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DISEASE, SANITATION AND THE 'LOWER ORDERS': PERCEPTION
AND REALITY IN SYDNEY, 1875-1881

by

ALAN JAMES CHRISTIAN MAYNE

VOLUME I

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University

MARCH 1980
This thesis is my own work

A.J.C. Mayne
# CONTENTS

## VOLUME ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synoptic Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART I

| CHAPTER ONE | The Urban Environment | 3   |
| CHAPERTWO   | City Health and Disease| 24  |

### PART II

| CHAPTER THREE | Good Rule and Government | 58  |
| CHAPTER FOUR  | City Health Officers in Sydney | 85  |
| CHAPTER FIVE  | Preventive Medicine: "your powers are unequal to... this duty" | 114 |

### PART III

| Introduction | 129 |
| CHAPERNINE | Charting the City slums: "hotbeds of vice, hotbeds of fever, and hotbeds of death" | 132 |
| CHAPERTEN | The Region of Depravity and Moral Death | 152 |
| CHAPERELEVEN | Ye Have The Poor With You Always | 186 |

### PART IV

| CHAPTER NINE | Homes for Working men | 214 |
| CHAPTER TEN | Common Lodging Houses | 226 |
| CHAPTER ELEVEN | Colonial Peabodies | 241 |
| CHAPTER TWELVE | A House in the Suburbs | 250 |
| CHAPTER THIRTEEN | Cleansing the Augean Stable: Slum Clearance, 1857-81 | 257 |

### PART V

| Introduction | 284 |
| CHAPERTHEREEN | Smallpox, 1881 | 291 |

### PART VI

| CHAPTER FIFTEEN | A New Sydney: Slum Clearance, 1881-90 | 314 |
| CHAPTER SIXTEEN | Moore Street, 1890 | 345 |

Conclusion 361
## APPENDIX TABLE

### ONE

1.1 Metropolitan population increase, 1846-91
1.2 City wards - by population and as a percentage of the City total, 1851-91
1.3 Metropolitan population distribution, 1846-91
1.4 Suburban population distribution, 1851-91
1.5 The city landscape. City wards and selected suburbs, 1891.
1.6 Persons per inhabited City dwelling, 1851-91
1.7 City population density per acre, 1851-91
1.8 House sizes per City ward, 1891

### TWO

Introduction

2.1 1861 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City ward
2.2 1861 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City ward (percentages)
2.3 1861 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by City ward
2.4 1861 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by City ward (percentages)
2.5 1871 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City ward
2.6 1871 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City ward (percentages)
2.7 1871 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by City ward
2.8 1871 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by City ward (percentages)

### THREE

Introduction

3.1 Single railway fares to suburban stations on the Parramatta, Illawarra, and northern lines, 1858-88
3.2 Workmen's weekly railway ticket concessional fares on the Parramatta and Illawarra railway lines during the 1880s
3.3 Omnibus single journey fares, 1861-88
3.4 Tramway single journey fares, 1881-8
3.5 Workmen's concessional tramway fares, 1890
3.6 Approximate omnibus journey times in minutes, 1866, 1876, and 1889
3.7 Approximate journey times between selected suburban stations on the Parramatta and Illawarra railway lines, 1858-88
3.8 Omnibus timetables, 1878-80
3.9 Railway timetables on the Parramatta line, 1858-88
3.10 Railway timetables on the Illawarra line, 1884-8

FOUR
4.1 Death rates for all ages, per 1,000 of mean population, 1857-91
4.2 Death rates among five year olds, per 1,000 of mean population, 1871-91
4.3 Deaths under five years of age as a percentage of total deaths, 1857-91
4.4 Deaths under five as a percentage of total deaths in each City ward, 1872-81
4.5 Deaths in the City among children aged under one to five, as a percentage of total deaths under five, 1872-81
4.6 Death rates among infants (under one year old) per 1,000 births, 1871-91
4.7 Registrar General's mortality classifications. Major causes of death in the City, 1874-81
4.8 Diarrhoea-related mortality in the City, 1874-81

FIVE
Introduction
5.1 Municipal electors as a proportion of total adult population in the City and selected suburbs, 1861-91
5.2 Proportion of non-resident municipal electors to total electors in selected Sydney suburbs, 1860-90
5.3 Non-resident electors in selected suburbs who voted at the last municipal elections, as a percentage of the total number of electors who voted, 1860-85
5.4 Electors in selected suburbs who voted in the last municipal elections, as a percentage of total electors, 1860-85

5.5 Percentages of each category of electors in selected suburbs who voted at the last municipal elections, 1871-85

5.6 Distribution of electoral influence in selected suburbs, 1871-90

SIX 6.1 Yearly salaries in pounds of selected City Corporation officers, 1857-99

6.2 Written notices served and prosecutions undertaken by the Inspector of Nuisances for the abatement of health nuisances, 1867-90

SEVEN City buildings condemned by the Corporation as unfit for human habitation, 1879-96

EIGHT Distribution of recorded smallpox cases in City and suburbs, 1881

NINE Occupations of householders in condemned buildings

TEN Movements of householders displaced by Corporation demolition orders

ELEVEN Chronicle of principal events

Select Bibliography
PLATES

1 Metropolitan Sydney in 1890
2 Smith And Hinton's Map Of Sydney And Suburbs 1854
3 Map Of Port Jackson And City Of Sydney, Shewing The Adjacent Municipalities, 1867
4 From the Town Hall, looking southeast, 1873
5 York Street, 1873, looking north
6 Darling Harbour, from St Philip's tower, 1878
7 From the Town Hall, looking southwest, 1873
8 Darling Harbour, from Pyrmont, 1870
9 Australian Gas Company Works, 1870
10 Guthbert's Shipyard, 1871
11 Darling Harbour, c.1880
12 Darling Harbour, c.1887
13 Sussex Street, n.d.
14 Washington Place, 1875?
15 George Street, c.1899
16 Building base lines in the Albion Estate, Surry Hills, 1887
17 Building base lines in the Albion Estate, Surry Hills, 1887
18 Building base lines in the Albion Estate, Surry Hills, 1887
19 The head of Darling Harbour, n.d.
20 The Haymarket, looking north, c.1895
21 Park Street, c.1880
22 Bridge Street frontages, 1889
23 Back premises, Bridge Street, 1889
24 Queen's Place, n.d. (1875?)
25 Building base lines in the Rocks, 1889
26 Back premises in the Rocks, 1900
27 Building base lines in Washington Street, 1887
28 Darling Harbour, c.1880
29 Building base lines, Macleay Street, Pott's Point, 1885
30 Sussex and Erskine Streets, c.1876
31 Sussex Street, c.1875
32 Lynch's court, off Clarence Street, 1875?
33 Plan Of The City Of Sydney, 1880
34 Numbers 25-7 Day Street, 1900
35 Millers Point Corner, 1901

Source:
A.N.L. (1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 28, 35).
M.L. (2, 4, 5, 7, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.B.C.N.</td>
<td>Australasian Builder and Contractor's News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.D.B.</td>
<td>Australian Dictionary of Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.G.</td>
<td>Australasian Medical Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.N.L.</td>
<td>Australian National Library, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.T.</td>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.N.</td>
<td>Evening News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.(N.S.W. L.C.)</td>
<td>Journal of the N.S.W. Legislative Council (commences in 1856 with the introduction of responsible government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.L.</td>
<td>Mitchell Library, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W.</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W.B.H., P.</td>
<td>Minutes of Proceedings of the N.S.W. Board of Health (mss. volumes in S.A., N.S.W.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W. P.D.</td>
<td>N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates (commence 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.C.C.S.</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Municipal Council of the City of Sydney (printed volumes start in 1887)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.H.S., J. &amp; P.</td>
<td>Journal and Proceedings, Royal Australian Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.S.N.S.W., J. &amp; P.</td>
<td>Journal and Proceedings, Royal Society of N.S.W. (title varies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.A., N.S.W.</td>
<td>State Archives of N.S.W. (See the Concise guide to the State Archives of New South Wales, Sydney, 1970, and the later Supplement volumes.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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SYNOPTIC INTRODUCTION

This is a study in human relationships - of the way in which the ignorance and subsequent fears and prejudices which shape human perceptions of one another are incorporated into the social ties binding together the community as a whole. The thesis is confined geographically to the inner city area within the administrative boundaries of the Sydney City Council. It takes as its core-period the years between the disease alarms early in 1875 and the smallpox epidemic during the second half of 1881, and from that perspective views the broader sweep of time from mid-century until the early 1890s. It shows an urban community in whose expanding economy and aggregation of population were contained forces of fragmentation and division - geographical, social, and psychological.

City growth at a rate faster than the enactment of regulatory controls and provision of local services had been accompanied by a proliferation of aesthetic and sanitary nuisances, caused for example by the expansion of industry, and deficiencies in garbage collection, in drainage and water services. Networks of abutting courts and passageways developed off City main streets, crowded with insanitary tenements and groups of decaying cottage-dwellings, relics from the city's past. The consequent anxieties about city ill-health, and recurring alarms about the likely appearance of epidemic disease, were expressed in a generally-felt dissatisfaction with the achievements of local government sanitary administration. As the experiences of CHOes in attempting to remedy sanitary nuisances make plain, the City Corporation's performance in the field of public health was limited by its powerlessness to undertake necessary sanitary initiatives independently of Parliament. Many outside critics however, aware only of the continuing deficiencies in City health regulation, called for the City Council's replacement by a more energetic metropolitan municipal council, or for its subordination to the directions of government-appointed experts on a board of health.

Contemporary understanding of the nature of disease, influenced by miasmic or filth-based explanations of illness, focused community anxieties about disease upon the working class districts of the inner City.

1. See Plate 33. The area within these boundaries is referred to throughout the thesis as the City; I use the word 'city' to refer to the total metropolitan area.
The resulting sanitary investigations of these little-known neighbourhoods presented a generalised picture of squalor and unwholesomeness. Apprehensions about disease, together with middle class rationalisations for the existence of poverty, and at the individual level a psychological need among people of all classes to have someone else to look down upon, in turn produced a distorting, stereotyped image of an alien and menacing subgroup of debased humanity within the community - the urban lower orders. The emergence and subsequent impact of the image of the lower orders upon the direction of sanitary endeavour and of public health policy in Sydney forms the core of this thesis.

This is the first doctoral thesis to have been based upon the manuscript material on city health in the Sydney Town Hall archives. The City Council's sanitary staff has never before been studied. The CHOs are largely forgotten men. In their many hundreds of reports, however, there lies an invaluable source of information on life - and death - in a nineteenth century city.

A chronicle of the principal events dealt with in the thesis may be found in Appendix Eleven.
PART I
CHAPTER ONE
The Urban Environment

I

Port Jackson, Sydney. The famed grandeur of the setting of the New South Wales capital held William Archer spellbound when as a young man of twenty the English literary critic visited the city in 1876. Harbour and shoreline together "combined to form a picture of indescribable beauty". And the city itself, as he remembered seeing it early one morning when the sun was rising through a light mist,

lay piled up, terrace upon terrace, with the mist turning from grey to gold and from gold to fire over the gigantic masses of building which crowned the heights. It reminded me of the great cities of the imagination — Carthage or Palmyra...I shall never forget either the one scene or the other.1

Sydney was then a sprawling metropolis of some 167,000 people, the second largest city in the Australian colonies. Melbourne, capital of the neighbouring southern colony of Victoria, had passed Sydney in population in the wake of the Victorian gold discoveries of the 1850s, and was not overtaken by its older rival until almost the turn of the century.2 Since the 1860s, however, the gap between the two biggest cities had been steadily dwindling, and it was to Sydney that a traveller in 1896 paid tribute as "the queen of the Southern Hemisphere, and the centre of commerce for this vast continent."3

The reason, said visitors, was the city's port. The port of Sydney, blessed with the spacious harbour that Archer so admired, and situated at the terminus of the colony's railway network, dominated N.S.W. commerce.4 That dominance was reflected in a rapidly growing population. In 1851 Sydney and suburbs had totalled some 54,000 souls. By 1891, metropolitan

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Plate 1. Metropolitan Sydney in 1890.
population was little short of the 400,000 level. Six metropolitan suburbs, in addition to the City proper, were each shown by the 1891 census to be more populous than was the colony's second largest port, the city of Newcastle. The Government Statistician, Timothy Coghlan, concluded that taken together, the residents of metropolitan Sydney considerably outnumbered the combined total of inhabitants from all other towns in the colony, and equalled the whole population of rural N.S.W.

Metropolitan Sydney was described by Coghlan as extending over some 150 square miles by the early 1890s, reaching westwards almost to Parramatta and including 35 suburban municipal districts. Only 40 years before, at mid century, visitors to Sydney had found settlement largely confined to the inner City, on a tongue of land extending from the base of Darling Harbour east to Woolloomooloo and Rushcutters Bays. Settlement then was concentrated in the western City, from Circular Quay south and west along the length of the major thoroughfare, George Street, across to Darling Harbour. In Clipps Ward, behind the warehouses along the western edge of Circular Quay, lay the already ageing working class district of "the Rocks". Brisbane Ward, extending westwards from George Street down the length of Darling Harbour, was becoming lined along much of its harbour shoreline with wharves. The hay, corn, and cattle markets, situated in adjoining Phillip Ward near the head of Darling Harbour, were on the southernmost outskirts of close settlement. Open meadows lay from here to the nearby suburban hamlets of Redfern and Glebe. In the City's Denison Ward, extending from Darling Harbour's southern base up the Pyrmont peninsula along its western shores, scattered small buildings stood amid large tracts of still undeveloped land.

Visitors to the Hay Market, looking across Elizabeth Street towards the walls of Darlinghurst Gaol on the City's eastern boundary, would have seen more acres of vacant land. Subdivision of the large Riley Estate had criss-crossed the area with rough streets, and from near the City's southeastern boundary, an irregular band of housing straggled along between Crown and Dowling Streets towards inner Sydney. On the City's east, the

5. Appendix One, Table I.I.
6. Coghlan, General Report, p.119. It was a pre-eminence far more marked than that of London over England and Wales; G. Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75, London, 1971, p.7. See Appendix One, Table I.I.
7. Coghlan, General Report, p.119; see Plate I.
8. Plate 2; Appendix One, Table 1.2; see T.L. Mitchell, Trigonometrical Survey of Port Jackson, 1853; Smith and Hinton, Map of Sydney and Suburbs, Sydney, 1854; Woolcott and Clarke, Map of the City of Sydney, Sydney, 1854.
higher ground of Darlinghurst was already dotted with the mansions and large gardens of the well-to-do, and on the rising ground opposite, running between Circular Quay and Woolloomooloo Bay south through the heart of the City, lay the park and recreation belt of the Domain and Hyde Park. Between the two ridges, the many still vacant allotments of the Woolloomooloo valley were being rapidly covered with houses for the working classes.9

Expanding City trade brought with it considerable alterations to the Sydney landscape over the following decade. In the neighbourhood of busy Circular Quay, new wool stores, large and often elaborately ornamented stone structures, had transformed the City skyline. The Sydney Exchange nearby, opened by the Governor in 1857, was described proudly by guide books as a massive and imposing structure offering all the facilities available in the kindred institutions of London and Liverpool. Along the central City blocks of George Street, the rising tide of commercial activity could be charted in the number and imposing appearance of the financial institutions constructed there since the mid 1850s.10

Not nearly so apparent were the internal lanes and alleyways behind the facades of those central City blocks, where working people, like the lumpers to be seen toiling at Circular Quay, had their homes.11 More noticeable to casual passers-by, the ageing district to the immediate west and southwest of Circular Quay was coming "to have a very old-fashioned and

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9. Mitchell, Trigonometrical Survey; see the plan of the Parish of Alexandria in W. M. Browning, 'Maps comprising the various parishes of the County of Cumberland', S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.77, 89, p.1288; see also qu.238-9, p.1295.


11. See the Bourke Ward statistics in Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 and 2.2. As the City Council rate collector explained in 1859, "The worst cases of poverty are to be seen in the back places, the lanes, and yards that lead off the main streets, and are not likely to be observed by a passer by." S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.258, p.1296; also qu.215, p.1294; qu.219-223, pp.1294-5; qu.628, p.1315. A network of such alleys, for example Robin Hood Lane, lay behind the Pitt Street facade opposite the Sydney Exchange; ibid., qu.326, p.1299. Across the intersection of George and Bridge Streets from the Exchange was the entrance to the working class neighbourhood of Queen's Place, known to the CHO as one of the most unwholesome spots in Sydney; ibid., qu.611-3, p.1314; qu.643, p.1317; also qu.230, p.1293; see Plate 24.
decayed appearance". The similarly run-down Rocks district nearby, a favourite home for shipping, dockside, and general unskilled labour, was also becoming regarded as a particularly unwholesome working class area.

The bustling dock area close at hand, stretching along the eastern shore of Darling Harbour, formed the hub of coastal trade and transportation up and down the N.S.W. coast, and manufacturing industries were also accumulating in the district. Sussex Street, extending from Margaret Street behind the docks down the remaining length of Darling Harbour to the Haymarket, was becoming one of the major commercial arteries of the City. The district traversed by it and the parallel thoroughfares, Kent and Clarence Streets, was also the most characteristically working class residential area in Sydney. It was likewise becoming one of the most unwholesome. Industrial development along the western shores of Darling Harbour, now linked by toll bridge to the inner City, was also said to be gradually turning Pyrmont's wastelands into a working man's "faubourg". Denison Ward, indeed, contained by far the biggest


13. See the Gipps Ward statistics in Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 and 2.2; see also S.C.C.W.M., qu.215, p.1294; qu.259, p.1296.


15. The surrounding area contained the second largest commercial and retailing population in the City after the central business districts of Bourke and Macquarie Wards; see the Brisbane Ward statistics in Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 - 2.4.

16. See ibid.; the Inspector General of Police remarked in 1859 that the description of dwellings occupied by the working classes in Druitt, Clarence, and Sussex Streets, and in the lanes and alleys abutting on those streets is, both as regards ventilation, drainage, and cleanliness, most defective. S.C.C.W.M., qu.78, p.1288; also qu.647, p.1318; qu.1965, p.1402.

17. Leigh, The Handbook to Sydney, p.60, also p.61; the district had become "a favourite resort of working men whose business at the foundries, patent slip, and building yards, renders it a place of convenient...residence". Whitworth, Bailliere's p.519; see the advertisement for the Pyrmont Bone Dust Steam Mills in ibid. Darling Harbour as far north as Liverpool Street was being reclaimed for railway yards; Select Committee on Railway Through Ultimo Estate, V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1865, vol.1, qu.30, 33 p.824. At the north of Pyrmont, the Australian Steam Navigation Company works employed some
population of metal workers in the City, and was home to more skilled wage workers than was any area save the rapidly growing Surry Hills district on the City's southeast. With the other western districts of Gipps and Brisbane Wards, it also contained over half of the general unskilled labouring workforce in the City.18

Phillip Ward, to the south of Pyrmont and Darling Harbour, was also becoming tagged as working class and industrial. In the Chippendale district, on the southern boundary with suburban Redfern and alongside the City railway terminus, could be seen a steam flour mill and the refinery of the developing giant, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.19 Also to be seen along the district's back lanes, said the City missionary Nathaniel Pidgeon, were crowded and insanitary rows of houses, small in design and many without even backyards. Further north up George Street, past the gasometers of a new Australian Gas Light Company substation and the adjoining Haymarket, the obscured interior lanes, such as Durand's Alley, warming off Goulburn Street were building a reputation for unsavouriness.20

Sightseers passing through Riley Estate on the City's southeast, which a decade before had been mostly vacant lots, now found the thriving community of Surry Hills. Comfortable working class dwellings were here being erected which were claimed to be as good as accommodation being offered about the inner City for double the money. Already the district was home to more wage workers than was any other ward in the City.21

Darlinghurst, on the City's eastern boundary, with its large mansions and spacious grounds was described to visitors as the most fashionable neighbourhood in Sydney.22 Woolloomooloo, lying between the higher ground of affluent Darlinghurst and the park belt of the City centre, was by contrast not a place in which to linger. A large manual population, some of them independent craftsmen and many more wage workers and general

17 .cont.
18. See Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 and 2.2.
19. Leigh, The Handbook to Sydney, p.75, and see the advertisement for James Pernell's steam mills; see also the advertisement for C.S.R. in Whitworth, Bailliere's.
21. Ibid., qu.426, p.1305; also qu.88, p.1288; see Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 and 2.2.
labourers, lived in the area. Parliamentary investigators reported in 1860 that

In many parts of Woolloomooloo, which have been built over during the last fifteen or twenty years, there are narrow lanes of houses with all the evils inseparable from improvident construction, insufficient living room, confined space outside, and want of drainage, in forms as aggravated as in the old cities of Europe.23

For visitors to the City, however, working class Sydney was generally out of sight and out of mind. For a dose of local plebeian colour, guide books suggested a visit to the City's bustling produce markets.24 The Hay and George Street markets together drew a mounting volume of farm produce from an expanding hinterland around Sydney. To the west, astride the Parramatta Road and the Sydney to Parramatta railwayline, in districts such as Five Dock, Ashfield, and Burwood, market gardens, dairies, and cattle farms had since the early 1840s gradually replaced the original bushland and now daily supplied the City. The latter 1850s had also seen the growth of small railway villages like Petersham, Ashfield, and Burwood, as suburban settlement was attracted to the pleasant cultivated rural surroundings prepared by the market gardeners. Similar suburban development was occurring to the east of Sydney, and in the fruit, vegetable, and dairying areas along the northern bank of the Parramatta River, at the pretty ferry stops of Ryde, Gladesville, and Hunter's Hill. The same pattern was being repeated on a lesser scale in the orchard and vegetable areas of Willoughby, Lane Cove, and Hornsby, to the north of Port Jackson.25

Access from there to the City was via the small township of St Leonards, which lay just across the harbour from Circular Quay. By the early 1860s a regular ferry steamer service every 15 minutes was enabling a small but growing number of people to commute daily to their workplaces in

23. See Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 and 2.2; S.C.C.W.C.M., p.1271.
the City. The village of Manly, at the harbour's furthest eastern reaches, near North Head, had also by the middle 1860s developed into a straggling town with several good hotels and an increasingly famous beach. The township had since the mid 1850s become "a favourite watering place", and by 1858, when the first regular steamer service began operating to Sydney, there were already a number of Manly residents with the time and the money to commute daily to their offices in the City.

It was however along the southern harbour shores beyond Darlinghurst that the well-to-do had mostly plumped for the location of their suburban homes. A string of stately villa residences had for decades dotted the different bays along the southern shore. Expanding settlement as the Sydney middle classes settled along and inland from the harbour now saw the district emerge as the fashionable suburb of Woollahra. Second in order of desirability was the neighbouring suburban district of Waverley, which extended inland from the harbour across to the Pacific coast. Both here and in suburban Randwick to the south, a landscape of farms and market gardens was being reshaped as villas and housing estates dotted the area.

Commuter traffic from Randwick entered Sydney through Paddington, a suburb of nearly 3,000 people in 1861, lying alongside the City districts of Surry Hills and Darlinghurst. Suburban settlement was overwhelmingly concentrated in a ring of such townships immediately adjoining the City boundaries. Largest of all was Redfern, only a few minute's walk beyond Surry Hills and Chippendale. Newtown, further afield, was still within walking distance of the City, as well as being serviced by omnibus and train. Glebe, on the City's southwestern boundary and separated from

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26. Ibid; Mitchell, Trigonometrical Survey; Waugh, The Stranger's Guide, p.13; Whitworth, Bailliere's p.488. A scattering of people able to afford the high fees charged by watermen were also settling along the picturesque bays and picnic spots eastwards along the harbour shoreline; see ibid., pp.349-50, 371.
27. Ibid., p.335; Waugh, The Stranger's Guide, p.53; see Wells, A Map Of The County of Cumberland.
29. See Appendix One, Table 1.3 and 1.4; see also Plates 2 and 3. Redfern had developed from an isolated hamlet in the early 1850s into a town of some 4,000 inhabitants by 1861; Newtown was described in 1866 as being "a favourite place of residence for gentlemen having business in Sydney", and convenience to City workplaces was enabling a working
Pyrmont by Blackwattle Bay, was by the 1860s a long-established suburb rivalling Redfern in population. Glebe had a reputation as a popular residence for City merchants and businessmen, and Glebe Point especially was a district of considerable exclusiveness.30 Balmain, situated on a large curved peninsula beyond Glebe that swung round above Pyrmont to face Miller's Point at the top of Darling Harbour, had grown from a scattering of buildings and tracks in the early 1850s into a mixed residential and industrial suburb of some three and a half thousand people a decade later. Steam ferries plied to and from the City every ten minutes, and a large middle class commuter population lived in the suburb. Manufacturing, however, was tempering Balmain's original exclusivist image.31

Developing commerce and industry were likewise continuing to influence the landscape and social composition of the inner City. A visitor to Sydney like Trollope, who arrived from England in 1871, would have found the City divided along generally recognised divisions of function and status. As one guide book explained during that year,

The fashionable quarter par excellence ... (contrary to the case of London), is the East End of the city, and the suburban localities stretching beyond along the shore. Here are most of the splendid mansions, glimpses of which are caught from the harbour which they overlook. Most of them have been erected at enormous cost, and for extent, internal grandeur, and magnificent grounds, are not equalled by any private residences on this side of the equator.32

29.cont.

class population to settle in the area, and in nearby Redfern; Whitworth, Bailliere's, p.423; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.89, p.1288.

30. Whitworth, Bailliere's, p.223; see M. Solling, 'Glebe 1790-1891: A study of patterns and processes of growth', M.A., University of Sydney, 1973, Working class Glebe, on the low-lying ground around Blackwattle Swamp, was an unwholesome district that went unmentioned in guidebooks; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.112, p.1289.

31. Plate 3; see Mitchell, Trigonometrical Survey. The ship repair complex developed in Balmain by T.S. Mort had by the 1860s become one of the industrial showpieces of Sydney; Whitworth, Bailliere's, pp.20-1.

32. Gordon and Gotch, The Australian Handbook and Almanac for 1871, London, n.d., p.67. The northeastern districts of Bourke, Macquarie, and Fitzroy Wards contained the highest concentration of professional people, merchants, and financiers, the greatest number of domestic servants, and the lowest proportion of unskilled working people in the City. In Fitzroy Ward, working class numbers had dropped considerably over the previous decade; Appendix Two, Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6. See S. H. Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney, 1870-1890: Aspects of Social Development in a Nineteenth Century City', Ph.D., Macquarie University, 1976, pp.42-3, 51.
The eastern City districts of Fitzroy, Bourke, and Macquarie Wards were all heavily white collar and professional in their social makeup. In the central City, a walk down Pitt Street from the wool stores of Circular Quay took the visitor past a line of mercantile and shipping offices to the Sydney Exchange, firmly established as "the principal place of rendezvous in the city for merchants and shippers, and business men generally." Only a quick step away were the Australian and Union Clubs. Taking a cab from the corner stand outside the Exchange, a run further down Pitt Street took the traveller past an impressive collection of finance, banking, and insurance corporations. A turn into George Street brought into view a further vista of banking and finance houses, and the principal stores of Sydney's busy shopping centre.33

A large working class population of self-employed artisans and skilled wage workers nonetheless still lived in eastern Sydney, in Woolloomooloo and also in the central business districts of the City. The unskilled and semi-skilled labourforce that had for long been housed along the hidden back lanes of Bourke Ward had declined in numbers, but as well as containing much of the City's social and economic elite the district's population continued to include a high proportion of shipping and general labour.34

Cook Ward on the City's southeast existed on the fringes of fashionable east Sydney. A significant white collar population of clerks from government service and commerce, of shop assistants and professional people, lived here in Surry Hills. They were greatly outnumbered however by the area's large and quickly growing population of skilled wage workers. Heavy settlement in the district by tradespeople, especially tanners, building tradesmen, milliners and dressmakers, had by the early 1870s made Cook Ward by far the most populous single neighbourhood in the City.35

33. Burton, Visitor's Guide, pp.73-4, and see p.32; Henry Cornish, visiting the City during the late 1870s, enthused of Pitt and George Streets, "The new banks, insurance offices, and warehouses are simply superb, ranging from four to five storeys in height, and built of ...magnificent freestone"; Cornish, Under the Southern Cross, p.253; The Industrial Progress of New South Wales: Being a Report of the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1870, at Sydney; together with a variety of papers illustrative of the Industrial Resources of the Colony, Sydney, 1871, p.480; J. Sands, Map Of Sydney For 1879, Sydney, n.d. Note the large retail population in Macquarie Ward in Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 -2.8.
34. Ibid., Tables 2.5 and 2.6; see Plates 4 and 24.
35. Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 - 2.8; Appendix One, Table 1.2.
Plate 4. From the Town Hall, looking southwest, 1873

Many independent artisans, especially precision workers such as watchmakers, locksmiths, jewellers, and printers, lived and worked to the east of George Street, in Bourke and Macquarie Wards. Considerable numbers of hired workmen, too, lived in the latter district.1 Here, in off-street alleyways were warehouses and scattered factories, such as John Sands' large printing works, and bootmaking and tobacco factories.2

The photograph is of Macquarie Ward. George Street can be seen in the right foreground, and Bathurst Street is obscured on the far left of the picture. Fitzroy Ward is to be seen on the far side of Hyde Park. The large avenue leading diagonally from the southeastern corner of the park is Oxford Street, the busy arterial road to suburban Paddington. On the extreme right of the photograph, among the crowded vista of buildings to the south of Hyde Park, is located the insanitary working class housing region about Goulburn Street.

In the foreground, squeezed behind the Australian Book Mart and the lofty blank walls of other business establishments in George and Pitt Streets, can be seen some of the jumbled sheds, dwellings, and workshops among which the inner City's working class population lived. A number of low metal (steam engine?) funnels and several large brick chimneys are scattered through this local neighbourhood. Note also the large factory chimney stack in the left-centre, flanking the Protestant chapel.

1. Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 and 2.6.
Phillip Ward to its west was more petty commercial and industrial in character, and was correspondingly less attractive a place of residence among middle class professional people and clerical workers. Many hawkers and produce dealers lived in the Haymarket area. George Street as it turned westwards through Phillip Ward continued to be lined with retail premises, and large numbers of store keepers, female shop assistants, and needlewomen lived in the district. A very high proportion of self-employed craftsmen, bootmakers and leather workers, building tradesmen, and workers in wood, also lived in the area. In Chippendale, the Colonial Sugar Refinery and Tooth's Brewery were major employers. Considerably fewer skilled wage workers however lived in Phillip Ward than in Surry Hills. The district was instead a popular home for the semi-skilled and unskilled, with high concentrations of policemen and labourers living in the area.

Phillip Ward was regarded by the middle classes as belonging more to the west of Sydney than to the fashionable east. The great divide in Sydney was George Street. Unlike the City to the east, a district like Pyrmont for example, now becoming a "large and expanding suburb", was said jokingly by Trollope to be "not fashionable at all". Western Sydney was a district dominated by commerce and industry. It was also regarded by contemporaries as working class Sydney. The district, as well as containing the heaviest concentration of population in the City, also contained its highest proportion of manual labour and only low numbers of middle class residents.

Western Sydney was not quite so exclusively proletarian in character as middle class eastern Sydney believed. Gipps Ward was home to professional people, school teachers, and office workers, as well as to the unskilled labourer. Pyrmont, and Brisbane Ward, with its streets lined with the premises of shipping merchants, brokers, and storekeepers, both contained a large commercial and retail population. Despite their heavy concentration in western Sydney, unskilled labourers, excluding domestic servants, were outnumbered by semi-skilled and skilled working people in every western district except Gipps Ward, whose population contained a very high level of shipping and dockside labour. High numbers of artisans too, were

36. Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 - 2.8; Cornish, Under the Southern Cross, p.248; Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', pp.44-5.
38. See Plates 5-9; Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 - 2.8.
39. Ibid; see Plate 10; see also Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', p.42.
Western Sydney, stretching from George Street to Darling Harbour and the Pyrmont peninsula beyond, and from Miller's Point in the north through Gipps and Brisbane Wards to Phillip Ward in the southwest, contained approximately half the total City population in considerably less than half the City area.¹

The photograph, taken from the Town Hall, looks north up York Street towards St. Philip's church. Further afield, beyond the Observatory above Miller's Point, can be seen the northern harbourside suburb of St. Leonards. In the left background, on the tongue of land facing the tall smoking chimney of the Australian Gas Light Company's works at Darling Harbour, is the suburb of Balmain.

The ageing Central Police Court stands in the right foreground, and behind it, the George Street markets. To the east of George Street, beyond the General Post Office, silhouetted topmasts mark the location of Circular Quay. Factory stacks dominate the western City skyline. In the left foreground, on the western side of Clarence Street, is a group of old single storey buildings, relics from the City's past. In the block between Clarence and York Streets, the towering blank walls of later erections throw deep shadows among the interior maze of buildings and passageways.

¹. See Appendix One, Table 1.2.
Close-built houses and chimney pots in the foreground look out over Kent and Sussex Streets towards the workshops and large warehouses lining Darling Harbour. Linked to the inner City by a wooden toll bridge is the Pyrmont peninsula. Two large factory chimneys north of the bridge bespeak the industrial development occurring in the area. Vacant land stretches southwards towards suburban Glebe and the City's Phillip Ward. The heavy concentration of population in the western City was the more remarkable since much of the Ultimo Estate at the base of the Pyrmont peninsula was throughout the 1870s open land.¹

George and Charles Hoskins opened an engineering works in Hay Street, Ultimo, near the railway goods line at the head of Darling Harbour, in 1875-6. The company prospered, and in the present century started the iron and steel city of Port Kembla on the N.S.W. south coast.²

1. S.C.C., L.R., 1876, vol. I, no. 33 (Inspector of Nuisances, 19.1.1876); see also Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', p.44.
One guidebook described in 1874 how all around Darling Harbour, "the clanking of hammers, the noise of hundreds of steam engines, will bespeak the numerous industries that are carried on there". Bathurst Street cuts diagonally from the left foreground to the head of Darling Harbour. Just off the street, in the centre of the photograph, stands the tall chimney and the great expanse of saw-tooth roofing of R.N. Russell and Company's foundry. The works were described in the late 1860s as covering four acres and employing from 200 to 360 men. It was proudly said to be "the most complete iron-working establishment in the southern hemisphere." 

Sandwiched between Russell's, and the other large commercial and industrial premises situated about the south of Darling Harbour, stand closely packed rows of two storey tenement buildings. A long tenement row stretching towards the harbour to the right of the photograph marks the working class neighbourhood of Washington Street. From several of the many factory furnaces that dominate the area, clouds of smoke are rising.

Beyond the Darling Harbour railway line and the scattered buildings on the Ultimo Estate lies suburban Glebe, and in the left background, the tall silhouette of Sydney University.

2. Leigh, The Handbook to Sydney, p.76; see also the advertisement on p.19.
3. See Plates 27 and 28.
Darling Harbour's eastern shore was a jumble of wharves and storage sheds, whose access roads and lanes became bottlenecked daily with commercial traffic. Timberyards and sawmills, shipbuilding, a woollen mill, flourmills, a scattering of foundries and engineering works, a galvanising factory, and a chemical works, were located among the warehouses and look-alike tenement rows extending from the harbour east to George Street. A jet of smoke or steam escapes from a factory vent in the photograph's middle background. On Pyrmont, a horse grazes among paddocks near the harbour toll bridge. Near at hand stands the chimney stack of Webb's Metallic Colour Works.

1. Sands, Map Of Sydney; The Industrial Progress, pp.450-3, 456, 459, 461, 483-4; Progress Report from the Select Committee on Employment of Children, pp.903-08; Department of Public Works, Miscellaneous Press Cuttings Book (S.A., N.S.W. 7/4135), pp.30, 37; see Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', p.44.
Plate 9. The Australian Gas Company Works, 1870

The gas company works covered a large block of ground at the northern end of Sussex Street. A ship, probably a collier, is berthed at the company wharves. A touch of colour tempers the industrial landscape, provided by the patterned curtain in the second storey window of a house in nearby Jenkins Street.

Detached dwellings of several stories and short housing blocks spread in moderate densities along the shore opposite, on either side of the Pyrmont ferry jetty. A commuter paddle steamer stands off from the shore. Close by, an ocean-going steamer is berthed at the Australian Steam Navigation Company works. Russell's foundry in the south of Darling Harbour, the Australian Steam Navigation Company industrial complex at Pyrmont, and Mort's engineering yards across the water in nearby Balmain, together employed over 1,000 workers.¹

¹ The Industrial Progress, pp.451-2.
The population of Gipps Ward contained the highest proportion of carpenters and shipwrights of any area in the City. Like most skilled working people living in western Sydney however, they were not independent tradesmen but employees of the workshops and factories located in the western City. One such was Cuthbert's yard, situated in the north of Darling Harbour, off Kent Street. South along the harbour shore stand the two chimneys of the Australian Gas Light Company. A smoking chimney stack is visible further south. Ships line the harbour wharves. The Pyrmont peninsula is located on the right of the picture.

1. Appendix Two, Tables 2.5 and 2.6.
living in Phillip Ward, but the bulk of self-employed tradesmen lived in Macquarie, Bourke, and Fitzroy Wards, to the east of George Street.\(^{40}\)

The western City district of Denison Ward was home to the second largest skilled wage earning workforce after Surry Hills, its rapidly growing population swelled especially by the large numbers of skilled factory hands who settled in Pyrmont from nearby engineering works. The proportion of skilled working people living in western Sydney as a whole, however, was slowly declining. Greater numbers lived elsewhere. By contrast, some two thirds of the City's general unskilled and shipping labourforce was located in the west, and as commercial and industrial enterprises in the district increased in size, that proportion was increasing.\(^{41}\) Overall, the consequence of developments in the City economy during the 1870s was a firming demand for unskilled labour generally, coupled with diminishing opportunities for self employment. In common with the experiences of working class communities in other nineteenth century cities, opportunities for upward social mobility were limited, nor were they increasing.\(^{42}\)

Social realities jarred with public images of City expansion during the 1880s. Industrial and commercial development during the decade confirmed western Sydney, in the words of one proud businessman in 1890, as "the workshop of the metropolis".\(^{43}\) To the east, along the City's major thoroughfare, George Street, visitors were urged to note the handsome shops, and the imposing facades in Florentine, Roman, and Greek styles belonging to branches of the dozen or more banking institutions established in the City. With the price of such City property becoming so expensive, it was said, Sydney was following the example of New York, with buildings of seven or eight floors becoming common.\(^{44}\) In Pitt Street,

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40. Brisbane Ward, which in 1861 had contained the second largest number of self-employed artisans in the City, a decade later shared with Gipps and Denison Wards the smallest populations of independent craftsmen in the City; Appendix Two, Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6.
41. Ibid.
43. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.695, p.238; see Plates 11-13.
The Pyrmont peninsula was dominated by the Australian Steam Navigation Company's engineering complex, and the works of the Australian Sugar Company. A wide sweep of housing is visible on the peninsula through the industrial pollution. Also visible beyond the Australian Steam Navigation Company's works in the right middleground are Johnston's Bay and suburban Balmain.

In the foreground, a group of old single storey cottages huddles between the larger buildings facing Sussex Street and a tenement block extending down a passageway off Kent Street. A puff of smoke escapes from a metal funnel among the storeyards and buildings of the coastal shipping companies located beyond the Pyrmont bridge. North of the bridge, alongside a storage shed belonging to the timber merchant J. Booth, smoke plumes from the funnel of a steamer berthed at one of the inter-colonial wharves.

Darling Harbour's southern foreshores on Pyrmont had during the 1870s and 1880s been given over to railway shunting yards and storage sheds. The harbour's eastern shoreline was one mass of wharves, with behind them a maze of iron and wooden warehouses and shipping offices, courts and passageways, stables, timber and coal yards, sawmills, foundries, steam mills, and other manufacturies. Offices and bond stores of stone and brick crowded in behind. Standing on the skyline are the Town Hall and St. Andrew's cathedral.

1. Gordon and Gotch, The Australian Handbook, p.231; Department of Public Works, Plan of Darling Harbour Shewing Existing Wharfage Accommodation, Sydney, 1887; Surveyor General's Office, Map of the City; City and Suburban Plan Publishing Co., City of Sydney 1888 (Sydney, 1888); City and Suburban Plan Publishing Co., City of Sydney 1889 (Sydney, 1889).
Travellers who braved the often congested commercial traffic along Sussex Street passed along lines of shops and offices occupied by ship's chandlers, commission agents, produce salesmen and tradesmen, with at each intersection a cluster of hotels. Similar sights were to be seen along Kent and Clarence Streets, running parallel. York and Clarence Streets were along the length of Darling Harbour literally covered with large employing establishments. Clarence-street is rapidly becoming the most important commercial street in Sydney. Then there is Sussex-street, which for extent of traffic and general business activity is unequalled by any street that ever I heard of, unless it is Lower Thames-street, in London.

Commercial traffic along Sussex Street was said to be "enormous, a constant stream of vehicles pouring into it from all directions" as draymen shuttled goods to and fro between the docks and the wider metropolis, and distributed cargoes arriving at the Darling Harbour railway yards to their different destinations among Sydney shipping stores.

2. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.695, p.238; qu.1365, p.286.
visitors saw more banking offices, mercantile houses, and the many headquarters of anglo-colonial insurance companies, all of them boasted to be "costly, artistically designed buildings, of contrasting styles". The Exchange, much enlarged, was invited to be admired for its "huge appearance", and a few steps further north brought into view the overseas steamer wharves, the bond stores, and wool warehouses about Circular Quay. The massive wool store of Mort and Company on the Quay's south-eastern boundary, and the larger of its fellows nearby, were said to be among the most substantial and elegant buildings in the City, and for visitors and residents alike epitomised the economic vigour that had sustained Sydney's rapid growth.

II

Sydney was not only an artifact, however, and a visitor standing at Circular Quay in the late afternoon would have seen great masses of people crowding the streets and pavements. In front of the pleasant stone Customs House, queues of people stood waiting, scanning the approaching traffic for the light blue and white of the omnibus service to suburban Waterloo, the green for Glebe Point, and the green and white of the bus for Forest Lodge. At the quayside, queues filed aboard steam ferries bound for the North Shore. More crowds formed at the Darling Harbour end of King Street, by the Parramatta River steamer terminus, whilst others headed down Erskine Street to the landings of the Balmain and Pyrmont ferries. They were all on their way home.

44. cont.
1882); Surveyor General's Office, Map of the City; City and Suburban Plan Publishing Co., City of Sydney 1889, S.M.H., 23.10.1883, editorial p.7; City Architect's and City Buildings Surveyor's Annual Report, p.9, P.M.C.G.S., 1889.
47. See the bus stands and ferry wharves in Sydney and Suburban Plan Publishing Co., City Of Sydney 1888; for the colours of the different bus lines, see Supplement to the N.S.W. Government Gazette, 1874, vol.1, no.104 (6 May), p.1380; see the accounts of passenger traffic on the North Shore ferries in R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.806, p.244; qu.1729-30, p.321.
48. Department of Lands, City of Sydney, 1883+ (Metropolitan Detail Series, M.L.), section 55 (1887); see the estimates of passenger traffic on the North Shore ferries in R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.806, p.244; qu.1729-30, p.321.
Streams of labouring men and clerical workers could be seen walking through Hyde Park to Woolloomooloo, while others turned aside into the "squalid quarter" of back streets and alleyways stretching south to Goulburn Street and the Wexford Street district beyond.49 In Sussex, Kent, and Clarence Streets, common lodging house keepers began turning on outside lanterns, and setting up boards advertising beds at sixpence a night.50 Nearby, a "vast traffic" of buses, cabs, and pedestrians was passing by Pyrmont Bridge into the western suburbs. Still greater numbers of pedestrians could be seen making their way southwards to nearby suburbs like Redfern and Glebe.51

Major City thoroughfares, and George Street especially, were clogged with buses in different combinations of blue, green, and red, brown, purple, white, and black, each separate set of colours marking a different suburban destination.52 At intersections along Pitt Street, waiting throngs divided among the similarly coloured trams that came rattling along the street,53 Suburban railway services were also heavily in demand. Evening crowds squeezed onto the trams and distinctively white painted buses bound for the railway terminus, while even greater streams of people walked to the station down George Street.54

48.cont.
traffic on the Balmain, Pyrmont, and Parramatta River ferries in R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.806, p.244; between 20-24,000 people daily were said to be using the Balmain ferries; R.C.C.S.R., R., qu.530, p.406.
49. Some 30,000 people daily were passing to and fro through the park in the early 1890s; R.C.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.1630, 1641, 1645, pp.316-7; Gibbs, Shillard & Co., Illustrated Guide, p.65.
51. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., p.182; see R.C.C.S.S.R., R., qu.530, p.406; Oxford Street, the major outlet to Paddington, Waverley, and Randwick, was similarly busy; Gibbs, Shillard & Co., Illustrated Guide, p.43. Foot travellers between the City and Glebe could take a short cut across the Ultimo Estate and Blackwattle Creek; Geaves, 'Recollections', p.415.
53. S.M.H., 8.2.1890, 'At A Street Corner' p.6; R.C.T.F., qu.4889, p.1124, qu.5350, 5354, 5356, p.1137; see the criticisms by the Mayor of Paddington of congestion on the trams in R.C.C.S.R., R., qu.56-7, p.383; some 55 million passenger fares were collected during 1888; see the annual reports by the Railway Commissioner in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.).
54. Appendix D in R.C.C.S.R., P.R., p.334; R.C.T.F., qu.5352, p.1137; see also Select Committee on the Pitt-Street Tramway, V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1865-6, vol.3, qu.341, p.576. Ten daily passenger trains were being run along the suburban line between Sydney and Parramatta in 1860. By the close of the 1880s well over 100 suburban trains were arriving in Sydney and a similar number departing each day; Third
By train, or on foot, by tram, by bus, or ferry steamer, many thousands of Sydney residents each day travelled into City workingplaces and in the evenings returned to suburban homes. Some 60 percent of the total metropolitan population had been living within the City boundaries in the early 1860s. That figure had been halved by 1891. Since mid century, some 40 years of rapid urban development had produced in Sydney a physical and mental division between the City, a place where people worked, and the suburbs, where the bulk of the population had their homes.

Suburban expansion was in part the consequence of growing population and of the conversion of City land from residential to business use. Expansion was also in great measure an aesthetic response to the City environment. Inner Sydney was regarded as a mighty artifact, but it was no place in which to choose to live. It was noisy, it was dirty, it was smelly and congested. Parliamentarians investigating the question of extending railways into the inner City were told by one witness in 1890, "Every person who can afford the time and money will live out of town if he can". During the latter half of the nineteenth century, middle class Sydney moved out to the suburbs. Their objective, according to one government medical officer, was "freedom from the city's noise and a purer atmosphere than they find there".

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54. cont.
55. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., p.182; ibid., qu.806, p.244; see Coghlan, General Report, p.108.
56. City population had almost doubled, to some 108,000 but that number was dwarfed by the over 280,000 inhabitants of the suburbs; Appendix One, Table 1.1; see Plates 1 and 3. See also W.H. Wells, Map Shewing Electorates Of Canterbury, Central Cumberland, Parramatta & St. Leonards, Sydney, 1880; Higinbotham, Robinson & Harrison, Atlas of the Suburbs of Sydney, Sydney, 1886; Higinbotham & Robinson, Map of the County of Cumberland, Sydney (1895 ?).
57. See Report Relating to the Proposed Railway from Marrickville to the Burwood Road, V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1890, vol.6, qu.2241-2, p.589.
59. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.748, p.241. Report Relating to the Proposed Railway to Connect the North Shore Railway with Port Jackson, at Milson's Point, V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1889 Second Session, vol.2, qu.5, p.324. The popularity of Manly as a seaside resort was already by the early 1860s being explained as owing to the desire by Sydney residents to be "away from the bustle of the crowd and turmoil of the
The industrial landscape of western Sydney was a fine example of colonial progress, but "The smoke-begrimed works" of the Sydney gas company, and across the water, "The din of hundreds of hammers, and the panting noise of powerful engines" from the Australian Steam Navigation Company works, made for an unpleasant environment in which to set up home.¹

The photograph shows a row of small weatherboard cottages leading down a rough lane to the wharves near Liverpool Street, at the head of Darling Harbour. At the bottom of the lane stands the engineering works and tall associated chimney of Charles Biggs. Another chimney smokes nearby. Industry in western Sydney was a dominant influence upon eye, ear, and nose among surrounding communities.²

¹. Gibbs and Shallard, Illustrated Guide, p.89; Leigh, The Handbook to Sydney, pp.60-1. The E.N., 26.2.1883, "Brevities" p.3, described the homes of company employees at the back of the A.S.N. Co.'s works as a smelly "fever-bed".
². See below, pp.22,40 n.79.
It was being complained by the middle 1860s that George Street had become "often impassable, from the crowded state of the roadway".\(^1\) The City Corporation Inspector of Nuisances reported in 1881 that

in George Street, and the other main streets, during the principal business hours the traffic is so great that the streets are literally blocked up by Trollies, Drays, Vans and Omnibuses, besides miscellaneous [sic] private vehicles.\(^2\)

The development of tramways during the 1880s filled City thoroughfares such as Pitt Street with noise and smoke.\(^3\) Frequent complaints were made about the annoyance caused by dusty streets and horse droppings,\(^4\) and with the progressive paving of the major thoroughfares from the early 1880s, about their noise and slipperiness.\(^5\)

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1. Report from the Select Committee on the Pitt-Street Tramway, qu.272, p.573.
2. S.C.C., L.R., 1881, vol.4, no.709 (Inspector of Nuisances, 20.4.1881). See the surveys of street traffic in 1891, vol.5, no.1449 (City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 15.7.1891); 1892, vol.2, no. 431 (Inspector of Nuisances to Town Clerk, 29.2.1892).
3. See, for example, E.N., 29.9.1881, editorial leader p.2; 'The Praises of Sydney' in S.M.H., 22.2.1890, p.7; R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.940, p.257.
4. See S.C.C., L.R., 1891, vol.5, no.1417 (Inspector of Nuisances to Town Clerk, 15.7.1891); see the indexes of letters received in ibid.
5. See the City Surveyor's Yearly Report in P.M.C.C.S., 1889.
As increasing settlement produced in the innermost suburbs undesirable aesthetic consequences of their own, land sales boomed accordingly in more pleasant districts located further afield. Leichhardt, beyond Glebe and Balmain, and Marrickville, south of Newtown, experienced rapid growth in the 1880s after their connection to the City by tram. Professional men commuted by steamer to garden suburbs developing along the Parramatta River. Burwood and especially Ashfield, their growth boosted by rail access to the City, had developed into "large and fashionable" railway suburbs. The Illawara line, opened in 1884 to rail coal to the port from the southern fields, led to the rapid growth of a string of new railway suburbs south past the weekend excursion areas about Botany Bay.

59. cont.

city"; Waugh, The Stranger's Guide, p.53. It was said that Balmain, too, owed its growing population not only to expanding industry but to the considerable proportion of "clerks and mercantile men who, although occupied in the city, have been attracted to Balmain by its proverbial healthiness and agreeable scenery." Whitworth, Bailliere's, p.21.

60. Not even in London, complained one letter-writer to the Herald, were there a more desperately hateful conglomeration of middle-class shops and dwellings than afflict eye, ear, nose, and every sense in a progress through (say) Newtown and Enmore, or the Glebe or Paddington...Arid and desolate wastes of basest brick architecture, utterly unrelieved by tree or grass, oppress the soul and shrivel up every poor little instinct and aspiration towards natural beauty and purity.


61. See Appendix One, Table 1.4. Trams also made more accessible desirable villa and cottage sites in still pleasantly rural Waverley and Randwick; see Report Relating to the Proposed Railway from Marrickville, qu.179, p.521; Woollahra was by the later 1880s thickly settled with "the better class of society"; see 'Woollahra' in The Tourist Bureau, Excursion Map Of Sydney And Surroundings Together With A Concise Guide To All The Principal Places Of Interest, Public Buildings, Etc., Sydney, 1887, n.p.

62. Appendix One, Table 1.4. See descriptions of Gladesville, Hunter's Hill, and Ryde, and also Ashfield and Burwood, in The Tourist Bureau, Excursion Map; R.C.C.S.R.,R., qu.329-30, p.390.

63. Report Relating to the Proposed Railway from Marrickville, qu.2185, p.587; also qu.272, p.525, and qu.334, p.527. Praising the district's charm, a writer in 1885 described the rich forest at Rockdale, [and the] high breezy downs at Kogarah, from which glimpses of the deep blue Botany waters are frequently obtained, while backward all the city is seen with its smoke shroud, pierced by innumerable spires and shafts, and towers.

F. Myers, Botany Bay Past And Present, Sydney, 1885, p.40.
The suburban exodus was joined, too, by the Sydney working classes. The development of brick making and of boiling down works in the district south of Redfern, towards Botany Bay, attracted an increasing working class population to the area. Working men also commuted regularly to the City from more exclusive areas like the railway suburbs of Ashfield and Burwood. Their numbers, however, were small. The great majority of working people living beyond the City resided no further afield than the nearer suburbs immediately about its boundaries. Working people and the lower middle classes could here enjoy the respectability of suburban residence within easy access of their workplaces, walking the two to three miles to the western City in between 30 minutes and three quarters of an hour. The cost and timetabling of metropolitan transport services disinclined the great bulk of working people and the lower middle classes from living further afield. Paralleling the growing division between the City and suburbs during the nineteenth century, the nature of suburban commuter travel was making more pronounced the separation of the middle from the working classes.

64. Whitworth, Bailliere's, p. 591; Progress Report from the Select Committee on Employment of Children, qu.4-5, p.881; R.C.C.S.R., R., qu.125-7, p.388; qu.142, p.389; qu.186, p.391. The largest suburb in the district, Waterloo, was described in 1887 as being "chiefly inhabited by the lower classes of the community"; The Tourist Bureau, Excursion Map; The populations of neighbouring Botany and Alexandria, similarly, were "principally of the working classes"; R.C.C.S.R., R., qu.208, 211, p.392; Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', p.55. See the numbers of Workmen's Weekly Tickets issued at suburban stations in the appendices of the annual Reports on Railways, in V. 6 P. (N.S.W. L.A.).

65. Although by the late 1870s Sydney's suburbs outnumbered the City in population, by far the bulk of the total metropolitan population lived within a five kilometre radius of the General Post Office; Appendix One, Tables 1.3 and 1.4. By the early 1890s the inner suburbs of Darlington, Redfern, Paddington, and Glebe had become comparable in terms of crude population densities with the City; Coghlan, General Report, p.121.

66. The Mayor of Glebe reported in 1891 that "most of the people living in the Glebe are employed in the city and travel there daily, such as assistants in warehouses, clerks, Government officials"; R.C.C.S.R., R., qu.428, p.401. S.M.H., 29.1.1875, 'Eight-Hour Movement' p.8. An adult can walk one mile in a quarter of an hour; Dyos, The Study of Urban History, p.175.

67. See Appendix Three. The significant point about population growth in a railway suburb like Ashfield or a bus and tram suburb like Randwick was thus not the rapidity of their development, since they both nonetheless continued to be dwarfed in size by the innermost suburbs, but rather the class composition which their reliance upon these forms of transport produced.
Social divisions were strengthened by developments in settlement patterns occurring within the City itself through the century. Although in 1881 the suburban population outnumbered that of the City by some 25,000, over 100,000 people were still living in the City as opposed to some 87,000 residing in the nearer and most populous suburban districts. A decade later, these districts exceeded the City by 54,000 people, but the City was still growing in numbers and density. Population was however very unevenly distributed. Almost two thirds of the City now lived in its outermost districts, Denison, Cook, and Fitzroy Wards, in neighbourhoods little different in appearance from the neighbouring suburban districts of Glebe, Redfern, and Paddington.

Cook Ward, embracing Surry Hills, was by 1891 home to more people than was the largest suburb. The population of Denison Ward, including the Pyrmont peninsula and the Ultimo Estate at its base, was exceeded in the suburbs only by Balmain and Redfern. Like the inner suburban areas that bordered them, their attraction was convenience to City workplaces. From Ultimo, Chippendale, and Surry Hills to Darling Harbour was little more than a fifteen minute's walk. Woolloomooloo was similarly well situated. As the increasing population attracted to these areas steadily diminished the amount of land still available for home building, the density of population per building in Phillip, Denison, Cook, and Fitzroy Wards, which had seemingly declined from the late 1850s and throughout the next decade, slowly rose again during the 1870s and 1880s. All four wards - the two western-lying and more heavily blue collar districts to a slightly lesser extent - still by the early 1890s remained overwhelmingly residential in function.

In the innermost City districts by contrast, where except in Gipps Ward residential land was more and more being turned to business and commerce, population had been declining since the early 1880s. It was remarked in 1890 that wherever a warehouse is erected in the busier parts of the city it will be noticed that a dozen or half-dozen private dwellings have to be pulled down. And the question then arises, what is to be done with the people who are thus turned out of their homes... Of course these people

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68. Appendix One, Tables 1.3 and 1.7.
69. Ibid, Tables 1.2 and 1.5.
70. Plates 16-21; Appendix One, Tables 1.2 and 1.4.
71. Ibid., Tables 1.6 and 1.5.
Plate 16. Building base lines in the Albion Estate, Surry Hills, 1887

Surry Hills was now, in marked contrast to its mid century appearance, a brick dominated landscape of tenements and cottage rows in one and two stories, moderate to above average in size. As well as sharing the appeal of a suburban address, until the latter 1880s it suffered with them the sanitary disadvantages of having no underground sewers. Open surface drains and closely packed cesspools along the back lanes produced in some areas a sickening atmosphere that the CHO warned was calculated to produce disease.

Plates 16-18 show building base lines in Surry Hills, prepared by government surveyors during the later 1880s. The three plans describe in detail the Albion Estate, stretching from the Elizabeth Street side of the Belmore Gardens southeast between Albion and Foveaux Streets to Riley Street in the east. Note the large block of land on the corner of Elizabeth and Foveaux Streets, occupied by the Standard Brewery.

1. Appendix One, Tables 1.5 and 1.8.
2. See S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.2, no.417 (Dansey, 9.3.1880); also 1870, vol.1, no.134 (Dansey, 10.2.1870); ibid., no.135 (Dansey, 10.2.1870); 1873, vol.2, no.212 (Dansey, 10.3.1873); 1875, vol.2, no.165 (Dansey, 9.3.1875).
The Albion Estate was settled during the 1860s and 1870s. Despite heavy population growth, scattered allotments are still unbuilt upon. Groups of near-identical houses, some arranged in long rows and others in blocks of much smaller scale, illustrate the process of estate division and subdivision by which the district developed. The base lines reveal an environment much more uniformly residential in function than in western Sydney.

2. See Plates 27 and 28.
Residents wrote to the City Council in 1875, complaining of the health danger posed by the district's unformed streets and lack of proper drainage. The City Corporation Inspector of Nuisances reported late in 1885 that drainage in the area was still greatly defective.¹ In June 1881 the first fatality in the smallpox epidemic of that year occurred in the Albion Estate. The victim, a carpenter named Edward Route, lived in a housing row along Bellevue Street, sharing seven rooms with 13 other people.²

² See below, Part V.
In the more uniformly working class districts of western Sydney, population in Denison Ward swelled as wage workers settled within easy access of their workplaces in nearby warehouses and factories. The hitherto largely undeveloped Ultimo Estate was said by the Inspector of Nuisances in December 1881 to have lately "grown so rapidly, that it now forms quite a Township by itself". Still, said one large property owner in 1890, "you cannot call Ultimo out of town. People who live in Ultimo (I have had a great many houses, and know something about it) are for the most part those whose time will not allow of their living on the railway line." The district generally was considerably more proletarian in image than was Cook Ward. Houses were smaller, well over 80 percent of them having between three and six rooms only, and a much greater number of them than in other City districts were constructed of weatherboard. Underground sewerage, as in Surry Hills, did not become general until the later 1880s.

The photograph is taken from the base of the Pyrmont peninsula, looking across at some of the indifferently drained and ventilated working class dwellings located south of Liverpool Street, among the wharves and factories around the base of Darling Harbour. A row of small cottages slopes down towards a harbourside factory chimney in the photograph's centre. Large piles of ready-sawn timber are stacked in the right midground.

3. Appendix One, Table 1.8. See the reports on drainage by the Inspector of Nuisances in S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.2, nos.218-9 (19.3.1874); 1878, vol.1, no.22 (14.2.1878); 1881, vol.10, no.2194 (9.12.1881); 1886, vol.8., no.2436 (11.12.1886).
The neighbouring district of Phillip Ward, including both the old inner City localities about Goulburn Street and still developing Chippendale on the boundary with suburban Redfern, was also slowly increasing in population. Its brick landscape contained a population whose housing sizes and social mix alike lay in between those in Cook and Denison Wards on the district's either side. The towering "wonder" of Anthony Hordern and Sons' retail store, the Palace Emporium, stood near the site of the old Haymarket, now closed, dominating the George Street skyline in the retail district of Phillip Ward.

1. Appendix One, Tables 1.2, 1.5, and 1.8.
To the north of Surry Hills, and below the rising ground of well-to-do Darlinghurst, an expanse of brick and roof shingles marks the location of Woolloomooloo, home of the crowds of office workers and working men who could be seen each evening heading across Hyde Park. It was a thickly settled district of two storey tenement rows, some of them well built and cared for but others ill-ventilated and poorly drained, cramped in areas of dirty back streets and blind passageways, with backyards "close and muggy". At left-centre, the Jewish Synagogue in Elizabeth Street overlooks Hyde Park. Plate 4, dated 1873, pictures the City further south along Hyde Park.

must be able to get to their work, which lies in the very heart of the city.

While the middle classes generally abandoned the inner city as a place of residence, with the exception of still exclusive addresses in a neighbourhood such as Macquarie Street, close to the clubs, to Parliament, and Government House, working people crowded into the diminishing number of dwellings remaining in the central districts. Simultaneously as the population of the inner City ceased to expand and began to dwindle during the 1870s and 1880s, crowding actually increased significantly.

Some working people were unable to afford the rents demanded for alternative housing in the outer City wards or inner suburbs. It was not however poverty alone which bound working people to the inner City. The convenience of living close to work kept them in the area. Some trades in particular were tied to such districts. Wharf labourers sought homes about the Rocks and in Brisbane Ward to be near the docks. Their labour would be heavily in demand on one day and perhaps unwanted on the next, according to the amount of shipping in port. Such intermittent employment made it essential to be quickly on the spot when work offered. It was an irregular source of income upon which to draw for the cost of daily travel to and from the suburbs, and did not lend itself to the concessional rates for weekly or seasonal tickets upon which the regularly employed could rely. Building tradesmen and labourers likewise had no guarantee of constant employment, especially during the winter months. Factory hands were employed by the day or week, and might be laid off for have their wages fluctuate according to changing demand.

Dr Henry Graham, CHO

72. R.C.C.S.R., P.R., qu.695, p.239; see Report Relating to the Proposed Railway from Marrickville, qu.2240-1, p.589. Appendix One, Tables 1.2 and 1.5.
73. Ibid., Table 1.6. See Plates 22-24.
74. See below, Part III.
75. See Plates 25 and 26. Appendix Two, Tables 2.1 - 2.2, and 2.5 - 2.6; see the speech by P.A. Davis, a delegate of the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union, in the Official Report of the Sixth Intercolonial Trades and Labor Union Congress, Hobart, 1889, p.57.
77. See the references to the daily hiring of hands by Cuthbert's Ship Building Yard and Russell's Foundry in Leigh, The Handbook to Sydney, pp.75-6; see also Progress Report from the Select Committee on the Employment of Children, qu.230-1, p.889; qu.293-4, p.891; qu.788-9, p.906.
Plate 22. Bridge Street frontages, 1889

The process of urban decay at work in the central City district of Bourke Ward. Behind the row of hansom cabs, a brick terrace block on Bridge Street presents to passers-by a show of outward gentility. Small shops line the pavement, and the floors above are let as lodgings. Several broken panes among the row of dormer windows, and some crudely repaired roofing, appear as the only blemishes upon the building's air of respectability.
Plate 23. Back premises, Bridge Street, 1889

Here photographed are the rears of numbers three, five, seven, nine, and 11 Bridge Street, the terrace block whose frontages are pictured in Plate 22. An occupant on the far right looks out over cramped and crowded backyards, filled with tenants' washing. Walls are weather-streaked and show early signs of decaying. Broken window panes and dilapidated roofing suggest prolonged landlord neglect.
An array of local working class neighbourhoods existed out of sight behind the major thoroughfares of Bourke and Macquarie Wards. The photograph shows part of perhaps the most notorious of all, Queen's Place, which ran between George and Pitt Streets, near to Circular Quay and only a stone's throw to the north of the Sydney Exchange. Note the clothes lines strung across the area. Many wives worked as washerwomen to boost family incomes. Drainage in the neighbourhood was defective. The foreground would in wet weather become a mass of mud and puddles. The blank back walls of surrounding business premises crowd the skyline. The row of whitewashed cottages in the middleground consist each of one small ground floor room and a tiny apartment above. The upstairs windows do not open. One has been removed and another has a pane of glass smashed. Bourke and Macquarie Wards, as well as containing the most handsome shops and offices in the City, also contained the highest concentration of one- and two-roomed dwellings after Brisbane Ward.

1. See the 1875 description of Queen's Place in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.142, pp.568-9. Appendix One, Table 1.8.
Population in Gipps Ward grew by several thousands during the 1870s and then remained constant through the 1880s. Crowding increased significantly over the two decades. The Rocks district, situated on the rising ground to the west of Circular Quay, was a mixture of ageing stone cottage homes and larger and more recent apartment blocks, set among a network of courts and passageways. Caraher's Lane, located in the middle of a block between Cumberland and Gloucester Streets, was described by the CHO in 1875 as a badly drained court of seven brick houses, each with three rooms. Plate 26 gives some idea of the visual environment with which the inhabitants of those seven houses would have been familiar.

1. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.193, p.574. Appendix One, Tables 1.6 and 1.5.
Plate 26. Back premises in the Rocks, 1900

Backyards run together between housing blocks in Cumberland and Gloucester Streets. Elsewhere in the latter street, the backyards of some houses served as the roofs of those below them. Two backyard chimneys in Gloucester Street stand beneath the level of clothes lines and back windows in adjoining premises.
during the 1860s, repeatedly made the point that many working people were thus compelled to continue living in the inner City to be close at hand to their workplaces.\textsuperscript{78}

Sanitary investigators touring Blake's Buildings, an unwholesome and otherwise unnamed tenement row near Goulburn Street in Phillip Ward, recorded in 1876 that

The rooms, inside measurement, are 12 x 12 ft., and the ceiling 7ft. high, and ... each room would afford the minimum air space for two people. How few of these rooms have only two occupants - how many have five or six or more?... We have reason to believe that the crowding at night-time in this locality is much worse than we have described it.\textsuperscript{79}

In nearby alleyways and in the adjoining part of Denison Ward south of Liverpool Street, in Bourke and Macquarie Wards, and most noticeably of all in Brisbane Ward west of George Street to Darling Harbour, the same investigators described similarly unwholesome local neighbourhoods that even by British standards would have been considered overcrowded.\textsuperscript{80}

Residents in Brisbane Ward and in the City generally were no less aware of the frequent unpleasantness of the surrounding environment than were those who chose to live in the suburbs.\textsuperscript{81} Sanitary investigators touring Sydney often reported that working people living among the district's unhealthy lanes and courts "complain bitterly of the awful stench" coming from the polluted foreshores of Darling Harbour at low tide.\textsuperscript{82} Working people similarly complained of "horrible" smells that stopped them from sleeping at night, arising from defective sewers\textsuperscript{83}, stinking

\textsuperscript{78.} See S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.3, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); 1861, vol.3, no.489 (Graham, 8.6.1861); 1861, vol.6, no.1106 (Graham, 9.12.1861); 1868, vol.4, no.886 (Graham, 9.9.1868); see Graham's comment in S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.613, p.1314. See also the report by Graham's predecessor, Dr Isaac Aaron in S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.2, no.269 (Aaron, 31.3.1858).


\textsuperscript{80.} See Plates 27-29. The rule of thumb employed in the mother country was to count as overcrowded all rooms occupied by more than two people; E. E. Lampard, 'The Urbanizing World', p.22, in H.J. Dyos, M. Wolff (eds.), The Victorian City: Images and Realities, London, 1977, vol.1. Examples of other similar neighbourhoods in Sydney were Sylas Lane (S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.39, p.555), Rowe Street (ibid., qu.304, pp.655-6; also qu.243, pp.586-8), Foxlow Place (qu.307, p.657), and Swan Street (qu.309-10, pp.658-9).

\textsuperscript{81.} See Plates 30-32.

\textsuperscript{82.} S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.242, p.584; also qu.39, p.555; qu.274, p.627. See below, Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{83.} S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.252, p.598 (Seales' Yard); for other examples, see qu.39, p.555 (Washington Place); qu.248, p.593 (Robin Hood Lane);
Working class crowding was probably most widespread in Brisbane Ward, the second smallest City district in terms of population during the 1870s and 1880s.\(^1\) Almost half the district's buildings were classed in 1891 as being non-residential, the highest proportion in the entire metropolis.\(^2\) The ward's population had already declined slightly during the 1870s, and during the 1880s population slumped far more dramatically than in any of the other inner City areas. Yet crowding among the remaining population was at the same time worsening. Crowding had not declined in the district as it had in other wards during the 1860s, and simultaneously as population declined in the following two decades crowding increased dramatically.\(^3\)

Plates 27 and 28 show one of the working class communities remaining among the industrial and mercantile dominated landscape near the southernmost wharves of Darling Harbour. Sussex Street runs from left to right at the bottom of the picture, and at right turns towards its junction with the Pyrmont bridge. Russell's foundry is located off Bathurst Street, just to the left of the picture. Bathurst, Washington, and Druitt Streets each end among the wharves and jetties lining the harbour. Timber and coal yards, storage sheds, a saw mill, an engineering works, and a corn mill are located in the area. The Pacific Foundry towers over the long line of working class tenements stretching down the length of Washington Street. A large stables faces houses further to the east. Forty-one tenement houses are situated along Washington Street. Another tenement row containing 10 houses is located in nearby Druitt Street.

\(^{1}\) Appendix One, Table 1.2. See Table 37 in Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', pp.232-3.
\(^{2}\) Appendix One, Table 1.5.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., Table 1.6.
Sussex Street passes from left to right in the foreground. Druitt Street cuts through the centre of the photograph towards the harbour. Washing hangs drying behind the ten-house tenement block in the street. Smoke rises from the corn mill and engineering works opposite, and more escapes from a harbourside chimney stack behind them. The tenement rows facing Washington Street are visible on the extreme left of the picture. Smoke drifts over them from the Pacific Foundry, whose corrugated iron workshops dominate the local skyline. A large mound of coal rises at the harbour's edge behind the foundry and the nearby tenement homes. The Pyrmont railway goods line runs along the shore opposite. Houses in suburban Glebe dot the promontory beyond Blackwattle Bay, and Balmain is visible in the right background.
Plate 29. Building base lines in Macleay Street, Pott's Point, 1885

Opposite Washington Street, on the eastern boundary of the City, the junction of Macleay Street with Elizabeth Bay Road provides a complete contrast to the cluttered districts alongside Darling Harbour. In place of the modestly-sized apartment dwellings of Washington and Druitt Streets, looking out over factories, and timber and coal yards, large mansions here stand in spacious grounds overlooking the waters of Port Jackson.
Brisbane Ward as a whole was a crowded brick environment of business premises mixed with back street housing rows and tenement blocks.\textsuperscript{1} Dwellings, shipping offices, and an engineering workshop crowd together in the photograph between Sussex Street and Darling Harbour, at the rear of Erskine Street. Weeds cover a cleared allotment in the middle of the block. A wooden privy stands partially obscured behind a clothes line. Weatherboard cottages, several of one room only, run in a row close behind Charles Halliday's engineering premises. Just on half the homes in Brisbane Ward in 1891 had four rooms only or fewer, the highest proportion in the City.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} See Plate 12; see also Appendix One, Table 1.5.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., Table 1.7.
\end{itemize}
Plate 31. Sussex Street, c.1875

A lane of dilapidated weatherboard cottages and workshops runs behind the eastern facade of Sussex Street. Abutting lanes led from the shops and offices lining Sussex Street to back streets and passageways "crammed full of people. There are Washington-street, Bay-street, Fowler's Lane, Jacob's Ladder, and places innumerable there." A ship's topmast in the right background of the picture marks the direction of the Darling Harbour docks. More washing hangs drying in the foreground, yet middle class sanitary investigators touring such areas remarked repeatedly upon what they said was the neglect of personal cleanliness by the City working classes.

Plate 32. Lynch's court, off Clarence Street, 1875?

Working class housing conditions in the Sussex Street neighbourhood were duplicated in and around others of the district's major thoroughfares. Nearby Clarence Street was as a place of residence, "not a very enticing locality". It was a street of "dreary habitations", and dwellings along Kent Street were likewise "mean" looking in appearance.¹

Lynch's court was one of many interior courts that existed behind the street frontages of these two thoroughfares. Buildings loom over the court at left, obscuring it from the view of passers-by. Neighbourhood children, attracted by the spectacle of a gentleman with a camera visiting their homes, gather in the foreground. Notice the thin walls of the apparently pise-built cottage row alongside them. Shadows form on the building's roof and side wall as the sun shines into the court. Sanitary investigators in late 1875 reported that Ellis' court, located 19 steps below the level of Clarence Street, was shut in on three sides by lofty buildings so that no ventilation is possible, and the atmosphere must be fearfully close during the hot weather, when the sun, which can rarely be visible here during the winter, sends its scorching rays into the centre of this boxed-up locality.²

The same investigators commented critically upon Lynch's court, noting that two dwellings examined by them were so "bad...that they are scarcely fit for dog-kennels." On every side, they reported, "dire misery stared us in the face."³ Drainage would in wet weather run through the middle of the unguttered court. The stain in the foreground perhaps indicates, too, that house slops were thrown into the yard.

³ Ibid., p.571.
cesspools, and open surface drains. Tenants complained that bad ventilation made their homes unbearably hot and close. Stables in adjoining back premises were said to produce "intolerable" smells. Of particular annoyance to City working people was the smoke and noise from workshops situated alongside their homes. The rumbling noise of nearby machinery was alleged to be "depriving many from their rest", and insufficiently high chimneys were said to spread clouds of smoke through surrounding dwellings, choking residents and spoiling furniture and clothing.

It was not from choice but by necessity that people located their homes among such unpleasant surroundings. The aesthetic awareness by City working people of the defects in their environment was not however generally recognised in Sydney. Community perceptions of the City and its inhabitants became increasingly an outsider's image during the course of the nineteenth century. It was a vision produced and sustained by suburbia, and in particular by middle class suburbia. Glimpsed only fleetingly by commuters during the morning and afternoon rush between work and home, the residential districts of the western city especially became

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83. cont.
qu.276, p.629 (Jamieson Street). A group of Woolloomooloo residents protested in 1880 that the stench from a nearby sewer was "making the neighbourhood unfit for our existence"; S.C.C. L.R., 1880, vol.2, no.327 (19.2.1880).
84. S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.258, p.607 (Blake's Buildings); qu.262, p.611 (Union Street).
85. Ibid., qu.301, p.654 (Charles Lane); see also qu.268, p.620 (Chambers Street); qu.291, p.644 (Riley Street). See also the report by the Inspector of Nuisances in S.C.C., L.R., 1890, vol.4, no.1156 (Richard Seymour to the City Surveyor, 20.6.1890).
86. See S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.198, p.579 (Kent Street); qu.242, p.585 (Wright's Wharf); qu.252, p.598 (Seales' Yard); qu.310, p.659 (Swan Street).
87. Ibid., qu.114, p.564 (Kent Street); qu.240, p.582 (Union Street).
88. S.C.C., L.R., 1891, vol.6, no.1710 (petition from W. R. Fyfe in Kent Street, 10.8.1891); see also the petition in 1885, vol.6, no.1652 (n.d.).
89. See S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.115, p.565 (Lawrence Buildings); S.C.C. L.R., 1876, vol.3, nos. 368-9 (Abercrombie Street, 31.3.1876); 1879, vol.2, no.371 (Elizabeth Street South, 2.4.1879); 1888, vol.5, no.1367 (Sussex Street, 31.7.1888); 1888, vol.5, no.1588 (Bubbs' Foundry, 24.9.1888); 1891, vol.2, no.524 (Regent Street, Chippendale, 24.3.1891); 1891, vol.6, no.1600 (Fyrmont, 25.6.1891).
90. Smoke from a sawmill engine in Dixon Street, at the head of Darling Harbour, was said by nearby householders in 1879 to be making life wretched for those having the "misfortune" to live in the neighbourhood. Ibid., 1879, vol.2, no.310 (Harbour Street, Denison Ward, 20.3.1879).
known by the all-embracing label, "the slums of the city". In the eyes of the middle classes, the anonymous acres of working class housing in the City tended to become seen as an alien and vaguely disquieting presence in Sydney. Barriers to communication, resulting from the physical separation which Sydney's growth had given rise to between inner City and its residential periphery, between City and suburbs, and between class and class, had in turn produced a compartmentalised community whose rational functioning was disturbed by the differing perceptions and conflicting stereotypes which clouded interactions between its separate parts.

91. Myers, Botany Bay, p.38.
One guidebook advised in 1884 that anyone travelling in or out of the City along George Street West, as it passed between Ultimo and Chippendale, would glimpse an unwholesome region, where houses are jumbled together in narrow streets and lanes, and the whole neighbourhood is excessively uncomfortable. If there be any truth in the aphorism that inferior dwellings help to demoralize a people, then many portions of George Street West and its off-lanes will help unmistakably to confirm the saying.
Gibbs and Shallard, Illustrated Guide, p.27.
CHAPTER TWO
City Health and Disease

I

"The topic of general concern of late has been the Public Health". The comment was contained in an editorial leader by the Herald in early March 1875. An approaching calamity in urban health had been freely predicted for the City since the New Year. A writer for the Evening News, recollecting many years of warnings by public health officials about the consequences of continuing poor sanitation in the City, queried whether the foreshadowed crisis was now arriving and "the pestilence really at last upon us?" Throughout the nineteenth century, community concern at the frequent unpleasantness of urban life was based upon widely shared anxieties about the ill-health associated with the city's unwholesome environment. To all classes it seemed that city fumes, stinks, and filth entailed disease, sickness, and death. And with good reason. Chronic illness and disease, encouraged by inadequacies in city sanitation, by overcrowding, and poverty, were until well into the first quarter of the twentieth century a dreaded and frequent presence in all families. Fear of infectious disease especially, with, as the ultimate dread, forebodings of malignant disease in epidemic forms, lay at the core of the nineteenth century urban psyche.2

The year 1875 would linger in the memories of Sydney residents as one of the most alarming crises of threatened epidemic disease faced by the city throughout the century.3 Rising mortality levels since 18704 had been regularly brought before the public by newspaper publication of health returns by the CHO, Dr Dansey, who warned of the increasing deaths caused

1. S.M.H., 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4; E.N., 6.1.1875, 'Town Talk' p.2. See also S.M.H., 26.1.1875, 'The Doomed City' p.5; 8.2.1875, editorial p.4; 15.4.1875, editorial leader pp.4-5; 20.8.1875, editorial p.4.
2. Appendix Four, Tables 4.1 and 4.2; see M. Cannon, Life in the Cities (being vol.3 of the trilogy, Australia in the Victorian Age), Melbourne, 1976, p.129. The eminent scientist, Sir Rutherford Robertson, today still walks with the limp he contracted from poliomyelitis well over half a century earlier during his childhood in Sydney. He remembers the "great dreads" of parents during his boyhood, caused by the frequency of diseases such as diphtheria and scarlatina, the "special fear" of tuberculosis, and the ever present anxiety "of pneumonia as the end point of the common cold or flu." (Manuscript and letter in my possession).
3. See the May 1875 reference to "the recent panic as to the health of the city" in S. & H.B., 1st R., p.388; see also the editorial in the E.N., 14.9.1875, p.4.
4. Appendix Four, Table 4.1.
by such 'regulars' as typhoid and diarrhoea, and from mid 1874, of alarming new levels first of scarlatina and from October onwards, of measles. At the end of 1874 the CHO drew attention to very severe outbreaks of scarlatina and measles, and in early January 1875 wrote somberly of "the presence of an Epidemic" in the City.

The CHO's reports impressed the editorial staff of the Herald. During January 1875, the newspaper's readers were told, there had been some 400 deaths in the City alone, and doctors, nurses, and also undertakers, were becoming overwhelmed with work. In both City and suburbs, an editorial commented in May, the death rate had risen to appalling proportions. Again and again, the newspaper hammered its worrying message that seasonal mortality levels in the City were clearly higher than in London or in any of the major cities in Britain, and that even in the supposedly healthy Sydney suburbs mortality was higher than in most towns in the mother country. At the inaugural meeting in August 1876 of the Health Society of N.S.W., established by sanitarians anxious to combat Sydney's spiralling ill-health, well-known City Alderman John Young contended that "During the last three years the health of Sydney had been worse than that of any town in Europe, whereas formerly it was one of the most healthy places in the world."

Anxieties about city ill-health in 1875 confirmed the reputation of Sydney as the most unwholesome spot in N.S.W. Recorded deaths in the City during 1875 formed one of the highest yearly totals for the whole of the nineteenth century, since the Registrar General's records began in the middle 1850s. In the suburbs, too, deaths were the highest since 1867, although new heights would be recorded during the typhoid scares in the middle 1880s. The City had experienced similar recorded mortality levels during 1860 and 1867. Mortality tables however recorded only a fraction of

5. S.C.C., L.R., 1873, vol.2, no.212 (10.3.1873); 1873, vol.3, no.498 (9.6.1873); 1874, vol.2, no.269 (9.4.1874); 1874, vol.6, no.812 (9.12.1874).
6. Ibid., 1874, vol.3, no.341 (9.5.1874); 1874, vol.4, no.509 (9.7.1874); 1874, vol.5, no.731 (9.10.1874); 1874, vol.6, no.776 (9.11.1874).
7. Ibid., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (9.12.1874); 1875, vol.1, no.15 (9.1.1875).
8. S.M.H., 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4; see also editorial leader on 11.3.1875, p.4. Ibid., 22.5.1875, editorial pp.6-7.
9. See, for example, ibid., 1.3.1875, editorial p.4; 22.5.1875, editorial pp.6-7; 22.5.1876, editorial p.4; 8.9.1876, editorial p.4; see also the editorial in the E.N., 17.3.1875, p.2.
10. S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3.
the ill-health actually present in Sydney. In terms both of total illness and the range of infectious diseases present, public memory of City ill-health during 1875 far eclipsed that of the two earlier years. In March 1875, commenting upon the mounting deaths in Sydney, the Herald remarked how "there has been scarcely a locality or a street in which disease, in some form, has not made its appearance." 12

The principal victims of those diseases were children. Some 47 percent of all deaths in the City during the year were children aged under five, and percentages in the suburbs were even higher. 13 A decade later the Government Statistician, Timothy Coghlan, still recalled those mortality levels with a shudder. "In 1875", he wrote,

Sydney was troubled by an extraordinary visitation of sickness; children died, stricken by diarrhoea and atrophy, pneumonia and bronchitis, diphtheria and scarlatina, convulsions, and measles. Its children were literally decimated, for out of 23,327 children of five years and under, 2,177 died during the year. 14

Dansey and his predecessors as CHO had frequently drawn attention to the disproportionately high number of infant deaths under five years to total deaths in the City, and in so doing had remarked particularly upon the susceptibility of children to the infectious diseases associated with the unwholesomeness of the urban environment. It was no coincidence, CHOs remarked, that infant deaths were highest in the insanitary working class districts of the City, and at their lowest in exclusive Darlinghurst. 15

The impact of city environment upon infant life was in 1877 the subject of a series of statistical enquiries published in the Herald by Professor M. B. Pell, chairman of the by then disbanded Sewage and Health Board that had been appointed by government in April 1875 to inquire urgently into the causes of worsening city ill-health. Many thousands of lives aged under

12. S.M.H., 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4.
14. T.A. Coghlan, The Wealth And Progress Of New South Wales 1886-87, Sydney, 1887, p.177; deaths under five years formed an "enormous number", said Dansey; S.C.C., L.R., 1875, vol.2, no.165 (9.3.1875); see also the reporting of Dansey's opinion by W.C. Windeyer at the inaugural meeting of the Health Society, quoted in S.M.H., 30.8.1876, p.3.
15. See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.3, no.570 (Dr Graham, 9.6.1859); 1862, vol.4, no. 624 (Graham, 9.6.1862); 1862, vol.6, no.1126 (Graham, 8.12.1862); 1863, vol.3, no.499 (Graham, 9.6.1863); see also Dansey's report of 9.3.1888 in P.M.C.C.S., 1888. See Appendix Four, Table 4.4.
five years had been "sacrificed", he concluded, because of the insanitary condition of the metropolis.\textsuperscript{16}

That opinion was supported by the statistics compiled annually by the Registrar General, which showed levels of infant mortality in the City and especially in the suburbs to be consistently far above those of rural N.S.W.\textsuperscript{17} The continuing high levels of infantile mortality in Sydney lay at the core of general community anxieties concerning city ill-health. In particular, child deaths intensified public dread of those urban diseases most commonly recognised as being readily communicable, and hence potentially epidemic in their proportions, the viral and bacterial diseases of smallpox, cholera, typhus and typhoid, dysentery, diphtheria, scarlatina, and measles, all of which nineteenth century city dwellers classed together as "miasmic diseases" produced by the unwholesomeness of the urban environment.\textsuperscript{18} For city dwellers, the connection between infant mortality and fear of epidemic disease was a logical one. Whenever infant sickness and mortality was greatest in the City, sanitary returns prepared by the CHO revealed the crises to have been caused by the increased prevalence of well known infectious diseases.\textsuperscript{19}

The connections thus made between urban environment and epidemic disease were nonetheless somewhat misleading. The starkest contrasts of

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\textsuperscript{16} Pell demonstrated that mortality rates for the whole of N.S.W. among under-five year-olds "were very greatly below those in England", but whereas in London the infant death rates [under 5] are only about 7\% per cent. greater than for the whole kingdom, in Sydney and the suburbs they are 55 per cent. above those for the colony at large. 'Rates Of Mortality And Increase Of The Population Of New South Wales', in S.M.H., 18.7.1877, p.5. So far as he was aware, said Pell, "Such an excess of town over country mortality...has never been shown to exist in any other country." Ibid., 7.7.1877, 'Rates Of Mortality And Increase Of The Population Of New South Wales' p.7; see Pell's earlier article on infant mortality in ibid., 26.6.1877, p.3. Pell's opinions were echoed by Professor A. Liversidge, in R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.22 (1888), pp.16-7; and Coghlan, Wealth...1900-01, p.1004.

\textsuperscript{17} See the classification of mortality statistics in ibid., p.40.

\textsuperscript{18} See the classification of mortality statistics in ibid., p.40.

\textsuperscript{19} High mortality levels in 1858 were caused by the many deaths among children from scarlatina, whooping cough, "Low Fever", and also bronchitis; S.C.S., L.R., 1858, vol.4, no. 715 (Dr Aaron, 9.9.1858). Mortality statistics for 1860 were boosted by outbreaks of measles and influenza; Registrar General's Fifth Annual Report, V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1861-62, vol.1, p.1322. Mortality among children again rose in 1867 when a measles epidemic claimed over 460 lives; ibid., 1875-6, vol.3, p.799. The jump in Sydney's death rate during 1875 had likewise resulted from a sudden upsurge in measles and scarlatina among children under five, and especially those aged between one and four years; Appendix Four, Table 4.5.
all between the health of city and country were revealed by comparisons of deaths among infants aged under one year old. 20 Throughout the century, such deaths in Sydney were far higher than mortality levels from any other age group. The year 1875, with its upsurge in deaths from measles and scarletina among one year olds to four year olds, was an exception to the normal pattern whereby between 65 and 70 percent of infant deaths were aged under one year, 21 the majority of such deaths being attributed to causes other than what was then commonly understood by infectious disease.

It was not the outbreak of this or that particular infectious disease that sustained the high levels of city ill-health so much as the continuing loss of life among the very young caused each year by sickness from the smells, the dirt, and the crowding of urban life, intensified for many by the exigencies of economic deprivation. 22 Community anxiety about public health was nonetheless centred overwhelmingly upon fear of infectious disease, with as the ultimate dread the appearance in epidemic form of the two most notorious scourges of all, smallpox and cholera. 23

II

Just how such diseases actually operated was a question much in doubt in Sydney throughout the nineteenth century. 24 Medical researchers across the world were until at least the 1880s unable to explain satisfactorily fundamental questions concerning the origins, the substance,
and the communication of disease. And inevitably, general medical and community knowledge lagged often far behind the latest discoveries in the field of pathological research.

In 1840 Jacob Henle in Germany had reinterpreted a line of argument dating back to Roman times to formulate the modern germ theory of disease causation. Henle lacked conclusive supporting evidence however, and talk of germs was listened to with scepticism by sanitarians until after experimental work by Louis Pasteur during the early 1860s proved that fermentation was a process caused by living micro-organisms. Fermentation was regarded as analogous to the process of disease development, and indeed under William Farr's classification of deaths adopted by the N.S.W. Registrar General, smallpox and other dreaded infectious diseases were listed as a subgroup under the general heading of "zymotic" diseases, after the Greek word for fermentation.

In recognition of Pasteur's research, and of the light which this shed on the propagation of zymotic disease, the French scientist was elected to honorary membership of the N.S.W. Royal Society. However Pasteur had to wait for that honour until 1883, His experimentation during the early 1860s had not suddenly provided pathologists with a key unlocking all the secrets of disease causation. Germ theory was only slowly accepted, and decades later doctors as well as lay people were still scoffing at the thought that infection might be spread by "a man going into a room and coming out with a pocketful of germs!"

