was all part of the south country, the newer wheat lands of the Macquarie period. Up to 1820-21 it had been but scantily settled, and they were pioneers who were clearing its bush. It grew wheat finer and heavier than the Hawkesbury, but this was on scattered farms. The toil of clearing was immense, and it was like "boring a hole in loneliness." Considerable difficulty rested in the marketing of produce, and it was quite a long journey from Appin, Airs or Bringelly by waggon, over the creeks and along the road which led to Sydney. It took days <sup>(39)</sup>.

Liverpool, Parramatta and Sydney constituted a triangle. There were the roads from Liverpool to Sydney, Parramatta to Sydney, and between the two villages was the old Dog Trap Road with seven bridges.



LORD'S MILL—BOTANY BAY.

The mill, a print of which is here shown, was visited by the French scientist, Bougainville, in 1825.

In his Journal he wrote:—

*“At Cook’s River, where a shallow stream falls into the head of the Bay, six miles from Sydney, a guide became necessary. . . . However, we reached Simeon Lord’s works, built on the bank of a stream in this lonely place. A score of men and youths are employed here making coarse cloth and linen blankets.”*

*The work done was apparently very successful, and Commissioner J. T. Bigge, very sparing in the best of times in his praise of emancipists, speaks in his first report of “the activity and enterprise of Mr. Simeon Lord . . . in establishing cloth manufacture. . . . The price of the best quality of cloth that he manufactures is 15s. a yard, and a considerable quantity is sold to settlers and exported to Van Dieman’s Land.”*

Macechose, in his *“Picture of Sydney,”* published in 1835, is more eulogistic.

*“There can be no question as to his (Lords) success—for upon examining a sample of the production of his looms, especially the blankets, they may properly be compared to those of the great mart, so celebrated in England, for the article, and without bestowing too strong a eulogy on this gentleman’s successful efforts, we should say that his estate with its boundaries, its reservoirs, and other works of art, merit the appellation of the Whitney of N. S. Wales.”*

*The factory continued to operate until 1856 when it was closed because of the resumption by the Government of the land and the water supply by which the mill had been worked. There is an interesting law suit connected with this resumption. The Sydney Water Act of 1853, under which the resumption took place, made provision for the payment of compensation. Mrs. Lord, then a widow, brought action in the New South Wales Supreme Court to obtain such compensation. The outcome of the case depended upon whether Mrs. Lord was entitled to damages for the withdrawal of the right to the use of the water of the creek. After long discussion the Supreme Court decided against Mrs. Lord and awarded damages for the loss of land, buildings and machinery only. Mrs. Lord then appealed to the Privy Council, which set aside the decision of the Colonial Supreme Court, and awarded £15,660 damages to her.*

(cf. Journ. and Proc. Royal Aust. Hist. Society, Vol. XXX, part III, 1944—by courtesy Mitchell Library.)

Beyond the Nepean there was country which was the dream of land-locked settlers fixed on unproductive farms. The Cow Pastures had been "pioneered in 1788 by 2 bulls and 4 cows." Here in November, 1795, Hunter found a herd of cattle the produce of the original "explorers," and the land had been since kept as a preserve of Government. In 1819, only 7,000 acres of the Cow Pastures had been granted, and that between two men, John Macarthur and Thomas Davidson, both of which grants had been authorised in London, without prior consultation with the Governor. As most of the good land, east of the River—and there was really very little—had been granted, settlers, especially those with sheep to pasture, were looking longingly at the Cow Pastures. Bigge asked John Oxley at the time of the Commission enquiry of 1820, what land he thought was available for future settlement. Oxley's opinion was that "there is so little ground available for new settlers, that unless he (the Governor) granted them land at the Cow Pastures (he did) not think that such settlers could be accommodated with any fair prospect of success" (40).

Directly south of Sydney, there was another District opening up to settlement, the district of the Five Islands or Illawarra. It was too low and moist for sheep on the coastal flats, and the mountains were too rugged and thickly timbered to graze cattle, but it was rich in cedar, and it was thought that could the mountain slopes be cleared, they would be "ideal for the vine." The only passage to the district was by land route over the mountains. The road was in part the Bulli Pass, and the descent was dangerous and laborious, worse even than the descent from Mount York in the West. Macquarie had wished to colonise it (41). He sent Surveyor Oxley and Assistant Surveyor Meehan to reconnoitre, with some idea of making a settlement at Jervis Bay, to absorb a portion of the surplus convicts. Oxley did not make his report until 1820, and his opinions were unfavourable. He had followed the coast by sea, whilst Meehan had traversed the pass by land, a difficult journey with packhorses. Jervis Bay was found to be too spacious to make a good harbour, and the country between Jervis Bay and the Shoalhaven was a barren waste. But notwithstanding, by 1819 some 11,400 acres had been granted to those who had pioneered its cedar resources (42). Cedar cutters had been there from the early days, but no attempt at effective settlement had been made until 1822. Despite the unpromising prospects, Alexander Berry (21), an adventurous Fifeshireman, in 1820 explored the Shoalhaven independently, later securing a large grant from Government. He was the first to cut a road over the mountains from Illawarra to bring cattle to Sydney, later digging a canal to the Crookhaven, and slowly consolidating a rude

settlement in the face of all manner of difficulties (<sup>43</sup>). The actual opening of the country to stock raising did not come for years, and the Illawarra in Macquarie times was a virtually unknown and insignificant district.\*

