



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF AGRICULTURE IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

By

C. J. KING, M.A., B.V.Sc., D.P.A.,

Chief, Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics.

(This is the second of a series of sketches by the author on early agricultural settlement in this State. The first also appears in this issue. The publication of further essays with sequence will depend upon convenience and the space that can be allotted in separate issues of this Review.)

2. THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND AGRICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CAPTAIN ARTHUR PHILLIP, R.N.

No record of agricultural development in Australia can pass over the first few years of settlement, and ignore entirely the early bewildering problems of the small community of Phillip, notwithstanding the so obvious nature of the problems of those years. It seems extraordinary, by modern standards, that a responsible government could have condemned the human cargo of the First Fleet, even though they were "felons," to a voyage to an, as yet, unknown land on the other side of the world, with so little regard for the ordinary instincts of humanity, and that the preparations for the voyage could have been so haphazard. Even if, as was the case, it had been a chance accident which had led to the acceptance of the proposition for "shovelling out" to the newly discovered Botany Bay, the criminals, the "redundant population," the "overflowing of the English gaols," the "sweepings of the streets of London and provincial towns and cities," it was with a cool, careless and even callous indifference, that the ministers of George III actually set about founding a penal settlement with these materials. All that the proposal rested on, in the final analysis, was that Cook and his companions had passed a few days at Botany Bay, and had found a small river, a profusion of curious plants and an indifferent harbour. They had not seen any plains of pasture fit to feed live stock; they had found no native edible animals; they had had no means of ascertaining whether the soil was capable of carrying crops for the support of a considerable population, and the nearest land at which livestock and dry stores would be available in an emergency was the Cape of Good Hope, a colony then in the possession of the Dutch. The meanness, the lack of forethought, the inefficiency with which the First Fleet was equipped as scarcely credible⁽¹⁾. At the last moment, by an afterthought, one chaplain was sent on board. There were no superintendents, or gaolers or overseers, except marines with muskets loaded in case of revolt—the marines on landing refused to oversee the convicts. No agriculturist was sent to teach the highwaymen and pick-pockets how to grow crops. No system of discipline was planned, nothing beyond mere coercion attempted. Even the supply of mechanics, required for erecting necessary buildings, storehouses and huts, was left a matter of

chance, depending upon the trades of the several hundred convicts. As it turned out, there were not half-a-dozen carpenters in the fleet, only one bricklayer and not one mechanic was found later, in the whole settlement, capable of erecting a corn mill. A printing press was put on board, but, as was so typical of the whole affair, there was no printer. When sometime later a seal for Phillip was sent out, there was no wax.

It is all inexplicable, except it be realised that, by some strange perversion of fact, a romantic conception of the new country had been engendered—that it was a land of wealth, an El Dorado, possessing a soil that had only to be scratched to yield a crop, a profusion of edible plants and fruits, a hostile race that could be made subservient and that would then carry on the labour of the colony⁽²⁾. Even Sir Joseph Banks, the only scientist behind the plan, had forgotten his earlier opinions and was now sharing in the general illusion⁽³⁾. The wonder of Phillip is that he ever set sail at all, and that his “cargo” survived to furnish the first roots of colonisation. When, in May, 1792, Lord Dorchester, in London, was proposing that the settlement should be bodily transplanted to Upper Canada, there must have been many in New South Wales, both convicts and officials, who would have welcomed the idea⁽⁴⁾.

An extraordinary inefficiency, however, is all that could have been expected in 1787. It was a characteristic of much that was government enterprise even so late as 1856, and Macaulay's reforms of the English civil service. In late 18th century England, things were close to being at their worst. It is then no wonder that in 1819, the *Edinburgh Review*, looking back over the first thirty odd years of preceding settlement felt called upon to state that “Great indeed must be the natural resources and splendid the endowments of that land, which has been able to survive the system of neglect and oppression experienced from the Mother Country. But mankind lives . . . in spite of Colonial Secretaries, expressly paid to watch their interests”⁽⁵⁾.

The First Fleets.

The story of the first five years of settlement has been so often and so fully told that the events stand out in all clearness. When Phillip landed on the coast of New South Wales in January, 1788, as Captain-General of His Majesty's penal settlement at Botany Bay, he was in charge of more than 700 British male and female convicts and 200 marines, the survivors of a long and trying journey⁽⁶⁾. On the voyage out flogging the women convicts naked had been given up for reasons of decorum, but even the thumbscrew, iron fetters and the shaving of heads had failed to control their “wickedness”⁽⁷⁾. Two later fleets brought additional “broken men and women from the hulks,” and Phillip's community, by the time of his departure, had grown to more than 4,000 men, women and children⁽⁸⁾. From the first six transport ships, Phillip's surgeon reported upwards of a hundred, who would be unable to work because of old age or chronic diseases of long standing⁽⁹⁾. There were even idiots and paralytics in the total, boys and girls of twelve years of age, men

and women of over seventy years of age, and, of the nominally able-bodied, few were able or willing to do more than half the day's labour of a free man⁽¹⁰⁾. Probably forty of the convicts with five of their children had died on the voyage out in 1787, and twenty-eight more with eight children died later, but within the first six months of settlement⁽¹¹⁾. Less than fifteen months after sailing, only 637 out of the original 757 embarked as prisoners were available for work of any kind and two years after settlement had commenced, and before the arrival of the second fleet, losses from deaths, desertion or disease had accounted for nearly 22 per cent. of the total of those who had originally sailed in May, 1787⁽¹²⁾. This small number of under 1,000 men, women and children, comprised the population over the first stage of pioneer colonisation, and among their number were some of the first farmers.

In mid-1790, the second fleet arrived with reinforcements, for what few men knew. There is this account of the scene which followed the arrival—the "Surprize" landing one hundred sick and having buried many on the voyage, whilst another two hundred sick were landed from the "Neptune" and "Scarborough": "The west side afforded a scene truly distressing and miserable; upwards of thirty tents were pitched in front of the hospital . . . all of which as well as the hospital and the adjacent hut were filled with people, many of whom were labouring under the complicated diseases of scurvy and dysentery, and others in the last stages of either of those terrible diseases, or yielding to the attacks of an infectious fever"⁽¹³⁾. Some, in fact, died in the boats as they were being taken ashore, concerning which there is this further eye witness description: "The shocking sight of the poor creatures that came out on the three ships would make your heart bleed; they were almost dead; very few could stand, and they were obliged to fling them as you would goods, and hoist them out of the ships, they were so feeble and they died ten or twelve a day when they landed The Governor was very angry for I heard him say it was murdering them"⁽¹⁴⁾. Phillip later wrote: "Of the 930 males sent out by the last ships, 261 died on board and fifty have died since landing"⁽¹⁵⁾. Of those that had landed, 450 were on the sick list immediately. Yet Phillip's instructions had been that he was to found a colony to maintain itself, and to undertake a serious social and economic experiment⁽¹⁶⁾.

The next important landmark in this brief record is August, 1791, which witnessed the arrival of the third fleet⁽¹⁷⁾. The "Matilda" arrived on the first of the month. The ship was "poor and leaky," the convicts an "aged and infirm lot", but, strange to say, only twenty-five convicts and one soldier had died on the voyage. The "Salamander" was healthy; only one convict was sick out of fifty. The "William and Mary" deposited 181 convicts, "mostly healthy"; the 154 male convicts by the "Active" from London, and the 126 male and 23 female convicts by the "Queen" from Ireland, were all "sickly and emaciated."

It was thus that the foundations of settlement were laid in the new land—Captain Arthur Phillip, Master Surgeon of a combined hospital and charnel house of the dead, the dying, the sick,

the aged and the infirm, and commandant of a settlement, designed in theory to be agricultural, composed of the healthy that remained over. The last date of particular significance in this introduction is the return of Phillip to England, on 10th December, 1792.

In the stories of these fleets there is a record of human misery which defies all attempts at concise description⁽¹⁸⁾. There is bestiality, immorality, unnatural vice, cruelty, jobbery by contractors, open trafficking in human lives and, above all, the frightening inroads of epidemic and deficiency diseases amongst an undernourished and debased population. It is necessary to note, however, these circumstances, for it was these convicts, these men who had gone through all this and more besides, who were to be the first farmers in the colony, the first graingrowers on the Hawkesbury. The sole heritage which they brought to the colony was tragedy—whether because of an ingrained criminality or following the inhuman brutality to which they had been subjected. Nothing, however, could, in after times, erase the memories of the terrors of the years immediately following arrival—of the cruelty, the hunger, the pain and the abjectness of their misery. In 1845, Mrs. Caroline Chisholm, whose character stands out like a beacon from the pages of early colonisation in Australia, obtained voluntary statements from a number of emancipist settlers, including a Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smith, who were then living at Macdonald's River on the Hunter, and who had both arrived on one of the convict ships in 1791, and a Henry Hale of Wells Creek, Hawkesbury⁽¹⁹⁾. Far better than mere statistics of land cleared or impersonal accounts of the successive threats of famine, is the insight which their reminiscences give to the trials of the convicts during the first few years of settlement. It is true that David Collins, Phillip's Judge-advocate gives the settings, but his recordings are colourless. This Joseph Smith was fourteen years of age at the time of his arrival in the Colony in 1791. After seven years of servitude he obtained his liberty, and then "started working about for a living wherever he could get it." He stowed away to Norfolk Island, and obtained some work as an overseer of the then governor's (King) garden. Afterwards, he went to live with "old D'Arcy Wentworth, a better master never lived in the world . . . and little Billy, the great lawyer, has often been carried in my arms." The Wentworths wanted him to take charge of their Homebush property, but instead he "took to the river (Hawkesbury), worked up and down, till (he had) saved money to buy old Brown's farm at Pitt Town." No man worked harder than he had done, and, by 1845, he had about £1,000 ready cash, several properties and more than 500 cattle. He was able to boast that he was "never without a chest of tea in the house," and, pathetically to add that "tea is a great comfort." Smith was one of the successful farmers, but it is his beginnings and those of his wife which for the present concern this narrative:

"I arrived in the colony 56 years since; it was Governor Phillip's time, and I was fourteen years old; there were only eight houses in the colony then. I know that myself and eighteen

others laid in a hollow tree for seventeen weeks, and cooked out of a kettle with a wooden bottom: We used to stick it in a hole in the ground and make a fire round it There was plenty of hardship then. I have often taken grass, and pounded it, and made soup from a native dog. I would eat anything then. For seventeen weeks I had only five ounces of flour a day. We never got a full ration except when the ship was in harbour. The motto was 'Kill them, or work them, their provisions will be in store.' Many a time I have been yoked like a bullock with twenty or thirty others to drag along timber. About 800 died in six months at a place called Toongabbie, or Constitution Hill. I knew a man so weak, he was thrown into the grave, when he said, 'Don't cover me up; I'm not dead; for God's sake don't cover me up.' The overseer answered 'D—— your eyes, you'll die to-night, and we shall have the trouble to come back again.'