It was not until 1876, during the disease alarms in Sydney of the mid 1870s, that announcement was made in Germany by Robert Koch of the successful isolation, identification, and culturing of the pathogenic

25. Pasteur's conclusions were based heavily upon the theory of specific aetiology. See the thought-provoking discussion on the triumph in the nineteenth century of the idea that particular diseases have particular causes, in B. Dixon, Beyond the Magic Bullet, London, 1978, esp. pp.1-63; see also Pelling, Cholera. See the discussion of the connection between fermentation and the development of zymotic disease in S.M.H., 5.7.1877, editorial pp.4-5.


28. Koch's work had been with the anthrax bacillus. Koch next announced his discovery of the tubercle bacillus in early 1882. Then in 1883, the same year as the bacterium causing diphtheria was identified, he isolated and cultivated the vibro cholerae; see Echo, 5.2.1891, "The Deadly Bacilli".
bacterium causing a specific disease.\textsuperscript{28} This and subsequent bacteriological "revelations" during the 1880s and 1890s were greeted enthusiastically by the press in Sydney, as foreshadowing the eventual control "of the micro-organisms that govern the life and death of all living creatures".\textsuperscript{29} Those bacterial controls were not however immediately forthcoming, as was underscored by the disappointment in Sydney of the hopes raised in 1890 by Koch's premature announcement of a cure for consumption. That there might also exist malignant submicroscopic organisms, moreover, remained generally unrecognised even among medical researchers until at least the end of the century. The first human disease virus identified, that of yellow fever, was not isolated until 1901, and modern virology did not become firmly established until well into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{30}

In Sydney, popular interpretation of advances in pathological research were based upon readings of the local newspapers.\textsuperscript{31} Probably the most regular and authoritative local source of pathological information thus absorbed by lay people was provided by newspaper publication of the sanitary reports compiled for the City Council by the CHO. Until Pasteur proved the existence of microscopic bacterial organisms, the Corporation official had spoken vaguely of dangerous poisons being at the root of disease. Disease causation was regarded as a chemical rather than as a biological process. In September 1859 Dr Graham, Dansey's predecessor, had announced that "Most diseases are generated by the introduction of a subtle poison into the system." This "morbid poison", he later explained, was introduced into the blood through air cells in the lungs, and there fermenting circulated a poison through the body to produce zymotic disease.\textsuperscript{32} Despite Pasteur's work on fermentation, Dansey was still in 1875 attributing infectious disease to "gases calculated when

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} S.M.H., 22.12.1890, editorial p.5; Echo, 14.2.1891, 'Disease Germs And Dirt'; see R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.22 (1888), p.16.
\item \textsuperscript{29} See the expectations voiced concerning a likely cure for consumption in the D.T., 25.11.1890, 'Dr. Koch' p.5; and see the later note of disappointment sounded by the S.M.H. in 25.12.1890, editorial p.4. On the nineteenth century origins of virology, see G. Williams, Virus Hunters, London, 1960, pp.36-7, 56-66.
\item \textsuperscript{30} The Herald, especially, frequently discussed contemporary understanding of disease and reproduced articles and speeches by British experts upon the subject.
\item \textsuperscript{31} S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859). Ibid., 1862, vol.2, no.217 (Graham, 8.3.1862). See Pelling, Cholera pp.81-145.
\end{itemize}
breathed and taken into the system to produce various disorders as fevers etc and in addition to cause other complaints to assume a typhoid form so much dreaded". In 1888, well after the bacterial discoveries of Koch, Dansey continued to talk vaguely of "poisonous gases" as the cause of disease.33

Dansey had always been equivocal as to what actually made disease develop within the human body, but even before Pasteur's work Graham had suggested cautiously that the poisons absorbed into the blood contained some sort of tiny malignant particles.34 Graham was much impressed when he heard the results of Pasteur's experimentation with fermentation, and in 1868 announced for the first time that disease was caused by microscopic living organisms called germs. The theory as he understood it fitted neatly with his own preconceptions concerning disease causation. As he explained in June 1868,

The polluted condition of the Surface Water in Darling Harbour and Circular Quay poisons the air we breathe, entering the lungs by inspiration, becomes absorbed by the blood, and conveying thereby from the atmosphere, floating germs of Microscopic Fungi and Infusoria

These animal and vegetable atoms have only recently been known to the Scientific World, dangerous parasites, invisible to the naked eye, entering the human body these Infusoria, rapidly obtain life and Multiply, and become diffuse in various soft parts of the body

These Microscopic germs of Fungi etc. are not met with in a dry healthy atmosphere, but only appear when the air becomes polluted by gases evolved from organic substances passing into a state of putrefaction.35

Graham's statement was as significant for the uncertainties and inconsistencies it contained as for the support given to the concept of "Microscopic germs". The emphasis given to poisons and gases as well as to germs was particularly significant. Two decades afterwards the City

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34. S.C.C., L.R., 1862, vol.4, no.624 (Graham, 9.6.1862).
35. Ibid., 1868, vol.3, no.524 (Graham, 9.6.1868). See the lengthy editorial leader linking the development of zymotic disease to the multiplication of fungi-like "minute organic beings", in the Empire, 2.3.1869, p.2; see also Pelling, Cholera, pp.146-249.
Corporation Inspector of Nuisances was still associating germs with poisonous gases. Germ theory as it was generally interpreted in Sydney explained how diseases spread through the body, but for many doctors and layfolk alike, the new theory did little to alter earlier opinions as to how diseases actually were generated and spread. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, most people believed that disease germs were somehow born from "miasmic" or polluting smells and gases arising from the decomposition of city wastes, and from the general grime and fumes of the urban environment.

Miasmic theories of disease generation had become popular in Sydney from mid century, as accelerating City growth was reflected in the proliferation of sanitary nuisances caused by problems such as harbour pollution, horse transport and stabling, the mounting volume of house slops, sewage, and garbage requiring disposal, and the development of overcrowding among the City's poorer districts. Belief that the urban environment was poisoning the air had developed from earlier hypotheses that the atmosphere itself produced disease. Increasingly, however, CHOs attributed disease to local City causes. Denying that climate could itself generate disease, Graham in 1866 remembered a recent outbreak of scarlatina, when

Many Parents who lost child after child, attributed the disease to some Atmospheric influence which could not be averted, but had they looked around their premises, they might have discovered some local causes - as offensive Cesspools, soaking and percolating into the surrounding Soil, accumulations of filth, and rubbish in back yards - ventilation in Sleeping rooms defective; matters far more productive of disease and contagion, than Atmospheric influence.

Graham suspected that the process of decay and fermentation caused "miasmic emanations" to appear in the same way as spontaneous combustion produced fire. Drawing attention in early 1868 to the partial blocking of the public sewer into Blackwattle Bay by accumulations of filth

36. Sydney's first CHO, Isaac Aaron, wrote that "The occurrence and the character of every Epidemic appears to be, mainly, determined by some atmospheric phenomena of the nature of which the present state of our Meteorological Knowledge does not afford us any information." S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857). As late as 1869 Dansey was suggesting direct parallels between atmospheric changes and the prevalence of fever; ibid., 1869, vol.2, no.265 (Dansey, 9.3.1869); see also ibid., 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859).

37. Ibid., 1866, vol.6, no.1049 (Graham, 8.12.1866); see 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (Graham, 9.12.1867); see also 1859, vol.3, no.570 (Graham, 9.6.1859).

38. Ibid., 1864, vol.6, no.883 (Graham, 24.10.1864).
and dead animals, the CHO predicted that "the Miasma arising is calculated...to produce Pestilence." Thus were the dreaded miasmic diseases believed to be given birth. Miasmic gases thus diffused into the atmosphere had the potential to poison the air breathed by people elsewhere in the City. So strong was Graham's belief in the miasma theory of disease generation that he sometimes expressed doubts whether cholera in particular was a disease "exhibiting contagious principles". Germ theory seemed to Graham to confirm his belief that disease was tied to local causes rather than to atmospheric changes, and that the process of fermentation was actually the source "which give[s] life and birth" to the "Germs of Pestilence"

Pasteur had explicitly sought to prove by his experiments in the 1860s on fermentation that the process was caused neither by a chemical reaction nor by the spontaneous generation of living micro-organisms. The French scientist demonstrated that bacteria developed from already existing microbes. Among City Corporation sanitary officials and the medical profession generally throughout the remainder of the century, however, echoes from the old idea of a chemical process of spontaneous combustion continued to influence perceptions about disease generation, notwithstanding the acceptance increasingly accorded to the biologically based germ theory of disease causation.

39. Ibid., 1868, vol.1, no.4 (Graham, 4.1.1868). Graham warned that miasmic poisons inhaled into the lungs were "calculated to produce a Typhoid type of Fever, and even generate Cholera." Ibid., 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860). Dansey also maintained that "Typhoid fever and other diseases are often caused by bad smells", which were "breathed and taken into the system"; ibid., 1872, vol.2, no.229 (Dansey, 9.3.1872); 1875, vol.1, no.15 (Dansey, 9.1.1875).
40. See, for example, ibid., 1859, vol.2, no.255 (Aaron, 9.3.1859). See below, Chapter Six.
41. Cholera, he said, was not spread by touch but by miasma in the atmosphere; ibid., 1865, vol.6, no.1032 (Graham, 9.12.1865); see also 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); similar views were expressed in Britain by John Simon; Lambert, Sir John, p.50.
42. 1868, vol.6, no.1286 (Graham, 9.12.1868).
43. In 1869 one doctor in the Legislative Assembly cautioned other speakers against so mistaken a belief "that disease would spring up spontaneously in scenes of dirt." Empire, 19.2.1869, 'Compulsory Vaccination Bill' p.3. See also the backing given by the Herald in 1877 to the declaration by the prominent British surgeon, Sir Thomas Watson, "that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation." S.M.H., 5.7.1877, editorial, pp.4-5.
44. See below, Chapter Fourteen. In 1892 the CHO, a man recently trained in modern sanitary medicine at Edinburgh, stated that working class
Uncertainty respecting the origins of pathogenic micro-organisms was caused by the continuing assumption of a miasmic link between filth and decay, and the production of disease. Not until the early 1900s was Farr's classification of miasmic diseases finally dropped. Occasionally during the 1870s and 1880s Dansey warned that disease might be spread by the contamination of clothing, and in working class common lodging houses by infected bedding. Overwhelmingly, however, the emphasis was upon the "most deadly stenches" and the "poisonous gases" attributed to decaying filth and then "wafted through the city". Concern centred upon the health nuisances caused by house slops and sewage. Drainage lying in foetid and stinking pools about the Ultimo Estate was said by the Inspector of Nuisances in February 1878 to have made the district a "hotbed of malaria". Such poisons were a major cause of typhoid, said Dansey, and of other maladies like scarlatina and diphtheria. The prevalence of such diseases among working people living alongside Darling Harbour was likewise blamed upon the "pestilent vapour" produced there at low tide in consequence of the raw sewage constantly being pumped into the harbour from the City's underground sewers. Around Blackwattle Swamp also, the Herald reported in 1873, the whole atmosphere was fever laden. The newspaper warned that even from the City's underground sewers, escaping districts like the Rocks, the western City facing Darling Harbour, and the area around Blackwattle Bay, because of their overcrowding and unwholesome dwellings "serve only as beds for the generation and propagation of diseased germs." Monthly report by Dr Gwynne-Hughes, 4.2.1892, P.M.C.C.S., 1891, n.p; see the comment by Professor Liversidge in P.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.22 (1888), pp.11-2; see also the Inspector of Nuisances, S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Richard Seymour, 5.2.1888).

45. See, for example, ibid., 1874, vol.2, no.184 (Dansey, 9.3.1874); 1882, vol.5, no.1463 (Dansey, 9.9.1882).
46. Ibid., 1873, vol.2, no.212 (Dansey, 10.3.1873); Dansey, 9.3.1888, in P.M.C.C.S., 1888, n.p. See also S.C.C., L.R., 1875, vol.5, no.708 (Dansey, 9.10.1875).
47. Ibid., 1872, vol.6, no.1018 (Dansey, 9.12.1872); see ibid., 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875).
48. This was especially so in the more outlying and unsewered portions of the City; see ibid., 1872, vol.2, no.229 (Dansey, 9.3.1872); 1874, vol.2, no.184 (Dansey, 9.3.1874) See Plates 16 and 18.
49. Ibid., 1878, vol.1, no.22 (Seymour, 10.1.1878). See Plate 19.
50. S.C.C., L.R., 1871, vol.2, no.300 (Dansey, 9.3.1871); 1874, vol.5, no.731 (Dansey, 9.10.1874); 1876, vol.1, no.128 (Dansey, 9.3.1876); 1876, vol.5, no.551 (Dansey, 9.9.1876); 1882, vol.7, no.1929 (Dansey, 12.1882).
51. Ibid., 1883, vol.2, no.560 (Seymour, 12.4.1883). See also ibid., 1869, vol.4, no.754 (Dansey, 9.6.1869); 1875, vol.4, no.517 (Dansey,
"miasma or gas" was undermining health.52

The full implication of the axiom formulated by Henle and Koch, that each infectious disease was caused by a specific micro-organism, would not be fully grasped by medical authorities in Sydney until well into the 1900s. But while uncertainties persisted throughout the nineteenth century concerning the mechanics by which infections originated and spread, upon one crucial matter all the conflicting theories were in agreement. City filth and unwholesomeness, whether it was sweepingly said to 'generate' disease, or more precisely claimed to "foster the development of disease germs",53 was agreed by everybody interested in urban health to be essential for the appearance and the communication of miasmic diseases. This was especially so in the case of the two most dreaded diseases of all, smallpox and cholera. In February 1869, during the anxieties caused in Sydney by the appearance of smallpox in nearby Melbourne, one Herald editorial writer noted how

In discussing the causes of small-pox it has been not uncommon to regard it as being generated by filth. Now although filth cannot scientifically be regarded as the generator of the specific poison of small-pox, it may be allowed to intensify it.54 Graham had similarly remarked of the other scourge late in 1865 that cholera arose out of city "Filth and Dirt".55 Dansey drew particular attention to the association between dirt and ill-health during the disease alarm of 1875. It was well known to all, said the CHO, "that nothing fosters and promotes disease so much as filth wherever it may be."56

51.cont.
9.8.1875); 1875, vol.6, no.767 (Dansey, 9.11.1875); 1877, vol.2, no.299 (Dansey, 9.3.1877).
52. S.M.H., 8.1.1873, 'Health Of The City. I' p.6; see 15.4.1875, editorial leader p.4. Ibid., 20.1.1873, 'Health Of The City. III' pp.2-3; see 7.1.1875, editorial p.4; see also the report by the CHO, Dr Clay, in S.C.C., L.R., 1889, vol.2, no.588 (16.4.1889); and ibid., no.874 (N.S.W. Board of Health to Town Clerk, 14.6.1889).
53. Monthly report by the CHO, Dr Gwynne-Hughes, dated 10.7.1891, in P.M.C.G.S., 1891, n.p.
54. S.M.H., 10.2.1869, editorial p.4.
55. S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865); also 1865, vol.6, no.1032 (Graham, 9.12.1865); A.B.C.N., 22.10.1892, 'Insanitation In Sydney' p.204.
In emphasising the importance of City filth and stinks in fostering miasmic disease, Dansey frequently had occasion to complain of apparent community indifference concerning cleanliness and sanitation. Reporting in June 1875 upon the progress of the measles and scarlatina outbreaks in the City, the CHO expressed concern that even in so grave a time, "amongst our population there seems to be so much apathy regarding hygienic measures". The Herald, too, in editorials during 1875, deplored what it labelled as the public indifference concerning City sanitation. The allegation was repeated during the following year by the well known Sydney lawyer Burton Bradley, when in August he endorsed the idea that a health society be established to combat Sydney's worsening record for ill-health. A public meeting was called by Bradley for the end of the month, at which the Health Society of N.S.W. was launched in order to overcome what was said to be popular ignorance and inattention concerning public health. The launching was only moderately attended. Deploring the poor turn out, a lead editorial in the Herald remarked that it was almost incredible in a city so ravaged by disease over the previous 18 months that scarcely 50 people should have been present at the Health Society's inaugural meeting.

Similar criticisms were voiced of the support given to the Royal Society of N.S.W's efforts in 1876 to form a sanitary science section as one of nine special interest groups launched by the society that year. The new section was chaired by Dr Alfred Roberts, a leading authority upon urban health, and in 1878 Professor John Smith, then vice-president of the Royal Society and in 1874-76 chairman of the Sewage and Health Board's inquiry into overcrowding in Sydney, was also elected to its standing committee. An energetic round of meetings was organised during its

58. See S.M.H., 20.8.1875, editorial p.4; also 15.4.1875, editorial leader p.4. See E.N., 11.5.1883, 'Alarming Increase Of Typhoid' p.5.
59. See letters by Bradley in S.M.H., 2.8.1876, 'A Health Society' p.6; 15.2.1876, 'A Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. See also letter by 'Cook Ward' in ibid., 31.3.1875, 'Our Health And Our Aldermen' p.5; and by 'Vive La Patrie' in ibid., 31.8.1876, 'The Public Health' p.3.
60. Ibid., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. Ibid., 31.8.1876, lead editorial p.4.
61. Two other doctors well known for their interest in health and disease, W. J. G. Bedford and Thomas Belgrave, were likewise active committee members; see R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.10 (1876), p.256, and vol.12 (1878), p.174.
first year, but in 1877 and 1878 a number of the section's meetings lapsed because of the small number of members participating. By 1879 the sanitary section was defunct.62

In 1886, as the result of interest generated by the introduction to Parliament of a Public Health Bill, the sanitary section was re-established with Roberts, now Sir Alfred, again as chairman.63 In May 1889, however, Roberts expressed his regret that the sanitary section was again in difficulties. Speaking of the continuing ravages caused in the city by diseases such as typhoid and diphtheria, Roberts remarked sadly upon "the deplorable ignorance which apparently exists among us, and the melancholy apathy with which these evils are tolerated". By 1890 the sanitary section was again defunct.64

Sweeping assertions of widespread indifference concerning public health were frequently heard during the nineteenth century. Certainly, there were few people present in 1876 to help launch the Health Society of N.S.W., but that may well have been because the society was too closely identified with Bradley, a man known for "tallness of phrase".65 Bradley had announced that the winning of working class participation was to be a major objective of the new society, and others predicted that with the subscription "fixed at so low a rate" as two shillings and sixpence, "a large number of working men" would be encouraged to join the society. Working people did not however appear to have been as enthused at paying two shillings and sixpence as was expected, and the Evening News, although supporting the Health Society's objectives, nonetheless remarked that the organisation "is open to the objection that the broad basis [claimed for it] is at present somewhat of the narrowest".66

62. Ibid., vol.10 (1876), pp.311-3; vol.11 (1877), pp.278-9; vol.12 (1878), p.293. The sanitary section's participants were absorbed into the Royal Society's microscopical and medical sections; ibid., vol.13 (1879), p.127.

63. Also active in the revived group were Robert's colleague upon the government Board of Health, its President Dr H. N. MacLaurin, and also the Board's medical officer, Dr Ashburton Thompson, and J. Trevor Jones, City Engineer for the City Council; ibid., vol.20 (1886), pp.337-8; vol.21 (1887), p.47; vol.22 (1888), pp.8, 47.

64. Ibid., vol.23 (1889), pp.11-2; vol.24 (1890), p.40.

65. With Bradley at the helm of the Health Society, remarked a satirist in the E.N., "we may hope to be healthy somewhere about the same time as all men may hope to be happy - in the Millennium." E.N., 30.8.1876, 'Town Talk' p.2.

66. See the speeches by Bradley, Cape, and John Young reported in S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. E.N., 30.8.1876, editorial and 'Town Talk' p.2.
Still less was the Royal Society a broadly based body. At the end of 1875 the society had only 176 members, although membership almost doubled during the following year with the establishment of the medical, microscopical, sanitary, and other sections. Numbers thereafter climbed steadily to reach almost 500 in the middle 1880s, after which membership declined slightly, falling to 457 in 1891. Within this group, the total of active members was said to be “comparatively small”, and indeed, the Royal Society was kept alive by a small intellectual elite of at most two dozen men, who year after year presented papers and led discussions, and shared among themselves the duties of office holders for the general society and its specialised sections.

That well-to-do bodies like the Royal Society's sanitary section and the Health Society did not attract working class participation was hardly surprising. Their limited appeal to the community generally was likewise unremarkable. Professor Smith voiced a widely-held opinion when at the Health Society's inaugural meeting in 1876 he made plain his scepticism concerning the potential of either the Health Society or his own Royal Society to make any great impact on sanitary problems which could ultimately only be solved by Parliament. The level of participation in private associations for sanitary reform was thus no test of a community's awareness of the problems of city health. Exaggerated talk of popular apathy was a propaganda tool used by sanitarians in their efforts to convince Parliament of the necessity for passing stringent new sanitary laws. Directed at a general community audience, their assertions of popular apathy served as a ready explanation for the extreme seriousness of the public health situation which sanitarians said had developed in Sydney, and by suggesting that the remedy lay in more active community participation in public health concerns, served also to mobilise

67. See Windeyer's comment in S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. See the annual volumes of the R.S.N.S.W., J. & P.
68. Ibid., Vol.12 (1878), p.167. In 1886 Professor Liversidge remarked that despite the society's almost 500 members only 35 papers had been delivered during the previous year, most of which had been contributed by seven or eight individuals; ibid., vol.20 (1886), pp.14-5.
69. See the annual lists of office holders in Ibid.
70. See the report of Smith's speech in S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. Smith's own membership of the Royal Society dated back to 1852 and in 1880 he would be elected its President; R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.14 (1880); see the oration delivered by Liversidge following Smith's death, in Ibid., vol.14 (1885), p.151.
71. See, for example, the lecture delivered by Bradley to the Health Society, and reported in the S.M.H., 31.8.1878, 'House Poison' p.8.
additional support for sanitary reform.72

The calculating emphasis given by sanitarians to talk of apathy was at variance with the remarkably high levels of community awareness and concern about urban ill-health. Letters regularly appeared in the press complaining at examples met with in Sydney of "filth and its companion—fever."73 Anxious letter-writers worried at the connection between bad smells, defective drainage, overcrowded habitations, and endemic low fevers like typhoid illnesses, and they warned of the potential of such "filth diseases" at any time to transform themselves into highly malignant epidemic proportions. It was well known by all, wrote one such correspondent, "that the filthiest cities and towns are most scourged when pestilence is abroad."74

During 1875 and 1876 worried residents addressed the Sewage and Health Board, drawing attention to what they considered were pestilential sources of filth and miasma about the City and suburbs.75 These communications, and the letters appearing in newspapers throughout the century, came in the main from the Sydney middle classes. Fundamental to the thinking of public health authorities and sanitary reformers alike was the assumption that the bulk of working people were especially ignorant and apathetic concerning "the laws of health and disease", that infectious disease in fact often originated among the filth of the working classes, and that consequently special efforts were needed to educate these people in sanitary awareness and hygiene.76 The reality was rather different. City working people

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72. See the speeches by Windeyer and T. S. Mort reported in ibid., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3.
73. Ibid., 10.9.1878, letter by C. Mayes entitled 'House Poison' p.6.
74. Bradley, in ibid., 31.8.1878, 'House Poison' p.8. D.T., 29.7.1884, letter by G. Atkinson entitled 'Redfern Quagmires' p.8; similar opinions were voiced by 'M.M.' in S.M.H., 13.7.1886, 'Suburban Unhealthiness: Its Cure' p.4; and by 'A.H.' in D.T., 23.2.1889, 'Sanitary Matters At North Shore' p.3; see the many letters drawing attention to sanitary problems in the indexes to S.C.C., L.R.
75. See the letters received and the mss. minutes of evidence filed in the S.A., N.S.W. (4/8053 part).
76. The phrase is Windeyer's; S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3. In 1890 City aldermen instructed the C.H.O. to prepare a pamphlet "to advise those poor ignorant people who lived in back slums how to protect their children." D.T., 26.2.1890, 'City Council' p.6; S.C.C., P. (25.2.1890), p.149. See also S.C.C., L.R., 1867, vol.5, no. 1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); letter by Charles Mayes, entitled 'House Poison', in S.M.H., 10.9.1878, p.6; also N.S.W.B.H., P., 1.8.1881, 25.10.1881.
and the lower middle classes were as a body keenly aware of the implications for health of stinks and dirt, and were vocal in their anxieties concerning the potential for devastation posed by filth diseases. Their opinions were not however widely voiced beyond their own class, and were communicated only to a handful of City Corporation sanitary officials who regularly toured among the homes of the City working classes.

In February 1876 Dr Dansey had sent to him care of the Sewage and Health Board a note from a working man in Alexandria, drawing attention to the dreadful stench caused by boiling down works in the suburb. With such places in existence, he said, "no wonder there is so much fever in Sydney". Developing his sense of grievance, the man explained the Proprietors does not live here themselves they can afford to have country Residences but for poor people that is obliged to live here I think it is too much for them to put up with.

The complaint was typical of those received by Corporation officials, sometimes by letter but more frequently by word of mouth, drawing attention to the insanitary conditions of working class living in the City and requesting assistance.

In 1892 a tenant from Dick Street, a narrowish and thickly populated street in the southerly City district of Chippendale, wrote to the Mayor alleging that the house next door was occupied by a tripe vendor who

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77. They, more than any other group in the community, had experienced at first hand the consequences in terms of sickness and death of the City's unwholesome environment, and while this familiarity undoubtedly produced resignation and fatalism concerning the continuing presence of disease, it did not entail indifference to the causes of ill-health.

78. S. & H. B., letters received (S.A., N.S.W. 4/805.3 part), Edward Williams to Dr Dansey, 23.2.1876.

79. Graham remarked in 1865 how during his tours among the working classes, "I hear many exaggerated reports and fears, as to the prevalence of Typhoid or Low Fever." S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865). Working people complained frequently of the "most pernicious stench" from Darling Harbour; ibid., 1875, vol.6, no.767 (Dansey, 9.11.1875); 1883, vol.2, no.560 (Seymour, 12.4.1883). Working people in Surry Hills drew attention to the health implications of the district's defective drainage; see ibid., 1863, vol.2, no.206 (Graham to Town Clerk, 11.3.1863); see Plate 18; see also the petition received 19.4.1877 in ibid., 1877, vol.2, no.422. Anxieties that factory smoke and fumes were "in the highest degree injurious to the health of ourselves, our wives and children" prompted further complaints from working men; ibid., 1875, vol.1, no.128 (Kent Street, 1.2.1875); also 1879, vol.4, no.675 (Wexford Street -Exeter Place, received 26.5.1879); 1880, vol.3, no.620 (Surry Hills, n.d.).
brings to his house the Tripe in a raw State and boils it on his premises and the Smell arising [sic] therefrom, is at times unbearable,...and as this dreadful disease called cholera, which is at the present time, so prevalent in Europe, and which may at any time visit our fair City of Sydney, it behoves us all to guard against it, by all the means in our power.80

The writer's concern was prompted by reports of the cholera epidemic then raging in Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, unease in Sydney concerning city sanitation and infectious disease was for all classes kept alive by recurring alarms occasioned by the outbreak of epidemic disease in other parts of the world either close to or in frequent communication with Sydney.

IV

Soon after the post of CHO was established in Sydney, Dr Aaron in his first quarterly report, written during September 1857, had cautioned that the city could not expect to remain immune from the epidemics which appeared elsewhere around the globe. The statement was echoed frequently by Graham during the 1860s, as in report after report he drew attention to fresh epidemics of cholera and smallpox overseas.81 Government notices were regularly issued under the authority of the 1832 Quarantine Act, proclaiming ports across the world as infected areas. The 1832 Act itself, with its preamble specifying the expediency of preventing "the introduction of the disease called the Malignant Cholera", had been hurriedly prepared to regulate the arrival of immigrant vessels from Britain, then suffering its first major outbreak of that disease.82

The greatest cholera alarms remembered by Sydney residents in 1875 had occurred during the later 1860s. Epidemic cholera had appeared in England midway through 1865, and worsened during the following year to claim over 14,000 lives. Reporting the epidemic's spread through southern Europe and appearance in England, Graham warned that cholera had also advanced as far as Aden, a port in constant touch with Sydney. Immediate precautions were needed in the City, he urged:

80. Ibid., 1892, vol.6, no.1780 (Michael Power to the Mayor, 19.9.1892).
82. 3 Wm. IV no.1; see Sydney Herald, 28.6.1832, editorial leader p.2; 30.7.1832 (Supplement); 2.8.1832, pp.2,4; 30.8.1832, editorial p.2.
There should be no procrastination - no foolish trusting in the salubrity of and dryness of our climate. What influence can climate have over percolating filthy cesspools, overcrowded Burial grounds in the heart of the City, absence of sewerage, surface drainage and ill ventilated, crowded habitations?\footnote{83}

Graham remarked late in 1867 that popular alarms in Sydney had now passed, but still in Europe and India, he cautioned, cholera boosted by bad drainage and dirt was causing fearful mortality.\footnote{84}

Notwithstanding the persistent anxieties which the menace of cholera produced in Sydney, it was the other great filth disease, smallpox, which residents in the City during the epidemic alarms of the middle 1870s regarded with the greatest fear. The cause was threefold. That the disease was so highly "Contagious... attacking persons of all ages, and that a large portion of those who are attacked do not survive, if unprotected by 'vaccination'", was said by Graham in 1865 to be "facts too well known throughout the world to require further comment."\footnote{85} Moreover, even apart from the great mortality smallpox had caused, the disease was dreaded for its debilitating and disfiguring effects upon victims who had escaped death. As Graham wrote during 1867,"as well as having carried off myriads of people..., there is constant mention made of the tax which it levied on the survivors, lost or partial loss of sight or hearing; constitutions left weakly, sickly, afflicted with consumption, bodies maimed, faces disfigured by horrid scars."\footnote{86}

The third cause for the special dread of smallpox was the frequency with which the disease threatened Sydney. Sydney had already by the middle 1870s faced many crises from the disease, as infected ships arrived in port

\footnote{83. S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.6, no.1032 (Graham, 9.12.1865), Graham repeated his warning during October 1866, in a special report devoted exclusively to the cholera crisis; ibid., 1866, vol.5, no.929 (Graham, 22.10.1866); also 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865); 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9 1865).}

\footnote{84. Ibid., 1867, vol.5, no. 1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); also 1867, vol.6, no.1434, (Graham, 9.12.1867).}

\footnote{85. Before the discovery of vaccination, he explained, "the ravages made by Small Pox were fearful, depopulating countries, and carrying off Millions of people." Ibid., 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865). The World Health Organisation, which launched a massive drive against smallpox in the late 1960s, officially announced the eradication of the disease in October 1979; Canberra Times, 28.10.1979, p.5; see D. A. Henderson, 'Smallpox -Epitaph for a Killer?', National Geographic, vol.154, no.6 (December 1978) pp.796-805.}

\footnote{86. Ibid., 1867, vol.5, no. 1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); also 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865); 1868, vol.6, no.1286 (Graham, 9.12.1868).}
and were hurriedly quarantined. Scarcely less alarming were the major outbreaks of the disease in ports in direct and rapid contact with Sydney. Emergency precautions had been ordered by government in 1863 following the appearance of smallpox in London. Renewed anxieties arose in 1868, with the announcement that smallpox had appeared at Cape Town and San Francisco. Smallpox was indeed introduced to Melbourne late in November by a ship arriving from China. Telegraphic announcements in the Sydney daily press early in 1869 of the disease's slow spread in Melbourne produced for a time a "considerable alarm" and predictions of the "inevitable" arrival of smallpox in the City. Emergency legislation enabling compulsory vaccination and the quarantining of infected premises and their occupants was submitted to Parliament, but by mid February it had become clear that the disease was being contained. Parliament was prorogued with the two smallpox Bills still unpassed, and in mid May the "happy announcement" was reported that smallpox in Victoria had entirely ceased.

87. In 1828 city residents were dismayed when a ship berthed in port without notifying health authorities that it had smallpox on board; Elizabeth Stuart (Mrs George Hemming) to captain John Piper, 3.8.1828 (M.L. DOC. 950). Port authorities were better prepared in 1855 when the immigrant vessel Constitution arrived from England infected with the disease. The ship was immediately isolated at the quarantine station, by the North Head of Port Jackson, and remained there for several months while passengers grumbled at being treated as "nothing less but Convicts". A total of 24 passengers died. Charles Moore, Diary of a voyage from England to Australia 15 February - 24 July 1855 (M.L, B.1319).

88. Graham warned in a special report that the spread of the disease from London to Sydney was "very probable"; S.C.C., L.R., 1863, vol.4, no.691 (Graham, 8.8.1863); also 1863, vol.4, no.800 (Graham, 9.9.1863).

89. Proclamations were issued quarantining all vessels from the latter city, but Graham cautioned that in view of the frequent communications with San Francisco, total immunity could not be expected; ibid., 1868, vol.6, no.1265 (Graham, 21.12.1868); also 1868, vol.6, no.1286 (Graham, 9.12.1868).


91. Empire, 19.5.1869, 'Summary Of News For England' p.2. See the telegraphic reports in the S.M.H., 10.2.1869, p.3; 19.2.1869, p.5; also the two reports entitled 'Summary Of News For England' in ibid., 25.3.1869, p.5; and 21.4.1869, p.5.
Sydney's vulnerability, however, was all too plain. Community anxieties intensified when epidemic smallpox broke out in London and Liverpool at the year's end, spreading by mid 1871 to cover the whole of England. When the disease finally abated midway through 1873 over 44,000 people had been killed and many more ravaged by its virulence. Dansey was pessimistic at Sydney's chances of withstanding the epidemic. Early in September 1872 he did indeed report that several suspected smallpox cases had lately been detected in Sydney, but that the dreaded disease's "attack" had fortunately been confined to the port and had gained no footing in the City.

Memory of the English epidemic remained fresh when the attention given from early 1875 to Sydney's own worsening ill-health again focused popular anxieties upon the threat of infectious disease. Concern at the re-appearance of smallpox in San Francisco was voiced in Parliament during June 1876, with a request that port health authorities exercise particular vigilance in checking vessels for possible infection. In mid December, however, it was announced in the press that one of the crew of the steamer Brisbane was ill with smallpox. The ship had been in port for two days before the disease was detected, and health officials hurriedly began tracing and then sending to North Head for quarantine all who had during that period been in communication with the vessel.

For a time it seemed that the danger had been averted, but on 31 December a major crisis arose when Dansey confirmed a case of smallpox in Windmill Street, Miller's Point, near to the wharf where the Brisbane had

92. Dansey in his quarterly report for June 1870 began by announcing that as yet the disease had been kept from breaking out in the City, although several vessels had arrived in port carrying smallpox and had been promptly quarantined; S.C.C., L.R., 1870, vol.4, no.584 (Dansey, 9.6.1870).
93. The English epidemic was described by the medical officer to the Local Government Board as being "marked by an intensity and malignancy unequalled by any previous epidemic of the disease within living memory." W. M. Frazer, A History of English Public Health 1834-1939, London, 1950, p.169. Dansey had worked in London during two previous smallpox epidemics there (see his report dated 9.7.1874 in S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.4, no.509), and well aware of the disease's preference for dirty and overcrowded localities, now warned in view of the unwholesomeness of some City districts in Sydney "that should the present scourge of England Smallpox ever appear here, it will run rampant"; ibid., 1871, vol.3, no.668 (Dansey, 9.6.1871).
94. Ibid., 1872, vol.5, no.841 (Dansey, 9.9.1872).
been moored. For the first time, smallpox had spread beyond the port and had reached into the City. Corporation scavengers set to work cleansing the streets and lanes in the surrounding working class district, and removing refuse from backyards, and Dansey was instructed to set up posts across the City for the sale of disinfectants at cost price. The Government meanwhile, responsible under the 1832 Quarantine Act for combating any diseases introduced into the port of Sydney, began a strict quarantine of the infected premises, and bought the hulk Faraway for use as a floating smallpox hospital at the North Head quarantine station.

Announcing the unwelcome appearance of the "dreaded scourge" so close on the heels of Christmas, an Evening News lead editorial observed that the ravages known to have been caused overseas by smallpox in previous years "were so terrific that it is only natural for the first appearance of it in this colony to awaken general alarm." Unfounded rumours of fresh cases flew about the city, and Dansey complained that the whole of his time was being taken up in investigating bogus cases. Alarm had intensified with the death on 6 January of the Miller's Point patient, a young woman named Holden. The Government immediately ordered that the body be placed in quicklime and buried at the quarantine station, and then resolved to move the whole of her family to the Faraway and to destroy the house at Miller's Point and all infected clothing and bedding. Rumours that the disease had spread to other members of the Holden family were followed in mid month by news that a little girl from the family had died of smallpox on board the Faraway. Two more Holden children died later in the month.

96. See the 'News Of The Day' columns in the E.N., 13.12.1876, p.2; 18.12.1876, p.4; 27.12.1876, p.2; 30.12.1876, p.2. Ibid., 1.1.1877, 'Reported Case Of Small-pox In Sydney' p.2; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.1, no.21 (Dansey, 9.1.1877); R.C.M.Q.S., qu.57, p.1173.

97. E.N., 1.1.1877, 'Reported Case Of Small-pox In Sydney' p.2; 2.1.1877, 'Dr. Alleyne's Report On Small-pox At Miller's Point' p.2; 3.1.1877, editorial leader p.2; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.1, no.21 (Dansey, 9.1.1877); R.C.M.Q.S., qu.57, p.1173.

98. E.N., 1.1.1877, editorial leader p.2.

99. Ibid., 3.1.1877, 'Smallpox In Sydney' p.3; S.M.H., 12.1.1877, 'The Small-Pox Cases' p.8. S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.1, no.20 (Dansey to Alderman Michael Chapman, 3.1.1877); no.21 (Dansey, 9.1.1877); no.97 (Dansey, 23.1.1877). The CHO reported that his private practice had declined greatly, which he attributed to popular dread of smallpox and subsequent wariness about approaching a man who had been exposed to possible infection; ibid, 1877, vol.1, no. 20 (Dansey to Chapman, 3.1.1877); no. 22 (Dansey, 8.1.1877).

100. E.N., 6.1.1877, 'Small-Pox At Miller's Point Fatal Result' p.2; 7.1.1877, 'The Smallpox' p.2.
and H.M.S. Wolverine and H.M.S. Sappho were ordered into quarantine when the disease was detected on board.101

Critical stories began to circulate about the Government's handling of the crisis, and the conduct of the medical profession in responding to the disease. When smallpox had been first discovered at Miller's Point, the patient was being treated by a private doctor who had not bothered to inform the port or City Corporation health authorities of the disease's presence within Sydney. Fearing that such negligence might not be restricted to the one case, the Government issued a special proclamation appealing for doctors to co-operate by reporting smallpox if it was brought to their notice.102 The medical profession's reputation was tarnished further when the Government after advertising for a doctor to become superintendent of the Faraway found difficulty in finding anyone willing to accept the post.103

Government medical authorities, too, at times seemed to be procrastinating needlessly. The Evening News complained of delays in implementing decisions to evacuate the Holden family and to destroy the infected premises. Later, in Parliament, speakers alleged that the Government was not doing enough to stay the disease, and that instead of one, several hundreds of houses should have been burnt down.104 Other parliamentarians countered that the Government had already done far too much. It was said that the young Holden woman had been actually starved to death, through the decision to keep her and her family in strict isolation at Miller's Point, and that once removed to the Faraway, the Holdens 'were cruelly deprived of all clothes and bedding, and exposed to other hardships.'105

101. See the 'News Of The Day' columns in ibid., 11.1.1877, p.2; 15.1.1877, p.3; 18.1.1877, p.2; 20.1.1877, p.2; 26.1.1877, p.2; also ibid., 29.1.1877, 'Small-Pox' p.2.
102. Ibid., 2.1.1877, 'Dr. Alleyne's Report On Small-pox At Miller's Point' p.2; Supplement to the N.S.W. Government Gazette, 1877, vol.1, no.6 (4.1.1877), p.37; repeated in ibid., no.7 (5.1.1877), p.39; see the E.N. comment in 17.1.1877, editorial leader p.2.
103. Supplement to the N.S.W. Government Gazette, 1877, vol.1, no.6 (4.1.1877), p.37; E.N., 15.1.1877, 'News Of The Day' p.3; see the critical comment in ibid., 17.1.1877, editorial leader p.2.
104. See the 'News Of The Day' columns in ibid., 11.1.1877, p.2; 15.1.1877, p.3. See the report of parliamentary proceedings in ibid., 17.1.1877, editorial leader p.2.
105. Ibid. Similar charges had been made in two letters published earlier in the E.N. The quarantining of the Holden family at Miller's Point along with the smallpox patient was damned by the one letter writer as
Rumours of tyranny and cruelty were dismissed by the Colonial Secretary. In any case, community anxieties and the rumours which bred on them were subsiding by the latter part of January. By the end of the new year's third week, the Holden's house had been destroyed, the smallpox patients from the two men of war were pronounced convalescent, and the Brisbane had been released from quarantine. The Herald announced in the second week of February that the disease was now seemingly overcome.

The respite was shortlived. Four years later, in mid 1881, the people of Sydney experienced their most traumatic encounter with infectious disease that the city would face during the nineteenth century. Smallpox, this time in epidemic proportions, again appeared in the City. By world standards it was only an insignificant outbreak, claiming a total of only 40 lives. Even in terms of the total number of deaths recorded each year within Sydney, 1881 was unremarkable. For a time, however, it had seemed as if a major smallpox outbreak was in the making, and it was only after nine months of recurring crises that the epidemic, in February 1882, was finally declared beaten. Special legislation rushed through Parliament at the height of the emergency set up a Board of Health empowered "to prevent the spread of the Disease known as Small-pox", and in response to rumours that the medical profession was not fully co-operating in stamping out the disease, also required doctors to report all cases of the disease or face prosecution. Stringent quarantining of infected premises and their occupants, to an extent never before experienced in Sydney, was

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105. cont.

an "extreme (not to say murderous)" measure, and in the second letter it was alleged that isolated inside the quarantined house, the Holden woman had been "allowed to die like a dog without medical attendance, or even that of a professional nurse"; ibid., 9.1.1877, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' by H.P.M., p.3; and 'Small-Pox At Miller's Point. - Fatal Result', by 'Humanity' in ibid.

106. Ibid., 17.1.1877, editorial leader p.2.


108. See Dansey's cautionary comment at the end of the disease crisis; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.2, no.299 (Dansey, 9.3.1877).

109. See Appendix Four, Table 4.1.

110. 45 Vic., no.25. Allegations that doctors were concealing smallpox cases, rather than risk frightening away other patients and so damaging their practices, are discussed in Chapter Fourteen.
enforced and drew forth allegations of tyranny and abuse of power by Government and its medical officials.111

Late in February 1882 one of Henry Parkes' colleagues wrote to the Premier, then in England, saying "Once again we are a clean port, and the smallpox is at an end for this time."112 The concluding qualification was significant, for the recent mastering of smallpox was seen by many as bringing only a reprieve. Among medical authorities especially, the disease was still regarded as laying siege to the city, and to the south of Sydney, at Little Bay, a special isolation hospital was prepared by the Government in readiness for the next outbreak. That crisis arrived in February 1883, when the Memmuir, from Hong Kong, anchored off the quarantine station and hoisted the yellow flag.113 Hopes were initially high that smallpox would be prevented from spreading, but the detection of more cases among the quarantined passengers, coupled with rumours of a case discovered in the city, produced forebodings of a repetition of the events of 1881, and accusations once more in the press and in Parliament of "gross negligence" and "a total absence of judicious care on the part of the [government] officials."114

By early March, however, it was announced that the threatened crisis was under control.115 In retrospect, the Memmuir incident appeared a storm-in-the-teacup affair. The disease's renewed appearance in the following year was more serious. Early in the second week of July 1884 proclamations were issued by the Board of Health announcing the outbreak of smallpox in neighbouring Victoria and warning that it was "extremely probable" that the disease would spread to N.S.W.116 In the third week

111. The 1881 smallpox emergency remains as a major example of the manner in which anxieties provoked by the threat of epidemic disease in one nineteenth century city markedly influenced class relationships, shaped the priorities and goals of urban sanitary administration, and affected contemporary assessments of proper and necessary levels of regulation and control in a basically laissez-faire society. See below, Part V.
115. See E.N., 1.3.1883, 'The Smallpox' p.3.
of August it was rumoured that smallpox had been detected in Sydney in the working class suburb of Waterloo. The alleged case was found to be only chickenpox, but alarm had scarcely been stayed when five definite smallpox cases were discovered in a hotel in the inner City Rocks district.\(^{117}\)

The patients had been treated for nearly a fortnight without having been reported by Dr Eichler, the same practitioner who had failed to report the Holden case in 1877. Eichler claimed that he had thought the illness chickenpox, but the Board of Health was unmoved and began legal proceedings for a breach of its Act. Again, as had happened in previous smallpox outbreaks, the medical profession found its conduct, and also its competency in even diagnosing disease, publicly questioned.\(^{118}\)

Government medical authorities received praise for their vigorous handling of the crisis, although allegations of tyranny were again made by those people quarantined as further cases of the disease were detected about the city.\(^{119}\) By contrast the reputation of the medical profession generally sank still further as another doctor was prosecuted and fined for concealing smallpox cases.\(^{120}\) Fresh outbreaks of the disease were still being detected during January 1885, but continuing strict quarantine, the burning of infected bedding and clothing, and disinfecting of premises, again gradually mastered the outbreak, and by early February the disease had almost played itself out.\(^{121}\)

117. E.N., 20.8.1884, 'Small-pox. Alleged Case In Waterloo' p.5; 23.8.1884, 'The Alleged Case Of Small-pox At Waterloo' p.2; 29.8.1884, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 'Small-pox In Sydney' p.5; N.S.W.B.H., P., 26.8.1884. Another 12 cases were detected during November and early December, in Woolloomooloo and Surry Hills, and much excitement was reported in the neighbourhood of the infected areas, ibid., 29.11.1884, 9.12.1884; E.N., 1.11.1884, 'Outbreak Of Small-pox' p.6; 17.11.1884, 'Small-pox' p.4; 26.11.1884, 'Alleged Small-pox' p.4; 28.11.1884, 'Small-pox' p.4. On 1 December the E.N. for the first time carried as the headline for its latest report of the outbreak, 'The Small-pox Epidemic'; ibid., 1.12.1884, p.5.


121. See the reports of fresh outbreaks in the 'Small-pox' columns in ibid., 1.1.1885, p.1; 5.1.1885, p.2; 10.1.1885, p.5; 12.1.1885, p.5; 27.1.1885, p.5. For a discussion of the working class antagonism aroused by heavy-handed disinfecting operations, see Chapter Fourteen; see also Smith, The People's Health, pp.202-3.
The renewed appearance of smallpox in August of the same year among crewmen on the Oceanien was pointed to by the Evening News as again providing unpleasant proof of the ease with which epidemic disease might at any time be introduced to Sydney. Smallpox on that occasion was prevented from spreading beyond the port, but only the following month the disease was detected on board the Gunga after the ship had already berthed and its passengers disembarked. The disease did not however spread. It was not until late December 1886 that the port's quarantine arrangements were again severely tested by smallpox, when the immigrant vessel Preussen arrived with smallpox on board and was immediately isolated. Again, although raging among the quarantined passengers, the disease did not spread beyond the port. The lesson afforded by the incident was not lost on Dr Dansey however. He re-emphasised the need to guard against the appearance of epidemic disease from overseas, and repeated the warning made so often previously in Sydney during the nineteenth century of the "dreadful ravages and disfigurements that are so often seen after a severe attack of this dire disease."  

The anxieties occasioned by the so frequent threat by smallpox to the City were strengthened further by the continuing dread of that other "dire disease", cholera. Smallpox alarms in 1884 and 1885 had been given added force by persistent newspaper telegraphic reports tracing the ravages being produced simultaneously in Europe and elsewhere by cholera. By August 1885 it was being reported that cholera was causing 1,500 deaths daily in Spain, and was present in varying intensities across Europe and in

122. E.N., 10.8.1885, editorial p.4; also ibid, 11.8.1885, 'The Smallpox Outbreak' p.5; N.S.W.B.H., P., 19.8.1885.
123. Ibid., 28.9.1885. The ship's master was prosecuted for breaching the City's quarantine laws, as had been the captain of the Brisbane in 1877, and those among the passengers and crew who could be traced were sent to the quarantine station; ibid., 28.9.1885, 30.9.1885, 19.11.1885; S.M.H., 9.2.1877, 'The Small-Pox Cases' p.8.
124. A case of smallpox was however detected at Randwick and another in Druitt Street, in the City's unwholesome west near Darling Harbour. Several more cases developed among those quarantined, and another case was diagnosed in the City early in November, but the disease spread no further; N.S.W.B.H., P., 28.9.1885; 10, 17, 23.10.1885; 6, 7, 19.11.1885.
125. Ibid., 4.1.1887. S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.119 (Dansey, 9.3.1887).
126. See Dansey's warning in S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.5, no.1471 (Dansey, 31.8.1883).
127. See the cablegram messages in E.N., 12.7.1884, p.4; 14.7.1884, p.4; 21.7.1884, p.4; 22.7.1884, p.2; 21.8.1884, p.2; and in the D.T., 31.7.1884, p.5.
Britain. Warning of the need for special precautions against "the dreaded pestilence", an Evening News editorial cautioned that rapid modern sea communication made easy the spread of cholera to Sydney.128 Government notices were issued proclaiming ports in France, Spain, and Portugal as infected places, and learning of the appearance of cholera in China and Japan, and as near as Timor, the Board of Health ordered the detention of all vessels arriving from Eastern ports.129 In an emergency effort to check the appearance of the filth disease, the City Corporation stepped up its prosecutions of the owners and tenants of dirty premises, and printed forms were prepared for distribution in the event of an outbreak of the disease, advising householders what sanitary precautions to take and what symptoms to watch for during the emergency.130

Concern over cholera during 1890 again caused the Board of Health to order the quarantining of all vessels arriving from Egypt and the Mediterranean. The Dick Street resident's appeal to the City Mayor in 1892 for action against the next door tripe vendor, lest cholera break out in the neighbourhood, underscored the widespread sense of siege then felt by anxious Sydney residents as they heard of the devastation once more being wrought overseas by that disease.131 In a special report warning of the "wave of Cholera Epidemic... now passing over the Continent of Europe", the

128. See cablegram messages in E.N., 7.8.1885, p.4; 10.8.1885, p.4; 31.8.1885, p.4. Ibid., 8.8.1885, editorial p.4.
129. N.S.W.B.H., P., 10.8.1885, 24.8.1885; E.N., 12.8.1885, 'The Cholera' p.4; see also cablegram messages in ibid., 1.9.1885, p.4; 21.9.1885, p.4. Some 83,000 cholera deaths had already been recorded in Spain alone, announced the E.N., and the spread of "the dreaded pestilence" to Timor, China, and Japan brought it "almost within striking distance of Australia." It was a prospect which, in view of the insanitary condition of much of Sydney, could not be contemplated without alarm, said the newspaper; ibid., 4.9.1885, editorial p.4; 29.9.1885, editorial p.4.
130. See the account of prosecutions by Mr Seymour, the Inspector of Nuisances, in ibid., 17.9.1885, 'Filthy Premises, &c.' p.4; the Board of Health wrote to the City Council urging the utmost efforts by Corporation scavengers in cleansing the City; see letter and enclosures in S.C.C., L.R., 1885, vol.7, no.2064 (Treasury to Town Clerk, 19.12.1885); also ibid, vol.1, no.7 (Board of Health, 23.12.1885). See printed circular no.2 in ibid.; also N.S.W.B.H., P., 24.12.1885.
131. Ibid., 27.8.1890, 16.12.1891, 3.2.1892. The Board warned the City Council in September 1892 "of the probable outbreak of cholera" and requested emergency precautionary measures by the City authorities; S.C.C., L.R., 1892, vol.6, no.1785 (enclosure in Seymour to Town Clerk, 5.9.1892). See above, pp.40-1 for the Dick Street letter.
CHO suggested to Sydney residents precautionary measures to guard against cholera's appearance, while the Inspector of Nuisances ordered his staff to new efforts in sweeping the streets, cleansing sewer shafts, and removing all refuse.132 Speaking like the captain of the guard in some besieged fortress, the CHO assured City aldermen "that every endeavour shall be made to maintain a good sanitary condition and to render the City as far as possible impregnable to the incursion of Cholera."133

V

Probably many in Sydney were sceptical of the CHO's promise. Recurring epidemic alarms in the City had often served to draw attention to continuing deficiencies in medical knowledge regarding infectious disease. During the smallpox emergency of mid 1884, dissension among doctors over diagnosis of the disease prompted from the *Evening News* the scathing comment that
to the ignorant lay mind it does appear extraordinary that after the many centuries small-pox has been scourging the world, a disease should appear in a British colony which swarms with duly qualified medical men, without there being sufficient professional ability among them to decide whether it is small-pox or not.

It was a complaint that had been frequently heard during disease crises in Sydney.134 Rumours of neglect and tyranny by medical authorities, and of non co-operation and sometimes cowardice by private practitioners, also circulated freely during smallpox emergencies.135

Community criticisms of medical performance highlighted the growing divergence between popular conceptions about disease and the approach that was evolving among scientists as they sought to achieve medical control.

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132. Ibid., 1892, vol.6, no.1690 (CHO, 2.9.1892). Reporting his actions to the City Council, Seymour spoke "of the fearful and terrible epidemic now committing such direful ravages in various parts of Europe and Asia"; ibid., no.1785 (Seymour to Town Clerk, 5.9.1892); City aldermen authorised the washing of all lanes in the City with disinfectant; S.C.C., P.(9.9.1892), p.547.
133. S.C.C., L.R., 1892, vol.6, no.1690 (CHO, 2.9.1892).
134. E.N., 7.7.1884, editorial p.4; see editorials in ibid., 22.7.1884, p.2, and 25.8.1884, p.2; similar criticisms had been voiced during the 1869 Melbourne smallpox outbreak; see the telegraphic messages in the S.M.H., 12.1.1869, p.5; 14.1.1869, p.5; 2.2.1869, p.5; also Australasian, 23.1.1869, 'Topics Of The Week' p.113. See below, Chapter Fourteen.
135. See above, section IV, and Chapter Fourteen.
over the pathogenic organisms they had discovered. Microscopical research, basing itself upon the postulates of Henle and Koch that every disease must be caused by a specific micro-organism, inclined increasingly towards a technologically biased belief that the remedy for each disease lay in finding a corresponding microbody that would neutralise or destroy the pathogenic organism. The medical profession as a whole and city health authorities, however, and the community generally (whose understanding of disease was limited by ignorance and suspicion of the latest medical knowledge), all regarded the problem of disease prevention rather differently. That disease was indeed preventable was generally accepted, but public health officials in Sydney and the general community, swayed by the old orthodoxies concerning filth generated disease and miasmic poisons, believed that the way to tackle city ill-health was to attack the unwholesomeness of the urban environment.

The often repeated expression, "cleanliness is next to godliness", was dogma in nineteenth century Sydney. It was the battle hymn of sanitarians, was urged by government and the press whenever

136. See the critical discussion of the impact upon Western medicine of the theory of specific aetiology, and of the subsequent over-attention given by medical researchers to finding specific antibodies or synthetic antibiotics for every illness, in Dixon, Beyond the Magic Bullet.

137. Opposition to smallpox vaccination is an obvious example; see below, Chapter Fourteen.

138. As the Herald had noted during the disease alarms of 1875, the little progress so far made by medical science had taught "most conclusively" that a considerable proportion of deaths in large cities were avoidable; S.M.H., 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4; see also ibid., 17.8.1876, editorial leader pp.4-5.

139. See the report of the lecture delivered on behalf of the Health Society by Burton Bradley in ibid., 28.7.1877, 'Salus Populi Suprema Lex Estol' p.7; similar sentiments were expressed by Bradley in his lecture, 'House Poison', in ibid., 31.10.1878, p.8. The Health Society began from its inception to agitate for instruction on health and domestic cleanliness to be included in school syllabuses; see letter by Bradley entitled 'Salus Populi Suprema Lex' in ibid., 13.6.1877, p.6; also ibid., 6.9.1877, 'Health Society Of New South Wales' p.6; 8.5.1880, 'Health Society Of New South Wales' p.3.

140. Government circulars prepared for distribution to householders during disease crises in Sydney all emphasised the prime importance of personal and domestic cleanliness; see E.N., 5.11.1884, 'Sanitary Rules For Small-pox' p.6; see also printed enclosure no.2 in S.C.C., L.R., 1886 vol.1, no.7 (Board of Health, 23.12.1886). The same message was stressed in communications to the City Council; see ibid., printed enclosure no.1; see also 1892, vol.8, no.1785 (Seymour to Town Clerk, 5.9.1892).

141. The E.N. explained to its readers in 1875 how "The very simple rule of
epidemic disease threatened, and formed the cornerstone of local government sanitary supervision in the City.\textsuperscript{142} Health officials regarded cleanliness as the most potent weapon in the fight against unhealthiness,\textsuperscript{143} and during the frequent disease alarms in the City recommended personal cleanliness as the most essential requirement for health.\textsuperscript{144} Advising householders how best to guard against the 1870 smallpox epidemic that devastated England, Dansey wrote in June that "Nothing tends to health so much as cleanliness, nothing tempts and invites disease so much as dirt. Attention to this in many families would often prevent disease.\textsuperscript{145}

The primacy accorded to the influence of environment upon City health however posed worrying social problems which inhibited sanitary initiatives throughout the century. Ill-health and disease, it was agreed, were caused by the filth and unwholesomeness of cities. And the filth and unwholesomeness of cities, it was likewise accepted, were the result of bad drainage, bad ventilation, the cramping together of buildings and narrow lanes, problems which intensified with the accumulation of people and which in Sydney were subsequently at their worst among the poorest and most overcrowded districts of the City. City ill-health and its resolution consequently intertwined with fundamental social and economic inequalities in society.\textsuperscript{146} The public health problems posed by insanitary working maintaining personal and domestic cleanliness is the chief element in the preservation of the general health." E.N., 4.8.1875, editorial p.2; see also Empire, 2.3.1869, editorial leader p.2; S.M.H., 29.3.1869, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4; 22.3.1878, editorial p.4; 1.6.1881, editorial p.4; E.N., 13.1.1885, editorial p.4; S.M.H., 24.6.1886, editorial p.9; see A.B.C.N., 22.10.1892, 'Insanitation In Sydney' pp.203-4.

\textsuperscript{142} "There was nothing more conducive to public health than cleanliness", said Sydney Burdekin, later Mayor of Sydney, during the City municipal elections in 1883; S.M.H., 1.12.1883, 'Municipal Elections' p.10.

\textsuperscript{143} See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); 1866, vol.5, no.792 (Graham, 9.9.1866); 1870, vol.5, no.914 (Dansey, 9.9.1870).

\textsuperscript{144} See ibid., 1866, vol.5, no.929 (Graham, 22.10.1866); 1869, vol.2, no.265 (Dansey, 9.3.1869); 1887, vol.7, no.1988 (Dansey, 9.9.1887); 1892, vol.6, no.1690 (Gwynne-Hughes, 2.9.1892).

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 1870, vol.4, no.584 (Dansey, 9.6.1870).

\textsuperscript{146} The connections between poverty and ill-health were noted explicitly by Graham in ibid., 1865, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 31.5.1865); 1866, vol.3, no.489 (Graham, 9.6.1866). See Smith, The People's Health, p.232.
class housing in the City, perhaps more than any other matter, highlighted the manner in which health reform and social reform impinged upon each other. What to do with City slums, so as to overcome their disease menace and abate potential tensions arising from deprivation, without at the same time involving revolutionary changes to the distribution of wealth and the structure of existing society, remained a perplexing issue throughout the nineteenth century.147

Only marginally less perplexing was the problem of how best to balance the necessity for strict City sanitary regulations with the middle class' self-interested mistrust of official controls. It was recognised that individual freedoms unfettered by any public controls could easily lead to mutual annihilation.148 Extensions in public health regulation by Parliament did not however fit like jigsaw pieces into an overall masterplan for the progressive expansion of controls. Rather, they were the consequence of reluctant and piecemeal modifications in prevailing laissez-faire dogma, taken in response to specific problems. The N.S.W. Board of Health was initially formed as an advisory committee to the Government during the smallpox epidemic of 1881, and even when its position was formalised by legislative enactment, the Board's authority was at first restricted to the prevention of smallpox.149 The City of Sydney Improvement Board during the 1880s and early 1890s claimed to have been established by Parliament in order to regulate all building design and to undertake the demolition of unhealthy slum areas in the City, but had in fact been set up in 1879 merely as an expert appeal-tribunal arbitrating disputes arising over building regulations between the City Council and private parties.150

The Improvement Board's dispute with City aldermen concerning responsibility for building regulation in the City highlighted the continuing dilemma of how best to administer sanitary laws in Sydney. Many sanitary reformers lobbied vigorously for the establishment of a Ministry

148. During the smallpox emergency in December 1884, the E.N. conceded that "Under extreme circumstances,... the interest of the whole community would have to be considered, and the authorities might have to be cruel to individuals only to be kind to the public." E.N., 3.12.1884, editorial leader p.4. It was a point frequently made by politicians and the press during such times of crisis.
149. See 45 Vic., no.25. See below, Part V.
150. See below, Parts IV and VI.
of Health, with medical officers and local boards of health throughout the colony. The general principle of increasing central government intervention was however roundly condemned by politicians and the press as an assault on British democracy and freedom.\textsuperscript{151} Government intervention during the smallpox outbreaks of 1877 and 1881, and the Memmuir incident of 1883, attracted criticism for mismanagement, or tyranny, or both. The State was involved in the recurring disease crises that menaced Sydney by virtue of the responsibility placed upon the Colonial Treasurer under the Quarantine Act for preventing the introduction of infectious diseases from neighbouring colonies and overseas. Overall responsibility for public health administration had since the early 1840s been transferred to local government. It was to the City Council and Corporation sanitary officials that Sydney residents, anxious at the ill-health and filth diseases apparently generated by the City's unwholesome environment, directed their complaints and requests for sanitary remedies.

\textsuperscript{151} Government efforts during the smallpox crisis of 1869, for example, to pass a Compulsory Vaccination Bill and a Smallpox Prevention Bill were thwarted by parliamentarians objecting to what they saw as the arbitrary and tyrannical nature of the two measures; see below, Chapters Three and Five.
PART II
CHAPTER THREE
Good Rule and Government

I

On 12 April 1875 the Colonial Secretary's department appointed Professor M. B. Pell as chairman of a board to inquire urgently into means of "protecting the health of the inhabitants" of Sydney. The new Sewage and Health Board was to comprise several parliamentarians and six government officials, one of them the government Health Officer in charge of quarantine at Port Jackson. The Sydney City Council, the body traditionally responsible for "protecting the health of the inhabitants", was virtually ignored: only the City Engineer was to be included on the Board. The CHO was included among several other new appointments made during the next fortnight. Two months passed, however, before Pell was advised that two representatives of the City Council, Mayor Benjamin Palmer and a colleague, Alderman Michael Chapman, had been appointed to join the health inquiry.

Sydney had been incorporated in 1842, householders in the City and within a seven mile radius then electing municipal councillors to take over from the police general responsibility for local city administration. After the model of such bodies in Britain, the City Council was vested with authority to make and maintain public streets and footpaths, to provide street lamps, gutters and sewers, waterworks and mains, and to police existing laws governing building construction in the city. Permissive powers were granted to enact by-laws for keeping the streets clean, for regulating butcheries, slaughter houses, and offensive trades, for "the prevention and suppression of all nuisances whatever", and for the general "good rule and government" of the city.

In 1850 a special sanitary law was enacted to overcome legislative deficiencies revealed by city expansion during the past decade. A

1. Colonial Secretary's Office to Pell, 12.4.1875, filed in letters received of S. & H. B. in S.A., N.S.W. (4/ 805.3 part). Pell had long been interested in the study of public health; see the papers on mortality statistics and on water supply delivered by him in R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.1 (1867), pp.66-76; vol.2 (1868), pp.86-96; vol.3 (1869), pp.146-56.
2. Colonial Secretary's Office to Pell, 20.4.1875, 27.4.1875, 10.6.1875.
comprehensive new Corporation Act was simultaneously passed, amending the
City Council's composition and altering the municipal franchise, and
redrafting the responsibilities of aldermen and their officials. 4
Both laws had been influenced by recent public health legislation in
England. Procedure for the abatement of such health nuisances as ill
drained cellars and overflowing cesspools, together with the scale of fines
for causing such nuisances, were copied directly from the English public
health enactment of 1848. The tentative first beginnings of sanitary
controls over the internal condition of dwellings, enabling Corporation
officials to order cleansing and whitewashing when two qualified doctors
certified a building as likely to encourage the spread of disease, were
likewise derived from the mother country. 5

Dissatisfaction with City Council performance led the Legislative
Council in 1853 to suspend the City Council temporarily and appoint three
Commissioners in their place. The City Commissioners also soon found
themselves under a cloud, in part because of the large debt run up in
providing the sewers and other services demanded of them, and in October
1856 the Parliament newly established under colonial self-government
reconstituted the City Council with expressions of "universal assent". 6

The 1857 Sydney Corporation Restoration Act, as well as redrafting the
municipal franchise and the administrative structure of the new City
Council, also incorporated new public health provisions copied from British
sanitary regulations since mid century. Parliament sought to upgrade
public health supervision by clarifying what was meant by the hitherto
vaguely defined health "nuisances" that local government officials were
required to have abated. Much more importantly, the statute copied recent
legislation in London and required the appointment by the City Council of a
qualified doctor as CHO. 7

The 1857 Act placed in the hands of the CHO and his Corporation
colleagues responsibility for enforcing more specific and voluminous public
health regulations (eight in number) already enacted before and during the

4. 14 Vic., no.33; 14 Vic., no.41.
5. Compare clauses 21 and 22 in 14 Vic., no.33 with 11 & 12 Vic., c.63
   (clauses 59, 60, 102); see 9 & 10 Vic., c.96. See also Larcombe, The Origin, pp.110-29.
6. 17 Vic., no.33; S.M.H., 31.10.1856, editorial p.4. See Larcombe, The Origin, pp.130-78; also Roe, Quest for Authority, pp.84-5.
7. 20 Vic., no.36, and compare with 18 & 19 Vic., c.121; see below, Chapter Four.
interregnum of the commissioners. The most important, the 1853 Sewerage Act, replaced the earlier law of 1850 and provided Corporation sanitary officials with most of their basic tools for regulating City health over the next quarter of a century. As well as providing authority for the construction and maintenance of sewers, the Act extended to the suburbs as well as the City the powers first granted in 1850, laying down the mechanisms for nuisance removal, for the scrutiny of base plans and closet specifications for new buildings, for authorising access inside buildings where there were "reasonable grounds" for believing a health nuisance to exist, and enabling the compulsory cleansing of buildings certified as unwholesome and a danger to public health.8

Late in the following year a general Municipalities Act was passed by Parliament, enabling local inhabitants throughout the colony to petition for the incorporation of their districts. In its essentials the Act was a generalised and simplified version of the Corporation Act in the City, providing authority to local councils for "the preservation of public decency and public health", and for "the general good rule and government of the Municipality". Suburban Randwick was the first district in N.S.W. to petition for incorporation, and the new municipality was formally proclaimed in February 1859. With the incorporation of Newtown in December 1862 eleven suburbs, including the whole of the more developed and heavily populated parts of suburban Sydney, had received municipal government.9

A revised Municipalities Act was passed in 1867, designed as the Colonial Secretary Henry Parkes then explained "to amend and to consolidate the existing law upon this important subject". This stimulated a scattering of the more populous unincorporated suburban districts to petition for municipal government, and between January 1871 and mid 1872 another nine suburban municipalities were proclaimed. Only a handful of neighbourhoods was by then still without municipal status, and a decade later they too had largely been incorporated. By 1891 the only non-incorporated area within the whole metropolitan district was Homebush, with a total population of only 472 people.10

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8. 17 Vic., no.34; see the list of local enactments contained in Schedule C of 20 Vic., no.36.
9. 22 Vic., no.13; see the lists of incorporated suburban districts in the annual volumes of the N.S.W. Statistical Register. See Larcombe, The Origin, pp.254-302.
10. 31 Vic., no.12; see Parkes' speech in the parliamentary debates reported in the S.M.H., 21.11.1867, p.2.
Meanwhile, as the basic functions of local government were extending throughout the suburbs, modifications continued to be made gradually in the municipal administration of the City. A comprehensive redrafting of the Corporation Act was not achieved until 1879. Specific legislative amendments dealing with smoke nuisances and food adulteration had however been enacted in the lengthy interval between 1857 and 1879. Sanitary investigations by the Sewage and Health Board during the disease alarms of the middle 1870s prompted Parliament to pass two new sanitary laws in 1875, building upon the existing codes for sewage regulation and nuisance removal contained in the 1853 Sewerage Act. A Water Pollution Prevention Act, borrowing from Britain, granted the Corporation improved jurisdiction over water closets. The Nuisances Prevention Act of 1875 provided greater regulatory powers over privies and cesspools.

An attempt was made to close another major gap in public health administration within the City by the enactment in June 1879 of the City of Sydney Improvement Act, a measure prepared by the Corporation's Building Surveyor to replace the old and ineffective Sydney building Act that had endured, with only minor amendments, ever since 1837. To remedy long standing sanitary omissions the new statute imposed comprehensive new building rules, largely modelled upon the blueprint of London building laws, which governed the siting, the dimensions and the materials of new buildings, and required the prior approval by the Building Surveyor and CHO of plans detailing lighting, ventilation, closet accommodation, and drainage before construction could begin. For the first time, connection to the public sewers was made compulsory. Old buildings deemed to be "in a ruinous state and dangerous to the public" could as hitherto be ordered

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11. Legislation to consolidate and expand Corporation sanitary jurisdiction was considered by Parliament on several occasions during the early 1860s, and in the middle 1870s government promised that a consolidating and amending Corporation Bill would be shortly introduced. Indifference among politicians, changing governments, and the pressure of other business however long delayed that event; see S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865); questions in Parliament in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.) 1876-7, vol.1, no.6 (20.12.1876), p.29; no.12 (12.1.1877), p.53; no.50 (26.4.1877), p.207; no.80 (13.6.1877), p.329; second reading speech by the Colonial Secretary, Fitzpatrick, reported in S.M.H., 4.10.1878, 'Sydney Corporation Bill' p.3.

12. 29 Vic., no.17; 42 Vic., no.14.

13. 39 Vic., no.7; see Professor Smith's speech in the Legislative Council explaining the purpose of the Bill and describing its British parallels, in S.M.H., 16.7.1875, 'Water Pollution Prevention Bill' p.2. See 39 Vic., no.14 (Nuisances Prevention Act).
to be repaired or demolished, and in a new development buildings certified as "unfit for human habitation" on sanitary grounds could be ordered vacated until sufficient improvements were made.14

The new building law was to an extent duplicated in the following month with the enactment of the 1879 Sydney Corporation Act, which as well as redrafting the municipal franchise and the proceedings of the City Council itself, also tried to consolidate and where it seemed necessary, to extend the sanitary and general regulatory authorities already granted piecemeal to the City Corporation. The example of the 1875 British Public Health Act was often plainly evident in the statute's scope, wording, and scales of fines for different offences. The Corporation jurisdiction over water closets, hurriedly established by the Water Pollution Prevention Act of 1875, was redrafted and incorporated in the new law. The provisions of the Nuisances Prevention Act were likewise included, and the 1875 Act consequently repealed in the City. Specific powers to suppress the sale of unwholesome or adulterated food and drink were for the first time included in the general Corporation law. The CHO's duties and authority were redrawn, powers of entry inside private premises clarified, and Corporation responsibility for sewers, water supply, street repair and cleansing, and garbage removal were again set down.15

Further sanitary laws having effect both in the City and suburbs were passed during the 1880s to better regulate the sale of meat, milk production, and sewage disposal, and in 1896 the first N.S.W. Public Health Act established colony-wide public health administration.16 The 1879 Sydney Corporation Act however, with its summarised powers embodying the experiences of almost 40 years' local government sanitary regulation in the City, remained the key piece of local government legislation within the City into the twentieth century.

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14. 42 Vic., no.25; see the evidence given by the Building Surveyor, Edward Bradridge, describing the Bill's preparation in the Report of the Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, J. (N.S.W. L.C.), vol.29 (1878-9 part 2), qu.293-331, pp.210-3; see below, Chapter Nine. Note the criticisms of the 1837 Building Act made by Aaron and Graham, in ibid.

15. 43 Vic., no.3; as an example of the similarities with the British Public Health Act, compare clauses 183, 193, and 197 with 38 & 39 Vic., c.55 (clauses 103, 46, 117).

16. 50 Vic., no.17 (Dairies Supervision Act, 1886); 55 Vic., no.17 (Diseased Animals and Meat Act of 1892); 55 Vic., no.20 (Nuisances Prevention Act Amendment Act of 1892); 60 Vic., no.38 (Public Health Act, 1896).
City Council policing of the 1879 Corporation Act attracted a continuing stream of criticism from the general community and especially from the daily press. For years, announced the Herald in May 1880, "the city has been malodorous, and its atmosphere subversive of health. Its sanitary arrangements have been a scandal to humanity, and a disgrace to those in authority."17 Local government administration throughout the nineteenth century was conducted against a background of fault finding with municipal performance and ridicule of municipal personnel.18

The Daily Telegraph and Evening News especially, with their penchant for heavy-handed satire, delighted to ridicule local council proceedings in Sydney. Lampooning local council meetings in suburban Paddington in October 1883, an Evening News correspondent described "the municipal farce" whereby business needing at most 40 minutes would instead drag over perhaps two and a half hours of innuendo and confusion that "can only be likened to that of Babel".19 Much more serious criticisms were the allegations of corruption, involving hints of electoral malpractice, of wages collected but never earned, of contracts faked and tenders rigged, which also periodically surrounded the City Town Hall. The institution "seems to thrive in the midst of abuses", remarked an Evening News leader in November 1881, "and to grow happy and vigorous on allegations of imbecility and almost general charges of infamy and corruption".20

17. S.M.H., 5.5.1880, editorial p.5. Generalised criticisms were tempered by tributes to the hard work and dedication of particular mayors and their officials (see the tribute to Mayor Harris in the Echo, 10.12.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1; and to Sydney Burdekin in S.M.H., 10.12.1890, editorial p.6). In January 1882 the E.N. recorded the presentation to the Mayor of suburban Redfern by local inhabitants of a handsome silver tea and coffee service, and an illuminated address. It was a vote of confidence in municipal performance that was repeated frequently in municipalities across Sydney; E.N., 28.1.1882, 'Presentation To The Mayor Of Redfern' p.3; also 6.2.1883, 'Presentation To The Mayor Of Newtown' p.3; 27.2.1883, 'Banquet To Mr. R. Seymour' p.3; S.M.H., 6.1.1890, 'Presentation To The Mayor Of Waverley' p.7; Echo, 29.1.1891, 'The Mayor Of Paddington' p.6.

18. See the criticism made by Mayor Riley in 1887 of unfair newspaper reporting of municipal proceedings; N.S.W. P.D., vol.26 (1887), p.1156.


20. E.N., 19.11.1881, editorial leader p.2; also S.M.H., 5.8.1879, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 27.11.1882, 'The Municipal Council -
Newspapermen in presenting their generally unfair and exaggerated picture of many-sided municipal "bumbledom" were only responding to popular prejudices already widely held in the community. Fundamental to that low estimation was the restricted nature of the local government franchise. A limited ratepayer suffrage, controversially restricted still further in the City by the Corporation Act of 1879, excluded all but a minority of the adult population from participation in the local government of their neighbourhoods. A property-based system of plural voting, linked with special property qualifications and absence of payment for municipal office, generally limited active participation in local government to only wealthy men.

In parliamentary debates through the 1880s, sparked by the efforts of former City Alderman Daniel O'Connor to widen the municipal franchise, there was general agreement that local City politics had been dismissed by the general population as a closed preserve monopolised by a propertied elite. Both in the City and the suburbs, it was alleged, local councils had in the absence of a widely drawn electoral foundation become a battleground for selfish cliques whose interests extended no further than determining the occupancy of the mayoral chair. Mayoral elections in the City were claimed to be decided as much by back room schemers as by a free vote. Municipal elections themselves, controlled as they seemingly were by selfish elites jockeying for influence, were said to be characterised by drink and bribery.

Talk of electoral malpractice never went beyond the level of hearsay. Municipal elections were however significant in another, crucial, way. At election time, the minority of Sydney's adult population who were entitled...
to vote stayed away in droves.\textsuperscript{25} Allegations of an unfair monopoly of influence by a few wealthy electors probably contributed in some measure to voter apathy, and cumulative voting undoubtedly did reduce the voting strength of the many proportionately to the few.\textsuperscript{26} Probably a stronger reason, however, in alienating many municipal electors was the more general ridicule and criticism of local government indulged in by the press, which, by catering to the prejudices of the unfranchised majority, projected a stereotype of aldermanic scurrility, questionable practices, and administrative incompetence.

Men of standing in the community were sweepingly said to avoid municipal office out of disgust for the selfish interests attracted to local government bodies. In 1874 the Mayor of Paddington could glumly concede that

\begin{quote}
\textit{it is not considered an honour to be an alderman or a mayor; they are looked down upon as nothing, and virtually they have no great power or influence; nobody thinks anything about them.}\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Popular criticisms and ridicule in Sydney borrowed directly from a tradition of hostility to local government in Britain, where at the start of the 1830s, local administration was a chaos of parish vestries, local improvement authorities, and town corporations. They were inefficient, unable to respond to the new complexities produced by the massive urbanisation of the early nineteenth century. Most of them were controlled by closed oligarchies, and being strongholds of Anglicanism they were a target for non-conformist resentment, whilst their Tory bias brought criticism from radicals and the Whigs.\textsuperscript{28} In 1883 a Sydney parliamentarian commented

\begin{quote}
Are the council not the fruit and outcome of this pernicious principle
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} See Appendix Five, Table 5.4; see, for example, D.T., 1.12.1881, editorial p.2; 18.11.1882, editorial p.2.
\textsuperscript{26} Appendix Five, Tables 5.5 and 5.6; see Echo, 2.12.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1.
\textsuperscript{27} What was needed, he suggested, were men with more education and better standing within the community, "men who would give the Municipal Council a better tone". S.C.W.M., qu.1428, 1435, p.150.
- a close corporation created by this limited franchise? What else could be expected from them, as from any body of monopolists, than that they would try to protect themselves in the positions which they have obtained?

His words were a direct legacy of the Whig polemic in Britain against the "separate and exclusive" town corporations which had accompanied the local government reforms of the early 1830s.29

Those reforms, which had the effect of further limiting the scope for popular participation, gave added substance to the characterisation of local municipal bodies in Britain as alien institutions unresponsive to public needs. Allegations and rumours of jobbery, malpractice, and incapacity, and stereotypes of self-interested and corrupt vestrymen and aldermen abounded throughout the century.30 Incorporated into British culture, the popular prejudices against local government were inevitably absorbed by the provincial society in N.S.W.

The reputation of local government in Sydney, and especially of the City Council, for extravagance and mismanagement of municipal finances31 was perhaps in part a natural outcome of the stereotyping of these bodies as closed, self-centred monopolies. At the core of newspaper criticisms of municipal finances, however, lay the continuing suspicions among ratepayers that taxes were too high and revenues overspent. Newspapermen complained that the City Council "spent money like water" with little in the way of return, supporting the "circumlocution offices" of an over-extended Corporation bureaucracy.32 The level of local taxation was invariably a major issue at the annual City elections, with ratepayers using the


31. See S.M.R., 28.8.1878, editorial p.4; E.N., 7.7.1881, editorial leader p.2; 5.8.1881, editorial leader p.1; 1.5.1885, editorial p.4.

32. Ibid., 29.9.1881, editorial leader p.2; L.T., 17.6.1881, editorial p.2; also ibid., 25.12.1880, p.4.
occasion to express their dissatisfaction with Corporation property assessments, and protest-candidates running for office upon the pledge of reduced taxation.  

Sensitivity concerning taxation made ratepayers particularly subjective in their assessments of the municipal services and amenities they were thus funding. Petitioning the City Council to form the streets and provide surface drainage for the Albion Estate, residents protested in 1875.

That as the Council enforces the collection of the rates and has further derived a very considerable revenue in the shape of Building Fees it is but fair that the contributors of this increase of revenue should receive in return something like a quid, pro quo.  

Similar dissatisfaction was expressed in the complaint made to the Mayor in 1891 against Richard Seymour, the Corporation Inspector of Nuisances, by one Charles Larry, living by Darling Harbour in one of the unwholesome working class tenement blocks along Washington Street. Seymour, he alleged, had not prosecuted the owner of an illegal slaughter house in nearby Sussex Street. Larry advised the Mayor, "so you Seemore of his duty to the poor people what pays his big wages".

The problem was one of radically differing perspectives. To working class tenants, resentful that while landlords added Council rates to their rents they should yet be denied a voice in Corporation affairs, and to those householders who paid rates directly and so qualified to vote, it seemed that Corporation sanitary regulation was inadequate. Specific health nuisances in their local neighbourhoods sometimes continued for

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33. See, for example, the campaign speeches of J. McMahon and J. Roseby in ibid., 17.11.1882, 'The Municipal Canvass' p.3; McMahon ran an identical campaign in the following year; see S.M.H., 28.11.1883, 'Municipal Elections' p.10. Special amendments to City municipal laws were approved by Parliament in 1880 and 1881, facilitating the right of appeal to the courts by ratepayers against local tax assessments; 43 Vic., no.27; 45 Vic., no.20; see the parliamentary debate on the former Bill in N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1879-80), pp.1221-2. See also ibid., vol.33 (1887-8), pp.4957-8 for the reservations expressed by Jeanneret concerning municipal rate collection in the suburbs.

34. S.M.H., 3.2.1869, editorial leader p.4; see the newspaper criticisms contained in ibid., 16.6.1881, editorial p.5; Echo, 28.11.1881, editorial leader p.1; S.M.H., 27.11.1882, 'The Municipal Council - Misgoverned Sydney' p.9.

35. S.C.C., L.R., 1875, vol.4, no.521 (petition, 8.1875).

36. Ibid., 1891, vol.7, no.2024 (Charles Larry, n.d.); Washington Street is pictured in Plates 27 and 28; see also the criticism of the City Council by 'A Balmain Ratepayer' in the E.N., 11.12.1884, 'Water Famine' p.5.
years without remedy. To the City Corporation officials charged with the overall task of providing services and preserving health, in departments overworked and understaffed, often working with limited and defective sanitary laws, and having to spread inadequate funds over wide areas of responsibility, community complaints frequently appeared trivial, unwarranted, and unfair.

The City Surveyor, labouring with inadequate staff and funding to surface, kerb, and gutter the City's streets and lanes, allowed a long-suffering note to enter his reply when queried in 1874 concerning public assessments of his performance. There had, he conceded, "been continual complaints, and I frequently get abused, as if I could help it". The Inspector of Nuisances, Richard Seymour, was incensed when the Corporation's system of street cleaning and household garbage removal, evolved by him in the face of considerable difficulties, was repeatedly

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37. See the letter by John Kevin (?) of Riley Street, Surry Hills, to Dr Alleyne, 10.4.1876, in S. & H.B., letters received (S.A., N.S.W. 4/805.3 part). The story was the same in the suburbs; see the petition to Professor Pell by ratepayers from Balmain West, 6.5.1876, in ibid. When in August 1884 a suspected case of smallpox was discovered in Waterloo, the nearby residents, described by the E.N. as "respectable...working people", blamed the reported outbreak upon the local authorities, complaining "that the neighbourhood is sorely neglected by the inspector of nuisances." E.N., 23.8.1884, 'The Alleged Case Of Small-pox at Waterloo' p.2.

38. See the speech by Professor Smith in the Legislative Council, reported in the S.H.L., 16.7.1875, 'Water Pollution Prevention Bill' p.2; see the explanations for City Council slowness in responding to suburban requests for extending the water mains, provided by the Town Clerk in the S.C.W.M., qu.40-1, p.100; and by the City Engineer to the Mayor, S.C.C., L.R., 1884, vol.5, no.1366 (21.8.1884).

39. See the comments of the City Surveyor in the S.C.W.M., qu.1837-40, pp.170-1; see below, p.73, n.61.

40. See below, Chapter Five.

41. See the attached minute-paper from the City Surveyor's Office, dated 22.9.1886, in S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.7, no.1860 (petition from Ultimo, complaining of dusty streets, received 14.9.1886); also ibid., 1887, vol.6, no.1856 (City Surveyor, 29.8.1887).

42. Ibid., 1885, vol.1, no.169 (City Engineer, 28.1.1885); also ibid., 1861, vol.3, no.363 (Graham, 29.4.1861); 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); 1868, vol.6, no.1286 (Graham, 9.12.1868). What made the situation all the more galling to CHC was their own experience of the frequent lack of community co-operation encountered by Corporation officials trying to police public health regulations in the City; ibid., 1859, vol.3, no.570 (Graham, 9.6.1859); 1862, vol.2, no.217 (Graham, 8.3.1862); 1874, vol.5, no.623 (Dansey, 9.9.1874); 1881, vol.9, no.1976 (Dansey, 1.11.1881).

criticised for mismanagement and neglect. From Seymour's viewpoint it appeared that any blame for continuing City dirtiness lay with the community itself. Reporting upon the removal of household garbage, the inspector explained to aldermen early in 1888 that

Notwithstanding the provision made by the Council for the removal of house refuse many people neglect to place such in receptacles for removal, hence the accumulation of filth in the yards and the many cases of prosecution for dirty premises.44

Shopkeepers swept their refuse into the gutters, he said, and advertisers, street hawkers, and passers-by likewise threw litter about the streets and pavements.45 Roads that had been thoroughly cleaned in the early morning looked several hours later as though they had never been touched, Seymour complained, "and who but the citizens are to blame for this?"46

To lay people however, knowing little of the difficulties confronted by municipal officials but keenly aware of the nuisance from local sanitary defects in their neighbourhoods, the apparent inaction of the municipal authorities was commonly explained as deliberate and cynical indifference towards legitimate community requirements. Complaining of the nuisance caused by an insanitary butcher's premises Charles Larry, the working man from Washington Street, remonstrated how "On Lords day night it was hawful worse than a bad privy". Of Seymour he said darkly to the Mayor, "Your Officer in your nuisance department Mr Seemore belies his name as he sees less than is good for... the citizens when he likes". Seymour indignantly called that veiled hint "too contemptible to call for a reply", and the charge against the butcher he dismissed as baseless after inspecting the premises. The integrity of Seymour and his staff was probably quite often thus impugned by persons dissatisfied with the slowness of Corporation responses to specific problems. Ignoring or more likely unaware of the difficulties standing in the way of the City Corporation's efforts to demolish substandard buildings, a citizen living near to some tumble-down City buildings commented late in 1890 that the City Council's attention had been drawn to the buildings years before, but "The Inspector of Nuisances

44. S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888); see the enclosure by Seymour, 30.12.1885, in ibid., 1885, vol.7, no.2064 (N.S.W. Treasury to Town Clerk, 19.12.1885).
45. Ibid., 1878, vol.1, no.22 (Seymour, 10.1.1878); 1883, vol.6, no.2112 (Seymour, 9.12.1883); 1887, vol.7, no.2092 (Seymour, 26.9.1887); 1891, vol.4, no.1101 (Seymour to Town Clerk, 1.6.1891); also Seymour's annual reports in P.M.C.G.S., 1889 and 1890.
46. Letter by Seymour entitled 'Our Streets' in the D.T., 13.3.1884, p.3.
got well paid to say nothing, so it was said... only for the money paid and neglect of duty by the officers it would have been [pulled] down long ago." 47

Neither did aldermen themselves escape mention in the hostile rumours circulating about municipal inaction. The CHO, Dr Dansey, received a letter in 1876 written on behalf of residents in suburban Alexandria and complaining at the stench coming from boiling down works in the municipality. There was no point in speaking with local aldermen, the letter stated, because the municipal council pretended to have nothing to do with the matter. 48  That the interests of such trades were heavily represented upon local councils to the detriment of community interests was a common belief in Sydney, and one that was not without justification. Complaints from neighbouring suburbs of the stench on calm and sultry evenings from piggeries and boiling-down works in Leichhardt received no attention, the Council Clerk alleged in 1875, because two aldermen were themselves pig-keepers and so blocked moves to appoint an inspector of nuisances. Like complaints in the West Botany district during the 1870s and 1880s were similarly blocked by vested interests represented on the Rockdale municipal council. 49  Local government sanitary administration would never be sufficiently impartial, a Health Society deputation had told the Premier in 1878. The Society alleged that aldermen were numbered among the owners of unwholesome slum buildings, and were also "some of the chief and most notorious offenders against the law" banning the slaughtering of animals within the City. 50

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47. Charles Larry to the Mayor, n.d., in S.C.C., L.R., 1891, vol.7, no.2024; for Seymour's reply, see the enclosure in ibid. (Seymour to Town Clerk, 21.10.1891). The allegation of corruption made against the Inspector of Nuisances in 1890 is filed in the Correspondence concerning complaints to the City of Sydney Improvement Board (S.A., N.S.W. 4/6898), complaint no.18 (10.12.1890); see below, Chapters Thirteen and Fifteen, for a discussion of the City Council's slum clearance activities.