A famous undertaking was, of course, the road that led over the mountains to Bathurst. It had been built by Captain William Cox in six months by convict labour and without casualties. The making of the road had been done very cheaply, for Cox's services had been honorary, the labour of the convicts had been paid for by remission of sentences, and even the horses and carts needed on the job had been hired on the same principle (<sup>44</sup>). There were a few staging stations on the 136 miles of road to the new township in the west. For agricultural settlement, however, the plains of the interior were scarcely suitable. Oxley told Bigge that "the land at Bathurst Plains is certainly not fit for small settlers, but for large grazing lands they are extremely well adapted" (<sup>45</sup>). "If lands were granted there," asked Bigge, "would they (the settlers) have any market for their produce?" "None whatever," replied Oxley, "unless Government bought it off them on the spot." The plains were clear of timber, the soil a gravelly loam, the points of the river alluvial, and generally there were about 40,000 acres clear of timber. The land "was not generally fertile, but by a proper course of cultivation it would produce any crop." There would be little expense attending its cultivation, but wood would have to be brought a very considerable distance. Macquarie had scarcely laid out the township of Bathurst and built the halfway house at Cox's River, before stock began moving over the mountains (<sup>46</sup>). Large stock owners had pushed their herds past the provision depot near Mount Blaxland, and over the last ridges down to the plains, where their herds had prospered so quickly that the first cattle for sale came out from the inland in October, 1815. This pioneering had been beset with difficulties. The natives were difficult to manage, and there was some plundering. Nevertheless, in 1815, Macquarie had settled the first agriculturalists at Bathurst (<sup>47</sup>). Ten settlers were established on a guarantee that the Government would purchase their produce for two years and issue it to them again as rations, in addition

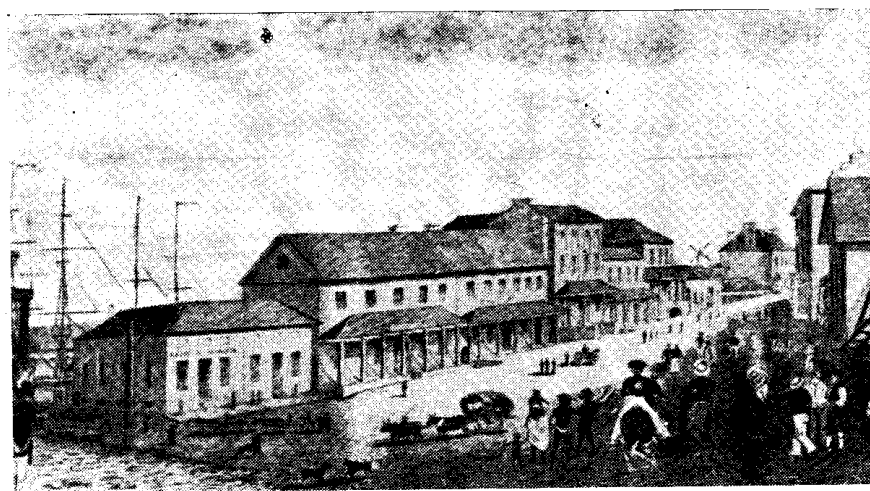
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\* *Alexander Berry, born in 1781, had studied medicine at Edinburgh, and as a ship's surgeon had later travelled to India and China. Finally deciding to turn to commercial pursuits, he became a shipowner, visiting Norfolk Island, the Cape of Good Hope, New Zealand, Van Diemen's Land, South America and Spain. Joining forces with Edward Wollstonecraft, Berry decided to trade with the developing Colony of New South Wales, but overseas trading proving difficult, the two partners began the exploitation of the cedar resources of the South Coast of New South Wales together with farming and stock raising. In 1830 the partners received an immense grant of land on the South Coast, calling the estate "Coolangatta," the native name for the particular part of the Shoalhaven on which this original homestead was built. Wollstonecraft died in 1832, but the Berry estate was maintained by the patriarch and his family. Berry died in his ninety-second year, on 17th September, 1872, at Crow's Nest House, Sydney, having been a foundation member of the Agricultural Society and a member of the Legislative Council until 1861, on which latter he served for a period of thirty-three consecutive years. Berry, on the South Coast, is named after this "Laird of the Shoalhaven," and the great estate which he created is one of the historical romances of early New South Wales settlement.*

to that which would be required for the upkeep of the military guards and stockkeepers employed by Government. These settlers were "a few native born youths and the rest emancipated convicts." Each was on a grant holding of 50 acres. In the near neighbourhood, "several settlers (had) flocks depasturing there by permission of Government." The Bathurst project was, however, an insignificant addition to agricultural settlement prior to 1821, for the costs and difficulties of transporting produce grown so far out over the hundred odd miles of rough road to Sydney were insuperable.

Thus far was settlement to the west and south. In the further north, there was the "hell hole" of Newcastle. From the first, the obstinate second offenders amongst the convicts had been on sentence removed to penal establishments in isolated locations whence escape would be difficult. There had been first Toongabbie, then Newcastle, Emu Plains, Macquarie Harbour on the west coast of Van Diemen's Land, and finally Port Macquarie. In 1820 there were 968 people at Newcastle, and 800 of them were the incorrigibles. It was a "hell of pain, despair and loneliness" (48). Here was the first coal mining in a shaft or two sunk near the house of the Superintendent. A breakwater was also being built. Further up the river, cedar was being cut and pontooned down to the mouth of the river. Most important of all was the burning of oyster shells for lime. The lime in bags had to be carted through the surf to the boats. The effects of the lime and the salt water, combined with the exposure of bare backs to the sun cruelly and unmercifully scarified the skins of those employed. The coal mining and the oyster burning at Newcastle constitute a book of sorrows in the history of early New South Wales. The diet of the men was unrelieved flour and salt meat. Attempt had been successfully made to find some agricultural land suitably adjacent to the penal settlement, and, by 1820, poultry, fruit, butter and eggs were being raised on the rich Paterson's plains for the wants of the Newcastle population (49). This later seemed to the rather inhuman Bigge highly reprehensible. "I was much disposed to think," so he wrote in his report, "that the attempt to mingle with the bitterness of punishment the enjoyments of property and the luxuriant produce of a fertile soil, was a deviation from that which ought to have been the principal object of the establishment" (50). Of the Hunter until the 'twenties, there was no significant agricultural development. Surprisingly, King had written so early as 1801: "The Hunter River and surrounding country has been recently examined, and from the report of the Officer who went on that service since Colonel Paterson was there, it appears very ineligible for an agricultural settlement. The only articles that could be raised (if hereafter no natural productions are discovered) would be wine, cotton or indigo" (51). From the 'twenties onwards, the Hunter and Paterson Rivers country acquired an increasing importance. Large estates were acquired on the Hunter by new "capitalist" farmers, which were the envy of poorer settlers in the worked-out old colony. It was from the Hunter that exploration was made to the north.

