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

By

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### 13. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLONY, 1821-1842.

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HAMPERING AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION—ROADS AND TRANS-  
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#### EXPANSION, 1821-1842.

The twenty-odd years of settlement following the departure of Macquarie from the Colony can only be described as a period of extraordinary expansion in all directions. In these years, New South Wales grew quickly from little more than a penal dump to a semi-independent economy, claiming the right of some share in self-government. The extent of this growth can be judged by comparing statistics for 1826, the first year of operations of the Australian Agricultural Company, and 1841<sup>(1)</sup> :—

		Population.	Revenue.	Imports.	Exports.	Wool.
			£	£	£	(in lbs.).
1826	...	34,697	72,221	360,000	106,600	411,600
1841	...	130,856	493,980	2,527,988	1,023,397	8,390,540

(Full figures of intervening years in Appendix).

It is interesting to note also these figures of actual exports in 1841: Wool, 8,390,540 lb.; butter and cheese, 94,080 lb.; cedar timber, 1,250,786 ft.; coal, 2,529 tons; cattle, 2,384 head; flour, 2,726,080 lb.; hides, 420,750 lb.; maize, 10,265 bushels; salt provisions, 716,480 lb.; tobacco, 50,716 lb.; wheat, 3,726 bushels; oil to the value of £127,470, plus miscellaneous items as well<sup>(2)</sup>. (See also appendix.)

Again, concerning land in actual cultivation, as distinct from land pastorally occupied or granted for such purposes, some even though limited, expansion of agriculture is evident from figures of cultivated land, exclusive of orchards and gardens, as assessed on 31st December, 1841<sup>(3)</sup> :—

	Crops.	Produce.	
	Acres.	Bushels.	
Wheat .....	58,605	832,776	
Maize .....	25,004	503,803	
Barley .....	5,423	90,172	
Oats .....	5,892	62,704	
Rye .....	495	6,507	
Millet .....	47	1,072	
		Tons.	Cwt.
Potatoes .....	4,027	11,141	9
Tobacco .....	380	132	2
Oats and sown grasses for hay	15,257	17,175	

Total land in cultivation—including district of Port Phillip—115,130 acres.

A further idea of this general development may be gained by noting extracts from the petition forwarded to the British Parliament in 1842 by the colonists, who at the time were seeking a representative legislature of their own: "The aggregate property of this community, movable and immovable, is estimated at the value of not less than 30 millions sterling; and the property annually created therein at two and a half millions . . . it appears from official returns that the maritime commerce of this community during the last ten years amounted in declared value to upwards of 22½ million pounds sterling; the trade with Great Britain direct, within that period, was in declared value upwards of 15 millions, more than 10 millions whereof were expended in the importation of British manufactures; the shipping employed by this commerce, inwards and outwards, comprised more than 7,300 vessels, exceeding 1¾ millions of ton burthen; and of the shipping inwards, there arrived from Great Britain direct, upwards of 900 vessels, carrying more than 376,000 tons . . . this community raises, for the purposes of government, a revenue, in round numbers, of £400,000 sterling per annum, being an average taxation of £4 per head . . . besides its large consumption of British manufactures and its extensive employment of British shipping, as shown above, this community within the last five years has relieved Great Britain of her surplus population, to the extent of nearly 57,000 souls, at the expense of the colonists of about a million and a quarter pounds sterling"<sup>(4)</sup>.

All this is a far cry from the earlier years of settlement, indicating an expansion of which even Bigge could have held no idea when his final reports were published in 1823. It should not be thought, however, that this development was throughout a peaceful one. In addition to two serious crises in 1828-1831 and 1842-1843, continual troubles accompanied each successive stage of agricultural, and for that matter, pastoral expansion. Problems of transport and communications, clearing costs, prices and marketing, pests and droughts, will be seen to have been the constant accompaniments of every attempt made to bring each further acre of land under cultivation, a continual conflict, meantime, being waged in the political field, between ideas of a pastoral occupation, on the one hand, and an agricultural consolidation of the country, on the other. Apparently, however, the "singular and eccentric" Australian continent was large enough to absorb, for the time being, these difficulties and to find niches for the manifold efforts made to exploit its resources. There was a little development of dairying, an increased cultivation of land for grain, a little tobacco growing, some timber exporting, but the whole insignificant, when compared with a vastly increased population which doubled itself from 1831 to 1842 and approximately quadrupled itself between 1821 and 1842. Even exports from the whaling fisheries were more important than the total of agricultural produce sent away. Fundamentally, all this expansion was made possible only because of the phenomenal development of the pastoral industry and fine wool growing, which alone encouraged the investment of British capital, free immigration to the colony and exploitation of the grazing lands of the interior. Agriculture was a slower growth, many steps behind the pastoral, constantly depressed, struggling to hold on to its position, sometimes falling back then regaining its ground and making some further progress, but unable as a regular

thing to provide a guaranteed subsistence for an increasing population, and being continually hamstrung by primitive methods and the surplus imports made to tide over a contemplated or existent deficiency.

The continual repetition of these factors may be tedious, but to ignore them would be to fail in providing an explanation of the factors which accompanied each successive stage in agricultural development, and as constantly entrammelled a vigorous full-blooded agricultural expansion. Agriculture in the years 1821-1842 continued largely divorced from stock-raising, as it had in the years preceding. There were thus two roads of development in primary production, constituting on the whole quite distinct patterns—the one, simple farming mainly followed by the smaller and thus poorer settlers; the other, the grazing of flocks and herds in the interior, first by those with permissive occupancies within the settled districts, lastly by the squatters spreading their stock beyond the settled districts and giving a new thrust and direction to the pastoral industry. This fact becomes clear if note is taken that in 1842, in the whole of the New England district, only three settlers were growing enough wheat for their own consumption, and that foreign observers commented on the entire absence of cultivation on stations. “Not a trace of culture,” wrote a Frenchman, Fauchery, “nothing except sheep and bullocks”<sup>(5)</sup>.

In fact it had become abundantly clear by 1842 that the colony could not hope to be self-sufficient, a notion that had become an accepted part of colonial economic theory. The general idea was that the people could best be fed on the cheaply-produced corn of China and South America, whilst wool sufficed to keep the country solvent. As yet, the position that wool belonged to the outer lands and wheat for the belts nearer the towns, was not realised. Agriculture was considered by the many a hazardous investment, “usually a means of severing fools from their money,” all right for the “Colin Clouts,” but no way to make a fortune. The farmers were decried as visionaries and their plight was lost sight of by both Government and the Colonial Legislative Council in the general emphasis placed on wool, until in the years after 1842 agriculture was slowly redeemed<sup>(6)</sup>.

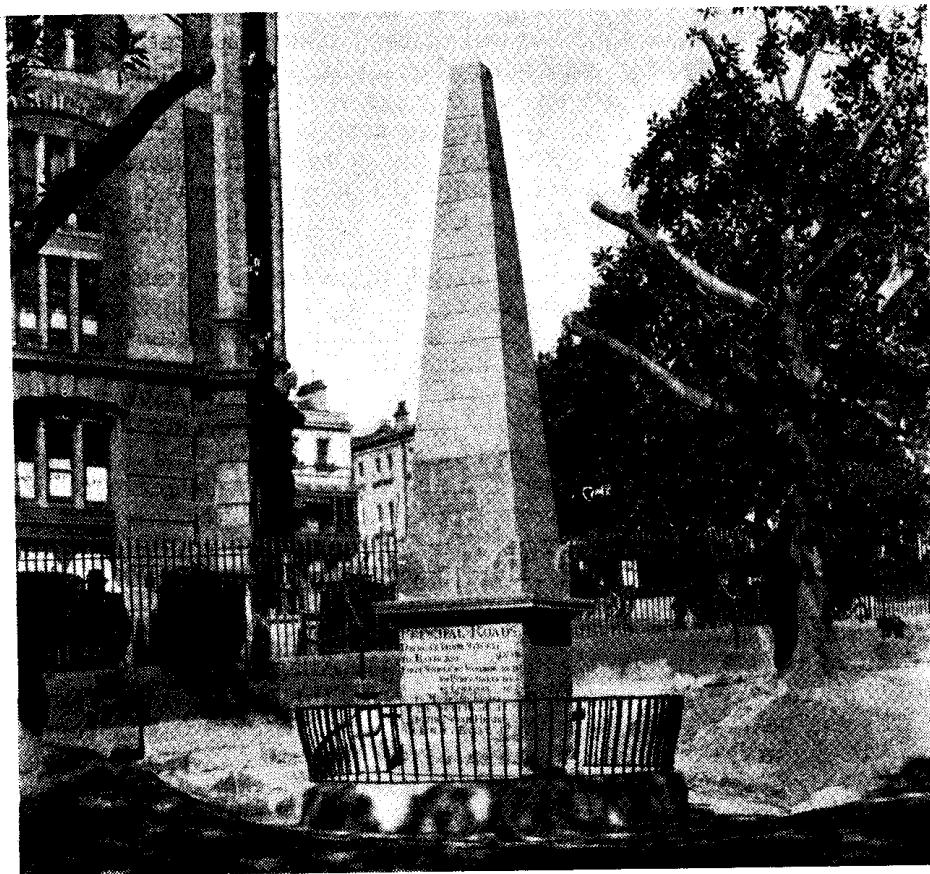
Some mention must be now made of the more significant factors which in the years 1821-1842 influenced agricultural development, though no attempt can be made to treat this subject extensively. In the first place, it would be quite impossible to do justice to the subject, for from 1821 onwards, with each new district opening up, all had particular problems of their own, such, for example, as those experienced on the Hunter and Paterson Rivers and in the New England district. These in themselves would amply justify individual researches. In the second place, any such detail in narrative would be rather a repetition of particular problems met with in the early settlement and common to agriculture in any country, and at any time, though modified by local conditions and circumstances. Rather, an effort will be made to single out particular problems and events which, linked together, give a broad picture of general settings and of the situation as existing at particular periods. Wherever possible, quotations from contemporary letters, books and documents will be used to tell the story. Before proceeding, however, to any such analysis, it would be as well to sketch in the general development that took place in the years 1821-1842, and to touch upon such events and facts as explorations, the opening up of

new settlement, shifts in the tide of immigration, changes in government policies, difficulties of roads and communications, all of which given an essential picture of an altering environment within which the Colony continued to expand. It is considered that to group this material with the treatment of a few major problems would confuse the general argument which is being followed in this survey. To ignore them, however, would be to make an alternative treatment hard to follow. It must not be lost sight of, moreover, that the material available for study, and as relating to the years 1821-1842, is almost overwhelming in the mass. Agriculture and the pastoral industry were linked with each new idea in land settlement, with each change of fortune in the destinies of the Colony, probably as no other problems of the period were so concerned. To some degree, in fact, it may be safely said that the period of expansion, 1821-1842, is essentially a period of a predominantly pastoral and a considerably lesser agricultural exploitation of the Colony's resources. It therefore follows that some selection of the material available is imperative, since this is an argument rather than a general survey, though the two have necessarily to be dovetailed together to some extent.

In succeeding pages of this sketch an attempt will be made to summarise the major points of development between the years 1821-1842 in so far as they bear upon the present survey of agricultural affairs in the first fifty years of settlement.

#### **EXPLORATION—OPENING UP OF NEW LANDS, 1821-1842.**

Until after 1813, as it has been seen previously, nothing definite was known of Australia beyond a small section of the eastern coastal fringe and few of the reports upon it were encouraging. Actual penetration began with the crossing of the Blue Mountains, followed by Evans' expedition, which verified what Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth had found, and pursued the quest for 100 miles further, finding (1813) the Macquarie River, beyond the locality where the township of Bathurst was to grow, and on a later expedition (1815) tracing the Lachlan further west. To solve the riddle of the inland waterways, Oxley (1817) had first wrestled with the mystery of the Lachlan. It was by the merest bad fortune that he had not been enabled to continue to the Murrumbidgee, for had he done so, says Scott, "not only would his immediate problem have been solved, but he would have found the key to the entire river system of southern and eastern Australia"<sup>(7)</sup>. It was the search for the solution of the waterways which did most to promote the succeeding explorations and thus the opening up of the lands of the interior. In 1818, Oxley had led another expedition to explore the Macquarie, in doing so finding the Castlereagh and the rich Liverpool Plains to the north. Meantime, Throsby and Hume had gone to the south, to Jervis Bay and the Goulburn country (1818), so opening up new areas which in the 'twenties were to become the "New Country" of promise, rather than the early Bathurst outpost<sup>(8)</sup>. Stockmen, soon afterwards, "looking not for glory but for grass," had driven their cattle south-east of the line of the Lachlan, finding the Murrumbidgee (1821) and already knowing it by that native name when Ovens and Currie came upon it by way of the Monaro tableland in 1823<sup>(9)</sup>. "Stockowners for a time concentrated in the south, and in a few years dotted settlements were placed all over the country from the old cedar huts of Illawarra to Lake George and the Lachlan, even



OBELISK: MACQUARIE PLACE, SYDNEY.

Sydney's most ancient monument, the obelisk shown in this photograph, was erected by Governor Macquarie in 1818 to serve the dual purpose of marking for posterity the original position where Governor Phillip first landed at Sydney Cove in January, 1788, and as an official starting point for measuring all the road distances of New South Wales.

Springing from a base 4 feet 8 inches square, the obelisk tapers to an apex of about 1 foot square at a height of approximately 26 feet.

On the front face of the masonry is the following inscription: "This Obelisk was erected in Macquarie Place, A.D. 1818 to record that all the public roads leading to the interior of the Colony are measured from it.—L. Macquarie, Esq., Governor."

The material used in the construction of the obelisk is Sydney sandstone, and although it has been weathered quite dark by its 130-odd years of exposure to the elements, it is still very well preserved. Convict labour was employed in its construction and the workmanship and finish are, by modern standards, poor throughout. The lettering is amateurish and the lines are out of centre in places. The lettering is cramped where the mason has boldly started off in fine style and subsequently finds it necessary to compress the lettering in order to complete the whole of the inscription. The four angle features which effect the junction between the upper and lower portions of the monument take the form of a quarter ellipse, and are inscribed with seven shallow scallops, the eighth, at the back, being left plain. However, in spite of these crudities in workmanship, the actual proportions of the monument are good, while the type of design adopted is so appropriate that it is thought to have been prepared under the direction of Francis Greenway, the illustrious convict architect of the Macquarie period who had arrived at Sydney some four years before.

(Cf. "Newspaper Cuttings," Volume 246; "New Nation Magazine," September, 1933—Mitchell Library, Sydney.)

sweeping round the mountain edge to connect with Bathurst<sup>(10)</sup>. By the close of 1822, herds of cattle had reached Lake Bathurst, and new settlers, having cursorily exhausted the south, were turning to the Hunter River, the key of the north, the banks of which had been opened to selection in that year<sup>(11)</sup>. This region absorbed, together with the southern regions, most attention for the next twenty years or so, especially when the Australian Agricultural Company received, in 1826, a million acres of land in Gloucester County, just north of the Hunter.