50. Ibid., 23.1.1878, 'News Of The Day' p.5.
Sweeping condemnations of aldermanic vested interests or of simple mismanagement could however oversimplify difficult and complex problems. The City Council decided in 1881 to legalise the slaughtering of lambs and calves within the City by licenced butchers. Slaughtering was a messy, smelly, insanitary business the banning of which during the 1850s had then been wholeheartedly supported by CHOs, and so the change in policy, coming in the midst of a smallpox epidemic, was unanimously condemned by the press as grossly irresponsible. It seemed that only vested interests could have motivated the change. When in 1882 the City Council confirmed its decision the Daily Telegraph wrote savagely of Alderman Thomas Playfair, who supported the legalisation of slaughtering, that he "sat in the Council, not as a representative of Gipps Ward, but as President of the Butchers' Association!"  

There was however another side to the matter. The difficulties of mounting successful prosecutions in the courts, coupled with an inadequate Corporation staff of only two officers available to police the existing law, meant that the ban on slaughtering had for decades been a dead letter. CHOs had since the early 1860s regularly reported upon the great extent of illicit slaughtering, usually undertaken late at night when detection was especially difficult. They warned that such meat was of dubious quality. Skins, blood, and offal were dumped in sewers or

52. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.3, no.573 (Dr Aaron, 9.11.1857); 1859, vol.1, no.120 (Aaron, 4.2.1859); 1859, vol.6, no.1120 (Graham, 9.12.1859); 13 Vic., no.42; 14 Vic., no.36. See also the Select Committee on Slaughter Houses, V. & F. (N.S.W. L.C.), 1848 vol., pp.405-54. D.T., 15.5.1882, editorial p.2; see also S.M.H., 29.6.1881, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 'The City Council And The Public Health' p.6; Echo, 8.7.1881, editorial leader p.1; D.T., 28.3.1882, editorial leader p.2.  
53. See below, Chapter Five; S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.1130, p.416; S.M.H., 29.7.1875, editorial pp.4-5; see the comment by the City Solicitor, Richard Driver, during Legislative Assembly consideration of the 1879 City Corporation Bill, and reported in the Herald's parliamentary coverage, 30.1.1879, p.6. One carcass butcher claimed in 1875 that 99 out of every 100 lambs bought by Sydney butchers were slaughtered illegally in the City; S. & H.B., 12th R., qu.111, p.748.  
54. See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1862, vol.2, no.265 (Graham, 25.3.1862); 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); 1870, vol.6, no.1149 (Dansey, 9.12.1870); 1875, vol.4, no.517 (Dansey, 9.8.1875); 1880, vol.2, no.417 (Dansey, 9.3.1880).  
55. See ibid., 1880, vol.4, no.856 (Dansey, 5.1880); 1882, vol.1, no.117 (Seymour, 25.1.1882).
cesspits, or hidden on the premises for later removal, putrefying and smelling and so endangering the health of the surrounding neighbourhood.56

Proper supervision by qualified inspectors was essential, said Dansey, in order to prevent the health problems resulting from the sale of unwholesome meat. The present rules merely drove slaughtering underground, where it was not subject to any sanitary regulation. Far better, said Seymour, would be the licensing of City butchers to kill lambs and calves. Licence fees could pay for an adequate staff of inspectors to keep the premises under constant scrutiny, and pay also for carts to remove and dispose of wastes in a legitimate manner.57 Newspaper casting of the City Council in the stereotyped role of a self-interested organisation "largely represented by the butchering, chicken-butchering, and other kindred callings"58 was a misrepresentation of the sincere efforts by aldermen as well as Corporation staff to resolve a legislative inadequacy that had long been a problem to public health.

Certainly, public complaints about deficiencies and omissions in Corporation administration were often based on real grievances. A letter writer to the Herald during 1888 alleged that along the back streets and lanes of the City rubbish was frequently left strewn about by Corporation scavengers. Seymour indignantly replied that such localities were thoroughly cleaned every morning, but undoubtedly there was often considerable difference between what the Inspector of Nuisances ordered to be done and what was actually achieved by less scrupulous members of his staff.59 Early in 1876 Alderman Michael Chapman, who had in the previous year been appointed to the Sewage and Health Board, reported of one

57. S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.4, no.856 (Dansey, 5.1880). Ibid., 1878, vol.2, no.230 (Seymour, 4.3.1878); similar recommendations had been made in 1876 by Mayor Palmer; S. & H.B., 12th R., qu.3362-3, p.750.
59. S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.3, no.760 (Seymour to Town Clerk, 23.4.1888); also S.M.H., 31.3.1877, 'Scavenging In The City' p.5; see the enclosure by Dr Ashburton Thompson, then deputy to the Government Medical Adviser, dated 9.7.1886 in S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.6, no.1515 (Colonial Secretary's Office, 23.7.1886); also the enclosure by Thompson, dated 11.6.1889, in ibid., 1889, vol.2, no.874 (Board of Health to Town Clerk, 14.6.1889).
unwholesome courtyard he had inspected as part of the Board's investigations into overcrowding,

Just inside the entrance to this yard is a large heap of house refuse, which the tenants informed us is cleared away once a fortnight. The dustman came with his cart while we were there, and would fain have persuaded us that his visits were made weekly, but it was clear that such was not the case, except perhaps theoretically.60

The effect of such neglect was compounded by the emphasis given by aldermen to the need for economy in all departments. To criticisms of City scavenging Seymour replied that the streets were kept as clean as possible, given the limited staff available. His scavenging department had been actually reduced in 1875 in order to save expense, notwithstanding Dansey's protests that with mortality rates then so high scavenging urgently required extending.61

In 1880 the Herald had remarked of City aldermen that "as a rule their tenderness for the ratepayers' purses has been infinite".62 The desirability of strict economies was repeatedly stressed by influential aldermen during the annual City elections.63 Sydney Burdekin, a man with extensive property interests in Sydney, was elected to the City Council specifically upon the plank of the need to check Corporation "extravagance".64 Rarely were City Council initiatives begun without some form of challenge by aldermen anxious to cut costs. Speaking at the

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61. S.C.C., L.R., 1878, vol.1, no.22 (Seymour, 10.1.1878); 1884, vol.1, no.328 (Seymour to Town Clerk, 21.2.1884); 1885, vol.7, no.2010 (Seymour, 9.12.1885). Ibid., 1875, vol.1, no.15 (Dansey, 9.1.1875); also E.N., 20.1.1875, editorial p.2; see ibid., 11.1.1875, 'News Of The Day' p.2.
62. S.M.H., 5.5.1880, editorial p.5. See the Legislative Assembly debate reported in Ibid., concerning the 1879 City Corporation Bill; 4.10.1878, p.3 (Davies and Cameron); 8.11.1878, p.3 (Fitzpatrick); 6.2.1879, p.3 (McElhone); also the Legislative Council third reading debate in Ibid., 14.5.1879, p.2 (De Salis and Sir John Robertson).
63. See, for example, the campaign speeches reported in Ibid., 29.11.1879, 'Municipal Elections' p.3 (Alderman Woods); D.T., 14.11.1882, 'The Municipal Election' p.3 (Alderman Meeks); Ibid., 17.11.1882, 'The Municipal Canvass' p.3 (Alderman Davies); S.M.H., 29.11.1883, 'Municipal Elections' p.5 (Alderman Matthew Harris).
64. Ibid., 1.12.1883, 'Municipal Elections' p.10; see also Burdekin's speech in D.T., 22.11.1882, 'The Municipal Elections' p.3. As Mayor during 1890, Burdekin later recalled proudly, he had saved some 20,000 pounds through approving only really necessary works and by pruning non-essential staff; 'Mayor Burdekin's Minute On Impressions Of Civic Affairs', in P.M.C.C.S., 1891, n.p.
ceremony in June 1869 to mark the start of work on the Blackwattle Swamp sewer, Alderman John Woods recalled how
this important work was not arrived at without great difficulty. And perhaps the greatest difficulty arose from the over-prudence of aldermen who were in some instances too careful how they handled the citizens' money.65 Corporation wages and staffing were similarly monitored to guard against extravagance. After 30 years of service, Seymour himself became a victim of City Council economy-mindedness when in 1896, during the major depression of the 1890s, aldermen resolved to replace Seymour by his assistant and simultaneously to slash the inspector's salary from 650 to 300 pounds per annum.66

The decision to dismiss Seymour was narrowly carried by ten votes to nine. Despite outside assertions to the contrary, it did not necessarily follow from the City Council's concern with economy that aldermen generally were unwilling to spend the money necessary to provide local services and to preserve public health. As Burdekin acknowledged when standing for election in 1882, "Taxes pressed heavily, but they could not expect the municipality to be carried on without the expenditure of a good round sum." At the ceremony to signal the start of Woods' Blackwattle Swamp sewer in 1869 the then Mayor, Charles Moore, remarked that although the completed work would produce no monetary return to the Corporation, "They had to consider the health, the lives of the citizens, and this was, in his opinion, a consideration paramount to all other. (Cheers)"67 Aldermen complained that local government performance was hampered by their having "always more to do than they had money to pay for".68

66. Prominent City Alderman John Harris complained in 1890 that "the council was paying their officers large salaries for doing nothing." D.T., 26.2.1890, 'City Council' p.6; see below, Chapter Four. For the decision to dismiss Seymour, see S.C.C., P. (14.5.1896), pp.326-7; (14.7.1896), p.344; (8.10.1896), pp.363-4.
68. S.M.H., 29.11.1879, 'Municipal Elections' p.3 (Macintosh); see also the comment by Macintosh, the committee chairman, in S.C.W.M., qu.1504, p.156. See the complaint by Alderman Davies, reported in the S.M.H. coverage of Legislative Assembly debate on the 1879 City Corporation Bill; 30.1.1879, p.6.
Notwithstanding economies, local councils throughout Sydney had to borrow heavily and often spent beyond their means. The City Corporation, especially, was throughout the 1870s in a state of acute financial embarrassment, already levying the maximum rates allowable and burdened with massive debts incurred in constructing a water and sewerage system for the City. When in 1879 the new Corporation Act granted the City Council expanded revenues and released it from a debt of 700,000 pounds owing to Government, the Corporation was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Aldermen asserted however that the City Council had no cause to feel indebted to Parliament for this assistance. The financial difficulties were after all caused in the first place, said Burdekin, "through the niggardly conduct of the Government". As a consequence, the City Council had through no fault of its own fallen into "a disreputable state of insolvency" and so had been obliged "to go, cap in hand, to the Government for assistance to carry on its ordinary business."
III

The City Corporation had been "crippled for want of power and money", said the City Solicitor, Richard Driver, in Parliament during 1879. It was a revealing comment. At the root of municipal inability to respond speedily and efficiently to provide the local services and safeguards against disease demanded by the community were basic inadequacies in the framework of municipal administration set down by Parliament in its local government legislation. It was a paradoxical situation, for politicians as a group had generally been ready to acknowledge the importance of local government, and rarely indulged in the ridicule and abuse of municipal institutions popular in the wider community.

The re-establishment and extending of municipal institutions after the granting of responsible government to N.S.W. had been regarded by colonial politicians as essential to the style of democracy they had inherited from England. The arguments publicised by Toulmin Smith in the late 1840s, that local self-government stimulated virtues like moral dignity and self-reliance among the general population, and by John Stuart Mill several decades later, that local government should act as schools "educating the people in their responsibilities as citizens", were absorbed and repeated in Sydney. By thus accustomed "the people... to exercise the duties of citizenship", said George Reid in 1895, local self-government made people "better as men, better as citizens, and even better as owners and occupiers of property."

74. Second reading debate, City Corporation Bill, reported in ibid., 4.10.1878, p.3.
75. In 1883 Angus Cameron, the working class parliamentary representative of West Sydney, announced

I have no wish to cast any aspersions on the gentlemen who occupy the position of aldermen; I have no doubt that they have onerous duties to perform, and, like other public men, they often receive more kicks than halfpence.

N.S.W. P.D., vol.8 (1883), p.689; see Cowper, reported during debate on his Sydney Corporation Laws Amendment And Consolidation Bill, in S.M.H., 10.9.1862, p.4; also S.C.W.M., p.87.
78. N.S.W. P.D., vol.76 (1894-5), p.4698; see also Macarthur's speech, reported in the S.M.H. during parliamentary debate on the Corporation Restoration Bill, 27.11.1856, p.4.
Also inherited from Britain was that traditional antagonism towards the principle of central government intervention in community affairs. The Herald applauded the Local Government Bill introduced to Parliament in 1881 by Henry Parkes as a necessary reaction against the tendency towards "increasing centralization" in government that was smothering "the spirit of self-help" in the community. One parliamentarian was cheered when during debate on municipal reform in 1865 he quoted at length from Toulmin Smith upon the advantages of local institutions over a centralism which "seeks to obliterate all sense of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of freemen". Criticising Henry Parkes' Local Government Bill in 1881 for still containing too great a concentration of central supervision and control, the opposition leader, Sir Patrick Jennings, insisted "that the very largest measure of local self-government - the largest amount of freedom - must be given."

But while Parliament agreed upon the importance of local government, the perimeters of municipal responsibility and action were at the same time seen in a very restrictive light. William Tunks must have filled many members with misgivings when in 1865 he declared that

> By placing local affairs in the hands of the people,... It would be the means of forming schools, as it were, for persons to become better qualified for the discharge of the duty of legislators in that House.

William Piddington had voiced the majority view among parliamentarians when in 1856 he argued against the doctrine held by some persons, that a municipal council should be a little parliament, a kind of normal school to prepare gentlemen for a more extended field of action. He thought it was an administrative body, and the more they decreased its numbers the more efficient they made it, by diminishing the desire to talk; their duties were very few, and their operation limited, and they in no way resembled the Legislature which made laws for the whole colony.

When Parkes in 1881 spoke of the benefits of municipal office in preparing

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77. Ibid., 1.7.1881, editorial leader p.4.
80. Ibid., 23.11.1865, 'Municipalities Bill' p.2 (Sutherland); see the similar speech by Jones in introducing the Legislative Assembly second reading debate of the Cowper-Robertson Ministry's Municipalities Bill; ibid., 30.10.1857, p.4.
82. Legislative Assembly second reading debate on the Municipalities Bill, reported in S.M.H., 23.11.1865, p.2; see the similar comment by Jennings in N.S.W. P.D., vol.4 (1880-1), p.1370.
men for parliamentary careers, the Herald likewise reacted with caution. Local bodies, the newspaper countered, deal with small affairs, not large ones...and, if they give familiarity with the conduct of executive business on a small scale, they do not force men to study the fundamental principles of public policy in the light of which alone large communities can be wisely governed.\footnote{Ibid., 4.7.1881, editorial p.4.}

Municipal institutions, it was commonly agreed in Sydney, had in England once enjoyed considerable responsibilities because, in a pre-democratic age, they formed popular bastions against arbitrary government, acting on behalf of the whole country as "the guardians of its political liberties". This function was seen as having passed away, so that "municipal bodies now existed not for general government but for the carrying out of matters of local concern...and not as in former days".\footnote{Ibid. The second comment was made by the Attorney General during Legislative Assembly debate on the Corporation Restoration Bill; ibid., 21.11.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4; see the report written by Robert Lowe, chairman of the Select Committee on the City Corporation, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.C.), 1849, vol.2, p.75; also Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp.18-9.}

It was likewise agreed that town corporations, having in Britain lost their earlier political focus as forums for debating the major issues of national politics, had now become wholly executive or administrative in character. The "deliberative functions of corporations" had "become totally inapplicable", said Forster late in 1856 during Legislative Assembly debate on the Corporation Restoration Bill.\footnote{S.M.H., 21.11.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4; see also Forster, reported in ibid. during the Legislative Assembly third reading debate of the 1867 Municipalities Bill, 6.12.1867, p.2.} Although one ex-Alderman in the chamber protested that "the Corporation was not merely an executive body, but also a deliberative body in a very large and important degree", that opinion was not widely shared. The emphasis by Parliament in restoring the City Council was rather on establishing an efficient administrative body in which there would be no place for that tendency towards "a great deal of talk and little work" that was said to have hitherto characterised the approach of Sydney aldermen to municipal affairs.\footnote{Ibid., 27.11.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4 (Weekes). Ibid., 21.11.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.3 (Nichols); see Plunkett's comment, reported in ibid., 27.11.1856, p.4.}

It was commonly agreed, too, that even the local responsibilities...
responsibilities of municipalities were to be strictly limited. Piddington declared in the Legislative Council during 1886, in opposition to O'Connor's proposed reforms to the City municipal franchise,

Why, what is a corporation, but a kind of partnership in which every man concerned is supposed to pay, in proportion to the amount of property he possesses, a share toward certain specified and limited objects - those objects, in the case of a municipal corporation, being principally the making of streets, the supplying of water and the lighting of the municipality.88

It was a view supported by recourse to the idea, advanced in 1864 by the future British Conservative leader Lord Salisbury, that local government was similar to joint stock companies. The one dealt with improvements to property and the other with shares, and the voting power in both cases should logically be vested with those most directly concerned, the owners of property or of shares.89

While public companies dealt only with property, objected S. C. Brown during debate on the 1867 Municipalities Bill, local government by contrast dealt "with the far higher matters of the health and the education of the public."90 Brown's argument was generally ignored. In 1883 Angus Cameron, summarising the views of his parliamentary colleagues concerning local government responsibilities, concluded that

Honorable gentlemen...fall into the error of supposing that in electing aldermen for the city we elect men whose functions do not extend beyond the making of provision for the formation of streets and culverts, and so forth. That is a great mistake.91

Cameron's statement was of course an exaggeration. Undeniably, however, the local responsibilities vested with the City Corporation and municipal councils generally were considerably weakened by Parliament's conception of

89. Webb, The Development, pp.176-7. See, for example, the speech by De Salis during Legislative Assembly committee debate on Parkes' Municipalities Bill, in the S.M.H., 29.11.1867, p.2; also Lucas' Legislative Assembly speech in ibid., 4.10.1878, 'Sydney Corporation Bill' p.3.
90. Ibid., 29.11.1867, 'Municipalities Bill' p.2; see Deas Thomson's comment in the Legislative Council during consideration of the Corporation Restoration Bill, in ibid., 29.1.1857, p.4; also Macintosh in ibid., 4.10.1878, 'Sydney Corporation Bill' p.3; Willard in N.S.W. P.D., vol.74 (1894-5), pp.2271-2.
91. Ibid., vol.8 (1883), p.1072.
local government bodies as parochial and wholly executive in function, mechanically performing a set programme of basic administrative duties.

The parochial nature of municipal authority was further emphasised by the politicians' aim of taking "from the central government the trouble of having to attend to the trivial requirements of localities", and so freeing Parliament for what Parkes called its "higher" legislative duty of making laws for the whole country. The intention was that government be relieved not only from the pressure, but also some of the financial burden, for local works.

Yet while there was a touch of cynicism in the desire by most politicians to relieve the general colonial revenue of the cost for local improvements, there were always within Parliament members ready to speak out when it seemed to them that financial expediency was weighing more in the minds of their colleagues than was sincere belief in the social and political value of the concept of local self-government. That local government achievements were undermined by inadequate funding stemmed less from parliamentary cynicism than from the general wish by politicians for economy in all departments. There was a quite genuine belief among politicians that they were indeed more than generous in their financial dealings with local government.

Opposing the 1879 Corporation Bill's proposed annual endowment of 25,000 pounds to the City Council for the next 10 years, James Greenwood warned that so high a level of assistance was antagonistic to the important

92. Ibid., vol.76 (1894-5), p.4818. See Parkes' comment in the Legislative Assembly during discussion of his Municipalities Bill, S.M.H., 29.11.1867, p.2; and in ibid., 4.7.1881, editorial p.4. See also Parker in ibid., 30.10.1857, 'Municipalities Bill' p.5; and Docker and Deas Thomson during discussions in the Legislative Council on the 1867 Municipalities Bill; ibid., 12.12.1867, p.2; see the D.T., 14.2.1881, editorial leader p.2.

93. See, for example, Jones' speech in the Assembly, reported in the S.M.H., 30.10.1857, 'Municipalities Bill' p.4; Manning's comments in the Legislative Council on the 1867 Municipalities Bill, ibid., 12.12.1867, p.2; also ibid., 1.3.1884, editorial leader p.11.

94. See Lutwyche in the Legislative Council, reported in ibid., 8.1.1857, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.3; Forster's Assembly speech in ibid., 2.9.1858, 'Municipalities Bill' p.5; also Jennings in N.S.W. P.D., vol.4 (1880-1), p.1370.

95. See Stuart's words concerning City Council endowment during Assembly debate on the 1867 Municipalities Bill, in ibid., 28.11.1867, p.2; also Fitzpatrick's comment during consideration of the 1878-9 Corporation Bill, reported in the S.M.H.'s parliamentary pages, 7.11.1878, p.6.
aim of "fostering a spirit of self-help" in the community. A similar misgiving was expressed in the Legislative Council by Leopold De Salis, who in opposing the Bill's purpose of relieving the City Council of its debt to the Government argued that

When it got abroad that the rich people of Sydney had received alms from the State, the whole country would inquire what they were going to get, and there would be a thorough revolution, so to speak, in the management of the country.96

Politicians' reluctance to retreat too far from traditional laissez-faire principle formed yet another dimension to the considerations tending to limit the power and independent initiative granted by parliament to local government.

Careful parliamentary scrutiny to guard against over arbitrary interference with individual liberties was a feature of the consideration given to all local government legislation.97 It was after all as a check upon increasing bureaucratic intervention that the concept of local self government attracted much of its support. Objections among politicians to the "system of compulsion" and "State interference" had during the smallpox emergency of early 1869 frustrated Government efforts, applauded by the CHO, to guide a Compulsory Vaccination Bill through Parliament.98 The possible encouragement of too arbitrary action by the authorities again caused misgivings to be expressed in Parliament during consideration of the Water Pollution Prevention Act and its companion measure, the Nuisances Prevention Act, during 1875, and again during deliberations in 1878-79 upon the new Corporation Act and the City's revised building law, the City of Sydney Improvement Act.99

97. An amendment to the 1867 Municipalities Bill imposing an upper limit to council rates was approved by Parliament despite strenuous opposition by the Premier, Parkes. As another Assemblyman complained, "We had passed a bill to establish municipalities, and given these municipalities certain powers, while we prevented them from using these powers by limiting their power to levy rates." S.C. Brown in ibid., 20.12.1867, 'Municipalities Bill' p.2; also Parkes' speech in ibid. See above, p. n.33.
98. See the parliamentary reports in the Empire, 19.2.1869, 'Compulsory Vaccination Bill' p.3; also the parliamentary reports in the S.M.H., 3.3.1869, 'Compulsory Vaccination' p.3; and ibid., 23.3.1869, p.2; 26.3.1869, p.3. See the Empire, 20.2.1869, 'The Flaneur In Sydney' p.4; S.M.H., 21.4.1869, 'The Sydney Monthly Overland Mail' p.5. See below, Chapter Five.
99. See the parliamentary debate concerning the Water Pollution Prevention Bill in ibid., 6.7.1875, pp.2-3; see the reservations expressed
Parliamentary reappraisal of laissez-faire principles in the light of the practical requirements of city government and public health regulation was a reluctant and fumbling process. Parliament was originally neither adequately prepared nor sufficiently skilled to provide general legislative solutions to the complexities of modern city life. Not until 1870 were two permanent parliamentary draftsmen appointed, and they were only made part-time. The result was often Bills full of "long clauses, and those not altogether well worded". Few parliamentarians were in any case able or willing to set aside the time necessary to achieve a working knowledge of the often highly technical problems involved in local government and sanitary reform, and to lobby for and adequately review such legislation when it was submitted to Parliament. Necessary local government reforms were in consequence often long delayed in enactment, and were frequently debated in half empty chambers.

99. cont.

concerning the Nuisances Prevention Bill in ibid., 11.8.1875, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3; see also the debate in the Legislative Assembly reported in ibid., 4.10.1878, 'Sydney Corporation Bill' p.3; see below, Chapter Nine, for a discussion of reactions to the City Improvement Bill.

100. See Robertson's defence of the "arbitrary" provisions in the Water Pollution Prevention Bill, ibid., 6.7.1875, p.2; also Manning's words in support of the Nuisances Prevention Bill, reported in ibid., 11.8.1875, p.3.

101. The Herald commented in 1894 that "as the capital grew in population and its affairs increased in complexity", so "the present confusion of government grew up. That confusion is part of the general backwardness of our community in matters of local government." As Driver had said in Parliament during 1865, with the colony in its infancy concerning the establishment of municipal institutions there could be no wonder that problems should arise; ibid., 22.8.1894, editorial p.6; Driver was speaking in the Assembly during debate on the Municipalities Amendment Bill; ibid., 6.5.1865, p.5. See also Smellie, A History, esp. pp.21, 28, 53-5.


103. The comment was made in the Assembly by Stewart, and was reported in S.M.H., 21.11.1867, 'Municipalities Bill' p.2. It was complained in the Assembly in 1865 during consideration of a Municipalities Amendment Bill that the existing Act was so obscurely worded that even the best lawyers were fully taxed to understand it; ibid., 6.5.1865, p.5; see S.C.W.M., qu.608, p.117; qu.662, p.120; qu.1377-84, p.149; see also the complaints of legal shortcomings hampering rate collection, made by the City Town Clerk in ibid., qu.289, 292-9, p.108.

104. See the lists of divisions contained in the V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.) and J. (N.S.W. L.C.). For a discussion of the consequences of parliamentary delay in enacting necessary legislation, see Chapter Five.
Even then, consideration centred more on questions of general community interest and easily grasped principle than on complex points of detail. During parliamentary consideration of the Corporation Restoration Bill in 1856-57, the Premier had remarked at the end of debate concerning the future size of the new City Council and the municipal franchise that the principle of the main clauses having already been determined, he imagined the labours of the committee, in considering the remainder of the bill, would be rendered comparatively slight.105

Most of those clauses remaining would, said his opposition counterpart, Charles Cowper, "be got over at a railroad pace". Cowper's prediction was realised, with large slices of the Bill, including important clauses like the one detailing Corporation borrowing powers, being approved in committee without debate.106

It was a typical situation in both Houses. The Legislative Council worked through the whole of the bulky 1879 Corporation Act in a single sitting, approving with a few verbal amendments all but a scattering of clauses, which were postponed and then quickly dealt with some days later.107 In the Legislative Assembly, deliberation focused on issues such as franchise amendments and the propriety of granting special financial concessions to the City Council. Concerning the measure's public health provisions, the Colonial Secretary had remarked dismissively, "They were phrased in the usual way, and needed no discussion".108 Those clauses, "phrased in the usual way", had for years been denounced by Corporation health officials as inadequate for efficient sanitary regulation in the City.

To resolve the deficiencies of local government, said the Mayor of Paddington in 1874, the municipalities needed extended powers. That same conclusion was reached by those few others who bothered to think beyond the ridiculing of municipal institutions and to assess rationally the difficulties faced by local aldermen in providing "good rule and government". Emphasising the need for local government reform, the

106. Ibid., 27.11.1856, p.4. See the report of the Bill in committee, in ibid., 17.12.1856, p.5.
107. See the Bill's passage through the Legislative Council, reported in ibid., 24.4.1879, p.2; 1.5.1879, p.2; 7.5.1879, p.3; 14.5.1879, p.2.
108. Ibid., 4.10.1878, 'Sydney Corporation Bill' p.3; note the fleeting attention given by the Assembly-in-committee to such crucial sanitary clauses as those defining the post of CHO and specifying the authority of Corporation officials to enter private premises; ibid., 24.1.1879, p.3.
Daily Telegraph in an editorial leader midway through 1883 declared that a municipal council

Should be something more than a mere vestry, and should have charge of matters of administration other than the making of roads and bridges... local government should most certainly be taken to mean something more than the power to levy taxes, to be expended in lighting and paving. 

In the opinion of one Herald editorial writer, improvement in municipal performance was unlikely without "making some radical changes in their relations to the central government", specifically "in the direction of increasing their governing power". In order to function efficiently municipal institutions required what politicians, with their insistence that aldermen be merely administrators, had all along denied - the capacity to rapidly devise and implement remedies to specific problems as they arose. The severely limited power of law-making open to local councils through the framing of by-laws was inadequate to meet the complex and continually altering requirements of regulating a big city.

During discussions in Parliament in July 1900 over amendments to the Corporation Act, Dr James Graham remarked critically that everybody was dissatisfied with Corporation performance. In Britain and Ireland, he said, local authorities had practically remade whole cities and had markedly increased the life expectations of their inhabitants. Yet the problems of Sydney, he conceded, were not entirely of the City Council's making. The blame lay in part upon Parliament itself:

The various parliaments that have sat here during the last twenty or thirty years must bear a share of that blame, because there is nothing in the way of power of legislation in the city council. They have not the power to initiate. Reform must come from without.

Over 40 years of conscientious reporting by CHOs detailing public health problems which the City Council had no power by itself to resolve, provided backing for the politician's claim.

110. S.M.H., 4.7.1881, editorial p.4.
111. See S.C.W.M., qu.685, p.121. See below, Chapter Five.
Assessing the City Council's achievements in the field of public health, Dr James Graham said of the local authority in Parliament during 1900 that as a sanitary instrumentality "It is distinctly primitive, and has never risen to the occasion as a health body, because it has never infused into its work anything like a scientific spirit, or exhibited in the slightest degree anything like scientific methods." General public criticism of City Corporation sanitary administration on the grounds of inaction, muddle, and sordid self-interest, and calls for proper preventive sanitary regulation instead by a government-appointed board of health, underscored the unhappy history of the City Council's own unwilling experiment since 1857 in preventive medicine. The post of City Health Officer, which Parliament in that year had made compulsory under the Sydney Corporation Restoration Act, had been expected by its initiators to signal the start of an efficient local government administration of urban public health that would check the potential for devastation posed by infectious disease. Instead, only two years later, the post was already being attacked by some aldermen as a sinecure, and dismissed by outside critics as having been downgraded into a farce through City Council obstructionism.

Chairing the annual meeting of the Health Society of N.S.W. in 1881, the respected sanitary reformer Sir Alfred Stephen complained "that the striking reports of the city health officer were too little regarded by the corporation and the Government. The Government, indeed, seemed to think nothing of them at all." Despite his brief to give the earliest warning of infectious disease, the CHO was not even properly informed of the government's quarantining infected ships. During anxieties in 1876 lest smallpox spread to Sydney from San Francisco, one

3. Ibid., 17.11.1881, 'The Health Society' p.3.
4. See S.C.C. L.R., 1859, vol.5, no. 835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); S.C.C., P. (14.9.1887), p.522. When in early January 1877 the Holden smallpox case was discovered in the City, it was said that the CHO was not even informed of the outbreak by government officials and only happened incidentally to hear of the disease's appearance; E.N., 1.1.1877, 'Reported Case Of Small -pox In Sydney' p.2.
parliamentarian, while inquiring what sanitary precautions were being taken, applied the term "Health Officer" not to the Corporation official at all but to the Government's own medical officer in charge of shipping in Port Jackson. That practice became steadily more frequent over time.5

The failure of over thirty years' effort by the different CHO's to prevent their office from stagnating as a minor clerical post for the passive collection of second hand information was made plain by Mayor Burdekin in 1891. The post of CHO, he said, "has always been, and must virtually always be, a sinecure." The Corporation official could fulfil his responsibilities without effort by obtaining every conceivable health statistic relating to the City from the Government Board of Health. It would, said Burdekin, "be absolutely unnecessary, and a mere waste of revenue, to have two expensive establishments running so closely on parallel lines".6

The start of the City Council's experiment in preventive medicine, thus explicitly abrogated by Burdekin in 1891, had begun with the restoration of the City Corporation in 1857. In mid December 1856, during Legislative Assembly committee debate on the Sydney Corporation Restoration Bill, the parliamentary faction leader Charles Cowper moved as an amendment that a CHO be added to the list of compulsory Corporation appointments. Members responded that the amendment was unnecessary, that it would require special legislation of its own, that the City Council would doubtless of their own free will make such an appointment. Cowper's motion was thrown out by 22 votes to eleven.7

In the Legislative Council, however, it was unanimously agreed that the appointment of a CHO should be made compulsory. A new clause defining the officer's responsibilities, modelled upon the duties set down for the City of London's medical officer in the 1848 City Sewers Act, was included in

5. Question by Hurley in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1875-6, vol.1, no.130 (27.7.1876), p.513. Also Ibid., no.138 (10.8.1876), p.553; S.M.H., 5.11.1883, editorial p.5. In contrast to the low profile and generally indifferent reputation of the badly paid CHO, the combined post of port officer and Medical Adviser to the Government became increasingly prominent, especially after that official's inclusion on the Board of Health set up by Parliament during the smallpox epidemic of 1881; see N.S.W.B.H., p.
7. The other compulsory appointments were a town clerk, treasurer, and an engineer or surveyor; 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 52). See the debate on Cowper's motion in S.M.H., 17.12.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.5.
the Sydney Bill.\(^8\)

Upon the measure being returned to the Legislative Assembly for ratification, the amendment was again heavily defeated.\(^9\) Legislative Councillors were not, however, prepared to let the matter rest there, and after emphasising the pressing need for sanitary improvements in Sydney, they insisted upon their amendment to the Bill.\(^10\) In the lower House, with the end of the parliamentary session drawing near, the Ministry decided to drop its objections to what was considered a point of secondary importance, rather than place the whole Bill at risk, and politicians generally agreed with that pragmatic decision. With only half the House present, the Legislative Assembly decided by 22 votes to five to accept the Council’s amendment.\(^11\)

Dissensions within Parliament over the new compulsory appointment underscored the Legislative Council’s originality in floating the proposal. The concept of a professionally recognised medical officer of health was derived from Britain, where the first such medical officers had been appointed a decade earlier, in Leicester and Liverpool.\(^12\) These appointments had however been isolated experiments only, \(^13\) and the

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8. See the local London Act, 11 & 12 Vic., c.163 (clause 80). The CHO, it was agreed, “shall be a duly qualified medical practitioner, and be subject to approval by the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council; and he shall perform the following duties within the city, that is to say, he shall ascertain the existence and character of diseases, especially those deemed epidemic or contagious, and point out any nuisances or other local causes tending to produce, aggravate, or continue such diseases, or otherwise injure the health of the inhabitants, and devise and recommend to the City Council, from time to time, the best means of preventing the spread of such diseases, also the best means of ventilating schools, lodging-houses, and public buildings within the city; and shall perform any other duties of a like nature required of him; and once in every quarter, or oftener if required by the said Council, shall report to such Council on the state of health generally in the city, as indicated by the presence or absence of such diseases, and on the means adopted or in progress, to prevent as far as may be their recurrence.” S.M.H., 24.1.1857, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4; also 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 53).

9. Compulsion was condemned as unnecessary. The City Council, it was predicted complacently, "would take every care to preserve the health of the citizens, particularly by adopting health officers throughout the city." S.M.H., 21.2.1857, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4.


11. See the Legislative Assembly debate in Ibid.


13. The best known of these appointments, that of Dr William Duncan in 1847 as health officer for Liverpool, had been owing not to nation-wide
authority to appoint a health officer was unlike Sydney permissive and not compulsory.14

The local Liverpool statute provided the model for another local British enactment, the 1848 City of London Sewers Act, which similarly permitted the appointment of a health officer. This the City Corporation reluctantly did in 1848, when Dr John Simon was elected to become the fourth and subsequently the most widely known medical officer in Britain. The Public Health Act of the same year gave permission nationally for local authorities to appoint medical officers also, but in the absence of compulsion only a handful of local bodies took advantage of the Act.15

Compulsion was introduced for the first time in Britain only shortly before it was in Sydney, when in 1855 the Metropolis Local Management Act required all local authorities in London to appoint qualified medical officers.16 In the year following passage of Sydney's Corporation Restoration Act the 1858 Local Government Act in Britain again gave a general sanction for the optional appointment of local medical officers, but not until the Public Health Act of 1872 was the appointment of medical officers made compulsory across the country.17 Sydney's 1857 City Corporation Act as it related to the post of CHO was thus in advance of all British legislation outside London.

Following the example of the London City Corporation in 1848, Sydney aldermen held an election among themselves to select the new official, as the result of which Dr Isaac Aaron was appointed CHO. Aaron held the position for just under two years, until mid April 1859.18 He was then

13, cont.

legislation but to that city's own far-sighted local sanitary law of 1846; see B. R. White, A History Of The Corporation Of Liverpool 1835-1914, Liverpool, 1951, esp. pp.30-47.
15. Lambert, Sir John, pp.89, 92-3 99-109. See clause 40 in the Public Health Act, 11 & 12 Vic., c.63; also Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.109. The 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act had granted permissive authority for the appointment of local health officers but had not required that such officers be qualified medical practitioners, specifying only that they be persons "of competent Skill and Experience"; 10 & 11 Vic., c.34 (clause 12).
17. Of the major British provincial cities, Glasgow and Leeds first appointed medical officers in 1863, Manchester in 1868, and Birmingham not until it was made to do so in 1872; Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp.111-4.
18. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.1, no.58 (Aaron to Town Clerk, 11.5.1857); S.M.H., 12.5.1857, 'Municipal Council' p.5. Aaron's resignation from
in his mid fifties, and had previously worked for the local board of health in Birmingham before emigrating in 1838. Since the late 1840s he had worked for the Sydney Dispensary as a visiting surgeon in Bourke and Macquarie Wards, and had in the process become actively interested in the sanitary and social problems of the City and of the City working classes.\textsuperscript{19} Aaron was also a Radical, an active member during the early 1830s of the Council of the Birmingham Political Union. In N.S.W. he had taken a prominent part with the young Henry Parkes in the struggle against the renewal of convictism and in the popular campaign for responsible government during the 1840s and early 1850s. In its obituary to Aaron following the doctor's death in April 1877, the \textit{Herald} remembered him as a bold and energetic speaker, and a man of a high spirit, whose usefulness was to some extent impaired by personal haughtiness and an ill-concealed scorn for many who assumed to be his superiors.\textsuperscript{20}

That temperament, following his appointment as CHO in May 1857, had boded ill for establishing smooth relations between the new official, City aldermen, and other Corporation employees.

Aaron had been offered a Corporation salary of 400 pounds. The health office was thus intended by aldermen to be like its counterpart in the City of London, only a part-time position.\textsuperscript{21} Most medical officers in Britain were throughout the nineteenth century poorly paid and thus forced to depend upon private practice or hospital posts for their livelihoods.\textsuperscript{22}

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\textsuperscript{18} cont.

the City Council is discussed below. For 11 years, until his death in April 1877, he held the post of government medical officer at Darlinghurst Gaol, and he was also from the early 1860s one of the government's district vaccinators in the City; ibid., 14.4.1877, 'The Late Mr. Isaac Aaron' p.4; S.C.C., L.R., 1863, vol.4, no.800 (Graham, 9.9.1863).

\textsuperscript{19} See S.C.C.W.C.N., qu.641, pp.1316-7, qu.647-8, p.1318. Aaron was active both as a speaker and as a writer on sanitary reform, and on two occasions worked as editor of medical journals in Sydney; A.D.B., vol.1, p.1.

\textsuperscript{20} S.M.H., 14.4.1877, 'The Late Mr. Isaac Aaron' p.4.

\textsuperscript{21} See Appendix Six, Table 6.1. Aaron wrote later that "the original vote was passed with the distinct understanding that it was too small to induce any properly-qualified practitioner to abandon his practice"; S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.2, no.3 (Aaron, 28.3.1859). In London a decade earlier Simon had been voted an annual salary of 500 pounds, less than the wage given to the Corporation Macebearer. Simon consequently retained his private practice and continued to work as a surgeon at St. Thomas' Hospital; Lambert, Sir John, pp.109, 117-8.

\textsuperscript{22} Wohl, \textit{The Eternal Slum}, pp.114-5. Duncan in Liverpool was an exception. He had been made a full time medical officer in 1848 with a yearly salary of 750 pounds; Frazer, Duncan, pp.45-7.
In Sydney, Aaron likewise split his time between the duties of CHO, those of a surgeon for the Dispensary, and the requirements of his private practice. The Sydney health office remained indifferently paid and thus only part-time throughout the century, generally avoided by prosperous and well-known sanitary reformers among the medical profession, and tending to attract instead candidates from the more inexperienced or lowest paid rungs of the profession. Aaron and his successors were far from being incompetents, however. The conscientiousness and technical competence of medical officers in Britain was fully echoed by their little-known colleagues in Sydney.

Aaron was replaced as CHO in May 1859 by Dr Henry Graham. The new CHO had studied at London University with Dr Henry Letheby, Simon's successor as medical officer for the London Corporation. Arriving in the Australian colonies in 1835, Graham had served for 18 years as a government surgeon in the military department and in the government's convict establishments in Tasmania and Norfolk Island. He had been in private practice in Sydney for several years when elected CHO, a post which he retained for almost 11 years, until February 1870. Graham had by the mid 1860s abandoned his private practice, and relied entirely upon the wages and fees received as CHO and, like Aaron, as a district surgeon for the Dispensary in working class Phillip and Dension Wards, and as a public vaccinator for the government in the same districts. After his departure from the City Corporation in 1870, Graham sank into obscurity, possibly leaving the colony to return to England.

For the next 18 and a half years, until August 1888, the duties of CHO were carried out with skill and dedication by another little-known doctor, George Frederick Dansey. In his late forties when he accepted the post,

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23. Aaron was reputed to have brought "a considerable sum of money" to the colony but in investing it to have "lost very heavily". The CHO's salary was a welcome addition to his income; S.M.H., 14.4.1877, 'The Late Mr. Isaac Aaron' p.4.
24. S.C.C., P. (2.5.1859), p.120.
26. S.C.C., L.R., 1863, vol.4, no.800 (Graham, 9.9.1863); enclosure by Graham, no.14 (11.1.1864), in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1864, no.3 (13.1.1864). In the mid 1860s Graham set up home along Glenmore Road to the east of the City, between Paddington and Rushcutters Bay. Towards the end of the decade he moved again, to Milson's Point on the north shore of Port Jackson; see the annual volumes of Sands' Sydney Directory.
Dansey had previously worked as a private practitioner in one of the more densely crowded parts of London before deciding to emigrate to N.S.W. in the middle 1860s. Sydney's post office directory first mentioned him in 1867, listing him at an address in Wynyard Square, just west of George Street, where he stayed for the next decade working at his nearby practice in the overcrowded and insanitary working class district of western Sydney, facing Darling Harbour. Dansey worked also as medical officer for the Oddfellows, and like Aaron retained his private practice after being appointed CHO so as to bolster the Corporation income. A committed sanitary reformer, his experiences as a private practitioner in London and Sydney made him especially concerned to improve working class housing conditions. Dansey continued in private practice following his break with the City Council in 1888, and was still listed as an active medical practitioner when, aged 83, he died in late July 1914.

Dansey had been replaced as CHO in 1888 by Dr William Rudolph Clay, a shadowy figure apparently newly arrived in Sydney and living in distant suburban Rockdale. Clay remained in the post for two years, until October 1890, when Dr D. Gwynne Hughes was appointed to the position. Gwynne Hughes was a young man from a "highly respectable" Irish family, who had

28. See the annual volumes of Sands; S. & H. B., 1st R., qu.348, p.351. Dansey is mentioned as the locality doctor in a Sussex Street inquest during 1878: S.M.H., 25.1.1878, 'Suicide In A Common Lodging-House' p.5.
30. See below, Part IV. Dansey was present at the foundation meeting of the Health Society in 1876, and was also a member of the N.S.W. Royal Society. He was not however a member of its inner circle. That was a preserve monopolised by more wealthy and influential men. He never gave an address to the Royal Society, nor was he a committee member of its medical science or its sanitary sections; S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3; Dansey was elected to the Royal Society in 1876; R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.10 (1876), p.263.
31. Dansey moved to Redfern in the early 1880s, and in 1890 moved again, to the pleasant railway suburb of Petersham. Thence he moved in 1898 further out along the railway to prosperous Burwood, settling finally at Drummoyne on one of the western reaches of Port Jackson in 1910; annual Sands' directories. Certified Copy of A Death Registered In New South Wales, 31.7.1914 (photostat in my possession). Dansey's dismissal from the Corporation is discussed below.
32. See below. Clay is listed in Sands as living in Rockdale from 1890 until the early 1900s.
graduated as a physician and surgeon at Edinburgh in 1886. He had left there highly praised by his teacher Henry Littlejohn, who was also Edinburgh's long serving first medical officer of health.33

Altogether, Gwynne Hughes appeared an eminently qualified young man for undertaking the exacting and wideranging requirements of preventive medicine. Sydney's Mayor in 1890, however, was Burdekin, and it was only shortly after Gwynne Hughes' appointment that the outgoing Mayor described the post of CHO as a minor clerical position, responsible only for the periodic collection of information from the Board of Health.34 The salary of 250 Pounds per annum, 100 Pounds less even than that earned by the assistant Inspector of Nuisances, underscored the minimal duties the CHO was expected to perform. Gwynne Hughes remained CHO at the end of the century. Still on 250 Pounds a year in 1899, he was earning only a little more than half of what Aaron had received forty years before when that CHO had first embarked upon the task of establishing what he had intended would be powerful office for the administration of public preventive medicine in Sydney.35

II

Aaron's ambition had not been an isolated one in 1857. Commenting upon Parliament's decision to require the appointment of a CHO, Parkes' Empire newspaper, while expressing surprise at the heat with which Parliament had debated the new Corporation appointment, yet acknowledged that the City's sanitary condition was indeed "frightful", and that something was needed to tackle the problem before epidemic diseases decimated the community. Preventive medicine was needed.36

33. While at Edinburgh he had studied public health under Littlejohn. The new CHO came to the City Council backed by former Mayor, John Harris, and with a reputation for having worked successfully since 1887 as a medical officer at the Sydney Hospital, as a surgeon for the Dispensary, and as a medical consultant for the Oddfellows; see letter of application by Gwynne Hughes, dated 20.10.1890, and the accompanying 14-page printed booklet of testimonials, in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1890, vol.2, no.38 (30.10.1890).
34. The post was an unexacting sideline to a young man establishing himself in private practice, and wishing to make his name better known; see the report of Gwynne Hughes' leaving the Sydney Hospital to enter private practice, in the A.M.C., vol.8 (1888-9), 17,10.1888, p.5.
36. "There must be a purgation and an enforced cleansing and ventilating", said the newspaper; Empire, 16.3.1857, editorial leader p.2. See Appendix Four, Tables 4.1. and 4.3.
Reservations were expressed both in the press and within Parliament concerning the wisdom of entrusting such an undertaking to local government, but doubts were tempered by the fame which had attached to John Simon in Britain following publication of his first two annual reports as medical officer for the City of London. Several days after Aaron's taking up his duties in May 1857, the Herald advised the CHO to be guided in his fight against disease by Simon, whose annual reports have been excellent samples of what such documents ought to be, and the improvements... carried out at his recommendation have shown what scope there is in crowded cities for official interference, and what benefits may result from it.

Commenting upon Aaron's announcement that he might be contacted at the Town Hall for half an hour each morning, the newspaper urged:

We hope that his labours will not be confined to this - that he will not be content with waiting for occupation to come to him, but that he will seek it - that he will commence a vigorous crusade against all unextirpated nuisances.

The Herald's passing unease was without foundation. Within days of his appointment, Aaron was drawing attention to sanitary problems about the City requiring abatement as nuisances potentially dangerous to the public health. His first quarterly report to the City Council, in October 1857, began with the bold explanation that he had decided not to confine himself to the particular subjects laid down in the Corporation Act's clause specifying the CHO's duties. He would write instead "somewhat at large" upon the general subject of City health.

The secret of city health, said Dr Dansey in 1875, was "the old adage 'Prevention is better than Cure'". His object, and that also of his two predecessors, was to make the Corporation health office a scrutinizer of every facet of urban life bearing upon the general health, and so ultimately to achieve a controlled


38. See Lambert, Sir John, esp. pp.143-55, 164-5. Simon's successor, Dr Henry Letheby, was also sufficiently well known in Sydney for his surname to be used in the Herald without any covering explanation. The CHO, the newspaper remarked approvingly, possessed an "ambition to acquire a fame as a local LETHEBY." S.M.H., 25.4.1859, editorial p.4.

39. Ibid., 15.5.1857, editorial p.4.

40. See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.1, no.75 (Aaron, 14.5.1857); ibid., no. 137 (Aaron to Town Clerk, n.d.). Ibid., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857).

environment in which potential sources of ill-health could be isolated and effectively countered.

That goal was based firmly on the example set down by Simon in Britain. In June 1857 Aaron was already requesting the City Council to apply to the London Corporation for information concerning the organisation and management of its health department, and to seek advice also from the General Board of Health to which Simon had moved late in 1855. Graham, complaining that the Corporation Act gave only a "very vague idea" of his intended duties, also turned for guidance to the directives for medical officers issued for the Board of Health by Simon.

Simon contended that for a city health department to be effective in checking the sources of ill-health, it needed to be based upon constant and searching sanitary inspections of the urban landscape. That advice CHOs set about applying as the cornerstone of Corporation sanitary policy in Sydney. City aldermen received a flow of information detailing a massive array of sanitary problems and suggested remedies, together with requests for greater powers for the CHO and the enactment of new sanitary legislation to tighten and extend Corporation controls.

Not only did CHOs believe in the necessity of systematic preventive sanitary regulation, they believed also that in such a system the Corporation health office was pivotal and all-important. The CHO

42. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.1, no.159 (Aaron to Town Clerk, 12.6.1857); 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857). Aaron wrote personally to Simon requesting advice on how best to fulfil his responsibilities and received "a most courteous reply" with copies of publications by the General Board of Health; ibid., 1858, vol.3, no.464 (Aaron, 9.6.1858).
43. Enclosure by Graham, no.14 (11.1.1864) in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1864, no.3 (13.1.1864); S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 31.5.1865); 1866, vol.6, no.1123 (Graham, 12.12.1866). Simon had participated in drafting the Board's 1851 guidelines on the duties of medical officers, and in 1855 as a member of the Board he issued a further minute concerning these responsibilities; Lambert, Sir John, pp.178-9, 244-5.
44. Ibid., p.152; see Graham's explanation of his methods in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1864, no.3 (13.1.1864). See also Chapter Nine. The blueprint adopted in guiding these sanitary observations was Simon's second annual report to the London City Corporation. From Aaron's second quarterly report in March 1858 onwards, CHOs followed Simon's method of recording and then evaluating the latest mortality returns, using these during their City tours to help isolate the specific sources of community ill-health; see Lambert, Sir John, pp.164-6.
45. It was a belief supported by the recommendations of the Board of Health in London; see the enclosure by Graham, no. 14 (11.1.1864) in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1864, no.3 (13.1.1864). See Dansey's comments on needed reforms in the administration of building laws, in S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877).
however was a newcomer to a local government bureaucracy that had been evolving since the incorporation of Sydney in 1842. That apparatus had still been in its infancy when Aaron was appointed in 1857, but already a clear departmentalisation of effort was becoming evident. Public health insofar as that involved the supervision of water closets, and the construction and repair of sewers and water mains, street and house drains, already lay largely within the provinces of the nascent departments of the City Surveyor and the City Engineer. Both officials were higher in seniority than was Aaron.46

More strictly understood, the City Corporation's health 'department' was in 1857 a small and marginal one, about which aldermen themselves knew little. An Inspector of Water Closets furnished a twice-yearly return of the amount of nightsoil removed from the City and also undertook the uncertain duties of assistant to the Inspector of Nuisances.47 It was this latter official who was responsible for the routine policing of general sanitary regulations in the City.48 The office was not, like the CHO, a compulsory one under the 1857 Corporation Restoration Act, nor would it be made compulsory until the Nuisances Prevention Act in 1875.49 Ever since the incorporation of Sydney however, the duty placed upon the City Council to suppress health "nuisances" had in effect required the appointment of some such officer.50

In Sydney as in British cities the Inspector of Nuisances was, in contrast to the post of CHO, a layman's position.51 At 200 pounds a year in 1857, the Inspector of Nuisances in terms of salary as well as regards formal qualifications was regarded by the CHO as a subordinate officer. The intended relationship and division of responsibilities between the two

46. See Appendix Six, Table 6.1.
47. Enclosure by Inspector William Thompson (13.5.1857) in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1857, no.6 (1.6.1857).
48. A separate position of Inspector of Nuisances had been created by the City Council only in 1857, when it split the existing post of Inspector of Hackney Carriages and of Nuisances in two; S.C.C., F.C.R., 1857, no.6 (1.6.1857).
49. See Nuisances Prevention Act, 39 Vic., no.14 (clauses 5-8); also Sydney Corporation Act of 1879, 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 51).
50. The Sewerage Act of 1850, 14 Vic., no.33 (clause 21); the Sewerage Act of 1853, 17 Vic., no.34 (clause 22); and the City Commissioners' Powers Extension Act of 1855, 19 Vic., no.23 (clauses 6-7) all mention powers requiring an "Inspector of Nuisances" or like official to implement.
51. Even after the Inspector's appointment being made compulsory in 1875 no professional qualifications were required of him; 39 Vic., no.14 (clause 4); see Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.111-2.
officials was nowhere formally specified, but Aaron's interpretation was seemingly acquiesced in by Richard Stubbs, who until the post's reorganisation in 1857 had acted as Inspector of Hackney Carriages and of Nuisances. The new full-time inspector, a Mr Drake, was likewise prepared to surrender some of the office's previous independence of action to the CHO, writing reports to Aaron drawing attention to health nuisances he had uncovered.

It was an arrangement Aaron hoped to regularise. He and Graham both submitted to City aldermen proposals, copied from Britain, for clarifying the responsibilities of the Inspector of Nuisances and formalising his position as an assistant to the CHO. Dansey spoke airily in 1869 of the Corporation's "Health Office Department", and in 1871 suggested that every suburban municipality should appoint a Health Officer with an active and intelligent Inspector of Nuisances to act under his directions.

Proposals for the systematisation of Corporation sanitary effort under the directions of the CHO, and for expanding the Corporation's public health responsibilities, all depended for their realisation, however, upon aldermen expanding the post from its part-time role. As Aaron emphasised in March 1859, "the entire time of the Officer of Health will have to be given to his official duties, and a corresponding Salary consequently required to be voted."
Only weeks later, in mid April, Aaron angrily resigned as CHO, charging aldermen with "extraordinary proceedings" against him. Almost 11 years later, in February 1870, Graham was suspended and subsequently forced to resign. In August 1888 Dansey's appointment too ended abruptly when he was dismissed by the Mayor, who labelled the post of CHO "a sinecure". The three men were defeated in part by the antagonism aroused among other Corporation officials by what struck the latter as the imperious meddling by CHOs with responsibilities belonging to others. It was with the Inspector of Nuisances and his assistant, made resentful by their treatment as subordinates, that such strains were most developed. Notwithstanding the apparent expressions of willingness by Stubbs and Drake to support the CHO, the underlying tensions in relations between the two posts were acknowledged by Graham after Drake's death in 1862, when he suggested the merging of the two posts as a means of preventing the "clashing of opinions."

It was not the inspector however, but City aldermen who forced the departure of Aaron, Graham, and Dansey. The three officials fell foul of the same scepticism towards medical science by the economy-minded men controlling the purse strings of local government, and the same aldermanic resentment at outspoken reflections upon municipal achievement and sincerity of purpose that strained relations between medical officers and their local council employers in Britain.

57. cont.
59. See S.C.C., L.R., 1861, vol.1, no.25 (Graham, 9.1.1861, and undated memorandum by City Engineer); 1861, vol.6, no.1007 (Graham, 25.10.1861, and undated memorandum by City Surveyor).
60. Just as the existing staff of inspectors in the London City Corporation had been reluctant to surrender their independence of action to Simon in the late 1840s, so in Sydney did the inspectors resist the CHO's claims to seniority over them; see Lambert, Sir John, pp.118-9.
61. S.C.C., L.R., 1862, vol.2, no.266 (Graham, 27.3.1862). Later in the same year Graham angrily complained that the Inspector of Water Closets had neglected a task given him by the CHO, and had been "rather curt" when asked to explain his inaction. And as Graham added resentfully, "I am sorry to say this is not the first time he has set my authority at defiance." Ibid., 1862, vol.6, no.1090 (Graham to Town Clerk, 3.12.1862).
The outspokenness of CHO's in discussing sanitary conditions in the City was an embarrassment to aldermen. Aaron had set the tone in his first quarterly report to the City Council in September 1857. Sydney was one vast sanitary nightmare, he said. The City was still virtually without underground sewerage. Vacant allotments were piled with filth and rubbish, the air fouled with smoke from factory steam engines and the stench of slaughterhouses, soap and candle works, and other noxious trades. Cesspools stank and overflowed into yards and lanes. Aaron labelled Sydney "the City of Cesspools". Decades of sanitary neglect had produced slums that he claimed would have disgraced cities in the Old World. A decade later Graham was still complaining how "Our sanitary improvements in the city do not, I am sorry to say, progress in proportion to the wants of an increasing population, and I fear we are little prepared to resist the force of epidemic diseases". Responsibility for remedying the situation, he made plain, lay with the City Council.

CHO's hinted broadly that aldermen used the deficiencies and omissions in existing sanitary laws as an excuse for evading irksome public health responsibilities even when sufficient powers were available to them. Soon after his resignation, Aaron explained to Henry Parkes' 1859 parliamentary Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis how the power possessed by the Municipal Council, of enforcing efficient sanitary regulations, is very deficient; but I am bound to say also, that even in matters over which it has ample control, I found great disinclination to act.

Dansey said bluntly that the price of local government "procrastination" and "neglect of proper sanitary measures" would be the city's decimation by epidemic disease.

Aaron had been a principal witness before a Legislative Council select

64. Ibid., 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (Graham, 9.12.1867). Ibid., 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (Graham, 9.12.1869); see also 1869, vol.4, no.754 (Dansey, 9.6.1869).
66. Ibid., 1879, vol.2, no.248 (Dansey, 9.3.1879); 1883, vol.5, no.1471 (Dansey, 31.8.1883). See also Dansey's criticism of the absence of by-laws, "without [which]... the health department can not be properly carried out"; ibid., 1880, vol.2, no.417 (Dansey, 9.3.1880).
committee chaired by Robert Lowe, which in 1849, only some two years after the appointment of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers in London, had sweepingly condemned the old Sydney City Corporation and called for its replacement by appointed commissioners. In later years, neither Graham nor Dansey concealed their hope to see local government public health administration reorganised under the direction of experts.

Many aldermen responded resentfully to the CHO's outspoken criticisms and brash calls for sweeping sanitary reforms. The City Council, copying from the London Corporation, had themselves printed Aaron's first quarterly report in 1857 with its trenchant observations upon City sanitation, but Aaron later complained that the practice was not repeated. It was subsequently periodically alleged that aldermen begrudged even allowing the press to report the CHO's comments. The Herald remarked in 1859 how

We have occasionally heard complaints that the quarterly sanitary reports are not published with the promptitude that is desirable, and a suspicion has from that cause been engendered that the Corporation was rather desirous to burke them.

Aldermen were said by the Evening News in 1875 to have resolved to subject Dansey's reports to "revision and correction" before making them public because, the paper sneeringly continued,

It is abominable, they say, that an officer of the Council should be allowed to abuse the condition of the city for the proper State of which the Council are responsible, or in other words of course, to make such unpleasant disclosures.

Dansey's reports were not in fact to be "doctored" as the Evening News feared, although pressures did exist within the City Council to silence the

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67. Report from the Select Committee on the City Corporation, pp.73-6; qu.90, p.138.
68. Dansey urged in 1877 and again in 1883 that "All the Municipalities should be placed under local boards of health responsible to the Central Health Board"; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877); 1883, vol.3, 1883, vol.3, no.703 (Dansey, 5.1883). See also Graham's call for the unification of municipal effort under a General Board of Health, in ibid., 1866, vol.3, no.489 (Graham, 9.6.1866).
69. Memorandum at the end of the CHO's report ordering that it be printed; ibid., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857). See Aaron's complaint in the S.C.C.W.C.M., Appendix, p.1322. CHO's reports were made available for publication by the daily newspapers, but not until the commencement in 1888 of printed annual volumes of City Council proceedings would aldermen themselves order the regular publication of these reports.
70. S.M.H., 9.3.1859, editorial p.4.
71. Were the City Council's proposal proceeded with, announced the newspaper, Dansey's reports would be replaced by "an official half-truth, which is really the plain English for a Health-officer's report 'doctored' by Aldermen." E.N., 12.3.1875, 'Town Talk' p.2.
Corporation official. CHOs in the course of their duties came into frequent and angry conflict with landlords, whose interests were strongly represented on the City Council, because of the property qualifications of the local government franchise. Antagonisms were aired openly during the City elections late in 1883 when Alderman Robert Guy, who had previously been fined for a breach of sanitary laws, attacked the "hardships which existed under their bylaws", and pledged "to have them removed".

Guy's campaign promise was criticised by the Herald, which asserted that aldermen had "other and more urgent duties than that of restricting the action of sanitary officers". The newspaper had had occasion before to criticise the City Council for interfering with Corporation officials, when some 14 years previously Dansey had run foul of aldermen by his efforts to better regulate the sale of meat. While acting as temporary CHO in 1869 during Graham's absence on leave, Dansey wrote angrily reporting how with the Inspector of Nuisances he had recently summoned a butcher at the Police Court for filthy premises, only to have City aldermen Oatley and Butler appear as witnesses for the defence and allege that the Corporation officials were telling "untruths". Dansey asked witheringly of City aldermen, "I should feel obliged for my future guidance if you would inform me what are the Duties of the Health officer of this City as the proceedings [at the Police Court] of last Friday prove I am useless".

72. Aaron "had rendered himself very obnoxious to many wealthy and influential men by his honest straightforward reports", said Alderman Smithers; S.M.H., 8.3.1859, 'Municipal Council' p.5. See Aaron's own comment, quoted below, p.104.

73. One block of insanitary tenement buildings condemned as a health nuisance by Aaron was owned by a former member of the City Council, Thomas Cowlishaw; S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.2, no.291 (Aaron, 18.3.1859). When Graham in 1861 foreshadowed the prosecution of a mill proprietor in Sussex Street for failing to abate a nuisance, he came under pressure from one alderman and subsequently abandoned the intended prosecution; ibid., 1861, vol.1, no.48 (Graham, 14.1.1861); ibid., no.153 (Graham, 7.2.1861).

74. S.M.H., 28.11.1883, 'Municipal Elections' p.10.

75. Ibid., 1.12.1883, editorial p.13.

76. S.C.C., L.R., 1869, vol.2, no.362 (Dansey, 22.3.1869). The CHO's comment was "fairly enough" put, said the Herald, indignant at such aldermanic obstruction when smallpox was threatening to spread from nearby Melbourne; S.M.H., 29.3.1869, editorial p.4. The incident was noted with equal concern in the Legislative Council; see the President's comments during discussion of the Smallpox Prevention Bill, in ibid., 'New South Wales Parliament' p.2.
Alderman Butler voiced "contempt" for Dansey's conduct and Oatley asserted "that the citizens are frequently oppressed by the officers of health, and that Mr. DANSEY stepped out of his way to comment upon evidence given by an alderman". The Herald returned cuttingly that it was not the CHO's function to pander to aldermen "who may patronise stinks". By performing his public duties regardless of special pressure Dansey would earn "the good opinion of all whose good opinion is worth anything", said the Herald in conclusion.77

Notwithstanding the newspaper's suggestion that Dansey might find it difficult to reconcile the citizens' public health requirements with the interests of City alderman,78 vested interests among aldermen were probably a relatively minor influence straining relations between the City Council and CHOs. To the extent that aldermen agreed with Dansey's 1869 assessment of his post as "useless", their opinion would have been motivated rather by simple scepticism for scientific opinions and solutions.

The Evening News in 1875 lampooned the "practical men" of the City Council for allegedly having little faith in science when reading Dansey's reports of the dangers to health caused by invisible gases.79 Dansey had warned City aldermen in 1874 of the ill-health resulting from the contamination of household water by the defective connection of many closets to the City water mains. Investigating the matter during the following year, the Sewage and Health Board quickly discovered that of the 5,400 closets then supplied with water, all but 700 were directly connected with the mains.80 Even so, Alderman Michael Chapman, a man sincerely interested in resolving the problems of urban ill-health, declared that he had not been aware of the situation, and when told that the information came from the City Corporation's own officers replied "I think they must

77. Ibid., 29.3.1869, editorial p.4.
79. E.N., 17.3.1875, editorial p.2. The effectiveness of the post of medical officer in Leeds was undermined by local government contempt for scientific opinion; Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp.231-5.
must be mistaken”. Asked if he doubted the judgement of “the engineers and men of science”, Chapman answered “I believe they do not know so much about these matters as a practical man. I believe a plumber is a better judge than an engineer in reference to matters of this sort”. The Mayor of Sydney, Benjamin Palmer, who was also questioned on the matter, replied shortly, “I believe it is all imagination”.81

Scepticism concerning experts and medical science did not mean that relations between the City Council and CHOs were characterised by unvariegated mistrust or hostility.82 When in late 1868 Graham requested nine months’ sick leave, the City Council instead granted him 12 months on full pay, subject only to his providing a satisfactory locum. Dansey, who was appointed acting CHO during that period, was upon Graham’s return given a vote of thanks and a gratuity by City aldermen. During the 1880s Dansey worked in close association with a succession of mayors and other Corporation officials, making inspection tours with them to condemn insanitary dwellings as “unfit for human habitation” under the authority of the City’s revised building Act of 1879.83

It was however a far cry between forging harmonious relations with individual aldermen and winning the acquiescence of the whole City Council in accepting the greatly increased responsibilities and costs involved in the Corporation’s administration of a comprehensive system of preventive medicine such as CHOs lobbied for. In 1890 Alderman John Harris recommended that the City be divided into four districts with a medical officer for each, and that a Health Board composed of aldermen from each ward be appointed to unify sanitary effort. Harris’ idea was rebuffed, however.84 A recommendation from Aaron in 1857 that a permanent Sanitary Committee of aldermen be established to systematise Corporation public

81. Ibid., qu.534-5, 542-4, p.357. Ibid., qu.664, p.362. See former alderman John Macintosh’s comment of doctors that “as a rule they are men who ride hobbies to death, and it is seldom that they are practical men.” N.S.W. P.D., vol.17 (1885), p.498.
82. Chapman and Palmer, for example, were both fair-minded men, and following their collaboration with Dansey as members of the S. & H.B. during the Board’s survey of working class housing, they declared their respect and support for the CHO; see below, p.110. See also Part III.
health effort had also been rejected. Aaron's and Graham's suggested remodelling of the health department also failed to elicit a response from aldermen.

Financial considerations undoubtedly greatly influenced the unhelpful attitude adopted by City aldermen towards the health office. In 1875 the Evening News had complained that as a consequence of Corporation finances, sanitary precautions in the City were miserably inadequate and the CHO had no staff of his own to assist him. The continual need for cost-paring combined with the resentment and scepticism of many aldermen towards the CHO to thwart the efforts by Aaron, Graham, and Dansey to develop the health office as a powerful full-time post supervising the wideranging sanitary regulation of the City.

III

On 25 February 1859 the City Council's finance committee presented a report on proposed salaries for Corporation officials, recommending as useful economies the abolition of the post of assistant Inspector of Nuisances and reductions in wages for several officials, among them the CHO. Recommending the cutting of Aaron's salary from 400 to 100 pounds, the committee in explanation for so large a proposed reduction argued that legislative deficiencies had undermined the full potential that had been anticipated of the health office. That argument was repeated when the finance committee report was considered by the City Council on 7 March. Other aldermen demurred. Those duties that Aaron was able to perform, said Alderman Williams, the CHO did well. To reduce Aaron's salary would, under the circumstances, "be dishonourable in the extreme". Scepticism at the

85. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.2A, no.426 (Aaron, 9, 1857). Aaron's suggestion was proposed to the City Council by Alderman Smithers, but as he later complained the idea "was scouted" by his colleagues; S.M.H., 12,4,1859, "Municipal Council" p.4.
86. See the memorandum, "Nothing Moved", by the Improvement Committee in S.C.C., L.R., 1860, vol.4, no.775 (Graham, 21,11,1860); see the similar memorandum in 1862, vol.2, no.266 (Graham, 27,3,1862).
87. E.N., 20,1.1875, editorial p.2. It was reported from London during the debate on working class housing begun by the Reverend Mr Mearn's 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London in 1883 that local government sanitary staffs in the metropolis were likewise pitifully small; S.M.H., 26,12,1883, "Outcast London." - Where To Begin" p.6 (from Pall Mall Gazette); ibid., 24,6,1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9. See Smith, The People's Health, p.200.
usefulness of a health officer, and resentment at his outspokenness, nonetheless carried the day. Alderman Northwood declared aggressively that the CHO was not "one pennyworth of good to the Corporation", doing nothing "save to find fault with it". As one placed in charge of the citizens' money, said Northwood, he felt it his duty to vote for the reduction to 100 pounds. So too did other aldermen, by a majority of eight votes to four. 89

Apprehension expressed within the City Council at possible public criticism of the decision was quickly borne out when the Herald in a scathing editorial attacked the Town Hall for indifference to sanitary reform, and hinted that Aaron had been penalised because his sanitary investigations were proving an embarrassment to "those whose indolence or cupidty he exposed". If aldermen had been genuinely anxious to improve the City's sanitary condition, reasoned the Herald, instead of reducing the CHO's salary because of the post's shortcomings "they would have striven earnestly to obtain from the Legislature the necessary power". 90

The same point was made by Aaron himself. There was, he announced, "an utter want of congruity between the reasons given and the decision professedly based upon them". Even without this reduction in salary, said Aaron, the part-time arrangement of the CHO's duties was proving unsatisfactory:

My practice has, actually, fallen off and will, doubtless, continue to do so more and more, the more I am brought into collision with the owners of properties which, in the faithful discharge of my official duty, I am compelled to report upon; this, together with an idea that my time is so much occupied with my public duties that I cannot attend satisfactorily to private arrangements, places me in a worse position than when I took the appointment. 91

The CHO's letter was read to the City Council on 28 March, and a fortnight later Alderman Roberts moved that Aaron's salary be restored to 400 pounds. To reduce Aaron's salary so drastically meant "virtually dismissing that officer from the corporation", said Roberts. By slashing the salary of so conscientious an official, he argued, "they were incurring

90. Ibid., 9.3.1859, editorial p.4. See also the hints that vested interests were responsible for Aaron's salary reduction in ibid., 25.4.1859, editorial p.4.
91. S.C.C., L.R. 1859, vol.2, no.327 (Aaron, 28.3.1859). See ibid., no.258 (Aaron to Town Clerk, 11.3.1859); also S.C.C., P. (14.3.1859), p.74.
the odium of the citizens", and he warned that rejection of his motion "would reflect discredit, if not disgrace upon the Corporation".92

Other aldermen reacted angrily to those words. Although the appointment of a health officer "had been forced on them by the legislature", declared one alderman, the matter of salary had been left to the City Council to determine and thus they had "a perfect right" to reduce that wage if they thought proper. A compromise proposal that the salary be amended to 250 pounds a year was accepted by Roberts and the matter was put to a vote, the CHO's defenders losing by five votes to nine.93

In a letter to the Mayor several days later, Aaron angrily labelled the City Council's "extraordinary proceedings" against him as a slur upon his self-respect and upon the medical profession, and resigned without notice. "There was a wish to get rid of him", commented the Herald, "and himself and his office were purposely disparaged, that he might feel the retention of his post incompatible with the customary notions of personal dignity".

The newspaper was forthright in its assessment of City Council motivations:

Without saying as much in direct words, a majority of the aldermen have intimated with sufficient plainness that it is a great nuisance to them to be bothered perpetually about sanitary matters; if they were free to do it, they would abolish the post of Health Officer altogether. But as they cannot do that, it only remains to make its functions as merely nominal as possible. There is a hundred a year, therefore, going a begging for anybody that will accept it. He will not be required to ferret out nuisances, because, to do that is virtually a reflection on those who have the management of the city, and nothing is more deprecated than an officer addicted to 'finding fault.'94

The manner of Aaron's resignation in great measure destroyed the credibility of the City Corporation's sanitary administration. The health office, it seemed, was firmly under the thumb of the special interests represented on the City Council. Commenting upon the reduction in salary approved by City aldermen, the Attorney General Edward Wise told Parkes' select committee in December 1859 that the CHO should be made a government appointee. There, Wise predicted, the official "would be less fettered by

personal influences". Committee members agreed, and in its report to Parliament Parkes wrote recommending the appointment of

a Government Health Officer..., with duties assimilated to those of the Board of Public Health in London. The office should be independent of municipal authority, and one of sufficient importance to secure the exclusive services of a gentleman of good professional standing, and of certified knowledge of the sanitary government of towns.

The committee's comment was significant in three ways. Parkes and his colleagues doubted the usefulness of any sanitary official paid by the City Council. Secondly, with their stress upon securing the "exclusive services" of any government medical officer, they echoed a more general scepticism at the effectiveness of a health officer working on only a part-time wage. Thirdly and most importantly, Parkes' emphasis upon appointing medical officers "of good professional standing" underscored the diminished reputation for professional competency remaining with the post of CHO following the salary reduction of 1859.

Noting that advertisements had appeared inviting applications for the vacant Corporation post, the Herald commented

Whether there will be many aspirants to the honour we cannot guess. It is true [t]he emolument is not very tempting to a medical man of any ability, and in the enjoyment of any practice. But then the duties will be correspondingly light. The advertisement does not say that that official will give most satisfaction who succeeds most in making the office a sinecure, but that is sufficiently understood from the reports that have appeared of the municipal debates.

95. Wise had previously collaborated with Aaron to draft a Common Lodging House Bill for the City; See Chapter Ten. S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.1460, p.1375.
96. Ibid., p.1274.
97. To be effective, said the sanitary reformer Dr Alfred Roberts, the CHO needed to be sufficiently well-paid to be able to devote his whole time to the wide-ranging problems of health regulation. Roberts suggested 1,000 pounds p.a. Such a gentleman, he said deprecatingly, could not be expected to accept the City Corporation's proffered salary and so "become a mere inspector of nuisances." Ibid., qu.2139-42, pp.1411-2; also Wise, qu.1436-7, p.1373; qu.1460, p.1375.
98. S.M.H., 25.4.1859, editorial p.4.
Notwithstanding the Herald's scornful words eight candidates applied to the City Council for appointment as CHO, and at a ballot held on 2 May 1859 aldermen elected Dr Henry Graham. Aaron's replacement was however relatively new to Sydney and thus shared little of his predecessor's long experience in the sanitary condition of the City. None of Graham's fellow candidates were men at all well-known to the public as successful physicians and surgeons, or as leading sanitary reformers.99

It was natural for well-paid doctors to scorn the Corporation health office, for at 100 pounds in 1859 Graham's salary was now far less than the 250 pounds per annum earned by the medically unqualified Inspector of Nuisances. The inspector was of course a full-time Corporation employee, whereas Graham was entitled to work also as a private doctor. The post of CHO also carried with it several extra-Corporation sources of income.100 Graham nonetheless frequently requested salary increases when the City Council was considering wage rates for the new year. Salaried government surgeons were in a much better position than he was, complained Graham, having far less to do and yet receiving double the pay.101

At the start of February 1870 however, the Inspector of Nuisances Richard Seymour alleged that Graham himself was doing little in the way of work. Mayor Walter Renny ordered Graham's immediate suspension from duty. To the City Council on 7 February Renny reported that he had suspended Graham "for misconduct and neglect of duty" and had temporarily appointed Dansey in his place until aldermen resolved the matter finally.102 After a decade, the tensions building up between the CHO and Inspector of

99. S.C.C., P. (2.5.1859), p.120. See the list of applicants for the post in S.M.H., 3.5.1859, 'Municipal Council' p.5.
100. See Appendix Six, Table 6.1. Negotiating for the services of a locum while he went overseas in 1869, Graham calculated that he received a yearly average of 73 pounds in cemetery fees, and that the fees made as a government vaccinator, although uncertain, could be made worth at least another 100 pounds annually; enclosure by Graham to Finance Committee, no.1266 (21.12.1868), in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1869, no.4 (7.1.1869). The former fees continued to be collected until the closure of the Devonshire Street Cemetery at the start of 1888; letter by Dansey in D.T., 17.8.1888, 'Dr. Dansey And The City Council' p.3.
Nuisances had come to a head.

Graham reacted indignantly to his suspension. Uncompromisingly reiterating his long-held opinion of the Inspector of Nuisances, Graham maintained "The only testimony brought against me, was, that of a subordinate officer of my Department, unsubstantiated, and can therefore hardly be considered condemnatory to an Officer of the Corporation of 12 years service".103

The Inspector of Nuisances, alleged Graham, was "no competent judge of the professional duties of the Health Officer".104 Aldermen disagreed. Graham had been no less outspoken in describing City sanitation than Aaron.105 He was an outsider, a man with degrees, whose appointment was forced on them by Parliament. The office of Inspector of Nuisances seemed a much more practical and satisfactory post, and Seymour himself had been known to some aldermen since his childhood.106

City aldermen upheld Renny's action in suspending Graham and gave the CHO seven days in which to resign. Graham flew into a rage at this seeming injustice, and as Renny explained at a City Council meeting on 14 Februrary, the CHO twice visited the Town Hall, and, by his violent and abusive manner towards myself and several of the officers of the Council, has been the cause of considerable annoyance, and has created very unseemly disturbances at the Town Hall.107

Graham, repentant, wrote to the Mayor apologising for his "intemperate language" but on 22 February, sensing that aldermen were now resolved to be rid of him, he reluctantly tendered his resignation. Dansey was confirmed as CHO by aldermen on 28 February 1870.108

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103. First and second enclosures (Graham, 4.2.1870; and 7.2.1870, no.120) in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1870, no.14 (received 28.2.1870). Ibid., fourth enclosure (Graham, no.169, 16.2.1870).
104. Ibid.
105. He had been particularly bluntly spoken upon his recent return from Britain, scathingly contrasting the "most stringent" sanitary laws in London with those in Sydney. In London, too, he added daringly, sanitary laws existed not only on paper but were strictly enforced as well; S.C.C., L.R., 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (Graham, 9.12.1869).
106. See E.N., 27.2.1883, 'Banquet To Mr. R. Seymour' p.3.
Graham's departure from the City Corporation was fully reported by the daily newspapers as part of their regular coverage of City Council proceedings, but without any accompanying comment whatsoever. The CHO had become a remote and seemingly unimportant figure. He was no longer newsworthy. Aldermen did not however use the opportunity of Graham's forced resignation to further limit the CHO's effectiveness. From their perspective and indeed from Seymour's, Graham's conduct had probably genuinely seemed deserving of censure. City aldermen appointed Dansey fully knowing that the new official would not take kindly to interference with his policing of sanitary laws in the City. Neither was Dansey appointed on a reduced salary. On the contrary, the CHO's salary was slowly increased until by 1879, twenty years after the reduction made to Aaron's wage, the salary was restored to 400 pounds per annum. In 1885 that sum was again raised, to 450 pounds.

Dansey lobbied with a vigour equal to his predecessors' for more effective and wide-ranging Corporation sanitary laws, and notwithstanding the manner of Graham's removal from office made it plain that the Inspector of Nuisances was properly a subordinate officer to himself. The two officers in fact worked together closely and with seeming amiability. Certainly, in terms of salary and staff Seymour had little to complain of. When Dansey was granted the 400 pounds in 1879 Seymour was given 500 pounds. By 1886 Seymour's yearly wage had risen to 700 pounds. Moreover, while the CHO still had no staff of his own Seymour had since the early 1880s been given a second assistant Inspector of Nuisances in addition to the large casual staff of scavengers and labourers under his direction. Referring to the CHO's low standing in the Corporation hierarchy, one letter writer contended that in order for the office to be filled by "a man of special knowledge and training", the post needed to be made more independent of the City Council. Otherwise, he predicted, "this appointment will continue the farce it is now evidently intended to

109. See the 'Municipal Council' reports in the Empire, 8.2.1870, p.3; 15.2.1870, p.2; 1.3.1870, p.3; and the 'Sydney Municipal Council' column in the S.M.H., 8.2.1870, p.2; 15.2.1870, p.3; 1.3.1870, p.2.

110. See the discussion of Dansey's 1869 dispute with aldermen Oatley and Butler, on pp.100-101. See Appendix Six, Table 6.1.

111. See Dansey's comments on the status of the post of Inspector of Nuisances on p.96. See Appendix Six, Table 6.1. Salaries for 1886 are recorded in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1886, vol.1, no.6 (21.1.1886).

112. See the salary list for 1881, in ibid., 1881, vol.1, no.294 (17.3.1881).
be."

The underlying lack of aldermanic enthusiasm for the post of CHO and scepticism concerning its value culminated in August 1888, when Mayor John Harris abruptly gave Dansey notice to quit. A shocked Dansey told an inquiring newspaperman "that the notice of dismissal came upon him like a thunderbolt." Never, in eighteen and a half years' service, said Dansey, had a complaint been made against him. The City Council was in the midst of an economy drive. The CHO's sudden dismissal, along with one of Seymour's assistants and two other long-serving officials, was calculated by the Mayor to mean a yearly saving of well over 1,000 pounds. A new CHO would be appointed at the reduced salary of 300 pounds a year. City aldermen generally backed Harris' actions, and after a long debate marked by general agreement that retrenchments were necessary in view of Corporation finances, Dansey's dismissal was confirmed.

The Mayor had opened proceedings by complaining to aldermen of Dansey's inactivity in preparing charts showing the distribution of mortality across the City:

I have not yet received these nor explanation why my instruction has been ignored; moreover I cannot learn - although I have repeatedly inquired of the Town Clerk - what duties are discharged by the Officer. it [sic] seems to me the office as the duties are at present regarded is a sinecure and that a change is absolutely necessary.

The previous Mayor, Alderman Riley, explained that by the Corporation Act they were compelled to have a CHO, "although for one he never could understand what his duties were." The City Council should seek to "get the best man they could at the lowest possible remuneration", said Riley, and he therefore suggested that Dansey be reoffered his post on a reduced

116. Ibid; also ibid., 6.8.1888, 'News Of The Day' p.7; D.T., 18.8.1888, editorial p.4. Early in the new year the salaries of most Corporation officials had been slashed, the City Surveyor's by £300 to £500, and those of the Town Clerk and City Engineer from £800 to £600. Seymour's salary was cut by £100 to £600. Dansey was one of the very few whose income was not then also reduced; S.C.C., F.C.R., 1888, vol.1, no.5 (12.1.1888).
118. D.T., 15.8.1888, 'General News' p.4; see the speeches by Playfair and Withers in ibid., 'City Council' p.3. S.C.C., L.S., 1888-9, no.496 (Town Clerk to Dansey, 15.8.1888).
salary. Riley's personal sympathy for Dansey was echoed by Benjamin Palmer, who as Mayor in 1875 and 1876 had worked closely with the CHO during the Sewage and Health Board's inquiry into working class overcrowding. 119 As an amendment, Palmer moved that Dansey's case be referred to the finance committee for reconsideration. Ex-mayors Hardie, Playfair, and Riley, all of whom had worked together with Dansey in inspecting the City for buildings "unfit for human habitation", all supported Palmer's proposal. Theirs however was an isolated position, and the motion was lost by five votes to eleven.120

Mayor Harris notified the City Council midway through September of Dr Clay's temporary appointment from among five applicants as CHO, on the much reduced salary of 250 pounds per annum.121 When however in mid October confirmation of Clay's appointment was proposed Michael Chapman, another supporter of Dansey, moved instead that the post be advertised and a ballot held. Chapman's amendment was accepted without division. The election was held on 1 November 1888, a large total of 16 candidates having applied for the post.122 Clay and Dansey were both candidates. Also, for the first time since Aaron's appointment as CHO, a man with some public standing was among the applicants for the office. Dr W. H. Goode, as an active member of the N.S.W. Royal Society's sanitary section, was associated with the intellectual elite of the Sydney medical profession.123 The election ran to three ballots. Goode was eliminated in the first, and the second left only Clay and Dansey in the running. By the final ballot Clay received 11 votes to Dansey's eight, and was then formally declared elected.124

Clay's salary was continued at the reduced level of 250 pounds a year,

119. See Riley's comments in the D.T., 15.8.1888, 'City Council' p.3. Announcing his opposition to Dansey's dismissal, Palmer defended the CHO as a man "he had known for the past 20 years, and against whom he had never heard a complaint." Ibid.
123. And unlike Dansey he was a participant with them, having in 1887 served as a committeeman upon the Society's sanitary section; R.S.N.S.W., J. & P., vol.21 (1887), p.47; Goode was also elected to the committee of the medical section in 1889; ibid., vol.23 (1889), p.521.
75 pounds less than that received by Seymour's remaining assistant Inspector of Nuisances. The CHO was still receiving the same income at the end of the century. In Britain by that time, most medical officers were earning between 300 and 600 pounds annually. The time when Sydney, by Parliament's decision to require the appointment of a health officer for the City, had been near the forefront of experiments in city preventive medicine by then seemed far distant.

The failure of Goode's candidacy for the health office probably reconfirmed the belief by those well-known in the medical profession for their interest in sanitary reform that the Corporation post had indeed long since become a farce. None of these men, certainly, were among the 17 candidates applying for the post of CHO following Clay's own resignation in 1890. Their negative opinion was widely shared. Reporting Clay's resignation, the Echo pointed to the post's low salary as the cause and asserted that "for such an amount no competent man could be found to do all the work required." The Herald had drawn the same pessimistic conclusion from the reduction of the CHO's salary following Dansey's dismissal in 1888.

The newspaper had then glibly repeated Harris' allegation of the CHO's neglect of duty. The testimony to the contrary afforded by the mass of sanitary reports Dansey had laboured to produce over the years, the bulk of them actually printed in that same newspaper, was overlooked or discounted. It was not however upon the CHO but upon his employers that the Herald's criticisms centred. Statements made by Harris and Riley that they had never known what the CHO was expected to do were quite "extraordinary", snorted the Herald. One certain fact to have emerged from Dansey's dismissal, said the newspaper, was the incapacity of the City Council's handling of public health regulation. It was "discreditable and

125. Appendix Six, Table 6.1. Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.114. Simon's old post in the City of London was then paying 1,500 pounds; ibid.
126. D.T., 10.10.1890, 'City Council' p.3; 1.11.1890, 'City Council' p.10.
127. Echo, 10.10.1890, 'The City Health Officer' p.4. S.M.H., 8.8.1888, editorial p.7; 16.8.1888, editorial p.7. It was an attitude reinforced by the misgivings sometimes expressed in Britain. A London article on working class housing, reprinted in the Herald, alleged that vestry officers were "too often... not... men of the highest zeal and intelligence." Ibid., 26.12.1883, "Outcast London." -Where to Begin' p.6.
128. Ibid., 16.8.1888, editorial p.7. See the letter by Dansey defending his conduct in ibid., 17.8.1888, 'The City Council Dismissals' p.4. The letter was published in the D.T., p.3, on the same day.
intolerable", the Herald concluded, for it to be acknowledged by aldermen that no one knows what are the duties of the health officer, and that the office is a sinecure because its occupant chooses so to regard it. What more do we want to show the incompetency of the City Council? It condemns itself.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129} S.M.H., 16.8.1888, editorial p.7.
CHAPTER FIVE

Preventive Medicine: "your powers are unequal to ... this duty"

Dansey, Graham, and Aaron had each been defeated in their efforts to evolve an effective system of preventive medicine by the antagonisms they aroused within the City Corporation, among both staff and aldermen, but in the process their efforts had served also to highlight the fundamental obstacles standing in the way of comprehensive sanitary regulation by local government. In fulfilling the responsibility laid upon them by Parliament to identify and resolve the sources of City ill-health and disease,1 CHOs regularly drew attention to problems the remedies for which the City Council, because of the essentially executive role assigned to local government by Parliament, was unable to implement.2 The administration of preventive medicine depended upon unfettered powers of initiative, capable of responding quickly to provide legislative remedies for deficiencies and omissions in public health supervision as these were discovered. The initiative vested in local government was revealed by the CHOs' experiences to be inadequate for the task.

The problem had been early recognised by CHOs. As Aaron remarked critically of Parliament in 1858,

A Municipal Council should be something more than a mere 'taxing machine', and to establish such a body and, at the same time, to deny it the means of carrying out the purposes for which it was, ostensibly, formed, is nothing less than a mockery of the legitimate hopes and expectations of the Citizens.3

Instead of being compelled to lobby Parliament for special laws whenever a new problem of sanitary regulation arose, the City Council should, said

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1. Sydney Corporation Restoration Act, 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 53); Sydney Corporation Act of 1879, 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 163).

2. Admitting the insanitary condition of many parts of the metropolis, Mayor Palmer nonetheless complained while chairing the inaugural meeting of the Health Society that "The general course of procedure upon the part of the citizens was to cast the blame upon the Corporation; but unfortunately that body had not the requisite powers for dealing with the many existing evils." S.M.H., 30.8.1876, 'Health Society For New South Wales' p.3.