It was not, however, Parramatta, Liverpool, Airds, Bringelly, Prospect or any of the rest which constituted the main agricultural land in Macquarie times. This was the alluvial flat country of the Hawkesbury and its tributaries. The Hawkesbury was the granary of the early Colony. It was still the "principal agricultural settlement of the Colony" when Lang described, in 1835, the New South Wales of his day (<sup>52</sup>). The problems of agriculture in the early settlement were very largely the problems of farming on the Hawkesbury. In 1814, the flats of the Hawkesbury were producing 25 bushels of wheat to the acre, when the average for the other wheat lands was 10 bushels or less (<sup>53</sup>). By 1820, the district was showing signs of failing fertility and probably produced only 15 to 20 bushels to the acre (<sup>54</sup>). Despite a few big estates, the district was the stronghold of the small farmer. The river flats were practically all cleared except for the lines of sugar gums on its banks. These districts were the birthplaces of agriculture in the infant Colony. On the seasons experienced at the Hawkesbury, on its droughts, floods, or invasions of "grubs," on the weed infiltrations of the cultiva-



GEORGE STREET NORTH IN 1829.

*This sketch would have been made from the roadway opposite the main Commissariat Stores, part of which just comes into the picture on the left. The ship is lying in what is now Barton Street, close to where the Harbour Trust Offices now stand.*

*The first verandahed building on the left was the home of Isaac Nichols, who here conducted the first Post Office in Australia. The tramway that now runs in front of the George Street Fire Station passes over this approximate site. The existing Fire Station stands where the next building to the right of the verandahed Post Office is shown.*

*The name of George Howe, the founder of the "Sydney Gazette" and Australia's first real printer, is associated with the building showing an archway to the left of the windmill. In the house adjoining this archway the "Gazette" was printed from 1810 to 1822. The shop on the extreme right was occupied by Mitchell & Coy., Shipping Chandlers, the oldest business of its kind in Sydney.*

(cf. C. H. Bertie—"The Story of Old George Street," page 11—

by courtesy of the Mitchell Library.)



tion fields, on communications with the Hawkesbury, on the effectiveness of harvesting and threshing at the Hawkesbury, depended the ability of the Colony to feed itself. Every rise in the river, every doing of its farmers is faithfully recorded in the *Sydney Gazettes* of the time. Every failure of its farmers to bring in grain to the Commissary was always an opportunity for acid comments by the Governor and his subordinates on the "ingratitude" or "slovenliness" of its settlers, and when threats were made, it is to the farmers at the Hawkesbury that they were mainly directed.

The Hawkesbury district had been discovered by Phillip. As early as 1790, Phillip was informing the home authorities that he had observed some excellent land at a place which he named Richmond Hill, and that he proposed placing any settlers who might emigrate from England in this locality<sup>(55)</sup>. In January, 1795, the maize growing on the settlement at Hawkesbury looked well, and the settlers expected a yield of at least 30,000 bushels. Wheat had succeeded well, producing as much as from 30 to 36 bushels to the acre, and this from only a one bushel or five pecks sowing to the acre<sup>(56)</sup>. Vegetables grew plentifully. The settlement increased considerably in size, for in June, 1795, the Lieutenant Governor reported the number of settlers to amount to a total population of upwards of four hundred and the farms extended thirty miles on both sides of the river<sup>(57)</sup>. The farmers were a good deal annoyed by the blacks who were here in large numbers and plundering the settlers of their corn. But if there was apparent plenty, there was more drinking and debauchery. Collins had noted in his diary: "At the Hawkesbury, where alone any promise of agricultural advantage is to be found, the settlers were immersed in intoxication. Riot and madness marked their conduct and this was to be attributed to the spirits, which in defiance of every precaution, found their way thither"<sup>(58)</sup>. In 1799 there was a drought, later on in the year a flood, and still later a severe storm. These were to recur throughout the early years of settlement, but as production widened, so their effect became less, but up to 1821, these natural hazards of agriculture were of a tremendous significance. King wrote, in 1801, that "the principal cultivation among the settlers is at the Hawkesbury, than which there cannot be a more productive soil . . . the other cleared parts of the Colony although free from these misfortunes (floods), are very inferior in point of produce or facility of working the ground . . . the banks of the Hawkesbury being a fertile light mould enriched by the floods it is so subject to, and the other settlements in general being of a clayey cold soil. The average crops of the Hawkesbury are 25 bushels per acre, but 35 have been produced, and the other settlements not more than 12 or 14"<sup>(59)</sup>. King set aside a common for the settlers at Windsor and Wilberforce so that they could pasture their stock. When later Macquarie considered appropriating this land for further settlement, Bigge listened to the representations of the Hawkesbury farming community and the commons were retained<sup>(60)</sup>.

Communication from the Hawkesbury with Sydney was either by road or waterway. Windsor, or Green Hills as it was formerly called, a hamlet on a hill by the river, was the capital of this little world. The river was navigable for four miles above the town by vessels of 15 tons burthen. Windsor was 140 miles from the sea by river, 35 miles as the crow flies. There were, in 1820, about six hundred inhabitants in the village, mostly settlers, with a few traders and mechanics also. Macquarie had raised a cluster of other small villages along the banks of the river—Castlereagh, Richmond, Wilberforce and Pitt Town—on the high land out of reach of floods. A road was built from Prospect to Richmond. The district was also serviced by a carrier trader running the "Hawkesbury Caravan." In February, 1814, a Mr. Hyland, the proprietor, was complaining that he was only able to make seven to eight shillings per week <sup>(61)</sup>.