Then came further explorations to the north and the south, which considerably widened the extent of the known areas. Starting from Hume's own station at Lake George, in the south, in October, 1824, Hume and his retired sea captain associate, Hovell, proceeded south, crossed the Murrumbidgee near Yass, the Hume near Albury, and succeeding mountain ranges and valleys, eventually emerging upon the sea at Corio Bay, on the western arm of Port Phillip<sup>(12)</sup>. The discovery of the highly promising territory south of the Murrumbidgee was "in itself the most important occurrence of its kind since the crossing of the Blue Mountains eleven years before . . . its consequences were commensurate with this event . . . for it was through reading of Hume and Hovell's journey . . . that John Batman was induced to form the Port Phillip Association for the development of the territory traversed by the explorers"<sup>(13)</sup>. To the north (1823), Allan Cunningham, just before and following Brisbane's wish to "direct the tide of immigration towards the heart of the continent rather than coastwise," had found a road to the north and a means of entering the rich Liverpool Plains, through Pandora's Pass, a finding which it was believed would provide a great route of communication between Bathurst and the extensive plains of the north-west. Four years later, Cunningham (1827) was able to penetrate through this pass he had found, straight through to the Darling Downs in Queensland<sup>(14)</sup>.

These years had meantime seen other "fluttered and hasty planting of settlements for strategic purposes"—Melville Island (1824), Westernport (1826), King George's Sound (1826), Port Essington (1824), Moreton Bay (1824)—in order to anticipate possible French attempts at colonisation, to provide security, and perhaps, also, to provide points for later trading<sup>(15)</sup>. It was not really until 1829, when Captain Fremantle was sent to the Swan River with instructions to "take formal possession of that part of the coast in the name of His Majesty, which possession is meant to be extended to the whole of the western coast," that in fact the transient issue of French fears may be said to have been resolved<sup>(16)</sup>.

It is beyond the scope of this study to trace at any length the extent of exploration in after years. Sufficient it is to note Sturt's finding of the Darling River (1828), the knitting together of all the river threads (Hume, Murrumbidgee, Darling, Lachlan, Macquarie, Castlereagh, Bogan and the rest of the rivers), in the great expedition of 1829-30 following, and finally Mitchell's two expeditions of 1835 and 1836 which disclosed "Australia Felix," or the Port Phillip district to the south. A new vista of untapped resources, never-ending plains, rivered valleys, was opened up before the eyes of enraptured graziers within the space of a few short years, and slowly the gaps in knowledge were filled in, infiltrations of stock made.

About the middle of this period, October, 1829, the Nineteen Counties were proclaimed by Darling, Government finding it necessary to define certain limits over which jurisdiction would be exercised, and within the boundaries of which legitimate settlement only would be authorised<sup>(17)</sup>. The northern boundary was roughly on a line continuing the Manning River to the west; the southern boundary, a line west from Bateman's Bay; to the east, the ocean; to the west, the Lachlan River extending south and north in both directions. These were to be the limits of colonisation, and here official Sydney took its stand. In 1829, these nineteen counties more or less meant Australia and "the Government decreed that they should be viewed as if the sea flowed all round, and not merely to the east"<sup>(18)</sup>.

On Brisbane's arrival in 1821, matters had then stood that agricultural settlement was still mainly concentrated in the County of Cumberland and on the Nepean and Hawkesbury rivers. There was a small outpost at Bathurst, and Macquarie had just opened up the entire County of Camden, laying out the townships of Appin and Campbelltown. Throsby (1819) had found an easier road to the west by making a detour via the Wollondilly, thus avoiding the precipitous pass of the Blue Mountains. Now it was the turn of the Hunter River. To colonists accustomed to the less attractive lands of the south, these alluvial flats, only three days on horseback from Sydney, exposed a new world, and offered rich rewards. Both banks of the river were thrown open for selection at the close of 1822, three years after John Howe had crossed the unknown territory north of the Hawkesbury and found meadows, strikingly English in appearance<sup>(19)</sup>. The line of the Hunter was at once rushed, 50,000 cattle grazing there by 1823<sup>(20)</sup>. Within four years, 372,131 acres had been granted and "if a new settler wanted land, he naturally went to the Hunter"<sup>(21)</sup>. A new class of settlers there sprang up—farmers given land in proportion to the capital which they possessed—who, for the following twenty years, were the envy of the poorer settlers denied the same benefits and forced to continue farming on the poorer lands to the south. By 1828, agricultural life was coming to centre on this river, for as much land was alienated there as in the rest of the Colony put together<sup>(22)</sup>. In the interior there were villages at Merriwa, Mudgee, Bathurst and a Government post at Wellington, whilst on the Hunter, Newcastle was a town and Maitland an established settlement. Settlement was begun also at Argyle, but roads hampered development, and Yass was not reached until 1829<sup>(23)</sup>.

As apart from these extensions of agricultural settlement, remaining expansion concerns extrusions of flocks and herds beyond the boundaries of the located Nineteen Counties and the beginnings of squatting, already traced out fully by S. H. Roberts in his "The Squatting Age in Australia, 1835-1847." It is sufficient to note the occupation of the New England (1832-1840), the Murrumbidgee in part (1834-1840), Port Phillip (1834-1840) and the beginnings of settlement also in South Australia and Queensland, all before 1842.



### FACTORS HAMPERING EXTENSION OF AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT—ROADS AND TRANSPORT.

It has been previously seen that one of the more obvious conclusions of Commissioner Bigge in 1820, in his inquiries into continued settlement in New South Wales, had been the futility of placing small, free and emancipist farmers on lands at some distance from markets, owing to the impossibility of their deriving a livelihood from the produce of their farming. He had, in fact, recommended a departure from the policy pursued by Macquarie, suggesting in its place that the settlement of undercapitalised emancipists should be restricted to small blocks in areas of special fertility reserved for them close to markets, where they might grow vegetables and other produce of a perishable nature, for the most part ignored in the farming agriculture of the



LIVERPOOL, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1824.

*The foundations of Liverpool were laid by Governor Macquarie on 15th December, 1810, who named the village after the Earl of Liverpool and not the English town of that name. A number of farm lots were granted to ex-soldiers and other settlers, the first indication of a town being a small notice-board which boldly stated, "This is Liverpool." The view here shown first appeared in Lycett's "Views in Australia," and was accompanied by a descriptive paragraph in which the town was stated to be "about 20 miles from Sydney, situated upon the banks of the Georges River, which is about half the size of the Hawkesbury, and is navigable for vessels of 50 tons burthen as high up as Liverpool." Macquarie in due course erected the usual church, prison, courthouse, barracks, school, hospital and storehouse, which were regarded as the essential nucleus for any sizable town set up under his aegis. The land in the immediate vicinity of Liverpool is described as very stoney and barren in some parts, but "near the river is very good, and from it are procured excellent crops of Wheat, Barley, Oats, Indian Corn and Potatoes." Liverpool was intended to be an inland "port" from which produce from "the southern countries" might be shipped to Sydney.*

*In the 1830's, Liverpool possessed its "wharf," also its "Ship Inn," but the unforeseen expansion of Sydney, coupled with the developments of new methods in land transport, soon rendered further development of the town of Liverpool unnecessary.*

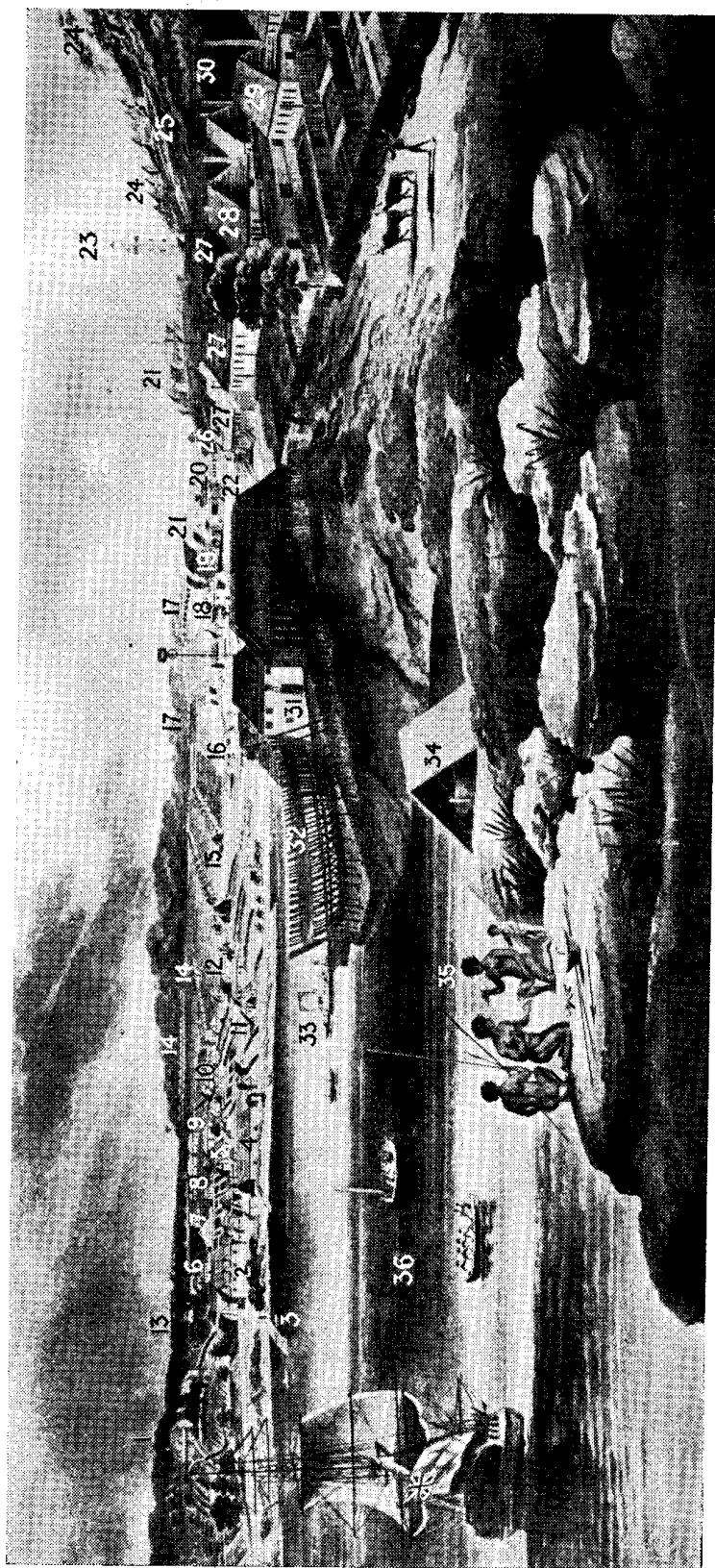
*(Miscellaneous references: "Views in Australia"—J. Lycett—Mitchell Library, Sydney.)*

larger, more wealthy landholders. There was much wisdom in this recommendation, sensible in its approach to possibly one of the most considerable hurdles involved in the agriculture of the early years of settlement—the twin problems of transport costs and distance from markets.

Atkinson (1826), also, in his conclusions in regard to the extension of agriculture, emphasizes this same obstacle: "The great defect of New South Wales is the want of navigable rivers. None have been yet discovered that are navigable any considerable distance, and the large tracts of fertile plains in the interior are in consequence inaccessible to water carriage . . . This circumstance will occasion the Colony for a long period to be more a pastoral than an agricultural country; and cultivation and colonization will extend most upon the sea coast, and in the neighbourhood of the few rivers that are navigable"<sup>(24)</sup>. There was nothing very original in these findings, which had been found to be true from the very commencement of settlement and instances of which have been earlier noted. It is to the credit of Macquarie that he did understand this difficulty and built roads and bridges, either before or at the same time as he encouraged settlement to new districts, ignoring the contrary advice given to him to let settlement first establish itself before proceeding to enter into "extravagant expenditure" in making roads. These difficulties in communications and distances from markets must explain why, in the earlier years, the Bathurst outpost remained for so long backward, Wentworth in 1820 concluding that: "The difficulty, however, of thus communicating with the capital is such as to preclude this vast tract of country from assuming an agricultural character except in so far as the raising of grain for a scanty population of shepherds and herdsmen may entitle it . . . The difficulty and expense of land carriage across the Blue Mountains will always prevent the inhabitants of that vast western wilderness which is at present explored, from entering into competition with the colonists in the immediate vicinity of Port Jackson"<sup>(25)</sup>.

The probability is that it was the search for navigable rivers which was the fundamental consideration in all the early attempts made to solve the riddle of the internal waterways. An indication of this viewpoint can be seen in Wentworth's summary of how the Colony stood in 1820:

"Nothing is now wanting to render this great western wilderness the seat of a powerful community, but the discovery of a navigable river communicating with the western coast. That such exists, although the search for it has hitherto proved ineffectual, there can be no doubt, since in the whole compass of the earth there is no single instance of so large a country as New Holland, not possessing at least one great navigable river. . . . What if the Macquarie, 5,000 or 6,000 miles long, empties into the north-west coast! . . . That countries which are more abundantly intersected with navigable rivers are most favourable for the purposes of civilised man, the history of the world affords the most satisfactory proof. There is not, in fact, a single instance on record of any remarkable degree of wealth and power having been attained by any nation which has not possessed facilities for commerce, either in the number or size of its rivers or in the spaciousness of its harbours and the general contiguity of its provinces to the sea. . . . From the moment savages abandon the hunter state and resign themselves to the settled pursuits of agriculture, the march of population



At the time when the sketch upon which this plate is based was originally drawn by Captain John Hunter, the infant New South Wales settlement was no more than a few months old. Hunter's drawing is dated 20th August, 1788. Subsequently the drawing came into the possession of an Isaac Clementson, Esq., of London. It was redrawn by E. Dayes, "under the inspection of Mr Thomson, late acting Chief Surgeon to the Settlement," and then engraved and published by F. Jukes of No. 10 Howland-street, London. The date of publication is given as 10th April, 1804.

Various landmarks can be identified and the key is as follows:—

1. Governor's House.
2. Government Store House.
3. Government Wharf.
4. Government Forge.
5. Judge Advocate's House.
6. Simeon Lord's Warehouses, etc.
7. The Superintendent of Convicts' House.
8. A Room where the Magistrates sit.
9. The Chaplain's House.
10. Surveyor-General's House.
11. The Guard House.
12. Government Granary.
13. Back Row.
14. Chapel Row.
15. Pitt's Row.
16. Tanks of Water.
17. Barrack Row.
18. Crphan House and School.
19. Tower for the New Church.
20. Lieutenant-Governor's House.
21. Barracks for the New South Wales Corps.
22. Parade for the New South Wales Corps.
23. Assistant Surgeon's House.
24. Convicts' Houses.
25. Court House.
26. Government Store Houses and the County Gaol.
27. Hospital and Medical Store Houses.
28. Principal Surgeon's House.
29. Hospital Garden.
30. Hospital.
31. Government Dockyard and Artificers Workshops.
32. Vessel on the Stocks.
33. Hospital Wharf where only Goods, etc., are landed.
34. Surgeon's Boat and House.
35. A Group of Natives.
36. Sydney Cove.

(*Cf. Journ. & Proc. of R.A.H.S., Vol. 5, p. 226.*)

must inevitably follow the direction of navigable waters. . . . Roads, waggons, etc., are refinements entirely unknown in the incipient stages of society. . . . Canals are a still later result of civilization. . . . But, after all, what are these artificial channels of communication, these *ne plus ultras* of human contrivance, compared with those natural mediums of intercourse, those mighty rivers which pervade every quarter of the globe?" (<sup>26</sup>).