3. S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.4, no.715 (Aaron, 9.9.1858). In December he again wrote of the absolute need for "preventive sanitary measures" and advised aldermen, "It is, therefore, Gentlemen, with regret, that I reiterate the opinion which I expressed in one of my former reports, that your powers are unequal to the efficient performance of this duty"; ibid., 1858, vol.5, no.982 (Aaron, 9.12.1858).
Aaron, be vested with a legislative responsibility of its own in the form of a more general authority to issue strict by-laws on matters of sanitary concern.4

In the absence of such an arrangement, the efforts by Corporation sanitary officials to evolve a satisfactory system of public health regulation were repeatedly hamstrung. Corporation efforts to overcome the sanitary nuisances caused by bad drainage, by defective closets and privies, and attempts to extend controls so as to cover the internal sanitary condition of dwellings and common lodging houses, were all dependent on Parliament expanding existing Corporation sanitary jurisdiction.5 Special legislative enactment had been required to remove noxious trades such as fellmongering and tanning from the City, and even so Graham found himself powerless to prosecute proprietors successfully in other noxious trades not specifically covered by the Act, or to abate industrial smoke nuisances.6 He was confronted by a similar problem during his long drawn out campaign to publicise the health danger resulting from the overcrowded condition of City burial grounds.7

To lobby Parliament for relief was, again, almost all that CHOs could do to prevent the adulteration of food and drink.8 The story was the same with regard to Corporation supervision of butchers' premises and of milk production. As the Town Clerk explained in 1886, in reply to a Board of Health request for tighter controls on butchers' premises, without the passing of further legislation the Corporation was powerless to act on the matter.9 Not until Parliament passed a Dairies Supervision Act in 1886 was the City Council empowered to regulate City dairies as Dansey

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4. Ibid., 1858, vol.1, no.166 (Aaron, 9.3.1858).
5. See below, and Chapters Nine and Ten.
6. S.C.C., L.R., 1863, vol.4, no.800 (Graham, 9.9.1863); also 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859). See Acts 13 Vic., no.42; 14 Vic., no.30; 15 Vic., no.13; 29 Vic., no.16.
7. See, for example, ibid., 1859, vol.6, no.1120 (Graham, 9.12.1859); 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865); 1868, vol.6, no.1264 (Graham, 21.12.1868). Since the Corporation was powerless to remedy the matter, he conceded, all that could be done was for aldermen to urge government to close the grounds and open new cemeteries elsewhere; ibid., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); 1863, vol.5, no.943 (9.12.1863).
8. Ibid., 1862, vol.6, no.1126 (Graham, 8.12.1862); 1871, vol.3, no.668 (Dansey, 9.6.1871); 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875); also 1883, vol.3, no.703 (Dansey, 5.1883).
wished.10

The Dairies Supervision Act had been drafted not by the City Council but by the Board of Health, and City aldermen were in fact at times criticised for not exerting themselves more in preparing amending sanitary legislation for submission to Parliament. The criticism was certainly valid to a degree. Quite significant efforts were nonetheless made by the City Council itself in framing new public health laws.11 The Town Hall was however ill-equipped for an ongoing legislative function. Corporation officials had little spare time to spend on the time-consuming process of preparing draft legislation. Neither did aldermen have the money regularly to engage a lawyer skilled in parliamentary draftsmanship and to cover the expenses incurred in guiding legislation through the two Houses of Parliament.12

Nor was the obstacle to guiding legislation through Parliament purely financial.13 Laissez-faire and individualistic misgivings among politicians concerning legislation embodying the "stringent powers" requested by CHOs, doubts concerning the accuracy of medical assumptions contained in modern sanitary laws,14 the pressures of other legislative responsibilities and the additional dimension imposed by political considerations and party politics, all tended to delay or frustrate the enactment of laws giving Corporation sanitary officials the extra powers

10. 50 Vic., no.17; see S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888). Sanitary officials had long urged tighter laws; ibid., 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (Graham, 9.12.1869); 1872, vol.2, no.229 (Dansey, 9.3.1872). The controls over City dairies granted in the Improvement Act of 1879, 42 Vic., no.25 (clause 35), were found to be inadequate; S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.3, no.932 (Dansey, 9.6.1883).

11. S.M.H., 9.3.1859, editorial p.4; 28.8.1878, editorial p.4; D.T., 11.6.1881, editorial leader p.4. The preparation by the City Council of draft legislation relating to building design and the resumption of City lands are discussed in following sections.

12. The Improvement Act was drafted by the Building Surveyor during evenings and public holidays; Report from the Select Committee on the City Improvement Bill, qu.304, p.210. The Surveyor was granted a gratuity of 50 pounds for his efforts, and another 75 pounds were set aside "to defray expenses incident upon the introduction into Parliament of the New Building Act"; S.C.C., P. (17.7.1877), p.156.

13. Major legislative amendments prepared by the City Council were neglected or basically altered in their emphases by Parliament; see below, Parts IV and VI.

14. The words are Dansey's; S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874). The extent of scepticism for medical opinion is apparent in the Assembly debate recorded in the Empire, 19.2.1869, 'Compulsory Vaccination Bill', p.3; and 3.3.1869, p.3; see also the reports of the debate in the S.M.H., 3.3.1869, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3; ibid., 26.3.1869, p.3.
they needed.\textsuperscript{15}

The anomaly of City Council powerlessness without parliamentary intervention to sustain the public health administration it was expected to provide was highlighted by the continuing problem of devising effective measures to guard against the appearance of smallpox in the City. Aaron, Graham, and Dansey were all convinced that the only protection against the disease was vaccination, but they possessed no authority to enforce their belief. CHOs argued regularly that a Compulsory Vaccination Act was necessary for complete protection against smallpox.\textsuperscript{16} That advice was repeatedly ignored.

Dansey had announced with satisfaction in March 1869, at the height of concern at the outbreak of smallpox in nearby Melbourne, that a Compulsory Vaccination Act was indeed imminent in Sydney.\textsuperscript{17} His optimism was premature. Early in February, despite the approaching close of the parliamentary session, the Robertson Ministry had announced its intention of introducing a Compulsory Vaccination Bill to guard against the eventuality of smallpox spreading from Victoria. The Bill's progress, however, was hampered by the small numbers of members present during discussions, consideration of the measure frequently lapsing for want of a quorum. Determined opposition to the principle of compulsion by a handful of parliamentarians further delayed the Bill so that it had still to be sent from the Legislative Assembly to the Legislative Council when Parliament was prorogued on 1 April.\textsuperscript{18}

Commenting upon Parliament's failure to pass the Compulsory Vaccination Bill, the \textit{Herald} expressed a measure of relief that so "arbitrary" a measure had not after all been enacted. Smallpox was reputedly a disease of dirt, and as was pointed out by the newspaper and in the Legislative Assembly, it therefore behoved the City Corporation, as the authority responsible for ensuring the City's cleanliness, to be especially vigilant.

\textsuperscript{15} Note, for example, Aaron's frustration at Parliament's rejection of a Common Lodging Houses Bill he had helped to draft, and Dansey's expression of "deep... regret..." at Parliament's failure to adopt a Building Bill prepared by the Corporation; \textit{S.C.C., L.R.}, 1858, vol.4, no.715 (Aaron, 9.9.1858); 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874).

\textsuperscript{16} For examples, see \textit{ibid.}, 1858, vol.1, no.166 (Aaron, 9.3.1858); 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865); 1872, vol.5, no.841 (Dansey, 9.9.1872); \textit{S.C.C., M.P.M.}, box 12/2, no.119 (Dansey, 9.3.1887).

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{S.C.C., L.R.}, 1869, vol.4, no.754 (Dansey, 16.9.1869).

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Empire}, 21.4.1869, 'Summary Of News For England' p.2. Note the reports of debate lapsing for want of a quorum in \textit{S.M.H.}, 'New South Wales Parliament' 3.3.1869, p.3; 23.3.1869, p.3; 31.3.1869, p.2.
during the present crisis. 19

Nuisance removal, centering upon cleansing filthy lanes and back premises, and improving defective house drainage, cesspools, and water closets, had always been regarded as a primary sanitary responsibility of the City Corporation. 20 When a CHO was first appointed in the late 1850s, a pattern was already firmly established, growing out of public complaints received about filthy places, offensive closets and cesspools, of regular sanitary inspection tours by the Inspector of Nuisances to order the cleansing of yards and alleyways, and the emptying of overfull cesspits.

The many resulting prosecutions by the Inspector of Nuisances were said by Graham in September 1861 to "have frequently been opposed and thought oppressive". 21 Corporation sanitary officials themselves were however generally dissatisfied with their progress in prosecuting offenders, complaining with justice that their endeavours to abate dangerous health nuisances were repeatedly undermined by the lack of authority at their disposal. Aaron had as early as March 1858 drawn attention to the exceedingly restricted powers vested in the Council by the existing laws... I may state that the circuitous process required to be gone through for the removal of nuisances, the delays of the Police Court and the uncertainty attending magisterial decisions, render it impossible to carry out the necessary sanitary measures, under the present imperfect laws, with anything like satisfaction.

The difficulties standing in the way of successful prosecutions were reported by Graham in 1859 "to present almost an insurmountable obstacle [sic] to such being taken, and hence many removal nuisances are perpetrated in spite of common sense, and all sanitary rules". 22

19. Ibid., 24.4.1869, editorial leader p.4. Ibid., 29.3.1869, editorial leader p.4. See Martin's comments in the Assembly, Empire, 19.2.1869, 'Compulsory Vaccination Bill' p.3; and in S.M.H., 26.3.1869, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3.
20. It was an understandable emphasis, given the primacy of miasmic explanations of disease. See the 1833 Police Act, 4 Wm.IV, no.7 (clauses 15, 24-6, 33-4); 1842 Incorporation Act, 6 Vic., no.3; Sewerage Acts of 1850 and 1853, 14 Vic., no.33 and 17 Vic., no.34; Nuisances Prevention Act of 1875, 39 Vic., no.14; Sydney Corporation Act of 1879, 43 Vic., no.3.
21. S.C.C., L.R., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861). See Appendix Six, Table 6.2. It was to oversee the emptying of cesspools condemned as nuisances that the assistant Inspector of Nuisances was appointed; enclosure by the Inspector of Water Closets, 13.5.1857, in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1857, no.6 (1.6.1857); 1868, no.29 (28.5.1868).
Part of the problem faced by Corporation officials in nuisance abatement was one of definition. Parliament had in 1850 described as a nuisance "any muck, filth, soil, or other offensive matter or thing,... deemed a nuisance, or dangerous to the health of any of the inhabitants". As an added help the Corporation Restoration Act of 1857 explained

The word 'nuisance'... shall include the following matters Any premises in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health any pool ditch gutter watercourse privy urinal cesspool drain or ashpit so foul as to be a nuisance or injurious to health any animal or the carcass of any animal in such a state or so kept or left as to be a nuisance or injurious to health and any accumulation or deposit which is a nuisance or injurious to health.24

That clause, Graham complained, "points out but little of what should be understood, and that little so beset by other enactments, and so open to technicalities of a legal nature as to make its operation an uncertainty or to say the least its interpretation vague". Graham's criticism centred upon the clause's key phrase "injurious to health", which Corporation officials relied upon as a general guide to action in nuisance removal.

Use of the same phrase in London was hampered by the magisterial ruling that "a nuisance is not a nuisance unless it can be proved to be injurious to health".25 That requirement was found to apply equally in the courts of Sydney. The same words were nonetheless retained in both the 1875 Nuisances Prevention Act and in the new Corporation Act of 1879.26

Corporation sanitary jurisdiction was uncertain also in the powers of access its officials wielded to inspect private property in the City. From mid-century on through the next 25 years sanitary officials could demand entry inside private yards and buildings only after swearing to a justice of the peace that there was "reasonable ground" for believing the property to be "in a filthy or unwholesome condition". In practice, their right of entry was rarely challenged. When entry was denied, however, the formal process required to be gone through prevented the prompt investigation

23. See the query by Jacob, "What did regulation of nuisances mean?" during Assembly debate on the 1879 Corporation Bill; S.M.H., 30.1.1879, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.6.
24. 14 Vic., no.33 (clause 17). 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 54).
26. Graham tried unsuccessfully to prosecute a factory for causing a nuisance, but the court ruled that smoke was not injurious to health; S.C.C., L.R. 1863, vol.4, no.800 (Graham, 9.9.1863). 39 Vic., no.14 (clause 13); 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 175).
of possible nuisances. The problem was tackled cautiously in 1875 by
the Nuisances Prevention Act, which enabled the Inspector of Nuisances to
"demand admission on... premises" where he had reasonable grounds for
believing a nuisance existed. Still however, as Seymour explained in 1877
to Colonial Secretary Henry Parkes, if the inspector's entry was resisted
he could not insist upon entry without first applying to a justice of the
peace for a special order. Not until nearly 30 years after Corporation
powers of inspection were first properly defined in 1850 were these powers
significantly amended to allow prompt access inside private properties.

Much more serious an obstacle to effective Corporation preventive
measures against the sources of ill-health was the difficulty of abating
nuisances once they were uncovered. Already when Aaron was first appointed
CHO in 1857 the Corporation possessed clear authority on paper to order the
removal of nuisances. Offenders faced stiff fines for every day the
nuisance remained, and further heavy penalties for disregarding notices
served upon them. As Aaron had however pointed out in September 1857,
instead of these powers being contained in the one Act, they were spread
across a number of sometimes "conflicting enactments" which at best made
"their execution unnecessarily and grievously cumbersome and costly." At
worst, legal complications frustrated Corporation endeavours. In 1873 the
then Mayor of Sydney, James Merriman, explained to a parliamentary inquiry
that the Corporation was "working under twenty-six different Acts, and in
nineteen cases out of twenty we get defeated at the Courts with them."

27. Sewerage Act of 1853, 17 Vic., no.34 (clause 22). See S.C.C., L.R.,
working class housing in 1875-6 also only very rarely encountered any
opposition to their visits; S. & H.B. 11th R., qu.259, p.608 (Dansey);
qu.272, p.625 (Palmer). Seymour drew attention to the inadequacy of
his authority to demand access inside private premises in S. & H.B.,
1st R., qu.220-4, p.347.
28. 39 Vic., no.14 (clauses 25 and 27); Seymour to Parkes, 18.7.1877, copy
filed in S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.712. The 1879 Corporation Act,
copying from the British Public Health Act of 1875, granted sanitary
officials a general authority to "inspect any premises" where they
believed a nuisance to exist, and set down fines for anyone obstructing
their investigations; 43 Vic., no.3 (clauses 181, 183, 185, 191); 38
& 39 Vic., c.55 (clauses 102-3).
29. The Corporation also possessed a full sanction to itself remove
nuisances, and then prosecute to recover costs; Sewerage Act of 1853,
17 Vic., no.34 (clause 20); these powers were retained in all
subsequent sanitary legislation.
30. S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.4, no.715 (Aaron, 9.9.1858). S.C.W.M.,
qu.2237, p.186. Half-hearted parliamentary moves in 1862-3 and again
Merriman's mention of the courts pointed to problems about which his health officials were particularly sensitive, for whatever the powers granted to them, the whole mechanism of nuisance removal depended upon the magistracy fully enforcing the laws' provisions. Sanitary officials frequently alleged that magistrates instead seemed deliberately to throw obstacles in the way of successful prosecutions, or else undermine Corporation labours to stamp out particular health nuisances by imposing the barest of fines upon guilty parties brought before the courts.31

A major part of the difficulty experienced in policing the City ban on the slaughter of animals before 1882 was, the Corporation complained, due to the Bench's insistence that an offender had to have been seen by the prosecuting official actually killing the animals before a conviction would be granted,32 Seymour complained in 1876 that his efforts to improve sanitation in common lodging houses by prosecuting landlords for keeping dirty premises were being thwarted by the leniency of the Bench.33 Unrealistic fines likewise limited the effectiveness of the Corporation's supervision of butchers' shops.34 It was the same with prosecutions against butchers' carts, which Corporation officials maintained were filthy and poorly designed, and against offal carts, which were left standing outside shops at all hours of the day, stinking and spilling their contents onto the streets.35

30. (cont) In the middle 1870s to consolidate Corporation statutes were all without result; see S.M.H., 10.9.1862, 'Parliament of New South Wales' p.4; also V. & P.(N.S.W. L.A.), 1876-7, vol.1, no.6 (20.12.1876), p.29; no.50 (26.4.1877), p.207.

31. See S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.5, no.982 (Aaron, 9.12.1858), and the enclosure by Drake, dated 4,12,1858, denouncing magisterial decisions as making "the exertions of the Inspectors useless." Note also the dissatisfaction expressed by Alderman Michael Chapman in S. & H.B., 1st R., qu.575-7, p.359.

32. S.C.C., L.R., 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (Graham, 9.12.1869); S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.1131-3, p.416 (Seymour); S.M.H., 30.1.1879, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.6 (Driver). In any case, Dansey recorded disgustedly, "the punishment awarded is no deterrent as a nominal fine of one shilling only was inflicted in a case lately brought into the Police Court"; S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.3, no.426 (Dansey, 9.6.1874).33


34. See S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.3, no.699 (Seymour, 12.7.1877).

35. Ibid., 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); 1869, vol.2, no.265 (Dansey, 9.3.1869); 1872, vol.2, no.200 (Seymour, 29.2.1872). By-laws were passed requiring special design rules for butchers' carts and prohibiting offal carts from the streets during daytime. Yet as Dansey explained in 1874, the fines imposed by the courts for breaches of these laws had been so small that it paid the offenders better to pay the fines and continue defying the Corporation regulations; ibid.,
Even in policing laws against such basic sanitary offences as overflowing cesspits, Corporation officials claimed that their efforts were hampered by the difficulty of mounting successful prosecutions in the courts and by the paltry fines imposed by some magistrates. Aaron advocated establishing a Mayor's Court after the example in California, to itself adjudicate the policing of sanitary laws. Such an initiative however required parliamentary intervention. The City Corporation remained dependent on the courts, and complaints continued to be aired about the leniency and inconsistency of magisterial decisions, and about possible vested interests represented upon the Bench tending to undermine Corporation public health regulation.36

A further grudge by Corporation sanitary officials against the magistracy was the latter's ruling that a landlord's agent was not liable for prosecution but only the owner or tenant.37 Since in the unwholesome districts where sanitary problems were most acute, the property owners were overwhelmingly absentee, CHO's complained that the ruling had the effect of making working class tenants financially liable for nuisances over which they had no control. Reluctance to make working people suffer for problems believed by Corporation officials to be caused frequently by the avarice of landlords tended to limit their enthusiasm for the vigorous enforcement of sanitary laws.38 Not until the 1879 Corporation Act was the agent at last made to share liability for health nuisances, but still nothing was done to ensure the non-liability of tenants for sanitary problems not of

35. (cont) 1874, vol.2, no.184 (Dansey, 9.3.1874); also 1878, vol.2, no.362 (Seymour & Dansey, 9.4.1878); 1890, vol.2, no.364 (Dr D. Rutledge, 10.2.1890) and attached memorandum by Seymour, 19.2.1890.
36. Ibid., 1858, vol.1, no.166 (Aaron, 9.3.1858). S. & H.B., 1st R., p.338; S.M.H., 15.5.1876, editorial p.4; the 1879 Corporation Act, 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 162) sought to prohibit magistrates from ruling on prosecutions for sanitary nuisances in which they were interested parties.
37. Until the 1879 Corporation Act, only the owner or occupant of a building was specified by law as being financially liable for nuisance abatement. Tenants who were made to bear the cost of nuisance removal had always been entitled to sue to have that amount deducted from the rent. As Aaron had however remarked in 1857, this entitlement was "in the great majority of such cases...inoperative in practice". 43 Vic., no.3 (clauses 177-8); sewerage Acts of 1850 and 1853, 14 Vic., no.33 and 17 Vic., no.34; Nuisances Prevention Act, 39 Vic., no.14 (clauses 11, 14-6). S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.4, no.706 (Aaron, 21.12.1857).
38. See Aaron's complaint in ibid.; similarly Graham in 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (9.12.1869). Seymour protested to Parkes at having to "punish tenants for what they often cannot help", and requested a change in the law; ibid., 1877, vol.4, no.712 (18.7.1877).
their own making.

The dissatisfaction of Corporation officials with the lack of protection existing laws gave tenants represented but a small part of their fault-finding with the sanitary laws on which their authority depended. By far the greatest cause of the problems with Corporation nuisance abatement, they claimed, was the inadequacies and omissions of the specific sanitary clauses upon which nuisance abatement depended. Describing working class housing conditions in the City, Graham complained in 1863 that "I cannot do more at present, than point out the sources of extreme Infantile Mortality - too little power is invested in me to save the lives of these Poor City Children." 39

Even in the regulation of closets and privies, a subject that had always been the prime focus of nuisance abatement, Corporation jurisdiction was inadequate. Long before the incorporation of Sydney the 1883 Police Act had specified that cesspools were to be emptied only at night and had sought to regulate the passage of nightsoil carts across the City. The most basic requirement, to compel people to empty their cesspools at regular intervals, was overlooked by legislators until the middle 1870s. 40 In the absence of effective laws requiring the regular removal of nightsoil, landlords and agents were said generally to leave the cesspools on their premises in an overfull and stinking condition. 41 If such cesspools did not themselves overflow they were sometimes deliberately drained into the gutters, a cost-saving device which health authorities were unable to prevent. 42

The 1853 Sewerage Act provided that before new buildings or any alterations could be commenced, "the situation and construction of the

39. Ibid., 1863, vol.2, no.197 (Graham, 9.3.1863). See also Chapter Nine.
40. 4 Wm.IV, no.7 (clauses 33-4). Since 1850, legislation had required the City Corporation to "cause the privies and cesspools within the... City to be from time to time emptied and cleansed", but the provision was made useless by a qualification that ownership of all nightsoil upon a premises should belong to the occupier unless it became a health nuisance; 14 Vic., no.41 (clause 102). Moreover a cesspool could not be declared a nuisance and ordered to be emptied until it overflowed; 17 Vic., no.34 (clause 20); S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); also S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.623, 627, p.397.
41. In one instance typical of many others members of the S. & H.B. described an open cesspool in a court off Goulburn Street, 16' x 4', "and nearly full, the contents of which kept bubbling up as if in a state of fermentation; the stench proceeding from it was horrible." S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.252, p.598.
42. S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.1, no.166 (9.3.1858); also S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.691, p.399.
privies and cesspools to be built” had first to be approved by the City Surveyor. Building regulations were however notoriously ineffective, and the clause in any case did not apply to existing buildings in the City. The general construction of cesspools and privies was said to be “exceedingly bad”. They were, wrote Aaron, “either constantly leaking into the surrounding soil, impregnating it with the most deadly poison, - often into adjoining premises, - or, after almost every shower of rain, overflowing into the yards and even the streets”. For the Corporation to better regulate the problem, said Dansey in 1873, strict new laws needed to be enacted by Parliament.

In the meantime, the City Council’s extending of underground sewers was gradually abolishing the need for privies and cesspools from the City. Sewerage extension was a mixed blessing however, because while the City Corporation might build sewers, no comprehensive authority existed compelling landlords to connect their premises to them. Graham lobbied throughout the 1860s for all closets in the City to be compulsorily linked to the sewers, and Dansey likewise advocated the granting of new "enlarged powers". Parliament remained unresponsive, and it was not until the Corporation-drafted City Improvement Act was passed in 1879 that health officials were able to enforce the connection of closets to the sewers.

In August 1875 Parliament had also at last legislated to better control

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43. They were improperly sealed, some of them of wood only, without lips around their edges, frequently old and ruinous in condition; 17 Vic., no.34 (clause 18). S.C.C., L.R., 1868, vol.3, no.524 (Graham, 9.6.1868); see also Seymour’s comment in S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.194, p.383.
44. S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol.1, no.120 (Aaron, 9.3.1859); see the description of privies in Woolloomooloo in ibid., 1867, vol.5, no.1229 (Graham, 7.10.1867); and in Cook Ward, 1874, vol.5, no.731 (Dansey, 9.10.1874). Ibid., 1873, vol.5, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873).
45. Numbers of backlanes about the inner City were nonetheless still unsewered by the middle 1870s; see Seymour in S. & H.B., 2nd R., qu.188, p.383. Lack of underground sewerage remained a major problem in the more outlying parts of Cook, Phillip, and Denison Wards into the middle and later 1880s; see Plates 16, 18, 19.
46. Slum landlords frequently did not connect; see, for example, S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.260, p.610; qu.262, pp.611-2; qu.292, p.645; qu.300, p.652. Provisions in the 1853 Sewerage Act designed to overcome this problem were ineffective; 17 Vic., no.34 (clauses 11-2).
47. For examples, see S.C.C., L.R., 1861 vol.1, no.25 (Graham, 9.1.1861); 1867, vol.5, no.1095 (9.9.1867). Dansey’s comment is made in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.291, p.645; also S.C.C., L.R., 1869, vol.5, no.1022 (Dansey, 9.9.1869); 1874, vol.6, no.776 (Dansey, 9.11.1874). 42 Vic., no.25 (Schedule B, Part IV).
cesspools in the city. Under the Nuisances Prevention Act, the removal of nightsoil was vested exclusively in the hands of the City Corporation. All cesspools were required to be emptied at least every six months, and the draining of cesspools into the street or sewers was made illegal. In addition, local government was empowered to regulate the siting and construction of cesspools and closets, and to demand that sufficient closet accommodation be provided on all premises.48

Corporation sanitary officials had at last been granted sufficient authority effectively to abate the health nuisances caused by cesspools in the City.49 The Nuisances Prevention Act had been long overdue in coming, and was moreover despite its title a rather limited enactment applying to only the one public health problem. That problem was in any case declining in seriousness as by 1875 cesspools were gradually becoming a thing of the past within the City. While applauding the new Act, Dansey remarked that what was now really needed to improve City health was much more comprehensive legislation. A building law was urgently required, he said, to attack the whole range of sanitary problems which Corporation inspection tours to remove nuisances had demonstrated to revolve around the unregulated, overcrowded working class housing of the City.50

Aaron had called for better sanitary controls over working class housing 18 years earlier. Returning late in 1869 from leave in Britain, Graham had advocated the passing of legislation based upon William Torrens' recently gazetted Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, so as better to tackle the problems of unwholesome working class housing in Sydney.51 As things were, the CHO had written in March 1868,

The Householders of filthy Streets, Cul de sacs Squares - Lanes and Alleys, will not affect repairs, clean or drain their hovels, so long as they can extract from the Poor Man the weekly rent. The City aldermen and officers of the Corporation, are not blameable for this state of things - they have no legal authority to interfere in such matters; they cannot pull down Houses, widen Streets, drain and ventilate houses, or build Model Houses for the poor and Labouring

49. See Seymour's reports on the successes achieved in removing old cesspools and regulating the construction of new ones; S. & H.B., 12th R., qu.3161–4, pp.737–8; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.712 (Seymour to Parkes, 18.7.1877).
50. Ibid., 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875).
Class... Nothing less than a stringent Act of Parliament, can affect the necessary Sanitary improvements in the City.\textsuperscript{52}

That "stringent Act" had still to be enacted when Dansey appealed for wider sanitary controls over buildings in the wake of the Nuisances Prevention Act. Preventive medicine, as Aaron had long ago realised in 1858, could never accord satisfactorily with City Corporation administration so long as local government remained limited by so restricted a capacity for legislative initiative. The continuing neglect of effective sanitary regulations governing working class housing was the direct consequence of that crisis. The heightened anxieties about epidemic diseases in the middle 1870s that produced the Sewage and Health Board and the Nuisance Prevention Act, also marked the beginnings of a flurry of increased public interest in the public health implications of working class housing conditions. Community concern at the accumulated sanitary evils thus uncovered was paralleled by shock and horror at the sudden flow of information concerning the hitherto veiled existence of Sydney's inner City slums.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 1868, vol.1, no. 206 (Graham, 9.3.1868).
PART III
PLAN

CITY OF SYDNEY,
1880.

"VISITORS' COMPANION."

Plate 33.
Introduction

Quite suddenly in August 1876 the people of Sydney, even those with the most casual interest in matters of social concern, were forcefully made aware that there existed in their City unimagined mazes of narrow alleyways and courts, hidden from public gaze off the main streets and lined with insanitary rows of crowded and dilapidated housing. Sydney residents learned how in courts hitherto unknown to them — many indeed still unnamed and known locally only by the name of an absentee landlord — endemic disease, criminality, brutishness, and immorality had reportedly combined among the inhabitants to produce a distinct race of degraded humanity. The shock had been contained in two documents delivered that month to the N.S.W. Parliament. The first, a select committee report, described common lodging houses in the City. The second, a lengthy document on working class overcrowding, had been prepared by a committee of the Sewage and Health Board. The insanitary and overcrowded City districts pictured in both reports were promptly labelled by appalled contemporaries as "human rookeries" and "back slums".¹

The picture is of course overdrawn. Not everybody in Sydney threw up their hands in horror and set about finding solutions to the sanitary and social problems thus revealed. Nor were the findings of the two documents totally unexpected. The very use of words like "rookeries" and "back slum", both of them terms already long current in Britain, suggested at least some familiarity in Sydney with the accounts of slum life in London that had appeared periodically since the 1840s.² Information of specifically local bearing, too, had long been available. Since the first appointment of a CHO in 1857, regular sanitary reports had appeared in the press describing working class housing in the City. In 1859 a parliamentary select committee chaired by Henry Parkes had probed in detail

¹ The word 'slum' was perhaps derived from slumber, and by coming in general usage to combine a sense of the sleepy and half-forgotten with the more racy connotation of low and best-hidden behaviour had thus emerged in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century as a slang term for the unfamiliar working class districts along city back lanes; Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.5; E. Partridge, Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English, London, 1958, p.633; H. J. Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', Victorian Studies, vol.11 (1967-8), pp.7-8.

into the living conditions of working people in Sydney. Newspaper reports of proceedings in the courts, and descriptions of the annual meetings held by Sydney charitable organisations, provided further details of life among the back streets. The knowledge accumulated by a handful of sanitary reformers and the churchmen who visited slum districts, and the expertise gained by policemen on the beat, is likely to have reached some sort of wider audience, if only through discussions with associates and friends.

People did not after all live in total isolation from one another. Beggars knocked at the doors even of distant suburban villas, and derelicts could often be seen lounging on City street corners. While such fleeting encounters explained to more fortunately placed inhabitants nothing about the details of slum life, at the same time they must have made it difficult for even the most self-centred of people not to acknowledge occasionally the existence of social problems in Sydney. For most people before 1876, any such acknowledgement would have nonetheless been fleeting, and based upon the haziest of conceptions of what it was like to be poor and living in a big city.

That picture began to change by the mid 1870s. In Sydney, as in London, in New York, Paris, or Berlin, the late 1870s and early 1880s were a time of rising interest in the social, economic, and moral problems posed by city slums. Reports reaching Sydney of working class housing conditions in cities overseas highlighted problems already prominently

3. Thus the owner of a large City ironfoundry was able to throw some light on working class housing conditions in 1860 from the complaints he had heard made among his factory hands; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu,1997, p.1403.

4. See Dr Andrew Garran's comment in S.M.H., 10.9.1878, 'Charity Organization Society' p.6. See the letter in ibid. by 'Fair Play', 16.5.1877, 'The Vagrants Of Sydney' p.6. The Inspector General of Police wrote to the Mayor in 1886 that the City's many advertising hoardings afforded "concealment and harbour for loafers and bad characters"; S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.1, no.57 (7.1.1886).

5. In Britain the late 1870s witnessed a resurgence of attention upon London's East End, an attention that intensified during the early 1880s when works such as Walter Besant's novel, All Sorts and Conditions of Men, and to a much greater extent George Sims' 1883 descriptions of How the Poor Live, reached a mass audience. Publication in October 1883 of the Reverend Andrew Mearns' pamphlet, The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, provoked a far-reaching debate concerning the housing of British working people; P. Keating (ed.), Working-class Stories of the 1890s, London, 1971, pp.xi-xii; also Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.200-49.


aired locally since the popular discovery of the City's own slums in 1876. The two documents that had been presented to Parliament that August had for the first time provided a comprehensive account of working class living conditions across the City. What was more, the reports were widely publicised in the daily press. Nor was the exposure limited to 1876. Parliamentary debate concerning the possible regulation of common lodging houses kept alive newspaper interest in the conditions of the City's overnight lodgings. The passage in 1879 of the City Improvement Act signalled the commencement of City Corporation inspection tours to police new regulations against housing "unfit for human habitation". Accompanying newspapermen produced from early in 1880 and throughout the next decade arresting descriptions of "Sydney Rookeries".

A new urgency sustained the widening interest in the City's slums. Community anxieties about the problems of urban health had from the middle 1870s changed to alarm at the imminent likelihood of the appearance of epidemic disease. In the light of the then current orthodoxies about the origins and spread of disease it was inevitable that the heightened anxieties about urban ill-health should direct a new attention upon the insanitary working class districts of the inner City.

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7. (cont) is one of the great scandals of this city"; ibid., 19.11.1883, 'Our American Letter' p.4. The writings of Sims and Mearns were fully reported in Sydney.

8. For the first time the inside world of the working class home received systematic documentation - room sizes, ventilation, internal drainage, furnishings, the number of occupants per room or building.
CHAPTER SIX

Charting the City slums: "hotbeds of vice, hotbeds of fever, and hotbeds of death"

Diseases in Sydney were largely caused by fevers breeding among and then spreading from the anonymous acres of "over-crowded dwellings and backslums" about the City. This was the opinion expressed in a Herald editorial written in August 1875, during community alarms at the upsurge of infectious disease in Sydney. To contemporaries it was an unexceptionable remark, confirming assumptions held throughout the nineteenth century that the epidemic diseases which regularly devastated cities across the world had their origins in the crowded and insanitary living conditions of the urban poor. Forebodings by the Evening News in January 1875 that disease from Sydney slums might thus engulf the entire city had been occasioned by its reviewing the latest assessment by the CHO, Dr Dansey, of the mortality statistics' evidence of worsening ill-health among the residential districts of the City working classes. From such hotbeds of disease, Dansey warned, epidemics spread across the whole community.

The message was already deeply embedded in the community consciousness, having been made repeatedly by Dansey and his predecessors in their quarterly analyses of Sydney's mortality returns. Working class neighbourhoods such as the "intersecting Lanes and Alleys" between Kent and

1. S.M.H., 20.8.1875, editorial p.4. Several months earlier a lead editorial had reflected how

   Men who live in large towns are miserably at each other's mercy. The germs of disease that are generated in back slums travel to front thoroughfares... One man charges the air with a poison which thousands breathe, and thus the unhealth of the few becomes that of the million.

   Ibid., 4.3.1875, p.4; also 9.1.1877, 'Streets Of Sydney' p.6; 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.

2. E.N., 20.1.1875, editorial p.2; S.C.C., L.R., 1875, vol.1, no.15 (Dansey, 9.1.1875); Dansey had already traced the origin of Sydney's prolonged measles epidemic to Brisbane Ward in the western City; ibid., 1874, vol.6, no.776 (9.11.1874). Ibid., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874); also 1875, vol.4, no.447 (Dansey, 9.7.1875); and see his report on the distribution of City mortality in 1875, vol.2, no.165 (9.3.1875).

3. Sickness and death were reported to be high in the broad band of working class housing running southwest from Woolloomooloo and along the City's southern boundary with suburban Redfern and Glebe. The menace of disease was said to be especially severe in Phillip and Denison Wards. The central City districts running alongside Darling Harbour
Sussex Streets were described as being "the continued haunts of Low Fevers... and other endemic diseases". Graham wrote in March 1868 that "Typhus Fever in a mild form no doubt exists in Sydney in an Endemic form, as it does in all large Cities, where in certain localities Miasma exists from poverty, filth, bad drainage and overcrowding in Homes and Rooms." What was so alarming was the capacity of such diseases to transform themselves into highly malignant and infectious forms. The unwholesome City slum environment had the potential at any time, said Graham, to produce from among the mild and localised fevers endemic there malignant diseases like cholera and smallpox, which through the medium of miasmic vapours would "spread from the abode of poverty and filth, to that of all classes." It was a frequent warning, and one that was repeated with special weight whenever epidemic disease was raging overseas.

It was with good cause therefore that the baneful image of Sussex Street and similar overcrowded and apparently disease-generating neighbourhoods haunted many in Sydney during the epidemic alarms of the middle and late 1870s. One sanitary reformer cautioned in July 1876 that "Disease germs generated in a Sussex-street slum may strike in Macleay-street or Darling Point". On finding it necessary to visit one of the Darling Harbour wharves in early January 1877, soon after the discovery of smallpox in the City, the well-known businessman Edward Hordern declared that he had passed along Sussex Street hardly daring to draw breath. The Herald responded to the appearance of smallpox by conducting a brief survey of some of the more notorious working class districts in the City. The newspaper's survey was symptomatic of the manner in which information detailing the more depressed areas of working class housing was made available, and upon which the public generally pieced together their

3.(cont) returned mortality figures which were viewed with similar disquiet; see, for example, Ibid., 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860); 1861, vol.2, no.224 (Graham, 9.3.1861); 1863, vol.2, no.197 (Graham, 9.3.1863).
6. S.C.C., L.R., 1865, vol.4, no.790 (Graham, 9.9.1865); also 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (Graham, 9.12.1867); 1871, vol.3, no.668 (Dansey, 9.6.1871); note also the report by Gwynne Hughes, 10.6.1892, in P.M.C.C.S., 1892.
perceptions of slums and slum dwellers. Any conclusions respecting the unfamiliar world of Sydney's "rookeries" tended to be made through the distorting perspective of the general community's inherently self-interested concern at the danger posed to themselves by poverty-bred disease.  

The appearance of "the loathsome disease of smallpox" in 1877 prompted one writer to suggest to the Herald the demolition of all "back slums" where disease was known to flourish. The attitudes adopted towards City slum dwellers were not however always so unsympathetic. Corporation sanitary officials had concluded that City ill-health was sustained by working class overcrowding, and the cause of such overcrowding, they argued, was other men's greed. Compassion for the slum dweller, and hostility towards the exploiting absentee slum landlord, were expressed frequently in the CHO's reports.

Dansey wrote with dismay in September 1873 that

In this great City (where Landlords are generally wealthy and living in fine houses) I find upwards of 200 houses with only one room, 1785 with two rooms and 2860 with three rooms. These houses are occupied by one or more families and so scanty is the accommodation that Fathers Mothers grown up Sons and Daughters sleep in the same room.

The overcrowding caused by landlords and their agents aggravated the poisoned atmosphere inside working-class homes, said Graham, as "poor families... breathe the vapour from their own bodies in a constant circle". Aaron had warned as early as February 1858 how the crowding of working people in unwholesome tenement buildings produced poisons that would one day lead to pestilence in the City. Aaron's opinion was emphatically endorsed during the following year by his successor as CHO. "So far as the

9. The great significance attached by CHO's to overcrowding was shared by their colleagues in Britain; Wohl, pp.611-2, in Dyos and Wolff, The Victorian City, vol.2. Overcrowding was perpetuated, wrote CHO's, by the almost universal working class habit of sub-letting dwellings, a practice that was said to be forced upon them by the high rents demanded by landlords; see, for instance, S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.1, no.126 (Aaron, 10.2.1858); 1865, vol.6, no.1032 (Graham, 9.12.1865).
10. Ibid., 1873, vol.5, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873). Predictably, said Seymour, overcrowding was greatest among the working class localities of western Sydney, alongside Darling Harbour, and consequently it was here too that he had seen the greatest amount of disease; S. & H.B., 1st R., qu.346-7, p.351.
dwelling-houses of the labouring classes are concerned", Graham told Parkes' select committee on the Sydney working classes in October 1859, "I look upon them as built in a manner calculated to produce and extend disease. There is a want of ventilation, a want of room, of cleanliness, of drainage, and all those things which it is necessary should be attended to in order to insure health".11

Sanitary concerns had likewise been generally uppermost in the whole of discussions about working class housing before the 1859 select committee.12 CHOs, unlike most observers of City slums, had over the years been able to reach a wide public audience because of the printing of their reports in the daily press. The 1859 parliamentary investigation had however provided an opportunity for the usually less well publicised findings of those few others in Sydney at all familiar with working class residential districts in the City to become on this one occasion more accessible.

Aaron and Graham both gave evidence to the select committee. Churchmen, sanitary reformers, and the police also provided many insights into the hidden workings of City slums. Parkes and his colleagues were told by the Reverend Patrick Newman that he frequently visited the homes of his parishioners giving guidance, and thus "having constantly to go through not merely the main streets, but also the by-ways and by-lanes, I am in a position to see thoroughly into the state of the working classes." The Anglican Dean of Sydney, the Reverend Macquarie Cowper, was likewise a periodic visitor to some of the most unwholesome and crowded streets and alleys in the City, and appeared as an expert witness both for the select committee of 1859 and for the Sewage and Health Board investigation of overcrowding sixteen years later. Richard Seymour said in 1875 that during his sanitary inspections of unwholesome districts he saw the Dean and a colleague, the Reverend Mr Sheppard, also travelling about the City.13

12. Parkes' committee had been appointed to seek explanations for the then high levels of working class unemployment in Sydney, but committeemen included also in their investigations a more general study of the social conditions prevailing in the poorer districts of the City.
Even more frequently seen by Seymour among the hidden alleyways of the City were the dedicated missionaries of the Sydney City Mission. One of the best known of these hard-working men, Nathaniel Pidgeon, described to Parkes' committee how he worked seven days a week among the poor, "preaching, and visiting in the houses in the lanes, courts, and alleys of the city; and also preaching in the chapel where I have invited the people to come."14 Three of Pidgeon's colleagues would be examined by the Sewage and Health Board late in 1875, and Board committeemen visiting the unwholesome neighbourhoods where the missionaries' meeting rooms were located paid generous tribute to the amazing dedication of this small band of Christian proselytisers.15

Rivalling the knowledge by the City missionaries of working class districts in the City was that of the police, whose lower ranks especially were intimately acquainted with the poorer districts through many years walking the beat, dealing with drunkenness and investigating theft and prostitution.16 The Sewage and Health Board study during the mid 1870s would depend heavily upon the encyclopaedic knowledge of Sydney's "back slums" by two long-serving police sergeants, and in 1859 the then Inspector General of Police, John McLerie, was regarded by Parkes' select committee as one of its most valuable witnesses in its inquiries into the social condition of Sydney's working classes.17

Policemen frequently accompanied and guided about the City's poorer districts the scattering of private citizens actively engaged in extending to Sydney the interest in urban social and sanitary reform that had

14. S. & H.B., 1st R., qu.390-1, p.352; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.384, p.1303; see also N. Pidgeon, Life, experience, and journal of Nathaniel Pidgeon, who has been upwards of twenty years an open-air preacher and city missionary in the City of Sydney, Sydney, 1864.
16. One constable mentioned in 1891 that he had been at the same City station for 33 years, and the then Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, George Read, said that he had had some 36 years' experience in the Sydney force; Report of the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling and Immorality and Charges of Bribery Against Members of the Police Force, V. & P.(N.S.W. L.A.), 1891-2, vol.8, qu.10275, p.761; qu.11898, p.814.
17. Senior Sergeant Nicholas Larkins and Sergeant Dawson both provided detailed information under cross-examination in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.144-91, pp.571-3; qu.199-239, pp.580-1. The two men also served as the principal guides for committeemen during their tours of the City. See McLerie's evidence in S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.1-143, pp.1285-90; qu.1365-1405, pp.1354-5; qu.2968-93, pp.1450-1.
awakened in the mother country. James Palmer, a shorthand writer for the Legislative Assembly who was interested in the question of juvenile prostitution, described to Parkes and his colleagues the tours he had made with Inspector Harrison about some of the very lowest quarters such as the notorious Durand's Alley, off Goulburn Street, and other hidden lanes about Kent, Bathurst, and Sussex Streets in the west and southwest of the inner City. Another witness appearing before Parkes' select committee to pass on information privately collected was the then Attorney General, Edward Wise. Similarly helpful was Dr Alfred Roberts, a man who combined running a fashionable medical practice with a dedication to sanitary and social reforms that in 1883 was rewarded by knighthood. Roberts had arrived from Britain in the early 1850s already interested in working class housing conditions, and set about touring the City's "back lanes... for the purpose of seeing what I could of the poorer classes and their dwellings".

Asked by committeemen to describe the sanitary conditions of working class living in the City, witnesses confirmed the bleak picture of unwholesome slums given to the select committee by Aaron and Graham. Roberts said that deficient house ventilation and drainage among the forgotten back lanes, and the inadequacy of room sizes for the number of inmates such dwellings housed, were sure causes of sickness and preventable deaths. Working class housing was so "wretched in the extreme", said the Reverend Mr Newman, that he was astonished there had as yet been no major epidemics. Should any such epidemic appear in the neglected poorer districts, warned James Palmer, it would spread even to the mansions of the wealthy. Parkes concurred with those opinions. Fevers once generated "by the filth and squalor of the poor", he concluded, would inevitably "extend to the rich".

18. See ibid., qu.1225-9, p.1346.
19. By his efforts the Philosophical Society, forerunner of the Royal Society of N.S.W., had early in 1857 appointed a committee to examine working class living conditions. The committee had not survived beyond a few meetings, but Wise had gone ahead and made private inquiries of his own; ibid., qu.1408-9, 1411-2, p.1371.
20. Ibid., qu.2122, p.1410.
22. Ibid., qu.1458, p.1374; also pp.1270-2.
Alarming glimpses of the poverty and unhealthiness among the City working classes were periodically given added weight when newspaper publicity given to the melodrama or pathos revealed through the proceedings of coroners' inquests and the police courts, briefly opened another chink upon the unfamiliar world of Sydney's back streets. While describing in June 1864 some of the working class housing about the City visited by him, Graham wrote how

We frequently read in the Local papers of Inquests being held on persons who have died in some of these unwholesome places, and public attention is thus directed to them. Lately a man died in a dirty Hovel at Ultimo, and another in Duran's [sic] Alley, in each case Inquests were held, and the premises condemned by Coroner and Juries.  

Concern at the extreme unhealthiness of some City districts thus revealed was paralleled by dismay at the poverty which accompanied it. In this way Durand's Alley became the stereotype for an image of poverty and misery more extreme even than that associated with mention of Sussex Street. From the daily round of police court cases reported by the press many separate details concerning individual cases of poverty and ill-health were gradually superimposed upon each other in people's minds to provide a fuzzy picture of a way of life led by anonymous numbers of people among the more crowded working class districts of the City.

II

It was this shadowy picture that the Sewage and Health Board's report on overcrowding in 1876 suddenly switched into focus. In it were some 100 closely printed pages of evidence and appendices and an ingenious ten page report, graphically recapitulating the committee's findings so as to achieve maximum impact upon Parliament and make for ready summary in the

23. S.C.C., L.R., 1864, vol.3, no.511 (Graham, 9.6.1864). Aaron remarked in 1858 how on two occasions during the year community attention had been directed by coroners' courts to the insanitary and overcrowded conditions about the Rocks; ibid., 1858, vol.2, no.269 (Aaron, 31.3.1858); 1858, vol.3, no.464 (Aaron, 9.6.1858). Introducing a Common Lodging Houses Bill to Parliament, Cameron remarked how everyone "had heard of people dying in a state of filth in these houses, without any comfort such as their condition required." S.M.H., 13.3.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3.

24. See, for example, ibid., 5.4.1875, editorial leader p.4; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877); D.T., 25.2.1884, editorial p.5.
daily press. The Sewage and Health Board had divided its sanitary investigations between a number of committees, one of the most important of which was to pursue the Government's brief by reporting upon "the crowded and unwholesome localities in the different wards of the city." The committee on overcrowding was chaired by John Smith, a member of the Legislative Council and Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Physics at Sydney University. The committee also included Benjamin Palmer, the Mayor of Sydney, Michael Chapman, an ex-Mayor and one of the most outstanding aldermen upon the City Council, doctors R. B. Read and Dansey, and following Read's resignation a civil engineer, Francis Grundy. Two sub-committees, the one comprising Palmer and Dansey and the other made up of Chapman, Read, and after his departure, Grundy, were formed and with the help of police guides began an exhaustive personal investigation of working class housing, reporting back to Professor Smith the conclusions from each tour.

For six months, from late in 1875 midway into the following year, committeemen undertook house to house inspections of working class districts throughout the City and into the nearer suburbs. With the expert help of Senior Sergeant Nicholas Larkins and Sergeant Dawson the two parties penetrated to and carefully described back street cul-de-sacs whose names at least had long been notorious for poverty and ill-health, such as Queen's Place one block north of the Sydney Exchange, and Durand's Alley and Quigley's Lane far to the south, both of them worming off Goulburn Street. Larkins and Dawson guided their visitors also to scores of other alleyways with reputations just as bad in the two policemen's eyes and yet whose very existence had hitherto been unsuspected by most committeemen.

Peering down narrow passageways opening off the busy thoroughfares of the City's business centre, committeemen found tenement blocks squeezed among crazily patterned canyons formed by the blank walls and paling fences of surrounding buildings, where the trapped air was fouled by the stench from uncollected house rubbish and accumulations of slops, and the sewage from defective closets and drains. Inside such dwellings the heat seemed intolerable, the rooms small and wretchedly furnished, the windows insufficient in number and so inadequately designed as to only partially open, if at all. In many a tiny backyard, an out-of-repair and evilly

25. The report was indeed reproduced in considerable detail in the S.M.H., 18.8.1876, pp.7-8.
smelling closet stood only feet away from living quarters.

These were conditions that in their essentials applied to any number of lanes leading off the major streets of the City centre. In such a light appeared Foxlow Place, a narrow passageway lined on one side by eight overcrowded three-storey tenement buildings, squeezed in on all sides by the high walls of the buildings lining Pitt and Castlereagh Streets. In Rowe Street, an alleyway just a few steps south along the same City block, committeemen saw 26 unwholesome dwellings, a family to each room, huddled between the back of the Prince of Wales Theatre and the stables and outbuildings of surrounding premises. Branching off behind the western facade of Pitt Street, a stone's throw away from the Sydney Exchange, the visitors were shown by their police guides through a network of similarly filthy and crowded little alleys to Robin Hood Lane, under whose already wretched homes ran all the drainage from surrounding buildings, thus forming said Chapman "a stream of filth, carrying with it fever, sickness, and disease".27

Among the central City blocks to either side of Goulburn Street, from the Belmore and Hay markets up towards Hyde Park in the northeast, committeemen found a densely settled working class population living along a maze of courts and alleys. While generally not belonging to the same level of dilapidation and unwholesomeness as the notorious Durand's Alley in the district's centre, the lanes still comprised tenement blocks built without sanitary foresight, badly ventilated, packed closely together, many of them still unsewered and relying instead on stinking common cesspits. Decent housing for working people was not to be had here for a modest rental, reported Chapman, and the resulting crowding caused by sub-letting made still more miserable living conditions in the district.28

Travelling away from Goulburn Street further south down George Street as it turned towards the City's southwest boundary, committeemen entered the newer housing areas that had developed so rapidly in the more outlying parts of Phillip and Denison Wards since mid century. Densely settled rows of buildings packed between narrow lanes were aplenty in these districts too, with dwellings internally confined, deficient in ventilation, and many

27. S. & H.B., 11th B., qu.307, p.657 (Foxlow Place); qu.243, pp.586-8; qu.247, pp.590-2; qu.304, pp.655-6; Appendix B (Rowe Street).
Ibid., qu.248, pp.592-3 (Robin Hood Lane).
of them already falling into ruin. Pockets of overcrowding here rivalled the inner City, and certain neighbourhoods were held by police guides in the same low repute as spots like Durand's Alley and Robin Hood Lane.\textsuperscript{29}

Taken as a whole however, inhabitants of the City's west and southwest might have been deemed tolerably well accommodated had it not been for the uniformly appalling drainage of these districts. In the absence of a full system of underground sewers and proper surface drains, sewage and house slops festered in street gutters, draining eventually into stagnant pools on low-lying ground and adding a further stench to the stinks already being produced by the common privies and cesspools along each lane, and in Pyrmont by the polluted waters of Darling Harbour.\textsuperscript{30}

A similar situation met committee-men when they began inspecting to the southeast of Goulburn Street. Passing through the pocket of closely built housing in the area about Wexford Street, immediately to the east of the Belmore Markets and extending up towards Hyde Park, Mayor Palmer and Dansey moved their inspections outwards to the mixed working and lower middle class housing of Cook Ward. Rapid development had transformed the district's mid-century landscape of semi-suburban villages at Surry Hills and Strawberry Hill, linked to the City by a straggling band of housing north to Goulburn Street and the base of Hyde Park, into one densely settled area. The whole western portion of Cook Ward, the two men reported with dismay, from the Wexford Street area in the north southwards towards the City railway terminus, was in a sanitarily disgraceful condition from want of a proper system of drains and underground sewers.\textsuperscript{31}

A more favourable contrast was met in Woolloomooloo, the working class district sandwiched between the rising ground of exclusive Darlinghurst and the park belt of the central City, and extending southwest from Woolloomooloo Bay towards the base of Hyde Park. It was a densely settled area, with buildings cramped closely together along narrow streets and lanes. Unlike Cook Ward and the more outlying parts of Phillip and Denison Wards however, the closely sited closets did not poison the air with stinks because here connections with water mains and sewers had become general.

\textsuperscript{29} See ibid., qu.260, p.609 (Paradise Row).
\textsuperscript{30} See, for example, ibid., qu.262, pp.611-2; qu.265, p.617; qu.274, p.627.
\textsuperscript{31} The Wexford Street area is described in ibid., qu.255-6, pp.602-5; see also the later description in S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.3, no.612 (Dr Clay, 17.3.1888). Note Dansey's description of drainage in parts of Cook Ward in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.282, pp.633-4; qu.291, pp.644-5.
While house ventilation in Wooolloomooloo was generally not good, said Senior Sergeant Larkins, and while there were numbers of overcrowded and unwholesome lanes and courts, dwellings in the district were on the whole "much better".  

The comparison Larkins had in mind was with the crowded and hidden lanes like Rowe Street and Robin Hood Lane off the City main streets, and the district about Goulburn Street. Even more, Larkins had in mind spots such as Washington Lane, by the stinking shores of Darling Harbour, and Syrett's Lane, an alleyway of brothels branching off Sussex Street further to the south. For the very worst of Sydney's "back slums", said Larkins, were heavily concentrated in the overcrowded and insanitary district of Brisbane Ward facing Darling Harbour, along Sussex, Kent, and Clarence Streets and their connecting lanes, from King Street in the north to the neighbourhood of Druitt Street in the south.  

Larkins' was no isolated opinion. City Corporation sanitary inspectors had long since isolated the whole western portion of the inner City as containing by far the worst slum districts in Sydney. That characterisation was fully endorsed by Sewage and Health Board committeemen. Dansey and Palmer had begun their City inspection tours in the Rocks, which ran diagonally from Dawes' Battery at the City's northern tip and thence behind the warehouses alongside Circular Quay towards Kent Street and Darling Harbour. Settlement in this, the oldest part of Sydney, was so close that on the heavily sloping ground refuse thrown from the houses in the one street fell upon those in the next. Behind the streets the area was a maze of interconnecting passageways, odd-shaped yards and steep stairways. Defective closets and open drains nauseated the two men, and dwellings inspected by them about the Whaler's Arms, a focal point for the neighbourhood, they classed as uninhabitable.  

The air of general dilapidation and unwholesomeness was relieved by pockets of modestly better dwellings tenanted by skilled working people. At the far south of Darling Harbour however, where Chapman and  

32. Ibid., qu.152-3, p.572; see also the reports of the house to house inspections in qu.297, p.650; qu.300-1, pp.652-4.  
33. Ibid., qu.147-51, p.571.  
34. See Dansey's comments in ibid., qu.41, p.558; qu.193, p.575. See also Plates 25-6.  
35. Ibid., qu.41, p.558. Likewise, on the higher ground further to the west, and extending across to Darling Harbour and to Miller's Point, the two men found old and decaying habitations standing closely
Read had begun their house to house inspections, no such contrasts were uncovered to relieve their impression of general dilapidation, ill-health and deprivation in West Sydney. Neither would they uncover any as they worked systematically northwards towards the Rocks. Nor would Palmer and Dansey find anything to contradict their two colleagues' reports when they later toured from Liverpool Street southwards around the head of Darling Harbour. The whole of the western inner City, from Margaret Street south along the entire mile length of Sussex Street, and from the harbour docks across to Clarence Street, appeared to the visitors as one common slum.36

Reviewing the committee's findings, Professor Smith concluded in the final report that

From the evidence now submitted it will be apparent that there can be no difficulty in accounting for the high death-rate which has unhappily obtained in Sydney for some years past; the wonder is that with so many predisposing causes to disease... the epidemics which have visited us have not been more severe.37

The presence across the western and inner City, committeeemen warned, of closely packed rows of tenement buildings, their unwholesomeness in many instances exacerbated by overcrowding, and about which there hung perpetually the poisonous fumes given off by rotting filth, drains, and defective closets, was a plain invitation "to the outbreak of some deadly epidemic."38

The Sewage and Health Board's shocking picture of the poverty and unhealthiness associated with much working class housing in the City was released only a week after that of an equally disturbing parliamentary select committee enquiring into common lodging houses in Sydney. Within the space of a few days newspaper accounts of the two reports had presented their readers with the most thorough portrayal of working class Sydney that appeared throughout the century. The committee's report, although not as exhaustive as that produced through the personal inspection tours of Smith's colleagues upon the Sewage and Health Board, nonetheless drew upon the expert knowledge of participants engaged in the other inquiry, and by

35. cont.
   juxtaposed with new buildings properly drained and ventilated; ibid., qu.115, p.565.
36. See the series of house to house inspections described in ibid., esp. pp.554-617.
37. Ibid., p.549.
38. The remark was made by Dansey, in ibid., qu.268, p.620; see also Chapman's comment at the conclusion of qu.263, p.614.
confining its attention to the very poorest and least-known level of City life had perhaps a greater impact upon the general community than even the report on overcrowding.

The committee was chaired by Angus Cameron. A former trade union official, he had in January 1875, in the first stirrings of interest by the colony's labour movement in direct political action, been elected with Sydney Trades and Labour Council backing as one of the representatives for the working class electorate of West Sydney. Witnesses were heavily drawn from the metropolitan police force, the most useful of whom were Senior Sergeant Larkins and Constable Mulqueeney, two of the policemen upon whose knowledge the Sewage and Health Board likewise relied extensively. Dansey and Alderman Chapman, both members of the Board's investigation of City overcrowding, were also examined. However it was Richard Seymour who with a mass of detail obtained during his sanitary work about the City's poorest districts became the principal witness for Cameron and his colleagues.

Assessing the information thus gathered, Cameron in writing his report concluded

The evidence which your Committee have obtained reveals a state of affairs existing in the heart of the metropolis, which is absolutely disgraceful, and calculated to work most injuriously upon the health and morals of the people.

No legislation existed as in Melbourne or the cities of Britain to regulate the sanitary condition of these working class lodgings. Witnesses described how in the Rocks and in western Sydney among the dock areas about Margaret and Erskine Streets were concentrated numbers of boarding houses accommodating seamen and artisans. The places were uncomfortably full and poorly ventilated, but at the same time their reasonable state of cleanliness and the weekly rentals of between 15 shillings and one pound gave them a reputation for modest respectability.

39. B. Nairn, Civilising Capitalism: The Labor Movement in New South Wales 1870-1900, Canberra, 1973, pp.8-19. Despite his key role in later moves to regulate common lodging houses Cameron was less active upon the 1876 committee than were four of its other members, Farnell, Sutor, Macintosh, and Terry. Parkes, who was also elected to the committee, appeared at only one of its meetings; S.C.C.L.H., pp.848-9.
40. Ibid., p.847.
The sanitary condition of the forty or so common lodging houses in the City was by contrast agreed to be absolutely appalling. Located about western Sydney, along Sussex, Kent, and Clarence Streets from Erskine Street in the north to Druitt Street near the head of Darling Harbour, these dwellings catered to "The very poor class of people living in the city". Unlike the more respectable boarding houses where lodgers booked in for a week or a fortnight at a time, common lodging houses provided casual accommodation by the night only, at the charge of sixpence or even fourpence a stretcher. The sixpenny lodging houses afforded overnight shelter for Sydney's floating population, for numbers of the casually employed like wharf labourers and for migratory labour from the interior.

Common lodging houses were said to consist generally of four to six cramped sleeping rooms, with perhaps as many as six or seven stretchers in a room only 12 feet square, and more lodgers sleeping on the floors. Proper ventilation under these conditions was said to be impossible, and working men were reported as saying they would sooner sleep in the open air were it not for police regulations against vagrancy. Larkins complained that bedding was in a very filthy condition, and when Seymour appeared before the select committee to give evidence he commented disgustedly that the lodging houses which he had inspected that morning with Dansey were crawling with vermin and the bedding covered with human excrement and blood. These conditions, he agreed, had a sure tendency to foster disease.

42. Ibid., qu.270, p.860. For a discussion of the numbers of lodging houses see Chapter Ten. The distribution of these overnight lodgings is described in S.C.C.L.H., qu.84-5, p.853; qu.138, p.855; qu.228, p.858.
43. See ibid., qu.142, p.855; qu.232, p.858.
44. Ibid., qu.168, p.856; qu.277, p.860; also S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.164, p.572. CHO's described how late at night in these overnight lodgings might be found the shifting members of "the travelling poor", those men and women "who have no fixed habitation or employment"; S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.4, no. 579 (Dansey, 9.8.1874); 1867, vol.5, no.1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); also 1867, vol.3, no. 761 (Graham, 8.6.1867). Chapman explained how "workmen and men from the country seeking employment...can live for 18d. a-day when hard up, by using these places; they get a bed for 6d., and at one of the cheap restaurants breakfast for 6d., and dinner for 6d." S.C.C.L.H., qu.427, p.865.
45. Ibid., qu.400, p.864; see qu.88, 90, p.853; qu.110, p.854; qu.136, p.855; qu.281, p.860.
46. Ibid., qu.136, p.855; qu.234, p.858; qu.278, p.860.
Concern at the disease menace posed by the wretched living conditions of common lodging houses and compassion at the deprivation of those seeking shelter within them had for years caused CHOs to keep the City's cheaper overnight lodgings under regular review. In these "overcrowded and dirty places", Dansey had warned in 1872, "disease is generated and wafted through the city to the danger of all the inhabitants." Cameron's 1876 select committee provided Dansey with the opportunity to re-emphasise his opinions and anxieties. Sixpenny lodgings in the City were "hot beds of filth and disease", Dansey told committeemen.

Not only may disease be brought on by the filth and over-crowding but it is liable to be spread by the people who sleep night after night in these filthy places. You may say the beds are sponges of infection.

Additional information for newspapers and reformers to draw upon in piecing together for the general community an impression of slum existence was provided by the scattered descriptions of common lodging houses contained in the pages of evidence accompanying Smith's 1876 report on overcrowding. More directly accessible to the general public was the vivid account of a tour by night among the cheap lodging houses along Clarence Street which appeared in the Herald early in 1878. The article was written by 'Vagabond', the pseudonym used by Stanley James, whose first hand descriptions of poverty in Melbourne and Sydney made him perhaps the antipodean equivalent of G.R. Sims in Britain. Lodgings for "the poorer class" in Clarence Street were terrible in the extreme, said James, being dirty and badly ventilated, out of repair, and abominably overcrowded. And yet in neighbouring Sussex Street, he marvelled, hearsay held that overnight lodgings were of "a still lower grade".

47. Aaron had directed attention to them in his first quarterly report in September 1857, and early in the next year devoted a special report to describing their conditions; S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (9.1857); 1858, vol.1, no.126 (10.2.1858). See also ibid., 1866, vol.1, no.147 (Graham, 9.3.1866); 1879, vol.5, no.1031 (Dansey, 9.9.1879).
48. Ibid., 1872, vol.6, no.1018 (Dansey, 9.12.1872); also 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865); 1867, vol.5, no.1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); 1875, vol.6, no.767 (Dansey, 9.11.1875); 1882, vol.5, no.1463 (Dansey, 9.9.1882). S.C.C.L.H., qu.301., p.861.
49. See the descriptions of Clarence Street lodging houses in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.40, pp.556-7; and the comments by Sergeant Dawson in qu.210, p.580.
James' comments on Clarence Street sixpenny lodgings were contained in the one isolated article in the Herald. A continuing source of information for general readers concerning the internal conditions of common lodging houses was provided by the press accounts of prosecutions for dirty premises made by Seymour against lodging-house keepers, and by the occasional outraged editorial comments upon the state of affairs thus brought to light. Inquests, too, at times directed newspaper attention upon the sanitary and social condition of sixpenny lodging houses. Newspaper coverage of the City Corporation inspection tours that began in 1880 under the authority of a new building law, the City of Sydney Improvement Act, to isolate buildings "unfit for human habitation", further strengthened popular connections between unhealthiness and poverty on the one hand, and common lodging houses on the other.

Newspaper accounts of the more general attention given by the Mayor and his sanitary officials to crowded and unhealthy tenement blocks across the City were also heavily coloured by anxieties concerning poverty-bred disease. Such premises, it was said, "cried aloud of sickness and disease." That assessment was still further strengthened by Sydney's smallpox epidemic in 1881, when inspection tours of the infected working class districts again pointed to the connections between poverty, dirt and disease. Newspapermen on subsequent Corporation house to house tours later in the 1880s repeatedly punctuated their descriptions of working class housing in the City with remarks upon the conditions of "pestilence and death" and "the disease-breeding tenements" they frequently encountered.

51. For examples, see ibid., 20.5.1882, editorial p.5; D.T., 11.8.1882, editorial p.2.
52. James' 1878 Clarence Street article, for instance, was in partial response to a recent suicide in one dilapidated lodging house in nearby Sussex Street; see S.M.H., 25.1.1878, ' Suicide In A Common Lodging-House: Danger To The Public Health' p.5; and the editorial leader which the inquest's findings prompted in ibid., 28.1.1878, p.4. See also ibid., 26.2.1879, 'Sudden death In A Common Lodging-House' p.3.
53. See the descriptions of Kent Street lodging houses visited by Corporation inspectors, in D.T., 6.6.1882, ' Inspection Of Rookeries' p.3; ibid., 13.6.1882, p.3; E.N., 7.11.1883, 'City Inspection' p.4.
III

While still collecting information for the Sewage and Health Board report on overcrowding, Chapman had returned from investigating one passageway off Clarence Street remarking compassionately:

How life can be supported under such painful conditions seemed to us almost a mystery, and our hearts felt sore within us as we noticed the squalid appearance and attenuated forms of the poor little hollow-eyed children scattered about the place.

Numbers of other more fortunate citizens likewise reacted in part with a deep humanitarian concern to the detailed and wide-ranging accounts of urban poverty which emerged from the sanitary investigations of the later 1870s and the 1880s.55

Their compassion was however qualified by disgust and concern at the extreme unwholesomeness revealed to exist in City slums. An abiding impression of filthiness and neglect of personal cleanliness was created in the minds of those reading the reports upon working class housing and common lodging houses in 1876, or glancing through the later newspaper accounts of mayoral tours to inspect unwholesome buildings. And disease, everybody agreed, was born of such dirtiness.56 From descriptions of working class localities in the City it seemed that the likelihood of disease arising from the insanitary environmental conditions produced by the cramming together of badly built and improperly drained houses was being intensified by an apparently perverse fondness for dirt among the inhabitants of these areas. Large numbers of City working people were seemingly disregarding the most sacred canon of popular nineteenth century sanitary dogma, the virtue of personal and domestic cleanliness.57


While discussing the significance of Mearn's pamphlet, The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, the D.T. early in 1884 expressed a passing misgiving that so great was the new interest about the urban poor in Sydney and London that it was becoming a fad in danger of being "ridden to death"; D.T., 25.2.1884, editorial p.5.

56. The district of Sydney east towards George Street from Darling Harbour, Seymour had told the S. & H.B. in April 1875, was the filthiest part of the City as well as being the most overcrowded and unhealthy. The area needed a special Inspector of Nuisances of its own, he said critically; S. & H.B., 1st R., qu.352, p.351.

57. See above, Chapter Two. See the discussion of the middle class "gospel of cleanliness" in Smith, The People's Health, pp.218-9. The notion of cleanliness pervades Charles Kingsley's The Water Babies; see esp. ch.2. The Herald noted during disease alarms in 1875 and again in 1884 that no legislation designed to improve city health could be properly effective if "people are filthy by choice." S.M.H., 8.12.1884,
Popular assessments of the degree of sanitary irresponsibility among the City's poorer districts were based upon the apparently reliable evidence of experts. The Reverend Mr Sheppard had remarked to the Sewage and Health Board in 1875 how "the filthy habits of some of the poor are very noticeable to anyone who visits their houses; at many times the stench is intolerable in these places". Criticism of the state of cleanliness in the free overnight accommodation provided by the Soup Kitchen was countered by Sergeant Larkins, who told Board members that such was the filthiness of the people eating and sleeping there that he thought it impossible to keep the place clean. Newspaper descriptions of City Corporation sanitary tours during the 1880s to condemn unwholesome buildings provided casual readers with an array of vivid images of "filth and misery of all kinds" uncovered by the sanitary officials among the homes of working people in the City.58

Popular images of filthy slum dwellers received fresh encouragement from Seymour's police court prosecutions for dirty premises.59 Because of legal shortcomings the Corporation was frequently unable to prosecute landlords or their agents successfully, and so it was the working class tenant who appeared in court to be fined and blamed for offences which were often not in his or her power to remedy.60 The validity of connections made between poverty and filth was seemingly further justified by the frequency with which the courts produced fresh evidences of grossly insanitary conditions within the common lodging houses about western Sydney. Generalising from the descriptions of overcrowding and potential ill-health in one Sussex Street lodging-house made at a coroner's court in January 1878, the Herald devoted an editorial leader to explaining how "The lowest haunts of large centres of population are made what they are by the people who live in them."61 In view of the extreme filthiness brought to

57. cont.
editorial p.7; 4.3.1875, editorial leader p.4. See the CHO's corroborating statement in S.C.C., L.R., 1862, vol.2, no.217 (Graham, 8.3.1862).
59. By this means, it was reported in August 1882, "during the year that has passed away, and in the early part of the present one, between £3000 and £4000 have been paid, mainly by the dirty people, at the instance of the inspector, for their indulgence in their favourite luxury." Ibid., 11.8.1882, editorial p.2.
60. See above, Chapter Five.
light in common lodging houses by the Inspector of Nuisances' prosecutions it was unrealistic, reported the *Daily Telegraph*, to judge the keeper always to blame and the lodger guiltless. Of the latter the newspaper declared "Dirt had become second nature to them." That judgement was backed by Seymour himself, who when asked by Cameron's select committee in 1876 to describe the people using common lodging houses replied "Their general character is that they are very low, drunken people, and very filthy in their habits - very filthy - extremely dirty in themselves." 62

Reporting upon an inspection of the working class housing estate of Blackfriars, near the head of Blackwattle Bay on the City's southwestern boundary, the then CHO Dr Clay wrote in May 1890 how the unhealthiness caused there by the "numerous failings" in personal cleanliness was worsened by the practice of keeping all windows firmly closed and thereby intensifying the close atmosphere within. It seemed the rule, said Clay, "to despise the only means that most of the tenants possess of ventilating their rooms". 63 Here, it appeared to contemporaries, was another example of the way in which working people in many instances could almost be said to go out of their way to intensify the unwholesome conditions under which they lived, thus increasing the likelihood of diseases breeding and affecting more respectably minded citizens.

During their inspections of workingclass housing in 1875 and 1876 members of the Sewage and Health Board inquiry into overcrowding had also been struck by the frequency with which windows were kept closed by householders. Inspecting the mixed factory and working class housing district through which Sussex Street passed near the head of Darling Harbour, Mayor Palmer remarked with astonishment upon the unaccountable efforts of the residents, in many of the houses by no means well ventilated, to exclude every breath of fresh air from their dwellings by closing their windows and doors. This is the case in almost every court or lane which we have had occasion to inspect. 64

The observation was fully confirmed by churchmen and by the city

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63. Dr Clay, report dated 9.5.1890, in *P.M.C.G.S.*, 1890. In a review of ventilation in working class premises later in the year, Clay noted that from inspecting some 700 dwellings in the poorer parts of the City it seemed a general practice to keep windows shut and where air-bricks were provided to stuff them with rags; *ibid.*, report dated 29.7.1890; see also Seymour's comments on this subject in *S.C.C.*, L.R., 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888).

Graham had once written in a report during 1865 that "The great secret of the preservation of Health consists in two words 'Cleanliness and Ventilation'." Evidence gleaned from the available sources of information about the homes of working people in the City, and especially in the unwholesome western district alongside Darling Harbour, suggested to the wider community that among the anonymous slum districts of Sydney these two essential prerequisites to city health were being generally ignored. The wretchedness and deprivation highlighted within areas of the City from the latter 1870s onwards struck outside observers as constituting a public health menace to the whole of Sydney, and the habits of the urban poor were blamed for worsening and perpetuating this crisis.

65. Ibid., qu.4, p.551 (Dean Cowper); qu.70, p.561; qu.98, p.562 (the Rev. Mr Sheppard); qu.130, p.567 (Bowmaker).
CHAPTER SEVEN
The Region of Depravity and Moral Death

I

The ready availability through the daily newspapers from the later 1870s of apparently accurate information detailing the lives of the City poor gave even to casual readers a wide-ranging picture of an existence among hitherto largely unknown or overlooked lanes and courts which seemed totally alien in its separateness from mainstream community life and values. Discussing the implications of the Sewage and Health Board's report on overcrowding, the Herald remarked how well-known City Alderman John Young, in a letter from Italy some time ago, destroyed the illusions of some of us by showing that in many a much-admired building there the beauty of materials lay only upon the surface; the marble walls were only veneered. Here we plume ourselves upon genuineness and solidity, and point with pride to the substantial though elaborately ornamented structures that are springing up as if by magic in our streets. There is little room for pride [.] It is only veneering on a larger scale. The handsome stores and warehouses that front our streets are but screens in many instances to human rookeries and rabbit warrens, where squalor reigns supreme, in the midst of an atmosphere of stinks.1

Midway through 1881 the Daily Telegraph, reporting on Corporation inspection tours of buildings "unfit for human habitation", conjured up images for its readers of

Lanes reeking with filth and swarming with population, crowded together in pest-houses which disregard every condition of health and common decency...The walls crumbling to decay, the roofs so low that there is hardly room to stand upright in the wretched tenements, windows nailed down, excluding every breath of fresh air, foulness within and without... These haunts of pestilence, malaria, and poverty have in many cases a fair exterior to some of the chief thoroughfares of Sydney, while behind the thin veneer of respectability lurk all the horrors of civilised degradation, and, if the term can be used, of modern barbarism.2

Newspaper descriptions of these Corporation tours, with headlines such as "Slum Surveying Expedition", and "Among The Rookeries", or "Human Sties In Sydney", presented images as of some foreign and unknown land.3

Specific scenes recorded by sanitary investigators and other visitors among the City's back lanes became merged with each other in the retelling to produce for the lay person a generalised image of poverty and degradation, dirt and unhealthiness, which was applied with little differentiation between districts across much of the City.

Newspaper image-making of an alien world of poverty and dirt hidden

1. S.M.H., 19,8,1876, editorial leader p.4.
2. D.T., 10,5,1881, editorial leader p.3.
3. Ibid., 25,1,1883, p.3. E.N., 14,1,1885, p.4. Ibid., 1,2,1881, p.2.
among courts and alleyways unknown to most citizens was merely an elaboration of the shocked descriptions of specific housing problems given by middle class visitors to City slum districts. The social origins of the slum visitors were crucial. Professor Smith for example, chairman of the Sewage and Health Board's committee on working class overcrowding, lived during 1876 in the well-to-do portion of Macquarie Street overlooking the Sydney Domain. Mayor Palmer, described by the Evening News in 1875 as one of the wealthier men in the city, had an address in exclusive Darlinghurst, and Michael Chapman lived in the affluent suburban retreat of Glebe Point. Dr Read likewise lived in the comfortable middle class environment of suburban Randwick. Only Dansey, at that time living at a City address in York Street, near Wynyard Square, had any first-hand familiarity with the housing conditions of City working people.4 The sharpness of the contrasts identified by committeemen between mainstream community existence and the poverty and unhealthiness of City slums thus rested upon the perception by some of the more fortunately placed in society of a working class way of life totally unfamiliar to them.

Descriptions of slum life by the charitable societies, churchmen, and other middle class dabblers in social and sanitary reform were likewise coloured by the lack of similarity between their own way of life and the conditions prevailing among the crowded working class housing of the City. So far removed did the latter conditions appear from anything within the experience of most people that observers sometimes doubted their ability to communicate their experience to others in words that could fully depict the depth of the deprivation and unwholesomeness they had seen.5

4. Ibid., 9.1.1875, 'Town Talk' p.2 See Sands', 1876 directory; Francis Grundy's address - 183 Pitt Street - is possibly an office address only. Although probably only Dansey had had any previous experience of Sydney slums, Chapman mentioned how during 1859 "I visited the underground cellars in the London Docks"; S. & H. B., 11th R., qu.243, p.586.

5. Describing a visit with Chapman to one alley close by the wharves and reeking mud flats of Darling Harbour, Read concluded that "To appreciate properly the wretched state of ruin and discomfort which these buildings present, it is necessary to visit the place; no description can convey a true impression of their utter unfitness for human habitation." Ibid., qu.242, p.584. Professor Smith echoed that opinion in the Committee's final report; ibid., pp.539-40. At the Sydney Ragged School's annual meeting in 1881 the Society's secretary rounded off his report by concluding lamely, "Those who have never known the want of food, clothing, and kindness will hardly be able to realize the wretchedness of which the teachers, in their capacity of visitors to the homes of their scholars, are made cognisant." S.M.H., 9.8.1881, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3.
Sewage and Health Board members were appalled when in May 1876 while inspecting the half forgotten cul-de-sac of Swan Street, only half a block up George Street from Durand's Alley and the other alleyways about Goulburn Street, they discovered a narrow unnamed passageway leading to another almost unknown row of damp, dilapidated and overcrowded houses. The swarms of inhabitants "seemed to be of the very poorest class", and being completely obscured by surrounding walls and buildings had been overlooked even by the probing Inspector of Nuisances, Richard Seymour. It could not have been imagined, explained committeemen, "that this passage should lead to a lower depth of discomfort and impurity" than that already discovered in Swan Street.6

No-one at all familiar with the condition of much working class housing about the inner City would have accused the Board of over-dramatisation in its description of Swan Street and its abutting passageway. The Anglican Dean of Sydney, the Reverend Macquarie Cowper, remarked that he had been sometimes surprised during his work among the City poor to find "such a number" of confined courts hidden from the view of passers-by along the main streets.7 Emerging from Rowe Street after an inspection for the Sewage and Health Board in 1876, Chapman remarked to Smith in a statement later reprinted by the Herald,

The houses contain for the most part four rooms each, of very moderate size, and in very many instances each room is occupied by a separate family who wash, cook, eat, drink, and sleep in the same apartment, all their family arrangements being confined within four walls, which are seldom more than 10 or 12 feet apart. It has been well said that half the world does not know how the other half lives. Neither Dr. Read nor myself, although we have both of us lived a great many years in Sydney, could have credited without ocular inspection the terrible state of overcrowding which we witnessed in this locality.8

In great measure, the emphasis given by middle class visitors to this apparent separateness and alienness of City slums stemmed from the great physical shock to their senses experienced in these districts. Morbid

7. Ibid., qu.12, p.552. Anyone leaving the imposing facade of buildings lining the major thoroughfares, Dr Graham had said in 1867, and "turning aside into the lanes, Courts, and Alleys frequented by the poorer part of the population" would immediately enter a different world; S.C.C., L.R., 1867, vol.5, no.1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); also 1864, vol.3, no.511 (Graham, 9.6.1864). See S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.258, p.1296.
8. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.243, p.586. Eleven years later newspapermen reported that "a most appalling state of affairs was discovered to exist" in Rowe Street when the lane was inspected by the Mayor; S.M.H., 16.3.1887, 'City Buildings Unfit For Habitation' p.11.
imaginings, that by entering some of these places they were perhaps covering themselves with germs of disease, accounted for only part of the visitors' disquiet. Upon concluding with Mayor Palmer the Board's inspection of the Rocks, Dansey recalled how "the unwholesome odours which have met us at every turn" made both of them actually feel ill. 

Something of their discomfort was frequently experienced by Corporation parties and accompanying newspapermen during inspections of working class districts in the 1880s to order the vacating of homes unfit for human habitation. The combinations of smells and sights offended the nose and turned the stomach. Returning from one such tour a Daily Telegraph correspondent recollected with a shudder a passageway between two Sussex Street houses, full of foetid water leading as a kind of turgid stream to an equally turgid lake or sea of liquid filth in the back - but whew! no one can stand it; and after one glance round at the filth and rubbish lying in all directions, a hasty retreat is beat, the party doing its best to keep clear of the line of slush in the passage.

Common lodging houses visited by Sewage and Health Board committeemen in western Sydney were so swarming with bugs and fleas, Chapman told Cameron's 1876 select committee, that afterwards on arriving home he had to leave his clothes outside on the verandah.

Dansey had previously, in September 1873, pointed to Seymour's sanitary inspection of some 3,200 houses between Sussex and Clarence Streets in order to emphasise the frightful state of poverty, immorality, drunkenness and filth that exists in this City. The Inspector has found a number of houses which you can not enter without the risk of being covered with vermin and in

9. Note the anxieties expressed at the risk of infection in S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.2, no.184 (Dansey, 9.3.1874); S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.142, p.569 (Chapman's concluding remarks after inspecting Queen's Place); also the concluding paragraph in D.T., 17.9.1881, 'Sydney Rookeries' p.6.

10. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.193, p.575; also Dansey's mention of the great "trial to the senses" encountered while inspecting a lane off Liverpool Street; ibid., qu.254, p.602. During a subsequent tour to the south of Darling Harbour, the CHO said later, one house closet "emitted such an abominable stench that it caused an involuntary fit of vomiting on my part, and very nearly upset the Mayor. It had the effect of bringing our labours for the day to a sudden termination"; ibid., qu.257, p.606.

11. D.T., 17.9.1881, 'Sydney Rookeries' p.6; a similar instance is recorded in ibid., 25.1.1883, 'Slum Surveying Expedition' p.3.

12. S.C.C.L.H., qu.428, p.865. Seymour said disgustedly that upon emerging from such lodging houses he had repeatedly found himself covered to the knees with lice; ibid., qu.243, p.858.
which there were poor sickly children lying on the floor revelling in their own dirt.  

The assault upon his senses experienced while collecting information for the Sewage and Health Board investigation of overcrowding seemingly fully validated his earlier opinion concerning the alien environment of City slums. Chapman's talk of two worlds existing within Sydney had been no empty symbolism but rested on the evidence of the physical protests by visitors' own bodies as, quite involuntarily, their body chemistry triggered alarms that the environment in slum districts was physically alien to them.  

Giving evidence in 1891 to the Royal Commission on Chinese gambling, Thomas Playfair said of some of the rookeries condemned by him while Mayor as being unfit for human habitation, "I could never have believed that any human being would or could live in such places".  

This separateness of the life led by Sydney slum dwellers from that familiar to observers from more privileged sections of the community struck the latter as reaching its most extreme in the common lodging houses of the western City. In order to see these places fully occupied, visitors inspected the crowded rooms late at night, when hand-held lamps and candles mixed beams of light with dancing shadows in the darkness, giving even to familiar objects an air of unreality. Theirs was a vision of something akin to the Hadeian underworld.  

Returning from touring the Clarence Street common lodging houses in 1878, Stanley James told Sydney readers in one of his Vagabond articles how

In some cases there were seven or eight beds, placed side by side, with not room to move between, the occupants having to crawl in from the feet. The beds were all mattresses on stretchers — the least said about the coverings the better. The ventilation in every case,

13. S.C.C., L.R., 1873, vol.5, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873); see Seymour's house to house report in ibid., vol.6, no.1044 (Seymour, 9.12.1873).  
14. See S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.70, p.561 (the Rev. MrSheppard); qu.139, p.567 (the city missionary, Tilley); see also the accounts of the especially stifling atmosphere in rooms, in ibid., qu.275, p.628 (Pyrmont); and qu.305, p.656 (Durand's Alley). Dr Read, recounting a tour with Chapman of the western City between Druitt and Liverpool Streets, remarked

At midnight we found ourselves at the foot of Liverpool-street, at which place the stench from the head of Darling Harbour was offensive to a degree which we could scarcely have credited... It appeared to us a matter of surprise that any persons could live at all in the immediate vicinity... It was low-tide at the time, - the whole of the foreshore was exposed, and the air reeked with the poisonous exhalations from the drainage polluting the harbour.

Ibid., qu.37, p.554.  
although windows might be propped open, we found to be totally insufficient. To enter these rooms and see the heaps of stifling stewing humanity was horrible. The atmosphere choked one with a fearful taste. Each man lay, sometimes almost naked, sometimes all clothed, in a feverish rest which could not fit him for work on the morrow. Those who were undressed had their garments beneath their heads for the purpose of safety. The pencil of Gustave Doré would be needed to draw the different forms and positions. Some tossed about restlessly – others were evidently drunk – those awake hunted for vermin. And considering that these were not paupers or beggars, but in many cases labouring men and sailors, it was really horrible to think that they could not have any better shelter. What diseases are not contracted in such holes?  

James' impressions were shaped not only by the reactions of his physical senses. The conclusion drawn by James and other investigators that because lodgers slept fully clothed therefore thieving was probably rife demonstrated the crucial importance of cultural responses in shaping the concept of a hidden, alien world inhabited by the urban poor. The apparent neglect of cleanliness by many City working people was in the eyes of outside observers only one example among many of the way in which inhabitants of City slums stood isolated from the norms of community behaviour. It was a moral judgement shaped by the middle class image builders, the sanitarians, churchmen and newspapermen who reported life in City slums, all of whom had been culturally conditioned by their own upbringing to accept at least publicly the loose rules of conduct championed by their class as the basis of social order and community cohesion. From their particular perspective it seemed that in the unwholesome environment of the City slums these socially desirable codes of behaviour were being ignored.

Working people residing in common lodging houses, Dansey agreed with a questioner on Cameron's 1876 select committee, were somewhat lower "in the scale of humanity" than were normal folk. Near the root of such

18. According to an editorial in Parkes' Empire newspaper far back in 1857, if we see a habitation habitually dirty, we may be sure that the inmates are disorderly, if not something worse. Drunkenness and cleanliness are not companions. And other vices will have their abode there too. And it is no uncommon remark that where ill-health is generated by filth and neglect, the deficiency in morals is quite equal.

cultural distinctions lay the influence of nineteenth century Evangelicalism, embodied in the mixed societies of churchmen and lay people who laboured to relieve distress and preach the Scriptures among the City slums. The mores of middle class culture found in Evangelicalism, with its starkly contrasting images of the darkness of Sin and the sublimity of Grace, a potent instrument shaping community perceptions of the urban poor.20 Evangelicalism was the spiritual expression of middle class attitudes and culture, in which secular and religious codes of behaviour were so intertwined that the one served as a measure for the other. Christian strictures concerning moral conduct formed the foundation for the secular ideal of respectability, and strengths of character like hard work, thrift, and diligence were praised both for their accord with secular middle class values and also as evidence of spiritual progress. Poverty offended on both scores, and for evangelicals it became merged with love of dirt, Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and immorality as the great sins of modern city life.21

While city life was acknowledged by one clergyman in 1876 to be associated in part with culture and progress, "the centre of population was also the centre of sorrow, and sin, and vice, in their worst and most degrading forms".22 Relief work and Gospel teaching among City working people was viewed by evangelicals as a great missionary undertaking to rescue sinners, penetrating to the very depths of urban poverty and debasement. It was a work of great compassion and humanity, but as with the Corporation sanitary officials it was a compassion mixed with disgust at the degradation they met with.23 A sacred duty required Christian

20. Asked by the S. & H.B. to describe the sanitary consequences he had noticed from working class overcrowding the Reverend Macquarie Cowper, the evangelistic Dean of Sydney, replied, "My attention has been directed much more to the moral than physical evils resulting from this cause." S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.2, p.551. See G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age, Oxford, 1969, esp. pp.1-2.


22. S.M.H., 10.5.1876, 'The Sydney City Mission' p.5 (the Rev. M. William); see also the annual report in ibid., and in ibid., 15.5.1878, 'Sydney City Mission' p.3.

23. As the Reverend G. F. Garnsey told the 1879 annual meeting of the City
missionaries to descend into the hidden back lanes "to pour into this mass of moral darkness and corruption the light and the salt of Gospel truth."

Evangelical commitment ran like a linking thread between Sydney's charitable societies. The Anglican Dean, Macquarie Cowper, who was closely connected with the Ragged Schools and the Sydney City Mission, was typical of many churchmen who shared their energies between the different city societies working among the poor. The Sydney city missionaries, likewise, with their dual responsibilities as religious educators and distributors of charity, were core members both of the Night Refuge and Reformatory, and the N.S.W. Temperance Alliance, and with the joint assistance of these two bodies helped to run the Sunday Morning Breakfast Meeting, providing meals and moral teaching to the destitute once weekly. The city missionaries also aided the Sydney Ragged Schools and shared with the Ladies Evangelistic Association the religious education of those men seeking relief at the Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen. For many years the goals and attitudes of these various organisations had been regularly and widely publicised, as newspapers recorded society meetings and annual reports, quoting from different tongues a common story of struggle to bring salvation to those whom evangelicals described with mixed compassion and horror as "the lower classes."

To the evangelicals it seemed that the apparently widespread extent of degradation and sin among the City's poorer districts interposed a deep gulf between "the lower strata of society" and its higher levels. Sin implied rejection of the religious and secular codes of behaviour which tied society together in its existing form, and so by their apparent non-participation in community norms of behaviour these lower orders were deemed to form a destabilising element within Sydney. At the annual meeting of the City Mission in 1879 Dean Cowper said apprehensively that

The social, moral, and Christian position of the community was deplorably sad. To any one who had the love of God and of humanity

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23. continued

Mission, "It is a great effort to go out into 'the streets and lanes of the city, and to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind.'" Ibid., 13.5.1879, 'Sydney City Mission' p.6.

24. Ibid., 10.5.1876, 'The Sydney City Mission' p.5 (the Rev. A. Burdett); also Ibid., 9.5.1877, p.6 (Burdett); 13.5.1879, p.6 (W. J. Foster).

25. Ibid. (the Rev. F. H. Cornforth); see also the chairman's comment in Ibid., 7.9.1880, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3.