Both from the farms on the Parramatta and Hawkesbury, an open, but sometimes troublesome waterway gave access to Sydney. There was a special wharf at Cockle Bay (the foot of the present Market-street), at which vessels from the Parramatta were unloaded. In 1820, there were thirty-two privately owned ships in the Colony, ten of them between 80 and 180 tons, and twenty-two of less than 50 tons burthen <sup>(62)</sup>. The Parramatta River banks were of further importance, for eight boats carrying six coxswains and thirty-eight men were daily employed, in 1820, in cutting grass for the Government horses and draught cattle working at Sydney, and also for the requirements of the Governor's horses during his residence in Sydney. They were under the direction of Bernard Williams, coxswain of the Governor's barge, who lived in a house that belonged to Government, on the shore of Sydney Cove and adjoining the dockyard <sup>(63)</sup>. The grass-cutters and boat crews were mustered each day, but from the nature of their work they were obliged to leave Sydney at irregular hours which were governed by the state of the tides and wind. Those of the grass-cutters who were well-conducted were allowed to lodge in the town, and at the conclusion of each day's task work permitted to gather more and sell the produce for themselves. In addition, those who were able to procure sufficient on the Fridays for the week-end requirements, were allowed the use of the Government boats to procure further supplies on the Saturdays and hawk it in the town. The daily task work of the cutters had been raised from forty to sixty bundles of grass for each man, and it was procured on the banks of the Parramatta or the tracts of land adjoining. Out of the number of grass-cutters, there were six who were allowed to procure grass for such of the officers of the regiment who kept horses. They were borne on the regimental books as civil servants, and received rations as such. Of the men, only two lived in barracks. They were merely employed for the supplying of grass for the horses of the officer to whom they were assigned, and after delivering it they were entirely at their own disposal for the rest of the day.

The Crown lands of the Colony comprised a tract at Rooty Hill, near Parramatta, approximately 17,000 acres in extent; the Cow Pastures, not less than 25,000 acres; the Emu Plains Farm

of 3,000 acres; Longbottom Farm of 400 acres, and Grose Farm of 280 acres. There was in addition, land at Bathurst occupied by the Government herds and calculated to be above 20,000 acres. All those were reserved for the use of Government. The farms were occupied by convicts, whilst the grazing lands were appropriated for the grazing and breeding of Government stock. From these herds, drafts were occasionally made for distribution to the settlers, and Government stock was used also for the supply of working cattle and horses to public works and to relieve a scarcity of meat, or control prices, on such occasions as the settlers showed any reluctance to supply the stores <sup>(64)</sup>.

### OUTPOSTS—VAN DIEMEN'S LAND AND NORFOLK ISLAND.

It remains but to sketch very briefly the settlements that had been made at Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land.

Phillip's instructions had directed him to occupy Norfolk Island, "To prevent it being occupied by the subject of any other European power," and to explore the territory within the limits of his Government with a view to the extension of settlement <sup>(65)</sup>. In fulfilment of the first direction, Lieutenant P. G. King had been despatched to Norfolk Island, so early as February 1, 1788, with a small party of marines and convicts to form a settlement. The reports from the island were so favourable that Grenville, who in 1789, had succeeded Lord Sydney as Secretary of State for Home Affairs, wrote a despatch in which he expressed the ill-informed opinion that it was preferable to Sydney Cove: "Were it not for the great labour and expense incurred already at Port Jackson, I should have been inclined to recommend that island's being made the principal settlement" <sup>(66)</sup>. The Island continued as a subsidiary agricultural settlement until 1804, when the first movements were made for its abandonment. After the establishment of the two settlements in Van Diemen's Land, at Hobart and Launceston, in 1804, instructions were given by Lord Hobart that Norfolk Island should be abandoned by the free settlers living there <sup>(67)</sup>. The principal reason for the move was the desire to people Van Diemen's Land as rapidly as possible. Monetary compensation was ordered to be paid to those settlers who were willing to leave, and they were promised land, convict labour and rations from the Government store. Nevertheless, many settlers were reluctant to leave—as it proved, with good reason—and Foveaux, Lieutenant Governor at the time, reported that voluntary evacuation was unlikely unless it were announced that the Government would "positively give up the settlement altogether" <sup>(68)</sup>. In 1804, there were about a thousand free settlers in Norfolk Island, none of them prosperous. Notwithstanding, only a fourth had accepted the Government's offer a year later, and the Colonial Office in 1806 had to issue an order for immediate abandonment. Between 1806 and 1813 the convicts were likewise withdrawn, and by the latter year Norfolk Island had been totally abandoned. It was not reoccupied as a penal settlement until 1824 <sup>(69)</sup>.

Van Diemen's Land was settled in the first instance as a precaution against any attempts by the French to establish a foothold for later colonisation. Flinders discovered Port Dalrymple

and the estuary of the Tamar on his voyage in the Norfolk in 1798. The desirability of occupying the port was brought under the notice of Lord Hobart, who pointed out that as it held so advantageous a position relative to Bass Strait, it was "in a political view peculiarly necessary that a settlement should be formed there" (<sup>70</sup>). The first vessels to establish a depot on the island left Sydney in June, 1804. In 1806, the site originally selected by Paterson was abandoned, when the situation of the present City of Launceston was selected. Further developments did not occur until the arrival of the compulsorily transferred settlers from Norfolk Island. In 1812, Hobart was proclaimed the capital of the island. In 1813, the first Lieutenant Governor was appointed, Colonel Thomas Davey. In 1817, Colonel William Sorell succeeded Davey, and from about this year onwards its real prosperity began, with whaling, agriculture and sheep raising as the three most important industries. Under Davey and Sorell, Van Diemen's Land was a dependency of New South Wales, but following the recommendation of Bigge, a year after the appointment of Colonel George Arthur (1824), it was proclaimed an independent colony (<sup>71</sup>).