Thus it is that in the years 1821-1842, agriculture continued to be confined to the more accessible districts and concentration of settlement came to be made in the Hunter River country, in a wave that developed from 1822 onwards, immediately after it was opened. This is why, also, the counties of Cumberland and Camden, notwithstanding the infertility of much of their soils and the dangers of their rivers, continued for so long to constitute the main agricultural districts of the Colony, although better lands were found in the interior, and why the newer wheatlands of the more distant Argyle, capable of producing good crops, lagged behind in development.

Few complaints appear in the contemporary newspapers of road and transport difficulties between 1821 and 1831. The reasons must follow from the fact that settlement by "capitalist" graziers and farmers was continuing in these years on the Hunter, only three days riding on horseback from Sydney, and with communication open with the capital and its main market by sea and river. But from 1831 onwards, with increasing population and a further worsening of the food situation, there is a succession of such complaints, just a few instances of which may be quoted to show the settings of the times. Thus from the "Sydney Herald" of 6th June, 1831:

"There was a parcel of wheat from Argyle brought into town, of the best description that has been seen for some time . . . . It is much to be regretted that this and other fine districts have not the advantages of good roads and other facilities afforded them for sending their grain to market, the want of which tends to the manifest encouragement of foreigners . . . ."

In the following issue of 13th June, 1831, further comment is made by an anonymous contributor, styling himself "Agricola":

"Never we believe in the memory of man have the roads of the Colony been in an equally deplorable state as they are at present. During the period when the roads were impassable, country produce increased in price, but no farmers could embrace the opportunity. The roads are improperly constructed and have not a sufficient declivity towards the sides. The rivers and the sea, we trust, will be our best highways as soon as the steam boats in progress are completed. If we had a few good roads to the Illawarra and other ports, we could then bring better grain to market than Launceston can supply; and we should have a never failing source of abundance, unchecked by seasons, derivable from our southern shores which are admirably adapted for wheat. A stimulus would thus be given to agriculture in the southern districts which has hitherto been confined to the feeding of cattle, and considered as fit only for the Colin Clouts of the Colony. But a few years will prove that the southern regions will become the most productive in sound wheat, and will feed the northern parts of our United States and receive in return our tobacco, corn, fruit and wine."

In a leader article of the "Sydney Herald" of issue 18th July, 1831, further references are made to the same subject:

"The fine grain of the south at a distance of not more than 100 miles costs more in the carriage than that of Van Diemen's Land at a distance of several hundred miles. Formerly, when the roads were in a tolerable state for many years, a load of 50 bushels could be brought from Argyle to the Cow Pastures in five or six days, but such is the miserable state at present that fourteen days are occupied performing the same feat with a team of nine bullocks. . . . Men are obliged to load and unload several times for fear of accidents, which frequently happen in spite of all precautions. . . . There is an outcry that gangs are liberally distributed to Hunter River and Bathurst, whilst the South is neglected. . . . Newcastle has her steam boat, small craft and extensive roads, whilst Argyle has no properly constructed road either to Sydney or to the sea coast. . . . The claim must be made. . . . Let a road be made at Shoalhaven also. . . . If these districts were opened up, agricultural produce would be brought within the profitable range of the Sydney market, the market would be more steady, foreign wheat would be excluded and fresh sources of traffic and intercourse would be opened up without extending the limits of the Colony. . . . The consequence is that most of the settlers have declined sowing large quantities of wheat and propose to sow barley on which to feed their pigs, which they conceive will cost less and bring a better price as they are constantly in demand for the shipping. . . . Hops will grow well in these districts. . . . Tobacco also grows luxuriantly. . . . we look forward to tobacco being a staple article of home consumption and foreign export, which in conjunction with vineyards and orchards will be perhaps more profitable than the production of wheat and corn, for the former of which our warmer latitudes are not well adapted."

Steamers, in the meantime, were bringing grain from the Hunter and some wheat, "the finest seen in Sydney for some time . . . weighing 63 lb. to the bushel," was being brought overland to Sydney from Bathurst, with, however, extraordinary differences in freight charges between the two. (S.H. 25/7/1831.) Further illustrations of the same sort could be quoted, but it is sufficient to note the general details. With bad roads and isolated settlement, came also, in the later days of the 1830's, depredations and attacks by bushrangers and natives. Such an instance is given in this final quotation (S.H. 8/1/1840):

"Recent arrivals from Yass represent the country about there to be in a very unsettled and deplorable state, on account of the depredations of bushrangers. . . . On the 31st December the station of Rev. Mr. Cartwright was plundered. On the same day at Yass there was a skirmish between seven armed bushrangers and two of the border police. . . . The residence of a settler named Heffernan living near Goulburn was attacked. The station of Mr. Isaac Shepherd was attacked. . . . Mr. Arthur Rankin who has been residing with his family for the last ten years on the Lachlan has been compelled to abandon his residence and retire to Bathurst. . . . What is now wanted is vigorous government action."

Summarising the position then, it can be readily seen that the factors which prevented any widespread settlement of the interior by farmers were—as apart from such fundamental factors as capital, labour, costs of clearing, fencing and similar issues—isolation, prohibitive costs of marketing produce and lack of protection from depredations by bush-rangers. If to these are also added the circumstances of a continual unstable market, primitive methods, lack of opportunities for a diversified farming, a swamping of the markets with imported produce and consequent ruinous low prices, this should be sufficient to explain why, by the 1830's, the general conclusion reached was that New South Wales was unsuitable for agricultural settlement and a pastoral occupation was preferred.

### **CHANGING POLICIES, 1821-1831—IMPORTATION OF CAPITAL AND “CAPITALIST” IMMIGRATION.**

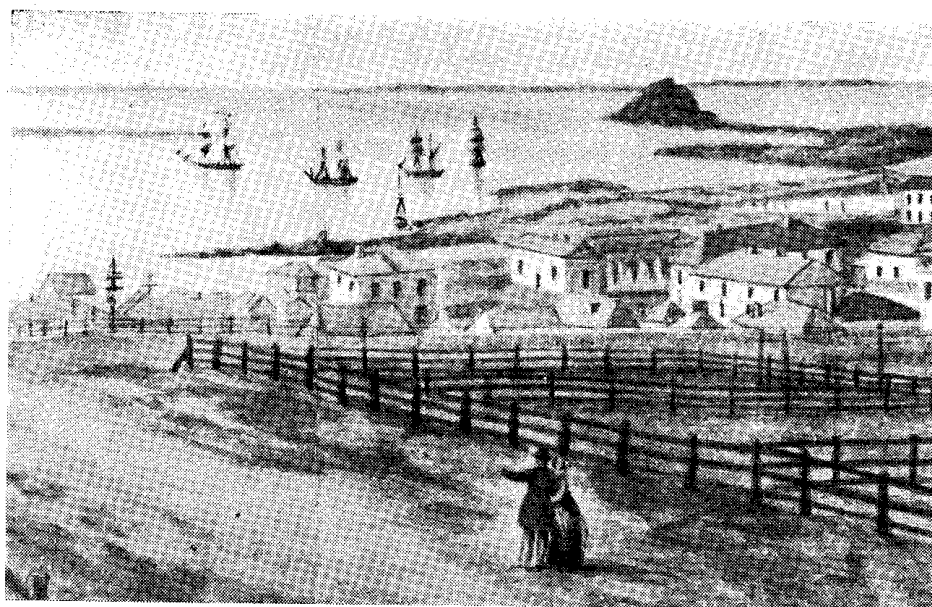
It has been seen that Oxley had suggested to Bigge that what the Colony required, in order to exploit its resources, was an inflow of men with capital, and that to such, lands should be granted in quantities proportionate to the amount of capital available for investment, and had also stated that he was convinced that small emancipist settlement, after the Macquarie pattern, if pursued alone, would tend to keep the Colony backward. Oxley was a realist by the very nature of his experiences as Surveyor-General, and the facts really were that under-capitalised farming on small acreages could not have paid without some provision of credit facilities by Government and a bolstering of the native agriculture by the maintenance of a stable and sufficiently profitable market for all produce grown. These being impracticable at the time, small farming was at best a risky, hazardous undertaking. The issue that followed, of course, was what to do with the convicts, how to find suitable employment for them and distribute them away from the township of Sydney, if transportation were to continue. The answer to this had been suggested by Macarthur—exploit the developing pastoral prospect by providing abundant labour for resourceful and reliable masters who with their flocks and herds, capital and abundance of labour, would then be able to utilise the extensive pastoral lands of the interior, proved to be eminently suitable for sheep, and spreading in limitless extent in every direction. Bigge had gone home and recommended both.

Though there had been some free settlement in the years prior to 1821, this had been but to a very limited degree. Government had provided a free passage for the emigrant and his family, a grant of land on their arrival in the territory, with rations and servants for a certain period afterwards. This had been discontinued in 1818, “Michael Henderson who arrived in 1818, and William Howe in 1819, having been the first free men who paid their passages to New South Wales”<sup>(27)</sup>. The new policy adopted in its place was to hold out prospects of grants of land to those who could produce satisfactory certificates of possessing a capital of at least £500, the grants being then proportioned to the amount of real and available capital demonstrated. This tide of free emigration continued through the years of Brisbane's following administration, 1821-1825, Lang saying of the position, “the Government of Sir Thomas Brisbane will always be memorable as the era of free immigration”<sup>(28)</sup>.

The most important facts to be noted in the years immediately following 1821 are, firstly, this influx of free immigrants; secondly, the new policy adopted of issuing grants of land to those able to subsist convicts in addition to those entitled to grants because of the capital possessed; and thirdly, the use of chain gangs organised in clearing parties. It has been already noted that in the few years immediately preceding Macquarie's departure from the Colony, convict labour had become something of a drug on the market. To Bigge, the accumulation of convicts in the towns, engaged on unnecessary building enterprises, had been one of the worst things he had observed. From various causes—the most important, a depression of the local agriculture; a second reason, the overwhelming number of them—the settlers were unable to usefully employ the shiploads of convicts arriving. Macquarie had been tempted, in consequence, to form agricultural and penal settlements, as, for example, at Emu Plains and Newcastle. Lands were cleared in this way and considerable expenditure incurred. The two factors then, with which Brisbane, following Macquarie, was confronted, were free immigrants arriving in the territory with capital to invest, and secondly, a surplus of convict labour. It remains to be briefly sketched how these two problems were handled.

Brisbane, in addition to this primary administrative difficulty, had many other threads, in fact, to tie together. The first thing done was to endeavour to place upon a legal footing grants made in previous years when "the smallest scrap of paper containing a promise was equivalent, if not superior, to the best title from the Crown"<sup>(29)</sup>. "Lands in towns were being held almost wholly on permissive occupancy, every tenanted allotment, almost, having been purchased from some obscure individual who had exercised the right to sell under an old permission to occupy, given him by a magistrate or the surveyor." Similarly, in respect of country lands, settlers had gone out and taken possession on a mere verbal promise, without any security, without fences, or marked boundaries, such following, as it has been previously seen, from a simple overloading of the work of the Surveying Department under Macquarie. The tangle was extremely perplexing to the new Governor. Wisely, Brisbane followed the policy of recognising, wherever possible, promises which had been made before he assumed control. But there were endless quarrels about the boundaries of adjoining estates, although an effort was made to settle these differences and to give occupiers a legal title to their land.

The convict system, as it had been left by Macquarie, left much to be desired, and did not make for a profitable and sufficient use of the labour available. This at least was the view of the incoming Governor. "The convict barracks of New South Wales," wrote Brisbane, giving his first impressions, "remind me of the monasteries of Spain. They contain a population of consumers who reproduce nothing"<sup>(30)</sup>. A student of Adam Smith, Brisbane maintained the proposition that "the capital of any country can only increase in proportion to the number of its productive labourers"<sup>(31)</sup>. Every convict cost the Government £24 14s. per annum to subsist—Bigge's estimate—which was diminished by 1823 in consequence of the increased production and the consequent fall in the price of foodstuffs. To reduce this financial burden on budget resources the Governor enforced a rule that every person who obtained a grant of land should maintain one convict per



PANORAMA OF NEWCASTLE, NEW SOUTH WALES.

*This view of Newcastle from Newcomen-street was drawn by John Rae in 1847. It first appeared as one of a number of illustrations published by the New South Wales Commission for the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition in a booklet entitled "Mr. Rae's Sketches of Colonial Scenes in the Olden Times." The following description is taken from the "Evening News," 10th October, 1883: "A few scattered houses and a few small vessels in the river represent what is now a large city and a port crowded with big ships. Some of the more permanent buildings are recognisable and still exist, such as the Barracks, Court House and Gaol, and Nobbys is still there."*

*Sailing vessels only are shown at anchor in the port, but it would have been possible to see steamers on the date at which this picture was drawn, since the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company had been formed in 1839 and the first steam ships brought out to New South Wales in the early 1840's.*

*John Rae was an artist of diversified talents who took a prominent part in the development of New South Wales. Born at Aberdeen in Scotland, he took his M.A. degree at Edinburgh University and arrived at Sydney in 1839 to take a position as Secretary and Accountant to the North British Loan and Investment Company. In July, 1843, he was appointed Town Clerk of Sydney and went on, in 1854, to be one of the three Commissioners who until 1857 administered municipal affairs in place of the Sydney City Council. Later he became Under Secretary for Works, and Railway Commissioner in 1858, the latter position carrying no salary and being administered as part of the duties of his Under Secretaryship. In 1884 he became a member of the new Civil Service Board, constituted under the Act of that year. It was in the leisure time left to him during the carrying out of his various and onerous duties that Rae found time to publish a blank verse translation of the book of Isaiah, the copies of which he printed and bound himself; to write a novel about the Napoleonic war; to invent a machine for the cutting out of intricate patterns; and to make hundreds of sketches with brush and pencil in black and white, which form an invaluable record of early life in Australia.*

*(Cf. Newspaper cuttings: Vol. 112, pp. 86-89 and Vol. 116, p. 193; New South Wales Railway and Tramway Magazine, December, 1920, pp. 147-148; Newcastle (1797-1947), edited by K. Lingard, Mitchell Library, Sydney.)*



100 acres of his holding<sup>(32)</sup>. The actual position that developed was such, says Lang, "that any respectable person who pledged himself to the Government to employ and maintain twenty convict settlers could immediately and without any recommendation whatever, obtain a grant of 2,000 acres of land, or 100 acres for each convict servant"<sup>(33)</sup>. Lang's father, who arrived in January, 1824, on pledging himself to employ twenty convict servants, was given 2,000 acres; whilst his brother, who had arrived in the preceding year (1823) with no order from the Home Government, on merely offering to maintain ten servants, was given a 1,000 acres grant. This plan, says Scott, had the further advantage of putting pressure upon landholders to make economic use of their properties, and restrained those who were continually endeavouring to obtain more land, not for cultivation but for speculation<sup>(34)</sup>.