26. The expression was used by the Reverend A. Gardiner in Ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3.
in his heart it was deeply affecting to see the squalid vice, immorality, and irreligion to be found in the back lanes of this city. Vice was common in all large centres of population, but as the result of twenty years' experience in Church work in this city he was convinced that the social and religious condition of the city had not in anywise improved, nor was it improving...Indeed, he believed it was on the increase. Vice produced pauperism, and pauperism was often the parent of crime. He often looked with great apprehension on the future of this city, which as it was growing in population, was also growing in vice, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, and other forms of evil which he should not name, but which were grievous to think of. If greater efforts were not made to raise the moral tone of society and increase the religious spirit of the people, we should go down hill, and crime and every form of moral evil would increase and multiply amongst us.

Evangelicals worried that the lower orders had been "thrown out of the race of life", and common prudence as well as Christian duty required their re-integration.27

II

Evangelical opinion was crucial in shaping the cultural perspective of the sanitary inspectors and newspapermen who provided the community with the bulk of its detailed information about City slums.28 The Sewage and Health Board, Cameron's parliamentary select committee, and the newspaper accounts of Corporation inspections of insanitary buildings presented a common picture of City slums which in terms of conventional and desirable social behaviour formed a separate and alien world characterised by widespread drunkenness, debauchery, prostitution, and crime.

Sewage and Health Board committeeemen touring Rowe Street in December 1875 reported disgustedly of their visit to a room rented by an elderly couple, that the man was found lying stupidly drunk on an old sofa, with an empty rum bottle beside him; whilst his better-half, who is about the same age, was crouching down at the foot of the stairs in a vacuous state, lost to all sense of

28. Dansey, a member of the Church of England, repeatedly emphasised the moral as well as the sanitary evils of City slums. So too did his predecessors as CHO; see below, Chapter Nine. Aaron served as president of the Unitarian Church in Sydney; A.D.B., vol.1, p.1. Edward Bradridge, the City Building Surveyor, redrafted the City Improvement Bill so as to incorporate in it the suggestions made by Dean Cowper, the Reverend Mr Sheppard, and the Society for Promoting Morality in the City; Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, qu.311, p.211.
decency, with a stream of urine proceeding from her along the floor. Beside her was a pannikin with a mixture of rum and Colonial ale, which we were told is her favourite beverage.29

Echoing the evangelicals' vigorous propaganda campaigns against drunkenness and the colony's licensing laws, the committee on overcrowding identified intemperance as one of the most potent causes of the filth and unhealthiness that characterised the City poor.30

Drinking and debauchery were fearfully common among inhabitants of the City's poorer districts, said Senior Sergeant Larkins, and in their own reports committee men referred frequently to finding in the dwellings they visited people recovering from recent excesses. Dansey recorded disapprovingly how the drunken inmates of one cottage in the Rocks had decorated their walls with pornographic pictures, and made "lewd suggestions" to the visitors. On another occasion Chapman related how in one tenement building off Union Street in the western City he and Dr Read saw two girls *en déshabille* who were trying to sleep off the last night's debauch. They did not hesitate to inform us that they had taken too much overnight, and addressing us alternately as 'old boss', and asked us to 'shout' for them.31

Probably the girls had already been debased into harlots, said Chapman.32

Standing near the centre of the depraved lives led by these examples of fallen womanhood were said to be the City's common lodging houses. In many of them, Seymour told Cameron's select committee inquiry, rooms for men and women adjoined each other "and no doubt during the night they all mix;

30. See the committee report in ibid., pp.540, 541, 548.
32. The depressing consequence of such dissipated habits was highlighted by one newspaperman accompanying a City Corporation inspection of insanitary buildings in 1881. Calling in at the Central Police Station, the party noticed how the beginning and end of a certain career were brought together in the persons of a bright-eyed girl who had just been fined for associating with Chinese, and a foul-mouthed hag, who yelled curses through the cell door as she beat it furiously with her head and fists. A glance at her repulsive features rendered it almost impossible to notice the fact that one gentleman present knew her 35 years ago when she was one of the prettiest barmaids in Sydney. E.N., 1.2.1881, 'Human Sties In Sydney' p.2; also D.T., 6.6.1882, 'Inspection Of Rookeries' p.3.
there is nothing but a door between them." Worse still were said to be the City's Chinese lodging houses. Sewage and Health Board committeemen concluded from their investigations that in these hidden "dens", reeking with the smell of opium and crammed with Chinamen and their European woman consorts, "fearful immoralities" and "midnight orgies" took place upon a scale "far more frequent and wide-spread" than could hitherto have been imagined.33

The 1876 select committee report on common lodging houses provided further and much more frank accounts of the sexual depravities among Chinamen and "women of the lowest classes".34 Working class girls 10 and 12 years old were said to be particularly sought after by the Chinese, and after being plied with opium shared their beds with such abandon as to finish "so exhausted that they could not walk across the room".35 Seymour gave vivid eyewitness accounts of spots like Durand's Alley and Cyrus Lane off Goulburn and Sussex Streets where queues of men waited turns as couples writhed before them, and of the ravages of syphilis upon the girls' bodies.36 After touring some of these premises with a Corporation party in early 1881, one hostile newspaperman recorded how vice in its most hideous form fattened and festered in nearly every hovel entered. In some of the yards young girls were standing, whose disordered dress and half-stupefied appearance, showed they had but a few minutes before been hurried from scenes that would not bear inspection.

The scenes enacted in such places were, he wrote, "a disgrace to our boasted civilization".37

Organised prostitution too was claimed to find here a congenial home. Police and Sewage and Health Board committeemen reported that among the women haunting Chinese lodging houses could be numbered some of the lowest

34. S.C.C.L.H., qu.24, p.852.
35. Ibid., qu.265, p.859; also qu.100-3, p.854; qu.262-4, p.859; qu.403-4, p.864; qu.418, pp.864-5.
36. Ibid., qu.261, 265, p.859; qu.300, p.861. See also Seymour's equally frank descriptions of Chinese premises in Durand's Alley and Goulburn Street in S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.5, no.1000 (Seymour, 9.10.1877).
37. D.T., 1,2,1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3; see also the report of an earlier Corporation inspection of Durand's Alley in ibid., 28,5. 1880, 'The City Improvement Act' p.3.
and most disreputable City prostitutes. It was however from the European sixpenny lodging houses that the bulk of street women were said to ply their trade. With their attention firmly directed upon studying social and sanitary conditions among working people, investigators discreetly disregarded 'respectable' brothels catering to a middle class clientele. The focus instead was upon the less prosperous levels of street workers who made a living among the alleyways of the City slums.

In scattered neighbourhoods of ill-repute about the west and south of the inner City, in Goulburn Street, Exeter Place, and off Sussex Street in Cyrus Place, Cohen's Court, and Syrett's Lane, common lodging houses were said by churchmen, Corporation officials, and the police to serve as much as low class brothels as places for legitimate overnight shelter. Rooms were set aside by the keepers for "women of easy virtue", who would return from the streets with clients "for several hours or for the night, and no questions asked." Dean Cowper told Sewage and Health Board committee men that at one stage some 57 prostitutes had been located in Syrett's Lane, and Seymour reported how Exeter Place was occupied almost entirely by harlots of the very lowest class, "thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen of them lying in one room without beds, or table or furniture of any kind."

What most appalled the middle class groups who produced and publicised these images of moral degradation among the City slums was the implication of their findings for the equilibrium of bourgeois society. A community, they argued, was something more than a disorganised mass of individuals competing against one another in narrow pursuit of self-gratification. Rather, it was an intricately linked system in which mutually beneficial social groups co-operated from their different levels within the one

structure towards the smooth functioning of society as a single harmonious whole. This notion, more of a reality in the minds of its publicists than in the facts of social life, was nonetheless as a myth a powerful sanction for the norms laid down by the dominant middle class culture as to what constituted socially desirable behaviour. For the secret of community unity, it was said, lay in sustaining a common morality as the basis for all social relations. Without a common culture, a society would split asunder. Essential, then, to community harmony was the full participation of all its members in the dominant value system. Evidence collected from among the insanitary working class districts of the City however supported the evangelicals' contention that here in effect existed a semi-autonomous society characterised by deviance from the norms of the surrounding metropolis.

Accounts in Cameron's 1876 select committee report of apparently widespread immoralities in common lodging houses and especially in those of the Chinese, were in the eyes of concerned supporters of middle class culture the most obvious illustration of the alarming extent to which participation in those crucial shared values binding society together was breaking down. Sydney's Chinese population faced hostile criticism, and Parliament was petitioned to put a check upon "the brutal lusts and unnatural vices of these foreigners". Moral outrage was not however directed solely at the Chinese. Observers pointed out that vice was as


45. For an excellent study of the middle class concept of participation as a means of securing "mass moral self-control and common commitment to dominant moral ideas" (p.42), see S. Yeo, Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis, London, 1976.

46. The evidence supplied by witnesses like Seymour was "truly horrible", declared an E.N. editorial, and in some parts, said a Herald leader, was unfit for publication in a newspaper; E.N., 8.8.1876, editorial p.2; S.M.H., 19.8.1876, editorial leader p.4; also ibid., 11.8.1876, editorial leader p.4.
much a characteristic of Europeans as of the "heathen Chinee".47

Avenues for healthy participation in community life and for the reaffirmation of common values were feared to be ignored or watched with antagonism by the lower orders. Local associations of the type that proliferated among other sections of the community, temperance and friendly societies, debating groups and sporting clubs, were among the City slums seemingly replaced by the debasing pursuit of self-gratification in drink. The school system was likewise said to be frequently ignored.48 Most alarming of all was the apparent alienation of the lower orders from the churches and thus isolation from the crucial religious and secular values they preached. Speakers at the annual meeting of the City Mission in 1879 warned that normal church worship was failing to attract the lower orders from their surroundings of "evil and... depravity".49 Slum dwellers seemingly looked with suspicion at the chapel and even religion itself as "things peculiar to the better class". Children were growing up believing "that churches and ministers were all very well for rich people, but could have nothing to do with them".50

The significant thing about remarks concerning non-participation, whether in the moral attitudes or the institutions of society, was the way they were directed not simply at individuals but at a continuing entity, the City slums, and at a permanent social class, the lower orders. The problem was perceived not as a frozen one, confined to a static group of people and relevant only to a specific point in time. Rather, it was a continuing problem. The lower orders was a tag applying not to petrified humanity but to a living social group which was constantly renewing itself

47. Petition on Common Lodging Houses, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1875-6, vol.6, p.867; the petitioners (the document contained 206 signatures) requested not merely stringent supervision of the "foreigners" but regulation of all the City's common lodging houses. S.M.H., 19.8.1876, editorial leader p.4; also ibid., 4.9.1876, editorial p.5.

48. Government public schools did not in any case cater to the very poor, but churchmen and lay people running the Ragged Schools complained that "parents of this class do not care whether their children go to school or play about the streets. It is only by constant visiting we can secure their attendance." Ibid., 4.9.1878, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.8 (annual report). That allegation was invariably heard at the Schools' annual meetings.

49. Ibid., 13.5.1879, 'Sydney City Mission' p.6 (the Rev. P. H. Cornford; also W. J. Foster, and Cowper).

over time irrespective of the cycle of birth and death among individuals.

The slum was no static place; it was alive and self-sustaining.

Working class residential districts in the City were damned as places "that seemed to actually breed vice and crime."51 After touring a terrace off Sussex Street for the Sewage and Health Board in November 1875, Chapman and Read reported that "The whole atmosphere of this area was sickening, and the habits of the occupants so slipshod and dirty that any newcomer could scarcely fail to become speedily demoralized".52 More worrying to outside observers even than the potential demoralisation of new arrivals in the slum districts was the manner of the upbringing of slum children who were thus "born and brought up in vice". Inspecting one hidden cul-de-sac in the City centre, Sewage and Health Board committeemen remarked in 1876 how the "Children there are in swarms, but they are small and sickly-looking, evidently preparing a generation stunted in growth, morally and physically".53

That children should thus be left free to pick up debased habits suggested to many observers an unhealthy neglect of parental

51. Ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3 (the Rev. Mr James Jefferis); see also the comment by the Reverend Mr Burdett, reported in ibid., 10.5.1876, 'The Sydney City Mission' p.5; and ibid., 19.8.1876, editorial leader p.4. The opinion was shared by CHO's; see Chapter Nine.

52. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.114, p.564. Their supposition was later supported by Larkins when questioned on the matter by Read:

176. Do you find that in almost all these places where the houses are bad and the ventilation deficient, the people who live in them are of a corresponding class? They are inhabited by the lower order of people...

177. And do you think that if respectable persons were compelled through unfortunate circumstances to occupy one of these houses, they would long remain respectable? I am satisfied that they would not if they remained there any time.

178. You think that they must lose all sense of decency and morality? Yes, gradually they would, because all the people living in these courts associate and drink together.

Ibid., pp.572-3; see also Dawson, qu.229, p.580. Such evidence is not of course 'neutral'. Notice how Read seeks confirmation of his own preconceptions by prompting Larkins to supply suitable corroborating information.

responsibilities. Visitors to slum districts often worried that the lower orders' dangerous non-participation in key institutions such as churches and schools was paralleled by an apparent break up of that other key institution preserving social equilibrium, the family.\textsuperscript{54} Left by their parents to wander unguided about the City, slum children would, said middle class observers, "grow up and become wanderers, Arabs, vagrants, larrikins", debased by the temptations they had met with on the streets and also by the "evil influences" of drunkenness and swearing in their parents' homes.\textsuperscript{55}

Behind expressions of compassion for the poor and neglected children lay unstated the spectacle of a self-sustaining subculture of deviance transmitting its perverted attitudes from parents to children and so through generations of slum dwellers. The apparent perpetuation across time of shared evils like drunkenness, crime, sexual licentiousness, and parental neglect, suggested to concerned middle class observers the presence within Sydney of a semi-autonomous and inherently antagonistic cultural underworld, whose potential for destabilising existing society was made plain by its competition with dominant bourgeois attitudes and behaviour.

Speaking at the twenty-first anniversary of the Sydney Ragged Schools in August 1881, the society's secretary warned "that there are hundreds of children in the city of Sydney totally ignorant of all that is good, and that from these classes spring those troublesome members of our community known as 'larrikins'.\textsuperscript{56} Larrikinism however appeared to others as merely the by-product of a deeper social malaise. During one of their inspections of the overcrowded working class homes along Rowe Street in

\textsuperscript{54} Committee men on Board house to house inspections noted that whereas working class children from clean and tidy houses were invariably schoolgoers, in "the abodes of dirt and drunkenness... the little ones are neglected." S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.259, p.609. Some children attending the Ragged Schools were said to come from places that could scarcely even be called a 'home', where they were surrounded by vice and wretchedness, and "receive such cruel treatment, and are so neglected... that the Ragged School is looked upon as a safe retreat." S.M.H., 7.9.1880, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (annual report); see Grundy's angry account of parental neglect and cruelty in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.301, p.654.

\textsuperscript{55} S.M.H., 16.9.1879, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (the Rev. Mr Paterson and the annual report); see also the Schools' annual report for 1878 in ibid., 4.9.1878, p.8; and Sergeant Dawson's comment in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.229, p.580.

\textsuperscript{56} S.M.H., 9.8.1881, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (annual report).
early 1876, Sewage and Health Board committee men had been forcibly struck firstly by the unusual amount of dirt, and secondly by the large numbers of apparently neglected children idling about the door steps; "children who, if allowed to grow up without education, will only live to swell the dangerous classes of society."57

Thus were Sydney's "criminal classes" perpetuated.58 The process was illustrated by Senior Sergeant Larkins for the 1876 select committee on common lodging houses. Sleeping in the sixpenny lodging houses by day, said Larkins, could be found a number of young men known as 'The Forties'. They were a band of thieves who as children had lived on the streets, sleeping about the wharves and supporting themselves by stealing. As grown men they now prowled the City until early morning, and then rested in lodging houses into the afternoon.59

When a wave of burglaries hit the metropolis in October 1876 suspicious eyes looked towards "the criminal classes" in the Inner City slums. The Herald called for more police, pointing out that "What medical officers are to epidemics of disease, police officers are to epidemics of criminality".60 One resident in fashionable Woollahra urged more direct measures, suggesting that a single revolver shot from an enraged householder would quickly put a stop to "these deeds of darkness" and allow wives and daughters to sleep again without "fear and trembling". In late November two men were convicted of burglary and sentenced to 10 and 15 years' hard labour on the roads, a rather harsh decision it was said, but one that was necessary if community order were to be maintained.61

In the eyes of the publicists for conformity with dominant cultural values and behavioural norms, there existed within Sydney a dangerous netherworld characterised by disease, moral depravity, and crime. Parkes'

58. S.M.H., 4.9.1878, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.8 (John Kent). The Melbourne-based Australasian had likewise maintained in 1869 that "the criminal classes and the destitute classes shade into each other, and mutually supply recruits"; Australasian, 26.5.1869, editorial p.816.
59. S.C.C.L.H., qu.163-6, pp.855-6. Common lodging houses possessed a reputation as centres of criminality, since it was only when investigating crimes that the police enjoyed a firm right of entry inside such premises; ibid., qu.152, p.855; qu.168, p.836; qu.223, p.857; qu.341, p.862; also Dansey's comment in qu.301, p.861. Police powers of entry inside premises are described by Constable Sweeney in the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, qu.10466-7, p.766.
60. S.M.H., 19.10.1876, editorial p.4. Ibid., 26.10.1876, editorial p.5.
61. Letter by 'Woollahra' entitled 'Housebreaking', in ibid., 23.10.1876, p.5. Ibid., 24.11.1876, editorial p.4; and see the report of proceedings in the Central Criminal Court in ibid., 23.11.1876, p.7.
parliamentary committee on the condition of the working classes had in 1860 identified it as "the region of depravity and moral death", whose anarchic behaviour was "undermining the social happiness of the community".62

The perturbing 'discovery' by city communities of such apparently non-participating fringe groups was likewise in nineteenth-century Britain, Europe, and North America, an outcome of the sanitary investigations prompted by anxieties concerning epidemic disease.63 At the start of the 1881 smallpox epidemic in Sydney, an Evening News reporter touring infected areas in Surry Hills seemed to detect actual signs of physical regression to more primitive human forms among inhabitants of the district's more unwholesome housing areas.64 Commenting upon evidence from Britain that each new generation born to slum dwellers was characterised by a progressive "reversion towards an earlier and lower ethnic form", the Herald suggested in 1887 that such hereditary processes might not only be shaping physical appearance but "the intellectual and moral being" as well.65 But whether the cause was genetic or simply social and environmental, it seemed to outside visitors that City slums in Sydney were breeding a debased and self-sustaining sub-society of social and moral outcasts, existing with a minimum of healthy integration upon the fringes of mainstream community life.

62. S.C.C.W.G.M., p.1272. Parkes had expressed sorrow "to discover this darkening mass of physical and moral disease", and pointing to the region's apparent non-participation in the common moral attitudes and goals which bound society together, he concluded pessimistically:

'It would seem that, in the short space of a lifetime, we have reproduced here all the criminal abnormalities which have grown up through centuries of ignorance, pestilence, arbitrary-government, and civil war in the cities of the old world.'

Ibid.

63. See Rosen, p.659, in Dyos and Wolff, The Victorian City, vol.2. See also the interesting account of the first systematic survey of the slums of western Montreal City, in H. B. Ames (P.F.W. Rutherford, ed.), The city below the hill, Toronto, 1972. Rutherford writes that before Ames' inspections the well-to-do knew as little about the city's working classes as they did about the natives of central Africa, and that they were more aware of the slums of London, Paris, or New York than of their own; pp.6-7.

64. See Chapter Fourteen. Background suspicions that vice and crime among the Sydney lower orders might be linked to a biological process of degeneration, which was gradually separating slum dwellers into a permanently debased sub-race, were given greater force by the popularity of this belief in Britain from the later 1880s and onwards into the 1900s; see Smith, The People's Health, pp.119-22; also Stedman Jones, Outcast London, pp.127-51; and Gertrude Himmelfarb's discussion of Henry Mayhew's beliefs in 'Mayhew's Poor: A Problem of Identity' pp.311-2, Victorian Studies, vol.14 (1971).

65. S.M.H., 22.10.1887, editorial p.11.
Anxiety among middle class intellectuals at the apparent existence within the general community of a deviant subculture of the lower orders was the product not so much of social reality as of the cultural perspective from which the City's working classes were viewed. Anxiety centred upon what was said to be the non-participation of these lower orders in the dominant moral attitudes which sustained conventional social behaviour. Criminality and the pursuit of personal gratification indicated a dangerous disregard for the notion of community, a denial of "the duties of citizenship." The seemingly widespread drunkenness in City slums meant defiance of worthwhile virtues like sobriety, industry, and prudence, whose acquisition was a measure both of respectability on earth and of spiritual reward in the life to come. Instead, energies were sapped, wages recklessly squandered, and even furniture and clothing bartered as the consequence of the passion for drink. The lower orders were a non-contributing appendage to society, said the evangelicals. Socially and economically, as well as morally, they were beyond the pale, outside the ranks of "useful citizens".

That the lower orders were lower indeed was thus a conclusion based upon the subjective class assessment by one class of another. What was unfamiliar about the lives of City working people to middle class observers was judged by them to be unfamiliar and alien to what was normal and healthy in society generally. Non-participation was a negative role assigned to slum dwellers by the dominant middle class culture. Recognition as active and worthwhile participants within the community was denied to them. Membership in a deviant subculture of the lower orders was the status attached to those whom deprivation made stand out as different in a society which gauged an individual's worth by the accumulation of wealth and the associated material trappings of home and household ornamentation which signified bourgeois respectability.

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66. Ibid., 16.9.1879, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (the Rev. Mr Paterson); see also G. W. Barker's comment in ibid., 7.9.1880, 'Sydney Ragged School' p.3.

67. Middle class assessments of the link between drunkenness and poverty are discussed in Chapter Eight. The expression "useful citizens" was made by Barker while chairing the annual meeting of the Ragged Schools, reported in the S.M.H., 9.8.1881, p.3. The expression was used repeatedly at the Schools' annual meetings.

68. See W. Miller, 'The Elimination of the American Lower Class as National Policy: A Critique of the Ideology of the Poverty Movement of the 1960s', pp.279-80, in Moynihan, On Understanding Poverty; also
The very concept of the 'lower orders' rested not on precise empirical tabulation of economic deprivation but on sweeping cultural judgements concerning normalcy. Simple poverty, indeed, was at times discounted by visitors to crowded and insanitary working class districts in the City as being a necessary characteristic of residents in such areas. A certain type of character, it had sometimes appeared to Sewage and Health Board inspectors, was actually attracted to living in such wretched, and frequently deprived, neighbourhoods. Among newspapermen, too, City slum dwellers were often distinguished from the mainstream community primarily in terms of alleged oddities and deficiencies of behaviour. It was not the deprivation of working people but rather their idle misuse of prosperity in self-gratification that was noted by a Herald reporter when he visited the Rocks in early January 1877, following the discovery of smallpox in nearby Miller's Point. The streets, he complained, were littered with broken bottles, and fish and jam tins, carelessly dumped there by residents during their Christmas festivities. According to the Herald the greatest cleavages in society were not economic at all but moral and behavioural. Increasing working class prosperity, it seemed, made no difference to those whose habits were low by nature.

The cultural subjectivity at the root of the concept of a subculture of the lower orders produced at times quite considerable divergence between perception and reality. The criss-crossing of perception with reality was most evident in the differing individual responses by middle class observers of City slums. Colouring all their conclusions was a generalised impression of an alien subculture of the lower orders, but because precise empirical observation was so shot through with subjective moral preconceptions, no consensus existed respecting the particulars or extent.
of this presumed entity. Parkes' 1860 select committee report had tempered its comments on working class deprivation and vice by concluding there is another side to the picture; the region of depravity and moral death is limited... These dark features do not belong to the character of the laboring masses of society. The witnesses, who have had the best opportunities of forming correct opinions respecting them, concur in assigning to the general body of the working classes of Sydney - the mechanics and others permanently settled as citizens - a high character for honesty, intelligence, and sobriety.72

But just who belonged to "the well-ordered portion of the working population" was disputed by different observers. Questioned by Parkes' committee whether "incurable intemperance" was a major cause of working class unemployment, one Corporation official answered that this was so in no more than one case in a hundred. Dean Cowper however, in common with the majority of outside observers, asserted drunkenness to be "prolific of crime, wretchedness, and want."73 Similar differences of opinion characterised all investigations of the City slums. What one man would point to as an example of behavioural deviance among working people, another man would dismiss, while making fresh allegations of the lower orders' nonconformity with normal community attitudes and behaviour.

Superimposed on each other, the conflicting assessments of what characteristics distinguished the subculture of deviance from the wider community gave the impression of including more and more City working people within the ranks of the lower orders. Paradoxically so, for the considerable differences of opinion among observers, revealed in their separate findings detailing specific aspects of working class existence, in fact queried the very assumptions on which the hostile stereotypes of the lower orders were based.

Antagonistic comments about City working people, that they seemingly wilfully herded together in foul slums because of a preference for the dirt and degraded behaviour which there surrounded them, ignored the explanations by working people themselves, that although they had no wish for it, they were obliged to locate their homes in the unwholesome districts of the City. The necessity of living near her husband's work was the cause given to Sewage and Health Board committeemen by a woman living in Robin Hood Lane.74 Residents along one narrow passageway off Campbell

73. Ibid., qu.248, p.1296. Ibid., qu.1547, p.1382 (Cowper).
74. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.248, p.593. Two old women sharing a 8' x 8' room in Rowe Street explained to Mayor Riley during a Corporation tour of insanitary buildings in 1887 that they lived here rather than
Street, near the Haymarket, pointed to their sickly children and then lamented that they must remain where they were since better accommodation could be had only at an impossibly long distance out into the suburbs. In a house along another narrow lane, this time in the north of the City, "The tenant, a working man, when we asked how he could live in such a place, said - 'I am a poor man and can't afford anything better'." 75

Working people were crowding into unwholesome dwellings, reported Dansey, because they had not the means to pay the rents demanded for more suitable accommodation. 76 These people could not all be labelled the degraded lower orders, since many of them were angrily outspoken about the insanitary conditions in which they had to live. In a two-roomed dwelling along Kent Street, recorded Chapman, the "tenant complains bitterly of want of ventilation. When asked why she lived in such a place she said it was quite impossible to get another house, the rent of which would be within her means." 77 High rents were driving "respectable working men" to live in wretched hovels, said Sergeant Dawson. 78

Chapman too remarked that "respectable" working people thus numbered among the inhabitants of City slums. 79 On the whole, however, committeemen did not generalise from the specific explanations provided by individual working people as to why they lived in dilapidated and insanitary City buildings. Assessing the common problems faced by these

74. cont.
"far away" in the suburbs or the outer City because Rowe Street was "very convenient" to the laundry where they worked; S.M.H., 16.3.1887, 'City Buildings Unfit For Habitation' p.11.
75. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.258, p.607, Ibid., qu.248, p.594 (Abercrombie Lane); the same applied to the family of a lumper at the docks, whose home in Robin Hood Lane was visited by committeemen; Ibid., p.593.
76. Ibid., qu.268, p.620. After inspecting some particularly dilapidated dwellings with Read in an unnamed court at the corner of Erskine and Clarence Streets, Chapman said of the buildings' tenants, "these people occupy them while in this condition solely because if they were to leave they would not know where to find other houses to live in, decent houses at a moderate rent being very scarce in the neighbourhood." Ibid., qu.143, p.570.
77. Ibid., qu.198, p.579. Tenants of a house in Pyrmont greeted S. & H.B. investigators with advice that their home "was a stinking hole, and that vermin abounded in it. We saw no reason to doubt either statement but everything to confirm it." Ibid., qu.275, p.628. Working people complained repeatedly of the nuisances caused by nearby factories, defective drains and closets, and if they lived near Darling Harbour, of the seethes arising from its befouled shores; see above, Part I.
78. Ibid., qu.228, p.580. See also McLerie's comments in S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.82, p.1288.
79. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.256, p.604; also qu.143, p.571 (McCrory's court); qu.247, p.591 (no.20, Rowe Street).
people, and which together produced and sustained City slums as a whole, was a task avoided or unrecognised by committeemen. Chapman's own uncertain grasp of the housing problems common to all working people was revealed by his naive comment upon the dwellings along Market Street, in the City's west, "they are all such worthless dilapidated tenements that the wonder is that any one can be found willing to occupy them." As to what underlying causes actually produced overcrowding in Sydney, the committee in formulating their conclusions remained silent, contenting themselves instead with describing the consequences resulting from such overcrowding in the City.  

More generally recognised was the complaint of the City working classes that the dilapidated and insanitary condition of their homes was due to the reluctance by landlords to maintain and repair their properties. The criticism had been repeatedly and outspokenly publicised since the late 1850s by CHO as they sought to isolate and remedy the sources of ill-health in Sydney. Landlords were criticised by them for not connecting their tenants' homes to the sewers, with neglecting to maintain their properties in a reasonably habitable condition, and with demanding extortionate rents while ignoring the requests of tenants to make necessary repairs. This profiting from others' misfortune appeared in an even worse light, the Corporation officials alleged, when it was borne in mind that slum landlords were frequently persons of considerable wealth and high standing within the community. Aaron and Graham declared that despite the high rents tenants were with good reason afraid to complain about the condition of their homes lest they receive abrupt notice to quit.

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80. Ibid. qu.194, p.575. It was only as the consequence of the actions by the City Corporation during the 1880s against buildings deemed unfit for human habitation that the pressures binding working people to the City centre gradually received some recognition and attention; see Chapter Fifteen.
81. For instance, see S.C.C., L.R., 1862, vol.4, no.624 (Graham, 9.6.1862); 1866, vol.3, no.489 (Graham, 9.6.1866); 1869, vol.2, no.265 (Dansey, 9.3.1869); also 1873, vol.2, no.212 (Dansey, 10.3.1873).
82. See Graham's remarks in ibid., 1859, vol.5, no.835 (9.9.1859); 1865, vol.1, no.157 (28.2.1865); 1866, vol.6, no.1049 (8.12.1866).
83. Ibid., 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860); 1868, vol.1, no.206 (Graham, 9.3.1868); 1870, vol.5, no.914 (Dansey, 9.9.1870); 1874, vol.3, no.341 (Dansey, 9.5.1874).
84. See ibid., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); 1873, vol.5, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873).
Members of the Sewage and Health Board inquiry into overcrowding, too, commented forcefully upon landlord neglect of their tenants. Many buildings were found to be unconnected to the underground sewers even when one passed within feet of the property. During inspection tours, committeemen regularly heard tenants complain that the landlords would do nothing for the upkeep of their properties, and in Clarence Street one such tenant informed us that whenever he applied to the landlord for repairs he was invariably served with a written notice to quit. He had a number of these documents on a file, which he exhibited in triumph as a full and sufficient excuse for any shortcomings, past, present, or to come. Landlords charged high rentals for buildings which they kept in a condition scarcely fit for habitation, said Dean Cowper. Deploring these evidences of "private greed", the Herald commented that "If the owners of these rookeries and rabbit warrens, and centres of evil influence could be held responsible and severely punished, they would only have their due."

The final committee report recognised that many working people, far from revelling in dirt and unwholesomeness, were in fact keenly aware of the insanitary condition of their dwellings and complained "that 'the landlord will do nothing.'" The same recognition was again made intermittently by newspapers in their coverage of City Corporation

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86. Returning from inspecting the abutting lanes and alleys in the south of Sussex Street, Chapman remarked. What struck us most forcibly during our visit to these crowded localities was the total absence of any attempt on the part of the owners or landlords to do anything in the shape of repairs... We noticed no signs of lime, or white-washing, paint, or any attention paid to the drainage... These essentials to the preservation of health do not appear to have engaged their attention at all. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.39, p.556. Professor Smith suspected that much of the blame attached not to owners but to their agents; ibid., qu.111, p.563.

87. Ibid., qu.143, p.571. See above, p.125 n.46, for S. & H.B. references to landlords neglecting to connect their premises to nearby sewers. References to tenants' complaints concerning their landlords are legion; one working man in Goulburn Street, complimented on the clean state of his home, replied "No thanks to the (strong adjective) landlord; it is all my doing"; qu.252, p.598. See also qu.141, p.568. One tenant in Rowe Street alleged that the landlord had not repaired or cleaned the premises for the past seven years; qu.247, p.591.

88. Ibid., qu.4-6, p.551. His colleague, the Reverend Mr Sheppard, agreed with Dansey that such slum property often belonged to persons "occupying a high position in the City"; qu.110, pp.562-3.

89. S.M.H., 22.8.1876, editorial p.4.
inspection tours of insanitary buildings during the 1880s.\textsuperscript{90} Sewage and Health Board committeemen had concluded in 1876 that many tenement buildings were indeed maintained in such an unwholesome condition as to make cleanliness and domestic good order difficult. After inspecting the overcrowded dwellings lining Sylas Lane, off Sussex Street, Chapman and Read remarked specially upon "the impossibility of preserving habits of cleanliness and decency under such circumstances".\textsuperscript{91}

Even concerning the apparent deviance of slum dwellers from the norms of desirable domestic and social behaviour, scattered evidence existed upon specific details which contradicted the general impression of a non-participating subculture of the lower orders. Seymour's assertion to the 1876 select committee on common lodging houses that there were many sixpenny lodgings for both men and women in which nightly immoralities took place was refuted by other witnesses before the committee. On the basis of his own inspections with the Sewage and Health Board, Chapman explained that separate lodging houses catered for female lodgers. In any case, he said, apart from old women of the vagrant class very few females frequented sixpenny lodgings. Most young women lived instead in boarding homes.\textsuperscript{92}

The sweeping characterisation made before Cameron's select committee of sixpenny lodgings doubling as whore houses was also overdrawn. Seymour conceded under questioning that not all common lodging houses were used for prostitution. Senior Constable Mulqueeny, who was helping to guide the Sewage and Health Board committeemen inquiring into overcrowding, said that he knew of only two or three lodging houses frequented by prostitutes. Larkins, with his extensive knowledge of the City's lower quarters, declared that he had not come across any sixpenny lodging houses being used for immoral purposes.\textsuperscript{93}

Allegations of Chinese immoralities had been likewise exaggerated. A return prepared by the Inspector General of Police in December 1876 pointed out that all together there were only 579 Chinese resident in the

\textsuperscript{90} S. & H.B., 11th R., p.545. See the accounts of Corporation slum tours in Chapters Thirteen and Fifteen.

\textsuperscript{91} S. & H.B., 11th R., p.545. Ibid., qu.39, p.555; Sylas Lane contained 21 two-room dwellings, each occupied by an average of five tenants. Three W.C.s were shared between the whole of the inmates; ibid.

\textsuperscript{92} S.C.C.L.H., qu.411, p.864. David Robertson, the City Corporation Water Inspector, told Cameron's committee that he knew of only one female lodging house, in Fowler Square, off Sussex Street; Ibid., qu.481, p.867.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., qu.269, p.859 (Seymour). Ibid., qu.348, p.862 (Mulqueeny). Ibid.,144-5, p.855 (Larkins).
metropolis, only 11 of whom were known to be living regularly with unmarried women. When in January 1890 the inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children alleged that in Chinese dwellings along Sussex Street, "the most shocking depravity exists," senior police officers dismissed the story. Commenting upon the incident, a Herald editorial writer noted that the police rejoinder questioned the overall accuracy of many a tale that had been heard alleging Chinese immoralities with European women. Seymour himself had modified his views upon the Chinese, as data compiled during regular inspections of their premises by his officials in the 1880s gradually gave the Inspector of Nuisances a more balanced picture of the Chinese in Sydney. Still, said Seymour, gambling and opium smoking were rife among the Chinese, and many European young women "are allured into these dens where modesty is dethroned and the worst vices practised." Entrenched prejudices concerning Chinese immoralities persisted.

Impressions of the separate character of the lower orders were sufficiently strong and many-faceted for the scattered qualifications made concerning this or that aspect of working class behaviour to be disregarded or easily adapted to. Questioned by Parkes during his examination by the 1876 select committee on common lodging houses, Larkins agreed that while petty theft in overnight lodgings was "pretty common", this did not mean that Sydney was facing a wave of criminality. Despite the corroborating evidence of the Inspector General of Police in his annual reports to Parliament, casual observers aware only of the police court cases reported daily in the newspapers, continued like Dansey to regard

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96. Corporation reports showed that Chinese premises in the City did not number more than several hundred during the 1880s; S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.8, no.2436 (Seymour, 11.12.1886); 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888); also Seymour's annual report in P.M.C.C.S., 1889. As regards cleanliness, Seymour admitted, Chinese dwellings compared very favourably with "many of those of the lower class of Europeans"; S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.8, no.2436 (Seymour, 11.12.1886); also Seymour's annual report in P.M.C.C.S., 1891.
common lodging houses as fountains of criminality and to eye City slums generally with suspicion as the haunts of the criminal classes.

In much the same manner concern at the apparently unnatural indifference by the lower orders for the mixed responsibilities and joys of family life continued to be loudly voiced, heedless of occasional cautious dissenting views. Sewage and Health Board committeemen and other middle class observers had frequently spoken critically of the low standard of parental responsibility in slum districts revealed by the large numbers of unsupervised children forever idling about the streets. A different interpretation, however, was suggested by a remark from Palmer during his inspections with Dansey around Cook Ward. "In our examination of house properties", the Mayor reported, and especially in back streets and lanes, we have usually a considerable following of juveniles. During this day's inspection our escort was unusually large; they followed us persistently from house to house, apparently in a state of intense wonder and enjoyment.99

Apart from Palmer's one passing comment, committeemen never paused to consider that the large numbers of children they saw might have had less to do with parental neglect than with the rarity for slum children of seeing a party of frock-coated gentlemen, one of them the Mayor of Sydney, trooping past their homes. That spectacle would have acted as a magnet for all the children of the neighbourhood.100

Similar contrasts of perception and reality had been evident in the complaints by the Sydney Ragged Schools at the numbers of working class children "who were shamefully neglected by their parents." Not only, it was said, were parents frequently indifferent concerning their children's education, but some parents actually forbade children to receive schooling.101 Little appreciating the economic complexities of family life among the least prosperous levels of City working people, the middle class organisers of the Ragged Schools rarely produced realistic explanations for the intermittent attendance of many children at their schools. That girls often needed at home to watch younger children while their mothers went to work, and that their brothers might be employed selling the morning or evening newspapers or carrying meals to working men,

100. See Plate 32.
went generally unrecognised. Instead, the matter of schooling appeared as one more example of the shared attitudes and behaviour which bound together the lower orders in common membership of a debased subculture of their own.

It was this emphasis upon the gulf between the values of the general community and the conflicting attitudes of the lower orders which underscored the unreality of assumptions about the existence of a semi-autonomous subculture among the City slums. Appearing as a witness in 1859 before Parkes' select committee on the Sydney working classes, James Palmer had given an example of a wretched block of buildings in Sussex Street whose occupants, unskilled working people, were yet respectable in their habits and tried their utmost to keep the place clean. Sewage and Health Board committeemen during their house inspections in the middle 1870s likewise witnessed ample evidence, revealed in the importance placed by working people upon 'home, sweet home', of the deep attachment by the so-called deviant lower orders to the same values which knit together the general community.

Recording a subcommittee tour in November 1875 near Miller's Point, Dansey briefly mentioned the party's turning aside from Crown Road "to Robin Place, where the houses are very old but kept clean; and from Crown Road to Smith's Paddock, where there is a small shanty in front, splendidly clean, and with flower garden attached, the picture of neatness." Rarely did committeemen demonstrate their recognition of the significance of such observations. They tended to see only disorder, poverty, and unwholesomeness. As Mayor Palmer remarked incredulously of residents in one back street neighbourhood in Cook Ward, they "are perfectly satisfied; indeed they seem proud of their dwellings". That was precisely the point. Board reports, like newspaper accounts of working class dwellings inspected by the City Corporation from 1880 onwards into the 1890s, repeatedly demonstrated the emphasis placed by many working people upon domestic neatness and household ornamentation, which together served as the foundation of bourgeois respectability. The signs were there to be

102. Ibid.; also the annual report in ibid., 9.8.1881, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3, and the supplementary comment by Kent. See James' Vagabond articles, 'The Waifs And Strays Of Sydney', in ibid., 25.1.1878, p.3; and 1.2.1878, p.3.
105. Middle class reactions to the Corporation's slum tours are discussed in later chapters. See Plates 9, 34-5.
An imitation-stone terrace, built with care but now showing signs of neglect. Flaking plaster-rendering reveals the bricks underneath, and weather-stains streak the walls beneath the guttering and sandstone sills. Two housewives yet stand at the doorstep, conscious of the care lavished over the upkeep and external appearance of their homes. Venetians and clean floral blinds and curtains of different designs hang in the windows. Sunlight shines on second-storey windows, whose glass panes gleam from regular washing and polishing.
The photograph shows the intersection of Pottinger Street and Ferry Lane, in the north of Gipps Ward. Children pose shyly on the doorstep of the corner house, in whose ground-floor window can be seen a gaily patterned blind, pulled halfway down over cheap white-lace curtains. The window frame has been painted dark green or brown by the occupants. Shrubbery grows over a paling fence further up Pottinger Street, and more greenery, from balcony plants or the branches of a tree, are visible along Ferry Lane. The second house from the corner in Pottinger Street has had the edging of its panelled door outlined with white paint. The occupants have also colourwashed their doorsteps in white. Pipeclay was regularly hawked by city vendors for use in whitening fireplaces and doorsteps.

1. Such minor maintenance and improvement projects were in Britain undertaken by the household rather than the agent or landlord, and the same was probably the case in Sydney; see Jones, 'The Aesthetic', p.176, in Dyos, The Study. In Britain, green was the cheapest mass-produced paint for external surfaces; ibid., p.185.
seen and their significance appreciated. That they generally were not
appreciated underlined the distorting influence of the unconscious cultural
arrogance with which middle class visitors observed the unfamiliar
environment of the City slums.106

Slum dwellers were not culturally distinct from the dominant norms
which characterised attitudes and behaviour in the wider community. They
were no less influenced by the values and beliefs enshrined in the larger
society than was anybody else. Their 'debased' habits - the frank attitude
to drink, the blunt language, the early maturity of children in matters
such as sexual relations107 - was evidence not of cultural differences of
behaviour deeply entrenched in the personality but rather indicated a
situational adaptation to circumstances.108 Working people compelled to
live among the substandard and unwholesome housing of the City were
dependent upon their landlords for the structural condition of their homes,
but in superficially little matters like sweeping floors and polishing
windows, the placing of clean and cheerfully patterned curtains and the
accumulation of household belongings, they displayed "a keenly felt
aesthetic defence against the general dirt and dullness" of the City
districts where they had to live, and announced proudly to the external
world their own respectability.109

p.178, while discussing "facts" makes the point that "we are never
neutral even in what we 'see' - we must always select, interpret, and

107. Drawing attention to cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis he had seen
among children employed in factories, Dr Arthur Renwick said
disapprovingly in 1876 that "the boys become men too soon, and the
girls women too soon"; Progress Report from the Select Committee on

108. Like Elliot Liebow's description of ghetto behaviour in contemporary
America, the aspirations of nineteenth century slum dwellers in Sydney
formed "a skewed variant of mainstream... values, the closest that
people can obtain given the poverty, unstable and demeaning
employment, lack of education, and prejudice under which they suffer";
R. Fox, Urban Anthropology: Cities In Their Cultural Settings,
of Negro streetcorner men, London, 1967, esp. p.209. This was not the
consequence of passive and compliant subordination to middle class
leadership but was rather an expression by working people of their
search for and affirmation of self-respect; see G. Crossick, An
Artisan Elite In Victorian Society: Kentish London 1840-1880, London,
1978, esp. p.136. See also S. Meacham, A Life Apart: The English

also Meacham, A Life Apart, pp.26-9, 88-90. The emphasis in Liebow,
Tally's Corner, given to feelings of shame and low self-esteem (e.g.
It was a respectability which outsiders with their different perspective only occasionally recognised. Describing a Sewage and Health Board inspection of two houses along Clarence Street, in the western City, Chapman recalled that in one was a couple and their child, the man being employed as cook in some eating-house in the city. The place was not unclean, and the woman appeared to keep it in a tidy condition, but the stench was exceedingly offensive. Both houses are greatly out of repair, and as the landlord refuses to do anything to improve them, steps should at once be taken to remove them. So bad are they that they are scarcely fit for dog-kennels.110

Instead of recognising such behaviour for what it was, a typical effort by working people to maintain 'standards' in a difficult environment, committeemen tended to attribute it more to the isolated conduct of a few exceptional individuals.

Committeemen met another such individual living in Robin Hood Lane. A working man's wife,

This poor woman, who is very intelligent, when informed of the object of our visit, exclaimed - 'Thank God somebody has taken the matter in hand, and not before it was needed.' There was evidence in one or two flower-pots about the yard of her desire to have things clean and tidy about her; but cleanliness, as well as health, is absolutely impossible in such a wretched hole.111

The woman's behaviour was said to be in striking contrast to the degraded habits of the other inhabitants along the lane, and as committeemen had remarked elsewhere during their tours, such respectable residents were unfortunately themselves demoralised eventually by the general degradation surrounding them.

It was a qualification that combined uneasily with recognition that individual behaviour did not always accord with the stereotype of the lower orders. For just as it was incorrect to describe the City working classes as culturally distinct from the community generally, so was it misleading to picture them as one monolithic group, automatically transferring common attitudes and behaviour from generation to generation. To suggest the existence of a common set of slum values different from those of the general community was to overlook that slum behaviour was a situational

109.cont.

pp.55-6, 60-3, 86, 135-6) is challenged by a recent British study, which argues that "the working class cultural pattern of 'failure' is quite different and discontinuous" from the concept of failure publicised by the middle classes; P. E. Willis, Learning to Labour, Westmead, 1978, p.1.


111. Ibid., qu.248, p.593.
modification of community norms that varied according to the length or
degree of economic deprivation among individuals. The impression of the
sameness of behaviour among slum dwellers upon which the idea of a clearly
defined and deep fracture separating the lower orders from normal folk
depended was an illusion.\textsuperscript{112} The infinite variety of individual
behaviour was understated. To acknowledge the individuality of one woman
in Robin Hood Lane while denying the individuality of her neighbours and
the diversity of attitudes and behaviour among City working people
generally which this implied was logically inconsistent. Talk of the unity
and continuity of behaviour among the more unwholesome working class
districts of the City depended upon a restricting and static conception of
human character and imposed upon the urban community a simplicity of
organisation and changelessness over time which did not accord with
reality.

Within the City working classes, movements were always occurring.\textsuperscript{113}
Working men passing through common lodging houses, said CHOs, formed a
migratory population that was constantly changing. At the Night Refuge
too, applicants for shelter were "generally soon lost sight of", for while
some men "come pretty regularly for a time..., there is a constant change
going on; fresh faces constantly appearing."	extsuperscript{114} Many working people
permanently settled in Sydney were of course compelled by circumstances to
continue living in City slums. Still, with population shrinking in the
inner City wards, families obviously did move to the more outlying parts of
the City and to the more accessible suburbs. Moreover, while it was
unlikely that working class children would acquire white collar status,
there was nothing predetermined about their social position as adults that

\textsuperscript{112} The significance attached by outside observers to a social problem
like excessive drinking among City working people, for example, by
emphasising drunkenness as a behavioural norm among the lower orders
meant that often there was little recognition given to dissenting or
alternative aspirations and values among working people; see H. J.

\textsuperscript{113} It was only natural that Sydney, being a populous city and seaport
into the bargain, should contain "a very large floating population",
said Parkes in 1876; S.C.C.L.H., qu.220, p.857. See S. Ternstrom,
'Poverty in Historical Perspective', p.165, in Moynihan, On Understanding Poverty; also Ternstrom, The Other Bostonians,
pp.9-28, 39-42.

\textsuperscript{114} S.M.H., 6.8.1878, 'The Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.6 (annual
report). See G. Davison, 'The Dimensions of Mobility in Nineteenth
Century Australia', pp.14-27, in Australia 1888: A journal for the
study of Australian history centred on the year 1888, no.2 (August
1979).
Far from comprising the one single entity, the City working classes instead formed a social pyramid of quite considerable complexity, each stratum of which pursued subtly different variations upon the general community theme of acceptable attitudes and behaviour in exactly the same way as did the different neighbourhood and social groupings throughout the metropolis. Among the more outlying parts of the City and between them and the City centre there was considerable variety both in landscape and in the economic position and social condition of inhabitants. Significant social and economic stratification existed even within an inner City neighbourhood like Foxlow Place, which to the outsider presented a single face of common deprivation. Variations in rent along the lane between one house and the next, which to a middle class visitor might have appeared an insignificant matter of one or two shillings weekly, nonetheless for the residents themselves demonstrated the diversity in status and respectability even among so small a community, and was a crucial measure of the local pecking order along the lane.

Only occasionally was this complexity of social structure and behaviour noticed by middle class investigators. John McLerie, the Inspector General of Police, told Parkes' select committee in 1859 that while the condition of the lower common lodging houses was very bad, by contrast those occupied by mechanics were "models of domestic neatness." In several instances during Sewage and Health Board tours of the inner City, Dansey and Palmer together noted that buildings they had seen occupied by the mechanic class were kept by their tenants in as clean and good a condition as the physical state of the premises would allow.

115. See the study of working class mobility in Sydney during the 1870s and 1880s in Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', pp.72-138. See Ternstrom's comments in Moynihan, On Understanding Poverty, pp.25, 171; also Ternstrom, The Other Bostonians, esp. pp.76-110.
116. See Appendix Nine. See also the discussion of Ulf Hannerz's study of the diversity of social groups and behaviour within the U.S. ghetto, in Fox, Urban Anthropology, pp.143-6.
118. S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.96, p.1289. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.41, p.558 (Windmill Street); qu.249, p.594 (Yurong Street); these rare observations were perhaps owing to the CHO, who in a report to the City Council in December 1874 had remarked that sanitary effort should be concentrated upon "the class below the well paid artisan... [since] it is not in the houses of the better paid class of artisans that diseases are born and bred"; S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874).
In a remarkable speech at the 1880 annual meeting of the City Night Refuge, the Reverend Mr Jefferis argued that the Sydney working classes were in fact divided into three:

- the wage-earning class, in fair and regular employment, able to pay house-rent; there was the class which only had intermittent employment, which yielded them just sufficient to pay for nightly or weekly accommodation; and there was the lowest class, into which seemed to filter the wrecks and vagabonds of society, who were rarely able to pay for even a night's lodgings or a day's meals.119

Aaron had suggested a similar classification to Parkes' select committee in November 1859, and had measured the attachment of working people to proper and normal community values by the strata to which they belonged. The first class, described by Aaron as "the lowest of all", was said by the CHO to be rather numerous and to live "in all manner of holes and corners, in most dilapidated places, paying little or no rent, and existing no one knows how."120 Some of these people, he alleged, "live more like beasts of the field or pigs." The next class "above" them were the casually employed, "those who generally get their living more or less by labor, sometimes employed, sometimes not, according to circumstances."121 There was a great deal of intemperance among these people, said Aaron, and they did not care greatly about the condition of their homes. The third group of working people "consists of those who, by industry and frugality, have been able to save sufficient either to rent a decent house or to build one for themselves. This, I am happy to say, is a tolerably numerous class in Sydney".122 In contrast to the two categories below them, Aaron concluded,

This class - the superior class of working men and the small shopkeepers about the city - are generally exceedingly correct in their manners; and what is, perhaps, as good a sign of their conduct as anything, when I have to attend them they generally pay their bills pretty punctually.123

Even such rough and unsatisfactory distinctions between the City working classes as were drawn by Aaron and the Reverend Mr Jefferis were however usually overlooked. With their complacent certainty concerning what was right and what was wrong, the sanitary investigators, the evangelicals, and the newspapermen who together reported upon the to them unfamiliar conditions of the Sydney working classes instead spoke with a mixture of

119. S.M.H., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid., qu.652.
123. Ibid., qu.654.
horror and compassion of the alien and debased existence led collectively by the lower orders. A generalised image of a subculture of deviance, based upon pooled recollections of what from their own cultural perspective appeared the most alien, was applied by them with little distinction across whole districts of working class housing in the City.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Ye Have The Poor With You Always

I

While discussing Henry Mayhew's mid-century descriptions of the London poor, Gertrude Himmelfarb remarked upon the seeming paradox "that the image derived from a relatively small, highly distinctive group of moral and social 'aliens' should get superimposed on the entire class of London Labour and the Poor".¹ In Sydney as in London, the cultural subjectivity of middle class observers, vagueness concerning the concept of poverty, and the subsequent blurring of available information into a composite picture of generalised working class degradation, explain how this translation of imagery took place, but they do not of themselves fully explain why community perceptions thus developed. In particular, the generalised impression of the lower orders advanced by many of the observers collecting evidence among City slums could not of itself explain acceptance of that impression also by the general community, many of whom had at one time or another themselves lived among or indeed in their occupations still worked alongside those who were being stigmatised as the lower orders.

It was a difficulty that was resolved in part by drawing distinctions between personally known individuals and the anonymous mass of their neighbours, by saying 'Oh, I know Bill well, and he's an exception'. Thus had Sewage and Health Board committeemen also distinguished between the housewife in Robin Hood Lane who kept flowerpots and the remainder of inhabitants along that unwholesome and ill-reputed alleyway. Perhaps the major reason, however, for general acceptance of the concept of the separateness of the debased lower orders was that this image accorded well with deeply-held prejudices already existing within the community. It owed its strength paradoxically to the great mass of the working and lower middle classes, in the City itself as well as in the suburbs, those people whose keenly felt sense of respectability and of having made good required just such an image to set against themselves as a measure or a confirmation of their own self-perceived virtue.

This sense of superiority combined with economic self-interest to unite the labour press across Australia in opposition to the assisted immigration of destitute working people from Britain in the 1880s and 1890s. The Reverend Andrew Mearns' poor were described contemptuously in 1883 as

¹. Himmelfarb, 'Mayhew's Poor', p.318.
"England's pauper scum", and General Booth's proposal in the early 1890s to settle some of the British poor in Australia provoked derogatory comments by colonial trade unionists concerning Britain's "social garbage heaps", whose poverty and moral degradation were due not to circumstances but to "hereditary instinct". Similar imagery had been employed by Evangelical missionaries preaching in the South Seas during the first half of the century, in order to draw a distinction between themselves and their native converts. As Niel Gunson has argued, the bulk of missionaries were drawn from the hard-working, upwardly mobile working class aristocracy, which existed as a kind of 'better half' to its neighbours, and in some degree of conscious contrast. Like most intermediary classes it required a lower class which acted alternately as recruiting ground and place of contrast. This need for a lower class was part of the psychology of Evangelical missionaries who substituted the 'poor heathen' for the 'lower orders'.

The need for such an image was not in fact confined simply to the labour aristocracy but applied equally to anybody whose aspirations were for self-advancement. The very unreality of talk in Sydney about the lower orders, its vagueness and blurring of details, ensured the idea's success as a potent myth bolstering the self-esteem of any person, however humble, whose aspirations accorded with dominant values and attitudes of bourgeois culture.

Working people living in the most depressed of circumstances, by contrasting things like their children's schooling, the neatness of their homes, their moderation with drink or their observance of the Sabbath with what they deemed to be the inferior or debased standards of some of their neighbours, could thereby feel a glow of pride at their own respectability. In great measure, therefore, the generalised image of the culturally deviant lower orders was accepted throughout the community not so much because of its relevance in articulating inter-class tensions but because at a more personal level it provided individuals with pegs on which to hang their self-identity as full and worthwhile members of the

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3. Gunson, Messengers of Grace, p.35.
4. See Barbour, Myths, pp.19-23.
5. The importance which working people often attached to the home and to household ornamentation is discussed in Chapter Seven and in later sections. See Crossick, An Artisan Elite, p.135; Crossick states that the concern for status can be seen as "a process of accommodation to structured inequality"; ibid., p.244, See also Meacham, A Life Apart, pp.26-9.
wider community. On one of his early house inspections with Read for the Sewage and Health Board, Michael Chapman had been struck by the manner of the tenants in Potts' Buildings, off Sussex Street. The place consisted of 12 two-room cottages, he said, each containing about five persons. The two water closets provided thus had to be shared between some 60 people, and the resulting sanitary evils were intensified by the smells and occasional discharges of sewage from the cesspits and unconnected closets in adjoining premises. "Yet in spite of these palpable obstacles to their physical comfort", Chapman marveled, "the residents in this ill-drained locality appear anxious to uphold the moral purity of the atmosphere, for we observed a notice affixed to the door of one of the houses - 'None but respectable persons will be allowed to reside here.'" On a handful of other occasions too, Chapman and Read during their tours together about the City remarked that among districts of the lowest repute, in places like Robin Hood Lane and even in Durand's Alley, there were respectable working people who complained at the coarse language and the drunken rowdiness of their neighbours, and who lamented at having to live alongside prostitutes and vagrants.

Alongside such highly personalised reactions there was another and more consciously class response which tended to perpetuate the generalised myth of the debased lower orders. Talk of the lower orders and of their rejection of virtues such as industry, sobriety, and thrift, was a more particularly middle class rationalisation of the poverty revealed by investigators to exist among Sydney working people. Poverty was and remains an ill-defined concept. In 1877 the annual report of the Sydney Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen asserted glibly that "In a large city like this, with 150,000 inhabitants, it is not surprising to find a few hundreds who are poor and destitute." Many people however argued that deprivation in admittedly greatly varying degrees extended far beyond a few hundreds. The Reverend Mr Jefferis voiced a generally held contention when he declared at the Night Refuge's 1880 annual meeting that as well as including a hard core of beggars and vagabonds, the term 'the poor' could also be said to encompass the class of the casually employed and even the

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6. This point is touched upon by H. J. Dyos and D. A. Reader, 'Slums and Suburbs', p.360, in Dyos and Wolff, The Victorian City, vol.1.
7. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.39, p.556 (Potts' Buildings); qu.242, p.585 (Rafferty's Rocks); qu.248, p.593 (Robin Hood Lane); qu.253, p.600 (Durand's Alley); qu.258, p.607 (Elizabeth Place).
regularly employed among working people. The persistence of widespread deprivation was an embarrassment to the status quo, and a source of considerable anxiety. To an extent it encouraged discussions among reformers of possible greater state intervention in community life, and certainly it produced misgivings that radical minds might countenance more comprehensive restructuring of society. Defenders of existing social orthodoxy therefore countered that the problem of poverty was not so much a structural as a moral one, a problem caused by an act of individual will rather than by the force of economic circumstances. The poverty of the lower orders was the consequence of their own withdrawal from participation in desirable community behaviour and pursuit instead of deviant and improvident pleasures.

The idealised image of a society in perfect harmony, its members smoothly integrated together by common participation in the same priority of values and the same norms of behaviour, had been put forward in all earnestness by newspapermen and middle class intellectuals generally as a justification for the 'rightness' of the existing status system and power structure in society. The image however depended upon the maintenance of community prosperity, and even more importantly upon convincing all members of the community that they could each expect to share in this common wealth. Newspapers regularly greeted each year with optimistic reviews of increasing community prosperity and with hopeful forecasts for the

8. See Ronald Mendelsohn's discussion of poverty in The Condition Of The People: Social Welfare in Australia 1900-1975, Sydney, 1979, pp.84-118. Ibid., 1.8.1877, 'Sydney Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.2. Ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3; the same point had been made by the Melbourne Australasian in 1869. The word 'poor' referred in part to the actually destitute, said an editorial in June, but in its wider sense the word was the opposite of 'rich' and thus ordinarily applied to people living solely by manual labour. In this sense, the newspaper argued, "the labouring classes, that is, the great bulk of the population of every country, are poor." Australasian, 26.6.1869, p.816. It is impossible to assess accurately the extent of poverty in nineteenth century Sydney. The City's general social composition is however examined in Chapter One, and Appendices One and Two. 9. It was less an explanation than a rationalisation of poverty, providing "a mental landscape within which the middle class could recognise and articulate their own anxieties about urban existence." Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p.151, also p.11. 10. Barbour, Myths, p.24. See Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', p.72; the 'mobility myth' was likewise widely publicised in the neighbouring colony of Victoria; Davison, 'The Dimensions Of Mobility', pp.7-8. See also Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, pp.57-79.
future. Seeing in the seventieth year of the nineteenth century, the Herald marvelled at the material, technological, and intellectual achievements of mankind and emphasised that the ordinary bulk of the British people, although subject to periodic depression, yet "enjoy a multitude of comforts which they never possessed before."¹¹

Midway through January 1884 a Herald editorial remarked how:

In our recent holiday-making we have all noticed thousands upon thousands of well-fed, well-dressed, respectable people of all classes spending, on trains and trams and other vehicles, on refreshments and amusements, on Christmas gifts and cards and gratuities.

It was, the newspaper said, "a healthy sign of our economical and social condition that pretty nearly all classes in Australia can afford to take holidays".¹² Words of optimism, they served only to preface discussion of less happy matters, the implications of Mearns' Bitter Cry of Outcast London and its presentation of the great contrasts which persisted in Britain between glittering wealth and abject poverty. Uneasiness concerning the continuing strength of economic growth, and pessimism about the ability of material prosperity to improve fundamentally the social condition of the many, formed an undercurrent of opinion in Sydney throughout the nineteenth century.

Malthusian anxieties at the possible disastrous social implications of increasing population had seemingly been laid to rest in Britain since the early 1830s, and in the colonies employers had always complained at the insufficiency of labour, and not of stagnation and pauperism caused by too great a supply of working people. In a complete reversal of Malthusian fears Rolleston, the N.S.W. Statistician, declared in 1872 that "Of all causes which create national wealth the power of population is the most influential".¹³ Even in N.S.W. however, Malthusianism was far from dead. The rediscovery of the British poor, beginning in the 1860s and gaining much greater momentum during the 1880s, by involving the colony in assisted immigration to resettle British working people, gave people in Sydney a

¹¹. S.M.H., 1.1.1870, editorial leader p.4. The newspaper had early in the previous year drawn attention to statistical evidence recently published in Britain, which sought to demonstrate that the trend towards higher wages, accumulating savings, and better education, food, and housing, had in the mother country "been chiefly appropriated and enjoyed by the working classes." Ibid., 24.2.1869, editorial p.4.

¹². Ibid., 14.1.1884, editorial p.5.

¹³. The colony might one day support 20 million people, he said, a prospect which "we cannot but hail with pleasure"; ibid., 30.12.1872, 'Review Of The Progress Of New South Wales During The Last Ten Years' p.7.
direct interest in the problems of overpopulation. The old master's principles still possessed "the validity of the multiplication table" declared a Daily Telegraph lead editorial in March 1887, while discussing the continuing relevancy of Malthus for the contemporary world. Talk by British political leaders of the need for assisted immigration to the colonies underscored "the ceaseless growth of population" in the mother country, a rate of growth which the Daily Telegraph maintained "serves to nullify every effort for the improvement of the condition of the working classes."

From the 1860s, seemingly, the pessimistic forecasts for economic growth that were associated with men like Ricardo, the Scottish economist John McCulloch, and J. S. Mill, had increasingly been set aside by more optimistic economic theorists. Predictions during the first half of the nineteenth century of an inevitable exhaustion of an economy's capacity for further expansion, producing a stationary economy in which working class living conditions could not hope to improve but might even deteriorate, had never in fact been completely accepted even among economic theorists. In 1864 the Melbourne economist William Hearn published a book, Plutology, in which he predicted a virtually infinite potential for economic growth given a correspondingly growing labour market, improvements in the organisation of labour and in the facilities for exchange, and the continuing accumulation of capital. Hearn's work in turn helped to shape the ideas of the much more influential British economist Alfred Marshall, who from the early 1870s was predicting the steadily increasing

14. D.T., 17.3.1887, editorial leader p.4; see also the 1869 reference to the cost in terms of increasing pauperism in Britain of the "Malthusian laws"; S.M.H., 8.4.1869, editorial p.4. See the D.T.'s alarmed response to the proposals by Booth and Bernardo for resettling the slum-dwellers of "Outcast London" in Australia; editorial leaders in 26.11.1890, p.4; 2.12.1890, p.4; 6.12.1890, p.4; 29.12.1890, p.4.
17. Ibid., pp.88-9. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, pp.4-5. Mill himself was later to modify the pessimistic forecast contained in his 1848 Principles of Political Economy to grant that some improvement in working class life was in fact possible; see, for example, ibid., p.2.
prosperity of all classes in society.17

The dominant economic optimism of most people combined uneasily however with an undercurrent of continuing uncertainty and at times pessimism about the potential of economic growth to diminish poverty. For one thing, the vision of steady material advance was marred by awareness that economic expansion was in reality a rather erratic affair, characterised by alternating but not simultaneous periods of boom and bust in the different sectors of the economy.18 Noisy demonstrations by unemployed working men calling for state assistance during lean times were a frequent occurrence in Sydney. The dominant tone of economic discussion coming from Britain in the early 1880s was to do not with expansion but with exaggerated talk of the "Great Depression".19

The assumption of people like Hearn, that capital accumulation inevitably meant economic progress, had already been brought into question by the financial crisis in Britain caused by the withdrawal of investment capital in the later 1860s following the collapse of the railway boom.20 George Goschen, a leading British Liberal parliamentarian and financial authority, in his famous Edinburgh Review article of January 1868 entitled "Two Per Cent.", observed pithily "capital, in high dudgeon, has retired to its tents. The situation of the moment is this: capital is on strike!" The significance of Goschen's remark was not lost in Sydney, and the Herald in April 1869 remarked how lack of confidence among British investors had "seriously diminished the productive industry of the country":

The complaint of the capitalist class is that all the interest they can get for their money is a beggarly two per cent. But the complaint of the surplus members of the working class is that they have not even two per cent.; they have nothing at all. Their old employment is shut

18. See Jackson, Australian economic development, p.5. The cycle of boom and slump, together with its effect upon the Sydney working classes, is traced in T. A. Coghlan, Labour And Industry in Australia From The First Settlement In 1788 To The Establishment Of The Commonwealth in 1901, Melbourne, 1969 ed., 4 vols.
20. Uncertain about the security of their assets and unenthusiastic at the reduced interest rates offered them, British investors had displayed a new reluctance to make their capital so freely available. See H. L. Beales, 'The "Great Depression" in Industry and Trade', Economic History Review, vol.5 (1934-5), pp.65-75.
off, and no new occupations are open. There is plenty of idle capital, and there is plenty of idle labour, but the two cannot come together, and separately they are barren. Labour has not the means to help itself, and capital does not seem to have the wit. 21

The 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, those years when economic optimists like Marshall were making their reputation and were apparently carrying all before them, were also the years when Mill's Principles of Political Economy was going through its greatest number of editions. 22 Echoes of the old idea of the stationary state appeared in the Daily Telegraph's 1887 discussion of Europe's Malthusian population dilemma. Commenting upon the gloomy future facing working people in the mother country, the newspaper cautioned those who saw in future expansion of the British economy an answer to the problem, "It is impossible to suppose that there is room for another great expansion of manufacturing industry such as marked the first half of the present century." 23

Scepticism concerning the ability in any case of material progress to eliminate poverty was fuelled by the gloomy assumptions contained in Christian teaching, which treated poverty as a sadly continuing and universal reality. Scripture reading surely took on an extra prominence when in 1881 the two hundred and seventy year old British Authorised Version of the Bible was superceded by the new Revised Version. The message contained in both the new and the old was clear: "ye have the poor with you always". The phrase introduced the 1881 annual report of the City Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen, as it had the 1876 report of the other City shelter, the Sydney Night Refuge and Reformatory. Supporters of the various charities affirmed the words' sad reality. 24 In a review during


22. Two impressions of the book were printed at the end of the 1840s, and another two during the 1850s. It was reprinted eight times in the 1860s, another eight times during the 1870s, seven times in the 1880s, and five times in the 1890s; J. S. Mill, Principles of Political Economy, London, 1923 ed.


24. Mark xiv. 7; Matthew xxvi.11. S.M.H., 2.8.1881, 'City Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.6; ibid., 3.7.1876, 'The Night Refuge' p.5. Judge Hargrave, at the end of a speech at the annual meeting of the Ragged Schools in 1878, concluded that "The poor would never cease from among them, and they would be more or less numerous according to circumstances"; ibid., 4.9.1878, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.8; see ibid., 13.5.1879, 'Sydney City Mission' p.6 (the Rev. H. Sharp).
1884 of the latest work by Henry George, a writer for the Herald noted the American social reformer's hostile references not only... to those professors of political economy who teach that the poverty of large classes in our highest civilisation is the result of social laws of which it is idle to complain, but also to those ministers of religion who preach that this is the condition which an all-wise, all-powerful Creator intended for his children.25

Religious teaching, continuing undercurrents of Malthusian-influenced pessimism concerning world population increase, and at least a vague awareness of the social consequences for working people of the continuing fluctuations in the different sectors of a country's economy, meant that middle class Sydney, despite its generally confident expectation of continuing buoyancy in the colonial economy, nonetheless felt deep misgivings concerning the ability of general economic expansion markedly to improve living conditions among the bulk of working people, or indeed to reduce economic distress among the most poor. Poverty there always would be, said the Daily Telegraph in February 1884. Inevitably in any community, "some will be rich and some poor, and... the weakest will go to the wall".26

II

In February 15 years earlier the Herald had devoted a lead editorial to discussing the implications of a recent disclosure by the City Mission that seven families had been found lodging in the one house. "In spite of all that has been done to overtake the misery of the country", began the newspaper, "it seems to be growing upon our hands." Anxiety stirred that the stark contrasts between wealth and poverty would make some people judge their British culture a failure. The newspaper's gloom intensified upon receiving the latest British mail. A Herald editorial in early March announced that

Most of the English journals in their notices of the Christmas season received by the last mail, have been constrained to acknowledge, that after more than eighteen hundred years of Christian influence and effort the most energetic, wealthy, and religious nation in Europe is

25. The book in question was George's Social Problems; ibid., 2.4.1884, 'Reviews' p.5.
26. D.T., 25.2.1884, editorial p.5. A D.T. editorial remarked on another occasion that "The poor, in fact, are always with us, however prosperous our conditions." Ibid., 18.5.1889, p.4; the same opinion had been expressed 20 years earlier in the Australasian, 26.6.1869, 'The Fact Of Destitution' p.816.
beaten in its endeavour to deal with the fundamental evil of society.\textsuperscript{27}

That evil was poverty. Poverty appeared to be "mastering" London, and more generally, in a country shaken by the economic crises and working class unemployment of the 1860s, it seemed that notwithstanding general signs of material and moral advancement, among "the lower classes" the trend was rather one of deterioration. Evidence suggested that pauperism and crime were increasing at a faster rate than was population.\textsuperscript{28}

That "exceedingly bitter cry" from London late in 1883 again focused the \textit{Herald}'s attention upon the apparent inability of middle class culture to resolve the great contrasts in wealth which characterised society. While the London West End drew upon the entire globe to satisfy its requirements for entertainment and comfort, there were probably millions in the East End and elsewhere about London, said the newspaper, who knew little comfort and whose only idea of pleasure was drawn from the gin palace. The reliance by economists like Hearn upon capital accumulation as the motor for economic and social improvement was again being questioned.\textsuperscript{29}

The \textit{Herald} anxiously warned readers against the "danger..." of concluding from the \textit{Bitter Cry} "that our civilisation is a failure, and that we are going from bad to worse". Behind the newspaper's anxiety was the editors' unease that the promise of individual advancement according to personal worth, which belief served as a justification of existing social order, might now be judged untenable.\textsuperscript{30} As early as Parkes' 1859 select committee of inquiry into the Sydney working classes, it was being acknowledged that the cycles of boom and bust experienced in the different trades about Sydney were built into the colonial economy. Recognition

\textsuperscript{27} S.M.H., 12.2.1869, editorial leader p.4; and see 24.2.1869, editorial p.4. \textit{Ibid.}, 2.3.1869, editorial p.4.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{29} As the \textit{Herald} commented soberly, 

\textit{In spite of the lavish expenditure of the rich in consumption which gives employment, and in charity to relieve distress; in spite of two millions and a quarter yearly dispensed by various charitable institutions; in spite of churches and schools and newspapers and books to give moral instruction, the manner in which the very poor are housed, and fed, and clothed, and taught is causing a new fierce flame of indignation.}

\textit{Ibid.}, 14.1.1884, editorial p.6; also 23.1.1884, editorial leader p.8; D.T., 25.2.1884, editorial p.5.

\textsuperscript{30} S.M.H., 14.1.1884, editorial p.6; see Wohl, \textit{The Eternal Slum}, p.241.
stirred uneasily that perhaps since the recurring periods of recession "will always be accompanied by a want of employment among the working classes", any benefits to working people accruing from general colonial prosperity would be continually undermined, with working class living conditions over the long term thus remaining as a whole depressed and largely unimprovable. Accounts of apparently widespread deprivation in Sydney, strengthened by the similar descriptions coming from overseas, seemed to menace the consensus which preserved community harmony and equilibrium. Radical ideologues and discontented working men might combine to pressure politicians into making fundamental and unwise alterations to the existing structure of society.

The contrast noted by the Herald between the "vast wealth being accumulated on the one hand, and an immense amount of poverty staring us in the face on the other" was provoking in Britain following the Bitter Cry a fundamental rethinking among many of prevailing economic orthodoxies. Radical solutions to social ills, however, by requiring as a first step that the country "throw over laissez-faire", only added to the disquiet of moderates alarmed by the revelations of widespread poverty but wishing for solutions that by reforming specific evils would preserve rather than overturn the status quo in society. One such remedy apparently lay in the modest reformism of the Liberal, Joseph Chamberlain, and the Conservative leader Lord Salisbury. Both men separately proposed limited state initiatives to encourage improvements in working class housing that offered to check more unacceptably radical proposals and to head off possible disaffection among the poor. Traditionalists alarmed by the seeming groundswell against laissez-faire however saw in the proposals much the same dangerous trend towards the tyranny of "State Socialism" as was being advocated openly by radical socialist theorists. The old twin principles of liberty and property were alleged by them to be under siege.

32. S.M.H., 22.3.1884, editorial p.11. The development during the early 1880s of the Fabian Society and the Social Democratic Federation was symptomatic of the doubts that had arisen concerning the ethics of an economic system that produced and sustained the inequalities described by Mears and G. R. Sims; see Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.221-35; P. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals And Labour: The Struggle for London 1885-1914, London, 1967.
34. Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.227-34.
In Sydney the Herald was prepared to support any social reforms which could be clearly shown to "better guarantee... the stability and prosperity of the country", notwithstanding the paper's general uneasiness at the possible consequences of increasing parliamentary regulation and state control. For as the newspaper remarked in late December 1876 in review of the recent investigations by the Sewage and Health Board, "Revolution is commonly born of misery; and conversely a comfortable people is usually a contented people." The Herald's support for social reforms that would remove misery and possible disaffection had led to the employment of Stanley James in the late 1870s to write his Vagabond impressions of working class existence in Sydney, and explained also the editorial decision in February 1878 to tolerate James' conclusion that the appalling condition of common lodging houses in the City was an "evil caused by the laissez-faire spirit of our authorities".\footnote{S.M.H., 26,12.1876, editorial p.4.}  

The newspaper's backing for socially useful legislative intervention made it willing to speak out during the mid 1880s in support of reforms being damned as "Socialistic" in Britain by the more intractable supporters of traditional laissez-faire.\footnote{See Ibid., 23,1,1884, editorial leader pp.8-9.} In late December 1883 it reprinted the Pall Mall Gazette's criticism of George Goschen's 1883 Edinburgh address attacking "the 'Socialistic' tendency of contemporary political thought and legislation." Goschen's statement of possible justifications for increasing state interference appeared to the Gazette more convincing than were the forebodings he had voiced concerning the evils to which the trend might lead. In any case, the article reasoned, in the "sturdy independence" of the English character there lay "a solid fund of resistance to any exaggeration of that principle of State control which, within limits, is necessary and salutary, and is a safeguard, not a danger, to individual freedom."\footnote{Ibid., 29.12.1883, 'Socialism And Freedom' p.6.}  

The crucial qualification "within limits" was one with which the editorial staff of the Herald fully agreed. Parliamentary intervention in Britain, they agreed, undoubtedly had a share in improving "the... condition of the working classes, and there is obviously scope for more of it; but it cannot be said to have had the principal share, or to be the chief hope for the future." Recommending that Australian cities...
systematise private charitable effort, as was already done in Liverpool, the newspaper described such modest initiatives as a sort of "Constructive Socialism" which formed "the only safeguard" against the "destructive Socialism" of exaggerated state interference with individual rights and liberties.\textsuperscript{38}

To believers in the continuing basic rationality and worth of the status quo in Sydney, the tyranny and destructiveness feared by them to be inherent in radical programmes for structural change in society appeared most amply demonstrated in the current writings of Henry George. The "startling doctrines"\textsuperscript{39} contained in the American social reformer's book Progress and Poverty, first published in 1879, and repeated in his 1883 work, Social Problems, had a profound influence upon social and economic debate in the city during the 1880s. George's own angry denunciations of the unequal distribution of wealth, and the muddled interpretations by others of his thoughts upon land reform stimulated an interest in socialism which paradoxically George, himself anti-socialist, had never intended. To the Herald he appeared as a bogeyman, and concerted efforts were made to demolish George's call "for the State ownership of all landed property" and to ridicule his justification "that private ownership has been the great cause of poverty, and that so long as private ownership lasts it will be impossible to deal satisfactorily with the social difficulty of poverty."\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 23.1.1884, editorial leader p.9. Ibid., 22.1.1884, editorial p.6. It was unfortunately to such interference, announced the lead editorial of 23.1.1884 that the Socialist party trust most to promote the good of the people. Their greatest abhorrence seems to be freedom. 'Laissez-faire' they look upon as the root of all evil. Their standing doctrine is, that there must be protection to the poor and repression to the rich in order to maintain the social equilibrium.

\textsuperscript{39} E.N., 8.7.1885, editorial leader p.4.

\textsuperscript{40} S.N.H., 22.3.1884, editorial leader p.11. The lengthy review of Social Problems which appeared in the newspaper in 1884 contended that Among the many millions who have perused Mr. Henry George's elaborate but most eloquent treatise, there is probably only a comparatively small percentage who accept the diagnosis he there makes of the evils that afflict our modern civilisation as substantially correct, and believe that he has traced these evils to their true cause. As to the efficacy and practicability of the drastic social reform or revolution, which he prescribes as the primary and indispensable remedy for the prevailing and ever-increasing poverty and misery of modern society, it must be presumed that still fewer of the students of his works are prepared to agree with him.

Ibid., 2.4.1884, 'Reviews' p.5.
The reason for the Herald's vehemence in attacking Henry George was the popularity which his disturbing ideas were in fact enjoying. The newspaper's morning competitor, the Daily Telegraph, had in February 1884 written provocatively of social conditions lately highlighted in London, Progress and poverty have in older civilisations always increased together, as Mr. George has so well pointed out. The greater the wealth of a community, the greater also its poverty. He... declares that its only solution is to be found in the confiscation and redistribution - or, as it is less offensively called, the nationalisation - of land.**

Despite such rhetoric, the newspaper was in practice interested less in fundamental economic changes aimed at the causes of poverty than in more modest parliamentary initiatives to improve working class housing standards, and more negatively, in the granting of authority to knock down City slums.** But while the Daily Telegraph might respond to George's contrasting of wealth and poverty by suggesting remedies that concentrated upon sweeping away the signs of deprivation rather than confronting the underlying causes, it seemed that more radical minds might turn to rather more extreme solutions.

George's Progress and Poverty, released in England during 1881, had an enormous impact there, selling 60,000 copies by 1885.** The writer's 1882 English campaign tour was a great boost for radicalism, and fuelled Liberal and Conservative fears of menacing socialism.** In Sydney the Daily Telegraph said of the success of Progress and Poverty in England and America, it "is as popular a book almost as any story by the late Charles Dickens." The newspaper had serialised the book for Sydney readers during the latter part of 1883, and the Bulletin also did much to spread George's theories. It was partly in order to publicise his theories that the Land Nationalisation League, later reformed as the Single Tax League, was founded in Sydney in 1887, and in 1890 George himself would visit the city.**

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**41. D.T., 25.2.1884, editorial p.5.
42. Ibid. The newspaper's attitude towards slum clearance is discussed in later sections.
43. Lynd, England, pp.141-3. It would ultimately sell 400,000 copies; Thompson, Socialists, p.113.
The American's antagonism to socialism and trade unionism in fact alienated much working class and radical support in Sydney. To middle class apologists however, arguing the basic worth of existing society, the left wing ferment generated by theorists such as George appeared an anathema. Denying the need for fundamental and unpalatable changes in the structure of society, middle class thinkers alleged that radical solutions contained basic errors of interpretation that were overlooked by "the impatient socialist".46 Certainly, they said, the unfortunate fluctuations within a capitalist economy might cause temporary inconvenience or hardship, but still the overall standard of living enjoyed by the bulk of working people, those who accepted the worth of values like hard work, thrift, and sobriety and who strove for the goal of respectability, was undeniably improving over the long term. Assessing economic progress in the Australian colonies, the N.S.W. Statistician Timothy Coghlan concluded in 1887:

That there is poverty in these colonies is undeniable and inevitable; but no one in Australia is born to poverty, and that hereditary pauper class which forms so grave a menace to the freedom of many States has therefore no evidence here.47

The same point had been made by the Daily Telegraph in late December 1883. In any community there was "always" suffering enough, said the newspaper, but in apparent confidence that the Bitter Cry would here find no major parallel it predicted "if the people of New South Wales were asked to vote to-day, we are sure they would not exchange their circumstances and conditions for those of any other territory on earth."48

The Herald in warning its readers against drawing too pessimistic a conclusion from Mears' work had moreover a trump card to play against left wing ideologues. This was the statistical analysis of changing social conditions among British working people between 1840 and 1880 that had been presented by Sir Robert Giffen during his presidential address in November 1883 to the Statistical Society of London. Giffen's analysis clearly demonstrated, said the newspaper, that the working man's real income was increasing even faster than was that of the capitalist - a conclusion, the newspaper declared, that "of course... entirely disposes of the fallacy

47. Coghlan, The Wealth... 1886-87, p.491.
blindly accepted by so many well-meaning persons at the present day - that the rich are becoming richer while the poor are becoming poorer."49

Other British experts in fact questioned the accuracy of Giffen's figures and calculations. In Sydney however, Giffen's work was said by the Herald to prove beyond doubt that the overall quality of working class life was steadily improving as capital accumulation was channelled back into the economy to provide more jobs and greater production.50

The N.S.W. Statistician, Timothy Coghlan, believed that similar trends applied equally in the colony. Coghlan declared in 1887 that the value of N.S.W. trade exceeded that of any other Australian colony and within the empire as a whole was bettered only by Britain, and by India, nearly 250 times more populous than the colony, and Canada, with five times the population of N.S.W. Sydney was the greatest port in the southern hemisphere, and in England was exceeded in trade only by London and by Liverpool. The happy result of the colony's generally high wages and comparatively cheap cost of living was visible on all sides, said Coghlan, "for in no other land can a better-dressed, better-fed, and more contented-looking class than the working people of New South Wales be found."51

The force of the arguments claiming increasing working class prosperity in Sydney was tempered to a degree by a recognition that many working people through no fault of their own were still likely to have to weather occasional periods of perhaps severe economic hardship.52

49. S.M.H., 10.1.1884, 'News By The English Mail Via Suez' p.5. The Herald relied heavily upon Giffen's address, reprinting the speech for its Sydney readers and publicising his conclusions in editorial comments.

50. Lynd, England, pp.50-1. See S.M.H., 10.1.1884, 'News By The English Mail' p.5; and the reprint of Giffen's speech from the Times, in 14.1.1884, p.4; also 23.1.1884, editorial leader pp.8-9; and 22.3.1884, editorial p.11.


52. For example, see D.T., 10.11.1890, editorial leader p.4. Such recognition had perhaps been aided by knowledge of the American Civil War's effects upon England, when the Union blockade of Confederate ports resulted in the laying off of thousands of factory hands in the Lancashire cotton mills. Even the most conventional country parson and professor of political economy found it difficult to argue that poverty was caused by the vice and indolence of the pauper, when everyone knew that the destitution of the hitherto industrious Lancashire workmen was solely due to the Civil War in America.
charitable societies frequently acknowledged that much of the distress with which they came in contact was owing to downturns in particular trades, to age or ill-health, to desertion by husband, and other circumstances beyond any individual's power to avoid.\textsuperscript{53} Commenting upon unemployment in Britain during the latter part of the 1860s, caused by Goschen's "era of two per cent", the Herald reflected in April 1869 that amongst the large number of families that have been thrown out of work by the financial crisis there must be many who are mainly the victims of misfortune, and who are less paupers from any defect of character than from the influence of circumstances over which they have no control.\textsuperscript{54}

Temporary distress among working people was regarded as an unfortunate but nonetheless unavoidable fact of life.\textsuperscript{55} Their distress might be sharp but it would also be brief and would little affect the general trend of rising working class prosperity. Increasing real wages and the savings accumulated during times of greater prosperity would enable frugal and industrious working people to ride out short term recession. Continuing poverty was not therefore seen as a fault of society.\textsuperscript{56} It was the penalty being paid by those who chose not to participate with the wider community in sharing common attitudes and common goals, but who opted instead for a fringe existence pursuing a debased and impoverishing life of

\textsuperscript{52.cont.}


53. See S.M.H., 30.6.1877, 'The Sydney Night Refuge And Reformatory' p.5 (annual report); 1.8.1877, 'Sydney Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.2 (Sir Alfred Stephen, and the annual report); 20.4.1878, 'Sunday Morning Breakfasts' p.5 (annual report); 2.7.1878, 'Sydney Night Refuge And Reformatory' p.3 (annual report); 2.8.1881, 'City Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.6 (annual report).

54. Ibid., 8.4.1869, editorial p.4.

55. According to one Herald leader, 

\textit{No condition of society will make a provision from the labour of each day sufficient to satisfy the wants of every day. There will be bad weather, bad crops, insufficient food, insufficient employment, and it is only by a reasonable forethought that people can escape extreme pressure in times of distress.}

Ibid., 12.2.1869, editorial leader p.4.

56. It was claimed that the causes lay rather in the habits of the people themselves. The Herald had complained in 1869 that the state of the colony was plainly favourable to anyone seeking self-improvement, and yet deprivation continued amongst them. Clearly, said the newspaper, it was "useless to flatter ourselves that the causes are involuntary"; ibid.
"self-indulgence" during the good times, so that when the slump came and the lay-offs began they were left with no savings on which to live.57

The problem was not seen as structural but as one of cultural deviance.

Drawing attention to the last annual report of the Inspector of Public Charities, a Herald editorial writer observed in April 1878 that if everybody were both industrious and prudent, the need for either public or private charity would be very small. But we have to do with an imperfect state of society, in which vice and folly create more destitution and suffering than misfortune ever can do.58

Thus it was that Sydney's slums were said to be perpetuated. It was a neat and plausible solution. For as the Reverend P. H. Cornford declared at the 1879 annual meeting of the Sydney City Mission, it was otherwise one of the most inexplicable things that, in this workman's paradise, as it was often called, there should be so much poverty, and misery, and degradation. Every one knew that in Sydney this ought not to be. The explanation of it was sin, but for which all New South Wales would be a paradise, and the remedy for it was the Gospel.59

Evidence coming from London in connection with the debate provoked by the Bitter Cry supported the Sydney assessment. Terrible as the contrast between wealth and poverty undoubtedly was in London, said the Herald, "The fact, however, may be broadly stated that the dwellers in those foul dens are not good workers, and the greater number of them are half idle all their lives."60 Statistical evidence published in the Quarterly Review was pointed to as indicating that poverty resulted not from capitalist monopolies of the sort alleged by writers like Henry George but rather from the enormous expenditure "dissipated" by the working classes upon non-essentials such as drink and tobacco. Thus, it was concluded, "the real cause of poverty in the United Kingdom must be sought for in the immoral and improvident habits of the people, and... the abolition of the evil rests, to a great extent, with themselves."61

57. Ibid., 4.5.1880, editorial p.5. The same argument was used in nineteenth century Newburyport; Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, pp.73-4. See also the comments made to the S.C.C.W.C.M. by Dean Cowper (qu.1525, p.1381), and by Aaron (qu.672, pp.1319-20; qu.693-6, p.1321).
58. S.M.H., 20.4.1878, editorial p.4.
60. Ibid., 14.1.1884, editorial p.5. Sydney readers were told of one "shrewd" article by a working man appearing in the Nineteenth Century, which argued that the poor while cursing their poverty made it worse by intemperance, the neglect of home economics and abuse of the "household virtues"; ibid., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.
61. Ibid., 22.3.1884, editorial p.11.
Of particular significance in Sydney was the Quarterly Review's argument that one eighth of total working class earnings in Britain was spent on liquor. This one statistic was, commented the Herald, "a sufficient explanation of at least a very large proportion of the destitution and misery, to say nothing of the disease, crime, and insanity, which prevails in the mother country." In 1869, discussing the continuing evidence of distress among their own local community, the newspaper had concluded that nine-tenths of the poverty, crime, and misery in society was "the result, clear and traceable, of intemperance." Continually, overwhelmingly, it was argued in Sydney by the newspapers, by sanitary investigators, churchmen, the charities, and temperance advocates that drunkenness was the most fundamental cause of poverty in the city.

In the experience of the Sydney Ragged Schools, said the organisation's secretary in 1879, drink was "in almost every case the cause of our poverty-stricken children". Teachers for the Ragged Schools visiting the homes of their pupils complained frequently of the chronic alcoholism among parents, and reported that families of otherwise good tradesmen were thus reduced to penury. Sewage and Health Board committeemen reported similarly. To be poor as opposed to being temporarily distressed was explained to be an act of individual will rather than the consequence of built-in inequalities in society. Chairing the 1877 annual meeting of the Sydney Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen, Sir Alfred Stephen maintained that but for the prevalence of "drunken habits" there would be little need for such an institution.