Briefly, these are the salient facts which fit Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land into the narrative of this study, but, otherwise, only occasional reference will be made to them. Van Diemen's Land and its problems deserve a separate consideration altogether.

### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

The threads which held together this little world were the communications—roads, rivers, bullock tracks and sea lanes. Transport difficulties continued for a long time in the early settlement to be one of the most pressing problems of an expanding agriculture, concerned not with an article such as wool which could be kept for twelve months, but with perishables requiring the close proximity of a regular market. It is interesting to note how very real, how immense, were these difficulties. It was inevitable that in the developing settlement a pastoral occupation had to come first, before agriculture could spread to the better country and dig its roots deep into the soil.

In the early days there had been no need of more territory than was available at and around Sydney. Norfolk Island was a useful adjunct, as a place for the transportation of persons who committed offences after arrival in New South Wales, but it was not necessary for the conduct of the penal scheme. The country between the Blue Mountains and the sea provided as good a natural gaol as could be desired. The mountains were a rough and formidable wall, which for a quarter of a century from the foundation of the Colony, defied all attempts to penetrate inland. The fertile areas upon the Parramatta, the Hawkesbury and George's River (at Bankstown) were occupied, and there was at least a sufficiency of suitable pasturage and corn land for the small numbers of settlers and stock that had then to be maintained. The seas were risky during such periods as the Anglo-French war, 1803-1815, and the Anglo-American war, 1812-1814. The Colony was thus concentrated for the first twenty-five years

of settlement. If it had been a wonderful feat for Phillip to have sailed to the top of Port Jackson and then travelled as far as the Lansdown and Richmond Hills, and the River Hawkesbury, such were nearly the outskirts of later exploration until, in 1813, the Blue Mountains were crossed. Emphasis was all on the Parramatta and Hawkesbury Rivers as means of communication between outlying parts of the settlement and the town. King had written home his convictions concerning the uselessness of further explorations: "I cannot help thinking that persevering in crossing those mountains (the Blue Mountains) which are a confused and barren assemblage of rocks and mountains, with impassable chasms between, would be as chimerical as useless," and again, "as far as respects the extension of agriculture beyond the first range of the mountains, that is an idea that must be given up" (72). George Cayley (1802-06), both in King's time and later on, tackled the problem of finding a way across the mountains from several aspects, but found the hills and river courses alike impassable (73). One of Cayley's party, indeed, reported Governor King, on seeing two solitary crows, had put forward that the birds had lost their way. And so the best parts of New South Wales remained completely untapped until Macquarie. In any event, it could scarcely have been expected that naval post-Captains would have been good explorers, since by every inclination the sea and its borders were their main interests, and besides, they had enough to do as it was.

Two main stages may be noted in the problem of communications in Macquarie times. The first concerned the river lanes, associated with the building of roads to the nearer settlements such as Parramatta, Liverpool and Windsor, and the linking of these townships with each other, and with the main market centre of Sydney. These were comparatively small-time affairs, though, as will be seen, there were even then difficulties enough. Later, there came the development of the Bathurst outpost and somewhat similarly distant settlement at Camden and Campbelltown, on the fringe of the yet further distant Argyle and "Manero." The problem of roads then becomes a matter of prime consideration, for, by now, road transport between Windsor, Liverpool, Parramatta and Sydney, is reasonably well organised. Emphasis comes to be placed upon finding some waterways which will link the interior with the coast, or else, in building up some suitable ports which will short-circuit long overland carriage. Still later, and beyond the Macquarie period, this problem becomes of overwhelming significance. The Hunter is settled in the 1820's and, about ten years or so afterwards, steam boats are building to convey produce from these districts to Sydney. Finally, there is expansion into pastoral settlement, the abandonment for the time being of all ideas of agricultural enterprise being profitable at any considerable distance from markets, and concentration upon the yearly freight carriage of wool from the interior. It is to the earliest of these difficulties, prefacing first attempts at expansion, that a short consideration must now be given.

Three-quarters of the grain produced in the early colony of Macquarie times probably came from the districts of the Hawkesbury and Nepean, and it was a problem to bring it to market.

both because of the cost of transport and the risks taken in spoilage. Macquarie had not been long in the Colony when, "With a view to relieve the settlers on the banks of the Hawkesbury from the very high charge of freight for bringing their grain round in craft belonging to this place (Sydney)," he entered into engagements with a number of the ship owners for the express purpose of bringing maize to Sydney (S.G. 16.6.1810). The agreement between the shipowners and the Governor was that the settler would not be required to pay more than 9d. per bushel in the cob, and 6d. per bushel, if shelled, for delivery from one or other of the settlement centres on the river to Sydney Cove. The settlers were to be freed of any transport risks, and the remaining charges were to be borne by Government. In June, 1810, it was announced that the vessels would be despatched immediately to the River. In order to prevent "preference or partiality" in the receipt of the grain, the masters of the vessels were to be given instructions to receive it in a regular manner: "Commencing from the first farm above the Green Hills (Windsor), and so taking the Farms in rotation upwards, until they (had) got their Lading . . . Other Vessels (would) in the same manner proceed down the River, in order to afford every Cultivator an opportunity of benefiting by this Indulgence." The masters of the vessels were to grant receipts for the quantity of maize received from each individual, and these receipts would be accepted by Government as vouchers for payment. This agreement constitutes probably the first recorded instance of a transport subsidy in the New South Wales Colony. When, in January, 1811, applications were being called for wheat supplies for the stores, the settlers were allowed 11s. 6d. per bushel at Windsor, as compared with 12s. at Sydney—the Government defraying half the expenses of 1s. a bushel, involved in the transport of grain from the Hawkesbury to Sydney (S.G. 26.1.1811). The subsidy was a short-lived affair, for, by the January of the following year, the settlers were being charged the full freight, but by then the acute position of the previous year had passed, and there was "a considerable quantity of wheat remaining on hand in the Public Stores of the last year's Produce." (S.G. 11.1.1812.) Questions of economy had, as they were nearly always to do, overcome considerations of statesmanship.