The man recovered: his name is James Glasshouse, and he is now alive at Richmond. They used to have a large hole for the dead; once a day men were sent down to collect the corpses of prisoners, and throw them in without any ceremony or service. The native dogs used to come down at night and howl in packs, gnawing the poor dead bodies. The Governor would order the lash at the rate of 500, 600 or 800; and if a man could have stood it they would have had more. I knew a man hung there and then for stealing a few biscuits, and another for stealing a duck frock. A man was condemned—no time—take him to a tree, and hang him. (J. Bennett, a youth, seventeen years of age, was convicted and immediately executed for stealing up to the value of 5s. out of a tent cf. Collins. 'History of New South Wales,' p. 27.) The overseers were allowed to flog the men in the fields. Often have men been taken from the gang, had fifty, and been sent back to work. Any man would have committed murder for a month's provisions! I was chained seven weeks on my back for being out getting greens, wild herbs. The Rev. ———, used to come nightly to force some confession. Men were obliged to tell lies to prevent their bowels from being cut out by the lash. Old ——— (an overseer) killed three men in a fortnight at the saw by overwork. We used to be taken in large parties to raise a tree; when the body of the tree was raised, he (old ———) would call some of the men away—then more; the men were bent double—they could not bear it—they fell—the tree on one or two, killed on the spot. 'Take him away! Put him in the ground;!' There was no more about it."

There are the further reminiscences of Henry Hale: "I arrived in the third fleet on the 16th October, 1791; it was on a Sunday we landed. I was sent to Toongabbie. For nine months there I was on 5 ounces of flour a day—when weighed out barely four; served daily. In those days we were yoked to draw timber, twenty-five in a gang. The sticks were 6 feet long; six men abreast. We held the stick behind us, and dragged with our hands. One man came ashore on the Pitt; his name was Dixon; he was a guardsman. He was put to the drag; it soon did for him. He began on a Thursday and died on the Saturday, as he was dragging a load down Constitution Hill. There were 1,300

died there in six months. Men used to carry trees on their shoulders. How they used to die! The men were weak—dreadfully weak—for want of food. A man called Gibraltar was hung for stealing a loaf out of the Governor's kitchen. He got down the chimney, stole the loaf, had a trial, and was hung the next day at sunrise. At this time a full ration was allowed to the Governor's dog. This was Governor ————. I have seen seventy men flogged at night—twenty-five lashes each. On Sunday they used to read the laws. If any man was found out of camp he got twenty-five. The women used to be punished with iron collars. In Governor King's time they used to douse them overboard. They killed one. Dr. ———— was a great tyrant. Mine is a life grant from Governor Bourke—fourteen acres. I grow tobacco, wheat and corn, just enough to make a living."

If life was apparently cheap in the pioneer settlement, it was revolting also. Mrs. Chisholm states that Mrs. Smith was blind and that "she acted as she spoke, and wept on recalling the horrors of her early life":—"I have seen Dr. ———— take a woman in the family way, with a rope round her, and duck her in the water at Queen's Wharf. The laws were bad then. If a gentleman wanted a man's wife, he would send the husband to Norfolk Island. I have seen a man flogged for pulling six turnips instead of five. One ———— was overseer, the biggest villain that ever lived. ———— delighted in torment. He used to walk up and down and rub his hands when the blood ran. When he walked out, the flogger walked behind him. He died a miserable death. ———— maggots ate him up; not a man could be found to bury him. I have seen six men executed for stealing 21 lb. of flour. I have seen a man struck when at work with a handspike, and killed on the spot. I have seen men in tears round Governor ————, begging for food. He would mock them with 'Yes, yes, gentlemen; I'll make you comfortable; give you a nightcap and a pair of stockings.'"

It has to be remembered that few of these first convicts were atrocious criminals. On the contrary, the crimes for which six hundred out of the original seven hundred convicts had been transported in the First Fleet were by the standards of the time minor offences only (²⁰). The term of sentence for the large majority had been the minimum of seven years, mild under a penal code which ordained the death penalty for nearly two-hundred offences. But vicious as the majority were not, they were the poorest of material for the pioneer labours of land settlement. Bred in the slums and shires of the unhappy England of the times, imprisoned for years before being bundled aboard a convict ship, often cruelly violated by a long voyage in which at times they were kept for months in chains, maltreated by brutalised overseers, subjected to every torture of hunger for the first few years, their very abjectness and apathy made the task of the early governors well nigh hopeless. But attempts were made by Phillip and some at least of the governors who followed him to settle these men on the land. This sketch is in part the story of such settlement and of the trials and difficulties to which these men were further subjected.



THE TANK STREAM AT CIRCULAR QUAY (1818).

[MITCHELL LIBRARY.]

The First Year.

An insight into the hazy notions of the planners at home may be observed in the instructions which Phillip received before sailing ⁽²¹⁾. He was told that he was to proceed immediately to the cultivation of the land. He was to husband his small stock, for upon this would depend their subsequent propagation. Vegetables were, also, to be grown. These with "most likely fish" would be amply sufficient for immediate wants, and "fresh provisions except for the sick and convalescents (might) well be dispensed with." Finally, he was to grow flax. In short, the idea seemed to be that Phillip would be a second Robinson Crusoe, able to develop or improvise out of the natural resources of the new country those things which he did not have with him—foodstuffs in particular. So that at least he would have something to start with, he brought with him one bull, a cow, four calves, one stallion, three mares, three colts, forty-four sheep, four goats, twenty-eight pigs, some fowls and turkeys, a small miscellaneous collection of plants, various kinds of seeds, some implements and, as it has been noted, an assorted collection of poor suffering humanity ⁽²²⁾.

It is interesting to observe the preconceived views of the Governor concerning the experiment which he was about to undertake. Even as late as the eve of his departure from England, there is this expression of opinion from him. "As I would not wish convicts to lay the foundations of an Empire," he wrote (28th February, 1787), "I think they should ever remain separated from the garrison and other settlers that may come from Europe, and not be allowed to mix with them, even after the seven or fourteen years for which they are transported may have expired" ⁽²³⁾. He was not the first nor the last to find expectations held of a new country and a new experience or plan, to be, in the event, something entirely different or impracticable. No doubt, if he had held to these views and had lived to see the later developments of Macquarie times, he would have been both surprised and appalled.

This wish, however, to place a river or some natural division between the convicts and the garrison, must explain the first steps taken at forming a settlement ⁽²⁴⁾. The marines were placed in a camp on the west side of the Tank stream near the head of the Cove; the convicts on the east side. On the eastern side also, a fort and storehouses were built, an area allotted for Government House and a garden made for the plants brought from Cape Town. Some ground on the garrison side, where the trees grew more sparsely, was given over to the officers to grow corn for their stock. The animals were first landed on the eastern point, but, when they had cropped the meagre grass there, they were moved round to the head of the next cove (Farm Cove), the stock being settled on an area of about nine acres on the margin of a small creek, which still flows through the Botanic Gardens at Sydney ⁽²⁵⁾.

Of the first problems met with, there were those of shelter, clearing, building, supervision of convicts and in immediate prospect, food. There were mosquitos, ants, storms, mice, flies and

the trials of a hot climate. There were the puzzling anomalies of huge trees growing from a poor soil which yet could not support the first crops sown, and of seasons upside down. There was the task of organisation of law and order, with all that this entailed. There were worries concerning the uncertainty of rainfall, hot wind blasts and of surroundings altogether different from any before experienced. There was divided authority, disagreement between the commandant of the marines, and the Governor; an atmosphere of tension and bickering, petty jealousy. The marines refused to supervise the labour of the convicts and there were only convicts to oversee the work of other convicts. There were thefts, trials, and executions, numberless floggings; sickness and deaths in the convicts. There were troubles with the natives, murders and reprisals. There was the plotting and charting of the harbour and adjoining coast to be carried out; explorations, and some worries concerning the intentions of the French, and the escape of convicts. There was a disproportion between the numbers of the female and male convicts, and unnatural vice was the consequence. All these and more besides, including shortages in almost everything, have been fully described elsewhere. It is merely sufficient to mention them, since they constituted the environment within which the first attempts were made to achieve self sufficiency and form the first pattern of agriculture in the colony. In the event, the years, 1788-1792, may be seen as a struggle for mere survival, of one threat of famine succeeding another. There were not a number of problems; mere living was in itself a problem, death a happy release for many.

In this first year of settlement there is little to record, other than the almost impossible difficulties of the unfortunate governor. The situation is at once clear from an excerpt in Phillip's second dispatch: "The officers who compose the detachment are not only few in number but most of them have declined any interference with the convicts, except when they are employed for their particular service. I requested soon after we landed that officers would occasionally encourage such as they observed diligent, and point out for punishment such as they saw idle or straggling in the woods. This was all I desired, but the officers did not understand that any interference with the convicts was expected, and that they were not sent out to do more than the duty of soldiers. The consequences must be obvious to your Lordship" (2^a). A first consequence was, in fact, divided authority with all that this meant in its effects upon discipline; a second, lack of proper supervision of convict labourers, this resulting in brutality of the worst kind by convict overseers, terror and untold misery for the convicts, inefficiency in the use of labour. A further source of unexpected trial was in the loss of implements. The convicts did as little work as they could, and they purposely lost their tools. In a short time about a third of the implements brought out had disappeared in this way. Of what remained, there is this description by Phillip: "A great part of the cloathing I have, Sir, already observed was very bad and a great part of it was likewise too small for people of common size. If some coarse blankets were to be sent out they would greatly contribute

to preserve the health of the convicts. . . . I am sorry to say that, not only a great part of the cloathing, particularly the women's, is very bad, but most of the axes, spades and shovels the worst that ever was seen" (²⁷). Desperation later made Phillip very outspoken: "I cannot help repeating that most of the tools were as bad as ever were sent out for barter on the coast of Guinea," and again, "the wooden ware sent out were too small; they are called bowls and platters, but are not larger than pint basons. There was not one that would hold a quart" (²⁸). Concerning equipment and supplies generally: "Some kind of covering will be wanted for the children. This is not an expense that will be necessary to continue after a number of settlers are in the colony, for then the convicts will have some resources, at present they have none" (²⁹).