Protests, so it seems, came from the free settlers already established, who wished to obtain from the Government as many acres as they could, and to use, or not use, the land as they pleased. "Not a cow calves in the Colony," wrote the Governor apropos of this, "but her owner applies for an additional grant in consequence of the increase of his stock. Every person to whom one is refused turns my implacable enemy. Seated in this situation, I cannot but recall to mind the French King who explained, from a similar feeling, 'By every gift that I bestow I create one ungrateful person and ten enemies'"<sup>(35)</sup>. But the developing effects of the new rule soon became apparent. New settlers were flocking to New South Wales; they were "all elbowing one another," a contemporary observed, and it was an advantage to a man who meant to make the best use of his opportunities, to have adequate labour placed at his disposal<sup>(36)</sup>. Policy was uniformly liberal, Alexander Berry, of Shoalhaven, recording in his *Reminiscences* how he and his partner, Edward Wollstonecraft, undertook to maintain one hundred convicts provided the Governor gave them 10,000 acres. He records that "our tender was promptly accepted, subject to the approval of the Home Government"<sup>(37)</sup>.

The general situation can be more easily understood if a reference is made to an article in the 'New South Wales Magazine,' June, 1843, written just twenty years later:

"It was not until the administration of Sir Thomas Brisbane that the Colony began to be resorted to by numbers of emigrants with capital. Up to that period it had been strictly a penal settlement, consisting of convicts, emancipists and their families, the civil and military establishments, and a slight sprinkling of emigrant settlers. No free person was even allowed to settle in the Colony without a written licence from the Secretary of State. But during the Brisbane administration—i.e., from the latter part of 1821—the emigration of British capitalists began gradually to increase and colonial society to assume the aspect of a free and enterprising British dependency. Throughout the subsequent ten years, vast tracts of waste land were alienated by the Crown, almost entirely without purchase, but subject to several conditions, the objects of which were to ensure a bona fide occupancy of the estate and the actual investment of capital in its cultivation and improvement. Agriculture and grazing made rapid advances. New regions in the interior, north, west and south, were discovered, thrown open and brought into use. Clearing parties or gangs of convicts assigned

for the special purpose of felling trees, were employed on every hand. Dense forests were converted into open glades, and these glades into luxuriant corn fields. Much attention was paid, too, to the improvement of live-stock. Choice breeds of sheep, horned cattle and horses were imported into the Colony in considerable numbers. The country had now fairly started in the race of industry and wealth. The value of her wools had become generally understood by British manufacturers: and the colonists encouraged by this propitious circumstance, actually became anxious to enlarge their flocks both by breeding and by purchase. (Exports of wool, 1820, less than 100,000 lb.; 1831, upwards of 1,400,000 lb.) And as every new emigrant was also a purchaser of sheep, the price of course continued to rise. But though bought at high prices, the investment was nevertheless remunerative, because the price of wool was in proportion, and the demands of the butcher were equal to the surplus increase of flocks. In the middle of these ten years, a strong impetus was given to the value of live-stock by the commencement of the Australian Agricultural Company. This wealthy association, with its capital of a million sterling, and with its princely endowment of a million of acres, entered upon its farming operations in 1825. But although the stocks of animals and implements brought out from England by its first vessels were ample, it yet had many wants to be supplied in the Colony. Sheep and cattle were the principal commodities which the company required, and of these it made large purchases at liberal prices . . . ."

In this way developed an extensive land settlement of the agricultural and pastoral country adjoining the Cow Pastures, of the Bathurst Plains, the thickly wooded alluvial banks of the Hunter and its tributaries and the district of Argyle, or what was then called the "New Country." The general extent of the grants was between 500 and 2,000 acres. Rations were at first allowed to each settler and to a certain number of convict servants, proportioned to the extent of the grant made, and the settler was allowed also a certain number of cattle from the Government herds as a loan to be repaid in kind in seven years, although in consequence of the increase in the number of immigrants, these indulgences were afterwards discontinued. Land came to be increasingly given in proportion to the independence of each settler and his ability to subsist convict assignees<sup>(38)</sup>.

Faced, even so, with a surplus of convicts, Brisbane initiated the plan of using convict labour to clear unsettled country, so as to make it immediately available for occupation. In 1820, the area of cleared land in New South Wales had been 54,898 acres, but within two years, Brisbane's convict gangs had cleared an additional 11,503 acres<sup>(39)</sup>. He believed—again as a diligent student of Adam Smith—that "a general system of political economy (had now been) for the first time introduced into this interesting settlement" which would, so he hoped, prove the foundation of its future prosperity and grandeur. Moral progress was likewise observable. Despite a large increase of the convict population, crime decreased. A cause contributing to this welcome result was Brisbane's new rule making the grant of "tickets of leave" and pardons consequent upon good conduct. Brisbane also, says Scott, introduced a "sound system of tendering for the supply of government stores and reformed the Commissariat Department," though, as will be seen, this

was not to the benefit of the agriculturalists. More intelligent direction and better government, so it is also said, prevailed under his administration than at any time previous in the Colony. The customs revenue was doubled and the export of wool, oil and timber substantially increased. Before 1825 and Brisbane's departure, both New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were coming to be recognised in Great Britain as countries where opportunities of prosperity were offered to industrious men. Small settlers who could be accommodated with 1,200 to 2,000 acres and men with capital who could work large estates, were welcomed, and both the Australian Agricultural Company and, a little later, the Van Diemen's Land Company began developments. "Every ship brought people; land was easy to obtain, and the requirements that a grantee of land should be possessed of a minimum of capital was easy to avoid with the assistance of agents who made it their business to study the regulations in order to circumvent them" ("").

All did not, however, go strictly according to plan with these developments of the Brisbane regime. There was, for example, some published half-criticism of his policy with the clearing gangs, as illustrated in this reference in the "Australian," 5th January, 1826:

"The clearing gangs, we observe by an official order, are about to be dissolved and the men distributed among the settlers. It is very questionable whether this measure be a prudent one or likely to give satisfaction. . . . The clearing gangs have been used as a means of punishing men for very serious offences. . . . The most notorious bushrangers have been escaped prisoners from clearing gangs. . . . Clearing gangs have been of great service to the Colony. They might have been of greater service. The principle on which they were introduced is good; and a great deal of land, through them, has been cleared which would never have been improved or touched. But they have not given assistance to those who needed it most. They have produced wealth to wealthy men. The poor emigrant could get no clearing gang for his few acres; while the lordly owner of Grants, and purchases, and thousands, he got his park, his meadows, and his whole estate untimbered and beautified. Improvements have been made but necessities have not been relieved by clearing gangs. They are, however, so beneficial to the Colony in whatever way they are employed that we would see them misused rather than disused."

Again, it was soon found that because of the continued influx of free settlers, the Government had by no means so large a number of convict labourers to dispose of, in proportion to the free emigrant inhabitants of the Colony, as had been anticipated, and was consequently so far from either requiring or compelling the guarantees to fulfil their engagements by maintaining the number of convicts they had respectively pledged themselves to employ, that it was even unable to supply them with the number they actually applied for. So steadily did the demand for convict labour increase on the part of the free settlers that during the administration of Darling there were at one time applications for no fewer than 2,000 convict labourers lying unsatisfied in the office of the principal superintendent of convicts. No doubt, thought Lang, this was one of the main reasons why the Government farms and penal settlements came eventually to be abandoned ("").

In the large scale alienation of lands made by Brisbane, it was perhaps inevitable that considerable irregularities should also have crept in. Lang instances, for example, the case of one man from the Isle of France who, receiving a grant of 2,000 acres, immediately sold it for £500 and then left the Colony. The few years 1821-1825, in this way, saw a considerable part of the richest land in the Colony, in the Hunter River district, irrevocably alienated to comparatively large landholders, if comparison is made with the small blocks which in the preceding years had been given to emancipists. Following shiploads of hopeful emigrants were to find to their cost that settlement, if it was to be made at all, required costly clearing outlays at ever greater distances from markets, or the alternative of gathering together a flock and seeking pastures. The latter was frequently the choice when the "sheep and cattle" mania developed in 1826.

With the arrival of Governor Darling (1826-1831), some means had to be adopted to correct abuses and render uniform the system of land grants. To this end the Governor instituted a board of enquiry called a Land Board and established regulations by which it was to be guided (<sup>42</sup>). Land was henceforth to be granted in proportion to the property or means of the applicant, and was not to be granted at all unless there was good reason to believe that the prospective grantee would be willing and able to improve it. Perhaps there was some hardship involved to poorer men seeking land, but, on the whole, thought Lang, the regulations were good.

It is of some interest to note, also, at this stage, new policies in regard to emancipist colonisation. When Macquarie was recalled in 1821 and Brisbane had been given his instructions, Bigge's reports (ordered to be printed, 1822 and 1823) were not available, and the Colonial Office's directions to him on 5th February, 1821, followed the traditional pattern in requiring him to make grants to emancipees (30 acres, plus 20 acres for wife, 10 for each child, with subsistence, etc.), and to free emigrants (about 100 acres). But from this year the system was rapidly extended by which persons of substance were provided, before leaving England, with written orders on the Governor for land grants (<sup>43</sup>). Three years later, when Bigge's reports had been sent to Brisbane and he was fully informed of the Government's expectations that he should follow them, he considered Bigge's recommendations that "no grants, beyond ten acres, be in future given unless to those possessed of property." Brisbane's comment was: "Attended to as far as considered expedient to due encouragement to that class of inhabitants, combined with the means they possess of doing justice to a grant of land." (Brisbane to Bathurst, 14th May, 1825, H.R.A. I, XI, p. 579.) In fact he did make grants to deserving cases. The next Governor, Darling, received his instructions two months after Brisbane had sent the despatch containing this comment. The provision was specifically not mentioned at all in his instructions that ex-convicts should be settled on the land in New South Wales. Grants might alone be made to "private persons." Additionally, land might be sold, but no grant was to be less than 320 or more than 2,560 acres (<sup>44</sup>). This date, July, 1825, states Fitzpatrick, from whom the foregoing has been taken, thus marks the official termination of the policy which in fact Macquarie had been the last to execute—the accommodation in New South Wales of the small man as an owner—and the institution

of a new policy—the accommodation of the large owner<sup>(45)</sup>. One hundred and one grants were made or confirmed by Darling in 1828, aggregating more than 150,000 acres. Ten of them averaged nearly 2,000 acres per grant. “The small holder was vanishing from the colonial scene, and nearly 4,400 square miles had been alienated in New South Wales as compared with considerably less than 300 square miles when Macquarie came, and considerably less than a thousand square miles when he left.” In Brisbane’s and Darling’s years to 1828, 3,500 square miles were granted or sold, as compared with less than 300 square miles in 1788-1809. But in the place of the emancipist landholder there was now the tenant-farmer<sup>(46)</sup>.

The position in regard to this growth becomes clearer if comparison is made at this stage between the circumstances of the colony as it was on Brisbane’s arrival and as it had developed by 1828, the year before the demarcation of the Nineteen Counties. (No census was taken during the years 1821-1828.) In 1821, the situation was that of the total population of 23,000-odd, the bulk of the people were in the town and neighbourhoods of Sydney (13,401), Windsor (5,506), Parramatta (4,778), Liverpool (4,246), Newcastle (1,168), Bathurst (287), and Port Macquarie (102)<sup>(47)</sup>. Notwithstanding the alienation of Crown lands (381,468 acres), only a small proportion was under crop (32,271 acres), while the livestock of the Colony comprised: horses, 4,014; cattle, 68,149; sheep, 119,777; pigs, 29,042, concentrated also in the neighbourhood of Sydney and the villages. By the census taken in November, 1828, comparative figures are indicative of a considerable growth. Population numbered 36,598. The mass of this population was still concentrated in the neighbourhood of Sydney (25,142), and the other established towns. The advent of the Australian Agricultural Company had hastened development in the northern coastal districts (3,260), but the southern coastal districts were less populous (2,338). Bathurst and its neighbourhood (2,072), however, were becoming more important every year. Of the Crown lands alienated (2,906,346 acres), only a small proportion had been cleared (231,573 acres), and a smaller proportion was under crop (71,523 acres). Stock had meantime increased considerably in numbers (horses, 12,479; cattle, 262,268; sheep, 536,391), but, whereas the county of Cumberland still contained the greater part of the cleared and cultivated land, Bathurst had become the centre of the sheep industry<sup>(48)</sup>.

In the meantime, Darling had improved the road to Bathurst. A good road was also made to the Hunter River settlement, a considerable undertaking involving construction of over 130 miles of cleared track through difficult country. Cross-roads were also built, whilst several gangs of convicts were also employed in opening a permanent line of communication beyond the county of Argyle. In appraising this achievement, Lang thought that, “in this respect Governor Darling certainly merited commendation, rather for the magnitude and extent of his undertakings than for their uniform judiciousness.” But, even so, these roads and bridges were but a drop in the ocean of the vast interior of the Colony<sup>(49)</sup>. The era of development closes with the four bad years of drought, depression and stagnation—1828-1831.

**AMENDED POLICIES, 1831-1842—PAUPER AND ASSISTED IMMIGRATION.**

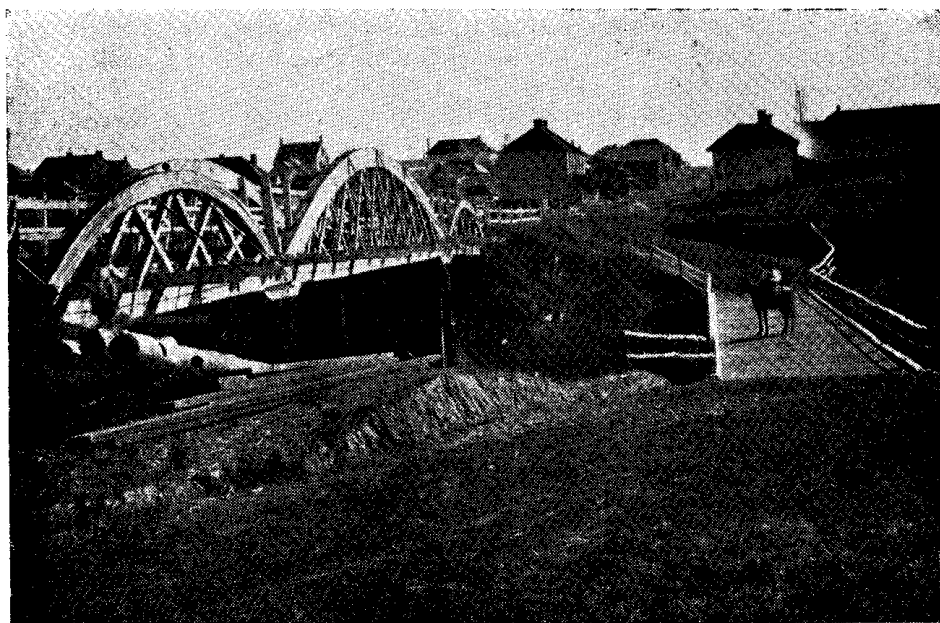
It is outside the scope of this study to do more than sketch in the briefest form the developments ushering in the accelerated immigration which in the short space of about ten years, from 1830 onwards, almost doubled the population of the Colony and completely changed its social fabric. These are fully examined in such authoritative works as those by Roberts, Mills and Fitzpatrick, and in the Cambridge History of the British Empire, Volume 7<sup>(50)</sup>. In broad terms, diverging theories of redundancy of population, of poor rates and poor house policies, of mass unemployment and dispossession, were troublesome issues in England in the years following the Napoleonic wars, and in the wake of the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions, still virtually proceeding. And naturally enough, under these circumstances attention came increasingly to be given to the possibilities of finding a profitable employment for surplus English capital and labour in the colonies, and, in particular, Canada and New South Wales. There was much distress in the England of the 1820's—rick burning and machine riots—and a new economy was being slowly fashioned, but at tremendous cost in human values.