The river transport had many objections to it. Freshes prevented navigation upwards; storms and unfavourable winds meant delays; there were unscrupulous practices, and in consequence, much of the grain reaching Sydney by boat sustained "considerable damage from the length of time the boats were detained on their passage by the badness of the weather." There is this interesting article on it all in the *Sydney Gazette* issue of 8th August, 1812:

"The condition of wheat arriving at Sydney by the Hawkesbury boats, too, generally speaking, is among the greatest evils of which the inhabitants of either settlement has to complain; and unless some method be adopted for the preservation of grain sent round by water, the utility of those vehicles must be totally done away with. The land carriage of wheat from Hawkesbury to

Sydney is at the general rate charged at 2s. 6d. a bushel and the water carriage at only 1s. . . . and yet it is a well-known fact that all who have the opportunity prefer paying the difference of 1s. 6d. per bushel for cartage than submit to the damage it is in most cases certain of receiving by water conveyance . . . the preference is because the wheat brought down by land carriage arrives in as good condition as when carted, whereas that brought by water is mostly damaged, sometimes entirely spoiled, and always so abominably intermixed as to make a difference in the value of good samples put on board, far exceeding the difference of carriage—a slight damage may proceed from unavoidable detention in the passage, and the tendency for the grain itself to become heated if long kept in a large body and particularly in the hold of a vessel laden in bulk. Without a tedious passage, however, and without any complaint of winds or weather, it seldom arrives in marketable condition, and without any probable cause being assigned for the diminished value of the grain, the owner sustains the loss of perhaps several shillings per bushel . . . . Sometimes the wheat is scarcely worth unloading, and as the loss falls upon the owner, if the boatmen have but the presence of mind to attribute the disasters to the elements, the injury may amount to a positive state of ruin while the true source of the damage might in all probability have been the bad state of the boat itself . . . . This is an offence of the most flagrant and injurious kind, by mixing all quantities on board . . . . There is universal complaint against the boat wheat . . . . If, for instance, one man turns into a boat 100 bushels of grain of value 10s. per bushel, and another, 100 bushels worth only 5s., the intermixture equalises all and consequently one must gain as much as the other loses, viz. £12 from the pocket of one man into the pocket of another . . . . (It is due to the) Roguery of boatmen Some of the bakers will not purchase boat wheat at all . . . . Wheat is a property in which the cultivator must place his chief dependence . . . . And how distressing is the reflexion that the annual production of his harvest should, in its bare conveyance to market, undergo an ordeal more dangerous than even floods and blights. It is a matter of universal interest.”

That improvement did not take place becomes obvious from a letter from a settler calling himself “Agricola,” a quite familiar correspondent of the *Gazette*, appearing in the issue of 13th November, 1819. The letter deserves a full quotation :

“Cultivating a farm four miles from Windsor on the Richmond side, I sometimes send down my grain by land and sometimes by water. The first mode is expensive, but the most secure; the other mode cheaper, but insecure. For the cartage I pay 1s. 9d. per bushel, and if the carter is steady my grain reaches Sydney safely, but if the sample prove inferior it brings but a low price and the charge of 1s. 9d. per bushel is a severe tax upon the already diminished profit arising from the sale. On the other hand, if I send by water, a still greater diminution is likely to take place from the system pursued by the boatmen of mixing all the samples together, *i.e.*, of throwing everybody’s wheat promiscuously into the hold of the vessel which, if at all leaky, must

leave those who take out their grain last a damaged residue that may not be worth half of that which is taken out first . . . . A few weeks ago I put on board a vessel 200 bushels of sound, well-cleaned wheat, and received from the boatmen a receipt that it was of good storable quality. It was consigned for the discharge of a debt I had contracted in Sydney; but was rejected on account of its inferior quality . . . . I went to Sydney and found it, to my utter astonishment and disappointment, one continued mass of smooty wheat which I could not sell at all . . . . Carriage and removal by boat cost 1s. per bushel, plus warehouse room; freight 9d. a bushel; bags I have not; and if I had it is probable I should never had had the same I put my wheat in returned to me, but others of less value." The total loss of the produce, plus the additional costs of freight and marketing charges, which were out of pocket with no return, and the ever present risk of double dealing by agents and traders, all strike a chord of familiarity, modern in its implications.

By 1820, however, William Cox was telling Bigge that, whereas Hawkesbury produce was "formally taken round in vessels to Sydney store which was then the only market we had; since the roads have been passable, it invariably goes by carts to Sydney and the cost is 18d. per bushel. The charge by water was formerly from 9d. to 1s. and by land formerly 2s. 6d. . . . the vessels now come up here with lime only from Broken Bay and seldom get a carriage back" ("). The days of the Hawkesbury grain boats were over.

Road transport was similarly a considerable problem in these early days. There were innumerable accidents. In one which occurred in March, 1812, "A poor man who drove Mrs. Wright's horse and cart of Bardo Narrang was unfortunately drowned in attempting to pass an inundated hollow and with him perished the horse, from the labours of which the widowed owner derived her chief support." (S.G. 4.3.1812.) Away from the main roads, the tracks were "rugged and intricate passes in the bush," and a man was in danger not only of injuring his horses and cattle, but of breaking his carts. (S.G. 26.2.1814.) Moreover, the roads were unsafe. Thus, in September, 1814, there is a note in the *Gazette* that "the depredations that have lately been committed on the roads have induced the settlers in a great many instances to travel with their carts in parties, by adhering to which system, we shall doubtless hear of fewer robberies . . . the robberies have been mostly perpetrated in lonely parts of the George's River and Liverpool roads." (S.G. 30.8.1817.) By 1821, the robbers were being called "bushrangers," and "in the interior they (were) very numerous and very troublesome . . . all parts of the country (had) been latterly visited by them, including Pennant Hills, Cow Pastures and the Hawkesbury road, half-way between Parramatta and Windsor." Expansion of trade and traffic, however, continued. (S.G. 31.3.1821.) No threats, no risks, could deter the movement to the grazing tracks of the interior. As early as 1815, cattle were being driven perhaps 100 miles for slaughter at Sydney, and William Cox and others, by 1820, were transporting their wool from Bathurst. The details given by