From the dispatches, something of the general situation can be imagined. There was a serious deficiency in supplies, divided authority and a helpless army of convicts to maintain, guard and set to work. There was chaos and confusion and, even so early, a fear of famine: "All the provisions we have to depend on," wrote Phillip, "until supplies arrive from England are in two wooden buildings which are thatched. I am sensible of the risk, but have no remedy . . . I should not think myself at liberty to send either to the Cape or the East Indies unless in case of the greatest necessity. . . . I mention these circumstances just to show the real situation of the Colony, and I have no doubt but that supplies will arrive in time, and on which alone I depend. . . . This country at present does not furnish the smallest resource except in fish, which has lately been so scarce that the natives find great difficulty in supporting themselves. . . . In our present situation I hope few convicts will be sent out for one year at least, except carpenters, masons and bricklayers or farmers, who can support themselves and assist supporting others. Numbers of those now here are a burden, and incapable of any kind of hard labour, and unfortunately we have not proper people to keep them to their labour who are capable of being made useful" (³⁰). In the event no ships arrived until the middle of 1790.

Of immediate importance soon after landing, clearing of land and getting it under crop was a matter of the first consideration, but on the small government plot only eight acres could be put into barley for general public requirements (³¹). The officers were encouraged to cultivate for themselves, but none of them, except Major Ross, who got four acres sown, managed more than an acre. Many lost heart at once because the land was poor and the results meagre. One of these officers, Captain Watkin Tench, has left an account of this experiment: "Our cultivation of land was yet in its infancy; we had hitherto tried only the country contiguous to Sydney. Here the Governor had established a Government farm, at the head of which a competent person of his own household was placed, with convicts to work under him. Almost the whole of the officers likewise accepted of small tracts of ground for the purpose of raising grain and vegetables; but experience proved to us that the soil would produce neither without manure, and as this was not to be procured our vigour soon slackened, and most

of the farms (among which was the one belonging to the Government) were successively abandoned"⁽³²⁾. It was under these circumstances of an unfavourable soil in the near vicinity of Sydney, that search had to be made for alternative farming land and settlement possibly came to be established so soon at Norfolk Island. In November, 1788, Rose Hill, to be later called Parramatta, was prospected. A redoubt was raised on the hill overlooking an area where the soil was deep and of a stiff clayey nature. The place was not thickly wooded as was the case at Sydney Cove, and the Governor had great hopes of it. Most of the convicts who had any knowledge of agriculture were transferred there, and Captain Campbell was put in charge with restricted power of punishment. On the 14th February preceding, Lieutenant King armed with Phillip's commission, had sailed to Norfolk Island to establish conjoint settlement⁽³³⁾.

In this overall situation may be placed a few other events of significance. The first of these concerns the stock. Here, again, the very worst of bad luck dogged the Governor. Practically all the stock was killed or lost in one way or another⁽³⁴⁾. At the beginning of February, 1788, five sheep were killed by lightning, and in April Phillip "had the mortification to find that five ewes and a lamb had been killed in the middle of the day and very near the camp, I apprehend by some of the native dogs." Lightning and even dingoes were in the nature of accident. What was more serious was that the grass of the country did not agree with the sheep. In September, 1788, Phillip reported to Lord Sydney: "One sheep only remains of upwards of seventy which I had purchased at the Cape on my own account or on the Government's account. It is the rank grass under the trees which has destroyed them, for those who have had one or two sheep which have fed about their tents have preserved them"⁽³⁵⁾. Horses did well and pigs even too well, as it was reported at one time that they had become too fat to breed. Fowls seem to have become acclimatised well enough, and Lieutenant Clark was evidently able to preserve his pair: "All my farm stock consisting of two hens and one pig; hope that it will multiply fast with the assistance of God, I hope I will do very well"⁽³⁶⁾. But the cattle were unfortunate. Four cows and two bulls, the progenitors of the "ferocious wild cattle" of Macquarie times, walked off into the bush and were lost. The loss was felt to be appalling and consternation was general.

Into this picture enters the food problem and the constant fear of shortage. All that remained by the end of the year were the ageing salt provisions and the flour reluctantly sold to the Governor at the Cape, a monotonous ration and one, moreover, conducive to malnutrition. Many suffered from scurvy. To correct it there were attempts to eat wild spinach, wild parsley and a few other herbs. The most useful was a vine from which was concocted a tea, which Surgeon White thought useful as an anti-scorbutic⁽³⁷⁾. The only other regular source of fresh food was fish, but "Our resource in fish is also uncertain," wrote Phillip, "Some days great quantities are caught, but never sufficient to save any part of the ration, and at times fish are scarce"⁽³⁸⁾. Turtles as received occasionally from Norfolk Island

were windfalls. Anything shot went into the pot. When Phillip's gamekeeper, McEntire, shot an emu seven feet two inches tall, "it was very well flavoured." Kangaroo meat was welcome: "When young the kangaroo eats tender and very well flavoured, tasting like veal, but the old ones are more tough and stringy than bull beef." Even crows were deemed to stew well, and later on dogs⁽³⁹⁾.

In May, 1788, there comes to be noted a worry on the part of the Governor that supplies of foodstuffs may be exhausted before further supplies arrive, Phillip in successive despatches making his position clear. Thus in his first despatch, dated May 15: "Your Lordship will, I presume, see the necessity of a regular supply of provisions for four or five years, and of cloathing, shoes and frocks in the greatest proportion. The necessary implements for husbandry and for clearing the ground brought out will with difficulty be made to serve the time that is necessary for sending out a fresh supply"⁽⁴⁰⁾. In July, there is a further request: "Thus situated, your Lordship will excuse me observing a second time that a regular supply of provisions will be absolutely necessary for four or five years, as the crops for two years to come cannot be depended on for more than what will be necessary for seed, and what the "Sirius" may procure can only be to breed from. Should necessity oblige us to make use of what that ship may be able to produce, I do not apprehend that the livestock she will bring will be more than a month's provision for the colony; and the supply is totally unfit for a service of this kind"⁽⁴¹⁾. Supplies, however, had not reached the colony in September, 1788. Decision was made to send the "Sirius" to the Cape for flour. The seed wheat that had been sown had not vegetated. It had either been destroyed by weevils or had become heated, and so spoiled on the passage out. There had been nothing for Phillip to do but to plant the seed he had been holding in reserve. This left him unprovided for the future, and he feared that no seed grain would be sent with the next shipments of provisions, or if it were, that it also would be destroyed in the passage. Explaining these circumstances, Phillip wrote to Lord Sydney, in September, 1788: "On these considerations, but more immediately for the fear of not having grain to put into the ground next year, when we shall have a more considerable quantity of ground to sow, I have thought it necessary to order the "Sirius" to go to the Cape of Good Hope in order to procure grain and at the same time what quantity of flour and provisions she can received"⁽⁴²⁾. The "Sirius" sailed October 2, 1788.

There can be no point in following in detail successive events in the colony over the next few years. The facts are evident in the accounts by Collins and Tench and in the Historical Records. The elements in the problems of Phillip are all there by November, 1788, less than twelve months after landing. There is the fear of famine, the problem of farming with inadequate materials, a deficiency of seed and skilled labour; there is a poor soil, a shortage of stock, scurvy and sickness from an ill-balanced food ration; a thousand things to do all at once, the direction of all affairs resting on the decisions of the Governor, for there is no no else

to relieve the burden. Moreover, even so early, it is found that the new country is almost completely destitute of any natural resources fit to support the population, the fish supply even failing, and being practically nil in the winter time. Successive years have their particular problems, but, the atmosphere of fear, worry and uncertainty overhangs everything connected with the two major problems in the first settlement, what to eat and what and how to grow?

Beginnings of Agriculture.

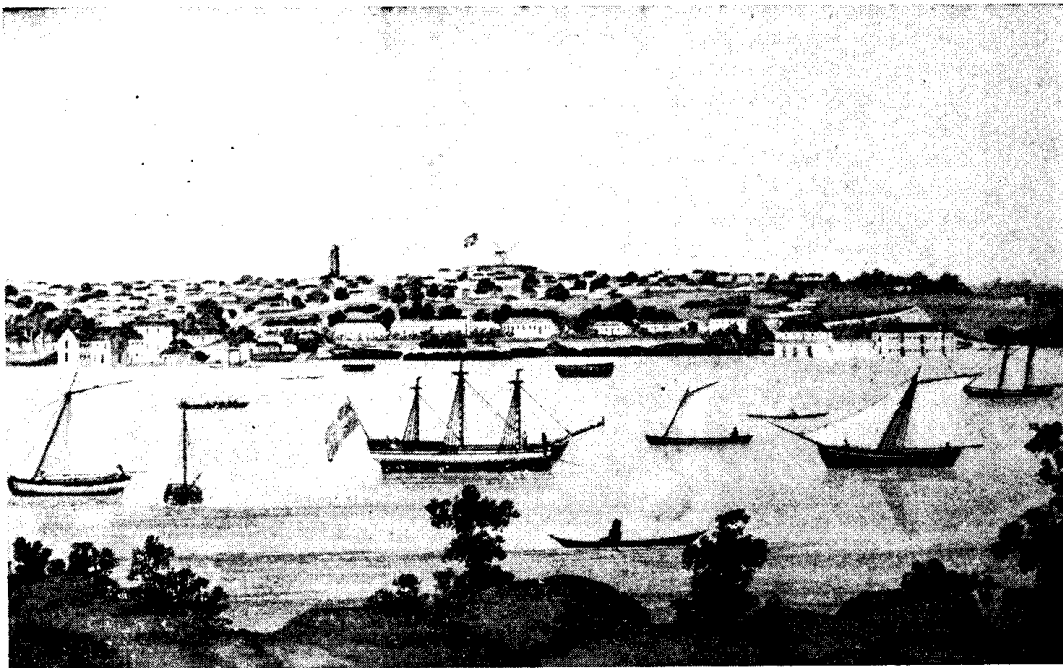
The story of formative agriculture in New South Wales really begins with the first settlement made at Parramatta, established in the November of the first year of colonisation. Here, about the winter of 1789, a barracks had been built for the soldiers, land cleared, the first real crops planted, and vegetable gardens were beginning to prosper. The settlement was placed in the hands of Henry Edward Dodd who had come out as the Governor's servant, and, proving that he alone did know something of farming, had been appointed Superintendent. Dodd had made the first sowing at the head of Farm Cove and was now supervising the work of one hundred convicts at Rose Hill (⁴³). He had shown ability not alone in managing the convicts and disciplining them, but, by force of personality, knack maybe, in getting them to work, whilst retaining their respect and even affection. He was, outside the Governor, probably the most remarkable man in that time and place, and "worth his considerable weight in gold." He soon had all the threads of life at Rose Hill gathered into his hands. He was in charge of the store as well as of agriculture, and even replaced the Captain of marines. He remains in the history of the early colony as the first in a line of men able to manage convicts, and with them to build and cultivate. Richard Fitzgerald, William Cox, John Macarthur and Major Druitt, are others in the succession who followed.