In the earlier years of the Colony, as it has been noted elsewhere in this study, some colonial theorists had, in fact, suggested a solution, which was afterwards to be followed, for the problem of surplus labour and capital in the Mother Country, an insufficiency of both in New South Wales—how to relate the two. Clear ideas, however, were not properly formed until 1829 and the publication of Wakefield's "Letter from Sydney." Thereafter, and until about 1850, a new policy in colonization was followed by the British Government<sup>(50A)</sup>. The proposition put forward by Wakefield, fictitiously speaking from Sydney, was, in his own words, this:

"We owe everything, over and above mere subsistence to the wickedness of the people of England. Who built Sydney? Convicts. Who built the excellent roads from Sydney to Parramatta, Windsor and Liverpool? Convicts. By whom is the land made to produce? By convicts. Why do not all our labourers exact high wages, and by taking a large share of the produce of labour prevent their employers from becoming rich? Because most of them are convicts. What has enabled the landowner readily to dispose of surplus produce? The demand of the keepers of convicts . . . But will transports continue to exert the same happy influence on our condition? I think not. If for every acre of land that may be appropriated here there should be a conviction for felony in England, our prosperity would rest on a solid basis; but, however we may desire it, we cannot expect that the increase of crime will keep pace with the spread of colonization . . . Every day sees an increase in the quantity of land, whilst the quantity of labour remains the same."

Transportation having then in this matter prepared the colonial field for a British society now under a pressing necessity of expansion, how should British enterprise plant seed that should return an abundant harvest? Wakefield offered a system. Two points only of this system may here be mentioned: (1) The declaration by authority of a fixed

price per acre of land; this to be a "sufficient price" in the sense that it should be an amount which would be high enough to prevent a person without capital from soon acquiring land from wage-savings. (2) The proceeds of land sales and taxation on land to be devoted to an Emigrant Fund for providing labourers with free passages to the Colony . . . The immigrant labour supply to be as nearly as possible proportioned to the demand at each settlement, so that capitalists should never suffer from an urgent want of labourers, and labourers never want well-paid



THE FITZROY BRIDGE, WINDSOR.

No less than four bridges have been successively constructed to carry the main road from Sydney across the South Creek at Windsor. The first was a primitive low-level bridge only a few feet above the height of the stream, and was built about 100 yards further down the creek than is the present-day structure. At some time before 1834 this was replaced by a high-level bridge built on the present site and named "Howe's Bridge," after a well-known Government Printer of the period. This, too, became unsafe and the bridge shown in the photograph was erected during the early 1850's, the small low bridge close to it on the right being retained to serve temporarily while the new bridge was in course of construction. The name "Fitzroy" was given to the re-designed bridge, and was kept when the present steel structure was substituted, in 1909, for the wooden bridge, which in its turn had become unsafe and unsuitable for traffic.

In the "Evening News," 8th May, 1909, there was published the reminiscences of a John Tebbutt, a native of the district, whose memory took him back to the early development of the town of Windsor, including various attempts made at bridging the Hawkesbury and its tributaries. This John Tebbutt was a remarkable local identity who in 1863 had built a private astronomical observatory at Windsor upon land occupied by his family some years before his birth in 1834 and within sight of the Windsor bridge. Such was this self-taught astronomer's ability that in 1869 his observatory was placed in the list of principal observatories in the British Nautical Almanac, and he was offered, but declined, the post of Government Astronomer for New South Wales. At the time of his death, in 1916, he was universally recognised to have been the first great Australian-born astronomer.

(Cf. Windsor Bridge, in newspaper cuttings, 1889-1920; "The Surveyor," December 30, 1916—Death of Mr. John Tebbutt (Mitchell Library, Sydney).)

employment . . . Young emigrants to be preferred and a proper balance of the sexes maintained . . . Colonists paying an emigrant's passage to be reimbursed from the Emigration Fund<sup>(51)</sup>.

It is probable, states Fitzpatrick, that the application or adaptation of Wakefield's ideas would not have been listened to with the immediacy of attention which was in fact given his ideas, had authority in Britain not been uneasily aware of the difficulties which he proposed to resolve—redundant population imposing an increasing economic and social burden, and capital lacking a sufficiently attractive ground for investment, on the one hand; on the other hand, inadequate population and capital and in consequence insufficient development of land and resources in Colonies overseas<sup>(51A)</sup>. His schemes, however, did directly and indirectly influence the foundation in 1829 of a settlement at Swan River by a syndicate composed of his adherents—a costly failure in the event; the foundation of a colony of South Australia in the middle 'thirties, and a radical alteration of land regulations in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in 1831. Visionary, however, as were his ideas, they yet did not take into account the usefulness, above all else, of Eastern Australia for grazing sheep and cattle, as compared with the lesser advantages of agricultural settlement of the type which he had in mind. The scheme, with its ingredients of sound sense, was in fact a mirage under the peculiar conditions then operating in New South Wales, and the cause of much of the controversies of the years which followed.

Out of this Wakefield scheme and other arguments came the plan of 1831 and the regulations of the Earl of Ripon, which fixed a minimum upset price of 5s. per acre on all land to be sold in the Colony, discontinued the free grant system of the years before, and established a fund to promote immigration<sup>(52)</sup>. The plan was enunciated early in 1831. An Emigration Commission began its work in June of the same year, and four months later the first emigrants under the plan sailed for the Colony. From 1831 to 1835, 7,221 emigrants left Great Britain for New South Wales, as compared with 16,289 convicts transported, and from 1831 onwards may be traced a consistent effort on the part of the British Government to send free men to Australia. Roberts points out some of the considerable confusions under which the emigration policy was both decided and managed—the conflicting advantages offered by America as compared with Australia, the uncertainty as to whether Government or private bounty efforts at emigration should be encouraged, and the dilemma concerning the type of emigrant, mechanic or otherwise, which best suited the colony. These, however, were incidental only. The whole of the land revenue was not systematically appropriated to emigration; some of the emigrants were required to pay varying amounts towards their passages; some private ventures like one arranged by Lang were subsidised; undue emphasis was placed upon young women and mechanics; but these also were factors involved in administration rather than policy.

The 'thirties under this rapid influx of population was a period of unprecedented prosperity for the Colony and of concurrent bitter conflicts on policy within. They concern the origins of squatting and the battles waged by Bourke (1831-7) and Gipps (1837-1846), respecting the 'flocks and herds and their owners, which within these years traversed and occupied the eastern half of the continent. All this



has been fully recorded by Roberts in his "Squatting Age," and within this chapter some of the problems which then arose can be no more than touched upon.

It is important to note the arguments put forward by Goderich to Darling, in his despatch of 9th January, 1831, heralding this adoption of the Wakefield theory and announcing the new policy of sales instead of grants<sup>(58)</sup>. Goderich commences by assuming that it had been impossible to enforce the "cultivation of land" condition in the grants which had been made by Brisbane and, in particular, Darling, for the several reasons that the term "cultivation" was so vague, grants could not be resumed until seven years had elapsed, and the condition could



PARRAMATTA, NEW SOUTH WALES, IN 1824.

*Taken from a series of plates entitled "Views in Australia, or New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land."*

*The original of this picture was drawn by J. Lycett, described as "Artist to Major-General Macquarie, late Governor of these Colonies." Parramatta was said to rank next to Sydney among the settlements of New South Wales, "being nearly a mile in length, measuring from the King's Wharf to the Government Domain." The description continues: "The principal street, which is of the same length, is called George street, and runs in a direct line through the town. There is a market held regularly once a week, but it is not very well attended, as most of the settlers carry their commodities to Sydney where they meet with better prices. . . . At the south end of the town is a delightful spot of rising ground called Rose Hill, which was the original name of the Settlement. . . . The genius and activity of General Macquarie are strikingly visible in the various improvements effected and public edifices built at Parramatta during his Governorship. Among these latter are to be numbered the King's Store, the Military Barracks, the General Hospital, the Prisoners' Barracks, Lumber-yard and Workshops, and a very large building called the 'Factory,' for the reception of disorderly Females. . . . A Court of Justice is held daily, consisting of the Chief and two other Magistrates, attended by the Chief and other Constables . . ."*

*The artist has chosen to paint the view of the town from the north-east, looking south-west; the historic Church of St. John's, Parramatta, can be seen in the centre of the town, through which the railway leading westwards to the Blue Mountains now passes, immediately to the left of the church grounds.*

*(Cf. "Views in Australia, or New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land," J. Lycett (Mitchell Library, Sydney).)*

be circumvented in any case by a token use of a small amount of capital to bring an acre or two into farming, of really no material advantage to any worthwhile extension of agriculture. And yet, it was an intolerable position for Government to stand by and passively watch its regulations being thus ignored and so see speculators benefit. The system, moreover, had the disadvantages attached to partiality being shown to individuals, and of encouraging the emigration of capitalists, whereas Government should have been more concerned with the emigration of "unemployed British labourers," who would be of service to the Colony in providing plenty of free labour available for hire, and at the same time, provide consumers for the produce of the Colony, thus relieving the "gluts" which from time to time affected agricultural prosperity.

Rather, the position in the Colony really was that "a mere extension of cultivation (was) much less desirable than generally supposed." To Government in England, it appeared that the "two apparently inconsistent evils of a high price and a want of demand for produce were the results of a too widely extended cultivation," and that "it would have been more to the interests of the Colony if the settlers, instead of spreading themselves over so great an extent of territory, had rather applied themselves to the more effectual improvement and cultivation of a narrower surface . . . . With concerted and mutual assistance, the result of the same labour would probably have been a greater amount of produce; and the cost of transporting it to market would have been a less heavy item in the total cost of production." But a contrary policy had been followed, heretofore, of enabling every man to become a proprietor, producing what he could by his own unassisted efforts. If these views were correct, what was required was a brake to check this too easy obtaining of lands, so as to encourage the formation of a class of labourers for hire, as the only means of creating a market for the agricultural produce of the Colony, of effecting various improvements, of prosecuting the many branches of industry now neglected, whilst at the same time enabling the agriculturalist "to apply the great principle of the division of labour," so that his produce would be increased and fetch better prices. All these things could only be assured by selling lands instead of granting them, and by tightening up labour indentures, both of which were intended.

Thereafter there was applied to the Colony a policy of land sales and of concentration of settlement, both designed in the interests of a controlled development, which was in conflict with the contrary tendencies for the colony to expand in a pastoral occupation of the interior.

It may now be of interest to take a bird's eye view of progress within the years 1831-1842, as seen through the eyes of a contemporary magazine of the time, looking back in 1843, and at a time of unparalleled crisis, on the ten years before. There is a reference to the withdrawal of convict assignees, which new policy came into force in July, 1841, involving a vast amount of reorganisation both in withdrawing the convicts from private land-owners and in arranging for their future disposition<sup>(54)</sup>. Coupled with this, there is further mention of the alteration, in 1840, by a Board of arm-chair theorists—The Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners—of the minimum price for land sold within the Colony, from 12s. to £1 per acre. (It had previously

been raised from 5s. to 12s. per acre in 1838.) More significant references, however, hinge upon the extraordinary growth of credit facilities, the large scale importation of British capital, the rise in population, the speculation which followed uncontrolled spending, the increase in luxury imports—all associated with the rapid development of grazing and wool growing. At the beginning, this pastoral expansion may be said to have been sound enough, based upon sure returns in natural increase and wool, but, in similar fashion to the aftermath of the “sheep and cattle mania” of the years before, depression proved the inevitable consequence of the inflationary spiral thus engendered. This is the background of this article in the *New South Wales Magazine*, June, 1843 (pp. 243 *et seq.*):

“In the course of 1831 affairs began to improve, the drought having broken up, and the seasons having again become fruitful. But in the middle of this year there occurred an event of the greatest moment, which, it was generally thought, would put a stop to all chance of our future advancement. This was the discontinuance of the free grant system. Crown land was no more to be given away, but to be sold by auction at the upset price of 5s. per acre. It was argued that if the late universal bankruptcy had happened even with the advantage of free grants, what but continued poverty could be expected when land was not to be had but at this high minimum price? And yet this improvement which had commenced with that year was not only unchecked by Lord Ripon’s new land regulations, but proceeded at an accelerated pace, and the next eight or nine years were the most prosperous the colony had ever seen.

“This prosperity began where our own must begin—in frugality and industry. . . . The prosperity thus based on the right foundation soon, however, began to grow somewhat top heavy, by reason of the fictitious additions made to it by a reviving spirit of speculation. This was greatly encouraged by the multiplication of banks, and by the large importations of British capital for the purpose of investment by way of a loan. Till the latter part of 1834, there were only two banks in the whole Colony, but within the next two years, three others were established, and subsequently a sixth. . . . Thus it appears that in the seven years from 1834 to 1841, the bank notes in circulation increased at the rate of 272½ per cent., whilst in the same period the bills under discount increased to the almost incredible rate of 772 per cent. The increase in population in that interval was only 100 per cent. According to the census tables of 1841, the classes requiring discounts, that is to say, landed proprietors, merchants, bankers, professional persons, shopkeepers, and other retail dealers, amounted in all to no more than 6,250 individuals—upwards of 2½ million pounds discounted for little more than 6,000 persons. This at the rate of more than £400 for each individual. The paid-up capital invested in our banking business in the year 1834 was £150,992; in the year 1841 it had risen to £1,876,322, being an increase, in seven years, at the rate of upwards of 1,142 per cent.

"This single fact is enough to prove how widely and how rapidly the rage for speculation spread in those seven bustling years. In the article of Crown lands alone, speculation was carried to the most extravagant pitch, the sums paid into the Colonial Treasury during those years, in exchange for waste lands, amounting to £1,110,246. It is, of course, impossible to determine with anything like precision, what proportion of these lands were purchased for actual and immediate occupancy as farms or pasture grounds, and what in the mere spirit of speculation; but it is a matter of notoriety that the latter far exceeded the former. Thousands and tens of thousands of acres were purchased without the slightest view to immediate employment. In numerous instances, the lands were bought with the intention of re-selling them at an advanced price; in others for the purpose of making estates compact, and of shutting out encroachment upon existing establishments; and in others, from a mere ambition to become extensive landowners. Unoccupied lands, of course, yield no returns; but their proprietors having, in the great majority of cases, bought with borrowed money, interest varying from 11 to 15 or even 20 per cent., had nevertheless to be paid upon the capital thus unprofitably locked up. So long as accommodation paper could be easily discounted at the banks, this loss was not much felt; but when the banks began to expect over-action, and thereupon to restrict their discounts, the owners of these useless lands discovered the folly of their conduct and had to make sacrifices of perhaps really productive estates, in order to meet liabilities incurred for the acquisition of a wilderness.

"Crown lands were not, however, the only lands upon which speculation lavished its thousands upon thousands. Private estates were cut up and sold, and re-sold again and again, at enormous advances. Imaginary townships were formed, and delineated on paper with all the taste and ingenuity of the surveyor's art; and being put up to auction, such was the headlong fury of competition that even townships consisting of dense forests, impassable rocks and bottomless morasses, their very locality being sometimes a matter of doubt, were sold piece-meal, lot by lot, at higher prices than could have been obtained a few years previously for allotments in Sydney itself! Land-jobbing rose to a perfect mania. Anything called land, no matter of what it consisted, nor where situated, would always command bidders. And what was bought one day would sell at a premium the next, and at another premium the next, and so on through some dozens or scores of successive bargains, until the bubble burst.