62. Ibid. The newspaper's comment of fifteen years earlier was made in ibid., 12.2.1869, editorial leader p.4.
63. It was the evil of drink, said the N.S.W. Temperance Alliance, which "degrades and impoverishes our fellow-men." Ibid., 27.2.1877, 'New South Wales Temperance Alliance' p.3 (annual report). See also S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877).
64. S.M.H., 16.9.1879 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (annual report); and see the opening speech by the meeting's chairman, J. Paxton. See the reports by Ragged School teachers, included in the annual report in ibid., 4.9.1878, p.8; and 7.9.1880, p.3.
65. S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.247, p.592 (no.26 Rowe Street); qu.256, p.604 (Goulburn Place); qu.301, p.654 (Charles Street); qu.310, p.659 (off Swan Street).
III

Stephen's objective was by charitable works to secure the reintegration of the debased and dangerous lower orders in society. Social equilibrium was to be maintained not by embarking upon revolutionary reforms in the production and distribution of wealth so as to remove basic inequalities, but by ensuring the acquiescence of the disadvantaged in the existing social structure by holding out to them the hope of amelioration through participation in mainstream community goals and attitudes. Charity was an obvious instrument to this end, but to achieve its purpose alms-giving had to be strictly regulated.

As in Britain and America, many middle class social thinkers in Sydney feared that simple charity by its over-generous and indiscriminate assistance to the poor was in fact intensifying rather than resolving social problems, by unconditionally giving the lower orders the economic means to support their deviant way of life. In London, the Herald had worried during 1869, working people were "living on the benefactions (the crumbs is scarcely a suitable term) of rich men's tables, with all sense of self-help rotted out - an insecure foundation to the superstructure of society". In Sydney likewise, the "pauper germ" breeding upon alms-giving was feared to be undermining the "steady and self-reliant habits" of working people and thus sapping the vitality of the community.

The Charity Organisation Society, formed in London in 1869, aimed to oversee the distribution of relief with a rigour sufficient to halt the demoralisation caused by overgenerous alms-giving and to encourage instead self-help, industry, and thrift among the poor. Efforts by the C.O.S. to curb a process that otherwise threatened "to pauperise what ought to be the respectable poor" attracted considerable interest and support among some social thinkers in Sydney, and won especial applause from the Herald.

67. Ibid., 2.3.1869, editorial p.4. See Stedman Jones, Outcast London, esp. pp.241-7; and Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, p.74.
68. E.N., 8.7.1885, editorial leader p.4; also S.M.H., 20.4.1878, editorial p.4. Burton Bradley expressed misgiving that Sydney charitable works were "overdone", in a letter entitled 'The Model Lodging-House' in ibid., 20.5.1884, p.8; see also D.T., 26.11.1890, editorial leader p.4.
69. S.M.H., 22.1.1884, editorial p.6; see the lengthy report of a speech on charity organisation given by the Reverend H.L. Jackson, in D.T., 14.11.1890, 'Pauperism - Its Nature, Causes And Remedies' p.6. The London C.O.S., and those middle class attitudes towards poverty with which the society was associated, are examined in K. Woodroffe,
In 1878 the newspaper's proprietor James Fairfax, aided by the Herald's editor, Dr Andrew Garran, by Sir Alfred Stephen and by Dr Alfred Roberts, launched a Charity Organisation Society of their own similarly to prevent "indiscriminate and wasteful charity, to give assistance to the really deserving poor, and to protect the charitably disposed from imposition."70

Already, as the September 1878 meeting to launch the Sydney C.O.S. freely acknowledged, there were some charities in the City such as the Benevolent Society or the Sydney Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen which went to considerable pains to guard against possible imposition. The Refuge's president, Sir Alfred Stephen, repeatedly warned subscribers to be on their guard against "persons who took advantage of the institution, who had been brought to distress by their own crimes and follies, or worse",71 To criticisms of the indigestible food and wretched lodgings which the institution offered, Stephen replied that it "was not desirable that the persons who went there for shelter should receive all the comforts of an hotel or a well-appointed home" since this would only encourage people "to loaf on the generosity of the subscribers."72

Rather than acting as passive dispensers of charity, society members actively sought to find employment for those who came to the Refuge so that

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69. cont.
70. A special officer was to be appointed to investigate thoroughly the circumstances of each claimant seeking relief, and Roberts, echoing the charity's namesake in London, anticipated that "the present effort would not stop at an office for one charitable society, but that there should be a central office in Sydney in which every charitable organization in Sydney would have a chamber." S.M.H., 10.9.1878, 'Charity Organization Society' p.6. See the study of Sydney charities by Brian Dickey, 'Charity in New South Wales, 1850-1914: a study in public, private and state provisions for the poor'. Ph.D., Australian National University, 1966.
71. See, for instance, the description in the Benevolent Society's 1876 report of the efforts taken "to check imposition", in S.M.H., 29.1.1876, p.10. Stephen's comment is reported in Ibid., 1.8.1877, 'Sydney Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.2. See also Sir William Manning's speech in Ibid.
72. Ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3. Ibid., 6.8.1878, 'The Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.6. Working class dissatisfaction with the institution is mentioned obliquely in the annual report, in Ibid., and was also expressed by "An individual" who interrupted the meeting to complain "that he had been twice at the refuge and was sent away without breakfast."
these people might "help themselves by earning their own living." This concern to cultivate industry and self-reliance among the poor was emphasised by another charity over which Stephen presided, the Home Visiting and Relief Society. Worried "that indiscriminate alms-giving creates a special class of persons unwilling to assist themselves", the society made it a central rule that no relief could be offered to applicants until they had been visited and approved by committee members. As a further guard against possible pauperisation, the charity followed the lead set by the C.O.S. in London in lending rather than giving money, and by emphasising that the assistance was to be repaid if possible, sought to encourage the distressed to strive harder for their own support.

The policy of loan-making would encourage the "restoration" of the down-and-out to society, said Stephen. Charity properly directed aimed in his view at demonstrating the correctness and the material rewards of conformity to dominant middle class culture. The lesson thus sought to be taught depended however upon the active participation of the charitable themselves in making plain the distinction between the virtue and success of the giver of alms as opposed to the failings, the dependence, and obligations of the receiver of assistance. The absent-minded handing over of a few coins to the beggar knocking at the front door or the impersonal process of writing a cheque to one or other charitable society for its office bearers to distribute as they saw fit was thus in this view a self-defeating and even harmful exercise. In its lending activities the Home Visiting and Relief Society by contrast placed prime importance upon the home visitation and "personal investigation" (my italics) of all those seeking relief. For as was argued during the meeting to form a Sydney C.O.S. in September 1878, the crucial "moral benefit" from personal contact in alms-giving tended to be lost when people merely sent their donations to benevolent societies for distribution. Discussing the work of the C.O.S. in London, a Herald editorial writer in 1884 suggested that it was perhaps

73. Ibid., 2.8.1881, 'City Night Refuge And Soup Kitchen' p.6 (annual report); see also the society's annual reports, reprinted in Ibid., 1.8.1877, p.2; and 4.8.1880, p.3.
74. Ibid., 25.8.1877, 'Home Visiting And Relief Society' p.3; and see the society's annual meeting for the previous year, reported in Ibid., 9.8.1876, p.5.
75. Ibid.
this sort of direct personal contact and paternal kindness which was responsible for "the milder attitude of the British proletarian with regard to property as compared with that of his Continental brother".77

Active participation by more fortunate members of the community in educating and guiding the lower orders was therefore said by the charitable societies to be essential for "restoring"78 the participation of these people in mainstream society. Chairing the Sydney Ragged Schools' annual meeting in September 1877, Justice Hargrave drew particular attention to the good resulting from the personalised and "universal kindness" shown to children in these schools.79 Volunteers from the N.S.W. Temperance Alliance and the City Mission worked together distributing tracts and giving advice, cajoling people to sign the pledge, and organising weekly lectures and meetings. The City Missionaries, the Ladies Evangelistic Association and the Christian Instruction Society regularly held scripture meetings and "earnest Christian addresses" for lodgers in the Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen.80 At the Ragged Schools, in addition to the regular work undertaken by the teaching staff, numbers of "Christian ladies and gentlemen" volunteered their time as Sunday School teachers, and brought little weekly gifts to the children and provided a Christmas tree each year. "It was very pleasing", the Reverend R. S. Paterson reflected in 1880, "to contemplate the kindly feeling that was thus engendered between one class of society and another."81

This coming together of the classes was acclaimed at the annual meetings of the Ragged Schools as achieving most worthwhile results. The Ragged School teachers, said the Reverend Mr Paterson in 1878, were like "the divers [who] go down into the depths of the sea to get the pearls.

77. S.M.H., 25.8.1877, 'Home Visiting And Relief Society' p.3 (annual report); and Stephen's speech during the 1876 annual meeting, in ibid., 9.8.1876, p.5. Ibid., 10.9.1878, 'Charity Organization Society' p.6; the expression was used by Carran; note also the letter by Thomas Walker, read at the meeting by James Fairfax. Ibid., 22.1.1884, editorial p.6.
78. The word was used by Dean Cowper, as well as by Stephen; ibid., 16.9.1879, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3.
79. There was no compulsion; nothing but kindness between the teacher and the child. That was the only way in which we could do any good, even in our prisons. His experience was that kindness towards these people and personal attention... did far more good than anything in the way of punishment towards reforming the criminal and preventing crime.
   Ibid., 4.9.1877, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.5 (Justice Hargrave).
80. See ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3 (annual report).
81. Ibid., 7.9.1880, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3.
And the pearls are worthless-looking until the artist sets to work upon them, and then every one is attracted by their beauty." Slum children, he said, were similarly being brought out of the depths and made into "useful members of society", well fitted to increase the ranks of industrious working people in the colony:

It was an industrious and virtuous population that brought prosperity to a land. We have abundance of natural resources, and we want only an industrious and virtuous population, and we could only get these among a certain class, through the agency of Ragged Schools.82

Economic advantage was paralleled by promising signs of social improvement. Children who without this education would have disregarded Christian teaching and avoided the chapel instead "took their places in Christian congregations, feeling that they had an interest in such, and were entitled to do so."83 Numbers similarly joined socially reputable voluntary organisations like the Good Templars, and some even induced their fathers to give up drink and join with them.84 Narrow self-interest was being replaced as a result of this more active and fruitful participation in the wider community by a healthy awareness of "the claims of society at large." In contrast to the apparent vice and anarchy characterising the homes into which they had been born, pupils of the Ragged Schools "had become much more obedient and submissive, and many of them had been so trained that they had become industrious, honest, and truthful members of society."85 Many, boys and girls, were said to have found positions in good trades. Moreover, instead of squandering their wages as their parents so often did, they followed the dominant middle class values of thrift and self-advancement.86 In place of the loose and immoral habits of their parents, ex-pupils displayed a gratifying desire to become respectably and comfortably married.87

82. Ibid., 4.9.1878, p.8.
83. Ibid., 9.8.1881, p.3 (Kent); and 7.9.1880, p.3 (Kent).
84. Ibid., 4.9.1878, p.8 (Kent); 16.9.1879, p.3 (annual report).
85. Ibid., 7.9.1880, p.3 (G. W. Barker). Ex-pupils had become "respectable members of the community", said the Reverend Mr Paterson; ibid., 9.8.1881, p.3.
86. Ex-pupils who visited their old teachers were said to look "very respectable" and to have told of using their savings "to set up in some business", perhaps, and to settle "in comfortable homes"; ibid., 4.9.1878, p.8 (annual report); also 16.9.1879, p.3 (annual report; also the brief speech by "A young man" and the approving responses by Dean Cowper and the Reverend Mr Paterson).
87. Ibid., 4.9.1877, p.5 (the Rev. Mr Paterson); 16.9.1879, p.3 (annual report).
By charitable efforts such as these, suggested one Herald editorial in January 1884, "The growth of industry, temperance, and thrift will create a state of public opinion which will make it impossible that such rookeries as our very poor live in, even in Sydney, should find tenants". It was an exaggerated opinion and one which the writer himself quickly went on to qualify. Notwithstanding the Fairfax family's generous financial support for the Ragged Schools and other competently conducted charitable institutions in Sydney, the newspaper consistently argued that attempts to reform character could never be truly effective without at the same time the passing of stringent sanitary laws to improve the environment in which people lived.

People could not be expected to be decent and orderly if they had to live in hovels. Equally, where the conditions in which people lived were improved, their characters would improve accordingly. The Herald mentioned to its readers early in 1884 how Lord Shaftesbury's experiments in building model working class dwellings had demonstrated that there is far less drunkenness among the inhabitants of healthful dwellings than among occupants of dirty, dingy, and dreary hovels. People fly to the excitement of drink as a refuge from the depressing and debilitating influence of their daily surroundings; and where these are bright, cheerful, and exhilarating, there is a diminished temptation to have recourse to illegitimate sources of hilarity.

A long article appearing in the Herald during February 1884 predicted that "Vice and misery, like vermin, haunt all places of squalor, filth, and decay. They cannot breathe the air of respectability and health. Improve the conditions, and you must improve the people." Improving people's homes, the newspaper had contended in 1876, "will do more to make a people orderly and well-behaved than the largest corps of the best disciplined police."

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88. Ibid., 22.1.1884, editorial p.6.
89. Ibid., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.
90. See the lead editorial in ibid., commenting on the reports by Cameron's committee on common lodging houses and the S. & H.B. on overcrowding; 19.8.1876, p.4. A similar opinion was expressed in the Echo, 9.10.1890, 'Sanitary Precautions' p.4.
91. Ibid., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.
Ibid., 29.7.1876, editorial leader p.4.
Certainly, the growing concern with working class housing by sanitary and social reformers in the latter 1870s and into the 1880s was regarded by them, as it was regarded by Shaftesbury and Salisbury in England, as a way of preserving social equilibrium.93 Just as certainly, housing reform represented "a way of avoiding any but the most superficial examination of the fundamental problems of poverty and social justice".94 Such reformism was also, however, a genuine effort to resolve acknowledged defects, and was the most that could be rationally contemplated by men who were yet determined to believe that the existing basic structure of society was the best one possible.

The wide-ranging sanitary investigations in Sydney during the latter 1870s and the 1880s of working class living conditions in the City sparked a general interest among middle class sanitarians and social reformers in philanthropic housing projects, in the possibilities of large scale slum demolitions and in framing stringent new laws to control land subdivision and house design. By destroying the alien City slum environment in which the lower orders lived and rehousing them in proper dwellings, the cycle which perpetuated their deviant way of life would be broken. Forced from their old haunts to decent homes in the suburbs, they would be absorbed and made active participants in the way of life of the general community. Here lay the solution for "a purifying of the scum and dregs" of society.95

This was the conception. This was the goal of those who laboured for the charitable societies and of the Corporation officials and private reformers who pressed for improved sanitary regulation in Sydney. It was not however the purpose of the community generally. The idea of compassionate intervention to assist and elevate the lower orders left the bulk of Sydney unmoved. Expressing regret that the City Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen was not more widely supported, Stephen commented during the society's 1880 annual meeting that the same few names appeared on the subscription lists of almost every charity in Sydney.96 While a minority

93. "Nothing so much prevents revolution as timely reforms", said Andrew Carran in 1896, "and the best way to prevent violent social convulsions is fairly to meet the social difficulties when they arise." N.S.W. P.D., vol.85(1896), p.3789.
95. The expression comes from the S.M.H., 13.2.1884, 'Rehousing The Poor: An Unfamiliar Aspect' p.4.
96. Ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3; see also Stephen's comments at the start of the society's 1881 meeting, in ibid., 2.8.1881, p.6.
of concerned men and women similarly gave time and money to help the aims of the Ragged Schools, general community indifference meant that the institution faced a continuing struggle to remain financially solvent. Only two parishes in the whole metropolis were contributing to support the three schools, the honorary secretary announced reproachfully in 1880.97

The essential participation of the more fortunate in society in efforts to integrate the lower orders was lacking.

Instead of responding to the disclosures about slum life by helping in the efforts being made to ensure the participation of the lower orders in bourgeois attitudes and behaviour, the reaction of most people in Sydney was limited to calling negatively for the simple destruction of the slum districts. Anxieties concerning urban health and cultural intolerance for the modifications in community norms of behaviour imposed by deprivation shaped middle class perceptions of City slums. That their antagonistic stereotyping of the alien and shadowy world of the lower orders endured, owed much to the need by working people themselves for a negative image forming the antithesis of everything they believed in, against which to identify their own personal worth and individuality. The humanitarian goal sought by sanitary and social reformers, with their emphasis on securing the participation of the lower orders in society, was frequently lost sight of as attention focused instead upon cosmetic schemes limited to the demolition of slum neighbourhoods. The rehousing of working people in improved dwellings, the framing of sanitary laws to better regulate house design and suburban development, and schemes to make commuter services between City and suburbs more easily accessible to all, tended to be overlooked or neglected.

97. Ibid., 7.9.1880, 'Sydney Ragged Schools' p.3 (annual report). At the society's annual gathering in the previous year the meeting's chairman had noted with concern that

The subscriptions for the year amounted to only £451, while the expenditure was £692. In looking over the subscription list I find there are not 300 names altogether... Surely there are many more in this wealthy city who... If they would only think of a £2 annual subscription rescuing a child from hunger, cruelty, crime, and death... would surely not refrain from helping this most excellent institution. Every child taken from the gutter and educated is a child saved from becoming a pest to the colony. (Hear, hear.)

Ibid., 16.9.1879, p.3 (Paxton).
CHAPTER NINE  
Homes for Working Men

1

The question of housing the poor, wrote a member of the Herald's editorial staff in late January 1884, "is one of universal interest in this age of great cities." ¹ The writer's remark was prompted by the publication in Britain of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, and by the subsequent attention there focussed upon the housing of the British working classes. For not only did the Bitter Cry stimulate interest in the living conditions of Sydney working people and in wider questions relating to 'the poor' and 'poverty', but by reinforcing the connection between housing, poverty, and human degradation already being made in Sydney by visitors to City slums, it gave added backing to the general contention that little could be done for the lower orders without first improving the foul environment in which they lived. In June 1880 the Herald had remarked

> No one needs to be told that in the lower quarters of cities like ours there are rotten and unimprovable rookeries, which are centres of dirt, disease, and death. Much of the improvidence, immorality, and crime of large centres of populaion is directly traceable to the hovels which are called homes.²

Attempts to reform those who were "the most wretched and debased" in the community required first that these people be removed from their unwholesome tenements and given proper homes "in which decency, cleanliness, health, and morality are possible."³

The Herald was far from voicing opinions that were new to sanitary reformers in Sydney or were unfamiliar even to the general community. Calls for improved working class housing had over many years been pioneered and sustained in particular by the City's first three CHOs who, from the post's establishment in 1857, had slowly developed a system of house to house inspections throughout the poorer districts of the City.

The evolution of systematic inspections of working class housing was at its start largely a chance affair, based less upon definite policy decisions and instructions by City aldermen⁴ than from the independent

¹. S.M.H., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.
². Ibid., 28.6.1880, editorial p.4.
³. Ibid., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7; also 17.12.1883, editorial p.7.
⁴. Instances of such are the Mayor's request for an inspection of working class housing in Queen's Place; S.C.C., L.R., 1861, vol.3, no.393 (Graham, 9.5.1861); the order given to Seymour to inspect all Chinese buildings in the City, in ibid., 1877, vol.5, no.1000 (Seymour,
initiatives of their sanitary officials. The immediate priority assigned by City aldermen to the CHO and Inspector of Nuisances was to abate public health nuisances such as defective street drainage, overflowing cesspits or insanitary backyards, and for this purpose the two officials began what quickly developed into systematic sanitary tours of the streets and lanes in the working class districts where these problems were most pronounced. In seeking to trace and rectify the sanitary nuisances thus uncovered, Corporation inspectors were inevitably drawn into placing an increasing emphasis upon the related sanitary problems that in the process were uncovered within the buildings in these districts.

Aaron claimed to have visited "every street and alley" in the inner City working class districts of western Sydney during his brief term as CHO. Graham reported at the end of 1860 that he, too, and the Inspector of Nuisances had made systematic house inspections in all parts of the City, and in memorandum books he began to record such details of working class housing as "the number of rooms in each house, and the peculiarities of each place or alley".

The frequently deplorable living conditions thus exposed convinced sanitary officials that house inspection needed to be regularised by the City Council as an integral part of the Corporation's sanitary

4. cont.
9.10.1877); and the instruction given the CHO to investigate ventilation in buildings, in S.C.C., P.(25.2.1890), p.149.
5. Aaron set a precedent when in 1857, upon being directed to examine the City's lanes, he extended his investigations to visit inside the homes of several hundred working people; S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857); vol.3, no.539 (Aaron, 26.10.1857)
6. See, for example, the early study of working class housing in the Rocks, prompted by complaints about poor drainage in the area, in ibid., 1866, vol.1, no.21 (Graham, 15.1.1866). It was no accident that in both Sydney and London some of the first legislative efforts to extend health regulation to house interiors were included in general sewerage Acts, along with clauses dealing with external nuisances such as defective drainage and unwholesome privies; see the City of London Sewers Act, 1848 (11 & 12 Vic., c.163); and the Sydney Sewerage Act of 1853 (17 Vic., no.34).
8. S.C.C., L.R., 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860). S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.607-9, p.1314; also S.C.C., L.R., 1866, vol.6, no.1123 (Graham, 12.12.1866). Throughout the 1860s, Graham frequently reported having made house to house inspections among the City districts "inhabited by the poor and Labouring Class"; ibid., 1861, vol.2, no.224 (9.3.1861); also vol.3, no.489 (8.6.1861); 1866, vol.6, no.1049 (8.12.1866); 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (9.12.1867).
responsibilities. This City aldermen did in 1873, when they directed the Inspector of Nuisances and the CHO to include an examination of housing conditions in their inspections of the City. Beginning in August in western Sydney, Corporation officials had by the end of the year worked their way through 3,207 houses. During the following year almost another 8,000 dwellings were inspected, and thereafter the internal examination of working class housing became regularised as a central component of Corporation sanitary duties. In February 1888 Seymour could report with satisfaction that "a well organized system of House to House inspection" was in operation, with a body of House Inspectors briefed to record the standard of drainage, ventilation and light, the state of closet and yard, and the number of rooms and occupants in each dwelling that they visited.

Bad working class housing, Corporation health officials concluded, was at the root both of City ill-health and immorality. Overcrowding and occasional mixing of the sexes in sixpenny lodging houses was said by them to be producing demoralisation and vice among lodgers. More alarmingly, CHO's concluded that the unwholesome conditions and lack of

9. See ibid., 1869, vol.5, no.1022 (Dansey, 9.9.1869); also 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874). See also the comparison drawn by Graham with the regular house inspections being undertaken in New York; ibid., 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (Graham, 9.12.1867).
10. Ibid., 1873, vol.5, no.753 (Dansey, 9.9.1873); vol.6, no.1044 (Seymour, 9.12.1873).
11. Ibid., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874); ibid., no.814 (Seymour, 9.12.1874). See ibid., 1875, vol.1, no.31 (Seymour, 28.1.1875). Inconsistencies and oversights of course remained which limited the evolving system's effectiveness. Dansey admitted in 1875 when quizzed by aldermen that he was keeping no regular record of the number of houses being inspected by him; S.C.C., P. (2.2.1875), p.343.
13. As Graham had said bluntly during the early 1860s, "It cannot be doubted but that the neglect of decency, comfort and health, among the labouring class is principally attributable to the condition of their dwellings." Ibid., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); also 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860). Dr Alfred Roberts claimed that "bad house accommodation leads to the sacrifice of human life in many ways; and it also leads to dirty, untidy, improvident, and immoral habits"; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.2124, p.1410; and see Chapman's comment in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.39, p.555 (Sylas Lane). Similar concerns were voiced by medical officers in Britain; Wohl, 'Unfit', pp.611-3, in Dyos and Wolff, The Victorian City, vol.2.
14. See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.1, no.126 (Aaron, 10.2.1858); vol.2, no.279 (Aaron, 14.4.1858); 1867, vol.5, no.1095 (Graham, 9.9.1867); S.C.C.L.H., qu.287, p.860 (Seymour).
privacy in much City housing was deadening the "moral sense" of City working people generally. Corporation officials spoke often of the combined public health and moral evils that were separating City slums from the remainder of the community. As Dansey wrote to aldermen in 1874, "No people can be otherwise than demoralized who are compelled to reside in such houses and in such localities as we have in our midst." Commenting upon the need to confront the environmental problems posed by the unwholesome dwellings in which working people lived, Aaron wrote in 1858 that there were many places in the City "in so shockingly dilapidated and irreparable a condition, that nothing short of destruction would be of any avail." No such power as existed in London to demolish unhealthy buildings was however then available in Sydney, but Aaron argued that many dwellings could be made more habitable if landlords were compelled to undertake repairs. In March 1858 the CHO brought to the notice of aldermen the City Council's authority under the 1853 Sewerage Act to cause the cleansing and whitewashing of buildings certified by two qualified doctors to be so filthy and unwholesome as to endanger health. During the next twelve months, until his resignation from the City Corporation, Aaron periodically sought and received the Mayor's permission to hire a second doctor so as to undertake proceedings against unwholesome buildings.

It was a tentative effort at improving the internal conditions of working class housing. In attempting to make use of the Sewerage Act, Aaron and later Graham underscored the concerns that had first driven them to investigate housing conditions by dwelling heavily upon the state of the drains, yards, and closets. Their descriptions of the buildings' internal conditions were by contrast vague and limited to criticisms of dirtiness and dampness caused by defective drainage. A more sophisticated

16. Examples are ibid., 1860, vol.4, no.843 (Graham, 10.12.1860); 1861, vol.2, no.224 (Graham, 9.3.1861); vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); report by the City Building Surveyor, 24.8.1880, in S.M.H., 27.8.1880, 'Sydney Municipal Council' p.6.
18. Ibid., 1858, vol.2, no.269 (Aaron, 31.3.1858).
19. Ibid.; see 17 Vic., no.34 (clause 21).
20. See ibid., 1859, vol.2, no.291 (Aaron, 18.3.1859); 1861, vol.3, no.393 (Graham, 9.5.1861); 1865, vol.6, no.967 (Graham, 30.11.1865).
approach to the problems of house sanitation was however also stirring, as the CHOs' interest in miasmic explanations of disease causation, with the emphasis upon poisons in the air, encouraged them to explore the twin questions of ventilation and overcrowding in City dwellings.

Even as early as February 1858 Aaron had prepared a special report upon the subject, and warned:

All experience proves that the crowding of human beings together in small, ill-ventilated tenements, will produce the most virulent of diffusible poisons, and I have no hesitation in declaring my positive conviction, that if this state of things is allowed to continue as it now is,... Sydney will one day be visited by one or other of those Epidemic Scourges from which other parts of the World have so fearfully suffered.21

"With such dwellings generally overcrowded in our midst", wrote Dansey in 1875, "can we wonder that our death rate stands so high or our code of morality so low".22 Sewage and drainage remained the major concerns of sanitarians and the wider community throughout the century, but as attention turned more and more to internal house sanitation during the 1870s there was a growing awareness also of the sanitary evils resulting from the related problems of overcrowding and bad ventilation, especially among "the dwellings of the lower classes".23 Comprehensive sanitary laws were required, urged Corporation health officials, aimed at producing a controlled environment in which no house could "be erected for the Labouring Man and his family without all circumstances connected with the preservation of health and decency being well considered".24

21. Ibid., 1858, vol.1, no.126 (Aaron, 10.2.1858).
22. Ibid., 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875). Little had changed when Seymour reviewed the internal sanitary state of "the dwellings of the humbler classes" in 1888; ibid., vol.2, no.301 (Seymour, 5.2.1888).
23. The comment was made in the S.H.L., 25.10,1880, editorial p.5, during an interesting review of the changing emphases among sanitarians.
24. S.C.C., L.R., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); also 1859, vol.5, no.835 (Graham, 9.9.1859); 1875, vol.3, no.357 (Dansey, 9.6.1875); vol.4, no.517 (Dansey, 9.8.1875); and 1883, vol.3, no.703 (Dansey, 5.1883).
Aaron's attempts in the late 1850s to use the Sewerage Act to attack unwholesome housing had quickly run into difficulties. By mid 1858, Aaron was urging an amendment of the Sewerage Act to make his say-so alone sufficient to cause the cleansing of buildings, and complaining as he did so at the "much trouble and difficulty" experienced in finding a second doctor willing to condemn unwholesome buildings, "especially where the owner of the property happened to be a person of influence." 25 Aaron was soon afterwards able to obtain the help of a second doctor, with whose assistance he toured Queen's Place, then enjoying one of many bouts of publicity for the extreme wretchedness of some of its dwellings. The result was the serving of a notice to cleanse and repair upon the Honourable Edward Hunt, member of the Legislative Council and owner of 18 overcrowded, dirty, and badly drained tenements in the alley. Aaron's success was only apparent, however, for after inspecting Queen's Place some three years later Graham wrote disgustedly that Hunt's premises were still "the most wretched, unhealthy, dwellings in the City". 26

In March 1859, reviewing his attempts to improve the sanitary condition of working class housing, Aaron had himself pronounced the Sewerage Act's provisions to be, "in its present state, cumbersome and expensive in its operation." 27 The CHO did nonetheless succeed in making some owners cleanse buildings in unwholesome Robin Hood Lane. Another block of buildings was inspected in March 1859 and ordered to be improved, but use of the Sewerage Act for this purpose was interrupted by Aaron's angry resignation in the following month. 28 Not until mid 1861 did his successor, Graham, again suggest making use of the Act's provision against unwholesome dwellings, and after another isolated request to the City Council by Graham in November 1865 for permission to use the clause, CHO's

27. Ibid., 1859, vol. 2, no. 255 (Aaron, 9.3.1859). City Council uncertainty concerning the means to be adopted for giving the clause effect is revealed in the attached minutes to Aaron's request to begin proceedings against a common lodging house in Lower George Street; ibid., 1858, vol. 2, no. 284 (Aaron, 15.4.1858).
28. S.C.C., W.C.M., qu. 326, p. 1299 (Robin Hood Lane); S.C.C., L.R., 1859, vol. 2, no. 291 (Aaron, 18.3.1859 - Cowlishaw's buildings, Castlereagh Street).
abandoned efforts to apply the Act to unwholesome housing.  

The inability of CHOs to apply effectively the Sewerage Act to improve housing conditions, paralleling the difficulty experienced in successfully prosecuting the owners or occupants of insanitary premises for creating common nuisances, highlighted the almost total powerlessness of Corporation sanitary officials before the disease scares of the mid 1870s concerning the internal state of dwellings. Graham complained frequently that his efforts to improve the environment in which working people lived were limited to giving advice, since "I have no power to interfere with the internal parts of a house, but can only compel the removal of external nuisances." A new Building Act was needed, he concluded, which by drawing upon the most up to date medical knowledge would ensure that inherently insanitary structures could no longer be built in Sydney. 

It was upon the basis of evidence and advice supplied by Aaron and Graham concerning the absence of sanitary laws to regulate working class housing that Parkes' select committee in 1860, albeit with some vagueness, suggested to Parliament the need for legislation setting minimum standards for room sizes and internal ventilation, requiring tenement blocks to provide adequate outside toilet facilities and exercise space for children, and establishing public baths and wash-houses. Existing Sydney building laws by contrast contained no sanitary provisions whatsoever.

The old Act of 1837 and its various amendments had been based heavily on British models, which in turn traced back to the rebuilding of London after 1666 and as such were greatly influenced by the need to guard against

29. Ibid., 1861, vol.3, no.393 (Graham, 9.5.1861); 1865, vol.6, no.967 (Graham, 30.11.1865). Some 20 years were to pass since Aaron first proposed amending the Sewerage Act before the 1879 Corporation Act, inspired by a similar reform in the British Public Health Act of 1875, granted the CHO independent authority to initiate "the whitewashing cleansing or purifying" of insanitary buildings; 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 193); see 38 & 39 Vic., c.55 (clause 46).

30. S.C.C., L.R., 1867, vol.6, no.1434 (Graham, 9.12.1867); also S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.626-7, p.1315; S.C.C., L.R., 1863, vol.2, no.197 (Graham, 9.3.1863). No authority existed, he explained, to compel Landlords... to repair - Cleanse and drain, the internal parts of the tenements, inhabited by the Labouring Class; the Council have the power through... their officers to abate and remove nuisances injurious to Public Health, as stagnant pools, ditch gutters, cesspools - or ashpit[s], so foul as to be a nuisance; but no authority is given to interfere with the internal dwelling.

Ibid., 1867, vol.3, no.761 (Graham, 8.6.1867).


Precautions against fire were obviously necessary, said Aaron, but they had been made at the expense of sanitary provisions and the Building Act in consequence contained nothing about regulating the minimum width of lanes or alleys or for ensuring the proper ventilation of buildings. "In a Sanitary view", said Graham in 1867, "our present Building Act is defective":

new regulations should be made having a prospective operation, framed, as to interfere no further with every one's right to manage his own property than necessary to protect the health of the Citizens. Houses should not be build back to back so as to prevent ventilation; or close courts built up at one end; sufficient space should be left in the back, for conveniences absolutely necessary for health and decency. Underground drainage should be enforced. The present act has no Sanitary clause - but only those apertaining to the thickness of walls and material - to hinder the spread of fire.

During the 1870s Dansey likewise agitated vigorously for a new Building Act to enforce sufficient ventilation, space, and internal drainage in new buildings and to enable repairs to be ordered in the old. As things were, he lamented, "property-holders can build what kind of house they like without any regard to health".

Draft legislation had been prepared early in the decade by the City Building Surveyor, Michael Golden, and again by his successor, Edward Bradridge. It was not however until December 1877 that the latter measure, named the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, was introduced to Parliament. All new building plans were to be submitted to the CHO, and the Building Surveyor was to oversee strict new design and construction codes. Bradridge proposed new rules to ensure adequate lighting and ventilation of rooms, to prevent the crowding together of buildings, and to bring the construction of stables and cowyards under effective sanitary regulation.

33. Sydney's Act of 1837 carried as its full title "An Act for regulating Buildings and Party-walls and for preventing mischief by Fire in the Town of Sydney"; 8 Wm. IV, no.6; and see amendments 2 Vic., no.25; 3 Vic., no.14. London Acts traced back to the 1666 Act for rebuilding the city of London, 19 Caroli II, c.3.
35. See ibid., 1873, vol.5, no.763 (9.9.1873); 1874, vol.2, no.269 (9.4.1874); vol.5, no.623 (9.9.1874); vol.6, no.812 (9.12.1874); 1875, vol.5, no.597 (9.9.1875); vol.6, no.833 (9.12.1875); also 1878, vol.3, no.538 (10.6.1878).
36. Ibid., 1875, vol.4, no.447 (Dansey, 9.7.1875).
37. 42 Vic., no.25; a detailed summary of the Bill was published in the S.M.H., 9.2.1878, 'The City Of Sydney Improvement Bill' p.5. The
The need for the more efficient supervision of building construction was widely admitted by the building industry in the City. Many architects, builders, and developers, having become accustomed under the existing ineffectual laws to determining their own standards of integrity and craftsmanship, nonetheless regarded the proposed new Corporation regulations with suspicion. Corporation officials, and most of all the Building Surveyor, would, they said, "be made autocrats". Their new powers were "arbitrary and excessive", and the proposed penalties for offences under the new laws "unnecessarily severe". Such sweeping powers were liable to "be very much abused". It was complained that the new building specifications and regulations were too rigid and were many of them technically questionable, and more importantly, that there was no check on the enforcement of what were thus undoubtedly arbitrary and perhaps also unworkable laws. Nowhere, it was pointed out, was there any provision permitting public examination of City Council by-laws before they were gazetted. It was likewise complained that the judicial check against arbitrary decisions by Corporation officials was inadequate, for the magistrates who under the draft Bill were to hear any appeals would, it was argued, know nothing of technical building matters.

In order to assess these criticisms, Legislative Councillors referred the Improvement Bill to a select committee so that skilled professional men could be called as witnesses to scrutinise the intended legislation.

37.cont.


38. See the submission given by Hugh McMaster, a vice-president of the Builders' and Contractors' Association, in ibid., p.214; see also the two petitions by builders, contractors, architects, and others, in J.(N.S.W. L.C.), vol.29 (1878-9 part 2), pp.173, 175.


40. Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, qu.98-9, pp.195-6 (Mansfield); also qu.25, p.188 (Blacket); qu.153, 156, p.199 (Alexander Dean).

41. Select Committee report, pp.179-80, and qu.33, 41-2, 44, pp.189-90 (Blacket); qu.90, p.194 (Mansfield). See the editorial review of the Bill and of objections to it in the S.M.H., 17.2.1879, p.4.

42. The Legislative Council debate is recorded in ibid., 31.1.1879, 'New South Wales Parliament', p.3; and ibid., 7.2.1879, p.3.
What was needed, witnesses told the committee, was an expert board of appeal such as existed in London and in Scotland, to protect individual liberties and to arbitrate in the disputes which it was predicted would arise over interpretation of the complex web of technical details contained within the Bill.43 The advice was accepted by committeemen. Amendments were prepared, requiring that before gazettal, by-laws were to be circulated for at least two months and published in two or more of the city's newspapers. Copies were also to be delivered to an Improvement Board, a body which was to consist of an architect, a builder, a doctor, and two other members, and which would hear any appeals made against the proposed by-laws. The Board would also act in place of the magistracy, hearing the appeals of any person "dissatisfied with the conduct proceedings or decision" of Corporation officials, and was also more vaguely vested with "power to determine any questions concerning the execution of this Act which may be brought before them by complaint report or otherwise". In May 1879, after almost two and a half years' delay, the amended Bill was finally passed by Parliament.44

Reporting upon the implementation of the new building Act, Dansay noted with satisfaction that now armed with expanded authority, Corporation sanitary officials had during their inspections of the City been able to cause repairs and alterations to the internal conditions of homes and workplaces, stables and cowsheds, that before they were powerless to interfere with. Plans for new buildings also began to be submitted to the more stringent scrutiny of sanitary officials permitted under the Act.45

43. Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, qu.44, p.190; qu.84, p.193; qu.98, p.195; qu.157, pp.199-200; qu.270, p.209. As Blacket explained later,
When the present Act was first introduced, it contained some clauses which appeared to myself and to others to be extremely arbitrary, and very liable to abuse - we were examined by the Select Committee, and having stated our objections, we suggested that some Authority might be interposed as an appeal against the harshness of the letter of the Law, and against any possible Official oppression.
Blacket to Town Clerk, 26.7.1881, enclosure in S.C.C., F.C.R., 1881, vol.2, no.16 (3.8.1881).
44. See the Select Committee report, pp.181-2. 42 Vic., no.25 (clauses 5-7).
45. S.C.C., L.R., 1879, vol.5, no.1031 (Dansey, 9.9.1879); 1880, vol.4, no.856 (Dansey, 5.1880); vol.5, no.1005 (Dansey, 6.1880). After a year of overseeing the new law Thomas Sapsford, Bradridge's replacement as Building Surveyor, reported that now as a result of the improved building regulations "a much better class of structures are being erected throughout the City especially Dwellings,... and I have much pleasure in stating that the City improvement Act on the whole is a
Grave deficiencies were however also detected in the new statute. Complaining at "the unworkable character of the Act", Improvement Board members reported that by observing a few minimum building specifications, people could still erect the "most objectionable" of structures. Buildings continued to be put up even along the City's principal thoroughfares which the Evening News, voicing a common feeling, maintained were an outrage to "every canon of architectural propriety and taste".

Nowhere in the Act were general minimum standards for room sizes in new buildings set down. Before even the Improvement Act had been passed by Parliament Hugh McMaster, a vice-president of the Builders' and Contractors' Association, was pointing out that nothing in the law prevented the building-up of new housing allotments with rubbish. Provisions relating to the internal ventilation of new buildings were also defective, he maintained, and the measure had failed to prohibit that "abominable and unhealthy proceeding", the building of back to back housing. Moreover, McMaster complained, there were no regulations to require that existing structures being converted into dwellings first have all their proposed sanitary arrangements approved by the CHO and City Surveyor.

Subsequent experience of the working of the Improvement Act bore out to the full McMaster's misgivings. In the absence of legislation to check them, parties continued to dump garbage and other refuse on vacant land so as to level the ground for building purposes. The law was also commonly agreed by 1890 to have been "a dead letter" when it came to preventing the crowding and linking together of buildings. The City

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45. cont.

success and proving beneficial to the general community." Ibid., 1880, vol.10, no.2241 (Sapsford, 30.11.1880).


47. E.N., 16.2.1883, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1 (S.A., N.S.W., 1/2124).

48. Select Committee on the City Improvement Bill, Appendix A, p.214.

49. Could it be wondered at, said Dansey in 1883, "that new houses built upon such a foundation should develop filth diseases or favour their propagation"; S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.3, no.932 (Dansey, 9.6.1881). Seymour was still drawing attention to this "most objectionable" practice in his annual report, dated 29.1.1892, in P.M.C.C.S., 1891.

50. D.T., 3.10.1890, editorial leader p.4; S.M.R., 3.10.1890, editorial leader p.4. The two comments were prompted by the great Moore Street fire; see below, Chapter Sixteen. See also the assessment of metropolitan building regulations made by the Royal Commission on
Building Surveyor, George McRae, complained in 1891 that the Improvement Act had turned out to be "a very defective measure" which in practice gave him no power to regulate room sizes or other matters of internal building design. The complete redrafting of the Act had been ordered by the City Council in 1881 and 1887, and in 1890 a Corporation Bill containing revised building codes was prepared by the City Council. All these initiatives faltered, however, either during consideration by the City Council or before Parliament, and continuing representations to City alderman by McRae throughout the 1890s for a new building law likewise bore no fruit.

The consequences of existing legislative inadequacies were in the meantime underlined by the house to house inspections of McRae's colleague, Seymour, who had warned in 1888 how

In some parts of the city where there is a density of population in narrow streets, lanes, and courts, where houses were built as it were back to back and with very small (if any) yards, there is no opportunity for the air to circulate between them consequently the inhabitants of such are continually inhaling an impure and poisonous atmosphere.

Among speculative builders in the City, he reported, the need for good ventilation "is almost lost sight of", and new houses were consequently being thrown up in whose close and unhealthy atmosphere "are embedded the germs of disease". Many older City buildings still by 1888 did not possess efficient drainage, the Inspector complained, although laws had been passed over a decade earlier with the intention of ensuring that they did.

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50. cont.
Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.492.
51. Ibid., qu.13607, 13615-6, p.871.
52. A City of Sydney Improvement Act Amendment Bill was prepared by Sapsford and approved by the City Council in 1881, but was ignored by Parliament; S.C.C., L.R., 1881, vol.2, no.405 (Sapsford to Town Clerk, 2.3.1881); S.C.C., F.C.R., 1881, vol.2, no.16 (3.8.1881); S.C.C., P. (4.8.1881), p.519; and see below, p.335. See the order given for the preparation of an amending Bill in ibid. (1.3.1887), p.403.
53. The 1890 Corporation Bill contained sweeping new sanitary provisions relating to building interiors, and sought to overcome overcrowding by proposing regulations governing room sizes and cubic space per occupant; see Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, qu.13615, 13635, p.871. See also the Town Clerk's annual report in P.M.C.C.S., 1890.
54. See McRae's annual report in ibid., 1891; also A. Roberts, 'City Improvement in Sydney 1880-1900', Ph.D. in preparation, University of Sydney, p.318.
56. Ibid.
The possibly disastrous implications of accumulating sanitary problems among working class housing districts were spelled out by the CHO, Dr Gwynne Hughes, in February 1892. Immediate action was necessary, he advised,

for the amelioration of the sanitary conditions of portions of Gipps Ward, known as 'the Rocks', the area at Blackwattle, the areas adjacent eastern fore-shores of Darling Harbour, as these localities, in consequence of dense population and imperfect habitations, seriously affect the health of the people in any circumstances, but in the time of epidemics such as have been recently experienced, serve only as beds for the generation and propagation of diseased germs.57

57. Monthly report by Dr Gwynne Hughes, 4.2.1892, in P.M.C.C.S., 1892.
CHAPTER TEN

Common Lodging Houses

I

The attention devoted by CHOs to extending sanitary jurisdiction and effective regulation over City housing was accompanied by a more particular concern to improve sanitary conditions in the City's common lodging houses. With their overcrowding, dirtiness and lack of ventilation, their reputation as fruitful sources and incubators of disease, and the allegations linking them with crime and prostitution, common lodging houses provided CHOs with perhaps their foremost example of the pernicious environmental influences upon City health and morals resulting from the ill-regulated condition of working class housing in Sydney.

Corporation inspections of common lodging houses had evolved haphazardly together with house to house tours, upon the basis of the sanitary officers' authority to enter premises to examine water and drainage arrangements and suppress nuisances to the public health. But while landlords generally submitted to inspection without first demanding to see a warrant, the Corporation visitors had no legal authority to interfere with internal sanitary arrangements beyond the serving of notices for water wastage or filthy yards and privies. The police similarly possessed no real authority to interfere with common lodging houses.

Formal right of entry to such premises was restricted to the investigation of robberies and other crimes. As Senior Sergeant Larkins explained in 1878 before the start of his tour of common lodging houses with Stanley James, "We have no power of entry anywhere, although in the sixpenny places they hardly ever refuse us. If they won't let us see this place, we must

1. See, for example, S.C.C., L.R., 1873, vol.6, no.1041 (Dansey, 9.12.1873); also the evidence by the City Corporation Inspector of Water Services in the S.C.C.L.H., qu.437-83, pp.865-7; and qu.291, p.860 (Dansey).

2. Ibid., qu.237-8, p.858 (Seymour); Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, qu.12376, p.834 (Seymour). The inadequacy of such limited jurisdiction was explained by a frustrated Seymour in 1876: 272. Are they [the lodging-house keepers] often brought up to Court for breaches of sanitary regulations? They are; but all we can do is to get them fined for not keeping their premises clean. The full penalty is £10, but very often they are fined not more than £1. 273. And they pay the fine and go back again? They do; and we find the premises just the same at our next visit.

S.C.C.L.H., p.860.
try another.”

Passage of the Improvement Act late in 1879 encouraged Seymour to begin a much more systematic and regular inspection of common lodging houses. Just as they did with other buildings, Corporation inspectors examined yards, drains and closets, and Dansey recorded that heavy fines were imposed for keeping dirty premises and bedding. The inspectors also recorded details of ventilation and lighting, the numbers of rooms and occupants, and sent daily reports of their observations to Seymour’s office to be entered in the departmental records. Yet over such matters Corporation officials still had no regulatory authority, and attempts to improve controls over common lodging houses merely upon the basis of prosecutions for filthy premises continued to be of limited effectiveness. Corporation sanitary tours of lodging houses, which for the greater part of the 1880s were so arranged as to inspect each premises fortnightly, were further reduced in effectiveness when in the early 1890s the understaffed department was forced to reorganise its tours on a monthly basis.

3. One landlady did indeed refuse admittance to the police party, maintaining defiantly that she "wouldn't have folks poking about her house at night." S.M.H., 8.2.1878, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Sydney' p.5. See p.168.n.59, for references to police powers of access.

4. S.C.C., L.R., 1882, vol.5, no.1463 (Dansey, 9.9.1882); also 1879, vol.5, no.1031 (Dansey, 9.9.1879); and see the court case reported in the E.N., 17.9.1885, 'Filthy Premises, &c.' p.4.

5. S.C.C., L.R., 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888); Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, qu.12401-3, p.835 (Seymour).

6. In May 1882 a Herald editorial recorded the outcome of a recent visit by Seymour to a common lodging-house in order to see if any improvement had been effected since the proprietor was last fined for keeping filthy premises. It is tolerably plain from the Inspector's description that things had in no sense improved, and that though the fine had been paid, the proprietor had little fear of a second prosecution... The house had still the same extraordinary number of beds, and these beds were in the same state as when first seen... The floors had not been washed, nor had the back premises been cleansed. It may well be asked what purpose had been served by the prosecution? S.M.H., 20.5.1882, editorial p.5; also D.T., 11.8.1882, editorial p.2. Some piecemeal improvements were nevertheless achieved; see the report of a return visit by Seymour to one Clarence Street lodging house in the S.M.H., 6.6.1882, 'News Of The Day' p.5.

7. See S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.6, no.2112 (Seymour, 9.12.1883); 1886, vol.8, no.2436 (Seymour, 11.12.1886); 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888).

8. Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, qu.12265, p.831; qu.12402, p.833. Seymour had only one sub-inspector in 1875 to assist
concede that common lodging houses in the poorer districts of the City remained, despite Corporation tours, appallingly overcrowded and a menace to public health.9

Findings from the more thorough Corporation inspection tours permitted under the Improvement Act had quickly confirmed Dansey's belief that stringent new powers of the type embodied in British common lodging house legislation were urgently required in Sydney.10 Dansey and his two predecessors repeatedly urged that on both public health and moral grounds, it was essential to pass a law enabling either the Corporation or the police to license all common lodging houses, and on that basis giving full power to inspect such places and enforce rules preventing overcrowding, ensuring sufficient ventilation of rooms and regular cleansing and whitewashing, and requiring the authorities' immediate notification of any cases of infectious disease among inmates.11

Aaron had restated that opinion in 1859 before Parkes' select committee inquiry, which subsequently recommended the licensing and thorough regulation of common lodging houses in the City.12 The Sewage and Health

8. cont.

him in house to house inspections. A second sub-inspector was later added, and in 1881 an additional 12 assistants were appointed. Staff numbers were unchanged at the end of 1885. Only 11 house inspectors remained at the start of 1889, and by the year's end their number had been further reduced to seven; see S. & H.B., 1st R., qu.374, p.352 (Seymour); S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.2, no.560 (Seymour, 12.4.1883); 1885, vol.7, no.2010 (Seymour, 9.12.1885); 1888, vol.2, no.501 (Seymour, 5.2.1888); also Seymour's annual report in P.M.C.C.S., 1888; and in ibid., 1889.

9. Ibid., 1891; ibid., 1892.
10. S.C.C., L.R., 1879, vol.5, no.1031 (Dansey, 9.9.1879); 1882, vol.5, no.1663 (Dansey, 9.9.1882). Concern was intensiified by the apparent mushrooming of cheap City lodging houses; S.C.C., L.R., 1869, vol.4, no.754 (Dansey, 9.6.1869). Seymour prepared a list of 37 common lodging houses in 1876; S.C.C.L.H., qu.244, p.858, and Appendix A. Two years later Stanley James, apparently drawing upon Larkins' knowledge, said that there were between 40 and 50 in the City; S.M.H., 8.2.1878, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Sydney' p.5. Seymour made a similar calculation in S.C.C., L.R., 1886, vol.8, no.2436 (Seymour, 11.12.1886). Early in 1889 the Inspector reported that there were 63 City common lodging houses, after which date according to his calculations their numbers climbed rapidly, to 132 a year later, to 250 by 1892, and to some 500 by the start of 1893; annual reports in P.M.C.C.S., 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892.
11. S.C.C., L.R., 1872, vol.6, no.1018 (Dansey, 9.12.1872); 1875, vol.6, no.767 (Dansey, 9.11.1875). See also 1858, vol.1, no.126 (Aaron, 10.2.1858); vol.3, no.644 (Aaron, 9.6.1858); 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865); 1867, vol.3, no.761 (Graham, 8.6.1867).
Board's committee of inquiry into overcrowding likewise concluded in 1876 that a comprehensive lodging houses Act was needed.\textsuperscript{13} Their opinion was forcefully restated during the same year by Cameron's select committee report. The committee's sometimes lurid evidence detailing moral and sanitary conditions prevailing in Chinese and sixpenny lodging houses provoked newspaper and community outrage, and a petition was prepared demanding the regulation of all common lodging houses.\textsuperscript{14}

That call was repeated at a coroner's court in January 1878 following the suicide of a sailor in one Sussex Street lodging house. After hearing evidence by Dansey, the police, and those who had known the dead man, the jury expressed dismay at the disgraceful state of the house in which the deceased lived, one juryman, indeed, saying that that of itself was sufficient to induce the poor fellow to commit suicide; but the City Coroner, while fully agreeing with the observations made as to the filthy and unwholesome state of the house, said he was afraid that nothing could be done in the matter until the Legislature passed an Act to bring common lodging-houses under proper control.\textsuperscript{15}

The court's dismay was echoed several days later by the \textit{Herald}, which devoted an editorial leader to publicising the case as being symptomatic of the evil consequences of overcrowding in the City. Chiding the public for letting lapse its indignation following Cameron's select committee report, and at the same time criticising Parliament for being "too much occupied over its party squabbles to devote itself to the health of the community", the newspaper urged the passing of a law to regulate lodging houses. Pointing to the continuing unhealthiness of Sydney common lodging houses even after being repeatedly fined by Seymour, the \textit{Daily Telegraph} concluded in 1882 that existing Corporation sanitary controls were inadequate and urged the cleansing of such an "Augean stable" by "a Hercules in the shape of a Common Lodging-house Act."\textsuperscript{16}

Aaron had participated with Edward Wise, the then Attorney General, and John McIerlie, the Inspector General of Police, to prepare just such a Bill

\textsuperscript{14} S.C.C.L.H., p.847. Petition on common lodging houses, in V. & P.(N.S.W. L.A.), 1875-6, vol.1, p.869; and see above, p.164, n.44-7.
\textsuperscript{15} S.M.H., 25.1.1878, 'Suicide In A Common Lodging-House' p.5.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 28.1.1878, editorial leader p.4. D.T., 11.8.1882, editorial p.2; and see the comparison drawn with the "very stringent" regulations enforced in Melbourne, in the S.M.H., 22.8.1882, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Melbourne' p.3.
in 1858. Introduced by Wise into the Legislative Council, the Bill was passed by the upper chamber but to the disgust of its framers was thrown out by the lower House. Wise's unsuccessful 1858 Bill was again introduced into the Legislative Council, by Dr Macfarlane, in March 1866. It was abandoned because of the approaching adjournment of Parliament, but Macfarlane again introduced the proposed legislation during the following session later in the same year. When however the Bill was ready for its second reading no-one was on hand to take charge of it, and again the measure lapsed.

Late in 1873 Wise's Common Lodging Houses Bill was once more introduced, this time into the Legislative Assembly, commenting upon the fresh documentation of bad ventilation, overcrowding and filth resulting from the Inspector of Nuisances' latest inspections of common lodging houses, leant his support to the measure before Parliament. Before even reaching its second reading however, the Bill was withdrawn from the notice paper. It was left to Cameron, in late December 1876, to reintroduce the measure into the Legislative Assembly, some months after the release of his select committee report. In the Legislative Council however, while general agreement was reached upon the desirability, as Sir Alfred Stephen put it, of regulating those lodging houses "for the poorer classes", dispute raged whether the owner or tenant of any dwelling taking in lodgers should also be licensed. With opinions deadlocked, the Bill

17. S.C.C.W.G.M., 47.97-9, p.1239 (McLerie); qu.676, p.1320 (Aaron); qu.1414, 1416, p.1371 (Wise).
18. See the comments by Wise in ibid., qu.1415, p.1371; and by Aaron in S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.4, no.715 (9.9.1858). A Common Lodging Houses Bill had been introduced by governments on two previous occasions to the old pre-reform Legislative Council, in 1854 and again in 1855, but both pieces of legislation were lost sight of amid the confused political wranglings which surrounded the establishment of an elective Parliament; see the S.M.H.'s parliamentary pages in 7.7.1854, p.5; 20.7.1854, p.4; and 14.6.1855, p.4; 22.6.1855, p.5.
19. Ibid., 'New South Wales Parliament' 16.3.1866, p.2; 23.3.1866, p.3; 25.8.1866, p.4; 1.11.1866, p.5.
20. All proprietors were to be registered with the metropolitan police. Other clauses proposed minimum standards for space, ventilation, and cleanliness, and required that the police be informed of any cases of contagious sickness; ibid., 3.12.1873, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.2 (Hoskins).
22. Ibid., 23.12.1876, p.15; 10.1.1877, p.2. The Bill passed unchallenged to its third reading; ibid., 19.5.1877, p.3; 2.6.1877, p.3; 5.6.1877, p.3.
lapsed while being considered in committee.  

Undaunted, Cameron again introduced the Bill early in 1878, and in a carefully timed piece of newspaper lobbying the Herald on the very same day published Stanley James' long and stark "Vagabond" description of lodging houses "for the poorer class" in Sydney. Critics within Parliament countered that desirable as such a measure undoubtedly was, the present Bill was unsuitable for the purpose. Jurisdiction was claimed to be crudely divided between the police and the City Council, with the Inspector General of Police being charged with registering lodging houses and the CHO responsible for their sanitary inspection. It was complained that the Bill was the same unamended measure that the Legislative Council had found fault with during the previous year, and Cameron decided to withdraw it for redrafting.

New regulations for municipal sanitary control of common lodging houses across the colony were included in the two Local Government Bills submitted to Parliament in 1881 by the N.S.W. Premier, Sir Henry Parkes. The Premier's attempted local government reforms were however unsuccessful, and it was not until February 1883 that Cameron reintroduced his more specific Common Lodging Houses Bill. The measure was still substantially Wise's old Bill of 1858, rewritten so as to be implemented solely by the police, and incorporating also an amendment by Sir Alfred Stephen to prevent it from interfering with other dwellings taking lodgers. Despite strong editorial backing from the Daily Telegraph, the Bill was again withdrawn before even passing its second reading.

During 1885 another approach to the matter was made by Sir Alexander Stuart's Government, which prepared a general Public Health Bill proposing amongst other things the licensing and control of common lodging houses by

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23. Ibid., 29.6.1877, p.3; and 20.7.1877, p.2. See the later comments by Cameron in N.S.W. P.D., vol.27 (1887), p.2007; and by Stanley James, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Sydney', in S.M.H., 8.2.1878, p.5.
24. Ibid., 9.2.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3. Ibid., 8.2.1878, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Sydney p.5; James wrote that Cameron in his present endeavour "deserves the good wishes and support of all who desire the amelioration of humanity and the public health."
25. Ibid., 13.3.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3. Ibid., 6.4.1878, p.3.
26. Parliamentary consideration of the two Bills can be traced in N.S.W. P.D., vol.4 (1880-1), and vol.5 (1881). See the detailed summary of the measure's sanitary provisions in S.M.H., 23.7.1881, 'The Local Government Bill' p.7.
municipal councils organised as local boards of health. The Bill was however stopped by the prorogation of Parliament, and because of the unstable politics of the period, when Parliament next assembled another government occupied the Treasury benches. The new Colonial Secretary, Dibbs, himself foreshadowed a law regulating common lodging houses during 1886, but his coalition government with Jennings was shortlived and the measure was never formally introduced.

Once more the initiative passed to Cameron. In mid 1887 he reintroduced the 1883 version of the Common Lodging Houses Bill that Wise had first brought before Parliament almost 30 years earlier. But yet again the measure foundered as politicians disputed whether it should apply to overnight lodgings only or to all dwellings taking lodgers. In July the Bill was once more withdrawn. Three months later Cameron gave formal notice of his intention to introduce yet again a Common Lodging Houses Bill, but the measure was never presented. Still no effective controls existed when early in 1892 the Royal Commission into Chinese gambling in the City pressed upon Parliament the necessity for passing a Common Lodging House Act. Overnight lodgings, as Seymour and police witnesses told the Royal Commissioners, continued in much the same wretched and insanitary condition as they had for decades.

II

In view of the failure by Parliament to provide the public authorities with power to regulate common lodging houses, Dansey had meanwhile cast around during the 1870s for an alternative solution, and looked hopefully to private philanthropists to provide model overnight accommodation. Late in 1874 he wrote enthusiastically to aldermen that his suggestions had been taken up by "some of our most influential citizens", among them Sir Alfred Stephen. A model lodging house with over 200 beds was being planned which, he said, by removing working men from unwholesome surroundings would "not only confer comfort but tend largely to improve morality." Dansey's

29. See the comment by Wise in ibid., vol.27 (1887), p.2010.
31. Ibid., vol.28 (1887-8), p.447. In March 1888 Cameron withdrew the motion standing in his name; ibid., vol.31 (1887-8), p.3103.
32. Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, pp.492, 495; and qu.12343, p.833, qu.12376, p.834 (Seymour).
33. S.C.C., L.R., 1872, vol.6, no.1018 (Dansey, 9.12.1872); 1874, vol.4, no.579 (Dansey, 9.8.1874); 1878, vol.3, no.538 (Dansey, 10.6.1878).
enthusiasm was premature. Describing his scheme's quick collapse, he told Cameron's select committee two and a half years afterwards that "I could not get any person to back me up thoroughly with it." 34

On a smaller scale, unknown numbers of private landlords did in fact make individual efforts to improve the environment in which working class lodgers had to live. Sewage and Health Board inspectors visiting common lodging houses along Clarence Street late in 1875 were surprised when at the Temperance lodging house they found, in contrast to the dirty and insanitary conditions of the other lodgings, beds with clean sheets and a water closet that worked. 35 Touring the unwholesome slum districts of western Sydney early in 1885, the Mayor and Corporation sanitary officials met with a model boardinghouse, the landlord whereof was most particular to inform them that his lodgers were most sumptuously housed. In proof of that he ushered the visitors into a room, with a fireplace, about 8 ft by 7 ft, where two of the favoured boarders reposed. 36

The description's concluding jibe sprang from two causes. Such lodgings, by their small numbers, scarcely touched the problem of providing adequate alternative accommodation to that available in sixpenny lodging houses. Just as importantly, the higher prices of necessity charged by the model boardinghouses placed such places beyond the reach of the bulk of the "travelling poor" whom Dansey and other sanitary reformers were hoping to assist. As Board members had said of the Temperance lodging house in 1875, "a higher scale of charges are made and a superior class of lodgers obtained." 37

Both these problems were highlighted by the Model Lodging House Company that was floated during 1878 to provide overnight accommodation for single working men in Sydney. The project had been initiated by the Health Society of N.S.W. soon after its beginnings in 1876, in the wake of the disclosures made by the two great sanitary investigations of that year. 38

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38. See S.M.H., 5.1.1877, 'Health Society Of New South Wales' p.4; and ibid., 9.3.1877, p.4. See also Sir Alfred Stephen's mention of the project at the Society's 1881 annual meeting, in ibid., 17.11.1881.
A limited liability company named the Model Lodging House Company of Sydney was launched in March 1878 and was formally incorporated in September.39

Burton Bradley, the energetic secretary of the Health Society and the organising force behind the new company, argued like Shaftesbury in Britain that model lodgings in the mother country had reduced mortality among working people,40 and he enthusiastically sought to apply the Health Society's motto "prevention is better than cure" in planning the model lodging house in Sydney.41 Improved sanitation was not only important in its own right, but was to serve as the means of achieving another and equally important end. By providing a model environment in place of existing common lodging houses, it was hoped to reform the character of working men.42 So clean and comfortable an environment, in place of the filth, overcrowding, and vice associated with sixpenny lodgings, was envisaged by Bradley as being of "inestimable benefit" in the case "of men whose habits had not yet been formed... (Hear, hear.)"43

38.cont.
'The Health Society' p.3; and the speech by Bradley, reported in ibid., 20.6.1882, 'The Model Lodging House' p.3.
41. See Bradley's speech in ibid., 20.6.1882, 'The Model Lodging House' p.3. The four storey building subsequently erected on a site in the north of Kent Street was planned to ensure proper drainage, and ample ventilation and light. Special attention, also, was given to providing sufficient closets and washing and bathing facilities, and, "to ensure perfect cleanliness", it was decided that all bed linen be washed each week; ibid., 23.5.1882, 'The New Model Lodging-House' p.3; also Bradley's letter in ibid., 22.5.1882, 'Model Lodging-House' p.3.
42. The aim, said the company's chairman, Louis Phillips, was "the social and moral improvement of the patrons of the lodging house." The company's prospectus in 1878 stated that
The objects for which the Company is formed are to erect and furnish a Lodging House for Men exclusively having beds baths reading and smoking rooms and other appurtenances with the view of improving the morals of the lower class of society.
Memorandum Of Association, p.5.
institution would, he predicted, break the vicious cycle which perpetuated the lower orders: "Dirt, poverty, disease, and crime depended upon one another, and increased each other, and these were the enemies such an institution as this would fight against." 44

The difficulty was how to finance such an undertaking. It was hoped that the Model Lodging House Company of Sydney would demonstrate to investors that philanthropy could be made to return a profit.45 From the outset, the new company because of its charitable purpose had enjoyed considerable dispensations not available to normal commercial undertakings. The men who launched the scheme and provided much of its capital, among them the Herald's proprietor, James Reading Fairfax, and his brother Edward Ross, Sir Alfred Stephen, and a future N.S.W. premier, Alexander Stuart, were themselves interested in social and sanitary reform rather than profit.46 One company director lent 900 pounds without security, and a large mortgage was obtained on a specially low rate of interest. The company's allotment in Kent Street had likewise been made available at below normal market cost, and the usual legal fees involved waived by a lawyer who himself donated the cost of the deposit for the land.47 Even with these concessions, however, unexpected costs in constructing and fitting out the lodging house delayed its opening and burdened the company with a heavy debt.48 The nightly tariff was in consequence fixed at ninepence a bed, compared with the sixpence charged in common lodging houses and by the model lodging house in Melbourne.49

45. Shareholders were promised a dividend from any profits; Memorandum Of Association, p.6. Michael Chapman had predicted in 1876 that model lodging houses "would... give a capitalist a good return for his money"; S.C.C.L.H., qu.431, p.865. See also James' glowing reference to the model lodging house already operating in Melbourne, in S.M.H., 8.2.1878, 'The Common Lodging-Houses Of Sydney' p.5.
46. See Phillips' speech at the 1884 annual meeting, reported in ibid., 9.5.1884, 'Model Lodging-House Company' p.3.
48. Ibid., 27.8.1881, 'The New Model Lodging-House' p.9; 20.6.1882, 'The Model Lodging-House' p.3 (Bradley). Total expenditure was over 15,000 pounds, almost half of it financed by mortgage and special loans, compared with only 10,000 pounds to open the institution's namesake in Melbourne; ibid., 14.11.1882, 'Model Lodging-House Company' p.8; 19.1.1884, 'The Model Lodging-House' p.10.
49. Ibid. Unexpectedly high running costs also influenced the decision; see the annual report and balance-sheet in ibid., 14.11.1882, 'Model Lodging-House Company' p.8.
It was nonetheless with great hopes for the future that the company chairman Louis Phillips, Bradley, Sir Alfred Stephen and the Dean of Sydney, all spoke at the Kent Street building's formal opening on 19 June 1882. One hundred beds of the building's 260 bed capacity had been prepared for occupancy, with the remainder to be added according to demand. Amid applause, Bradley stated optimistically that should "this thing... be shown to pay" he hoped to build another such model lodging house in the City.50 Dansey had already in 1878 expressed his pleasure that some philanthropists were after all to build model lodgings in the City. The Herald, predictably in view of the Fairfax family's involvement with the project, was also warm in its support.51

The Daily Telegraph was less enthusiastic, questioning the new institution's real ability to help the bulk of working men seeking overnight lodgings. One model lodging house, the newspaper predicted, "could not empty a quarter of the worst common lodging-houses in Sydney". Those people most needing reintegration into society, suggested one cynic, could not or would not make use of the new facility. The new building would doubtless prove a success financially, he said, and may close some of the better class of lodging-houses, used by labouring men; but if they imagine it will produce any effect on the lowest class houses which are the greatest danger to the public health, they can either know very little of these houses and their lodgers, or else they must be exceedingly sanguine men.52

The company's directors, by contrast, remained cautiously optimistic. A nightly attendance of 100 had been judged necessary to cover expenses, and during the institution's first six months of operation attendances averaged 113 nightly. Louis Phillips announced in May 1883 that the average number of lodgers accommodated each night had risen to 120.53 At the annual meeting of shareholders held in May 1884, it was reported that average nightly attendances during the previous six months had increased to 125, and that it had been made necessary to increase the number of available beds to 200. These were being filled by men "who used to sleep

either in the open-air or in houses unfit for human habitation". During the 12 months a profit of 304 pounds returned. This, said Phillips, amounted to a clear profit of four percent on their capital, and he declared the institution to have been proved "an unqualified success."\(^{54}\)

The \textit{Herald}, however, was more reserved in its assessment. The profit, certainly, had saved "the managers from any fear of perpetually nursing a white elephant".\(^{55}\) The lodging house however, as one editorial writer had conceded twelve months earlier in May 1883, "only fills one little niche."\(^{56}\) As the newspaper now reiterated at greater length, the ninepence charged by the institution was for some "as effectual a bar as the closed door of a mansion." The model lodging house did not cater for "the lowermost depths of social degradation", concluded the \textit{Herald}.\(^{57}\)

The Model Lodging House Company announced another profit, this time of 636 pounds, at its next annual meeting in 1885.\(^{58}\) Another slightly increased profit was announced in 1886, amounting, said Phillips, to a return of nine percent on their capital. With heavy repayments yet remaining from the building's original construction costs, shareholders still received no dividend, but the \textit{Herald} expressed hope that "if this kind of progress should be maintained the institution will soon be free from debt, and the directors will be able to extend their operations to other parts of the city."\(^{59}\) Because of heavy unemployment and the provision of emergency free accommodation by government, the number of lodgers had in fact dropped slightly during the year, but an average nightly attendance of 144 was still reported. A "large amount of good was being done", said Phillips,

by way of providing more suitable and more comfortable quarters than could be obtained by the class of people who patronised the lodging-house in any other part of Sydney, whilst they were being inculcated in good habits.\(^{60}\)

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 9.5.1884, 'Model Lodging-House Company' p.3 (Phillips and annual report).

\(^{55}\) It was pointed out that although a four percent return on one's money was not high, it was no less than that offered by government debentures; ibid., 14.5.1884, editorial p.9.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 14.5.1883, editorial p.4.

\(^{57}\) It had, the writer suggested, begun "on a sort of false bottom. It would be well, perhaps, that a separate body of philanthropists, somewhat stouter-hearted, should go down and begin upon that bed-rock before indicated"; ibid., 14.5.1884, editorial p.9.

\(^{58}\) The result "now proved beyond doubt", reported one \textit{Herald} writer, "that this sort of venture may be made to pay." Ibid., 11.5.1885, editorial p.7.


There had, agreed Bradley, "been a marked improvement in the appearance of
the lodgers, as well as in their general demeanour." Thanks to the lodging
house, remarked the Herald, numbers of working men "were becoming
respectable members of society."\(^{61}\)

Those confident assessments were however weakened by a continuing
decline in patronage at the model lodging house. Further reductions during
1887 in the number of lodgers using the building, blamed upon easy
government assistance to "persons calling themselves unemployed", cut the
company's annual profit to 309 pounds. In consequence the directors had
during the year converted the upper dormitory into two-bed apartments,
available to lodgers at the higher charge of one shilling a night. The
pattern already familiar in Britain, of model housing companies catering to
the needs of the more affluent working men and the lower middle classes,
was increasingly repeated in Sydney.\(^{62}\)

Louis Phillips announced to shareholders in 1888 that the yearly profit
had declined again, to 235 pounds. In 1889 the profit fell further to 173
pounds. Phillips had plaintively expressed his regret in the previous year
that "the deserved support had not been accorded by the working classes,
for whose special benefit the company was formed."\(^{63}\) The model lodging
house, obliged to reflect in its charges the cost of repaying its original
debt and also the continuing outlay necessary to maintain the building and
its facilities "in a respectable condition",\(^{64}\) was as critics had all
along predicted, of only marginal utility to the bulk of those working
people requiring casual overnight accommodation. As one man wrote to the
Herald in 1890 after staying at the model lodging house, the charge there
of ninepence a night "was too much to pay for many of the men who were in
low circumstances." The few pence saved by staying at one of the sixpenny
lodging houses was important for these men, "and [they] put up with the
inconvenience of such places in many cases from necessity alone, and not by

\(^{61}\) Ibid. (Bradley). Ibid., editorial p.7; see also Chapter Eight.
\(^{62}\) Annual report, in ibid., 13.5.1887, 'The Model Lodging House Company Of
Sydney' p.4; also 14.5.1887, editorial p.11. See Stedman Jones,
\(^{64}\) Ibid., 21.5.1886, 'The Model Lodging-House Company, Limited' p.9
(an annual report. Running expenses are detailed in ibid., 14.11.1882,
'Model Lodging-House Company' p.8; 9.5.1884, 'Model Lodging-House
Company' p.3; 13.5.1887, 'The Model Lodging House Company Of Sydney'
p.4.)
III

Notwithstanding the limitations thus imposed by the cost of private philanthropic housing schemes, Bradley argued that the mere presence of the Kent Street model lodging house had been sufficient to bring about a general improvement in the condition of sixpenny lodging houses in the City. The vastly superior facilities offered to lodgers by the company had, he claimed, forced "a great number of inferior lodging-houses" to close down.66 Others, he maintained, "have undergone great improvement, and at least one new house had been opened, which is said to be in every respect excellent."67 Critics of the Model Lodging House Company's capabilities argued however that overall improvement in the condition of common lodging houses would be best achieved not by such isolated philanthropic effort but by the inspection and regulation of all overnight lodgings in the City.68 Moreover, argued some sanitarians, such regulation should not be limited by some arbitrary definition of 'common lodging house' but should cover all working class dwellings let as lodgings.69

Knowledge of the existence of legislation to this effect in Britain70

65. Ibid., 7.2.1890, 'Sydney Model Lodging-House' p.5. The company continued to operate at reduced capacity until 1902, when it was taken over by the N.S.W. Government; see letter by Phillips to the lodging-house's long-serving manager, William Stimson, dated 31.10.1902, in the Louis Phillips Papers, vol.53 (M.L., A4755).

66. S.M.H., 21.5.1886, 'The Model Lodging-House Company, Limited' p.9. This result, a Herald writer concurred, was "due to the patronage which has been given to the Model Lodging-house." Ibid., editorial p.7.


68. For example, see the letter by Durham in D.T., 10.6.1882, 'Common Lodging Houses' p.3; also 12.2.1883, editorial p.2.

69. In Britain, Shaftesbury's Common Lodging Houses Act of 1851 had required the licensing only of dwellings where single rooms were let nightly to more than one family, but in the City of London that same year the definition of lodging house was extended to include any building let at a rate not exceeding 3/6d. per week. Shaftesbury's attempt in 1857 to pass a general law regulating all working class housing was defeated, but the 1866 Sanitary Act contained permissive powers for local authorities to license all houses let in lodgings; Lambert, Sir John, p.170; Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.74-5, 78, 80.

70. Ibid., p.122; Lambert, Sir John, pp.191-2.
acted as a spur to sanitary reformers in Sydney. In his very first quarterly report, written in September 1857, Aaron had linked his agitation for a common lodging houses Act with a plea for the "Registration of all tenements receiving Lodgers". The same recommendation was made in August 1876 by members of the Sewage and Health Board inquiry into overcrowding, who pointed approvingly to the rule "adopted... in large towns in England, viz, that all houses in which rooms are sub-let be registered and subject to regular inspection." The suggestion was for some people however extremely perturbing in its implications, involving the contentious issue of legislative interference with private property and the home. That consideration was responsible for Parliament's repeated failure to pass a Common Lodging Houses Act.

It was in order to avoid the possibility of legislation intended to cover only common lodging houses being applied more generally to any building taking lodgers that Sir Alfred Stephen proposed amendments to Cameron's 1876-77 lodging house Bill that eventually led to the measure's abandonment. Cameron incorporated Stephen's amendments in the Bill subsequently introduced by him in 1883 and again in 1887, but as had happened in 1877 disputes arose over the measure's jurisdiction which prevented its being passed into law. Moving the second reading of the 1887 Bill, Cameron proposed to distinguish between common lodging houses and other tenanted dwellings by defining the former as "a house in which or in any part of which persons of the poorer class are received as lodgers for short periods and though strangers to one another are allowed to inhabit one common room." Bernhard Wise, Attorney General and son of the Bill's originator in 1858, commented approvingly that this proviso would prevent the inclusion of "houses which it might not be intended to bring within the scope of the measure". Other politicians however objected to the new definition. Dibbs foreshadowed yet another re-airing of old controversies when he labelled the definition "a very wide one". Once again the proposed legislation was unsuccessful.

72. In England the same issue had defeated Shaftesbury's Crowded Dwellings Prevention Bill; Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.75.
73. See the Legislative Council debate in S.N.H., 29.6.1877, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3; and ibid., 20.7.1877, p.2.
74. N.S.W. P.D., vol.27 (1887), pp.2007 (Cameron), 2010 (Wise), 2009 (Dibbs).
But while Parliament remained deadlocked over the wording of amendments designed to limit the application of legislative controls over working class dwellings, some sanitary reformers were seeking alternative ways to control the whole gamut of housing conditions under which working people lived and raised their families. While politicians procrastinated over the licensing of common lodging houses, outside Parliament private proposals were periodically made not merely for the building of model common lodging houses for the overnight accommodation of single lodgers, but for the running of model tenement blocks in whose carefully controlled environment working class families could establish proper homes and bring up children away from the sanitary and social evils of existing City slums.
CHAPTER ELEVEN
Colonial Peabodies

Proposals in Sydney for the building of model working class dwellings stemmed directly from admiration at the achievements of philanthropic housing associations in Britain. The promise there made was that private capital could rehouse British working people in proper dwellings and at the same time return to investors a profit of five percent. Over 30 model-dwelling companies and trusts were operating in London during the second half of the nineteenth century. A pioneer in the field was Lord Shaftesbury, as was the London philanthropist Sir Sydney Waterlow. Smaller in scale than the two undertakings with which Shaftesbury and Waterlow were associated, but looming largest in reputation among model housing associations was the Peabody Trust, which had been established in London during the early 1860s by the first of four massive donations made by the London-based American banker, George Peabody.

Despite the impressive number of people rehoused by the different associations during the century, it was insignificant in relation to total population and total working class housing needs. This, combined with land purchase and building construction costs pushing rentals above what many working people could afford to pay, and regulations and controls whose effect was often to exclude less affluent lodgers, had by the 1880s caused enthusiasm for private philanthropic housing schemes to begin to fade. At mid century, by contrast, model dwellings had been widely regarded not only as the answer to the housing problem but as a panacea for many social ills. They represented a controlled environment of enforced respectability - a reward for those who could afford to live in them, an example, a model, for those who could not. They answered perfectly

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1. See Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.141-78. The first such model housing company, the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrial Classes, had been founded in the early 1840s, and more companies were established during the 1850s and 1860s; see W. Ashworth, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning, London, 1954, p.83; and Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p.183.
5. Ibid., pp.184-7, 203-4; Whol, The Eternal Slum, pp.149, 150-1,159-61, 166-7.
to that conception of self-help which held that just the right dose of philanthropic paternalism was needed to get the poor to help themselves.\(^6\)

Five percent philanthropy was greeted enthusiastically as providing the most practical solution to the sanitary and social problems of city slums.

That enthusiasm was long echoed in Sydney. Working class housing was so bad, said CHOAs, that colonial philanthropists would likewise do well to "build Model Houses for the poor and Labouring Class."\(^7\) Parkes' 1859–60 select committee of inquiry into the Sydney working classes, influenced by Aaron's and Graham's accounts of the apparent successes of British philanthropic housing, recommended that government provide "medals or diplomas of distinction" to similar philanthropists in Sydney as an encouragement for private enterprise to provide improved dwellings for working people.\(^8\) And in another recommendation remarkable for its originality in the face of prevailing laissez-faire dogma, committeemen suggested that "more as an example to private capitalists than otherwise", the Government should employ some of the many out-of-work tradesmen and build "a model group of laborers' cottages".\(^9\)

The committee's tentative raising of the subject of public housing for the disadvantaged passed unheeded, and for almost the next two decades the much less revolutionary proposals periodically voiced by Graham and Dansey that private philanthropy build model tenements as well as lodging houses also produced little obvious result.\(^10\) Public interest in the possibilities of model housing projects did however stir as a result of the disease scares and associated sanitary investigations of the later 1870s. To remedy the insanitary and apparently demoralising conditions under which working people in the City were obliged to live, the Sewage and Health Board committee built upon Parkes' select committee proposal of 1859 for publicly funded housing, recommending to Government "the necessity of providing improved dwellings for workmen." The management of improved

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6. Ibid., p.164; and see Olsen, The Growth, p.280.
7. S.C.C., L.R., 1868, vol.1, no.206 (Graham, 9.3.1868). Other examples are 1864, vol.2, no.234 (Graham, 9.3.1864); 1869, vol.5, no.1022 (Dansey, 9.9.1869); 1870, vol.5, no.914 (Dansey, 9.9.1870).
10. In 1857 the Sydney Ragged School of Arts had offered a small prize "for the best design for a residence for working men", but the proposal was without result; S.M.H., 15.5.1857, editorial p.4; S.C.C., L.R., qu.308, p.1298.
working class housing by municipal authorities was in London and provincial British cities also well established, Professor Smith reported, and as another string to his bow lest proposals for public housing run by the state or local government appear too revolutionary, he added that in other places too, private companies had successfully provided "improved dwellings".11

Responding to the less radical of Smith's suggestions, one concerned clergyman wrote urging that the only way to remove the "sanitary and social evils" uncovered by the inquiry was for philanthropists to buy up slum properties and build in their place improved artisans' dwellings. As one doctor exclaimed in August 1878, "Oh for a Peabody, or other philanthropist, to give example to our monied classes."12 Most people in Sydney, the Herald commented enthusiastically, would remember "the large-hearted munificence" of Peabody and have heard of "the magnificent piles of buildings" which his bequest had permitted to be built for London working people. The newspaper predicted that similar efforts among the charitable in Sydney, "if they did not remove the causes of epidemics, would at least so control them as to render such calamities less frequent and less destructive." Philanthropic housing schemes would elevate the working man's physical, mental, and social condition, and he will be a far more efficient and intelligent workman; he will be less under the influence of the selfish demagogue, he will have more power of self-restraint because he will be less of the brute and more of the man, and he will become a voluntary guardian of the public peace. Every property will reap a full equivalent for the cost of sowing the seeds of contentment.13

Parliament ignored the suggestions of Smith and his colleagues concerning public housing, and the City Council, even if it had the inclination, did not have the special legislative tools possessed by city corporations in Britain for the building and operation of model working class dwellings. Any such undertaking in Sydney would have to depend upon the initiative of private philanthropy and capital. Prompted by continuing disease scares and the smallpox epidemic of 1881, private philanthropists

11. S. & H.B., 11th R., p.548; see also Chapman's call for philanthropic housing after touring some of the "objectionable tenements" off Goulburn Street, in ibid., qu.256, p.504.
and men of capital did combine to launch the Model Lodging House Company. At the same time the continuing descriptions of working class living conditions provided by regular Corporation house to house inspections of dwellings and common lodging houses kept alive interest in the wider question of providing improved dwellings for working people. Concern to provide such housing was further strengthened by the start in 1880 of the special Corporation mayoral tours to condemn unwholesome buildings as "unfit for human habitation" under the provisions of the Improvement Act. The cause of philanthropic housing in Sydney, already benefiting from newspaper descriptions of these Corporation tours "Among the Rookeries", received fresh encouragement during the middle 1880s by the flow of ideas from Britain concerning working class housing after publication of the Bitter Cry. The Herald in particular maintained a comprehensive and in-depth account of British debate on improved working class housing. Newspapers early in 1884 announced first Salisbury's call for an inquiry into working class housing, and then news of the appointment of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes.

14. For instance, see the editorial in ibid. prompted by Seymour's prosecutions of lodging-house keepers for having filthy premises, 20.5.1882, p.5.
15. See the speeches by John Davies and the Reverend Mr Jefferis in ibid., 4.8.1880, 'The Night Refuge' p.3.
Late in June 1885 the Herald carried a long article on the British Royal Commission's report, emphasising the Commissioners' confirmation of "the generally lamentable condition of the homes of the labouring classes" and summarising the various recommendations designed to assist the building of improved dwellings for working people. Two months later the newspaper announced that, in the interval since the Royal Commission's findings had been published in Sydney, a number of gentlemen had organised themselves and under the patronage of the Attorney General W. B. Dalley and the Honorable A. Wright were in the process of forming a Sydney Workmen's Improved Dwellings Company. Model tenement buildings were proposed for construction which would be let in flats to working families. The honorary secretary of the provisional management committee predicted confidently "The movement is sure to go on, public attention being now so strongly drawn to it." The company did not however eventuate. Neither did the proposals for philanthropic housing sparked in 1887-8 by Corporation inspection tours of houses unfit for human habitation. Meetings were held and a preliminary plan prepared, but that plan was never translated from its drafting paper.

The lack of success in Sydney resulted largely from the problems of finance. As British experience was already proving, private philanthropic housing schemes to be successful had to find ways around the difficulties of obtaining expensive inner City lands and then providing accommodation at sufficiently low cost to be of use to working people, while sustaining a profit margin sufficient to attract investors. Dansey, prodding investors to use their capital in providing improved working class dwellings, contended that in Britain money thus invested had returned a good interest. Professor Smith offered the same inducement to would-be investors when writing the report of the Sewage and Health Board.

20. Ibid., 31.8.1885, editorial p.7. S. A. Byrne, 'Workmen's Improved Dwellings', in ibid., 2.9.1885, p.6. Mayor Riley's 1887 proposal for improved dwellings is discussed in Chapter Fifteen.
21. This despite the increasing dominance of the urban construction industry after 1876 as a source for investment. Capital was poured especially heavily into residential building; see N. G. Butlin, Investment In Australian Economic Development 1861-1900, Cambridge, 1964, p.21; also Jackson, Australian economic development.
22. Parkes' select committee of 1859-60, before it recommended the encouragement of private philanthropic housing, had paid particular attention to the question whether "as a mere investment of capital" such schemes could prove successful; S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.650-2, p.1318; also qu.1064, p.1339; p.1274.
inquiry into working class overcrowding in Sydney. Experience in the mother country, he maintained, had demonstrated that model dwellings can be erected to meet the requirements of artisans at a cost which allows a fair per centage upon the money invested. From the rents obtained for the dilapidated and unhealthy buildings described in the evidence it is clear that in Sydney such investments would prove equally safe.23

Such assurances were received with scepticism by many in Sydney. In 1859 the builder and City alderman, Thomas Spence, had reacted unenthusiastically when as a witness before Parkes' select committee the chairman had mentioned the potential of philanthropic housing:

996. As a practical builder, do you not think if men with capital invested that capital in erecting dwellings for the working classes, having in view all the means for the preservation of health, as proper ventilation, drainage, and conveniences inside and out, that such an undertaking would turn out a good investment, if the houses were built in blocks? I do not think it would, if they were let at so low a rent as to meet the wants of the working man.

In early 1884 the Herald voiced unease even at the long term viability of British local government's expanding involvement in the provision of model housing. Reports from Birmingham that houses owned by the city authorities were standing vacant served as a warning, said the newspaper, "that corporations, though they may be very benevolent landlords, may not always find the business a profitable one."24

Special dispensations existed in Britain to ease the financial difficulties involved in building and operating model working class housing, enabling local government and private philanthropic housing associations to arrange long-term loans from the state on low interest. Such financial assistance, amounting already to government subsidisation, was recommended by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1885 to be still further extended.25 Yet as the Royal Commission report and the Bitter Cry itself brought home to many in Sydney, for all the assistance given in Britain to model housing the results were nonetheless unimpressive. In London, wrote the Daily Telegraph, thousands

25. Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.82-4, 144-5, 161-3. The Royal Commission recommendations were reported at length in the S.M.H., 24.6.1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9.
still "are born to live and die among surroundings that the pen can hardly describe."26 The effect of Octavia Hill's assurances following Mearns' publication that she could privately buy land on the open market for cheap model housing and still make a solid three percent return on her capital was tempered by more down to earth calculations of the huge cost that would be involved in systematically rehousing the British poor.27 Dampening accounts appeared, too, of the "extravagant compensation" for resumed land which hindered municipal progress in replacing slums with improved dwellings.28

The price of City land was central to the financial problems of model housing proposals. Sydney philanthropists sought to overcome the difficulty by proposing to build multi-storey tenement blocks.29 In Britain, however, disagreement persisted over the desirability of such dwellings,30 and opposition in Sydney to multi-storey apartments was a further contributory factor to the failure of proposals for model dwellings in the City. As in Britain some working people were reluctant to live in such accommodation.31 Much more significant was the prejudice against block buildings held by potential investors in philanthropic schemes.