An insight into the progress made is evident in the account of the first harvest, planted in May-June, 1789, and reaped in December, 1789. The Government farm at Rose Hill yielded 200 bushels of wheat, 35 bushels of barley and small quantities of oats, maize and flax (⁴⁴). In addition, from the farm at Sydney, 25 bushels of barley were obtained. All this had, however, to be reserved for planting in the following season, so the colonists had to wait a further twelve months before relief in foodstuffs from local supplies could be expected. It was only the garden-produce that could be turned into immediate consumption. This was fortunately plentiful, and Dodd's most considerable achievement was a cabbage weighing 26 lb.

In the following year, 1790, further planting was carried out, at the same time the acreage of land for cultivation being increased. By the second fleet which arrived in the middle of the year, further superintendents were available for supervising the work of the convicts: "The most vigorous measures were adopted to give prosperity to the settlement, large tracts of land were ordered to be cleared . . . and prepared for cultivation. Some superintendents who had arrived in the fleet were found extremely

serviceable in accelerating the progress of improvements" (⁴⁵). Many excursions were made from Rose Hill in various directions, Tench recording that, "on all these occasions we brought away in small bags as many specimens of the soil of the country we had passed through as could be conveniently carried, in order that, by analysis, its qualities might be ascertained" (⁴⁶). There is, however, no record to show the results.

In November, 1790, Tench visited the settlement at Rose Hill, where he found that about 200 acres of land had been cleared and cultivated—fifty-five in wheat, barley and a little oats, thirty in maize, and the remainder cleared or occupied by buildings and gardens. He was accompanied in his inspection by "the Rev. Mr. Johnson, who is the best farmer in the Colony, and Edward Dodd, one of the Governor's household, who conducts everything



SYDNEY COVE (1810).

[MITCHELL LIBRARY.]

here in the agricultural line" (⁴⁷). The Captain-historian has left an unforgettable picture of general conditions in the colony at the time and of the first attempts at agriculture, which it would be a pity to omit from this essay, in view of the faint glimmerings of later problems, there already to be seen (⁴⁸).

Of Sydney he wrote: "Cultivation, on a public scale, has for some time past been given up here, the crop last year being so miserable as to deter from further experiment, in consequence of which, the government farm is abandoned, and the people who were fixed on it have been removed. Necessary public buildings advance fast, an excellent storehouse, of large dimensions, built of bricks and covered with tiles, is just completed and another planned which will shortly be begun. Other buildings, among

which I heard the Governor mention an hospital and permanent barracks for the troops may also be expected to arise soon . . . Vegetables are scarce, although the summer is so far advanced, owing to want of rain. I do not think that all the showers in the last four months put together, would make twenty-four hours rain. Our farms, what with this and a poor soil are in wretched condition. My winter crop of potatoes, which I planted in days of despair (March and April last) turned out very badly, when I dug them about two months back. Wheat returned so poorly last harvest that very little besides Indian corn has been sown this year. . . . God knows we have little enough for ourselves."

The picture of Rose Hill is more significant: "Next morning (wrote Tench) walked round the whole of the cleared and cultivated land with the Rev. Mr. Johnson—Edward Dodd accompanied us part of the way; and afforded all the information he could . . . Dodd says, he expects this year's crop of wheat and barley from the 55 acres to yield full 400 bushels. Appearances hitherto hardly indicate so much. He says, he finds the beginning of May the best time to sow barley, but that it may continue to be sown until August. That sown in May is reaped in December, that of August in January. . . . He sowed his wheat, part in June and part in July. He thinks June the best time, and says he invariably finds that that which is deepest sown, grows the strongest and best; even as deep as 3 inches he has put it in, and found it to answer.

"The wheat sown in June is now turning yellow; that of July is more backward. He has only used the broadcast husbandry, and sown two bushels per acre. The plough has never yet been used here. All the ground is hard and (as Dodd confesses) very incompetently turned up. Each convict labourer was obliged to hoe sixteen rods a day, so that in some places the earth was but just scratched over. The ground was left open for some months to receive benefit from the sun and air, and on that newly cleared the trees were burnt and the ashes dug in. I do not find a succession of crops has yet been attempted; surely it would help to meliorate and improve the soil. Dodd recommends strongly the culture of potatoes on a large scale, and says that were they planted even as late as January they would answer, but this I doubt. He is, more than ever, of opinion that without a large supply of cattle nothing can be done.

"They have not, at this time, either horse, cow or sheep here. Fowls, he said multiplied exceedingly; but the hogs neither thrived nor increased in number. He pointed out to us his best wheat, which looks tolerable, and may perhaps yield thirteen or fourteen bushels per acre.

"Next come the oats, which are in ear, though not more than six inches high; they will not return as much seed as was sown. The barley, except one patch in the corner of a field, little better than the oats. Crossed the river and inspected the south side. Found the little patch of wheat at the bottom of the Crescent very bad. Proceeded and examined the large field on the ascent to the westward. Here are about twenty-three acres of wheat, which, from its appearance, we guessed will produce perhaps

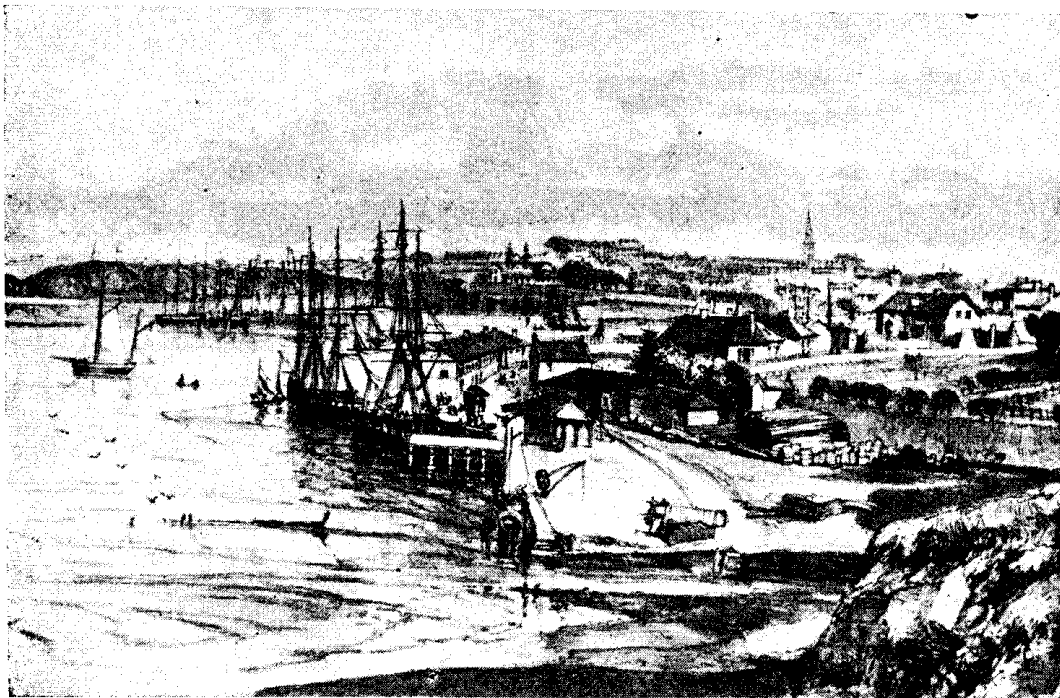
seven bushels to the acre. The next patch to this is the maize, which look not unpromising. Some of the stems are stout. . . . Continued our walk and crossed the old field, which is intended to form part of the main street of the projected town. The wheat in this field is much better, but not much more than in the large field before mentioned. The next field is maize, inferior to what we have seen, but not despicable. An acre of maize at the bottom of the marine garden is equal in luxuriance to any I ever saw in any country."

In this quotation of Tench, there are to be seen, even so early in organised settlement, some of the factors which for the next fifty years caused agriculture in the colony to remain backward. Edward Dodd tells Tench that without cattle the farming will be a failure. This opinion is repeated by James Ruse later on. Exactly the same is stated in the New South Wales Magazine, in issues of 1843, following. There are the problems of the depth at which seed is to be sown and of the time of the year most suitable for sowing. We see much the same debated in the diary of J. A. Betts of Wilmington, kept from 1839 onwards in the later settlement. The same issue arises in the theories concerning the development of smut and rust, and as it is hoped to record in following sketches of this study. Tench thinks it is primitive to farm without rotation of crops, a subject that constantly recurs through the next fifty years of settlement, but which, by 1842, is just about abandoned as a possibility, having in view the failure of sown grasses in a "convertible husbandry," and the failure of rotational crops in an "alternate husbandry," through both want of markets and over-riding factors of soil and climate. Dodd was impressed with potatoes, but the planting by Tench had been a failure. By 1842, it was generally recognised that this crop was suitable only for certain "limited districts." There is the uneconomic use of manpower in "hoe husbandry," the half-clearing of cultivated lands. On the Rosehill farm the convicts are set the impossible task of hoeing 16 rods a day. The consequence was that the soil was just scratched over. When Ruse is later settled he does not do more than 8 rods a day, for he is satisfied that, unless the ground is properly prepared, results will be uneconomic. This consideration also constantly recurs in following years, as a reason for the poor progress of agriculture. After all, everything was "slovenly husbandry, but in a country where immediate subsistence (was) wanted it (was) perhaps necessary." (Tench.)