"Nor was land the only lottery in which the desperate game was played. Trade and commerce were also pursued with the reckless impetuosity of gambling. In 1831, when the Colony began to revive from its former stagnation, the Custom-house value of imports was £490,152; in 1841 it was £2,527,988, being more than five-fold, whilst the population had little more than doubled itself. Of these imports more than three-fourths were luxuries—wines, spirits, ales, tobacco, carriages, jewellery, and gee gaws of all sorts.

"Connected with this rage for buying and selling were the twin vices of extravagance and indolence. Elegant houses and pleasure grounds, elegant furniture, elegant equipages, elegant dresses, elegant banquets, were the common order of the day. Everybody thought himself rich, expected to be richer still, and could therefore afford to indulge in these costly enjoyments . . .

"Such has been the mismanagement on the part of the colonists themselves. On the part of Government there has been mismanagement also, which has hastened and aggravated the crisis of our distress. Some persons charge the Government with mismanagement in having put too sudden a stop to the transportation and assignment of convicts. That the colony has sustained some injury by the loss of convict labour and of the British expenditure in the maintenance of the convict establishments, cannot be doubted; but that the loss has been more than compensated by the removal of so foul a blot from our society is, we think, equally clear. The Government has again been accused of mismanagement in having sent away such large sums of money, approaching a million sterling, for the purposes of immigration. But with the exception of the women and the children, these sums realised immediate value in the labour imported; and even the women and children cannot be put down as absolute loss. There is, however, one act of mismanagement on the part of Government which cannot be too much lamented and condemned: we allude to the Parliamentary enactment that no more waste land shall be sold at a lower price than twenty shillings per acre. The price is so exorbitantly above the average productive value of such land that its enactment has put a stop to the land sales, and consequently to the importation of labour. The non-importation of labour, and the extravagant price of land, have again operated to the discouragement of the immigration of capitalists; and this again has deprived our settlers for a market for our surplus stock; and thus all the evils of our mismanagement have made matters worse and worse by the mismanagement of our rulers."

This long quotation is a mirror through which can be seen the extraordinary wave of prosperity, for the most part caused by an unprecedented expansion of the pastoral industry, which the colony enjoyed in the years from 1831, culminating in a boom, crisis and depression, by 1842-43. It is against this background that agricultural development in the same period has to be considered. Note should, however, be taken of the rise of squatting and of the spread of the flocks and herds through the interior, with the problems which this movement brought in its train, for otherwise there is no accounting for the agricultural backwardness of these same years.

#### **ORIGINS OF SQUATTING (1831-1835) <sup>(55)</sup>.**

"In the 'twenties," states Roberts, "New South Wales was a Colony organised along deceptively simple lines." Its population consisted of a vast majority of people who were, or who had been, convicts. The remainder were a comparatively few settlers of good social position, either favoured immigrants or ex-convicts, and a sprinkling of free immigrants of much lower social and economic standing. For all practical purposes, the community was divided into convict-servants and

a minority of landed proprietors who had received their holdings under the system of free grants instituted by Brisbane and Darling, and in the Bigge legacy. Expirees of good behaviour could receive small blocks in the country immediately around Sydney, but most of the estates were relatively large and held by upper class people such as Macarthur, Bowman, Riley, Wentworth and the like. No intruders such as yeoman-farmers, for instance, were tolerated. It was a time of landed vested interests, of the alienation of large blocks on the Hunter River and the Goulburn country, to mention but two districts which were very popular. There were very few immigrants and most of them preferred to stop in the town. It was very difficult for small men to get land, when most of the accessible areas had been seized by favourites of the authorities, and moreover, settlement was in any case a costly business in this freehold stage. Convict servants were usually the appendage of wealth and social position, as was the size of the grants, while the price of stock returned to those fortunate enough to own them, ran up to absurd figures following the boom year of 1825.

All land given over to this predominant large-scale settlement and tenant farming was in the located districts, within the Nineteen Counties which were eventually proclaimed in 1829. The policy of the Government was "Concentration of Settlement." The benefits of civilised life, effective protection, the amenability of the population (and especially a convict population) to the law, and the safeguarding of Government interests—all of these were to be obtained only if settlement was in circumscribed areas. But even whilst this idea was being welded into a fixed and immutable policy, the stockmen had perceived the obvious weakness of the Government's position. The very emphasis the Administration placed upon concentration showed how it feared dispersion, and the pioneer stock-holders, looking round and perceiving a fifth of the Counties already alienated and the remainder largely bad or mountainous land, saw that nothing could prevent them from going beyond the mountains. It was notorious that the Government could not afford police protection even to the settled districts and "that the redcoats at Sydney had to stay there to keep the convict population in check." In other words, the lands beyond the Nineteen Counties were lying idle for whosoever cared to drive stock across to them.

If this was more particularly the position with the stock-owner from 1835 onwards, a rather similar phase of land hunger had become evidenced with the first tide of immigration in 1831, with the increase in the number of emancipists and with the illicit move of the stockmen towards the bush. The lower classes, objecting to the feudalistic structure that had emerged, simply placed themselves on small holdings, sometimes legally by purchase or lease, but usually with no man's permission. Exactly the same argument that appealed to the large stock-holders applied on a smaller scale to these men. Land was there for the taking, and the Government could not remove everybody. "The force of this was soon perceived and the entire Colony was riddled by the settlement of small men on favoured spots—on places where they could farm or raise stock or steal other men's stock, or sell grog or raise cribs as bush-resting places, or do a thousand and one things that sufficed to carry on their brutish existence."

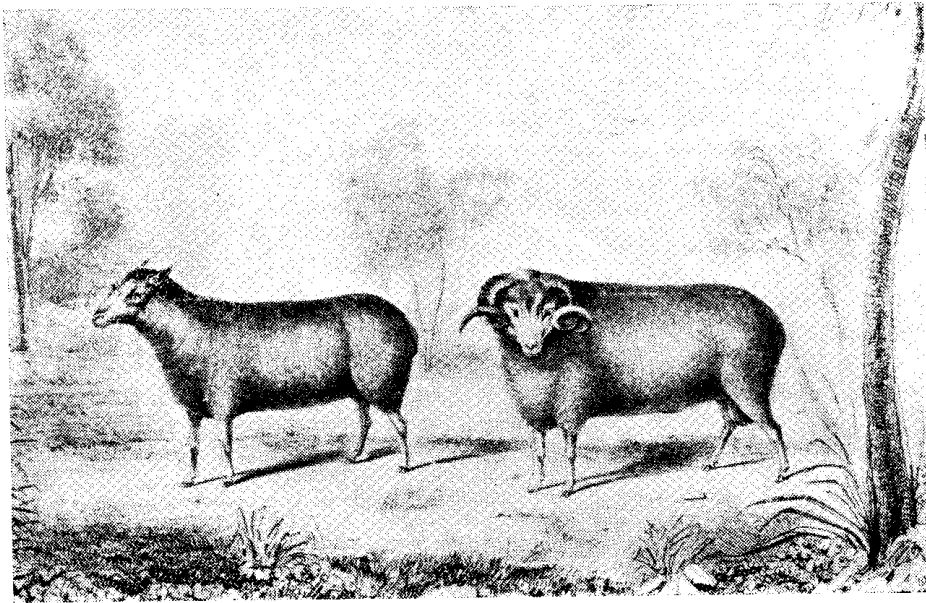
"With a population of 50,000 freemen (ex-convicts and pauper immigrants alike), and many hundreds loose on tickets-of-leave, and with the prices of land and stock beyond what any poor man could honestly pay," continues Roberts in tracing this movement, "it was not very strange that thousands should live more or less predatory lives of this kind, especially as settlement progressed inland and effective surveillance became increasingly difficult." A category of dubious characters, singly or in gangs, shiftless individuals depending for a living on stock stealing or bushranging, became the chief menace to legitimate settlement in the early 'thirties, and were "regular camp followers of any movement that had pastoral expansion as its goal." In Roberts' phrase, "They harrassed the stock-owners and conspired with their servants, they rendered property and at times even life uncertain, they haunted the bush tracks like so many evil scarecrows." In all cases alike, the larger stockmen suffered and knew no redress except superior strength.

It was men of this type who in the middle 'thirties were known as "squatters," the term being universally used as one of opprobrium: "The looting by (these) squatters was the lowest form of villainy conceivable at that time in the Colony: it was an idea opposed to that of respectability or even of enterprising crime." A squatter was simply a person who illicitly occupied Crown lands in the vicinity of alienated estates and plundered the flocks and herds. By implication, when the larger settlers moved part of their establishments to the outer lands and dispensed with the formality of freehold, the term was extended to the same class of dishonest persons; but at the outset it meant anyone who lived on the fringe of a big estate and acquired a living by dubious means. It is clear from the reports of both the Police and Immigration Committees of 1835 that the rural population was divided into settlers (small or large as the case might be) and squatters—sometimes sly-grog sellers, sometimes bushrangers or cattle duffers, sometimes receivers, but all universally recognised as men of ill fame.

This phase in development, concludes Roberts, was a "cancerous growth" necessarily associated with extension of settlement in a convict Colony.

### **THE SQUATTING MOVEMENT (1835 and FOLLOWING) <sup>(56)</sup>.**

From 1836 onwards, and with "a somewhat startling rapidity," a rapid change occurred in the meaning of squatting, although the first connotation lingered for a time. The change began once persons of all social status began to dabble in "anything on four legs." Soon army officers, younger sons of the Macarthur and Riley families, immigrants of means, ex-officials, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, coming under the general appellation of "gentlemen squatters," were pushing beyond the "boundaries of location." The older grantees of land were compelled by the very poverty of their coastal estates to send stock inland where the rich pastures easily lured them on. To these were added the new settlers, especially when the middle 'thirties saw a considerable influx of respectable immigrants and capital. Soon "every man of means in the Colony" was buying stock and pushing off to the bush to "squat," there developing a sort of close union between them, formed of self interest and opposed to Government, as a militant group "fighting for what it deemed its rights."



"PORTRAITS OF A PRIZE RAM AND EWE—EXHIBITED AT PARRAMATTA, OCTOBER, 1828, BEFORE THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, FROM THE ELECTORAL SAXONY FLOCKS OF RABY."

*In the period 1827-1830, two gold medals awarded annually by the Agricultural Society of New South Wales for the five best Saxon Rams and Ewes were won with monotonous regularity by a certain Mr. Alexander Riley, of Raby.*

Riley first brought himself under the notice of the authorities by means of a letter, dated 29th June, 1803, and written to Lord Hobart, in which he gives his views on the geographical advantages of New South Wales. He compares it with such other countries as Barbary, Syria, Egypt, Persia, France and Italy, and after calling Lord Hobart's attention to the new colony's superiority to most of these countries, he explains the reasons for his interest in its future development: "I was first led, my lord, to turn my views to the settlement in New South Wales from the singular circumstance of having two sisters married to . . . and gone from this country to settle with . . . two officers stationed in the regiment there . . . I unremittingly devoted my attention to the obtaining of information of every step that could, if pursued, lead to the reciprocal benefit of England and the colony itself; and I found to my surprise, that all the cultivation that had been entered into there was only from the necessity of immediate subsistence, and the hope of temporary private advantage, and that ultimate interests of government in any cultivation of those articles that the nature of the climate suggested, were by no persons attended to." He goes on to give a list of articles which could be produced—silk, opium, rhubarb, indigo, fustic, the olive tree and hemp—asks for a government appointment and says, "if moneyed men saw that, independent of being able to raise a support for their families by the customary cultivation of the land, that there was also a channel of lucratively employing their property in cultivating articles of commerce, it is certain that there are numbers of the most creditable families that could immediately embrace the advantageous opportunity—and the colony would daily present more and more inducement for settlers of credit to add to its prosperity and respectability . . ."

Riley's letter was not without effect. He arrived at Sydney in the "Experiment" in 1804 with an order for not less than 150 acres of land, and he was soon appointed official Storekeeper at Port Dalrymple (Tasmania) under Lt.-Col. Paterson, the Lieutenant Governor. In November of the same year, he was made a magistrate, acquired his farm in 1805, and by August, 1806, was able to report himself as the owner of a bull and four cows, 16 rams and wethers and 42 ewes, 1 male and 2 female goats, and two pigs.



The question of regulating the unauthorised occupants of Crown lands first arose in an acute form in 1835 when the stockmen were about to enter the new lands of Port Phillip and New England. The flocks by then were already 300 miles from Sydney, in two directions, and in the six years since 1829, the end had been seen, in the rapidly-growing Colony, of the restrictive "Nineteen Counties" idea, with its emphasis on "concentration of settlement." The main difficulty that faced Bourke, and after him Gipps, was the theory of the day which was based on the assumption that dispersion of settlement meant the ruin of any Colony, for in 1835 the Wakefield idea was still strong in its influence on the Home Government. In short, as the theorists saw it, "dispersion would convert the nation . . . into a horde of wandering Tartars, living upon milk and flesh, and getting drunk on fermented mare's milk." ("Westminster Review.") Agricultural settlement controlled and located within a concentrated area was, in fact, the fundamental principle in the Wakefieldian idea. This meant civilization. On the other hand, uncontrolled settlement and haphazard dispersion, it was thought, meant Nomadism and the negation of civilization. The absurdity of this idea when transplanted to the ill-developed and sprawling Colony becomes plain when it is noted that, as late as 1836, the oracle of the theorists, Wakefield himself, put forward a definite opinion that "it seems to me to be just as possible to prevent squatting in a Colony as it is to prevent it on the extensive districts of Crown land in Wales." Though how anybody in his senses could have compared Wales with Australia is beyond comprehension.

The difficulty of Bourke in attempting to find a solution to this problem is at once obvious; how best to reconcile his instructions, to achieve concentration at all costs, with the plain fact that the colonists who spurned theories had already dispersed themselves over thousands of square miles. He could neither deny his orders nor stand against such an irresistible force. The stand which he took, forcibly and realistically, was neither to deny nor to unduly surrender to the squatting movement, and to favour neither the large land-owners nor the small settlers. Two things were certain in his view, the first, that the Government could do nothing to prevent dispersion of settlement; the second, that as wool was and must remain the Colony's chief wealth, any measure that tended to restrict wool production was a direct blow at the Colony's prosperity. As he saw it, even the existing flocks could not feed within the official counties, quite apart from the large annual natural increase, so that if the flocks were not allowed to range in the interior, artificial

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*After the domestic troubles in New South Wales which culminated in the deposition of Governor Bligh, Colonel Paterson, as senior military officer of the settlement, returned to Sydney, bringing Riley as his secretary.*

*In due course, Riley received a grant of 3,000 acres of land, and the seal was set to his success when in November, 1810, together with Blaxcell and Wentworth he was given a contract for the erection of "The Rum Hospital." He had previously been treasurer of the Orphan and Gaol Funds. In 1812 he bought 750 acres of ground "opposite the Parramatta Road," for £520, built there a cottage called "Burwood Villa," which subsequently gave its name to the Sydney suburb of Burwood. Another of his properties—"Raby" was the site of his Saxon-type Merino sheep stud.*

*Alexander Riley died in London on 17th November, 1883.*

*(Cf. "Newspaper Cuttings," Vol. 14, pp. 42-44: Miscellaneous other references.)*

feed must be imported, and that would be obviously "a perverse rejection of the bounty of Providence." He therefore put forward that since not all the red coats in England could patrol the thousands of miles of bush front, the best thing, the most economical thing, and the only thing the Government could do, was to protect and control the country occupied by the stockmen. By such means, in the future, it might be possible to sell lands in advantageous spots, however distant from other locations they might be, and then by linking up with towns and means of communication, gradually to extend the power of order and social union to the most distant parts of the wilderness. "The old boundary of the Nineteen Counties," states Roberts, "had, from this time onwards, no significance in Bourke's new scheme of things—the limit was to be no Government line, but one determined solely by economic pressure, and settlers were to be allowed to go anywhere within that limit, whether to the remotest part of Port Phillip or Moreton Bay, and as far as possible, to be protected by the forces of the State. At a step, Bourke had placed the official theory of concentration far behind him, and himself half a century ahead of his time."