27. See the discussion of Octavia Hill's December 1883 Nineteenth Century article in S.M.H., 25.1.1884, editorial p.7. See ibid., 22.6.1888, editoral p.5.
28. See the article from the Pall Mall Gazette, reprinted in ibid., 26.12.1883, "Outcast London." - Where To Begin" p.6; also 14.1.1884, editorial p.6; and 21.1.1884, "Mr. Chamberlain's Plan For Rehousing The Poor" p.5.
29. As one Sydney curate reasoned in 1876, "Land in this city is valuable, and in erecting artizans' dwellings, twenty buildings on a given site will bring a higher interest to their owner than ten. We want therefore to know how to economise space, and to erect a poor man's house on the smallest piece of ground consistent with the obtaining of perfect ventilation and all the other necessaries of life. Here architects can greatly help us. What gentleman will favour us with plans of a model labourer's tenement?"
Ibid., 26.8.1876, 'The Last Report Of The Health Board' p.3 and see 25.1.1884, editorial p.7. Mayor Riley in 1887 and the promoters of the Workmen's Improved Dwellings Company in 1885 all envisaged the building of tenement blocks in order to save costs; see Chapter Fifteen.
31. Ibid.; Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p.187. At one meeting to discuss model dwellings, a representative of the Sydney Trades and Labour Council voiced opposition to "the barrack or flat system which was one that should not in his opinion be introduced in this colony with its warm climate." S.M.H., 22.6.1888, 'Meetings. Artisans' Dwellings' p.4.
Perhaps the chief objection to the flat system fashionable on the Continent, announced the Evening News, "is that it is an un-English style of lodging." Differences upon this score divided those seeking to provide model housing in 1887-8, with Burton Bradley expressing his disapproval "of laying-out dwellings in flats", and others speaking out strongly in their defence. The loudly voiced opposition of the Herald in 1885 to apartment blocks had similarly played a part in the failure of the Sydney Workmen's Improved Dwellings Company. Anything more dreadful than the working class tenement blocks in New York could not be easily imagined, asserted one editorial writer:

The light in the buildings is bad, and the ventilation worse. The accommodation is execrable. Disease, therefore, is nearly always present, and in the summer time especially the misery of the occupants is almost unendurable. Nor is the condition of things in London and Edinburgh much better than it is in New York.33

One final consideration, less of an immediate obstacle than either the problems of finance or the misgivings about block buildings, but perhaps ultimately at least as influential, sapped the energy of proposals to establish model dwellings in the City. Just as critics of the model lodging house in Kent Street had argued that such private philanthropy could never reach that class of persons most in need of assistance, so by the 1880s and 1890s in Sydney was the relevancy of model housing associations generally being questioned by the mounting evidence coming from Britain that even with government subsidies the rents of such dwellings were too high to attract large sections of the working classes.34 In one of his "Horrible London" articles, reproduced in the Sydney press late in 1883, G. R. Sims had warned that five percent

33. Speeches by Bradley, Symons, Dean and Wilson in S.M.H., 15.12.1887, 'Artisans' Model Dwellings' p.5. Ibid., 31.8.1885, editorial p.7; criticism of New York tenement blocks was again voiced in 26.11.1887, editorial p.13; multi-storey blocks equipped with lifts were however supported by another editorial writer as providing a remedy for the housing problems of working class London; 25.1.1884, editorial p.7.
34. A British parliamentary committee headed by Richard Cross destroyed many illusions when in 1882 it reported that Peabody buildings were "beyond the means and unsuited to the wants and special callings" of the poor. Sidney Webb echoed that opinion in 1891. Evils uncovered by the 1884 Royal Commission had still, he said, been little tackled; Ashworth, The Genesis, p.85, S. Webb, The London Programme, London, 1891, pp.129, 126.
philanthropy did not cater for "the abject poor." Dansey had himself conceded in December 1874, "it is to be feared that pure philanthropy however much it may achieve within certain limits will never bring about such a reform as that which is imperatively demanded in Sydney". 

While attempts to provide large scale model dwellings for working people in Sydney failed, numbers of property owners, influenced perhaps by the writings of Octavia Hill or motivated simply by humanitarian concern, attempted by their own individual endeavours to improve the standard of working class accommodation available in the City. Just as certainly, the effectiveness of such endeavours was generally limited by their piecemeal nature and by their catering of necessity only to the better paid. One City magistrate, Richard Wynne, complained to the Sewage and Health Board in 1876 that after he had bought and repaired a property in Exeter Place his efforts to let the place to "decent tenants" had been defeated by the continuing drunken brawls in the surrounding unwholesome and unreformed district. Another project by Wynne likewise failed when after repairing some properties in Castlereagh Street and ordering that they be let "only to decent working people" his agents failed to find tenants who suited him. Wynne described how

When I first got the property there was only one cesspool closet for the use of thirty or forty persons; I immediately thoroughly drained the whole of the property, and put in seven patent water-closets; besides ventilating the whole of the houses, I was quite prepared to put in baths, or do anything I could to make decent tenants comfortable. I thought I could, in this way, effect a thorough reform amongst the smaller class of tenants, but have been hopelessly disappointed, and have in consequence, altogether closed up the property as tenements.

35. 'A Typical London Slum', reprinted in D.T., 29.12.1883, p.7; and S.M.H., 2.1.1884, p.4. See the description of Sims and his writings in Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.201-5.
37. For examples, see S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.114, p.565 (Fowler's terrace); qu.247, p.592 (Payne's Buildings); qu.269, p.621 (Harwood Street); qu.287, p.639 (Alderman Green's buildings in Goulburn Street).
39. Ibid., qu.44, p.559 (Exeter Place). Ibid., qu.42, p.559 (Castlereagh Street).
CHAPTER TWELVE
A House in the Suburbs

In early January 1884, discussing the talk in Britain, following publication of the Bitter Cry, of expanded municipal or even government participation in rehousing the British poor, a Herald editorial writer remarked

In large cities some great tenement lodgings will be expedient, if not necessary. But, as a rule, it will tend more to the health of children that they should be brought up in the freer light of the suburbs rather than in large and crowded town houses.¹

Housing reformers in Sydney were not only interested in improving the supervision and sanitary regulation of working class dwellings and in the provision of low cost model housing in the central City. For decades they had talked with even greater enthusiasm about the sanitary advantages of encouraging working people to move to the improved environment of the suburbs.

Dansey remarked after the smallpox alarm of 1877 had directed new attention to the poorer districts around the docks that if only concerted efforts were made to rehouse the labouring classes in the suburbs, the colony at large will gain by the growing up of strong healthy families instead of the sickly puny children that are continually to be seen in the crowded ill ventilated and ill drained houses situated in the streets in close proximity to the wharves etc.²

Nor were there merely public health advantages seemingly to be gained by encouraging working people to reside in the suburbs. Moral and social rewards were believed to await a community which could remove its lower orders from the unwholesome and debasing environment of crowded inner city slums. It was an assumption resting comfortably upon belief in that precious Victorian symbol of community prosperity and social equilibrium, the home.³ A lasting solution to the degradation and vice among the city poor described by Hearns in the Bitter Cry was said by the Herald in a long editorial early in 1884 only to be had by providing for honest labour the

¹ S.M.H., 7.1.1884, editorial p.6.
² S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.3, no.602 (Dansey, 9.6.1877); also vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877); 1883, vol.3, no.703 (Dansey, 5.1883).
³ One writer proclaimed grandly during December 1883 that GOD has... ordained that industry, thought, and enterprise must be encouraged in the world, that the labouring man must be incited to labour and to save, by the hope of achieving that saving and exalting triumph - a house and a home of his own.
S.M.H., 17.12.1883, editorial p.7. See also 4.5.1880, editorial p.5.
chance of obtaining a proper home. As the newspaper explained, "It is by a man having some property, or hoping to have it, that he learns to respect the rights of others; it is by home having some comfort and permanence that the marriage bond becomes sacred".  

As it was for the London poor, so was it in Sydney. In the suburbs, where land was said by some to be so cheap and house rents sufficiently low for those with moderate means to lease or even own nice cottage homes, there could be found thousands of working class families leading sober and well-settled lives.  

Appraising the artisan's ambition to "obtain a roof-tree and garden plot of his own", an article writer for the Herald pointed in 1884 to the social good that would result from having working class families "reared upon their own soil, brought up beneath the sacred influences of property and the respectability which comes of the absolute possession of a home". The workman's desire for freehold property should be encouraged, he wrote, with sanitary laws to regulate suburban development, and "cheap and rapid means of transit" made available by the building of suburban railways into the City centre.

The writer's call for improved regulatory controls was very much to the point, for in an experience common to many nineteenth-century cities, increasing suburban population was paralleled by a progressive deterioration in that suburban healthiness emphasised by sanitary reformers when urging the removal of working people from City slums.

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4. Ibid., 14.1.1884, editorial p.6. The development of philanthropic cottage estates in London were sustained by a hope "that the suburb would become the means for the moral and intellectual regeneration of the working classes"; Olsen, The Growth, p.293.
5. See McLerie's evidence in S.C.C.W.C.M., qu.89-90, pp.1288-9; also qu.303-4, p.1298. An editorial writer remarked in 1887 that "Private enterprise has done much within the last few years. Working men with habits of industry and thrift, and with the aid of the building societies, have provided themselves with freehold suburban homes." S.M.H., 26.11.1887, editorial p.13. Residential building replaced the pastoral industry during the later 1870s to become the leading field for investment in the Australian colonies. It was a trend based upon the boom in estate development in the cities; Butlin, Investment, pp.211-87.
7. It was stated in the Herald during 1876 that "Some of the suburbs... already give promise to outrival, before many years have passed, the oldest parts of the city in the accumulation and concentration of the elements of misery, disease, and death"; ibid., 19.8.1876, editorial leader p.4. By the middle 1880s that prediction seemed to many people to have been realised; see the comment by Flood in N.S.W. P.D., vol.17 (1885), p.65; also S.M.H., 24.6.1886, editorial p.9. See Ashworth, The Genesis, p.157; and Lampard, 'The Urbanizing World', p.29, in Dyos and Wolff, The Victorian City, vol.1.
disease-alarms resulting from escalating mortality figures in 1875, Dansey had cautioned that epidemics were to be feared from the suburbs as well as from the poorer districts of the City.8

No building Act existed in the suburbs. Sanitary regulation was essentially a matter of nuisance control under the limited provisions set down in local government legislation.9 The 1881 Width of Streets and Lanes Act was intended to tackle some of the problems posed by rapid and uncontrolled suburban growth, but the measure did not affect allotment size or building design, and even where its jurisdiction did extend the new law proved to be of questionable utility.10 Dansey complained of new estates continuing to spring up that were subdivided by developers into miniscule allotments, with narrow streets and lanes, and with no provision for house drainage or sewerage. "Lower rents and more breathing space are doubtless the suburban attractions", wrote the CHO in 1883, "but there are some suburbs of which the lanes are so narrow, and the houses so closely packed that the advantages are very slight."11 Calling for metropolitan-wide building regulations, the Herald complained in December 1883 that all around the City

Insanitary areas are being covered with death traps. Honest men and innocent children are living in places where a humane person would not stable a favourite horse. There is no proper system of metropolitan sewerage, and almost every suburb has its fever beds.12

In the absence of comprehensive sanitary laws regulating building in the suburbs, more enlightened developers sometimes privately sought to lay out subdivisions planned to accord with public health requirements and

8. S.C.C., L.R., 1875, vol.2, no.165 (Dansey, 9.3.1875); and see the earlier warning in 1872, vol.3, no.535 (Dansey, 9.6.1872). Graham was already drawing attention to alarming levels of suburban ill-health in the early 1860s; 1861, vol.2, no.224 (Graham, 9.3.1861); 1862, vol.6, no.1126 (Graham, 8.12.1862).
10. 45 Vic., no.28. Dansey had drawn attention to the sanitary consequences of uncontrolled suburban subdivisions in S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.4, no.887 (Dansey, 19.9.1877). His concern was shared by the City Building Surveyor; Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, qu.317, p.211 (Bradridge). See also S. & H.B., 11th R., p.548.
11. S.C.C., L.R., 1883, vol.3, no.703 (Dansey, 5.1883). The CHO had reported similarly in the previous year; 1882, vol.7, no.1929 (Dansey, 12.1882); see also 1883, vol.5, no.1471 (Dansey, 31.8.1883).
12. S.M.H., 2.12.1885, editorial leader p.11.
aesthetic taste. Richard Wynne, discouraged in his efforts to provide improved housing in the City, was reported by Dansey in September 1877 to be preparing for sale a carefully planned subdivision in suburban Burwood. Rather than attempting to squeeze the maximum number of allotments into the minimum of space, Wynne envisaged his estate as a recreation reserve with residences forming two crescents around it. The plan was a noble one and worthy of imitation, said Dansey.

Wynne's subdivision proposal in affluent Burwood was unlikely to have catered to the poorer among working people any more than his experiments with existing housing in the City had done. Still less widely based were the plans for the model suburb of Kensington, which was launched in 1889. Situated between Moore Park and the Randwick Racecourse, the model suburb was intended to become a showpiece of well-planned middle class suburbia. The model suburb, with its generous-sized house allotments, extensive recreation areas, and plans for a grand central boulevard and square, was inspired by its namesake in the West End of London and was intended to "stand in the same relation to Sydney that Kensington does to London".

If ideas for assisting working people to find comfortable and healthy houses at reasonable cost in the suburbs ever reached the drawing boards, they seem never to have left them. The charitable impulse was everywhere tempered by private vested interests and public self-centredness. Prices for suburban land, at least in areas with easy access to the City, were acknowledged by some experts to be "becoming too high to admit of the working classes and those with limited means getting away from Sydney, or living at places far distant from their work". Practical schemes to overcome the obstacle were however neglected. Late in September 1881, in a letter entitled "The Lanes In Sussex Street And Elsewhere", an anonymous contributor to the Daily Telegraph remarked that although the labouring man's wages were quite sufficient to enable him to live in comfortable dwellings, this was prevented by the locking-up of available suburban land under long term leasehold agreements and by the parceling out of large land

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13. One such example, Swiss Terrace in suburban Glebe, was mentioned in S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.264, p.615. What were otherwise "very suitable residences for working men" were however spoiled by the absence of house drains.


grants during the early years of the colony.\footnote{17}

As one means of resolving the difficulty the \textit{Daily Telegraph} suggested levying rates on the value of land rather than on the buildings on it. Any interference with the right to hold property was however a subject of considerable sensitivity, and Alderman Hammond's proposed alteration of municipal taxation in the City so as to assess the unimproved value of land was roundly condemned by the \textit{Herald} as a pernicious scheme that would in a few years swallow up in taxes a property's total value.\footnote{18}

A far more palatable alternative to many people, and one which moreover accorded easily with the interests of middle class suburban commuters, was to improve and make widely accessible the means of transport within the metropolis. Cheap workmen's trains, running along new lines through more distant and hence cheaper suburban lands, would "afford a means by which the poorer classes of the people could obtain residences in the country instead of being cooped up in the town."\footnote{19}

Michael Chapman had remarked in early 1876 how great "a blessing" railway extension could be for families at present unable to afford to live away from the City. By government developing a network of suburban railways, Dansey wrote in June 1877, the masses would be enabled to sleep "in fresh country air" instead of remaining in the "close atmosphere" of the inner City.\footnote{20} The CHO's words were echoed in the following month by another previous member of the recently disbanded Sewage and Health Board, its ex-chairman Professor Pell. Looking enviously at the way in which London's railways were "enabling the working classes to live in more healthy situations", Pell recommended that in Sydney likewise

Every encouragement should be given to the working classes to reside in the suburbs out of the crowd of the city. They show a very general disposition to do so wherever there is easy communication, but the Railway Department has done almost nothing of late in this direction. What is wanted is cheap and frequent communication with places close at hand. Between Redfern and Ashfield, a distance of five miles, there

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item[17.] D.T., 20.9.1881, p.3. Commending the letter, the D.T. pointed to "the narrow and unwholesome lanes in the city where the population is so crowded that disease and death is inevitable", while large tracts of unoccupied land surrounding the city were withheld from the public by speculators; ibid., editorial p.2; also 3.10.1881, editorial p.2.
\item[18.] Ibid., 20.9.1881, editorial p.2. See the D.T.'s criticism of the Herald's stance in ibid., 18.10,1881, editorial p.5.
\item[20.] S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.248, p.594 (Chapman). Expanded train services would, said Dansey, permit "the working man to leave Town of an evening and to return early in the morning refreshed"; S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.3, no.602 (Dansey, 9.6.1877).
\end{itemize}}
are only two stopping places. In a similar case in England, I am told, there would be seven or eight.21

At a public meeting in May 1877, held to canvass support for extending railway lines into the City centre, it was predicted that railways could be made a means of overcoming both the sanitary and moral evils associated with City slums. The recent appearance of smallpox at Miller's Point gave added force to the suggestion, for as was pointed out, if a filth disease such as smallpox,

which has recently caused so much alarm, were to get hold...[in the crowded City slums, it would] spread with an irresistible force; so that it would be well for the health of the city if the means of railway communication with the suburbs were increased.22

At a similar meeting held at Ashfield in the following month Burton Bradley, too, emphasised the likely sanitary benefits "if our artisan population and the poorer classes, the labouring men, living in back lanes and alleys, where diseases were rife, had at their disposal a line of railway and penny trains running to the suburbs".23

These suggestions were endorsed by the editorial staff of the Herald.24 Corporation inspection tours during the 1880s of houses unfit for human habitation, by highlighting the sanitary and social problems caused by City overcrowding, reinforced the newspaper in its opinion.25 A further dimension to the Herald's descriptions of working class housing problems, and a new urgency to its calls for the Government to provide "working people... [with] quick and cheap transit between home and work" as a partial remedy to those problems, was provided by news of the British debate sparked by the Bitter Cry, and by the attention given by the subsequent Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes to the subject of workmen's trains.26

22. Ibid., 10.5.1877, 'Railway Extension To The Circular Quay' p.5 (W. J. Foster).
23. Ibid., 8.6.1877, 'Meeting At Ashfield On The Railway Question' p.5.
24. Ibid., 12.5.1877, editorial leader p.4; also 28.1.1878, ibid., 28.1.1878, p.4; 24.11.1880, editorial p.4.
25. See ibid., 25.11.1887, editorial p.13; and see the earlier comment by the Fairfax's other newspaper, the Echo, 21.2.1884, editorial, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
26. S.M.N., 8.3.1884, editorial p.11; also 7.1.1884, ibid., 7.1.1884, p.6; 25.4.1884, ibid., 25.4.1884, p.7. See the Royal Commission findings reported in ibid., 24.6.1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9.
Metropolitan commuter transport facilities undoubtedly improved and became more generally accessible during the 1870s and 1880s. The opening of suburban railway lines was however an incidental result of the construction of goods lines to Sydney's port, and the spread of tramways across the city was also the result not of schemes to resettle working people in healthy suburban homes but rather of the demands by commuters generally for improved transport services. Commuter transport remained essentially middle class in its emphases throughout the nineteenth century. Special workmen's services were insufficient, crowded, and of apparently low priority in the eyes of government. Concern to see working people from City slums rehoused in decent dwellings, whether model block buildings within the City or cottage homes in the suburbs, tended to be lost amid general community relief at the simple sweeping away of disease-breeding localities.

27. Report Relating to the Proposed Railway from Marrickville, qu.2185, p.587. Over-investment in railways, based in large measure upon government borrowings overseas, sustained a rapid expansion of the colony's railway network until the early 1890s; see Butlin, Investment, pp.321-33; Jackson, Australian economic development, pp.86-90. The investment was not used to upgrade commuter travel in Sydney, however, but to expand goods lines into the Interior. The long drawn out agitation in Sydney for railway extension into the City is examined in Roberts, 'City Improvement In Sydney'.

28. See Appendix Three.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN
Cleansing the Augean Stable: Slum Clearance, 1857-81

I

In May 1857, only days after his appointment as CHO, Aaron wrote to City aldermen drawing attention to a building whose back yard was a quagmire of stagnant and fever-producing filth, urgently requiring surface drainage. The building itself, Aaron added, was in a ruinous condition and ought to be removed.¹ Since 1837 authority had existed on paper, copied from British enactments, for magistrates to order the demolition of buildings in a "ruinous or dangerous ... condition".² In 1850, some eight years after the City's incorporation, this power had been extended specifically to enable the City Council to seek magisterial authority for the repair or demolition of buildings "in a ruinous state or dangerous to passengers or to the occupants of the neighbouring buildings".³ Similar demolition clauses were in Britain defective and little used. In Sydney also the provisions were largely inoperative, owing both to the uncertain authority contained in the 1837 building regulations inherited by the Corporation, and to the permissive nature of the initiative against dilapidated buildings granted to City aldermen in 1850.⁴ There existed no authority whatsoever for the City Corporation to order buildings to be demolished on purely sanitary grounds. Nor would there be until passage of

1. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.1, no.75 (Aaron, 14.5.1857).
2. 8 Wm.IV, no.6 (clause 63). The compulsory repair or demolition of "ruinous and dangerous" buildings had long been permitted in parts of Britain under police and other local enactments. For instance, the provision was first adopted in Liverpool in the local Act of 1839, 2 & 3 Vic., c.92 (clause 47); Glasgow was granted the same power by the local Police Act of 1843; C. M. Allan, 'The Genesis of British Urban Redevelopment with special reference to Glasgow', Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol.18 (1965), p.603. See also the general authority contained in the 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 10 & 11 Vic., c.34 (clause 75).
3. 1850 City Corporation Act, 14 Vic., no.41 (clause 94).
4. See the Glasgow experience in Allan, "The Genesis of British Urban Redevelopment", p.612; and see Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.84. Although the City Surveyor periodically issued notices against dangerous walls and buildings in Sydney, he was also frequently obliged to concede that such notices had been ignored; for instance, see S.C.C., L.R., 1867, vol.3, no.644 (City Surveyor, 21.5.1867); and the Indexes to letters received. See the allegation by one unnamed Legislative Assemblyman of City Council neglect of the clause against ruinous or dangerous buildings, in S.M.H., 4.10.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3 (interjection during Fitzpatrick's speech, City Corporation Bill).
the Public Health Act in 1896.  

Notwithstanding the lack of encouragement afforded him by the defective local government laws at his disposal, Aaron rapidly concluded from his inspection tours of working class housing that many dwellings were so unwholesome as to be fit only for demolition. The City Council should, he said, be granted authority like that given the London City Council in 1851, to order the repair or demolition of tenements whose unhealthiness made them "unfit for human habitation". It was a proposal which, arising out of Aaron's house to house inspections, had suggested itself to the CHO as a procedure whose application was limited to specific sanitary nuisances. Graham, too, became interested in slum clearance through his efforts to remedy specific sanitary nuisances formed by individual buildings or connected blocks of buildings which, after the British example, he would characterise as being "so unhealthy and dilapidated as to be quite unfit for human habitation." 

Dansey was no less impressed by the unimprovable condition of many of the dwellings he visited during house to house inspections about the City. Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in attempting to prosecute house owners or, more reluctantly, their tenants for permitting nuisances injurious to the public health, the Inspector of Nuisances and Dansey were to a certain extent able, by a vigorous use of this authority, to induce the owners of numbers of tenement buildings to demolish and rebuild. In December Seymour was able to report that due to his earlier sweeps of the City, 

A number of wretched hovels which existed in Wentworth (formerly Wallis) Lane at the time of my last report have been pulled down, and good clean houses erected on their sites, and further improvement is contemplated in this quarter. A nest of filthy places on the east side of Sussex Street, between Bathurst & Liverpool Streets, has also been pulled down. 

5. 60 Vic., no.38 (clauses 38-9). In common with British practice, however, structures erected in contravention of the City's building laws were liable, at least theoretically, to demolition as common nuisances; see the Sydney Building Act of 1837, 8 Wm. IV, no.6 (clauses 53-4); and its replacement, the 1879 City Improvement Act, 42 Vic., no.25 (clauses 34, 38, 40). 

6. S.C.C., L.R., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857). The local 1851 City Sewers Act had set a precedent in Britain by extending the Corporation's power of demolishing ruinous and dangerous houses to include any building which the medical officer certified on sanitary grounds to be "unfit for human habitation"; see Lambert, Sir John, p.175. 

7. S.C.C., L.R., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.1861). The phrase, unfit for human habitation, was used repeatedly by CHO's. 

8. See Chapter Five.
removed, and will be replaced, I believe, by good houses. The houses in Irwin Lane, off York Street, mentioned in my last report, and also the houses adjoining in York Street are in the course of demolition. Two other places in York Street, one near the Theatre, the other at the corner of Market Street, have been cleared away and good buildings are being built in their places. In several other parts of the City, similar improvements are being effected, and I am given to understand that on the expiry of existing leases many rookeries which now deface and disgrace the City will be demolished to make way for a better class of buildings. These desirable results are in great measure due to the action taken against tenants and owners in the Police Courts.9

Commercial and industrial developments, aided by rocketing City land values, were independently replacing "eyesores" with handsome new warehouses, shops and offices.10 And while such "improvements" often amounted only to architectural veneering along the major thoroughfares, piecemeal redevelopments during the 1870s also removed from the western City a scattering of unwholesome local neighbourhoods which had previously been numbered among the most degraded spots in Sydney.11

This re-modelling process was to a limited extent given direction by improvement works undertaken by the City authorities. Late in 1877 for instance, Foxlow Place, a lane which a year earlier had been pinpointed by the Sewage and Health Board as one of the worst examples of working class housing in the City, was swept away when the City Council widened the lane. Aldermen had first secured the property owner's consent and arranged for his compensation, and had negotiated to obtain approval for the scheme and partial funding from the Government.12 Such a process was however unsystematic, cumbersome, and greatly hampered by the problem of funding.13 What was really needed, said Dansey, was a general

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9. S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.6, no.814 (Seymour, 9.12.1874). Dansey reported in September 1875 that by this means "there has been a large clearance effected lately of these wretched hovels"; ibid., 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875); also 1875, vol.4, no.447 (Dansey, 9.7.1875).
11. Included were the western City localities of Cohen's Court (S.C.C.L.R., qu.121-3, p.854), Syrett's Lane (S.S.H.B., 11th R., qu.4, p.551), and "Rafferty's Rocks" (ibid., qu.39, p.556, qu.242, p.585), all of them reputed to be "bad" neighbourhoods; see also the mention of demolition work in the unwholesome Wentworth Estate, off Kent Street, in ibid., qu.198, p.579.
12. See the description of Foxlow Place in ibid., qu.307, p.657. S.C.C., L.R., 1877, vol.3, no.541 (N.S.W. Department of Works to Town Clerk, 18.5.1877); S.C.C., L.S., Oct. 1877-July 1879, no.396 (Town Clerk to John Hughes, 28.11.1877); S.M.H., 28.11.1877, 'City Improvement' p.4.
13. Insufficient Corporation finances had prevented such "improvements" from being undertaken in other than "a piecemeal manner", said Davies
Corporation authority to remove systematically "all places that may be unfit for human habitation and serve only to engender disease and death".

Interest had also for some time been stirring in the possibility of larger scale clearance works than could be accomplished by the demolition of individual insanitary buildings or local neighbourhoods. In September 1868, Graham had directed public attention to the entire western portion of the City stretching between Sussex Street and Darling Harbour. "Nothing can improve this, the most unhealthy part of the City", he predicted, "but reconstruction of the whole."16

Graham's wish was to see the entire district levelled, although significantly, the word he used was reconstruction and not simply demolition. The frequently expressed objective of CHO's was to provide working people with decent homes in place of their existing foul slum dwellings.17 There was nonetheless a subtle difference between the authority sought by Aaron (and contained also in British public legislation before 1875, which while envisaging systematic slum clearance was nevertheless confined to buildings which could individually be declared unsuitable for habitation) and the more general authority implied in Graham's call for the rebuilding of west Sydney. In Britain this was spelt out by the 1875 Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act which the Home Secretary, Richard Cross, had guided through Parliament that year. It and Graham's call of 1868 both suggested that buildings might be pulled down not necessarily because in each case they endangered the health of

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during Legislative Assembly debate on the new Corporation Bill; ibid., 4.10.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3.
14. It was a call encouraged by the enactment in Britain during 1868 of William Torrens' housing Bill, the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, which granted municipal authorities power to demolish buildings and local neighbourhoods which were "unfit for human habitation"; see Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.84.
15. S.C.C., L.R., 1874, vol.6, no.812 (Dansey, 9.12.1874); also 1873, vol.5, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873); 1875, vol.5, no.597 (Dansey, 9.9.1875). Graham had called as far back as 1861 for the systematic demolition of "all dilapidated and unhealthy dwellings"; ibid., 1861, vol.5, no.838 (Graham, 9.9.1861); also 1865, vol.1, no.157 (Graham, 28.2.1865).
17. In calling for comprehensive slum clearance powers, CHO's commonly linked the granting of such an authority with the need for better building regulations so as to ensure proper sanitation in future working class housing; for instance see ibid., 1857, vol.2A, no.424 (Aaron, 9.1857); 1873, vol.3, no.763 (Dansey, 9.9.1873). See Chapter Nine.
their occupants but because collectively they constituted a nuisance to the rest of the community.18

Knocking down the dilapidated and insanitary housing about the Darling Harbour docks as Graham proposed was certainly a necessary preliminary step before the district's inhabitants could be rehoused there in properly constructed dwellings. In recommending the removal of Durand's Alley during 1864, Graham had however seemed less concerned for the welfare of the people who inhabited the place than with protecting surrounding areas from the crime, the vice, and the ill-health which were present in such a locality.19

In December 1868 Graham commented admiringly to the City Council concerning the scale of the grand yet essentially face-lifting reconstruction works being undertaken in the capitals of Europe. The whole of East London, he said, was soon to be demolished and rebuilt by the City Corporation. Paris was already being transformed from its old state "of Dirt, Filth, and Poverty - to a new magnificent City". Plans on a proportionately similar scale were required for Sydney, the CHO suggested.20 It was all too easy for sanitary officials, who were obliged by the nature of their duties to approach the problems of public health in ways which would satisfy majority interests, sometimes to regard slum clearance, and especially those larger scale proposals for city redevelopment, not as a means to an end but as an end in itself, and in the interests of the general community to suggest demolition and 'improvement' schemes that were at the expense and not for the benefit of the occupants of the buildings concerned.

British parliamentarians in 1868, too, had made plain their chief priority in slum clearance proposals by their emasculation of the housing Bill William Torrens had been trying to have enacted since 1866. Described enthusiastically by Graham in Sydney as "An Act to Provide better Dwellings for Artizans and Labourers", the emphasis of the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act had in fact been so altered by Parliament that the powers

18. Commenting upon the 1875 Act, Torrens caustically "compared its effects to a dentist who knocks out all the teeth, good and bad, in a patient's head." Wohl, The Eternal Slum, p.104. Special Acts of the British Parliament in 1864 had already given local authorities in Liverpool and Glasgow power to rebuild entire city districts. Edinburgh received similar powers in 1867; ibid., p.107; and see Allan, 'The Genesis of British Urban Redevelopment', pp.604-13.
20. Ibid., 1868, vol.6, no.1286 (Graham, 9.12.1868).
foreshadowed by Torrens for local authorities to rehouse those evicted from their dwellings by slum rebuilding schemes, and to provide additional and improved housing for working people generally, were completely removed. Instead, the emphasis of the new legislation had been switched to encourage 'improvement' projects which would simply sweep away unhealthy dwellings. \(^{21}\)

The same priority was to a large degree also evident in the support which Dansey gave to Seymour's rigorous policing of sanitary regulations, in order to pressure owners to demolish their dilapidated tenements. The CHO's applause for the successes thus achieved was never followed up by any proper investigation of the consequences for working people of these policies. Dansey suggested naively that perhaps a better class of dwellings would be built for the old tenants on the cleared land. At other times, showing a greater grasp of the financial realities that shaped city redevelopment undertaken entirely by private enterprise, he hailed the replacement of insanitary slum dwellings by fine warehouses. \(^{22}\)

Like Simon in London, Dansey hoped that the displaced residents would be forced into the suburbs. To help meet the accommodation needs of those people obliged by their work to continue living in the inner City, both Simon and Dansey urged the construction of model dwellings and lodging houses. \(^{23}\) In the absence of such model housing in Sydney, working people who because of their hours of work or the cost of transport were compelled to live in the City remained to increase overcrowding in other low-cost housing districts. \(^{24}\)

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21. Such a law, Graham added, 'would be most useful here'; ibid., 1869, vol.6, no.1327 (Graham, 9.12.1869). Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.84-92. London's street improvement and railway construction schemes were sometimes criticised for evicting working people without any consideration being given to their rehousing, thus exacerbating overcrowding among remaining poorer districts. But among the general community the improvements attracted support for their diminution of unsightly London slums; ibid., pp.26-39; and see Smith, The People's Health, p.224.


23. S.C.C.L.H., qu.309, p.861 (Dansey); and see Chapters Ten and Eleven. Lambert, Sir John, pp.149-51.

24. As Dean Cowper acknowledged to the S. & H.B. in 1875, working people forced from their homes by demolitions "move off to localities similar to those they have left"; "They go to some other parts of the city where they can obtain similar [i.e. similarly priced, and similarly convenient geographically, to their workplaces] accommodation". S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.8, p.551; qu.28, pp.552-3.
The disease alarms beginning in the middle 1870s gave considerable impetus to the question of large scale slum clearances, turning the subject from one which had hitherto been pursued only by Corporation sanitary officials with peripheral community interest, into a matter of some celebrity. The disease crises and the subsequent publicity given to City slums also acted to reinforce the developing tendency, as proposals for reconstruction works became bigger in scale, to emphasise the simple goal of slum demolition. The emphasis of the new community interest, motivated as it was by fear of epidemic disease, was firmly centred upon the immediate expedient of sweeping away disease-breeding slum districts rather than upon rehousing their inhabitants in improved homes.

There were, said a Herald editorial in July 1876, "scores of courts and alleys leading out of our chief thoroughfares that ought not to be allowed to exist any longer. They are hot-beds of disease, haunts of vice, and centres of crime and misery." The appearance of smallpox at Miller's Point early in 1877 prompted one alarmed correspondent to suggest that as Sydney abounds in hovels and back slums, in houses not deserving of the name (vide the Report of the Sewage and Health Board), advantage should be taken of the present crisis to purge by fire every such hovel in which small-pox appears or is suspected to exist.25

The idea of large scale city redevelopment projects forming a solution to poverty and ill-health in Sydney had been strongly supported by members of the Sewage and Health Board's study into overcrowding.26 Committeeemen repeatedly commented upon the number of buildings they had seen fit only for demolition27 and which under sanitary legislation existing in Britain would have been removed as being unfit for human habitation.28 In the committee's concluding report Professor Smith had recommended that "extended powers" should be granted to either the City Corporation or to a...

25. S.M.H., 29,7,1876, editorial leader p.4. Ibid., 4,1.1877, p.4, letter by 'G.R.D.' entitled 'Small-Pox In Sydney - Purification By Fire'.
27. For examples, see ibid., qu.39, p.555 (Sylas Lane, off Sussex St); qu.41, p.558 (Gloucester St., the Rocks); qu.143, p.570 (Clarence St.); qu.242, p.583 (Wright's Wharf, off Sussex St); qu.245, p.590 (Union Lane, off Pitt St.)
28. Instances are ibid., pp.542-3 (report); qu.114, p.564 (off Sussex St.); qu.198, p.579 (Brisbane Place, off Kent St.); qu.249, p.595 (Stanley Lane, Macquarie Ward); qu.253, p.600 (Durand's Alley and surrounds); qu.269, p.621 (unnamed lane, Denison Ward near Blackwattle Swamp).
Board of Health "to buy up unhealthy tenements and crowded areas so as to open up broad thoroughfares in closely packed quarters of the city".  

The suggestion of Smith and his colleagues had been encouraged by the recent passage in Britain of Richard Cross's Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Bill. Coming at a time of heightened concern over disease, the 1875 Cross Act and news of the redevelopment schemes which it soon set in train exerted a powerful influence in Sydney. The logical conclusion to be reached from the disclosures made by the Sewage and Health Board report on overcrowding was, said the Herald, the enactment of a measure

more or less similar in principle to Mr. CROSS's Act, to provide for the compulsory purchase of areas which are so overcrowded with unhealthy tenements as to be a source of public danger, in order that they may be swept clean and thrown open to the light and air, and become sites of buildings worthy of human habitation.

The concluding comment was as significant for its rarity as for its implicit recognition of the necessity to rehouse working people adequately. Certainly, the disruptive consequences in Britain for working people living in areas zoned for demolition that would have resulted from any widespread adoption of the 1868 Torrens Act was to a degree overcome by the provisions for rehousing evicted residents contained in Cross's new Act of 1875. It was a modification recognised and applauded, too, by at least some people in Sydney. Professor Smith's report on overcrowding, as well as recommending comprehensive demolition work, also cautioned that as such measures "will necessarily cause some displacement of the population, ... we think ... the Government [should] ... take into consideration the necessity of providing improved dwellings for workmen." That proposal was however in Britain still a hotly-contested issue, and was one that Cross had sought to avoid. He had intended the new legislation primarily as a slum clearance measure like the Torrens Act, albeit with rehousing

29. Ibid., p.548.
30. S.M.H., 19.8.1876, editorial leader p.4; also E.N., 11.1.1876, editorial p.2; S.M.H., 22.8.1876, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 25.9.1876, p.4.
31. The E.N. noted that the inevitable displacement of the multitudes of the poor... is in accordance with the new law, to be accompanied by what are considered adequate provisions for their accommodation in the meanwhile; so that the public improvements shall not entail individual suffering.
E.N., 11.1.1876, editorial p.2.
provisions added. In Britain and in Sydney, the most pressing objective was the elimination of the visible symbols of poverty and ill-health, and just as the underlying causes of these problems were left unresolved, so was only scant attention given to the consequences for working people of the demolition of their homes.

Business groups in Sydney responded to the disease anxieties of the middle 1870s by combining proposals to sweep away the "narrow lanes or dirty back slums" of the western City with suggestions for railway extensions and the upgrading of port facilities along Darling Harbour. Nowhere, however, were plans discussed for the adequate rehousing of residents living in those areas proposed for resumption. The intention, rather, was the same as that envisaged by Palmer and Dansey when in March 1876, after inspecting one insanitary local neighbourhood in the City's southwest, the Mayor reported back to Smith how

All courts and lanes of this description off main streets should, in our opinion, be cleared of these wretched tenements which would not be allowed to exist if they were not thus hidden from public observation, and the ground devoted to its legitimate use, the erection of substantial stores and warehouses.

No such authority was contained in the City Improvement Bill prepared by the City Council and introduced to Parliament late in 1877. The Bill was intended as a replacement for the old building law of 1837, not as a slum clearance measure, and merely carried on from the 1837 statute the existing and unsatisfactory clause providing for the repair or demolition of buildings "in a ruinous state and dangerous to the public". Also

33. See Wohl, The Eternal Slum, pp.97-105. The Act's go-ahead for municipalities to provide accommodation in addition to that required merely for rehousing purposes was the result of a successful amendment moved by that well-known promoter of philanthropic housing, Sir Sydney Waterlow; ibid., p.102.
34. The expression was used by the businessman and City Alderman, John Young, while publicising his plan for the resumption and remodelling of a generous slice of the Darling Harbour waterfront, in S.M.H., 31.7.1876 (S.A., N.S.W., Department of Public Works, miscellaneous press cuttings book, 7/4135). See also the speech by John Pope, treasurer of the businessmen's Railway Extension Committee, proposing the sweeping away of "the dilapidated buildings in Sussex-street and neighbourhood", during a public meeting supporting City railway extension reported in the S.M.H., 14.6.1876, p.3.
36. 42 Vic., no.25 (clauses 29, and also 21); the 1837 Act is quoted above, p.257. The absence of slum clearance provisions was commented upon critically by Chapman in 1875 when the measure was still being drafted; S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.143, p.571.
included in the measure was a new clause giving formal recognition to the CHOs' long established practice of labelling insanitary housing as "unfit for human habitation", by requiring buildings so condemned by the City Corporation to be vacated, under threat of heavy fine, until repairs made them again habitable.  

The question of slum clearance was no better tackled by the Government's 1879 Corporation Act. In late 1878 the Colonial Secretary had indeed been at pains to emphasise that "It was not intended to give any corporate body [a general] power to knock down old buildings." Instead, it was merely proposed to continue the existing jurisdiction over ruined or dangerous buildings contained in earlier Corporation Acts. An amendment designed to expedite the clause's operation was attacked in Parliament as being "a very arbitrary proceeding", and the clause was instead altered to grant the owner of a condemned building 30 days in which to repair or demolish it, in place of the three days that had been law since 1850.

Notwithstanding the extremely tenuous nature of the City Corporation's revised authority respecting building demolition, public interest in the question of slum clearance greatly magnified its significance. A call by Professor Smith in the Legislative Council during February 1879 for the enactment in Sydney of a measure similar to the Cross Act was answered by an assurance that the new Corporation Act would meet that need. Similar misconceptions were even more current in relation to the Improvement Act. The mistaken community perceptions of the new law as a slum clearance measure were largely owing to the Legislative Council. The Upper House, while redrafting Bradridge's original Bill so as to set up an

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37. 42 Vic., no.25 (clause 31). Such a provision, modelled upon the British Public Health Act of 1875, had been recommended for enactment in Sydney by the S. & H.B. report on overcrowding; S. & H.B., 11th R., p.542; and see 38 & 39 Vic., c.55 (clause 97).
38. Such a power would, he said, be "too stringent"; S.M.H., 4.10.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3 (Fitzpatrick).
39. 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 78); see the original provision in the 1850 Corporation Act, quoted above on p.257. The clause was similar to that contained in the Improvement Act and the old Building Act of 1837.
40. S.M.H., 25.10.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3; 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 78); and 14 Vic., no.41 (clause 94).
41. Note the prominence given by the Herald to the demolition clauses in the two new Acts; S.M.H., 9.2.1878, 'The City Of Sydney Improvement Bill', p.5; 9.10.1878, 'City Of Sydney Improvement Bill' p.6; also 3.10.1878, editorial p.5. See below, n.45; and p.270, n.57.
42. Ibid., 7.2.1879, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3 (Smith and Samuel, during consideration of the Improvement Bill).
Improvement Board, had looked beyond the immediate issue before them of better regulation of new buildings in order to discuss the wider question of existing insanitary housing. Arguing that the proposed provisions against dilapidated and unwholesome housing were "clearly insufficient", Smith had suggested instead "that Mr. Crosse's [sic] principle might be incorporated in this bill". Smith's proposal was endorsed by other Legislative Councillors, and debate was only dampened when it was pointed out that extensive slum clearances, involving the expenditure of large amounts of public money, could hardly be initiated by tacking on an amendment to what was merely a building Bill introduced on behalf of the City Council.43

In August 1879, encouraged by the Legislative Council's consideration of the broader subject of city improvement, the Herald looked beyond the Improvement Act's existing provisions to powers such as in Britain were already contained in the Cross Act and local laws such as the Glasgow Improvements Act, and anticipated to its readers that if in Sydney "the Act is vigorously worked, the area of its operations will have to be greatly widened." Significantly, the Glasgow Improvement Trust had at that time not yet embarked upon the building of artisans' dwellings. Its emphasis was instead on demolition, and the re-sale of the cleared land to private enterprise at profit. By creating a new public image of the Improvement Act as a measure for knocking down dwellings as much as for regulating the building of new ones, discussion of the new law served to direct energies away from seeking improved homes for working people to the more limited objective of destroying City slum districts.44

III

The tendency for people to read into the Improvement Act's vague provisions concerning dilapidated and unwholesome buildings a general licence "to cause the removal of buildings which are unfit for human habitation"45 exerted a particularly powerful influence over Thomas Sapsford, Bradridge's replacement in August 1879 as City Building Surveyor.

43. See the Legislative Council debate recorded in ibid.
45. D.T., 28.5.1880, 'The City Improvement Act' p.3. The E.N., too, maintained that the City Council had been made responsible under the Improvement Act for "demolishing those dens which have long been nests of immorality and infamy"; E.N., 27.8.1880, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
Sitting virtually idle as a scrutineer of building plans during the first three months of his appointment because builders, fearful at the reputed stringency of the new building regulations, had rushed to begin any construction work before the Improvement Act became operative, Sapsford began an ambitious inspection of the City looking for insanitary tenements that might be demolished. When Parliament had amended the City Council's original Bill to have building disputes arbitrated by an expert appeal board in place of the judiciary, procedure for the Corporation to order the repair or demolition of dilapidated buildings was also altered to require prior authorisation by the new Improvement Board rather than the magistracy. During October 1879 the Improvement Board inspected 80 buildings which Sapsford had consequently referred to them as ruinous or dangerous under the Act.

Sapsford's campaign quickly ran into difficulties. The Improvement Act, in line with long obsolete legislation in London, specified that condemned buildings must be both ruinous and dangerous. It was a difficulty that by itself would have been overcome by recourse to the 1879 Corporation Act, which retained the wording 'ruinous or dangerous' hitherto adopted in Sydney local government legislation. The problem however was compounded when legal opinion sought by the Improvement Board held that the term 'dangerous' used in both Acts applied only to buildings that were structurally unsound and did not extend to buildings objectionable for public health reasons.

46. S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.10, no.2241 (Sapsford, 30.11.1880); and see the discussion of the building industry's misgivings concerning the Improvement Bill in Chapter Nine.

47. See 42 Vic., no.25 (clause 29), and compare with the wording in Bradridge's Bill quoted in S.M.H., 9.10.1878, 'City Of Sydney Improvement Bill' p.6. Ibid., 4.9.1880, 'City of Sydney Improvement Act. II' p.3. The article was written by 'Iconoclast', whose pseudonym was the almost certain mask for a member of the Board itself.

48. 42 Vic., no.25 (clause 29); and see the 1848 City of London Sewers Act, 11 & 12 Vic., c.163 (clause 157), A.B.C.N., 24.5.1890, 'The City Of Sydney Improvement Act' pp.1053-4; and see also the proposed amendment Bill (clause 4) in the City Improvement Board, Fifteenth Annual Report, V. & P.(N.S.W. L.A.), 1894-5, vol.3, p.1035.

49. 43 Vic., no.3 (Clause 78); also 8 Wm. IV, no.6 (clause 63); 14 Vic., no.41 (clause 94).

Sapsford abandoned as futile the tactic of referring insanitary buildings to the Improvement Board as ruinous and dangerous structures and instead sought court orders for their demolition as common nuisances. It was still a rather unsatisfactory procedure, its effectiveness resting upon the whim of the magistrates involved, since nowhere did the Improvement Act specify a necessary connection between the overcrowding, the bad ventilation, or bad drainage of a house and the forming of a nuisance. The process was moreover cumbersome, time consuming, and potentially costly for the City Council. A much easier course of action against insanitary buildings suggested itself to Sapsford and his Corporation colleagues.

The City Corporation could not compel the demolition of insanitary buildings but it could now cause their repair, by virtue of the new provision against buildings "unfit for human habitation" contained in the Improvement Act. Corporation officials had almost immediately begun to make use of the new power available to them, although its use as anything more than a threat to be brandished before erring citizens was for a time limited by City Council uncertainty as to its proper use and full implications. The first difficulty was overcome upon receiving legal advice that insanitary buildings might be ordered vacated provided that they had first been personally inspected and unanimously condemned by the Mayor, Building Surveyor, CHO, and Inspector of Nuisances. In late May 1880, following this clarification, the Mayor, Robert Fowler, accompanied by Sapsford, Dansey, and Seymour, in the first of many such tours visited buildings already provisionally condemned by the three officials in west Sydney and the alleyways about Goulburn Street, to approve the issuing of notices against them as being unfit for human habitation.

The mayoral inspection tour had been delayed not only by confusion as to the correct manner of policing the new clause, but by Corporation uncertainty concerning the provision's full implications. This matter, too, had been resolved by May, for the Corporation visitors did not confine themselves to ordering the repair of insanitary buildings, but more
ambitiously demanded the total removal of condemned buildings. That the Mayor should authorise such a proceeding, and that the press should applaud his initiative rather than question its legality, highlighted the mistaken perceptions of the Improvement Act that had been caused by anxiety at epidemic disease and by the related debate over slum clearances.

Dansey maintained that he was legally "required" by the Improvement Act to order the repair or rebuilding of unwholesome dwellings. The Daily Telegraph, too, explained after a tour of City slums early in 1881 that Corporation officials were now empowered to order "any building deemed by them unfit for human habitation... to be vacated and demolished, or, where possible, thoroughly renovated and repaired." The Corporation notices served upon the owner or occupiers did nothing to dispel belief that condemned buildings were destined for summary demolition. Such notices, after advising that a building had been found unsuitable for continued occupation, warned that if the building remained occupied after seven days, "immediate action will be taken in accordance with law". As the Improvement Board complained of this working, in many cases "owners, believing that a continued occupation of the premises condemned would cause their compulsory demolition, anticipated the order by removing the objectionable building."

At the end of the first year of the City Corporation's crusade against buildings unfit for human habitation, in November 1880, slightly over 300 buildings had been condemned and either directed to be repaired or demolished. By February 1881 some 450 buildings, or a substantial two and a half percent of the City total, had been condemned by the Mayor and his officers. In early January 1881 the Herald informed its readers that approximately 250 of the condemned buildings had been pulled down by the
landlord or agent. Landlords were seen independently repairing or more simply cleansing and whitewashing their premises in the hope of avoiding proceedings being taken against them. Dansey noted, too, that Corporation inspections had spurred property owners to themselves initiate the clearing and redevelopment of "wretched hovels" about the City.

While both business premises and dwellings were inspected by the CHO and his colleagues, it was against tenement buildings rented by working people that Corporation campaigns were directed. Neighbourhoods which had figured prominently in Professor Smith's Sewage and Health Board report of 1876 and which had for years attracted the attention of CHOs and the Inspectors of Nuisances were among the very first places visited. In December 1880 Sapsford reported with satisfaction that in consequence of Corporation demolition notices Durand's Alley and a number of similar "nests of disease" had been completely removed by their owners. As well as inspecting the Goulburn Street district about Durand's Alley, Corporation tours also ranged through western Sydney and the Rocks. Further tours studied pockets of poverty scattered through the major business districts of the City centre, and extending their inspections wider afield the Mayor and his colleagues in February 1881 toured the cottages and shanties about the base of the Pyrmont peninsula.

Newspapers warmly praised the City Corporation's initiative. At the same time, the very extent of the slum housing thus revealed caused newspapermen to caution that successes so far achieved in "cleansing... the Augean stable" were only partial, and to clamour for the demolitions to be

60. E.N., 18.8.1880, 'Improving The City' p.2; D.T., 14.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3; ibid., 10.5.1881, p.3.
61. The CHO commented that "we often find on arriving at certain spots that the tenements which we went to inspect have either disappeared or are being pulled down"; S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.6, no.1425 (Dansey, 16.8.1880); see also the current events column in D.T., 19.8.1880, p.2.
62. S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.10, no.2241 (Sapsford, 30.11.1880); also vol.5, no.1005 (Dansey, 6.1880).
63. See D.T., 7.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3; S.M.H., 7.1.1881, 'Marking Tenements For Demolition' p.6; D.T., 14.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3; E.N., 1.2.1881, 'Human Sties In Sydney' p.2; D.T., 1.2.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3; ibid., 4.2.1881, p.4; S.M.H., 15.2.1881, 'Old Buildings Marked for Destruction' p.6.
extended to embrace the systematic removal of all "moral plague spots" and "fever-beds" in the City.64 Calls for more comprehensive slum clearance were not, however, made solely in response to the hostile stereotyping of the 'lower orders'. Newspaper reporters accompanying Corporation inspections occasionally commented sympathetically upon the "extremely creditable" efforts of some occupants to keep their dilapidated dwellings neat and clean.65 Even in some districts of the Rocks, it was once noted, with very few exceptions every room, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, was scrupulously clean, and in many the attempts at refinement and ornamentation were very marked. Flowers, pictures and nic-nacs were placed wherever an opportunity offered, and bore evidence of being carefully tended.66 Sympathy for these attempts at refinement and respectability was paralleled by indignation for the apparent greed of landlords and their indifference to their tenants' welfare. Such was the condition of many dwellings rented from well-to-do slum owners, said the Herald, that "it was an outrage upon all efforts to effect social improvements to allow human beings to remain in such places."67

The new attention by landlords to the repair of their properties, motivated by the possibility of a sudden Corporation visitation, was said by the newspapers to be causing tenants to "rejoice at the action of the Mayor".68 Whilst civic pride and concern about epidemic disease made layman and sanitary expert alike applaud the simple removal of City slums,69 hopes were also sometimes expressed that some of the allotments cleared by owners after receiving Corporation notices would be used to rehouse their previous residents in improved dwellings.70 That such schemes, if they were successfully to combine philanthropy with sound

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64. The quoted comments are contained in the one D.T. article, 10.5.1881, 'The Rookeries Of Sydney' p.3.
65. S.M.H., 4.2.1881, 'News Of The Day' p.5.
67. S.M.H., 7.1.1881, 'Marking Tenements For Demolition' p.6. Terrace dwellings in the Rocks owned by Lady Martin, wife of the Chief Justice, were alleged to be in such a condition as "almost beggars description"; D.T., 7.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3. Her husband had been mentioned by Aaron in 1858 as being the owner of a foul slum building in which a woman had recently died; S.C.C., L.R., 1858, vol.2, no.269 (Aaron, 31.3.1858).
68. E.N., 18.8.1881, 'Improving The City' p.2; also S.M.H., 7.1.1881, 'Marking Tenements For Demolition' p.6.
69. For example, see S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.10, no.2242 (Dansey, 9.12.1880); D.T., 14.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3.
70. See S.M.H., 7.1.1881, 'Marking Tenements For Demolition' p.6; D.T., 1.2.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3.
business, would almost inevitably place house rents beyond the ability of many working people to pay, was ignored. The most pressing objective sought by sanitarians was by eliminating dilapidated housing in the City to force the evicted occupants into the suburbs. The response of working people living in the City that practical necessity forced them to stay near their work was generally overlooked and everywhere discountenanced. It almost seemed to newspapermen that labouring families actively sought out the most insanitary housing available, with the consequence that dwellings totally unfit for habitation commanded exorbitant rents "that in the suburbs would secure them a neat, clean and comfortable cottage, from which they could scent the fresh air of Heaven, instead of the poisonous atmosphere of the city lanes."

Many working people had no illusions about the condition in which landlords maintained their apartments. What middle class observers dismissed lightly as hovels were however still regarded by their occupants as home, and many tenants of buildings inspected by the Corporation displayed pride and fondness for what the outsiders classified as places unfit for human habitation. With a gentle humour, newspapers in early January 1881 recounted the tale of an old Irishwoman from Little Essex Street in the Rocks, who on being visited by the Corporation party "pleaded hard for the salvation of her house, as she had lived in it for about 20 years, and would not leave it if the best house in Sydney were given to her. It, however, shared the same fate as the others". There was no cause for humour by the anonymous Irishwoman however, or for others who like her were obliged by an apparently hard and unfair Corporation order to leave their lodgings and seek alternative shelter.

More widespread unease was nevertheless occasionally expressed during

71. See Chapter Twelve. One Herald editorial countered criticism that improved City housing would be beyond the means of working people with the argument that such a result "would doubtless send many people into the suburbs who now horde in the city." S.M.H., 17.2.1879, editorial p.4.

72. It was reported after one Corporation tour of Clarence Street that "The rents paid would in the suburbs obtain a neat cottage, but the occupants said they must live in the town in order to make a living"; D.T., 10.5.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3.

73. Ibid., 14.1.1881, p.3; also Ibid., 7.1.1881, p.3; and 28.5.1880, 'The City Improvement Act' p.3.

74. Ibid., 14.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3. Ibid., 7.1.1881, p.3.

75. E.N., 6.1.1881, 'Civic Raid On Phillip-street' p.2; the incident was reported also in the D.T., 7.1.1881, 'The Rookeries Of The City' p.3. See Appendices Nine and Ten.
1880 and early 1881 lest the City Corporation drive against dilapidated and unwholesome buildings become unduly "arbitrary". In late October 1880 it was reported that among some people at least "Our City Improvement Act has been denounced as a City Destruction Act."76 Corporation orders were only rarely challenged by appeals to the Improvement Board. Working class tenants were unlikely to file any formal complaints, and the expense involved in appealing to the Board acted as a disincentive to many smaller property-owners.77 Misgivings did however arise when at those few appeals that were heard by the Board, allegations were freely aired of "over-official smartness" and interference "with existing rights".78 The Daily Telegraph, hitherto a strong supporter of the municipal drive against insanitary buildings, cautioned after the Board had upheld four appeals in April 1881 that although the Corporation's vigorous efforts have effected much good, ... the report of the proceedings yesterday, before the Improvement Board, show that it is possible for the Mayor and his officers to allow their zeal to outstrip their discretion.79

That worry accorded oddly with the sense of disappointment among newspapermen that was becoming evident by the second half of 1880 at the small scale of the improvements thus far attempted by the City Council. The sanitary reformer, Burton Bradley, had already in December 1879 expressed his dissatisfaction with the Improvement Act. Even the "most sanguine sanitarian", he said, "never dreamed that the status quo of filth and overcrowding would be in danger of interference by reason of permissive

76. D.T., 19.8.1880, current events column p.2. S.M.H., 25.10.1880, editorial p.5. The Echo complained that Corporation tours to condemn insanitary buildings were "manifestly an arbitrary exercise of power which was never contemplated by the framers of the Act"; Echo, 12.2.1881, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
77. Ibid.; and Suburban Telegraph, 19.2.1881, also in ibid. Over 300 premises were condemned during the first year of the Corporation's drive against insanitary buildings, but only 11 appeals were heard by the Board; City Improvement Board, Return showing the number of References received from the City Building Surveyor, and the number of Appeals received from owners or agents, together with the number of buildings, structures, &c., effected thereby, since the establishment of the Board in August, 1879, and the names of the different Mayors who held office during that time. (S.A, N.S.W., 4/6891).
79. D.T., 13.4.1881, editorial p.2; see also S.M.H., 14.4.1881, editorial p.5; and compare with the earlier Herald article, supporting the condemning of the buildings in question, 15.2.1881, 'Old Buildings Marked for Destruction' p.6.
authority placed in municipal hands." 80 It appeared to many that events were bearing out Bradley's prediction. One Herald editorial writer remarked pessimistically in June 1880 that in its object of removing all "nests of fever and sources of malaria", the Improvement Act "has wholly failed." In England, too, the writer continued, the 1875 Cross Act's reliance upon the voluntary initiatives of municipal authorities had similarly foundered. Both in the mother country and in Sydney, he maintained, "The Town Councils did not like to risk the unpopularity of dealing with unwholesome buildings, and thus the Improvement Act left things as they were." 81 Suggestions began to be more frequently heard that any expanded authority granted by Parliament respecting the demolition of insanitary housing might better be placed in the hands of appointed experts than with the City Council. 82

IV

Misgivings were sustained by the comments of the Improvement Board, which aggressively maintained that the condemning of ruinous and insanitary buildings was their responsibility. Board members had been appointed at a time when parliamentary consideration of the new Corporation Act of 1879, designed to rescue the City Council from bankruptcy, was prompting renewed newspaper criticisms of the Town Hall for mismanagement and incapacity. 83 That assessment had been echoed at meetings of suburban residents and aldermen, called while Parliament was still debating the measure, to protest at its proposal to give City aldermen the sole word in determining such matters of metropolitan-wide interest as City sewage disposal, the

80. Letter by Bradly (4,12,1879) entitled 'Salus Populi Suprema Lex' and printed by the S.M.H., in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.

81. S.M.H., 28.6.1880, editorial p.4; also 5,8.1879, editorial leader p.4. In view of the mayoral tours recently begun to order the repair or demolition of insanitary buildings, Sapsford indignantly dismissed the Herald's claim as an "astounding and startling assertion"; postscript (dated 6.2.1881) to Sapsford's 1880 annual report in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.39. See also Sapsford's earlier report to the Town Clerk, dated 1.7.1880, in ibid., no.36.

82. See E.N., 6,11.1880; Echo, 12.2.1881; E.N., 25,4.1881; in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1. S.M.H., 28.6.1880, editorial p.4; editorial opinion is indicated also by the decision to publish the series of articles by Iconoclast, for the first of which see ibid., 30,6.1880, 'The City Of Sydney Improvement Act. 1' p.7.

83. See Chapter Three. See also S.M.H., 28,8.1878, editorial p.4; also Echo, 24,12.1879, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
regulation of public vehicles, the siting of saleyards, and rates for water supply. Petitioners to Parliament recommended instead the setting up of one or more metropolitan boards so that the interests of the whole metropolis could be represented.84

The same suggestion was being made by others in Sydney. In discussions stimulated by parliamentary consideration of the new Corporation enactment, and of another measure intended to establish some form of government board of works to build a metropolitan system of sewers and water mains, increasing recognition was being given to the duplication and wastage of effort resulting from the dividing up of local government responsibilities among a number of parochial authorities.85 The Herald commented also that undesirable pressures moreover retarded "vigorous sanitary action" by men elected to represent the wishes of local ratepayers. Government-appointed experts might be of more use in such matters than were elected aldermen, announced the Herald.86

Conceding the justice of those requests by suburban critics of the Corporation Act for a single new city authority to be formed in Sydney, the Herald suggested establishing a metropolitan board of works to act as a form of federal council, with representatives from all the various local municipalities.87 The successes of the London Metropolitan Board of Works in imposing order where local vestry control had produced chaos strongly influenced opinion in Sydney, and its example was mentioned frequently by witnesses before the select committee reviewing the original City Council draft of the Improvement Bill. Evidence was taken urging that a metropolitan board of works rather than the City Council should administer the new statute. It was suggested moreover that such a board, unlike its London namesake, should be composed not of municipal representatives but of government appointees.88

85. For example, see ibid., 28.8.1878, editorial p.4; 23.10.1878, editorial leader p.4; letter by 'Civic Romanus', 24.10.1878, 'Municipal Organization' p.8; also the comment by De Salis in N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1880), p.2160 (Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Bill).
86. S.M.H., 28.8.1878, editorial p.4; also 3.10.1878, editorial p.5.
87. Ibid., 2.10.1878, editorial leader p.4; also ibid., 24.10.1878, p.4.
88. Select Committee on the City of Sydney Improvement Bill, qu.73-7, p.193 (Mansfield); qu.224, p.203 (Burdekin); qu.247-8, pp.205-6 (Hunt).
In the event, while committeemen recommended setting up a government-appointed board, the new Improvement Board was to act solely as an appeal tribunal. Many in the community, swayed by the current debates concerning municipal reform, believed differently. A writer in the *Australasian Builder and Contractor's News* voiced expectations that had been widely held when in 1890 he recalled

> It was confidently expected that the board to be brought into existence by the Act would have ample powers,... possessing full authority on the recommendation of the City Building Surveyor to compel the demolition of any rookeries, unsafe structures or buildings.\(^89\)

So strong were the associations made between the new Improvement Board and the Board of Works in London that it was widely believed that the City Corporation position of City Building Surveyor in fact corresponded to the post of architect upon the London authority, and that the surveyor was consequently "under the control of the Board, and...not... the Council".\(^90\)

As an appeal tribunal protecting the building industry from arbitrary City Council decisions, the Improvement Board was quickly found to be "altogether unnecessary".\(^91\) The Town Hall was generous in allowing deviations from the new building rules, and relieved builders and architects acknowledged that their earlier misgivings about probable Corporation tyranny had generally been groundless.\(^92\) Board members,

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88.cont.

The suggestions were supported by Professor Smith, one of the most active members upon the select committee; for example, see qu.85, 89-90, pp.193-4.

89. The select committee recommendations are discussed above in Chapter Nine. *A.B.C.N.*, 24.5.1890, 'The City Of Sydney Improvement Act' p.1033.


91. Iconoclast, 'City of Sydney Improvement Act. IV', *S.M.H.*, 18.9.1880, p.3; and see City Improvement Board, Return showing... the number of Appeals received. The other intended function of the Board, to scrutinise City Council building by-laws, was likewise found to be unnecessary, because no by-laws were ever framed under the provisions of the Improvement Act; see City Improvement Board, First Annual Report (31.8.1880); Ninth Annual Report, *V. & P.* (N.S.W. L.A.), 1888-9, vol.1, p.353.


influenced by the discussions about possible local government reforms that
had surrounded their appointment, argued however that theirs was a double
function. As well as performing an arbitration function as a board of
appeal, they claimed that Parliament had intended for them an executive
function as "a Board of Improvement".93

Members of the Improvement Board maintained that the new law intended
the City Building Surveyor to be, like the architect of the Board of Works
in London, "the executive officer of the Board". Sapsford was required by
the Act, they said, to report all dilapidated and insanitary buildings to
the Board, and to see that their directions concerning the repair or
demolition of condemned buildings were carried out.94 Board members
began weekly inspection tours with Sapsford in Kent and Sussex Streets, and
other "unwholesome quarters", and for this purpose requested the City
Council to make the Building Surveyor freely available to them. These
initiatives quickly ran into difficulties. The claimed authority to
determine building standards brought the Board into conflict with
jurisdictions already belonging to the City Council. Inspection tours of
unwholesome dwellings were early thrown into confusion when Crown Law
officers advised that the Board could not condemn buildings on purely
sanitary grounds.95

To overcome these obstacles, Board members in late 1879 drafted an
amending Bill designed, they said, to ensure that "the intentions of the
Legislature" in originally passing the Improvement Act could be fully
carried out. The Board's judicial authority as a court of appeal was to be
strengthened. Its jurisdiction over "ruinous and dangerous" buildings
would be expanded to enable the condemning of buildings on public health as
well as structural grounds. The City Council's ancient authority to seek
the repair or demolition of buildings was to be abolished. The City
Building Surveyor would instead refer all dilapidated and unhealthy
buildings to the Board alone.96

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93. cont.
95. Iconoclast, 'City of Sydney Improvement Act. II', in ibid., 4.9.1880, p.3; Barlee, 'The City Improvement Board', in D.T., 29.11.1879, p.6; Garrett, 'The City Improvement Act', in S.M.H., 1.12.1879, p.7; see above, p.268.
The Improvement Board's chairman, the parliamentarian Thomas Garrett, arranged a meeting in November 1879 with City aldermen, hoping to win the City Council's concurrence in the proposed amendments, or at least "to conciliate that body as much as possible".97 City aldermen, however, were in no conciliatory mood. The Improvement Board was said by them to be "only a Board of Appeal", and in claiming otherwise "wanted to arrogate to themselves powers that the law never gave them." The Building Surveyor, they complained, had no business making reports to the Board or performing any duties for it without first seeking permission from the City Council. The Board's object, aldermen claimed with heat, was to make "the officers of the Corporation...be at their control, so that they might have more meetings, and consequently more guineas."98

The Improvement Board, peeved at the "ridicule..." with which their amendments were received by City aldermen, responded angrily to the insinuations of financial deviousness levelled against them. C.H. Barlee, the Board's secretary, in a letter to the press spoke provocatively of the City Council's "jealousy of the Board", and Board members went ahead independently and presented their amending Bill to the Colonial Secretary.99 City aldermen meanwhile ordered Sapsford to cease reporting unwholesome buildings to the Board, and to refuse to carry out its instructions unless specially directed to do so by his legitimate masters, the City Council.100 With the Building Surveyor now instructed to ignore them, Board members began to agitate for more ambitious legislative amendments giving them an executive officer of their own. Circumstances were pushing the Board into claiming for itself powers that would formally transform it from an appeal tribunal into a full board of health and works.

That process was aided by a change in Board chairmanship during December 1879 from Garrett to the doctor and sanitary reformer, Alfred

97. Ibid.; Iconoclast, 'City of Sydney Improvement Act. II', in ibid., 4.9.1880, p.3.
100. See E.N., 1.12.1879, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
Roberts. Early in the New Year Board members met to consider drafting new legislation designed to transform "the present board into a board of health as well as improvement." Advised that there was no chance of Parliament at present passing such a law, they instead prepared a short new amending Bill granting the Board jurisdiction over insanitary buildings and requiring the appointment of a building inspector "under the sole control of the Board". The amendment Bill was presented to the Colonial Secretary, Parkes, in May 1880 by the new Board chairman, the architect Benjamin Backhouse, and was subsequently introduced to Parliament. Parkes however took no interest in the measure, and when the parliamentary session ended the Bill had still not proceeded beyond its first reading.101

Improvement Board members in the meantime continued their ill-judged sniping at the City Council. It was alleged that the Board's efforts were being undermined as much by the "persistent hostility of the City Council" as by the Act's faulty construction. In Parliament, Garrett supported his ex-colleagues by requesting an explanation for the ignoring of Board instructions by the Corporation Building Surveyor.102 Barlee wrote more acrimonious letters to the newspapers, and when Sapsford was goaded into making a public reply, said of the man whom he had once generously praised as an "able and energetic officer", that "he distorts the truth, and makes reckless and unfounded charges" that were quite "beneath notice".103

Barlee's attacks were the more bitter because of the commencement during 1880 of the Corporation's sweeps against buildings unfit for human habitation. From the viewpoint of the Improvement Board, it seemed that the City Council was cynically making use of round-about means in order to upset the Board's own legitimate functions.104 When newspapers hailed

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101. E.N., 6.1.1880, in ibid. Iconoclast, 'City Of Sydney Improvement Act. III', in S.M.H., 14.9.1880, p.3; also City Improvement Board, First Annual Report (31.1.1880); and see N.S.W. P.D., vol.3 (1879-80), p.2985. See also the highly critical assessment of the Bill made by Sapsford in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.36 (Sapsford to Town Clerk, 1.7.1880).


104. In January 1881 a pamphlet was published by the Board and circulated to all parliamentarians, questioning the City Council's sincerity of purpose and urging the granting of effective slum clearance powers exclusively to the Board; see City Improvement Board, Second Annual Report (31.8.1881), p.811; the pamphlet was also mentioned much later by 'De Libra' in S.M.H., 8.6.1891, 'The Amendment Of The City...
the Corporation's demolition orders against insanitary dwellings, Board members responded sourly that the Mayor and his officers were acting illegally, and they redoubled their attacks upon the Building Surveyor for not reporting such dwellings to the Board. Appeals heard by the Board against notices issued by the Corporation developed into a series of terse exchanges between the Board, demanding to know why its orders were not being carried out, and Sapsford, now convinced that the Board sought only to embarrass and obstruct Corporation officials.

Sapsford in retaliation prepared a draft building measure of his own which he presented to Mayor John Harris in March 1881. The Bill proposed for the City Council the important new power "to demolish buildings unfit for human habitation". The Improvement Board was to be abolished, and in its place a special committee comprising the Mayor and four aldermen would be appointed to hear appeals. City aldermen adopted Sapsford's building Bill in early July 1881, and forwarded it to the Government.

Parkes never introduced the measure to Parliament, but knowledge of its existence and of its implications increased still further the Board's antagonism against the City Council, and provoked Board members to challenge the Government to choose between the City Council and the City Improvement Board, and delegate the improvement of the city to that body in which they have the most confidence and which they consider most qualified to discharge the duty.

104.cont.

Improvement Act' p.6. See also Sapsford's angry rejoinder to "the inferences thrown out" by the Board, in his postscript (6.2.1881) to his 1880 annual report, S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.39.


106. See City Improvement Board, Minutes of Evidence Relating to Appeals, 10.8.1880, 24.8.1880, 3.9.1880. See also Sapsford's angry reports to the Mayor, alleging obstructionism and questionable practices by the Board during its hearing of appeals; in his letter to the Mayor of 24.8.1880, printed in S.M.H., 27.8.1880, 'Sydney Municipal Council' p.6; and in his postscript of 6.2.1881 to the annual report for 1880, in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.39.

107. S.C.C., L.R., 1881, vol.2, no.403 (Sapsford to Town Clerk, 2.3.1881); also S.C.C., F.C.R., 1881, vol.2, no.16 (3.8.1881). Sapsford had foreshadowed such a Bill at the conclusion of a report to the Town Clerk, dated 1.7.1880, in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.36. S.C.C., P. (4.8.1881), p.519.

The picture of themselves as simple appeal court judges, arbitrating in disputes over building design, had been pushed to the background. The subject of their attention had switched to clearing the city of unhealthy slums, and they now demanded action to resolve the question of who should undertake that responsibility. The choice offered by them was between an appointed expert board of health and works, and local municipal government.
PART V
Introduction

Towards the end of May 1881 Sydney residents noted from their newspapers that government medical authorities had quarantined a prominent Chinese merchant's premises in Lower George Street. The owner's child was reported to be ill of an unidentified malady. Because of certain symptoms, made to seem the more ominous because of the recent release into the city of several hundred Chinese immigrants from the hitherto smallpox-quarantined steamer Brisbane, the government medical officer Dr Alleyne had decided for caution's sake to treat the case as one of suspected smallpox. The patient's mystery complaint soon began to improve, and on 14 June Alleyne left Sydney for a week's leave, handing another suspicious case of illness from the far side of the City over to a friend, Dr Caffyn.¹

On the morning of 15 June, with Parliament then in recess, the Colonial Treasurer James Watson boarded the train to the Blue Mountains for a stay at Faulconbridge, home of the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes. As the train passed through Granville Watson bought the morning's Herald, but a browse through its pages was halted on reading a news flash squeezed in by the printers early that morning. Dr Caffyn, following up Alleyne's request, had confirmed an advanced case of smallpox at the Albion Estate, in Surry Hills. The guarding of the colony against infectious diseases from overseas being the responsibility of the Colonial Treasurer, Watson immediately telegraphed his Under Secretary, Geoffrey Eagar, giving him full authority to tackle the outbreak. Because of Watson's absence from the city, and also Alleyne's and Edmund Fosbery's, the Inspector General of Police, governmental response that day did not extend beyond sending two constables to isolate the house in Bellevue Street where the smallpox patient, a carpenter named Edward Rout, lay dying.²

The response by local government was more positive. Acting upon the orders of Mayor John Harris, Seymour set his scavenging staff to work in the district around Rout's house, cleansing streets, lanes and yards, and spraying with carbolic acid and disinfectant. At the Town Hall, Dansey made preparations for mass vaccinations. In Paddington, the municipal council hastened to order the twice-weekly flushing of all drains and

1. S.M.H., 26.5.1881, editorial p.5; ibid., 'News Of The Day'. See also 13.6.1881, 'News Of The Day' p.5; R.C.M.Q.S., qu.6-7, p.1171; qu.62, p.1174; qu.246, p.1182.
2. Ibid., qu.61, pp.1173-4; S.M.H., 17.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.6. See Plates 16-18; the responsibility of central government under the 1832 Quarantine Act to guard the colony against the introduction of disease is discussed in Chapter Two.
sewers with carbolic acid. Following the discovery the same day of smallpox in Waterloo, municipal workmen there began toiling long hours cleaning streets, drains, and yards. More smallpox cases were found during the day in Cumberland Street in the Rocks, and at Circular Quay. At an early morning conference called by Eagar on 16 June, available government officials met to consider their tactics for counteracting the disease, which morning rumours held to be already spread wide across the metropolis. Faced with a hostile clamour by sections of the press against government inaction and by the prospect of widespread hysteria, the meeting decided to repeat the tactics employed during the smallpox scare of 1876-7, and remove everyone exposed to the infection to the quarantine station at North Head. All but three of the 14 souls in Rout's house were removed under police escort that morning. Rout himself was too ill to move and died some hours later. Cautious officials ordered his body packed in quicklime and sent immediately to North Head, along with the other smallpox patients who had been discovered in the city. Dr Alleyne hastened back to work on that same afternoon and listened with perhaps a little dismay to accounts of his colleagues' hurriedly conceived actions, for while in 1877 the quarantine station had been able to cope with the handful of persons sent over to it, the present spread of smallpox threatened a flood of patients quite beyond the capacity of the station to deal with.

Cabinet, called by Parkes on the following morning, ordered a circular to be issued requesting the earliest information on all doubtful or suspicious cases of sickness. It was decided also to appoint immediately more medical officers to tour the insanitary parts of the metropolis on the look out for any further outbreaks of the disease. The Minister of Railways instructed that government trams and trains be disinfected daily, a practice which was soon adopted on city omnibuses as well.


Corporation workmen in the meantime continued to spray the streets and sewers with disinfectants and remove refuse from the neighbourhoods about infected houses, and at the Mayor's orders special outlets were set up to sell carbolic acid at reduced prices. Parents seeking vaccination of their children daily crowded Dansey at the Town Hall and so thronged the government Vaccine Institution that supplies of vaccine lymph seemed likely soon to be exhausted. Yet already the press had begun to express guarded relief that "the loathsome malady" seemed to have been contained, and that contrary to rumour, the total of confirmed cases could be numbered on the fingers of one hand. At a City Council meeting on 23 June reassured City aldermen praised Seymour for his efforts during what, while it lasted, had been a very nasty scare.

In early July, however, fresh smallpox cases were discovered in Glebe and within the City. By 12 July there were over a dozen confirmed infected houses in the metropolis, and about 50 policemen had had to be taken off normal duties to mount guard about them and the quarantine station. A pattern was emerging in the distribution of the disease which confirmed assumptions long-held in Sydney concerning the source of city ill-health and disease. As a report submitted to Parliament in 1883 explained,

The disease principally attacked the laboring classes, ... and, as might be expected, it proved more virulent and fatal amongst those occupying badly-drained and old houses, and residing in neighbourhoods the sanitary conditions of which were seriously at fault.

The outbreak was concentrated overwhelmingly in Sussex Street and its environs, in Pyrmont and the Ultimo Estate, and at Woolloomooloo. In the suburbs, the disease was most apparent in the poorer areas of Glebe, and in working class Waterloo and Alexandria.

On 11 July, overwhelmed by work and impressed by the continuing emergency facing the colony, Watson had ordered the immediate establishment of "a Board of Advice or Board of Health" to help systematise government efforts and to respond without delay to any further crises. Appointed to

10. Report of the Board of Health Upon the Late Smallpox Epidemic, p.953; see Appendix Eight.
the new Board were the City Mayor, Eagar, Alleyne, the Inspector General of Police, the Colonial Architect, and the sanitary reformer Dr Alfred Roberts. The new Board's usefulness became quickly apparent. On its advice, a full-time Ambulance Corps consisting initially of some half-dozen white-uniformed men was established to remove patients and fumigate their dwellings, tasks for which the police force had exhibited scant enthusiasm. And since the mounting number of smallpox cases showed the inadequacy of the temporary expedient of removing to the quarantine station all the inmates from infected dwellings, the Board also decided to build a permanent smallpox hospital at Little Bay near Botany. In the meantime, to relieve pressure on the station, only actual smallpox patients would be sent across to North Head, while those with whom the patients had lived would remain isolated inside their quarantined homes.

In the City, arrangements were made for the closest co-operation between City Corporation disinfecting teams, the Ambulance Corps, and the police. A special corporation staff which was progressively increased to some 20 labourers worked under Seymour's directions from 5 a.m. till 6 p.m., removing rubbish from the neighbourhood of all newly-infected buildings, disinfecting the surrounding streets, and instructing nearby householders in ways of purification. Over each quarantined house there flew a yellow flag, and at the corner of Sussex and Fowler Streets, where the disease was most concentrated, a large palisade was erected around the crowded block of quarantined buildings. In place of the regular policemen who had stood guard outside infected premises to ensure the isolation of those inside, a squad of special constables was instead sworn in whose numbers were augmented as the disease spread until by late August they totalled 70 men.

11. Copy of a minute from the Colonial Treasurer, dated 11.7.1881, in N.S.W.B.H., P., 18.7.1881.
13. N.S.W.B.H., P. 18.7.1881; 1.8.1881; S.C.C., L.R., 1881, vol.7, no.1591 (Dansey, 9.1881); vol.10, no.2195 (Seymour, 8.12.1881); 1883, vol.5, no.1742 (Seymour, 11.10.1883). See S.M.H., 26.7.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6; D.T., 29.7.1881, 'Further Outbreak Of Small-Pox' p.3; 24.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3.
15. S.M.H., 27.7.1881, 'Small-Pox And Vaccination' p.3; 28.7.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; ibid., 26.8.1881, p.6. Normal police duties had been disrupted by the epidemic; ibid., 15.7.1881, editorial leader p.4; D.T., 24.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3.
At Little Bay, builders toiled to finish the new smallpox hospital. Temporary isolation camps of army tents were meanwhile prepared at Little and Long Bays, and opened in mid September as an alternative to quarantine in the city for those who had come into close contact with smallpox cases. Daily information bulletins issued to the press by the Health Board replaced the previous hectic scramble by reporters for news. Those bulletins were by the end of August announcing several fresh smallpox cases each day, and newspapers acknowledged that the outbreak could no longer be classified as anything other than a full-scale epidemic.

The disease had taken a frightening new turn in late August when smallpox was found to have spread from the poorer districts of the City and the inner suburbs to fashionable Woollahra, where a Miss Wailes, "the daughter of well-to-do parents", was reported to have caught the disease. By then 31 houses were quarantined, with several dozen people isolated inside them and 50 more sent to North Head. Smallpox had been reported in Glebe, Balmain, Redfern, Croydon and Druitt Town, as well as in the City. Miss Wailes died in the first week of September and was buried at the Woollahra public cemetery - in contrast to poor Rout, sent in quicklime to the quarantine cemetery at North Head. At the end of the week, in its summary of colonial news for Europe, the Herald reported that the "dread contagion" was still slowly spreading.

Only one week later however, a writer for the Daily Telegraph could comment that the number of smallpox cases was really "exceedingly small". The disease's spread, which had until recently threatened to be extensive, was now as a consequence of the government measures seemingly being held in check. The Ambulance Corps, which during the third week in August had been increased to 14 men, was after 7 September gradually decreased in numbers. Parkes prematurely telegraphed neighbouring colonies that there was not a smallpox case remaining in Sydney. Although new cases continued to appear almost daily they were recognised to be generally confined to the same limited areas in the City and innermost suburbs. From

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17. For instance, see the report on 'Small-Pox' appearing in S.M.H., 27.8.1881, p.3, and the Echo, p.7; also D.T., 29.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3.
18. Ibid., 27.8.1881, p.5. Ibid., 3.9.1881, p.5.
mid October onwards people began to talk with growing confidence of a waning of the epidemic. 21

Returning complacency was jolted in late November and early December. A sudden rise in the number of new cases, and rumours that smallpox had spread across the harbour to the "salubrious suburb" of North Shore, again produced alarm in the metropolis. Emergency legislation was pushed through Parliament, requiring the compulsory registration of all smallpox cases and also replacing the temporary Health Board with a permanent Board of Health to combat smallpox. 22 The new flood of patients, and with them the fear of infection, were meanwhile removed to the now open Little Bay hospital, one and a half hour's journey from Sydney. In any case, it had again become clear that the renewed outbreak remained largely confined to the same localities as before. 23 In mid December, perhaps swayed by the effect upon colonial trade of continuing quarantine restrictions, 24 Parkes asked the Board of Health whether the disease could in fact now be considered extinguished, and whether the quarantine regulations might not be relaxed. 25

This hope, the Daily Telegraph announced with satisfaction on 18 February 1882, had at least been realised. The Government had telegraphed to Parkes, then visiting London, and to the other Australian colonies and New Zealand, declaring New South Wales free of the disease. Four days earlier the Board of Health had felt sufficiently confident to order the disbanding of the Ambulance Corps. 26 Forty people had died from the

24. The D.T. (12.6.1882, p.2) reported that shippers engaged in the fruit trade from Fiji had suffered great losses due to the restrictions. See also ibid., 18.2.1882, editorial p.4. In Victoria, restrictions on ships from N.S.W. ports were eased when shippers protested against the "much inconvenience and delay" being caused to intercolonial trade; Supplement to the Victoria Government Gazette, 1881, vol.2, no.78 (22.7.1881), p.2161; Echo, 21.7.1881, 'The Quarantine Regulations At Port Phillip' p.3.
26. D.T., 18.2.1882, editorial p.4. N.S.W.B.H., P., 14.2.1882. The new Coast Hospital at Little Bay was officially declared to be free of the disease on 7 April; S.M.H., 1.1.1883, 'Chronicle Of Occurrences' p.7.
disease, of whom 40 percent were aged under 10 years old, and 154 cases of confirmed smallpox had been reported during the nine months since May 1881, although Board of Health members conceded that many more cases had been concealed.27 There was a sense of finality in the air when, at a meeting of the City Council on 14 March, Alderman Butcher proposed a bonus of 50 pounds to Seymour for his "great and unceasing labours" during the late epidemic. At the suggestion of several of his colleagues, the proposed bonus was altered to 100 pounds, and the motion was carried unanimously.28 The smallpox crisis was over.

27. Report of the Board of Health Upon the Late Smallpox Epidemic, pp.953, 963.
Although by 1882 people could dismiss the recent smallpox epidemic as only very mild, they had for a time been undeniably panic-stricken by it. The stationing of police about Rout's house on 15 June had caused "a great commotion" in the street as neighbours packed their belongings and fled, and the Daily Telegraph reported that in the days following, the dread of infection was so general that the sense of self-protection led to wild and unfounded rumours going abroad in all directions of new outbreaks of the disorder. Nearly every quarter of the city and its environs was in turn said to contain another victim; but fortunately the medical officers, who were at once despatched to ascertain the true state of the case, found that imagination, influenced by the general alarm, alone had given rise to the serious interpretation of the commonest symptoms of the most trifling indisposition.  

In August 1881 the Echo asked with words of scorn "Have we altogether lost the calmness, the self-possession, the easy gallantry in the face of peril of our forefathers?"  

Colonists referred to smallpox with a special fear, as "The generally dreaded scourge of the world", "the loathsome malady", or as "one of the most deadly diseases that human flesh is heir to". Memory stirred of the over 44,000 deaths in the British epidemic of 1870-3, and of the thousands more victims who had been left "consumptive, weakly, and sickly". The crowds of parents in June 1881 who with their families formed long queues for vaccination were, it was said, all filled with dread at the power of the disease to cause their children "horrible disfigurement".  

The initial scapegoat for introducing the feared filth disease to Sydney was found in the city's Chinese community.  

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5. See ibid., 18.6.1881, editorial leader p.4. In the alarm following Rout's death, citizens demanded the ending of Chinese immigration,
approach of the steamer Brisbane, reported to have a case of the disease among its 350 "coolie" passengers, the Daily Telegraph had predicted in April that

A couple of cases of small-pox in the over-crowded and polluted Chinese quarter would be more disastrous to the citizens of Sydney than a Russian invasion... the Angel of Death would sweep Australia's capital from Miller's Point to Waverley.6

Smallpox, because of its notoriety as a disease of dirt, focused community attention upon those areas with a reputation for dirt and ill-health. The disease was thus seen to threaten not just from the Chinese but from the European poor. Racial prejudice provided only a final colouring to the more general fear that smallpox, breeding "from the lowest classes and from the squalid and dirty parts of the city", would engulf the metropolis.7

That worry, now given substance by the spread of smallpox in western Sydney, gave sudden clarity to the imagined cleavage that had long been identified by sanitarians, churchmen, and other middle class observers between the lower orders in their unwholesome City slums and the remainder of the community. Commenting upon the reports of "squalor, filth, and misery which have lately reached the public ear" as the result of cleansing operations in the infected neighbourhoods of the western City, a lead editorial in the Herald remarked that it required something like the present "small-pox panic... to show half the world how the other half live". An anonymous correspondent to the Daily Telegraph calling himself "Sussex-Street" wrote that the smallpox-infected slums of west Sydney had for years been "hot-beds of crime, degradation and disease, the nucleus of the larrikin element, festering, fomenting, and frothing up the greater number of cases that come before our police courts".8

5. cont.

boyicotted Chinese shopkeepers and hawkers, and swore and cursed at Chinese in the streets. The "mongolians" were pushed off buses and trams, and on the North Shore ferries were banned from passenger boats and allowed to travel only on the horse ferry; ibid., 20.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; ibid., 22.6.1881, p.3; E.N., 18.6.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.5; S.M.H., 18.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.6; 22.6.1881, 'News Of The Day' p.5.


Hostility feeding upon fear and ignorance produced in the press and the general community visions of slums and slum dwellers only slimly related to actuality. The erection of the iron palisading around the infected Sussex Street neighbourhood about Fowler Street, lying between Druitt and Bathurst Streets, prompted a reporter for the Daily Telegraph to label the district "'the plague spot' of Sydney". Newspapermen accompanying the disinfecting staffs described the area and its dwellings collectively as filthy and overcrowded, and peopled with tenants to fit the surroundings. As the Evening News commented critically of the neighbourhood in July 1881, the houses in this locality are principally of an ancient type, and many occupied by the lower classes of society, whose habits are not indicative of thrift and cleanliness. A great deal of rubbish and filth was, on a previous occasion, cleared out of these quarters, but sufficient time has elapsed for them to have returned to their former state.9 Chapman and Read had painted a similar picture of general unwholesomeness and squalor when they toured Sussex Street for the Sewage and Health Board in November 1875. Their description of Fowler Street, uninfluenced by fear of epidemic smallpox, was however strikingly different from those made in 1881. Chapman reported that the lane was "as clean as the neighbouring courts were dirty. Fowler, the owner, a builder and a man of industrious habits, lives in one of them, and is continually doing something to keep them in order."10 Similar contrasts of perception had been evident regarding the Surry Hills district in which Rout had lived. Although the house in Bellevue Street was described by a Daily Telegraph reporter as being one of a two-storey brick terrace, "genteel" in appearance, other observers remarked that Rout's family was said to be very poor, and to share only seven rooms with two other families, 14 people in all.11 Houses in the Albion Estate seemed to an Evening News reporter to be chiefly "tenements run up on the cheap and nasty principle", and which by their unwholesomeness were producing a distinct breed of debased humanity. "The appearance of the people inhabiting the places", he wrote, "the slatternly-looking women in the back yards, and the unkempt slovenly children, is all on a par with the wretched character of the buildings they inhabit, and no doubt greatly

9. Ibid., 'Further Spread Of Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3. E.N., 22.7.1881, 'Small-Pox -Further Cases Reported' p.2; see also S.M.H., 27.6.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; and D.T., 1.9.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3.
influenced thereby."\textsuperscript{12}

The frequency and unanimity of reports alleging neglect or defiance of precautions against the spread of smallpox among the infected City working class districts provided backing to such unsympathetic visions of a distinct class of the lower orders. "Perfect cleanliness" was again repeatedly urged in government circulars, in Parliament, and in the press as an essential defence against the spreading epidemic.\textsuperscript{13} To middle class advocates of cleanliness, it seemed that the conclusion to be drawn from the spread of smallpox in the insanitary working class districts of western Sydney was that the inhabitants of these localities, by their continuing fondness for dirt, were endangering the health of everybody else in the community.\textsuperscript{14} The start of disinfecting operations in these districts was accompanied by critical newspaper comments upon the amount of accumulated refuse thus uncovered. The isolated mention made of attention to domestic cleanliness in the western City did little to mitigate the image of general unwholesomeness, crystalised in the Herald's conclusion "that there is hardly a degree of social degradation to which certain classes of our own countrymen will not descend if they are left without restraint".\textsuperscript{15}

That opinion was shared by Dansey, his judgment distorted by the responsibility placed upon the CHO to protect the general health. Efforts by the Corporation and government staffs to clean infected neighbourhoods would never be effective, he complained in November 1881, unless the

\textsuperscript{12} E.N., 16.6.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3.