But, even beyond these factors, there was the influence of the elements, and a poor soil. The harvest time of 1790 was a time of drought. In December the crops were reaped. The returns were paltry—a mere 200 bushels of wheat and sixty bushels of barley, a small quantity of flax, Indian corn and oats, all of which was preserved for seed. On the 28th January, 1791, whilst agricultural affairs were in full swing, what was little short of a disaster overtook Rose Hill; the Superintendent, H. T. Dodd, died. His death was thought to have been brought about or hastened, because, hearing thieves in his garden one night, he had got up although ill, and given chase to them, clad only in his

shirt. He had hunted them for several hours, suffered a relapse and suddenly died. His loss coinciding with the drought was probably one of the severest tests for the unfortunate governor's peace of mind.

The position as reached at Rose Hill at the beginning of 1791, in total analysis, was one of poor results. Two crops had been reaped with small returns. As yet, no help was available to the settlement, for all the grain grown was required for seed. In vegetable produce only, had the food supply situation been at all alleviated. The dissatisfaction of the Governor can then be understood, at the apparent poor showing at the end of three years



CAMPBELL'S WHARF AT SYDNEY COVE—AN HISTORIC LANDMARK.

(Circa 1820–1830.)

[MITCHELL LIBRARY.]

of active settlement. The foundations of the colony had been satisfactorily laid in almost every direction, except in that which mattered most, and upon which its future prosperity depended. The food shortage was acute and, above all, a drought was ruining even the slender garden resources. The position, in February, 1791, was serious: "Wind N.N.W., it felt like the blast of a heated oven and in proportion as it increased the heat was found to be more intense, the sky hazy, the sun gleaming through at intervals—my observations on this extreme heat, succeeded by so rapid a change, were that of all animals man seemed to bear it best. Our dogs, pigs and fowls lay panting in the shade or were rushing into the water" (⁴⁹). Tench thought that the winds must blow off

"immense deserts." How often do people think the same to-day, sometimes with good reason. The gardens were parched; the water supply at Rose Hill was fouled because of dead birds and flying-foxes; and there was anxiety about the Tank stream—the water supply at Sydney—whilst on the outlying farmlets water was very scarce. There is in this description—the position is, of course, much clearer and fuller in the records themselves—something to be seen of the feeling of isolation, uncertainty and compression, affecting the small community of Phillip, huddled on an unproductive soil in a difficult climate, and attempting to hack out of the bush a maintenance agriculture.

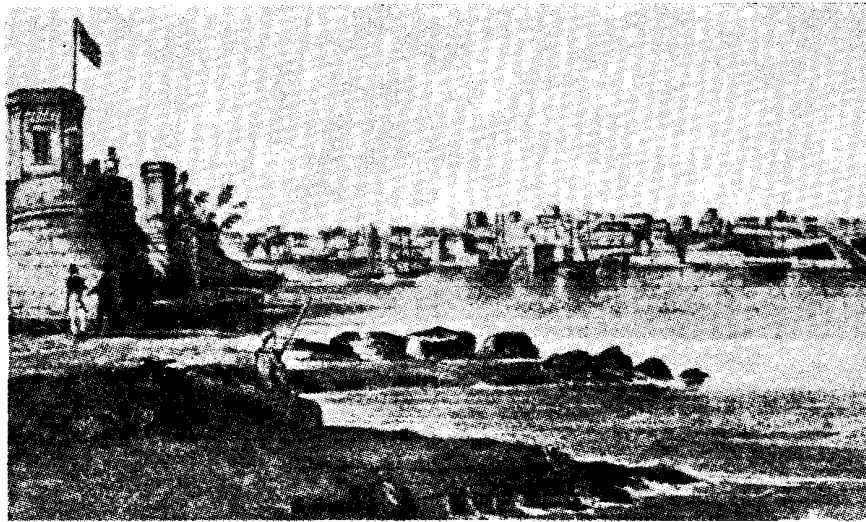
The twelve months before had seen the first beginnings of individual farmer settlement, as opposed to a public agriculture, but as yet, the position was by no means clear concerning its future. About the beginning of the year (1790) Phillip had finally set up the first farmer, by way of an experiment. He had wanted to ascertain how soon a man might maintain himself, working on his own land, and thus relieving Government of the necessity to subsidise him from its own slender resources. The first settler chosen was James Ruse. The experiment in its grim realities may be seen in its true setting from a despatch written by Phillip to Nepean, on the 17th June, 1790, following: "In order to know in what time a man might be able to cultivate a sufficient quantity of ground to support himself, I last November ordered a hut to be built in a good situation, an acre of ground to be cleared and once turned up. It was put in possession of a very industrious convict, who was told if he behaved well he should have thirty acres. He has been industrious, has received some little assistance from time to time, and now tells me that if one acre more is cleared for him, he shall be able to support himself after next January, which I much doubt, but I think he will do tolerably well after he has been supported for eighteen months. Others may prove more intelligent though they cannot be more industrious" ⁽⁵⁰⁾. Fortunately, there is left by Tench ⁽⁵¹⁾ a full account of the work of this first settler, James Ruse: "I next visited a humble adventurer who is trying his fortune here. When his term of punishment expired in August, 1789, he claimed his freedom, and was permitted by the Governor, on promising to settle in the country, to take, in December following, an uncleared piece of ground, with an assurance that if he would cultivate it, it should not be taken from him. Some assistance was given him to fell the timber, and accordingly he began. His present account to me was as follows:—'I was bred a husbandman near Launceston, in Cornwall. I cleared my land as well as I could with the help afforded me. The exact limit of what land I am to have, I do not yet know; but a certain direction has been pointed out to me in which I may proceed as fast as I can cultivate. I have now an acre and a half of bearded wheat, half an acre in maize, and a small kitchen garden. On my wheat land, I sowed three bushels of seed, the produce of this country, broadcast. I expect to reap about twelve or thirteen bushels. I know nothing of the cultivation of maize, and therefore cannot guess so well of what I am likely to gather. I sowed part of my wheat in May, and part in June.

That sown in May has thriven best. My maize I planted in the latter end of August and the beginning of September. My land I prepared thus: Having burnt the fallen timber off the ground, I dug in the ashes and then hoed it up, never doing more than eight or perhaps nine rods a day, by which means it was not like the Government farm, just scratched over, but properly done. Then I clod-moulded it and dug in the grass and weeds; this I think almost equal to ploughing. I then let it lie as long as I could, exposed to air and sun, and just before I sowed my seed turned it all over afresh. When I shall have reaped my crop, I propose to hoe it again and prepare it for next year. My straw I mean to bury in pits and throw in with it everything which I think will rot and turn to manure. I have no person to help me at present but my wife, whom I married in the country; she is industrious. The Governor for some time gave me the help of a convict man, but he is taken away. Both my wife and myself receive our provisions regularly at the store like all other people. My opinion of the soil of my farm is that it is middling—neither good nor bad. I will be bound to make it do with manure, but without cattle it will fail.”

A further note concerning Ruse and the singular position which he occupied as Australia's first farmer is given by Collins: “Some time in March, 1791, James Ruse, the first settler in this country, declared himself desirous of relinquishing his claim to any further provisions from the store, saying that he was able to support himself by the produce of his farm” ⁽³²⁾. Prior to this on 22nd February, 1790, Phillip had granted him thirty acres of land, including the cultivated area. This was the first grant issued in Australia, and in this grant Ruse's land is described as “Experiment Farm.” Campbell records that the name still attached to it in 1901 ⁽³³⁾. Ruse afterwards obtained another grant on the Hawkesbury, where he became one of the first settlers. This he sold and afterwards worked on the same farm as a labourer. No reasons can be given for his dispossession, in any event a common experience with small settlers within the Macquarie administration.

The Ruse experiment was an expedient, an effort to test the practicability of the Home Government's instructions to afford every encouragement to non-commissioned officers and men of the marines to settle on farms, and to settle, also, under similar conditions, convicts having served their terms. From 1791 onwards, and as the settlement grew older and developed, increasing numbers of grants were made. Perhaps one of the most interesting of these grantees was a German, by name Philip Schaeffer. In April, 1791, Schaeffer had arrived from England as a superintendent of convicts. Who appointed him does not seem clear, but the fact was that he could not speak English. Being unable to discharge his duties, he retired and was given a grant of 140 acres at Rose Hill. This was one only of a singular succession of serious, pitiable, ludicrous and even disgraceful incidents in the history of the early settlement and in its planning by the Home Government ⁽³⁴⁾.

From 1791 onwards, as apart from settlement on Norfolk Island, agricultural extension consisted in an expansion of public farming at Rose Hill, and Toongabbie, and the opening of small settlements at The Ponds, Prospect and the Field of Mars, in which, by the close of 1792, a nucleus of small farmers on acreages of 20 to 140 acres had been set up. In the Historical Records of New South Wales there is a pen picture of affairs as seen through the eyes of a visiting naval officer who called in at Sydney in November, 1792⁽⁵⁵⁾ :—"Parramatta is the grand settlement, about sixteen miles from Sydney by land Here is a large park, called Cumberland Park, where the Government cattle are put to graze. About four miles from this place is another settlement, Toongabby, where the greatest number of convicts are, and work very hard their hours for work are often from five in the morning till eleven, they leave off till



SYDNEY AT THE TIME OF GOVERNOR BOURKE (1831-1837).

[MITCHELL LIBRARY.]

two in the afternoon, and work from that time till sunset. They are allowed no breakfast hour, because they have seldom anything to eat. Their labour is felling trees, digging up the stumps, rooting up the shrubs and grass, turning up the ground with spades and hoes, and carrying the timber to convenient places. From the heat of the sun, the short allowance of provisions, and the ill-treatment they receive from a set of merciless wretches (most of them of their own description) who are their superintendents, their lives are rendered truly miserable. At night they are placed in a hut, perhaps fourteen, sixteen or eighteen together (with one woman whose duty is to keep it clean and provide victuals for the men while at work) without the comfort of either beds or blankets, unless they take them from the ship they came out on, or are rich enough to purchase them when they come on shore. They have neither bowl, plate, spoon or knife, but what they make of the green wood of this country, only one small iron pot being allowed to dress their poor allowance of meat,

rice, etc. In short, all the necessary conveniences of life they are strangers to and suffer everything they could dread in their sentence of transportation. Some time since it was not uncommon for seven or eight to die in one day, and very often while at work, they being kept on the field till the last moment, and frequently while being carried to the hospital. Many a one has died standing at the door of the storehouse waiting for his allowance of provision, merely for want of sustenance and necessary food."