The significant problem of the squatting movement, as wrestled with by Bourke, and after him Gipps, stands out in all clearness—how to so regulate matters as to retain some rights for the Crown and following generations of settlers over the lands of the interior and its thousands upon thousands of square miles, whilst recognising in some degree the privileges of pioneers engaged in the expansion of an industry of vital importance to the Colony, and allowing compensation for the improvements effected by them in carving out precarious livelihoods in the wilderness; how to peacefully, legally and equitably convert disorder into order; how to transform the character of settlement from barbaric nomadism to civilised land tenure, upon which alone a stabilised later society could be built.

The solution of this problem, as it was finally arrived at, is exhaustively traced out by Roberts, ending in the recognition of pre-emptive holding rights by the squatters, occupying and then usurping the untapped Crown lands of the interior. It was a large-scale problem, of immense importance to the future generations of the settlers, following on the heels of the pioneers, and as such, occupied the political battleground both in the Colony and in England between the years 1835 to 1848-9. It is sufficient, however, to merely note that there was this problem, that it arose, as was inevitable, and that it was finally settled by recognising the rights of the squatters—the first in the field. In this way, immense areas were alienated and vast cattle and sheep stations established. It was essentially a "capitalist occupation" of the lands that were left over after the first forty years of foundation settlement had set the pattern.

#### **FARMERS AND GRAZIERS (circa 1835-1842).**

Of preponderating importance in the 1830's were the graziers—the men who with small or large capital were developing the country with their flocks and herds, and completing the "squatting" occupation of the interior. The problems of this period are largely their problems; the economic advancement of these years, largely the results of their efforts. By concentration of new enterprise within the field of pastoral pursuits, the overall economy of the settlement was soon changed from the agricultural to the pastoral. It was inevitable, once a "sheep and cattle

mania" had captured the imagination of men with capital to invest and seeking a quick profit. By voluntary selection, agricultural endeavours were passed over in favour of the greater gains to be made in grazing. Starting as a tendency, it became a wave that engulfed and swamped everything else—its lure, the fortunes to be won in sheep, cattle and fine wool. In a society so primitive as early New South Wales, it correspondingly carried with it a sharp distinction between classes.

Thus the social fabric of the 1830's is a fairly clear pattern, a man's fortune and position in life depending upon the particular avocation followed. Heading this list, there were the graziers, the entrepreneurs of the new economy, from whose numbers were derived many of the men of new wealth, and in whose ranks were some who had participated in the earlier advances of grazing enterprise. There were, again, the merchants and shop-keepers, counting some of the "capitalists" of the Macquarie period, and their historical descendants. These two classes organised the credit facilities and provided the capital to finance the grazing occupation, in association with newly formed banks. Outside these two classes fell the great mass of the population, convicts, emancipists, ticket-of-leave men, the tenant-holders, the dispossessed, the poor and needy. With the rage for speculation in stock, and in lands on which to feed them, developed an inflationary tendency which, rising to a crescendo, eventually caused collapse. In the process of its rising, prices for ordinary necessities also rose. This affected the cost of living, causing little or no concern to those on top of the wave and living freely on credit, but depressing to the lowest levels the lot of those forced to lead a day-to-day subsistence existence.

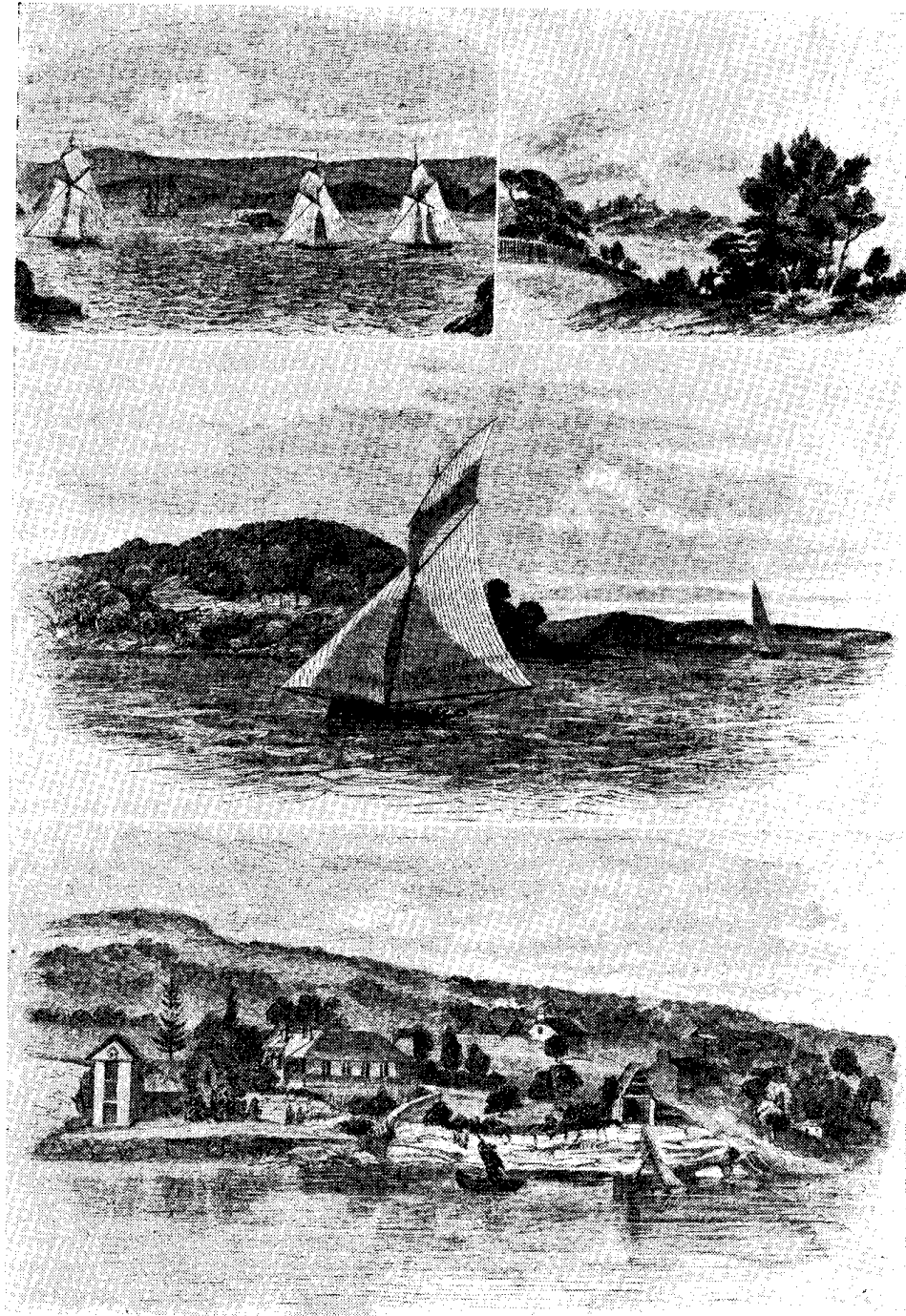
The social make-up of the settlement, otherwise, was a queer mixture. There were the "canaries," convicts in their appropriately sallow garb; "dungaree" men, the poor who could afford no better material for their clothing; the "cornstalks," the "lean, dishevelled currency urchins indigenous to the Colony"; the military; the lesser shop-keepers and publicans; the officials who were everywhere—concerned with immigration control, landing, inspection, customs, police purposes and numberless other functionary duties; a sprinkling of professional people; and lastly, the "poor settlers" who were the farmers, eking out a precarious existence on their freehold or rented farms within the Cumberland or Camden areas, and who had been denied any chance of participating in the lordly alienation of lands on the Hunter in the years before—the descendants, whether in fact or in effect, of the "lower order of settlers" of Macquarie times. The produce upon which their livelihood depended, in these years, consisted as it had done in the times before, of a little wheat, a few vegetables, eggs, poultry, a coarse green grass that took the place of hay in the Colony, and perhaps a little pork. These small farmers were really "labourers on the land," miserably poor, forced to sell their wheat for what they could get for it, and economize instead on a "dough-boy" made of maize and at times a little salt beef or salt pork, which itself oftentimes was an import rather than a local produce. Their solace was the solace which ruled universally in the Colony—smoking and alcohol.

A further distinction might be made between townsfolk and country people. In the town was still concentrated the bulk of the population, as the position had been in the later years of Macquarie. There was here a mingling of free immigrant and ex-convict mechanics and

labourers, between whom there was no harmony, but something of a class warfare. Without money, their individual existences were also miserable. Work was very difficult to obtain in the overcrowded town. Freemen were loth to go into the bush, and doubly disinclined to lower themselves to the "hatter's" occupation of shepherding—convicts' preserve as that was. Skilled men could be absorbed, though even the best turner and joiner could not hope for more than 6s. a day on the average. The only shortages for labour were for ploughmen, shepherds and shearers. For such jobs a mere pittance of £10 or £12 a year with rations was offered, and the labourer required to face a lonely life in the bush far up country, and in a master's power. Work was scarce; convict competition always existed and conditions were hard. The cost of living was high. With a wage of 2s. a day, a man could not buy much bread at 5d. a two-pound loaf, or beef and mutton at 5d. per lb., or sugar at 3d., or butter at 2s. 6d., or flour at 40s. a hundred pounds, whilst luxuries were green tea at 1s., coffee at 1s. 4d., and foreign tobacco at 3s. 6d. per lb. A small "capitalist" could make his fortune in the Australia of the late 1830's but there was little place for the labouring classes who had to live somehow, especially if they did not wish to sink down to the convict level. Money was the monopoly of the squatters and merchants of Sydney. The Colony was simply organised to receive from the inland its bales of wool and to maintain supplies of capital, stores and labour outwards, with which this wool could be grown. Poor free immigrants and ex-convicts figured no more than as the cheap labour supply incidental to the process. There was no yeoman peasantry or middle class of agriculturists to soften the distinction between "haves" and "have-nots." Wool was the new wealth; agriculture forgotten.

In the Colony of the middle and later 1830's, everybody with prospects of participating was infected with the new stock disease. People talked of stock, traded in them, wrote of them, dreamt of them, and every unencumbered person, by fair means or foul, tried to join in the squatting rush. As it had been in the years immediately before the depression of 1828-31, the gospel of the time was "to put everything in four legs."

To the grazier, wealth was available, provided only that he could overcome certain practical difficulties and was endowed with some abilities, for it was a long road between a plan such as had been put forward by Bigge, Macarthur, Wentworth, Cox and others, and its practical realisation. Successful "squatting" was a possibility to some, an impossibility to others, unsuited by character or upbringing to its hardships and fierce realities. It required a considerable "know how," a sixth sense maybe, some experience, not a little knowledge, some luck, the lonely job of pioneering, and trials above the ordinary. He was lucky who had met these before, or possessed these abilities and necessary experience. Of immediate necessity was money, in order to provide a maintenance, whilst search was being made for a convenient location on which to "squat," and there raise wool. By the very nature of things, profits largely varied with accessibility, and it was inevitable that the late-comers had a harder task before them than the first in the field. In 1835 the mad rush into the heart of the territory was just beginning, but the difficulties became worse as each year succeeded another. The alternatives were to crowd into the southern counties, with only inferior and limited land remaining, and with the certainty of perennial boundary disputes, or to push out to the unoccupied fringe. The force of this



"THE LATE RESIDENCE OF BENJAMIN BOYD AT SYDNEY."

These scenes of harbour life in Port Jackson in the 1850's are taken from Sydney newspapers of the period. The lowermost engraving, that of a large house on the north shore of Sydney Harbour, is of special interest in the history of New South Wales. It first appeared in "The Illustrated Sydney News," of December 9, 1854, above the legend, "The late residence of Benjamin Boyd," and an accompanying article confirmed the news of his murder by hostile natives upon the island of Guadalcanal. Thus passed a man of tremendous energy and vision who had he lived, so it is said, might well have become the Cecil Rhodes of Australia. A Scotchman by birth, Benjamin Boyd was born

primary consideration led first to the opening up of the Murrumbidgee and New England, and a few years later, of all of Mitchells "Australia Felix," or across Pandora's Pass to the Darling Downs and beyond. Expansion of settlement was effected in this constant searching to gain possession of selected tracts of country, either in an atmosphere of "camaraderie" and mutual dependence, or with bitter arguments, conflicts, perhaps armed resistance. There were "rum-hunters," bush-rangers, thieves and worse sprinkled amongst these men seeking their fortunes in sheep and cattle.

*in Wightonsire, about 1796. In 1824 he became a stock broker, operating on the London Stock Exchange. In the years 1840-41, Boyd floated the Royal Australian Bank and the Australian Wool Company, with a combined capital of £355,000. On 18th July, 1842, Boyd arrived at Sydney aboard his private yacht, the "Wanderer," in order to watch over his existing interests and to further seek his fortunes.*

*He lost no time entering upon pastoral adventures and grandiose investment projects. He was granted by the authorities an area of 240,380 acres in the Monaro district (then known as Maneroo), embracing large estates on the Southern Tablelands and South Coast of New South Wales. On the southern side of Twofold Bay, on the Far South Coast, he built a hotel ("The Seahorse Inn"), several stores, dwellings for his officers, and barracks for his workmen, to all of which the name Boydtown was given.*

*From 1843 until 1848, Boyd engaged in the raising of cattle and sheep and built up also extensive interests in whaling. He acquired a small fleet of vessels and his whaling ventures from Twofold Bay and Mosman's Bay were conducted on large scale lines. A sandstone structure intended as a lighthouse was erected on the southern headland of Twofold Bay, but permission to place a light there was refused, chiefly because Boyd had given prior warning that he intended to light it only when his own vessels were expected into port.*

*Boyd prospered for a time, and in 1848 Boydtown was a flourishing settlement, but towards the end of that year there came a sudden halt to its activities. The last years of the 1840's saw a severe general financial crisis developing in New South Wales, and Boyd's extravagance was overtaken in the ensuing crash. The British financiers on whom he had depended for money with which to carry on his immense enterprises, began to grow fearful of their commitments. They "sniffed extravagance" and became uneasy about the companies concerned. Finally Boyd resigned; everything was sold for what it would bring, and the glory departed from Boydtown. The shareholders of the Royal Bank ultimately sustained losses to the extent of £80,000.*

*Undaunted by these reverses, Boyd sought means to rebuild his fortunes and sailed to California where gold had recently been discovered. He met with no success there, however, and on the return voyage to Australia, October, 1851, the "Wanderer" anchored off Guadalcanal and Boyd, accompanied by his black boy, landed to go pigeon shooting with a local chief. In his absence, the crew of the "Wanderer" fired on a native boat and killed five natives. In revenge, Boyd's servant was immediately killed and he himself was carried off to a council of chiefs where the majority decided that he should die. Boyd was then speared to death, his body eaten, and his skull hung up in the high chief's Tubula's canoe-house.*

*A few years later, rumours that Boyd still lived caused an expedition to be sent to the islands, under the command of Captain Truscott of the "Oberon." A reward of 100 axes was offered for Boyd, or 20 axes for definite proof of his death. The natives surrendered a skull which they said was that of the murdered man, but it turned out to be of Papuan and not of European origin. The expedition ascertained the facts of Boyd's death and the circumstances leading to it, then returned to Sydney.*

*On the bar outside the town of Port Macquarie, on the North Coast of New South Wales, and in the same year as the death of its owner (1851), the unlucky "Wanderer" was wrecked, soon after returning to Sydney.*

*(Cf. Miscellaneous references, Mitchell Library, Sydney, in particular: Twofold Bay and Boydtown—H. P. Wellings; The Illustrated Sydney News, December 9, 1854; The Lone Hand, February 1, 1917—J. Abbott.)*

Save for the choicest spots, occupation was very fluid. A would-be grazier was forever tormented by the dream of better country further out, and deluded by the vague rumours of travellers passing through. "Finding a run was playing a game of hide-and-seek in an unknown country of millions of square miles, without clues, but with the enticement always there in the possibility of rich prizes."