Cox of his methods of transport are of particular interest <sup>(75)</sup>. He employed a four-wheeled truck, with five horses, and a cart, with five bullocks. With these he was able to convey 2,000 lb. net weight of wool at the one time from his grazing lands at Bathurst, direct to Clarendon on the Hawkesbury, a distance of 120 miles. The waggon or truck carried 1,250 lb., the cart 750 lb. when loaded. With empty waggons he was able to make the forward journey to Bathurst in seven days. A rest would be made for four days, and the return journey usually took, without breakdowns, ten days. Arrived at Clarendon, the horses would then require a week's spell before a second trip, but a second team of bullocks was kept for the cart, and in consequence, the bullocks only made one trip in two. Thus on the average, the horse team made one trip a month from Clarendon to Bathurst and return, the bullocks one trip every two months. The road to Bathurst was so stoney that it frequently lamed the bullocks, and it was the general opinion that horses were much better than bullocks on this account.

The years from 1820 to 1842 and beyond were to see a constant succession of such carts and bullock teams from Sydney to far out distant stations, hundreds of miles from the coast.

It has been noted that by 1815 cattle were being brought to Sydney from the interior, by overland route. There is a classic description by Wentworth of what this must have meant, if it involved a crossing of the Blue Mountains:—"The old road to Bathurst . . . traversed a range of mountains nearly 60 miles in breadth, and of so bleak and barren a nature that its only vegetable production is a miserable dwarf underwood, interspersed every here and there with a few diminutive gum trees. Scarcely a blade of grass is to be seen in the whole of this distance, and it would require all the skill and industry of man to render it capable of producing any. Cattle and sheep consequently, on their way to and from the western country, were unavoidably compelled to traverse these mountains without any sort of food except the leaves of shrubs and a few occasional tufts of rushes. Many of them, therefore, perished on the route from weakness, and all suffered so considerable a loss of flesh as to be greatly deteriorated in value on their arrival at the market" <sup>(76)</sup>. This is the reason why Throsby's finding of an alternative route to the West (1819) was of such immense importance to the Colony. The sixty miles of desolation and hard stoney road across the Mountains would probably have taken sheep not less than ten days, cattle four to seven days. Without natural feed and with limited water, the difficulties of droving must have been considerable. On Throsby's route, however, there was feed and water all the way, and the journeying was easier. On 25th April, 1819, Charles Throsby had set out from the Cow Pastures to find an alternative route to Bathurst <sup>(77)</sup>. He did so by skirting the high mountain spur, directly west of Sydney, arriving at Bathurst on 9th May, 1819. It is evident from a letter written by Throsby to one of his friends that he appreciated the importance of his discovery: "I have no hesitation in stating we have a country fit for every purpose; where fine woolled sheep may be increased to any extent, in a climate peculiarly congenial to them. Ere long

you will hear of a route being continued to the southward as far as Twofold Bay, and so on in further succession through a country as superior to the Cow Pastures as that now enviable district is to the land contiguous to Sydney, and where our herds, our flocks and our cultivation may ultimately increase at no inconsiderable distance from the great and grand essential in a young colony—water carriage” (78).

Communications, it is quite clear, were a real problem to farmers and graziers alike. In 1818, the Rev. Mr. Lawry thought he saw distance from markets and high costs of transport as one of the chief reasons why the farmers of the Colony were mere beggars and slaves. Many of the farmers were even at this stage forced “to carry their produce for 100 miles before they could sell it on any conditions whatever” (79). Peter Cunningham, again, ten years later, was satisfied that no new settlers could possibly compete with the settlers inhabiting the old settled parts of the Colony, in supplying Government demands for grain, on account of “the distant carriage and bad roads” (80). It might be possible for them to find a market in their own vicinity, but generally his conclusions were that if they grew enough for their own wants, it was probably as much as they could expect, “concentrating on stock raising, wool growing, dairying, pig raising for salt pork production, and tobacco.” Bigge, even, foresaw some problems with the transport of wool (81). As he came to state in his Report upon the Colony: “In order to obtain the occupation of good tracts of land in the interior, for grazing sheep and cattle, it will be necessary for such persons (new settlers) to remove to a distance of not less than 120 or 150 miles from the sea coast. The cost of the transport of their wool will thus become heavy, and unless every encouragement be given to these enterprises, either in the allowance of good labourers from amongst the convicts that arrive, and in a certain prospect that (the duty on) the importation of wool into Great Britain from New South Wales will not be raised for a period of ten years, the sacrifice to which I have alluded will not be encountered, nor will that course of patient industry be entered upon, that can alone lead to extensive and beneficial results.”

Probably things were no different in New South Wales than in any other pioneering settlement. Nothing could gainsay the simple facts that the further out was settlement, the greater were the costs of production, the heavier the costs of marketing, the greater the difficulties in obtaining labour, the more the aboriginals were to be feared, the greater the risk from outlaws. But a few short years and the sheep were picking their way to the Maneiro, Yass, the Murrumbidgee and the Lachlan. The story of transport trials continues, though the circumstances are different. In the early Colony it was the marketing of grain and perishables which was the greatest concern, and it has been seen how, often-times, it was spoiled. In the later Colony it is wool which is being handled, and dry stores on the outward journey. Both were more easily managed than wheat. Bullocks could find their way anywhere, provided only that there was feed and water for

them, and it is feed and water which directs the traffic in the after years, both for the waggons and stock going out, and the waggons and stock coming in.