But, whilst there was this misery and this cost in lives, the agriculture of the last two years of Phillip's foundation had been slowly welded into an organisation, which, at least, was giving some faint hope of eventual security. Thus, although the wheat and barley harvest reaped and put away in the early part of 1791 had been a failure, more success was had with the later crop of maize. Some had been available for use, as apart from that reserved for seed and excepting the constant losses from theft, Phillip reporting: "Our last year's crop of maize, notwithstanding the long drought, was 4,844½ bushels; of which 2,649½ bushels have been issued as bread for the colony, 695 bushels reserved for seed and other purposes, and not less than 1,500 bushels were stolen from the grounds." (⁵⁶). If, then the public agriculture was at least starting to function, as it had been intended, there is Collins' word for the position of the independent settlers at about the same period: "Several of the settlers at Parramatta, notwithstanding the extreme drought of the season, had such crops as enabled them to take off from the public store, some one, others two convicts to assist in preparing the ground for next year Exclusive of the idle people, however, of which there were not many, the settlers were found to be doing well, their farms promising to place them shortly in a state of independence of the public stores in the articles of provisions and grain; and it is proper to remind the reader of this account that they had to combat with the bad effects of a short and reduced ration nearly the whole of the time they had been employed in the cultivation of the ground on their own account" (⁵⁷).

It is important to note that no free emigrant settlers arrived during the first five years, notwithstanding the anticipations that had been held that there would be an immediate efflux of free emigrants from England who would, without much cost to Government, solve promptly the problem of feeding the convicts with the help of assigned labour (⁵⁸). Actually the first free emigrants arrived after Phillip's departure from New South Wales; the ship "Bellona," bringing thirteen free persons, including a family of seven on 16th January, 1793. Phillip, on numerous occasions during his term of office, asked for such emigrants and particularly those who were farmers or artificers—fifty men and their families was all he required. The simple facts were that none offered. "I am sorry to add," wrote Dundas concerning the later "Bellona" arrivals, "that the above settlers are all that have offered themselves" (⁵⁹). In consequence the pioneer colonists came from the relatively small body of convicts, discharged marines and "oddments from the first fleet"—with afterwards some political offenders, whose services were not assigned to the Colonial Government, and some "gentlemanly convicts," who were liberated

on tickets of leave as a matter of course. For years to come there were very few farmers in Australia save "settlers from convicts" and "settlers from marines"⁽⁶⁰⁾.

The measure of settlement, as apart from public enterprise, may be gathered from consideration of figures given by the Governor in despatches at particular periods of time. In November, 1791, Phillip in an advice to Grenville, stated that by then the first expirees had been settled on Parramatta grants in accordance with the scheme of 1787. Forty-four expirees had been settled between March 30 and August 17, 1791, in addition to thirty-one time-expired marines who had elected to stay in the country rather than return to England (where the New South Wales Corps was being raised to relieve the garrison) and nine seamen and an ex-superintendent (Schaeffer), a total of eighty-five farmers⁽⁶¹⁾. The grants to these first colonists totalled 4,180 acres, the marines as a rule being granted sixty acres, the ex-convicts thirty or fifty acres each. Phillip had then had power to make grants to N.C.Os. and men of the military, but not to officers. In any case he could not have spared the labour for large farmers such as commissioned officers might expect to be. Phillip was "very far from wishing to throw the smallest obstacle in the way of officers obtaining grants of land; but in the present state of this colony, the numbers employed on the public buildings . . . and in other occupations equally necessary," left him few convicts for public farming, let alone farming experiments by amateur persons from the mess⁽⁶²⁾.

In December, 1791, Phillip's grantees numbered 147—forty-five at Parramatta, 102 at Norfolk Island—including seventy-three ex-convicts, sixty-two ex-marines, eleven ex-seamen, and a former superintendent⁽⁶³⁾. Finally, in October, 1792, on the eve of Phillip's departure from the colony, there were sixty-eight settlers at Parramatta, including fifty-three expirees, and one pardoned convict, and 104 at Norfolk Island, including forty-eight expirees, and 1,703½ acres were in cultivation. In October, 1793, an analysis made by the Surveyor-General showed these figures: under wheat 208½ acres; barley 24¼ acres, maize 1,186½ acres; garden 121½ acres; ground cleared of timber 162½ acres, being a total of 1,703¼ acres on government accounts; settlers, holding grants of approximately 3,470 acres, of which 417 were in cultivation and 100 more cleared.⁽⁶⁴⁾

These simple statistics, however, as statistics so often are prone to do, hide the real value of a considerable achievement, starting, as Phillip had had to do, from scratch, with every possible disadvantage. There is more than a touch of complaint in the last letter which the weary and troubled Governor sent home to his superiors on October 24, 1792 (by the "Britannia"), just before his own departure: "The period at which this colony will supply its inhabitants with animal food is nearly as distant at present as it was when I first landed in this country. It has, sir, been my fate to point out wants from year to year; it has been a duty the severest I have ever experienced. Did those wants only respect myself or a few individuals, I should be silent; but there

are numbers who bear them badly; nor has the colony suffered more from wanting what we have not received than from the supplies we have received not arriving in time"⁽⁶⁵⁾.

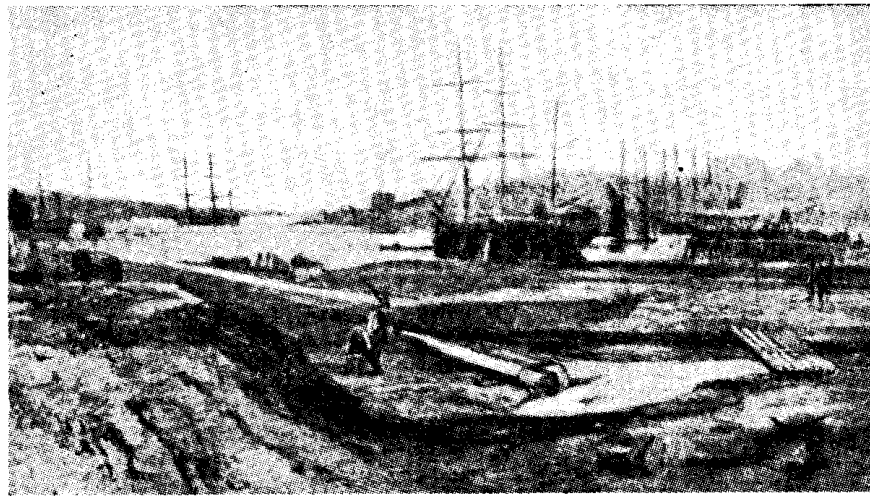
Food and Famine.

It is needless to trace out at any length the food shortages of the years of settlement, 1788-1792. There is almost a day to day account in Collins' record of the events of those years, and a sufficiently explicit secondary account in Eldershaw's "Phillip of Australia" (Chapter III). Even the schoolboy is aware that Phillip had one ration fixed for everybody in the settlement, convict, marine and officer alike, and that officers when asked to dine with the Governor were requested, also, to bring their rations with them. Near famine conditions operated over the whole five years, sometimes being more acute than at other times, the actual state of affairs depending in the long run on the supplies received from England by the arrival of convict ships or as gained by ships sent specially by Phillip to procure them. There are ludicrous incidents, incredible situations, amusing accounts of turtles, kangaroo meat and crows being added to the rations, innumerable mentions of frying pans, clothes, axes, spades and so on being required, but stark tragedy is the final impression.

The death penalty for stealing was published in April, 1788, and was carried into effect when the offenders were caught⁽⁶⁶⁾. In his accounts Collins puts, side by side, stories of deaths from starvation and executions for the stealing of food: "Their universal plea was hunger; but it was a plea that in the then situation of the colony, could not be so much attended to as it certainly would have been in a country of greater plenty"⁽⁶⁷⁾. The situation was impossible to control, hunger driving desperate men beyond all bounds of caution and to risk death, if caught, in order to gain a few miserable biscuits, a paltry handful of vegetables, some flour or a loaf of bread; government, on the other hand, forced to terrorise and to make examples of any men so caught, in order to prevent anarchy and the total submergence of all law and order. An alternative to martial law with all that this entailed is difficult to conceive even in our own more humane age. Nothing could cure the evils following the neglect of a careless, short-sighted and inefficient Home Government failing to maintain supplies to the colony in the developmental stage.

It must not be overlooked that two primary factors were involved in the threat of famine—the first, the simple factor of insufficiency in both energy-producing foodstuffs and protein; the second, malnutrition of a deficiency nature causing scurvy, dysentery, weakness, a constant lethargy, and other manifestations. Both caused a profound malaise and apathy, multiplying every difficulty which faced the Governor in attempting to get the major public works under way. Allied, of course, with these factors was the further danger to health following exposure and an insufficiency in both shelter and clothing. The losses in both deaths and manpower from weakness must have been appalling, if the accounts of the Smiths and of Hale, who survived these terrible times, are to be believed.

In retrospect, it can be seen that Phillip did everything he could to tide the colony over its troubles ⁽⁶⁸⁾. In October of the first year of actual settlement, he sent the "Sirius" to the Cape for grain. He lessened the mouths to feed at Sydney by sending as many convicts as possible to Norfolk Island, where it was believed better opportunities for self-support were available. The convicts were given Saturday as a holiday so that they might forage, and, so it was hoped, help to support themselves. He founded a new settlement at Rose Hill and spared no pains to make it succeed. He modified the law in favour of expediency, as, for example, by retaining William Bryant as a fisherman, because of his skill, although he had been convicted of stealing fish, and when others were being executed for petty thieving ⁽⁶⁹⁾. Justice was tempered by necessity, but, all of these notwithstanding, nothing he could do was able to prevent the scourge of dire want falling upon his small community.