A man with a run already selected or hazarded had at least the first hurdle in his path cleared. If he was lucky and his selection was good land, well watered and of spacious extent, it might be said he had more than his first hurdle cleared; he had his fortune made, if only he could hang on to it and weather a few storms. With capital enough to buy what he wanted, or sufficient to form an acceptable security with some merchant or bank, his succeeding task was then to buy his stock, complete with equipment, and arrange for what labour he required. He was lucky again, if able to buy into a choice Saxon strain of sheep and select an able and willing overseer or foreman for his undertaking. Sheep, an overseer, bullock-drivers, hut-keepers, log-splitters, food, implements and necessities sufficient for a twelve months' requirements, drays and waggons—all these were the requisites for a station, all requiring a considerable primary outlay. On top of this, there was required a sufficient credit or ready money to cover all outgoings until the first returns would be received from the clips and sales of increase.

Having arrived at the chosen selection, after weeks or months of travelling over tracks cut through the bush, settlement would be established—a few bark huts or improvised slab affairs at the head station, smaller huts at strategic points some miles away, both to guard the run and look after the outer flocks, and, in these, shepherds and hut-keepers would be installed. Then would commence the sheep-herding itself, on unimproved country without fences, with the wilderness stretching on all sides—at last, face to face with reality. Hurdles would have to be made, and in these the sheep were folded at night time, left to graze at will during the day. Further improvements following, would comprise the erection of a rough wool-shed with a wool press and a place for shearing, and, if a cattle station, stock-yards as well. No more than this would be attempted at a time when no man held security over his land. Purely visionary were the ideas of providing a rounded subsistence with an orchard, a flower garden, a dairy, a vegetable patch and some acres under cultivation to tide over any period of want. These, on the overwhelming majority of the primitive stations of the squatters, "were conspicuous by their absence." Living conditions for long remained unbelievably hard and rudimentary. It was "a sordid, filthy existence," a penal servitude of the worst type, endured only because of the profits which might be made.

The returns which a sheep-holder might expect would rest in the disposal of his natural increase and sale of his wool. The yearly cycle, provided there was no drought or water shortage, consisted in yarding and moving the hurdles as a day-to-day measure; the treatment of stock for scab, footrot, catarrh, rot or other ailment if such appeared; lambing in the winter, with related operations of weaning, marking and branding; shearing in the spring, and as a preliminary to it, washing of the wool on the sheep's back (Macarthur used warm water for this washing—almost everybody else was satisfied with a dip in a creek

or river) ; then pressing of the wool, and finally the long trek by bullock-waggon to Sydney for its disposal ; some huckstering, perhaps, at the Cross Roads at Ashfield, and completion with the purchase of a further twelve months' supplies and return of the waggons, to be prepared for the next year's journey.

There were droughts and fires, floods and pests to contend with ; aboriginals, thieves and bushrangers to do battle with ; numberless disappointments and difficulties to overcome—problems, some of them, not dissimilar to those which cannot even now be dissociated from life on the land. There were some men who survived, many who faltered under the strain.

Up to about 1837 the price of wool was continually rising, and land was, of course, available for practically nothing. Much would depend upon the relationship established with the ubiquitous Commissioners of Crown Lands, but provided there was no interference, the prospects were favourable, though the conditions of success were considerable uncertainties. It followed that if a would-be grazier were to start on an even keel, he required sufficient money to meet the whole of his first year's expenses in wages, purchase of stock, tools and other equipment, costs of washing, shearing, pressing and marketing, and besides, to have something left over in reserve. To these had to be added the contingencies of the value of his land and the quality of his stock, the incidence of his losses. These all figured on one side of his primitive ledger, involving the investment of his capital. More problematical than these certain expenses were the items of his returns—the prices returned for his wool and for the stock which he might be able to sell from his surplus culling. Provided the two balanced he could survive. If his credits offset his debits he was making a profit. If only he could keep afloat for the first two or three years, maintain labour for increasing assets and ensure sufficient grazing land for his growing flocks and herds, he was assured of at least the foundations of his fortune. Wool was thought, in the costing notions of the times, to pay for the expenses of a station, and what made the sheepman's profit was his increase.

All these were of a somewhat equal consequence with cattle, the only differences being that the problem of marketing, the costs of capital outlay and the risks were greater, as they are to-day. All would depend—a far more weighty uncertainty—upon an opportunity being available to dispose of the yearly increase.

It was inevitable that in such circumstances, whilst the many tried, comparatively few succeeded. "It would be a mistake," states Roberts, "to suppose that the squatters of the 1830's and later years were self-made men who rose to affluence from humble origins." On the contrary, the surprising thing to note is how many of them were men of good birth, education and capital. There were the sons of successful officials and colonists of the settled parts, retired officers, immigrants with capital, adventurers, men of noble families, foreigners, political refugees, and a strange assortment of different and lesser fry. The determining factor was that a man needed about £5,000 to run a flock of 1,000 sheep, a considerable item in a Colony lacking a middle class, or a progressive element of prosperous free working men who could dabble in the art and science of grazing.



**LABOUR PROBLEMS, 1835 ONWARDS** <sup>(58)</sup>.

All through the boom and crisis years of the squatting onrush, the squatter encountered grave labour difficulties. In a sense labour conditioned the advancement made, at every stage. "At no single moment after 1835," writes Roberts, "were shepherds offering as quickly as they could be absorbed." Indeed at one stage in 1841, a witness before a committee set up to consider the question, held that 10,000 were needed at that moment in the Central District alone. The culmination of this labour shortage was in the later Coolie and Kanaka agitations, particularly of the 1840's. All in all, "the labour shortage was a kind of recurrent plague afflicting the stock-owners year after year."

Such a shortage was inevitable, having in view the increasing number of stock to be tended, multiplying year after year, and the intense dislike evidenced towards menial work with sheep. "Crawling after sheep" was an occupation no energetic freeman would consider, because of the peculiarly humdrum and soul-destroying nature of the life which such employment offered—the isolation, the monotony, the boredom, the negation of all ambition which it implied. It involved a certain stigma in the ideas of the time, and once a shepherd, a man had consciously lowered himself to a "hatter's" status, far below that of a stockman or town mechanic. Moreover, the recompenses were small—10s. a week (often withheld by trickery), and a weekly ration of 10 lb. of flour, 12 lb. of meat, 2 lb. of sugar and some 4 oz. of tea. The convicts, even, were disinclined to enter such employment, wages being raised even to £50 per annum in the early 'forties as an enticement.

Up to November, 1838, any settler could obtain assigned convicts if available. The procedure involved an application to Government and an undertaking in the matter of rations and a small dole, amounting in all to a value of about £15 a year, as compared with as much again for rations. This system of assignment ended in 1838, and Transportation itself by an Order-in-Council in August, 1840.

Against this shutting off of an abundant and more or less free labour supply, centred the later claims by certain landed elements in the Colony for the restoration of Transportation. Gipps found the Colony in 1838 in a furore over its labour difficulties. Petitions were signed, the Council passed a whole series of resolutions on the subject, and an agitation, in which Blaxland and Wentworth held prominent places, was vociferous in the cause of a continued in-flow of convicts to provide cheap labour. The staple of the Colony was thought to be at stake and the great mass of the prominent citizens were behind the movement. The consequences were indeed serious, for the sheep industry was in a chronic state of uncertainty, so that many flocks were allowed to run wild, sheep left to rot for want of men to shift the hurdles far enough, and their increase died because there were no men to graze them. The changes by Government had been in fact badly timed, and injudicious in the event, and there was some reason behind the fears expressed by the Colonists.

In 1844 a few convict exiles were sent to the Colony, all to be immediately absorbed, the understanding being that an equal number of free immigrants would be shipped also. Transportation, however, was not resumed to New South Wales, the last few convicts arriving in 1850.

Thereafter the scene changed, and with the gold rush of the early '50's coupled with an acute labour distress in England, a voluntary immigration at least corrected the labour shortage.

Throughout the period 1835-1848/9 most of the shepherds were ex-convicts or convict assignees. Their descriptions are legion, tradition making of them a race of quiet men to the point of half-wittedness and bad, mainly in company. "More frequent," continues Roberts, "are memories of dull, besotted labourers, with some little eccentricity." Usually, however, they were petty criminals transported for some minor offence, and they remained weak, lonely men, safeguarded from the defects of their character by their isolated life, and soon becoming pitifully strange in their behaviour. From their ranks, no Simeon Lords, Dr. Redferns or Samuel Terrys emerged.

Of the 36,429 assisted and 7,444 unassisted emigrants who arrived in the years 1838-1842 inclusive, most stopped in the town as small artisans, excepting those who ventured into the squatting business themselves as petty proprietors. Free men hardly figured at all as shepherds, and scarcely affected the labour problems of the grazing expansion, 1835-1842.

Into this general picture has to be fitted the agitation for cheap oriental labour and the episode of the Chilean muleteers. This agitation, pursued for so long by the colonists and fanned by the "Sydney Herald," failed in the face of the opposition of the Colonial Governors and Home Authorities, eventually provoking a counter-agitation in the Colony itself. Possibly one of the first references to this labour shortage in the Colony appears in a petition by John Mackay to the Governor respecting the importation of Indian labourers. (S.H. 8.6.1837.) In September, 1837, there appears in the "Herald" an advertisement by H. C. Sempill, O'Connell-street, Sydney, advising of a forthcoming visit to England and of his willingness to arrange for the indenture of shepherds from the Scottish Highlands, "preferably not married." (S.H. 28.9.1837.) In 1838 there is a leading article in the "Herald" on the vexed question of Indian labourers. (S.H. 23.4.1838.) In the following year appears an article in the same newspaper, calling on settlers to import their own unmarried labourers, the conclusions reached being that "convict labour is, in fact, gone, even if the transportation system should be continued." (S.H. 4.1.1839.) In the same year there is published a letter from Mr. M. A. Davidson, written from Singapore and returning £1,500 to L. Duguid, Esq., Cashier of the Commercial Bank, Sydney, because he had failed to obtain a ship to send Chinese coolies out to New South Wales. (S.H. 3.5.1839.) Such references could be multiplied, but at least these few illustrate the attempts made to obtain labour from any and every source to cope with the shortages which occurred in the course of the intense development from 1835 onwards. A side issue is a reference which may be made to the female immigration of the years 1832-1835, under the Female Emigration Board, and which by 1835 had served to fill "the streets of Sydney with the free immigrant prostitutes of the cities of London, Dublin and Cork" (<sup>89</sup>).

### CONCLUSIONS.

In the two succeeding articles of this survey, the food and agricultural problems which arose in the quickly changing little world of the Colony between 1821 and 1842 will be cursorily looked at. There were interminable controversies in these years, ranging from discussions on duties on imported grain, spirits and tobacco, to such things as the reasons why in a predominantly pastoral economy, it should be necessary to import horses and salted meats.

The period covered in these twenty-odd years has to be regarded as one of turmoil, of sudden changes in policies, acute predicaments, booms, crises and depressions, of violence both in the political and even physical sense, all inseparable from the conversion of a small semi-coastal penal settlement into a Colony of millions of acres within a peculiarly isolated and singularly ill-watered continent. It is remarkable how swift was this conversion, shattering, meantime, the flimsy structure of its agriculture and internal markets.

Probably it is a truism that of all things which a progressive agriculture requires, stability, caution, slow growth and the establishment of settled marketing practices and policies are the first requisites, these alone building a firm foundation and ensuring a certainty of prospects for each further acre brought under cultivation. It was inevitable that these were wanting in an environment in which a universal near madness in favour of grazing for so long was present in both old colonist and new immigrant alike. The effects were to further widen the separation which in the earlier years had been so noticeable in the disjunction between agriculture and grazing, and to concentrate new vitalities and fresh in-flowings of capital into the field of grazing alone. The plain issue which guided all the activities of the time rested upon the basic fact that grazing was more profitable than farming in a country where the dry interior was proved to be more suitable for sheep than crops at the then stages of comparable development. It stood to reason that grazing would pay since it had an expanding market, where farming was a failure because its market was wholly internal. When in the 'twenties and 'thirties large-scale imports were made to support the insufficient and hazardous farming of the Colony, the difficulties involved in adjusting the internal consumption and price levels proved beyond control, the main agricultural problems of the period resting primarily on this adjustment.

At no single point in this period, moreover, is it possible to note an accession of the better type of free immigrant into the ranks of pure agriculturalists depending on farming alone for a livelihood, nor, from 1821 onwards, any attempt to further experiment with the establishment of small settlers. From 1821 to 1842 farming was a non-prospering side issue in a Colony given over to any and every means of making money except by the cultivation of the soil.

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- (48) Ibid, p. 148.
- (49) Lang op. cit. p. 180.
- (50) Cf. particularly R. C. Mills: Colonization of Australia, 1829-1840.
- (50A) Wakefield—A Letter from Sydney (1829); Everyman's Ed. pp. 37-38.
- (51) Ibid.
- (51A) Fitzpatrick op. cit. pp. 261-262.
- (52) Roberts, op. cit. p. 15.
- (53) H.R.A. I, XVI, p. 19 et seq.
- (54) Roberts op. cit. p. 150.
- (55) This material is essentially a precis of Chapter III of Roberts' Squatting Age, pp. 60-84.
- (56) Ibid, op. cit. pp. 79-84; pp. 85-114 (Chapter IV).
- (57) This sketch is based fundamentally on Roberts' extensive description of Squatting Life in Chapter X of his book, pp. 332-427, which should be referred to in the original for further details.
- (58) The material for this brief mention is taken from personal researches in the "Sydney Herald," 1835-1842, and Roberts op. cit. pp. 388-398, pp. 399-402.
- (59) Lang op. cit. p. 255.