### Conclusions.

Geographically, then, the settlement, up to 1821, was roughly in three degrees, the County of Cumberland which was known and reasonably closely settled, about 9,000 square miles, much of it barren, bounded by the Coast from Botany Bay to Broken Bay. George's River, the Nepean and the Hawkesbury; the County of Camden, with ill-defined limits and possibilities, which comprised the Cow Pastures, the Illawarra and all the half discovered country extending away into the wilderness, and those scattered outposts isolated by geography and by plan, Bathurst, Newcastle, Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island<sup>(82)</sup>. Several of the following essays in this series will be concerned with the problems encountered in agricultural affairs within this concentrated area of settlement.

### REFERENCES.

- (<sup>1</sup>) Barnard—Macquarie's World, p. 11.
- (<sup>2</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>3</sup>) Ibid., pp. 21-22.
- (<sup>4</sup>) Ibid., Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 58.
- (<sup>5</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>6</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 41-48.
- (<sup>7</sup>) Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- (<sup>8</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>9</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>10</sup>) Barnard op. cit. pp. 12-15.
- (<sup>11</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 9.
- (<sup>12</sup>) Ibid., pp. 13-20.
- (<sup>13</sup>) Ibid., p. 48.
- (<sup>14</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>15</sup>) Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- (<sup>16</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence.
- (<sup>17</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 82.
- (<sup>18</sup>) Barnard op. cit. p. 48.
- (<sup>19</sup>) Ibid. pp. 53 et seq.
- (<sup>20</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>21</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, pp. 21-22.
- (<sup>22</sup>) Ibid., p. 24.
- (<sup>23</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>24</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>24A</sup>) Ibid., p. 38.
- (<sup>25</sup>) Ibid., p. 24.
- (<sup>26</sup>) Ibid., pp. 24-25.
- (<sup>27</sup>) Ibid., p. 37.
- (<sup>28</sup>) Ibid., p. 25.
- (<sup>29</sup>) Wentworth—"A Statistical Historical and Political Description of the Colony," pp. 26-27.
- (<sup>30</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 25.
- (<sup>31</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence—Examination of John Macarthur.
- (<sup>32</sup>) Ibid.

- (<sup>33</sup>) Barnard op. cit. p. 109 et seq.
- (<sup>34</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 41
- (<sup>35</sup>) Ibid., p. 40.
- (<sup>36</sup>) "Sydney Gazette," 26th February, 1814.
- (<sup>37</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>38</sup>) Barnard op. cit. pp. 62-63.
- (<sup>39</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>40</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence—Examination of John Oxley.
- (<sup>41</sup>) Roberts "Squatting Age," p. 161 et seq.; Barnard op. cit. p. 64 et seq.
- (<sup>42</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>43</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>44</sup>) Barnard op. cit. p. 34 et seq.
- (<sup>45</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence—Examination of John Oxley.
- (<sup>46</sup>) Roberts op. cit. p. 161.
- (<sup>47</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence—John Oxley.
- (<sup>48</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, pp. 114-118; Barnard op. cit. p. 65.
- (<sup>49</sup>) Ibid., p. 118.
- (<sup>50</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>51</sup>) Cit. Campbell—From Colony to Commonwealth, p. 48.
- (<sup>52</sup>) Lang—An Historical and Statistical Account of N.S.W., Vol. II, p. 40.
- (<sup>53</sup>) Cit. Campbell op. cit. p. 51 et seq. cf. King's Despatch in 1801—"The average crops of the Hawkesbury are 25 bushels per acre, but 35 have been produced and the other settlements not more than 12 or 14."
- (<sup>54</sup>) Estimate drawn from the various figures put forward by Oxley and Cox in the Bigge Transcripts of Evidence.
- (<sup>55</sup>) Campbell op. cit. p. 7.
- (<sup>56</sup>) Ibid., p. 6.
- (<sup>57</sup>) Ibid—Despatches quoted.
- (<sup>58</sup>) Cit. Collins op. cit.; Campbell op. cit. pp. 18-19.
- (<sup>59</sup>) Cit. Campbell op. cit. pp. 48-51.
- (<sup>60</sup>) To be fully discussed in a later essay.
- (<sup>61</sup>) "Sydney Gazette," 4th February, 1815.
- (<sup>62</sup>) Barnard op. cit. p. 60.
- (<sup>63</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 28.
- (<sup>64</sup>) Bigge—The State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony, p. 39.
- (<sup>65</sup>) C.H.B.E. Scott Vol. VII, pp. 66-67.
- (<sup>66</sup>) H. R. New South Wales, Vol. I, Pt. 2, p. 253 cit. C.H.B.E. op. cit. pp. 66-67.
- (<sup>67</sup>) C.H.B.E. Scott, p. 117, H.R., New South Wales, V., p. 157.
- (<sup>68</sup>) Ibid., H. R. N. S. Wales, V. p. 583.
- (<sup>69</sup>) C.H.B.E., p. 157.
- (<sup>70</sup>) C.H.B.E., p. 96.
- (<sup>71</sup>) C.H.B.E., pp. 117-118.
- (<sup>72</sup>) Bonwick "First Twenty Years in Australia," p. 212.
- (<sup>73</sup>) C.H.B.E., p. 109.
- (<sup>74</sup>) Bigge—Transcripts of Evidence—Examination of William Cox.
- (<sup>75</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>76</sup>) Wentworth, op. cit. pp. 484-485.
- (<sup>77</sup>) Ibid., pp. 80-81.
- (<sup>78</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>79</sup>) MSS. Letter from Rev. William Lawry to his parents, May 21, 1818; Bonwick Transcripts—Missionary Vol. 2, pp. 355-6 (Mitchell Library).
- (<sup>80</sup>) Peter Cunningham—Two Years in New South Wales, Vol. I, p. 240.
- (<sup>81</sup>) Bigge—The State of the Colony, p. 162.
- (<sup>82</sup>) Barnard op. cit. p. 65 et seq.