CIRCULAR QUAY, SYDNEY (*Circa 1838-1845*).

[MITCHELL LIBRARY.]

Certain periods of want stand out as times of particular seriousness. Perhaps the first was the first four months of 1789. In this period six marines were executed for theft—"the flower of our battalion," as Tench had cause to lament ⁽⁷⁰⁾. This was partially relieved by the return of the "Sirius" from the Cape in May, 1789, with sufficient flour for the settlement to cover four months' minimum requirements. A second period of practically famine conditions began in August, 1789, with a further and increasing wave of garden robbing and pillaging, necessitating a watch being formed to provide protection. Rats then, also, destroyed eight casks of flour and "did considerable mischief" in the gardens of individuals. By the end of the year, almost two years had elapsed since the first fleet had sailed; supplies were nearly exhausted and "Famine, besides, was approaching with gigantic strides and gloom and dejection overspread every countenance. Men abandoned themselves to the most extravagant

reflections, and adopted the most extravagant conjectures" ⁽⁷¹⁾. In these circumstances—for a store ship was not to arrive until the middle of 1790, with the second fleet—misery and want were at their peak. Three nights a week were devoted to fishing for public requirements, and gardening for the production of vegetables was encouraged. In March, 1790, a fair proportion of the convicts and marines were sent to Norfolk Island (in all 281 persons). The little society on the mainland was broken up. Stock were slaughtered on a pretext; rations were reduced; hours of work cut down, and thieving increased under the pressure of that strongest of all impulses—hunger. Sorrow reached its climax when, in April, 1790, word was received that the "Sirius" had been wrecked at Norfolk Island, on the preceding 19th of March ⁽⁷²⁾. On 17th April, 1790, the "Supply"—the settlement's last hope—sailed from Sydney to Batavia; the ration was reduced to less than subsistence level: 2½ lb. of flour, 2 lb. of salt pork, 1 pint of pease and 1 lb. rice per person per week, one uniform ration applying to every person in the colony, except those under 18 years of age, who were allowed 1 lb. of salt meat ⁽⁷³⁾. Despair was mounting, energies being concentrated on fishing with renewed vigour and with a trial at organised hunting. It would seem that this was the worst time of all—the months from April, 1790, to July of the same year.

Two excerpts from contemporary documents, relating to this period of actual famine conditions, may be quoted, as indicating the atmosphere in which the colony was viewed by the more enlightened, for there should be no need to explain the deplorable condition of the helpless convicts themselves. The first is probably from the pen of Captain Campbell, writing home in the "Supply" (17th April, 1790): "I do not know what representations of this colony and of Norfolk may have been given to Government and the country. We suspect that a favourable picture has been drawn. But give me leave to assure you, if such be the case, you may rely on its being a gross falsehood and base deception. The country, take my word for it, has not one thing to recommend it; and what could have induced Government to form a settlement here without having first examined it particularly I cannot imagine. One thing is certain it will never answer" ⁽⁷⁴⁾. A second naval man had this to say: "The country, my lord, is past all dispute a wretched one, very wretched and totally incapable of yielding to Great Britain a return for colonising it. Amidst its native productions I cannot number one which is valuable as an article of commerce. There is no wood fit for naval purposes; no fibrous grass or plant from which cordage can be made; no substance which can aid or improve the labours of the manufacturer; no mineral productions; no esculent vegetables worth the care of collecting and transporting to other climes; and lastly, which is the most serious consideration, no likelihood that the colony will be able to support itself in grain or animal food for many years to come, so that regular annual expense is entailed on the Mother country so long as it shall be kept" ⁽⁷⁵⁾.

A second period of extreme want commenced about April, 1791, when, in addition to an acute food shortage making its presence felt, a fresh water deficiency also added to the troubles of the colonists. Rations were again reduced, and, the condition of that which remained in foodstuffs is obvious, by noting that the rice was full of weevils, the pork ill-flavoured, rusty and smoked, the beef lean, and, being cured with spices, "truly unpalatable" (⁷⁸). There is a description by Tench of what things were like at that time: "Notwithstanding the incompetency of so diminished a pittance, the daily task of the soldiers and convicts continued unaltered. I have never contemplated, the labours of these men without finding cause for reflection on the miseries which our nature can overcome" (⁷⁹). This period was relieved by the arrival of the third fleet in August, 1791.

Of the last eighteen months; there is the same repetition of misery, want and near famine. In November, 1791, Phillip was forced to the conclusion that he would have to send away for further supplies, a dispatch by him, dated 5th November, 1791, stating the case fully: "When the provisions brought out with the convicts and what has been received of the Guardian's cargo and the surplus of the Gorgon's provisions were added to what we have in the colony, it only gave us five months' flour, ten months' beef and pork, twelve days' pease and twenty-three days' oatmeal . . . I therefore thought it prudent to take the Atlantic transport into His Majesty's employ and send her . . . to Calcutta, in order to purchase flour and pease for the use of the colony" (⁸⁰). From the end of March, 1792, famine and disaster were again at their worst, until finally on July 26, 1792, the "Britannia" arrived; on August 20, 1792, the "Atlantic" returned; on October 7, 1792, the "Royal Admiral" reached Sydney; and on November 1, 1792, the first ship from America—the forerunner of many others which followed—struck anchor at Sydney with a speculative cargo on board. Only through these means were the anxieties of Phillip concerning his unfortunate charges relieved, and he was able to board his own transport, homeward-bound, with a firm tread.

With the arrival of this shipping, there occurred an instance of what was to be a foretaste of the future—the chartering of ships on private account in order to obtain supplies which the settlement lacked, and which it had been no fault of the Governor's that it had not obtained. The beginnings were in a letter to the Governor by Major Grose, the Commandant of the newly-arrived New South Wales Corps garrison, in October, 1792:

"The situation of the soldiers under my command, who at this time have scarcely shoes to their feet, and who have no other comforts than the reduced and unwholesome rations served out from the stores, has induced me to assemble the captains of my corps for the purpose of consulting what could be done for their relief and accommodation. Amongst us we have raised a sufficient sum to take up the 'Britannia,' and as all money matters are already settled with the master, who is also an owner, I have now to request you will assist us to escape the miseries of that precarious existence we have hitherto been so constantly exposed to" (⁸¹).

It may be that Phillip was instinctively suspicious of this philanthropic design of the officers, for in his letter in reply he gives various reasons why he did not think such a private chartering was necessary, suggesting that in future transports be directed to buy at the Cape any extras the officers required ⁽⁸⁰⁾. He possibly feared—subsequent events were to prove it so—that this might be the thin edge of the wedge that would weaken the Governor's authority to the detriment of the community. He, nevertheless, was placed in the unfortunate position of knowing that the community could only be served if the civil and military authorities worked together. So weighing all things, he agreed to Grose's proposal and wrote guardedly to England to that effect:—

“I saw Major Grose on the subject; but being of a very different opinion as to the propriety as well as of the necessity of such a measure, I wished to prevent what may be supposed to affect the interest of the East India Company by opening a door to a contraband trade; at the same time, as I could not prevent it, and do not believe that the ‘*Britannia*’ goes to the Cape with any such view, I beg leave to say that I do not think His Majesty's service will suffer, if the reasons assigned in Major Grose's letter should be deemed sufficient for the step which has been taken, and which being admitted may prevent much discontent” ⁽⁸¹⁾. So the ‘*Britannia*’ sailed on October 24 for the Cape, and the pernicious system of private trading by the military was initiated.

Conclusions.

Much could be said of the shortages which were experienced in the colony for the first five years of settlement, of the rationing expedients which were implemented and of the extraordinary neglect by the British Government in maintaining a supply service, once the first fleet had established a footing. Such, however, would be purposeless. Phillip, in the circumstances of poor equipment, unaccustomed climatic and other local conditions, unskilled management and labour, officers' intransigence, almost complete severance from outside sources of supply, drought and food shortages, established during his five years, in addition to his public farms, 172 settlers on land grants totalling about 12 square miles, of which about 3 square miles was being farmed at the time of Phillip's making his last return (October, 1792). This is the measure of his considerable achievement ⁽⁸²⁾. As Fitzpatrick points out, it is foolish to read into this early period of settlement, economic policies and pseudo-generalisations for which there is no evidence ⁽⁸³⁾. Phillip did his best with the materials at his disposal, using any and every experiment he could call on, in just the same way as on a smaller scale any man would set to, to develop a property of his own, for the first five years of settlement is wholly Phillip's struggle against almost insuperable odds.

Not the least of these was the failure of the colony to live up to even the most modest expectations formed of its resources. It was in a sense unfortunate that in “the singular and eccentric fifth continent,” to use Wentworth's phrase, settlement came to be established in the Botany Bay and Port Jackson area. From the agricultural and maintenance point of view, prospects could

have been little worse. The land was poor, desperately arid on the first few miles inland, uncertain in the Parramatta and Toongabbie areas and of supplementary resources, whether of fauna or flora, there were none, even untapped fishing grounds yielding a variable return. For many years, thereafter, in the colony, the settlers could not help comparing their particular lot in pioneer farming with the lesser difficulties of colonisation elsewhere, and in particular America. The comparison again and again crops up in the records and contemporary newspapers of the time, and perhaps it would be interesting to note at this stage one such comparison appearing in a settler's guide book in 1835:—

“Having observed in the colonists of Australia an apathy and carelessness as to the production of the most common articles of life, we were led to make enquiries as to the cause of it Wherever we went crops of wheat, maize and potatoes were to be seen in abundance, but scarcely any other, unless upon the estates of the wealthier classes of settlers a few of whom, perhaps, would go out of the usual routine and grow a little tobacco or a few vines. Aware of the enterprising spirit of the English, the absence of it in this respect struck us as somewhat remarkable. Upon enquiry, however, we found that this apathy to enterprise was not wilful, but that it arose from inability, or rather ignorance

“The people of America are almost entirely independent of their towns for assistance; each Yankee is brought up to some trade, and by interchanging commodities with one another they avoid the necessity of purchasing the articles they require; besides which, the farm of an American settler is in itself a practical farming encyclopaedia; his wife spins his wool and cotton ready for weaving; his children knit his stockings, gloves and night caps; the ashes of the trees he fells to clear his ground, afford him ley to make his soap; he seldom wears a shoe, but the leather is tanned, and the shoe made by himself, his children or his servants; his sugar is procured in the simplest manner from the maple tree, and from this, he brews his beer, distils his spirits, and makes his wine. His cows, poultry, pigs, rabbits, etc., afford him food; and the cotton plant, clothing—in fact, there is nothing that an American farmer requires, but what he manufactures himself or barter for with his neighbour. This is to be really independent. This it is which has made America an independent, powerful and wealthy nation.

“Let us now look at the Australian settler. Is the shoe he wears the produce of his farm. Is the tobacco he uses the result of his industry? Are his Parramatta trowsers, or his blankets made from the yarn spun from his wife? Are his stockings or his night caps knitted by his children? Are his spirits distilled, or is his beer made from the barley of his own estate, or does he pay an enormous duty to encourage the importation of these articles, to the prejudice of his own or his adopted country? Are all, or any of these, with perhaps a few solitary exceptions done upon any of the farms of this colony? It is but too well known that they are not. But, let us hope for better things—let us hope that when knowledge is disseminated far and wide that the result of that

knowledge will be to make the Australian farmer as happy and as independent as his American brother" (⁸⁴).

The facts are, as succeeding essays of this study will attempt to illustrate, that the farms of the majority of the smaller settlers right up to 1842 did not in essentials vary from the primitive little establishments of James Ruse and his associates. On much that was poor soil, a humdrum existence was eked out with practically two crops only, wheat and maize. There is much to wonder at the insight into things to come given by Ruse and Edward Dodd. They both told Tench that without manure, *i.e.*, cattle, farming would be a failure, and so it was to be. The whole idea of small land settlement might perhaps have been different if there had not been this fundamental obstacle of farming within a difficult environment and on an unresponsive soil, and if, moreover, the country could have yielded more that required only to be gathered or caught, than was the case. The first generations of cultivators were an unhappy lot, unskilled and ignorant, ill-equipped for the battle of farming with all that this involved. Yet, the conclusion must be, even judging by the experiences of the first few years of settlement, that they could scarcely have had a more complex and arduous enterprise to embark upon.

Historians have failed to fault Phillip as an administrator, for no Governor of New South Wales had harder problems than he to surmount. To the limits open to him he succeeded in forming a nucleus of successful settlers. Phillip was wise, also, in the ideas he had of planning the village of Sydney. When Sydney was first formed on January 26, 1788, settlement was made around the shores of Sydney Cove (Circular Quay) and up and along the side of the Tank Stream (between Pitt and Hamilton Streets). Within six months of landing, Phillip had devised a creditable plan for his new settlement, basing his central position on the side of the hill between the present Bridge and Argyle Streets. From this central point which was a parade ground, Phillip ran several streets 200 feet wide mostly in a south-westerly direction, thus taking advantage of prevailing north-easterly winds, for he was a firm believer in the "free circulation of air." Following his departure his plans lapsed and the sprawling village allowed to spreadeagle in all directions. Streets just somehow or other came into existence, seven running north and south and other less important ones running east and west being mapped by Surveyor Meehan in 1807. But contemporary accounts describe them as being almost impassable. An impossible task thus faced Macquarie, when in 1810 the builder-governor took over the administration. By then it was found impracticable to replan the town and Macquarie was forced to concentrate all his energies in making the best job possible of the narrow winding streets and crooked by-ways left to him by his predecessors. He cleared Macquarie Place, near the then Government House at the corner of Bridge and Phillip Streets, remade Macquarie Street and transferred the markets from near Circular Quay to a more central situation, but the damage had already been done. Sydney has, in consequence of this departure from Phillip's plan, reaped a legacy of congestion in modern times to which it is difficult to find a solution.

REFERENCES.

- (¹) Cf. E. Barnard Eldershaw—Phillip of Australia, Chapter I and Proem.
- (²) Cf. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. 7, Chapters II and III.
- (³) Ibid and cf. also Greenwood Early American-Australian Relations, pp. 39 et seq.
- (⁴) Eldershaw, op. cit., p. 212.
- (⁵) New South Wales Magazine, July, 1843, p. 319.
- (⁶) Fitzpatrick: British Imperialism and Australia up to 1830, p. 79.
- (⁷) Bowe's Journal cit. E. B. Eldershaw—Phillip of Australia, p. 86.
- (⁸) Fitzpatrick op. cit., p. 97.
- (⁹) Phillip to Grenville, 17th July, 1790; Fitzpatrick op. cit., p. 97; Collins Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, pp. 32, 41, 64.
- (¹⁰) Collins op. cit., p. 41; Phillip to Sydney, 9th July, 1788 (Enclosure 3) —H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 53-54; Evidence by Hunter before Select Committee on Transportation, 12th July, 1812 (Minutes of Evidence, p. 22).
- (¹¹) Phillip to Sydney, 9th July, 1788—H.R.A. I, 1, p. 38.
- (¹²) Phillip to Sydney—H.R.A. I, 1, p. 144; Collins op. cit., p. 41—Fitzpatrick op. cit., p. 81.
- (¹³) Collins op. cit. p. 177.
- (¹⁴) H.R. New South Wales Vol. 11, p. 768.
- (¹⁵) Collins op. cit. p. 197.
- (¹⁶) Phillip's 1st and 2nd Commissions; October 12, 1786, April 2, 1787; and Instructions April 25, 1787 are given in H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 1-15.
- (¹⁷) Cf. Eldershaw op. cit. pp. 193-196
- (¹⁸) Cf. Eldershaw Chapters 1-4.
- (¹⁹) Cit. Sydney, Three Colonies (1865)
- (²⁰) Cf. Fitzpatrick op. cit. pp. 79-81
- (²¹) H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 1-15.
- (²²) Cf. Eldershaw op. cit. Chapters 1, 2.
- (²³) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 53.
- (²⁴) Cf. Eldershaw op. cit. pp. 106 et seq.
- (²⁵) Campbell "From Colony to Commonwealth"—N.S.W. Agric. Gazette, January, 1901.
- (²⁶) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 35.
- (²⁷) H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 66-67.
- (²⁸) H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 86-87.
- (²⁹) Ibid.
- (³⁰) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 55.
- (³¹) Eldershaw op. cit. pp. 93 et seq.; Campbell op. cit. pp. 1-12.
- (³²) Campbell op. cit. p. 4.
- (³³) Cf. Campbell pp. 1-12; Eldershaw op. cit.
- (³⁴) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 132.
- (³⁵) H.R.A. I, 1, pp. 77-78.
- (³⁶) Clark Journal p. 85 cit. Eldershaw p. 133.
- (³⁷) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 132.
- (³⁸) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 22.
- (³⁹) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 132-133.
- (⁴⁰) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 35.
- (⁴¹) Ibid, p. 108.
- (⁴²) Ibid, p. 137.
- (⁴³) Cf. Eldershaw op. cit. p. 126 et seq.; Campbell op. cit. pp. 1-12; Fitzpatrick op. cit. pp. 82-85.
- (⁴⁴) Ibid.
- (⁴⁵) Tench, Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson, p. 6.
- (⁴⁶) Campbell op. cit. p. 6.
- (⁴⁷) Tench op. cit. pp. 76-79.
- (⁴⁸) Ibid.
- (⁴⁹) Ibid pp. 166-168.
- (⁵⁰) H.R.A. I, 1, p. 185.
- (⁵¹) Tench op. cit. p. 81.
- (⁵²) Collins op. cit. p. 163.
- (⁵³) Campbell op. cit. p. 7.
- (⁵⁴) Cf. Eldershaw op. cit. pp. 190, 257, 258.
- (⁵⁵) H.R. New South Wales Vol. 2, pp. 794-96.

- (⁵⁶) H.R.A. I, I, p. 384.
- (⁵⁷) Campbell op. cit. p. 12.
- (⁵⁸) Fitzpatrick op. cit. p. 84.
- (⁵⁹) H.R.A., I, pp. 13, 125, 364 et seq. 771.
- (⁶⁰) Fitzpatrick op. cit. p. 84.
- (⁶¹) Ibid pp. 88-89 cf. also H.R.A. I, I, pp. 203, 215, 278-282 (Fitzpatrick here furnishes a critical account concerning these calculations).
- (⁶²) Ibid.
- (⁶³) H.R.A. I, I, pp. 383 et seq., 307, 324, 339, 373, 391.
- (⁶⁴) H.R.A. I, I, pp. 371, 374, 397.
- (⁶⁵) H.R.A. I, I, pp. 371-374.
- (⁶⁶) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 140, 245.
- (⁶⁷) Collins op. cit. p. 210.
- (⁶⁸) Eldershaw op. cit. pp. 136-137.
- (⁶⁹) Ibid p. 240.
- (⁷⁰) Ibid p. 151.
- (⁷¹) Ibid pp. 158 et seq.
- (⁷²) Ibid, p. 164.
- (⁷³) Ibid p. 165.
- (⁷⁴) H.R. N.S.W. Vol. 11, p. 763.
- (⁷⁵) Ibid, pp. 761-762.
- (⁷⁶) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 189.
- (⁷⁷) Tench op. cit. p. 109.
- (⁷⁸) H.R.A. I, I, p. 269.
- (⁷⁹) Ibid, p. 381.
- (⁸⁰) Eldershaw op. cit. p. 215.
- (⁸¹) H.R.A. I, I, p. 380.
- (⁸²) Fitzpatrick op. cit. p. 90.
- (⁸³) Ibid p. 89-91.
- (⁸⁴) The Australian Settlers' Guide for June, 1835 (Mitchell Library).

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.

JULY, 1948.

SHEEP.

Numbers Available Increase.

Although at times during the period supplies were relatively light, the overall penning showed an increase of 57,395 head on the previous month's aggregate. During July nine sales were conducted when a total yarding of 174,517 head was offered, or an average of 19,391 head for each sale day. The smallest number submitted on any one day was 12,362 and the highest 25,488. Generally supplies were insufficient for trade needs.

Trade Sheep Numerous.

With a total of 64,244 head of sheep available buyers had a fairly good selection of suitable light trade sheep from which to obtain their requirements, wethers being much more in evidence than ewes which, due to the sucker lamb season, were in comparatively short supply. Good to prime heavy sheep were somewhat scarce. Nevertheless some particularly attractive drafts were on offer. Several lots of sheep submitted were only in good forward store condition.