\textsuperscript{13} S.M.H., 25.8.1881, 'Government Notices' p.2; see also 1.6.1881, editorial p.4; 27.6.1881, editorial leader p.4; \textit{ibid.}, 19.8.1881, p.4; D.T., 22.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; and Buchanan's comment in N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1881), p.2476.

\textsuperscript{14} As a writer for the E.N. emphasised in early August,

\textit{The appearance of the disease in thickly populated districts where a large amount of squalor prevails, is not a circumstance likely to cause much surprise, as in the majority of instances it is noticeable the premises which become infected are not remarkable for the display of a strict attention to cleanliness, and the sanitary laws.}

E.N., 1.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; also S.M.H., 27.8.1881, editorial p.5.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{ibid.}, 27.6.1881, editorial leader p.4; also D.T., 25.7.1881, editorial p.2. When another case of smallpox was discovered in a house in Fowler Street, the Echo reported that the three-room dwelling, the home of a labourer and his family, was kept in "an exceedingly clean state"; Echo, 25.7.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.4; and see S.M.H., 18.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.6; D.T., 23.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; 9.7.1881, 'Further Spread Of Small-Pox' p.5.
inhabitants co-operated. In this however
they seem backward as shown by the filthy state of premises even only a
day or two after being thoroughly cleansed and in many instances where
the occupier has been summoned and fined at the Police Court for
keeping dirty premises within a week the yards etc are in as filthy a
state as ever.16

The same approach was evident also in the comments of the medical staff of
the Board of Health, whose accounts of apparently wilful herding together
in dwellings totally unfit for human habitation, and of the cartloads of
accumulated filth removed from premises by the disinfecting staffs,
provoked disgusted and angry comment against the city's "lower strata" by
the press.17 The danger to public health was, it was pointed out, so
easily removable if only "every person concerned did his duty, and had a
reasonable regard to the safety there is in cleanliness." This solution
was however made unworkable by the "inordinate, unseemly, and perverse
fondness for dirt and filthy conditions of life" by the lower orders. The
fact that smallpox should have established itself in a low district like
Pyrmont rather than a respectable working man's suburb like Balmain, and in
Sussex Street rather than other streets in the metropolis, was ample
evidence, it was alleged, of criminal inattention by the poor to matters of
health.18

Critical assessments of the apparent separation of the lower orders
from more responsible citizens were encouraged further by reports of
concealment of smallpox cases or of undue delay in seeking medical help
within the infected working class districts. Delays in reporting suspected
cases were due partly to inattention by the authorities themselves,19 and
partly to confusion among both doctors and public over the identification
of smallpox symptoms. Such delays hinted also at the degree to which
illness was tolerated as a normal part of working class existence. Many
cases were not reported because working people feared the expense and loss
in wages involved in doing so. A doctor's aid was sought only after family
or friends had failed.20

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17. See, for example, Alfred Robert's comment in Opinions of Medical Men on
Compulsory Vaccination, qu.540, p.1052; see N.S.W.B.H., P.
S.M.H., 29.11.1881, editorial leader p.5.
19. See Echo, 26.7.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1; S.M.H., 8.9.1881,
'Smallpox' p.6; E.N., 23.11.1881, editorial leader p.4; ibid.,
30.11.1881, p.4.
20. For instance, see ibid., 15.6.1881, 'Fresh Outbreak of Small-Pox' p.2;
Echo, 22.8.1881, editorial leader p.1; 3.12.1881, 'Spread Of The
Little time was however spared in the midst of the panic of epidemic disease to explore the underlying causes for the delays in reporting smallpox cases. Instead, medical authorities and the press blamed the lower orders for "such criminal conduct", which upset all efforts to stamp out the disease.\textsuperscript{21} The flare up of smallpox in late November, after it had been seemingly almost overcome, was generally attributed to the concealment of cases from the authorities. In the working class district of Pyrmont, it was alleged in Parliament, many people had been infected because one foolish man had not reported the appearance of smallpox among his children and had instead tended them himself, while at the same time continuing at his trade. Such people, said Sir Alfred Stephen, "commit a serious wickedness - a grave crime", and deserved heavy punishment.\textsuperscript{22}

II

Commenting upon the "simple and easily followed" list of sanitary precautions prepared by the Board of Health for distribution to residents of infected localities, a Herald editorial remarked that "We cannot sufficiently press the consideration that if the people themselves would do more, the Government would have to do less."\textsuperscript{23} The concentration of smallpox in those City districts with a reputation for filth and squalor, and the comments made by medical authorities and developed in the press, alleging neglect of cleanliness, and concealment of smallpox cases, made realisation of the writer's hope seem unlikely. Prompt and rigorous action by the responsible authorities was instead urged in order to counter the menace posed by the life-style of "the other half".

\textsuperscript{20}continued

Smallpox Disease' p.6; S.M.H., 20.9.1881, 'Smallpox' p.6; ibid., 6.12.1881, p.3. See also ibid., 16.6.1881, 'Outbreak of Small-Pox in Sydney' p.6 (Rout); 17.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6 (Haymarket).

\textsuperscript{21} D.T., 6.12.1881, editorial p.2. Dansey complained that his efforts to prevent the spread of disease were hampered by the unwillingness of the populace to co-operate with him and report suspected smallpox cases; S.C.C., L.R., 1881, vol.10, no.2192 (Dansey, 9.12.1881). Dr Ashburton Thompson, too, protested at the frustration to the endeavours by the N.S.W.B.H. caused by the existence of so many smallpox cases "which patients' friends determine to conceal"; letter by Ashburton Thompson, "The Compulsory Registration Of Infectious Fevers", in S.M.H., 6.12.1881, p.3.

\textsuperscript{22} N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1881), p.2744; see also Darley in ibid., p.2743; D.T., 6.12.1881, editorial p.2; Echo, 6.12.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1.

\textsuperscript{23} S.M.H., 1.9.1881, editorial p.5.
Widespread calls were made for strict new sanitary laws designed to overcome the menace of slum-bred disease, aimed at problem areas such as overcrowded common lodging houses, and providing for compulsory vaccination and the compulsory notification of cases of infectious disease.24 The Board of Health drew the attention of the Mayor to working class dwellings in infected districts that might be designated buildings unfit for human habitation, and Corporation inspection tours independently ranged through western Sydney to condemn insanitary buildings. Applauding the Corporation initiatives, an Evening News reporter pointed to the Sussex Street district and announced that since

It would seem as though no diligence can prevent infection spreading from house to house in this closely packed network of lanes and rookeries,... a wholesale condemnation of them would probably be the best course to pursue.25

Others, too, suggested the total removal of all infected slum districts. Calling for government resumption of the whole of Sussex Street and neighbourhood, a lead editorial in the Echo contended that it was only a proper thing for the State to respect the privacy of a home as long as that home respects the private and public health; but is a private castle entitled to give harbourage to a disease which will not remain confined there, but which will take opportunity to stalk abroad?26

The Echo's comment underscored the conflict which existed between the new demands for slum clearance and extended public health legislation on the one hand, and traditional and deep-seated beliefs in laissez-faire. The Herald, ever a strong advocate of individualism and voluntarism over collectivism and compulsion, worried lest crucial principles might be forgotten amid the passing panic caused by epidemic disease. Despite the paper's support for vaccination, it labelled the B.M.A.'s call for compulsory vaccination "a very strong remedy" and refused to give the B.M.A. campaign its support. Similarly, while the newspaper conceded that the Association's related demand for compulsory registration of smallpox


25. See N.S.W.B.H., P., 29.8.1881; 11.10.1881; Corporation inspection tours are discussed in Chapter Fifteen. E.N., 13.9.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3.

cases was made necessary because of the disease crisis in Sydney, it still cautioned that "The principle of compulsion is not itself a popular thing, and few people would recommend it under any other plea than that of sheer necessity." In the Legislative Assembly, it was objected that any move to make vaccination compulsory would be "an abuse of power on the part of the governing body - it will be a tyranny and a cruelty". Many doctors, too, were reluctant to compel either vaccination or the registration of smallpox cases.

In the last resort however, the Herald admitted, the rights of individuals had to "be subordinated and give way to the clear requirements of the community at large." Retreating from its general position of principle under the pressure of circumstances, the newspaper conceded that the smallpox emergency fully justified the Parkes Ministry taking "strong measures". The enactment of strict new sanitary laws "might cross the scruples of some individuals", admitted an editorial writer for the Daily Telegraph in June, "but the safety and the health of the community should be respected before whims and absurdities."

The same rationale was applied to the question of greater state involvement in the field of public health. The Herald, which with one breath was deploring on principle the tendency towards "universal dependence upon the central Executive", was with the next maintaining that insofar as the city's health was concerned, "No one will deny the duty of the Government to act with promptitude and firmness in the protection of the general interest." Commenting upon the proud announcement by the City Council that from 15-20 June it had removed fully 2,651 loads of rubbish during disinfecting operations, the Daily Telegraph remarked dryly that the public has a title to ask why these 2,651 loads of pestilence-creating rubbish were allowed to accumulate?... This white-washing, garnishing, and furbishing-up as soon as a germ of disease makes its appearance, is evidence of the neglect that has been chronic for years under the very noses of the Aldermen and their officers.

28. N.S.W., P.D., vol.6 (1881), p.1713 (Forster). See, for instance, the B.M.A. debate over compulsory registration, recorded in the D.T., 5.12.1881, 'The N.S.W. Branch of the British Medical Association' p.4; also S.M.H., 9.11.1881, editorial p.5.
30. S.M.H., 1.7.1881, editorial leader p.4. Ibid., 23.6.1881, p.4.
The task of sanitary regulation, the writer suggested, could be better performed by some form of "sanitary board, endowed with plenary powers and proper means".31

The Health Board appointed by Parkes' Government in July had in fact been set up only as a temporary board of advice, and the inclusion of the Mayor of Sydney among Board members testified to the Government's desire to involve local government in the measures it was obliged by the 1832 Quarantine Act to undertake in order to check the smallpox outbreak. To many observers however, the new Board promised to be of more than temporary significance. Calling for the Board's appointment to be made permanent, the Herald's editorial staff complained that the press had for years lobbied without success for the passing of a comprehensive Public Health Act, to be administered by a powerful central Board of Health. It was because of the absence of such a body, the newspaper claimed, that the Government had been caught unawares and unprepared when the smallpox outbreak was discovered.32 Burton Bradley, the well-known sanitary reformer, likewise urged that the present disease crisis was an opportune time for government to set up a central Ministry of Health to direct sanitary effort across the colony.33

In the first scare of the smallpox outbreak in June, the advocates of stricter controls over insanitary slum districts applauded the "promptitude and vigour" of the City Corporation's actions against the "keepers of dirty premises", and expressed the hope to see a similar zeal on the part of the Government.34 The reaction of those working people affected by the smallpox prevention measures was rather different. In mid June Mrs Tiffin, a "wretched old woman" living in Gloucester Street in the Rocks, had

32. S.M.H., 23.6.1881, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 15.7.1881, pp.4-5; note also the support expressed for the setting up of a permanent Board of Health, in ibid., 29.11.1881, p.5; E.N., 23.6.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; D.T., 12.7.1881, editorial p.2. A deputation from the B.M.A. called on Parkes to urge the passing of a Public Health Act setting up a network of local boards throughout the colony; S.M.H., 14.7.1881, 'Summary Of News For Transmission To Europe' p.9.
34. The comments are taken from a description of Seymour's disinfecting operations, in the D.T., 16.6.1881, 'Further Spread Of Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; see also the appreciation expressed for the actions of Seymour and his staff in E.N., 28.7.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; Echo, 15.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.4.
attracted unanimous newspaper censure for the accumulation of filth which
the disinfecting staff removed from her home. Mrs Tiffin had taken a
different view of the matter. A Daily Telegraph reporter noted that
Six loads of refuse were removed from the yard, which is not 6 feet
square; and Dr. Egan was asked by Sub-inspector Johnson for an order
for the removal of Mrs Tiffin - who bitterly bemoaned the interference
with the liberty of the subject - to some asylum or other place of
refuge.35

Behind the two reactions were radically differing perceptions of
reality. According to Eagar, the Under Secretary for Trade and Finance,
Some of the persons removed to the [quarantine] station... were in
comparatively humble circumstances, residing in localities unfit for
human habitation, some of which have since been destroyed or directed
to be destroyed under the City Improvement Act. In these cases it may
be presumed that the parties went willingly to the Quarantine Station,
because they were removed from a scene of squalor and distress to a
healthy locality, where they were supported at the cost of the
Government, and from which the bulk of them have returned healthy.36

In the working class districts where smallpox was most evident however,
Government intervention was seen as arbitrary and cruel. John Hughes, a
wool packer living with his family in a three-roomed house up a passageway
off Queen's Place, maintained that although suffering only a hangover he
had been labelled a smallpox patient by the authorities and wrongfully
"arrested". Government officials protested that removal of patients to the
Quarantine Station had always been on a purely voluntary basis, and Hughes' statements were dismissed by them as the stories of "a reckless and
insubordinate man".37 Yet many other persons released from North Head
also complained bitterly of having been led to believe that their
evacuation was compulsory.38 Moreover, they said, patients at the
station had been treated very shabbily. Clothing and bedding were alleged
to have been insufficient, there were complaints about the food, and it was
said that their communications to Sydney had been censored.39

35. D.T., 17.6.1881, 'The Small-Pox Plague' p.3; and see the critical
descriptions of Mrs Tiffin's premises in S.M.H., 17.6.1881, 'Small-Pox
In Sydney' p.6; E.N., 18.6.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.5.
36. R.C.M.Q.S., qu.70, p.1174.
37. Letter of complaint by Hughes, in D.T., 30.5.1882, 'One Of The Victims
Of The Small-Pox Scare' p.3; see S.M.H., 17.6.1881, 'Small-Pox In
Sydney' p.6. R.C.M.Q.S., p.1168; also qu.65, 70, p.1174 (Eagar);
qu.146, p.1179 (Fosbery); qu.411-6, p.1183 (George Read,
Superintendent of Police).
38. See ibid., p.1164, and the complaint by Constable Cook in ibid.,
qu.557, p.1193; and by Hughes, qu.681-6, pp.1197-8; Mrs Bonner,
qu.1009-13, p.1207; Mrs Kelly, qu.1029-30, p.1208; all of them
working class residents of western Sydney.
39. See the minutes of evidence in ibid.; also p.304 n.52.
Indignation was also reported among people quarantined in the city. It was observed in the *Daily Telegraph* during mid August that great complaints are raised among the quarantined persons in Fowler-street at neglect being shown with regard to visits from medical officers, and they entertain the belief that they are not cared for, and that their children may linger and die, bereft of any help to save them.

The continuing spread of smallpox in the district was attributed by them to their "close confinement, and being deprived of fresh air and needful exercise." Loud and angry altercations were reported in Fowler Street "between some of the quarantined persons and police - the former asserting that they would scale the barricades and make good their escape."  

Eagar's assumption that those people sent to the quarantine station should be glad to be removed from their unhealthy surroundings miscalculated because those to whom he referred did not accept his initial premise. They saw themselves not as slum dwellers but as respectable working people. Newspapers on occasion noted how the destructive operations of the disinfecting and cleansing staffs alienated working class householders whose dwellings, although of "humble" appearance, were yet kept clean and tidy. It was observed that even in so low a neighbourhood as Sussex Street there were residents who had accumulated possessions of some value. Such householders were understandably highly sensitive to any disruption or damage caused by the disinfecting men.

The Monaghan family, returning to their Sussex Street home after being released from the quarantine station, had been told that everything was in "apple-pie order" for them, but found that, on entering the house, things were quite the reverse:

> Every room in the house, excepting a small front room which was previously used as a parlour, was empty. In this small room was tumbled that portion of the furniture that was not smashed up by the

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40. *D.T.*, 23.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; see also S.M.H., 29.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6; and Copeland's mention of the dissatisfaction in quarantined neighbourhoods, in *N.S.W. P.D.*, vol.5 (1881), p.903.

41. S.M.H., 26.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6. As one woman living at the corner of Sussex and Fowler Streets complained, the ambulance men, after they had finished burning a lot of things in another place, came to my house and burnt everything in the house, leaving me only a blanket as a bed, without any pillow, and with only a dress to wear.

> 'Victims To The Late Small-Pox Scare' by 'The Widow Of The Late Mr. Lindsay', in *D.T.*, 22.4.1882, p.3. See the mention made of the hardships and antagonisms caused among working people in Britain by disinfecting operations, in Smith, *The People's Health*, pp.202-3.

42. S.M.H. 29.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6.
disinfecting people. It consists of a splendid horsehair suite, a cheffonier, round table, and other articles, all of which are completely spoiled, and Mr. Monaghan says he would much rather they were broken to pieces than left in the condition in which he found them. The 'lime-wash' has been freely used, and the original colour or polish of the furniture, which was new when the house was quarantined, is not discernable, but the lime-wash has stuck to it so closely that it is an impossibility to remove it even with a knife or sharp instrument. The table, which is of choice cedar, elaborately designed, has to all appearances been scraped, and looks as though it had been tumbled about in a 'don't care sort of manner'. In one of the other rooms are some pictures, to all appearance of a valuable character, and even these have been considerably damaged. The bedding has all been destroyed, together with valuable table-cloths and several other articles in the 'soft goods line'.

To officials like Eagar or Seymour, engaged in the implementation of measures designed to protect the whole community from health risks, such stories probably seemed based on trivial or exaggerated complaints. Allegations of property damage seemed to them motivated by a desire to win easy money, and the compensation claims filed for belongings destroyed and wages lost during quarantine were, said the Colonial Treasurer, in many cases quite "extortionate".

To the claimants whom Watson disparaged, however, compensation for the damage they had suffered seemed long delayed, and then only grudgingly and partially paid. The unwelcome and heavy-handed intrusion into their lives by municipal and governmental sanitary staffs was seen by the aggrieved parties and by their neighbours and friends as tyrannical and cruel, and gradually among working people antagonism grew towards those prompt governmental actions against the irresponsible poor which, in principle, they might once have been inclined to accept. Perceptions of the lower orders had always been sufficiently indistinct to enable anyone, however depressed his own circumstances, to pin that label of disapprobation upon others whose values he judged inferior to his own. It came as a slur upon the diligent worker's self-esteem when it he became apparent that the authorities saw no distinction between oneself and those whom one had always despised as idle representatives of the lower orders.

43. D.T., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.5; also ibid., 26.8.1881, p.3; ibid., 15.9.1881, p.3; ibid., 19.9.1881, p.3. See E.N., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3.
44. N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1881) p.2706.
45. See D.T., 19.9.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; 'Victims To The Small-Pox Scare' by 'The Widow Of The Late Mr. Lindsay', in ibid., 22.4.1882, p.3; John Hughes, 'One Of The Victims Of The Small-Pox Scare', in ibid., 30.5.1882, p.3; also the petition from Julia Russell of Sussex Street, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1883, vol.2, p.975.
The resentment building up in the smallpox-infected working class districts passed relatively unnoticed among the wider community for a time. Until the release from quarantine of patients at North Head, beginning in August 1881, those people feeling most aggrieved at Government actions were effectively isolated from contact with the outside world. An undercurrent of uneasiness was nonetheless evident concerning the consequences of the increasing governmental intervention made necessary by the smallpox emergency. The wide-ranging powers given to the Ambulance Corps prompted the Echo in late July to ask what limitations would there be upon the disinfecting staff's ability to "enter a man's home and decide how much of his furniture and effects shall be destroyed". Did the Government intend to allow compensation for loss of property, or would "the personal suffering in families where the disease shows itself be aggravated by a heavy pecuniary loss...?"46

Misgivings were fuelled by the resentment at Government policies which newspaper reporters periodically encountered among working people when they visited quarantined houses, and by the pressures acting upon journalists to dramatise the news. From the Evening News offices murmurings began to be heard of "cruelty and bungle", and of "gross blundering and culpable negligence" by the authorities.47 The Herald's editorial staff, too, expressed growing unease about increased Government activities, and pointing to allegations that a Mrs Bonner had been sent to North Head without even suffering from smallpox, urged a full disclosure by the authorities of any "official mismanagement". The newspaper suggested that people were afraid of reporting the disease for fear of being "roughly treated" by the Government.48

Newspaper anxieties were given greater weight when in August a scandal erupted over complaints from prisoners and staff at the Darlinghurst Gaol that they had been compulsorily vaccinated by the visiting surgeon, Dr O'Connor, with vaccine lymph taken from a prostitute.49 In October opposition parliamentarians used the allegations of abuse of power by Dr O'Connor as the means of bringing in a censure motion against the

46. Echo, 30.7.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1.
47. E.N., 16.8.1881, editorial leader p.2.
48. SMH., 17.8.1881, editorial pp.4-5; also Echo, 16.8.1881, 'Notes Of The Day' p.1. SMH., 23.8.1881, editorial p.4.
Government for having acted with "gross tyranny".\textsuperscript{50} Politics certainly influenced the Government's critics, but the incident also underlined the continuing strength of traditional laissez-faire hostility to the idea of official controls. The outrage at Darlinghurst was claimed by Forster during the censure debate to be "what comes of our aspirations after strong government". The colony now had a government sufficiently strong "to infringe personal rights, to establish an illegal system, to abuse the power given into their hands... in order to inflict tyranny and cruelty".\textsuperscript{51}

By October, when Forster thus stingingly attacked the Parkes Ministry, such criticism echoed a now strongly felt community antagonism towards the idea of further government intervention, for in the meantime such a storm had broken over allegations of mistreatment and cruelty at the quarantine station that a Royal Commission had had to be appointed to inquire into Government abuse of power. The first patients released from North Head had arrived back in Sydney late on 25 August. Several complained of poor conditions at the station and of the destruction of personal belongings discovered when they returned to their homes, but other declared themselves "thoroughly satisfied" with the treatment they had received. Over the following days, however, more inmates were released from the quarantine station, many of whom vocally expressed dissatisfaction at Government actions.\textsuperscript{52}

Recognising a good story, the press cried outrage, alleging neglect of the sick, inadequate food, insufficient bedding, and "official censorship" of mail.\textsuperscript{53} In the Legislative Assembly, Henry Copeland tabled a resolution which condemned the quarantining of people in their homes as "tyrannical and cruel and an infringement of the liberties of the subject." In a debate extending late into the night on 30 August and continuing the next day, members considered both the quarantining of houses in the city

\textsuperscript{50} N.S.W. P.D., vol.6 (1881), p.1716 (Forster). The matter had earlier been raised by Buchanan in July and August; ibid., vol.5, pp.321, 478-9, 559.

\textsuperscript{51} ibid., vol.6, pp.1717-8.

\textsuperscript{52} D.T., 26.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; also Echo, 26.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3. D.T., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.5; ibid., 29.8.1881, p.3; Echo, 26.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; S.M.H., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; E.N., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3.

\textsuperscript{53} D.T., 29.8.1881, editorial leader p.2; E.N., 25.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; 29.8.1881, editorial leader p.2; Echo, 25.8.1881, editorial leader p.1.
and the more startling allegations concerning North Head. General dissatisfaction was expressed at Government excesses, although it was acknowledged that wide powers were needed in such emergencies as epidemic disease. It seemed however to many politicians that the price in individual liberties being abused was too high in relation to the gains in community welfare. Government spokesmen hastened to stave off a parliamentary revolt by reaffirming Ministerial support for the principle "that a man's home is still his castle; in other words, that individual liberty cannot be infringed". Recognising the widespread nature of the discontent being expressed within Parliament, Parkes, ever the master tactician, sought to rally support by letting it be known that he regarded the motion as one of no confidence in the Government. Debate fizzled towards its obvious conclusion, as the Premier's opponents sneered at the ties of patronage which bound to the Ministry members who privately admitted the Government to be at fault. Copeland's motion was defeated by 63 votes to 11.

Watson, the Colonial Treasurer, having worked conscientiously to combat the spread of smallpox, reacted resentfully against opposition politicians and the press for what he regarded as the unfair and ungracious attacks being made against him. Pressmen however, having fully convinced themselves that Government policies were undermining long-held principles and menacing traditional liberties, redoubled their calls for an independent inquiry. Charged by Watson with irresponsibility, they felt aggrieved in their turn and so spoke with passion and much self-righteousness of the public duty they performed. They claimed that

54. N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), pp.815-60, 873-905. Assertions that the motion was an opposition strategem designed to embarrass the Government were denied by Copeland; ibid., p.816; also p.881 (Pigott).
55. Reid, for instance, staunchly defended the Ministry, arguing that Preservation of the public health is one of the most sacred duties of Government... and even the liberty of the subject, about which we hear so much, must give way if it exposes the whole community to the danger of loathsome and contagious disease. Ibid., p.843.
56. Ibid. (Dr Renwick).
57. When one speaker remarked that "I know there have been many minorities which have ultimately become majorities", Parkes interjected confidently, "Not on votes of censure." Ibid., p.879.
58. Ibid., p.905. See p.845 (Buchanan); pp.848-9 (Fitzpatrick); pp.859-60 (Forster); also E.N., 1.9.1881, editorial leader p.2.
just as "The gross blundering and incompetence displayed in the Crimean war were exposed by the correspondence of the English newspapers", so now the Sydney press by pinpointing Government bungling and mismanagement was warning the public that their rights were being interfered with.

With people released from North Head continuing to allege mismanagement, the Government suspended the superintendent at the quarantine station and on 13 September appointed a Royal Commission, composed of John Street, the Vice President of the Sydney Infirmary, Francis Hixon, the President of the N.S.W. Marine Board, and doctors Sydney Jones, MacLaurin and Manning, three of the most distinguished and energetic of the medical profession in Sydney, to examine the allegations.

The Royal Commission's report, written in January 1882, stressed that many of the complaints respecting the condition and management of the Station were frivolous and had little foundation in fact, whilst a number of them were grossly exaggerated, and seem to have been made with the ulterior object of obtaining increased compensation from the Government.

Adverse criticism was, the report pointed out, only to be expected from people resentful at being arbitrarily quarantined and so feeling "in a mood to be captious and fault-finding". Nonetheless, the Royal Commission conceded, the removal of people from their homes had been "somewhat peremptory", and, in the initial unpreparedness of the Government for coping with a smallpox epidemic, conditions at the quarantine station had for a time been rather chaotic. Moreover, on board the hospital hulk Faraway, moored at North Head for the accommodation of male patients, conditions were "in every way deplorable". Patients' telegrams back to Sydney had indeed been censored, though it was decided that this had resulted from the misplaced zeal of the station superintendent rather than from Government directives.

The Royal Commission report was not released to the press until mid
September 1882, and produced fresh cries of outrage from the **Daily Telegraph**, though its rivals now seemed less moved to comment.64 In the Legislative Assembly a motion expressing dissatisfaction with the Government was belatedly proposed in late October by the opposition politician, Dr Tarrant, who in a speech lasting one and a half hours blasted the Parkes Ministry for the "frightful atrocities" perpetrated under their authority. Copeland described the Government's quarantine measures as "a series of blunders and outrages". Yet as even he admitted, Parliament seemed little interested in the new censure motion. Less than 50 members were present when the final vote was taken and the motion defeated by 38 votes to nine.65

The issue was cold and the newspapers uninterested. The smallpox alarm had played itself out more than six months earlier. Yet even at the height of the indignation expressed against Government excesses, many commentators both in the press and in Parliament had stressed that while the Ministry must accept responsibility for any abuses committed, the blame really lay with their subordinates. Watson pointed out that in deciding to remove patients to the quarantine station and to isolate suspected cases in their houses, the Government had merely been acting upon the advice of their medical advisers.66

It was a calculating remark, for government doctors were increasingly becoming the butt of public ridicule. Among the quarantined working class districts of the inner City, the frightened, bored, and resentful inmates of barricaded dwellings spread tales of neglect, confusion, occasional cowardice, and even mistreatment by government doctors. One quarantined woman in Ultimo shouted to newspapermen that "The way we are left here is simply disgraceful, and if we were dogs we could not be treated worse".67

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64. An editorial leader drew attention to the nearly 11 months that had passed since the Commission had finished its work, and concluded that there had been an attempt to have "the scandal hushed up". The report represented "a manifest toning down of the abuses". The accompanying minutes of evidence showed that freemen had been "dragged away from their homes by force" and that at the station people had been "killed by the treatment they received"; 13.9.1882, p.2.


66. Ibid., vol.5 (1881), p.821; also Echo, 31.8.1881, editorial leader p.1; but see the E.N.'s rejection of this argument in 31.8.1881, editorial leader p.2.

67. Ibid., 16.8.1881, 'The Case Of Mrs Bonner And Family' p.3; other instances are 19.7.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; ibid., 14.9.1881, p.3; S.M.H., 22.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6; D.T., 23.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3; petition from Julia Russell of Sussex Street, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A), 1883, vol.2, p.975.
In Parliament, opposition politicians and Government spokesmen anxious to divert criticism from the Ministry onto erring subordinates both accused the medical authorities of incompetence for quarantining apparently still healthy people inside infected buildings. Sanitary reformers within Parliament, anxious lest this humiliation of the government doctors might set back efforts to frame further public health legislation, sneeringly dismissed the government sanitary officials as "the waifs and strays of the medical profession".

Already, however, attacks directed specifically against government doctors had widened into a more general criticism of the medical profession. The doctor was, after the smallpox patient, the person most closely associated with the disease, and was thus seen by many as a probable carrier of infection himself. Doctors appointed by the Government to search for further outbreaks of the disease had to leave their lodgings and use assumed names if they were to find rooms for the night. In the panic produced by epidemic disease the doctor had paradoxically become in many respects an alien and threatening figure who automatically attracted popular mistrust.

As had happened during the smallpox alarm of 1877, allegations were now heard of a tendency among the medical profession to "shirk their responsibility" when faced with the dangers of epidemic disease.

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68. N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), p.835 (Foster); p.838 (Stuart); p.842 (Renwick); p.848 (Garrett). See also the press criticisms in E.N., 16.8.1881, editorial leader p.2; S.M.H., 17.8.1881, editorial p.5; Echo, 19.8.1881, 'The Government Recipe For Checking Small-Pox' p.4; D.T., 12.9.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3.

69. N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), p.892 (Farnell); also p.842 (Renwick); pp.883-4 (Dr Tarrant); pp.887-8 (Dr Ross).

70. For instance, see S.M.H., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3. It was a suspicion validated in many minds by Eagar's initial over-reaction in ordering the quarantining of all doctors who had examined smallpox patients, and the ill-considered tales carried in the D.T. of doctors carrying disease germs wandering about the streets; N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), pp.845-6 (Buchanan). D.T., 15.6.1881, editorial leader p.2; 18.6.1881, 'The Small-Pox Plague' p.6.


72. Ibid., p.901 (Fletcher); also pp.822, 828 (Watson); p.887 (Kidd); p.895 (Martin). The E.N., 31.12.1881, editorial leader p.4, deplored the want of "public spirit" among doctors during the smallpox emergency. In Britain, infectious diseases were not a popular study among doctors, until the 1880s at least. Doctors correctly regarded them as personally dangerous and socially degrading in that their incidence was highest among the lower orders.

Stories of doctors' cowardice circulated widely. Doctors, too, were frequently blamed for concealing smallpox cases, out of pragmatic concern lest they lose their practice or themselves be quarantined were it known that they had come in contact with a smallpox patient.

From questioning the willingness of the medical profession to confront the threat of epidemic disease, it was but a small step to question the ability of medical science to protect the public health. Over 200 years had passed since the Great Plague in London, complained one letter writer, yet despite medical advances infectious diseases were seemingly just as prevalent as they were then. As a Herald leader acknowledged, the origin of small-pox is wrapped in mystery, and the same may be said of the laws by which it does its deadly work. There is perhaps no malady about which even medical specialists are so much in the dark.

The continuing uncertainties which the smallpox epidemic now highlighted among medical circles questioned the central assumption of pathological research, that specific causes and solutions more precise than generalised talk of filth and cleanliness might be isolated, which would enable an attack to be made on disease at its very source rather than merely reacting to and treating its developing symptoms.

Community doubts were strengthened by the apparent weaknesses in medical skills revealed by smallpox. It was reported in the Evening News that one doctor continued treating a smallpox patient for rheumatism up to

73. The stories stemmed from the allegations of working people in the infected districts; R.C.M.Q.S., qu.2231, p.1243; S.M.H., 22.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6; John Hughes, 'One Of The Victims Of The Small-Pox Scare', in D.T., 30.5.1881, p.3. See the letter by former S. & H. B. member, Dr R. B. Read, in S.M.H., 19.8.1881, p.6.

74. See D.T., 24.8.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3. Failure by doctors to report new cases was judged to have been a not unimportant contributor to the upsurge in the disease in late November; E.N., 24.11.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.2; S.M.H., 29.11.1881, editorial leader p.5; D.T., 3.12.1881, editorial p.5; also Report of the Board of Health Upon the Late Smallpox Epidemic, p.954. Roberts had earlier prepared a special circular for the Board, requesting doctors to report at once all suspected cases of the disease; N.S.W.B.H., P., 11.10.1881. See also N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), p.828 (Watson); p.848 (Garrett); p.855 (Hoskins).

75. Alex. Cumming, 'Precautions In The Olden Time Against Contagious Disease', in S.M.H., 6.12.1881, p.3. Ibid., 17.6.1881, editorial leader p.4.

76. See, for instance, the confused mixing of chemical and biological explanations of disease causation, in Opinions of Medical Men on Compulsory Vaccination, qu.125, p.1028. See S.M.H., 1.6.1881, editorial p.4.
the patient's death. Delays in confirming cases of suspected smallpox, the confusion of the disease with chickenpox and other maladies, the accompanying disputes among doctors over conflicting diagnoses and the bungling of vaccination operations, produced public wonder and scorn. Weaknesses in technical skill and uncertainties of medical opinion prompted people to question medical knowledge itself. Whatever "a select circle of scientists" might say, remarked the Daily Telegraph, an "ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory", and as the debate in newspaper correspondence columns over differing schemes for smallpox prevention made plain, lay people regarded themselves as quite sufficiently well-equipped to dispute facts confidently with any expert.

Public debate centred on vaccination, which medical authorities regarded as the foremost example of the successes achievable by scientific methods in the controlling of disease. Despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, community fears persisted that vaccination transmitted disease rather than preventing it. At Darlinghurst Gaol, Dr O'Connor's vaccinating programme first aroused controversy when two lay people, the matron and the principal gaoler, objected to vaccine being obtained from one Susan Fisher, a street-walker who had "suffered from the loathsome disease to which low prostitutes of her class are subject". A special committee of doctors appointed by the Government reported that it was very unlikely for syphilis to be transmitted by vaccination, but

77. Letter by 'Justice' in E.N., 25.11.1881, 'The Late Mr. Wm. Russell' p.3; also 28.11.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.2.
78. See letter by 'Pater' in Echo, 11.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.5; S.M.H., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; ibid., 8.9.1881, p.6.
79. For example, see N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), p.830 (Watson); D.T., 5.9.1881, 'Small-Pox In Sydney' p.3. The same criticism was heard throughout the century; see Chapter Two. Allegations that Mrs Bonner, Mrs Kelly, and Constable Cook had been wrongly diagnosed as smallpox sufferers were later found to have been correct; R.C.M.Q.S., p.164.
80. John Hughes' case was a well-publicised example; E.N., 26.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.2; S.M.H., 27.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.3; Hughes, 'One Of The Victims Of The Small-Pox Scare', in D.T., 30.5.1882, p.3.
81. See S.M.H., 27.7.1881, 'Small-Pox And Vaccination' p.3; 17.8.1881, 'Small-Pox' p.6; ibid., 22.8.1881, p.6.
82. D.T., 18.2.1882, editorial p.4.
83. See the report of Dr Belgrave's lecture in S.M.H., 15.11.1881, 'Medical Section Of The Royal Society' p.7.
84. Correspondence relating to Vaccination at Darlinghurst Gaol, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1881, vol.4, p.1077. The apparently general acceptance of their qualifications to dispute medical matters was remarked upon by an 'Observer' in a letter to the D.T., 25.8.1881, 'Vaccination In Darlinghurst Gaol' p.3.
community opinion remained unconvinced. Equally reputable findings existed which contradicted the report's conclusions, announced the Evening News. In Parliament, the Attorney General asserted that regardless of what the doctors might say, he would never consent to being vaccinated from a source like the woman Fisher.85 Pointing to the conflicting sets of statistics and statements of fact employed by both supporters and opponents of vaccination, a lead editorial in the Herald concluded that "Medical science, it is admitted, is so called only by courtesy. Of fixed and irrefragable principles there are none, and hence we see theory and practice so constantly and so greatly changing."86

IV

In a review of the previous 12 months, the Evening News' editorial leader on 31 December 1881 said of the smallpox epidemic that The cruelty and inconvenience caused by the authorities will not soon be forgotten, and the horrors of the quarantine ground form one of the blackest and most humiliating chapters in the history of this country.87

The allegations heard during past months of muddle and tyranny had served to reinforce community misgivings at official controls. In the working class City districts where smallpox had been concentrated, there existed a legacy of resentment towards the authorities. Parliament too, after the furore produced by the Government's handling of quarantine arrangements, was wary about increasing state or municipal responsibilities. Criticising the Parkes Ministry for its unenthusiastic response to the Contagious Diseases Bill introduced by the reformer Farnell, a writer for the Evening News in October 1882 spoke with scorn of parliamentarians "with so despicable an idea of their functions as to sit cowering in a corner with averted faces like frightened children when they are brought face to face with a vital social question".88

86. S.M.H., 6.8.1881, editorial leader pp.4-5.
88. Ibid., 23.10.1882, editorial leader p.2. The likely effect upon Parkes of the embarrassments caused to his Government during 1881 is particularly interesting. When during the Copeland censure debate one speaker mentioned the possibility of government leaving people to do more for themselves, Parkes interjected with a "Hear, hear." N.S.W. P.D., vol.5 (1881), p.875.
The writer's words were doubly significant, for the smallpox epidemic, as well as crystallizing the reluctance felt by many against increasing official intervention in community life, also excited a demand for new public health legislation incorporating greater controls over the sources of city ill-health. At the annual meeting of the Health Society in November 1881, Bradley read from the Society's report that

The recent outbreak of smallpox found all persons unprepared..., and it is not too much to say that great infraction of liberty and a large amount of unnecessary suffering have followed from that want of preparation which appropriate legislation and executive organization would have obviated.89

The two conflicting attitudes, the one in favour of greater legislative controls and the other deeply apprehensive of the consequences of such initiatives, were evident in the comments of most sanitarians, politicians and newspapermen as they considered the measures needed to better protect city health in the future.90

The prominence which the smallpox emergency had given to reports of the apparently debased and disease-producing existence led by the city lower orders produced general agreement in principle, notwithstanding the strongly-felt resistance to expanding official controls, that firm action of some sort was needed by the authorities to deal with City slums. Calling for the enactment of a Common Lodging Houses Act, the Daily Telegraph in August 1882 spoke disgustedly of the "daily defiance of sanitary laws" in the western City by "the lower strata of society".91

Criticisms during the smallpox outbreak of doctors, of scientific assumptions and methods, underscored however the large measure of community scepticism which existed concerning the effectiveness of the health controls sought by sanitary experts. While the latter might draw upon accumulated medical experience to urge such precise legislative improvements as the setting of minimum standards for lighting, ventilation, and occupancy in buildings, the more popular response to the disease crisis of 1881 was to call for the general and more 'practical' remedy of sweeping away the insanitary working class districts of the inner City.

89. S.M.H., 17.11.1881, 'The Health Society' p.3.
90. The conflicting impulses felt by many were pointed out by Renwick when he criticised an opposition parliamentarian, Foster, for saying that "a strong Government ought to have adopted stronger measures, whereas he condemns them for the excesses of strength they have exhibited."
PART VI
CHAPTER FIFTEEN
A New Sydney: Slum Clearance, 1881-90

I

The outbreak of smallpox in Sydney greatly stimulated community interest in the possibility of demolishing City slums. The heightened concern felt at the potential of filth-bred pestilence to cause havoc was given substance by newspaper accounts of expeditions made with the City Corporation "right in the thick of the small-pox country" to order the repair or demolition of insanitary housing. In squares and alleyways behind the main roads of the western City, Corporation visitors threaded their way gingerly among the disinfecting staffs to stare upon scenes of squalor and filth. In Webster Square, off Kent Street, a Daily Telegraph reporter recalled "a sea of filth around us", and "dirty and dilapidated tenements" on all sides. Neighbourhood children danced about the party and cry 'the small-pox! the small-pox! as though it were their war whoop. 'Phew! let us get out of this'—and we do. Verdict gentlemen; quick so that we can get away. Only one opinion—Mayor[.,] doctor, surveyor, inspector, and sub-inspector condemned unanimously the whole of them; and a good riddance for Sydney.¹

Sapsford noted with satisfaction in November 1881 that the existing "dire epidemic" had been prevented from taking a greater hold by the Corporation's condemning of numerous "filthy hovels". Some 450 buildings had been condemned by the Corporation in the year to November, of which 350 or roughly two percent of all buildings in the City had already been demolished by their owners, and the remainder repaired as directed by the Corporation.² Almost all these buildings came from the scattered alleyways of working class housing in the City centre and from the streets and lanes westwards to Darling Harbour, from the Rocks in the north, and from southern Sydney in an arc from the base of the Pyrmont peninsula eastwards through the alleyways above the Hay and Belmore Markets as far as Wexford Street. Pockets of unwholesome housing were also condemned near the smallpox district in Surry

1. D.T., 17.9.1881, 'Sydney Rookeries' p.6; also E.N., 16.9.1881, 'Mayoral Inspection' p.2; 27.9.1881, 'More Rookeries Condemned'; p.2; D.T., 3.10.1881, 'Sydney Rookeries' p.4. It was said that with such places in their midst, there could be no surprise at the spread of smallpox in the City; ibid., 17.9.1881, p.6; ibid., 23.9.1881, p.3.
2. S.C.C, M.P.M., box 12/2, no.47 (Sapsford, 30.11.1881); and see Seymour's earlier letter to the D.T., 27.7.1881, p.3, telling of the destruction of "hovels and nests ripe for the development of the germs of disease, which otherwise would have created a great source of anxiety." See Appendix Seven.
Hills and alongside the railway tracks in Chippendale.  

John Harris, re-elected mayor, in 1882 continued his vigorous inspection tours of the previous year, working systematically along the length of Kent Street through the smallpox districts of western Sydney and uncovering further dilapidated and insanitary housing. Shocked newspaper writers applauded the City Corporation's efforts, and raised a fresh cheer when in January 1883 Harris celebrated his third consecutive term as Mayor by instituting a further "crusade" against unhealthy rookeries. "It is always pleasant to know that his Worship the Mayor is out and about", crowed the Echo; "it means that a crusade is ordered against the Kingdom of Dirt". 

Mayor Harris' inspection tours were continued in January 1884 by his successor, James Hardie, and in the following years by other occupants of the mayoral chair. Referring readers to its accounts of the Corporation tours, a lead editorial in the Daily Telegraph announced that while such slum districts remained in the City, the "only wonder is that the place is not visited by something like the plague of London". Newspapermen reasoned that these haunts of the lower orders, because of the haven they afforded to the "twin sisters" of dirt and disease, had to be entirely "razed" from the City. 

Commercial re-development in Sydney, by erecting "lofty and handsome warehouses and places of business where shabby and dilapidated houses and mere huts once stood", was welcomed for its contribution to that goal. Between November 1879 and November 1883 almost 4,000 new structures were built in the City, including some 2,000 new dwellings, 400 shops, almost 350 warehouses and over 80 workshops. Many of these would undoubtedly have been built on vacant land, especially in the more outlying City districts,

3. The addresses of buildings condemned were provided in the newspaper accounts of the Corporation tours.
8. S.M.H., 26.11.1887, editorial p.13. Accurate information concerning the extent of this process is fragmentary, but from the proud accounts of new construction works filling the newspapers, City re-development would appear to have been massive.
but a City Council return of all buildings pulled down and erected in the various wards during 1880 and 1881 showed that 1,000 buildings had been demolished during the two years, some 240 more than the total ordered either to be repaired or pulled down by the Corporation.9 Those demolitions were concentrated in the working class districts in the western portion of the city. Nearly a fourth of the total demolition has taken place in Kent, Clarence, and Erskine streets, and the neighbourhood, and the locality which ranks next in these figures is that situated between George-street and Darling Harbour, to the southward of the Town Hall.10

In November 1887, applauding the combined effect of Corporation actions and of commercial expansion upon the appearance and the health of Sydney, the Herald remarked that

As a result of them the condition of the city has been undergoing a sweeping change. We say the condition rather than the appearance, because although the frontages to the main streets present an aspect widely different from that which they presented even ten years ago, it is not only on the face of the main streets that the work has been done. A bird's eye view from some elevated point is necessary for a full realisation of the changes that have been wrought in the by-ways and back slums, where houses which had been the habitations of artisans, labourers, and the poor have been swept away not merely by the score, but by the hundred.11

II

The applause which greeted the sweeping away of unwholesome working class housing in Sydney was not solely caused by a self-centred relief that the separate world of dirt, disease, and immorality allegedly inhabited by the lower orders was thereby excised from the city. As had happened during earlier mayoral tours undertaken before the smallpox epidemic of 1881, accompanying newspaper reporters sometimes remarked sympathetically upon evidences of thrift and cleanliness in the homes they saw, and upon the efforts that had gone into the choice of household fittings and arrangement of the "parlour". In every case, however, such efforts were made to seem pitiable to the visitors by the dilapidation, the inadequate ventilation or defective drainage of the homes.12

10. S.M.H., 1.7.1882, editorial p.5.
12. D.T., 25.2.1885 'Among The Rookeries' p.6; also 13.6.1882, 'Inspection Of Rookeries' p.3; E.N., 14.1.1885, 'Among The Rookeries' p.4; S.M.H.,
Describing a tour of dilapidated buildings in 1889 with Harris, then serving his fifth term as mayor, a Daily Telegraph reporter recalled two rickety wooden cottages,

the one kept clean and neat with flowers and shrubs in front, the other a filthy hovel, in which a man half stupid lay on a mattress reeking with dirt, from which a horrible stench came. One sniff from the doorway was enough and the place was doomed.13

Since virtues such as cleanliness and domestic good order might be found even in one of two hovels such as these the question arose, what might be done to reform slum dwellers like the poor drunken wretch in the other cottage if only the foul environment in which they lived was removed?

It was a suggestion paralleled and encouraged by the special attention devoted in Britain, following publication of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, to the best means of improving the conditions of working class housing and so integrating the lower orders with the wider community. The Herald in March 1884 remarked of the impact made by Mearns' work that "Outcast London has not raised a bitter cry, but philanthropic London has done so."14 In many ways the same remark could have been applied to the impact then being made upon humanitarian men and women in Sydney by the accounts of slum life in their own city. In both cities dismay at the apparently unhappy existence being led by the urban poor,15 and anger at the exploitation by slum landlords16 lent encouragement to the idea of slum clearance as an essential part of any attempts to improve the housing and thus the health and morality of the city working classes.

Responding to the Nineteenth Century's December debate upon the London poor, the Herald cautioned that

It is no use to preach self-reliance and self-helpfulness to men and women in the condition of some of those described by Mr. G. R. Sims in his 'How the Poor Live,' and whose circumstances are paralleled by those of many persons burrowing in the back slums of Sydney and Melbourne. The burrows must be destroyed and replaced by habitations in which decency, cleanliness, health, and morality are possible. Otherwise, reform is hopeless.

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12. cont.

16.3.1887, 'City Buildings Unfit For Habitation' p.11; D.T., 23.2.1889, 'Inspection Of Rookeries' p.3.


14. S.M.H., 8.3.1884, editorial p.11.


16. Ibid., 3.10.1881, editorial p.2; Ibid., 15.1.1884, p.4; S.M.H., 16.1.1884, editorial p.9; Ibid., 21.1.1884, p.5; Ibid., 25.4.1884, p.7; D.T., 25.2.1885, 'Among The Rookeries' p.6; S.M.H., 23.2.1889, 'News Of The Day' p.11.
If "homes unfit for human habitation are vigorously condemned by the aid of the law", suggested the *Daily Telegraph*, "a standard of comfort, which for millions in Europe is absolutely non-existent, will be established, and it will be impossible for our poorest - for poorest there must be - to sink into irreclaimable poverty."17

Sapsford wrote in November 1881 that due to inspections of unwholesome housing landlords were now paying more attention than formerly to the comfort of their tenants in order to avoid having their premises condemned by the Corporation. A still more welcome development was noted by Dansey late in the following year when he reported with satisfaction that as the consequence of Corporation inspection tours and of the demolition of dilapidated and unwholesome housing which these encouraged, "the working man is being driven from the city" to live in more congenial surroundings in the suburbs.18 Dansey's humanitarian delight at the progress achieved in removing housing which he regarded as uniformly unwholesome and demoralising was echoed by the *Herald* when in January 1884 it spoke of the Mayor's "merciful severity" in condemning slums. In the following year the *Daily Telegraph* likewise remarked approvingly upon "the lynx eye of Mr Inspector Seymour" for unwholesome dwellings.19

The Mayor and Seymour were regarded rather differently by those parties directly affected by the mayoral tours. Property owners watched with antagonism the Corporation activities against substandard buildings. Working people threatened with eviction often reacted similarly. There was little relation between the way the community saw City slums and the self-perceptions of the evicted tenants.20 Adding to their resentment at being labelled in the press as undesirable slum dwellers were the very real difficulties of finding suitable alternative accommodation. Sanitarians'

19. S.M.H., 16.1.1884, editorial p.9; the Herald predicted that this "judicious weeding-out process... will... no doubt, ensure comfortable and healthy homes for the poorer classes"; 16.3.1887, 'City Buildings Unfit For Habitation' p.11. D.T., 25.2.1885, 'Among The Rookeries' p.6.
20. Quite complex social stratification existed among the tenants and sub-lessees of condemned buildings; see Appendix Nine. The opposition to Corporation actions by some property owners is discussed below in section III; the bulk of dwellings in Sydney were occupied not by their owners but were leased to others; see R. V. Jackson, "Owner-Occupation Of Houses in Sydney, 1871 To 1891", in *Australian Economic History Review*, vol.9 (1970), pp.138-54.
expectations that evicted tenants would move to decent homes in the suburbs were very often unfulfilled. Overcrowding in the poorer districts of the City was not relieved but was intensified by slum clearances.

Corporation inspections were consequently regarded at times with apprehension or anger by the occupants of buildings visited. Touring along Kent Street in 1885, Mayor Playfair came across "an old lady who had lived there for 30 years, and who loudly lamented the cruel fate which ordered that she should leave." When in January 1884 a City Corporation party entered Campbell Street, just to the east of the Goulburn Street district and the City's southern markets, one woman took up a commanding position on her own doorstep, and as the municipal procession passed along, delivered an address to her congregated neighbours, which was received with many marks of sympathy and satisfaction. She took for her subject the City Council in general, and Mr Seymour in particular, and drew short but trenchant historical parallels between the former and 'a den of thieves', and the latter and 'the evil one himself'.

Growing outside awareness during the 1880s of the reasons for resentment among City working people at the condemning of their homes slowly modified reformers' previous assumptions about the benefits for working people resulting from slum clearances. Although in January 1884 one reporter in the Herald was still expressing facile surprise that people could be found who were willing to live in some of the dirty and tumble-down buildings in Sydney, even during the smallpox epidemic of 1881 it was already being reported elsewhere that the poor frequently spoke ill of their dilapidated tenements, "but ask what they can do, as they must live somewhere". Gradually it was becoming accepted among sanitarians that for many manual workers it was inconvenient if not impossible to live away from their City workplaces.

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22. D.T., 25.2.1885, 'Among The Rookeries' p.6. Members of the Improvement Board had encountered more active opposition while inspecting an out-of-repair building in Pyrmont during the previous year. The old woman occupant had "plumped herself down against the door, and in every possible way resisted an inroad on her privacy." E.N., 10.9.1884, 'Sydney Slums', in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
24. S.M.H., 15.1.1884, 'News Of The Day' p.7. D.T., 3.10.1881, 'Sydney Rookeries' p.4. In August 1882, however, one D.T. editorial writer could still comment unfeelingly upon the condemning of 50 buildings by the Mayor, "The owners and occupants will, in too many cases, be like the dogs we read of which 'returned to their vomit,' and the pigs which went back 'to their wallowing in the mire.'" 11.8.1882, editorial p.2.
25. Ibid., 10.5.1881, 'The Rookeries Of Sydney' p.3; S.M.H., 31.8.1885,
Greater recognition of the influences determining working class housing needs was afforded in part by the accounts coming from Britain upon the subject following release of the Bitter Cry. The new awareness stemmed also from local investigations into the causes of increasing working class overcrowding in the City. Pondering the unstated consequences of the building boom mentioned by Sapsford in his annual report for 1883, the Echo remarked that as

the poorer class of tenements are giving way to the insatiable demands of business... the poor... must huddle closer together. If each family cannot obtain a house for itself, several must collect under one roof - a necessity that has fallen upon thousands of the humbler classes of older cities, to their degradation and ruin.

The "wholesale destruction of houses" caused by the City Corporation was said to be greatly aggravating this evil. Rejecting the idea that the condemning of insanitary buildings represented a simple remedy for the City's social and public health problems, the Herald in mid 1882 warned how in fact

The very improvements which are being made in the metropolis often have the effect of confining the lower classes within a still narrower compass. In the centre of Sydney, whole streets which used to be occupied by people of the poorest or more undesirable class are now sites of palatial warehouses... When the MAYOR decrees that four or five score of uninhabitable houses shall not be inhabited, he does a good thing. But the question that forces itself after all is, where do the people who occupied these hovels go? In some instances no doubt they go to better dwellings; but the thing to be noticed is that in cities the construction of good dwellings for the poor does not keep pace with the demolition of bad ones, the result often being that since people must live somewhere, through the shutting up of one bad quarter other bad quarters are made worse.

Reports from Britain showed clearly the stress there being placed upon the connection between slum clearance and rehousing schemes in order to achieve the proper accommodation of the urban poor. Discussing in March

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26. cont.
27. For instance, see the lengthy extracts from the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in ibid., 24.6.1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9.
28. S.M.H., 19.11.1887, 'Sanitary Dwellings' p.9, by 'Sussex-Street'; and see the reply by R.A.D., in 22.11.1887, 'Improved Artisan Dwellings' p.4; also Bradley, 'Condemned Dwellings Of The Hand-Working Classes', in ibid., 3.9.1887, p.6. See Appendix One, Table 1.6.
29. Ibid., 22.6.1882, editorial leader p.4; also 1.7.1882, editorial p.5.
1884 the implications of the Bitter Cry for the Corporation's condemning of unwholesome dwellings in Sydney, the Herald observed with concern the total absence in the City of any provision requiring the rehousing of tenants evicted through the demolition of their homes. The condemning, followed frequently by the demolition of dwellings in the poorer districts of western Sydney and their replacement by warehouses certainly gave "the impression of the improvement and advancement of the city", conceded one correspondent to the Herald late in 1887. However, he added,

To the wharf labourer and the like, whose occupations must be entered upon and carried on through all hours of the day and night as occasions require, this wholesale destruction of tenements, unless followed by the erection of other and better ones, has a debasing influence by causing such to crowd together in the available houses of the same district; and city missionaries and others who constantly visit from house to house can testify to the fact that where two families occupied a house previously, now another, and in cases two families more, are sharing the same house.

The humanitarian purpose of slum clearance was being frustrated, it was now realised, because many working people could not, as it had once been presumed, move easily from the City to better homes in the suburbs. That conclusion had been highlighted by the reports on working class housing problems coming from Britain in the wake of the Bitter Cry. Corroborating evidence was also becoming available at home. As one writer signing himself 'Sussex-street' explained in November 1887, working people were by the nature of their employment prevented "from taking advantage of the benefits a suburban residence is supposed to confer, as a very large proportion of our labouring class must always reside almost upon the 'spot'." Rising suburban land costs and the expense of transport to homes that became increasingly distant as the metropolis expanded were feared to be intensifying centripetal pressures. Nor was it simple

30. Ibid., 8.3.1884, editorial p.11; see the report from the London Spectator, reprinted in ibid., 21.1.1884, 'Mr Chamberlain's Plan For Re-Housing The Poor' p.5; also 24.6.1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9.
31. Ibid., 22.11.1887, 'Improved Artisan Dwellings' p.4, by R.A.D. The same point was made in 26.11.1887, editorial p.13.
32. Ibid., 8.3.1884, editorial p.11. It was noted from the British Royal Commission report that often when working men "have made an attempt to leave an overcrowded neighbourhood for some better locality at a little distance away, after a short sojourn many of them have often been compelled to come back to be near their work." 24.6.1885, 'The Housing Of The Poor' p.9.
33. Ibid., 19.11.1887, 'Sanitary Dwellings' p.9.
34. E.N., 19.12.1883, 'Notes On Current Events' p.5; see the comments by the Reverend Mr Jefferis in S.M.H., 4.8.1880, 'The City Night Refuge' p.3; also 22.6.1882, editorial Leader p.4; and 18.6.1888, 'Artisans' Dwellings' p.3, by 'Aedile'. 
poverty that made life in the suburbs inconvenient for many. Mayor Riley reported in June 1888 that among the "artisan class" the "present complaint was that they could not get into the city early enough to begin their work in time." As the Herald conceded in 1885, the suburbs alone could no longer be regarded as providing a panacea for the housing needs of working people forced from insanitary dwellings in the City: "much as a number of them may prefer the suburbs, it is inconvenient to live there. Their work is in the city, and it is necessary that they should reside near their work." The only way to resolve that difficulty and counteract the pressures of high-cost City land was, the newspaper suggested, "by the erection of tenement houses of several stories." It was to provide such a solution that S.A. Byrne sought in 1885 to launch a Sydney Workmen's Improved Dwellings Company, but the scheme quickly collapsed for lack of support. The matter was raised again in 1887, when as a practical memorial to the Queen's Golden Jubilee, it was suggested that the strain on working class housing caused by City redevelopment be relieved by erecting block buildings modelled on those of the Peabody Trust. Mayor Riley, himself concerned at the evidence of increasing overcrowding he had seen during Corporation tours and influenced by the enthusiasm of George McRae, Sapsford's replacement as Building Surveyor, for the model tenements then being built for working people in Scotland, announced that he would seek to have model dwellings built in the City for low cost working class accommodation. Riley's initiative provoked new calls for the building of model tenement blocks, and in mid December the Mayor organised a public meeting to discuss the matter further.

Among the audience over which Riley presided on 14 December 1887 were

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35. Ibid., 22.6.1888, 'Meetings: Artisans' Dwellings' p.4.
36. Ibid., 31.8.1885, editorial p.7; see also the letter by 'Aedile' in 18.6.1888, 'Artisans' Dwellings' p.3.
37. See Chapter Eleven.
38. Frederic Jones, 'A Jubilee Suggestion', in S.M.H., 16.2.1887, p.10; also 22.2.1887, 'The Better Housing Of The Poorer Classes' p.8, by R.A.D.
Burton Bradley, S.A. Byrne, the man who had sought to build model dwellings in 1885, George McRae, the Corporation Building Surveyor, several City aldermen, a number of churchmen, and two officials from the Sydney Trades and Labour Council. A letter of encouragement with a promise of support was read from the Governor, Lord Carrington, who in the mid 1880s had served on the Royal Commission in Britain which inquired into the conditions of working class housing.41

Riley told the meeting that since the Improvement Act had come into effect in 1879, approximately 1,700 buildings had been condemned as unfit for human habitation, which by his calculations meant at least 9,000 people had been "dispossessed of their homes from the lower area of the city." These people had swelled overcrowding in other buildings, which further undermined their health and had "the most demoralising effect."42 The meeting endorsed the general principle of Riley's proposal that improved working class dwellings be erected in the City, and a committee was elected to take the matter in hand.

From the outset it became apparent that the major difficulty they faced was how to overcome the problem of cost.43 When in March the Mayor had first publicly acknowledged the need for model housing in the City he had proposed moving in Parliament that government undertake the matter. Upon calculating that a sum of a quarter of a million pounds would be needed to build sufficient dwellings, Riley however pragmatically rejected the idea of raising the matter with his budget-conscious parliamentary colleagues and instead called for private businessmen to undertake the task.44 At the public meeting in December Riley expressed confidence that the erection of model dwellings for artisans would return a profit to investors. The Mayor however qualified this apparent optimism by admitting regret at "the somewhat meagre attendance" of the general public at the meeting. A Herald editorial several days later was more outspoken. Voicing disappointment that the meeting had been so poorly attended, the writer commented "It would almost appear that a mine, with a capital of some hundreds of thousands of pounds, has a better chance of being floated than a genuine investment of this description with a more modest capital."45

41. Ibid., 15.12.1887, 'Artisans' Model Dwellings' p.5.
43. See the letter by 'Aedile', 'Artisans' Dwellings - The Price Of The Land', in ibid., 26.12.1887, p.3.
45. Ibid., 15.12.1887, 'Artisans' Model Dwellings' p.5. Ibid., 17.12.1887,
The difficulties of finding sufficient finance divided even those few men and women actively supporting the building of model dwellings. Suggestions during 1887 that such schemes could best be undertaken by the City Council because of its ability to raise large loans were countered by claims, motivated perhaps by unease at a possible trend towards the 'municipal socialism' of Britain, that model housing could be more satisfactorily realised by private persons of "philanthropic tendencies". Riley declared firmly in December 1887 that he was envisaging schemes undertaken by private philanthropists or special companies, but at a further meeting called by him in June 1888 a Trades and Labour Council representative urged the City and suburban councils to raise long term loans to build and operate working class housing.

A more serious controversy arose over proposals to reduce the cost of buying City lands by constructing multi-storey tenement blocks to be let in flats. Riley himself favoured flats as a practical answer to the high cost of City land and at a public meeting called in June 1888 explained that plans had been prepared for constructing one or more block buildings organised on the flat system, to provide two or three room accommodation for between 60 and 70 families. Bradley and other potential supporters of the scheme however strongly opposed the flat system, and the meeting broke up with Riley vainly seeking to appease critics of the system. Disagreements among those few who actively participated in the planning of the buildings had sapped the movement of its strength. The June meeting at

45. cont.
editorial p.11. At a subsequent meeting in 1888, it was conceded that "the project had not as yet received the amount of support from the public the committee had anticipated"; 22.6.1888, 'Meetings: Artisans' Dwellings' p.4.
46. Frederic Jones, 'A Jubilee Suggestion', in ibid., 16.2.1887, p.10; 19.11.1887, 'Sanitary Dwellings' p.9, by 'Sussex-Street'.
47. See the two letters by R.A.D. in ibid., 22.2.1887, 'The Better Housing Of The Poorer Classes' p.8; and 22.11.1887, 'Improved Artisan Dwellings' p.4. The development of 'municipal socialism' is discussed in Nohl, The Eternal Slum.
49. See the letter by 'Aedile' in ibid., 18.6.1888, 'Artisans' Dwellings' p.3, suggesting tenement blocks of three or four stories as a means of overcoming the cost of City land. Recanting its opposition in 1885 to multi-storey blocks, the Herald declared that now with the perfection of lifts, tenants could live in flats of even eight or 10 stories without inconvenience; 17.12.1887, editorial p.11.
50. Ibid., 22.6.1888, 'Meetings: Artisans' Dwellings' p.4; and note also the conflicting opinions expressed at the earlier meeting in December; 15.12.1887, 'Artisans' Model Dwellings' p.5.
which Riley displayed the architect's draft plans had originally been scheduled for earlier in the month, and it had been arranged that Carrington himself would address the audience. When the Governor had arrived at the Town Hall however, only Riley and Bradley and eight other people were present, and the meeting broke up with embarrassment on all sides. The gathering later in the month likewise attracted a small audience of only 30 persons.51

Riley's project to rehouse displaced working people in model lodgings faltered and ceased. In 1890 the parliamentary member for suburban Canterbury, J. H. Carruthers, complained to a parliamentary committee studying suburban railway extention that no relief at all existed for the City working classes, who were being "tossed and turned about in every direction by the re-building of the city."52 Among the great bulk of the community however, concern to see working people from City slums rehoused in decent dwellings tended to be lost amid general relief at the sweeping away of disease-breeding localities, and pride in the progress of city architectural adornment.

III

A Daily Telegraph correspondent travelling with one mayoral inspection of western Sydney in June 1882 remarked that as a consequence of earlier Corporation tours, "substantial and ornamental buildings" were transforming neighbourhoods previously "frequented by the very dregs of society, and where vice and crime reigns supreme".53 What was to become of these "dregs" and how they were to be uplifted and reformed were questions left unmentioned by the reporter. Neither were such considerations probed by the Evening News when in 1886 it applauded the way in which

Buildings palatial in their magnificence have sprung up on sites previously occupied by hovels. Splendour has appeared where squalor lurked or hideousness was painfully to the front. As if by the touch of a magician's wand, ugliness has vanished, and beauty and grace have taken its place.54

The newspaper's emphasis was less upon the elimination of 'squalor', than on replacing its 'ugliness' by cosmetic architectural ornamentation.

It was a viewpoint which even among the Corporation officials engaged in inspecting working class housing in the City had considerable force. The City Building Surveyor, George McRae, asserted blandly at the end of 1889 that

A large number of old, dilapidated, and unsightly tenements have, during the year, been demolished, and considerable changes have been effected in almost all the principal streets by the erection of handsome and stately buildings, the architectural features of which constitute a lasting ornament to the city.  

Practical measures for rehousing working people in improved dwellings, with the humanitarian objective of resolving the demoralisation that was associated by middle class observers with City slums, were subordinated to the more immediate and self-interested goal of removing from the City all visible presence of the unwholesome environment that had housed the lower orders.

Civic pride swelled instead as outmoded or dilapidated buildings gave way to impressive new banking premises, to massive and elaborately ornamented warehouses, and elegant retail and business establishments.  

Enthusiasm for the substitution of the unsightly by the grand and ornamental in turn lent further encouragement to the tendency, long evident in Sydney, to think in terms not simply of pulling down individual insanitary buildings but of resuming and remodelling entire City districts. Suggestions for blanket demolitions regardless of the sanitary or structural condition of individual buildings within the designated area, simply because the locality was unpleasing to the wider community or had a reputation for ill-health or 'low' habits, tended still further to reduce consideration of the consequences for persons living in the areas proposed for rebuilding. The Echo spoke in December 1881 of the Corporation's condemning of those "absolutely unhealthy dwellings" in the City as being merely a prelude to grander reconstruction schemes aimed at producing "a new Sydney".  

Visions of imposing public buildings, of broad new thoroughfares and ornamental squares were obscuring the humanitarian

55. Annual report of the City Architect's and City Building Surveyor's Department, P.M.C.C.S., 1889. See the report of his predecessor, Sapsford, in S.C.G., M.P.N., box 12/2, no.47 (30.11.1881).
56. As a Herald editorial noted in 1890, "It is a common thing to rejoice when the old rookeries are cleared away and commodious and substantial buildings are erected in their place. The substitution is a source of pride." S.M.H., 6.10.1890, p.4. See also ibid., 7.6.1882, 'Old And New Sydney' p.7; Gordon and Gotch, The Australian Handbook (1888), p.229; S.M.H., 25.12.1890, 'City Improvements' p.5.
purpose of demolishing dilapidated and unwholesome buildings.

Proposals for the resumption and beautification of whole City districts were given new direction by the approach of the year 1888, that of Sydney's centenary. In August 1887 a citizen calling himself M.P. wrote to the Daily Telegraph suggesting "that the best and noblest way of celebrating the origin of what must become a great world-power would be on January 26, 1888, to lay, with all due solemnity, the first stone of a new Sydney." M.P. suggested that the State resume 12 or 14 square miles of the city, and by renting out the resumed properties use the resulting profit for the systematic clearing and reconstruction of the whole of Sydney. Others quickly took up the general purport of M.P.'s scheme, their imaginations fired by the possibility of making Sydney "become in the next century... metropolis of Australasia", and soon the formation of a league was being mooted to promote the visionary scheme. Such an undertaking it was suggested would provide employment for thousands of those being thrown out of work by the onset of colonial recession, but discussion of the long-term benefits of the scheme for the more deprived among working people was lost amid vague talk of the mental and moral elevation achievable through an improved environment, or was shelved in favour of talk of city railways, broad boulevards, and a magnificent central square.59

M.P.'s suggestions and talk of a league were themselves quietly shelved after the Daily Telegraph devastatingly lampooned the project as one appealing more to "dilettanti theorists" than to practical people.60

58. See, for instance, the 1884 proposal by the Chief Justice, Sir James Martin, for "a clean sweep" of slum districts; S.M.H., 4.12.1884, 'The Workhouse Act Of 1866' p.6, by Martin; 8.12.1884, editorial p.7; and 10.12.1884, 'Cleanliness' p.7, by Henry Dangar. Parkes had also raised the subject in 1881; see below, Section IV.


60. Ibid., 14.9.1887, editorial p.4. Less ambitious than M.P.'s proposal was a plan to clear the blocks to the north of the new Town Hall and the Anglican cathedral of the old and ugly Central Police Court and Corporation markets, forming in their place a Centennial Square. The City Council had already proposed the site's partial redevelopment seven years earlier, and although the idea of combining the two sites to form a public square did not materialise, aldermen now went ahead and replaced the old markets with an imposing if somewhat extravagant pile named the Queen Victoria Markets; S.M.H., 12.1.1887, editorial pp.10-11; S.C.G., P. (9.6.1880), p.189; (14.9.1887), pp.511-2; (19.9.1888), p.695; (9.4.1889), pp.31-2; (21.5.1889), p.49; (17.2.1891), pp.296-7; also (9.6.1892), p.515.
On a more modest scale, however, the City Council had throughout the decade been promoting schemes for the architectural improvement of the City. In the absence of legal authority summarily to demolish buildings or resume land, the Town Hall continued as it had done during the 1870s to undertake street improvement schemes by negotiating privately with owners and financiers for the sale of land.\(^61\) The process was hampered, however, by the inflated prices demanded by landlords, and aldermen periodically sought legislative amendments giving the Corporation formal powers to borrow money and impose special rates, and to buy, resume and exchange lands for the purpose of widening and extending streets and for related City improvements.\(^63\)

Corporation officials also occasionally sought special laws for the resumption and remodelling of specific districts whose poverty and ugliness offended community sensitivities. In 1882 the City Surveyor, A.C. Mountain, wrote urging the rebuilding of the working class housing estate of Blackfriars, located to the far southwest of the City at the head of Blackwattle Bay. The low-lying estate was inundated with sewage and flood water after every shower of rain. The streets and lanes were narrow and mean, said Mountain, the dwellings were mostly small and valueless and many of them unfit for human habitation. Were the entire area resumed, reclaimed and offered for sale, he suggested, "a new and handsome 'quarter'" would be created from the existing unplanned and unpleasing district. The same proposals were repeated by Mountain on a more comprehensive scale during the following year, when he recommended to aldermen that they seek authority to borrow money and resume whole districts of narrow and crooked streets and nondescript buildings.


\(^{62}\) See D.T., 9.7.1881, editorial p.4; also Alderman Davies' mention of suggested improvements in Oxford Street, in 22.11.1882, 'The Municipal Elections' p.3; and the complaints by Mayor Burdekin in 4.10.1890, 'Interview With The Mayor' p.5; and Alderman Martin in S.M.H., 15.1.1891, 'Municipal Councils' p.6.

\(^{63}\) As well as Sapsford's Improvement Act Amendment Bill, draft legislation embodying proposals for the clearing and redevelopment of City lands was ordered to be prepared in 1883, 1887, 1890, and in 1896; see the 1883 Corporation Act Amendment Bill in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.17; also S.C.C., P. (1.3.1887), p.403; (14.6.1888), p.648; (23.10.1890), p.246; (26.3.1896), p.314. Note Mayor Riley's call for Parliament to give the Corporation power "to resume fever-stricken areas and places that are now hotbeds of disease"; in N.S.W. P.D., vol.26 (1887), p.1153.
Mountain's eyes turned especially this time to the Rocks district west of Circular Quay, which he suggested could be razed and re-subdivided.64

Mountain's proposals for the Rocks were not proceeded with further until early in the next century, when the outbreak there of bubonic plague prompted the N.S.W. government to resume the whole area.65 The suggested resumption of Blackfriars Estate did however receive further attention from the City Corporation. In 1884 Mountain and the City Engineer together proposed to the Town Clerk the area's wholesale demolition and rebuilding.66 For another six years the matter rested there, any further action complicated by the prolonged legal wranglings between City Council and the developers and residents of the estate concerning responsibility for drainage and the proper formation of the estate's illegally narrow streets and lanes.67 In 1890, however, the CHO was instructed to make a house to house inspection and assessment of the area and the City Surveyor asked to prepare plans, with a view to resuming and improving the district. When in March 1891 City aldermen at last agreed to form Blackfriars' streets they simultaneously ordered the City Solicitor to prepare a Bill for presentation to Parliament seeking special authority to resume the whole of the remaining low-lying parts of the Blackwattle Swamp district for the purpose of raising, draining and generally improving the locality.68

The extension of interest from the demolition of individual buildings or blocks of buildings to proposals for larger scale redevelopments tended further to reduce consideration of the needs of working people affected by the clearances. For just as discussions about the building of model working class housing in the City revolved around the problem of providing low cost accommodation on highly expensive land, so were plans for the

64. S.C.C., L.R., 1882, vol.4, no.1110 (City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 4.7.1882). E.N., 16.3.1883, editorial leader p.2.
65. See Kelly, A Certain Sydney.
66. S.C.C., L.R., 1884, vol.5, no.1408 (City Engineer & City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 6.8.1884).
67. See Correspondence relating to the Blackfriars Estate, in S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.64 (ordered to be printed 31.8.1883); also ibid., no.67 (n.d.).
68. S.C.C., P. (10.3.1890), pp.157-8; (8.5.1890), p.175; (12.3.1891), pp.309-10; also Report of the CHO, on the Sanitary Condition of the portion of the City bounded by George Street West, Bay Street, Black Wattle Creek, and William Henry Street, 9.5.1890, in P.M.C.C.S., 1890; and S.C.C., L.R., 1890, vol.4, no.970 (City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 16.5.1890). See Report of the CHO on Inspection of Unhealthy Areas (10.6.1892), in P.M.C.C.S., 1892.
future use of City lands proposed for resumption by large clearance schemes determined by the enormous expenditure involved. The prospect of heavy cost was the major stumbling block to the realisation of the plans for large scale redevelopments.

Neither central government, the City Council, nor private enterprise could countenance schemes necessitating heavy and unrecoverable financial outlays. In order to avoid making such losses the cleared land had to be designated for new uses that would so increase its resale value as to cover the initial acquisition cost plus the cost of demolitions. The work of demolition and rebuilding actually being carried out by private enterprise was in particular guided by the practical aim of "profitable speculation". It was, commented the Daily Telegraph, "an undertaking... which is governed by the laws of supply and demand." Supply and demand suggested to developers warehouses and business premises, and not financially unrewarding schemes for housing the City working classes in model tenement blocks leased at low rental. Corporation officials too, when in 1882 and 1884 they suggested resuming the Blackfriars Estate, had envisaged laying out the new allotments "on a liberal scale" and selling them as business premises "to recoup the outlay occasioned by the resumption". No mention was made of building improved homes for working people or even of resettling the district's existing residents.69

Community interest in the combining of proposals for large scale slum clearance with the goal of city improvement and beautification centred upon the continuing proposals for upgrading the City docks and for extending commuter and goods railway lines through the City to Port Jackson. Wharfage improvement along Darling Harbour was recommended as a practical means of remodelling the entire western City. Within Parliament, the whole matter was for years the subject of questions, debates, and special committees. And among the general community associations of businessmen were formed, a competition called to select the best possible scheme, and scores of public meetings held to discuss wharfage improvement and railway extension in the western City.70

69. D.T., 14.9.1887, editorial p.4. S.C.C., L.R., 1882, vol.4, no.1110 (City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 4.7.1882); also 1884, vol.5, no.1408 (City Engineer & City Surveyor to Town Clerk, 6.8.1884).

70. According to the D.T., there was "no portion of Sydney which requires improving off the face of the city more than the part which lies between Sussex-street and the waters of Darling Harbour," 7.2.1882, editorial leader p.2; note also the letter by 'Mercator' in S.M.H., 7.5.1889, 'A Visitor's Impressions Of Sydney' p.11; and the proposals
The problem was to persuade government to outlay the millions of pounds necessary to realise such schemes. Demolition of the "hundreds of very unhealthy and unsightly tenements" standing in the way of port and railway developments, and resale of the land for "shops, stores, warehouses, and residences that would be a credit and an ornament to this great city" would, said the M.L.A. for West Sydney, W.F. Martin, result in a profit of perhaps one million pounds. It was a claim repeated by the business association, the Wharfage Improvement Committee. John Young also, continuing to campaign for the adoption by government of his ambitious scheme for the resumption of a generous strip of the City waterfront all the way from Circular Quay to the head of Darling Harbour, maintained that the resale of land for business premises would cover the whole of the expenditure required by the project.\(^71\) The financial viability of Young's scheme was assured, enthused the *Daily Telegraph*:

Much of the land proposed to be resumed is not in its present condition worth £50 a foot, but were the suggested improvements carried into effect, every foot of land facing the [new] esplanade would be worth £700 or £800. By the carrying out of such works as these the Metropolitan Board of Land and Works in London made an annual profit of two million sterling, and in the same way Napoleon, while he transformed the appearance of Paris, enriched the Empire by many millions of francs. What is to hinder us from sweeping away the rookeries which disfigure our shores, and making a similar profit by the bargain?\(^72\)

The newspaper's sums made no provision for rehousing the evicted occupants of those rookeries. Proponents of "a new Sydney" would be content with a "sweeping away" of the alien and unsightly City slums. As for the displaced slum dwellers, out of sight was out of mind.

IV

Community support for large scale redevelopment projects was nevertheless tempered by continuing uneasiness at the prospect of excessive harshness and the violation of individual liberties entailed in the

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70. cont.

by Mountain and the town planner, Norman Selfe, for remodelling the Rocks, in *R.C.C.S.R., P.R.*, qu.466, p.223; qu.1281, pp.281-2. See Roberts, 'City Improvement In Sydney'.


72. *D.T.*, 14.12.1882, editorial leader p.2. The *D.T.* had used the same argument in September when it had again urged the resumption of "the ill-formed alleys and crooked lanes in the neighbourhood of Sussex-street and Miller's Point"; 12.9.1882, editorial leader p.2; also ibid., 23.5.1883, p.2.
compulsory demolition of private property. Misgivings centred, as they had done before the smallpox epidemic of 1881, upon the highly publicised visits by the Mayor and his officials to condemn insanitary buildings.

Even the Daily Telegraph, usually a strong supporter of Corporation tours "Among The Rookeries", remonstrated in mid 1884 that while it had no wish to dishearten the Mayor and his officers, yet "we are disposed to object to the apparent harshness with which the Act is administered". Suburban aldermen, on those occasions when proposals were made for the extension of the Improvement Act to their districts, frequently shied away from the suggestion, contending that in the City the law was proving "arbitrary" and "too harsh".

Doubts about possible Corporation excesses were suggested not so much by the resentment of the 'lower orders' being swept from their homes but by the much better articulated opposition of some property owners and those small scale traders and businessmen whose old and cheaply rented premises were frequently condemned by the Mayor along with other dilapidated housing. Within the City Council as a whole, which to its chagrin shared none of the authority over unwholesome buildings possessed by the Mayor and his officers, unhappiness among aldermen at what some felt was mayoral overzealousness came into the open in May 1886 when at a Council meeting Mayor John Young was advised to proceed with more caution, as people were being put to unnecessary inconvenience by his actions.

Robert Chadwick, a slum landlord resentful at the condemning of 15 tenement buildings owned by him in Liverpool Street, formed a Ratepayers' Association in opposition to the workings of the Improvement Act. A petition containing 670 signatures was presented to the Mayor in May 1886 by a deputation from the Ratepayers' Association, complaining at the

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73. Ibid., 19.6.1884, 'Demolition Of City Buildings', in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1; also S.M.H., 13.11.1883, editorial, in ibid. See the E.N.'s criticism of Mayor Harris for breezily ordering the demolition of an old hall used by the Salvation Army, "Utterly regardless of the good work which may here be nightly enacted"; 7.11.1883, 'City Inspection' p.4.
75. Appendix Nine; see also D.T., 19.6.1884, 'Demolition Of City Buildings', in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1.
76. The Echo defended Young, saying dismissively of the occupants of condemned buildings that "what they do is entirely their own affair." 12.5.1886, in ibid. See D.T., 28.6.1883, 'Municipal Association Of New South Wales' p.3 (Alderman Creer). Note also Mayor Harris' later jibe against Young, in ibid., 19.7.1889, 'Condemning City Property', p.3.
condemning of buildings by the Corporation and of the abuses which this practice had allegedly produced. Doubters within the City Council itself at Corporation slum tours were heavily represented at a protest meeting called by the Association in August. McIlhone, Playfair, J.D. Young, Meeks, and Lees all sat on the speakers' platform. Alderman Meeks declared "that a more tyrannical Act than the City Improvement Act was never in existence in any country in the world." His assertion was given greater weight by the authoritative comments of the meeting's chairman, Playfair, who as Mayor himself during the previous year "had had an opportunity of seeing behind the scenes, and many hardships were the result. In some cases solid buildings had been condemned." Playfair and J.D. Young both hinted at the corruption of Corporation inspectors by developers who sought to have properties condemned so that they might purchase them at reduced cost.

The uneasiness expressed during the meeting at the arbitrary use and perhaps even abuse of power by the Mayor and Corporation officials was again voiced later in the same month when summonses were issued by Mayor Young against proprietors who had disregarded Corporation notices condemning their premises as unfit for human habitation. In the Legislative Assembly it was alleged that the Mayor was overstepping his legal authority, and the secretary of the Ratepayers' Association wrote to the Herald calling upon "every right-minded citizen" to resist the Mayor's attempted flouting of the rights of citizenship and of property.

Chadwick, one of those summoned to the police court, stubbornly continued to let his 15 condemned tenement buildings, and after prolonged wranglings between himself, the City Corporation, and the Improvement Board, appealed in 1888 to the Supreme Court to declare the notices served against his buildings void. In August 1888, almost two and a half years after Chadwick's premises had first been condemned, the Supreme Court dismissed

Chadwick's appeal.  

Meetings of the Ratepayers' Association attracted slight public interest. Rather than being criticised for abuse of power, the City Council was increasingly charged with neglecting its responsibilities. As the 1880s progressed, disappointment at the actual extent of Corporation achievements soured the initial community enthusiasm for mayoral slum tours following the smallpox epidemic, and in turn lent encouragement to those doubts that had existed already before 1881 about the sincerity of the City Council's commitment to slum clearance. After the flurry of activity by Corporation officials to condemn unwholesome buildings during the first few years after the passing of the Improvement Act, activity declined throughout the remainder of the 1880s and into the 1890s, although building condemnations were again boosted between 1887 and 1891 by Mayors Riley, Harris, and Burdekin. During 1891 roughly one and a fifth percent of all buildings in the City were condemned by the City Corporation, as opposed to almost two and a half percent during 1881. Moreover less than half a percent of those condemned in 1891 were demolished, in contrast to some two percent a decade earlier.

In part this run down of effort stemmed from complacency that few unwholesome buildings remained to be dealt with. Parkes was uncontradicted when in December 1890 he asserted that "all, or the greater part" of dilapidated and insanitary buildings in the City had already been condemned and removed. The central reason for the run down, however, lay in the absence of any power actually to cause the demolition of unwholesome buildings. Reporting upon the condemning of buildings in February 1889 as unfit for human habitation, one newspaperman remarked with the surprised air of new discovery that "The Corporation, it appears, strangely enough have no power in themselves to order the places to be pulled down". Moreover as Chadwick's long defiance of Corporation orders highlighted, property owners upon realising the severely limited powers actually held by Corporation officials frequently ignored even those orders to vacate and

81. For instance, see D.T., 10.10.1882, 'City Omissions And Complaints', by 'A Citizen', in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1; also S.M.H., 7.5.1889, 'A Visitor's Impressions Of Sydney' p.11, by 'Mercator'.
82. By 1896 only 0.36 of all buildings were condemned during the year, and 0.15 percent actually demolished in that time. See Appendix Seven.
repair premises legally condemned as unfit for human habitation under the provisions of the Improvement Act.\textsuperscript{84} The City Council had in August 1881 approved an amending Bill prepared by Sapsford which would have permitted the Corporation actually to order the demolition of specifically insanitary as well as structurally unsound buildings, but as Sapsford complained in November 1881 and again late in 1883, Parliament did not adopt the measure.\textsuperscript{85}

The City Council meanwhile, perhaps swayed by the numbering among aldermen of so many large property owners, displayed a certain reluctance to enforce fully even those legal powers against unwholesome buildings that were available to them. Not until May 1882, some two and a half years after the commencement of Corporation actions against substandard tenements, was the first prosecution begun at the police courts against one of those disregarding orders to vacate or repair unwholesome premises. Just how infrequently prosecutions were mounted was indicated by the cries of outrage that greeted the issuing of summonses against Chadwick and others during 1886 for likewise disregarding Corporation notices. In September 1889 a man was given the choice by the courts of a 288 pound fine plus costs or three months in gaol for defying a Corporation notice, but as the Echo then commented, the City Council's authority thus to prosecute had certainly not generally been strained. Indeed, said the newspaper, it was a wonder that so many ramshackle tenements were permitted to remain occupied as long as they had.\textsuperscript{86}

Early in 1890 the Sunday Times dismissed the latest Corporation inspection tour of insanitary dwellings with the jibe,

As we have been all along pointing out, the same 'rookeries' were solemnly condemned year after year, and fresh credit given to the energy of the mayor each time for passing the stereotyped sentence, while not the slightest difference was made towards the buildings, which remained standing just the same.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{84} D.T., 9.2.1889, 'Some City Rookeries' p.6. See E.N., 29.10.1883, p.2; also S.M.H., 6.7.1889, editorial leader p.10. Corporation officials, discouraged, became less energetic in policing the Act. John Harris complained in 1890 "that he had condemned structures five years ago which were still standing and other evasions of the council's orders had been allowed to pass unnoticed." D.T., 26.2.1890, 'City Council' p.6.

\textsuperscript{85} S.C.C., M.P.M., box 12/2, no.47 (Sapsford, 30.11.1881); no.67 (Sapsford, 11.1883).

\textsuperscript{86} S.M.H., 30.5.1882, editorial p.5. Ibid., 11.9.1889, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.2. Echo, 11.9.1889, in Ibid.

\textsuperscript{87} Sunday Times, 12.1.1890, in Ibid.
Seeking a reason for Corporation inaction regarding nominally condemned buildings, the Evening News remarked during 1886 that City aldermen were undoubtedly "subjected to much pressure from the wealthy owners of these miserable tenements". Within Parliament it was claimed sweepingly in December 1890 that City aldermen themselves often had interests in City slum property, a charge which brought forth from Parkes the interjection that "Some of them own the most dangerous properties in the city!".

Doubts about the adequacy and sincerity of local government handling of slum clearance were encouraged by the Improvement Board in its continuing disputes with the City Council during the 1880s and early 1890s. The Board's often repeated allegations of jealousy and obstructionism by City aldermen, and the related calls by Board members for legislative amendments enabling them to demolish insanitary buildings and to undertake large scale redevelopment works, exerted a powerful formative influence upon newspaper opinion in Sydney. Corporation control of slum clearance in the City, all newspapers agreed at one time or another, was proving unsatisfactory.

Assessing the Corporation tours to condemn unwholesome buildings, one Herald editorial writer concluded soberly that "When broadly considered, how small appears the praiseworthy action of the MAYOR". A more systematic and comprehensive approach to slum clearance was needed, the Herald concluded. That was a task seemingly beyond the capacity of the City Council as it was then constituted to fulfil. It was predicted that large

88. E.N., 30.8.1886, in ibid., vol.1. N.S.W. P.D., vol.50 (1890), p.5894 (Waller and Parkes). When however Burton Bradley had similarly alleged in 1880 that two houses unfit for habitation in Sussex Street were owned by a City alderman, Seymour and Dansey inquired into the matter and found that the charge was unfounded; S.C.C., L.R., 1880, vol.9, no.2045 (Bradley, 3.11.1880, & attached memo by Seymour, 8.11.1880).

89. See the Board's annual reports in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.). Members maintained that probably the major reason for the Board's inactivity as an appeal tribunal was "the comparative inaction of the Mayor and the Corporation Officers... in dealing with buildings"; Ninth Annual Report (1888), p.353. See the nine letters in May - August 1891 between the Board and the A.B.C.N., arranging publication of a series of articles explaining the Board's dissatisfaction with the Improvement Act (S.A., N.S.W. 4/6888).

90. The Board had been "constantly thwarted by municipal jealousy, if not by actual opposition." D.T., 15.1.1884, editorial p.4. See also S.M.H., 18.8.1887, editorial leader p.6; A.B.C.N., 16.1.1892, "Editorial Notes And Comments" pp.54-5.

91. S.M.H., 13.6.1882, editorial p.5; also D.T., 7.6.1882, editorial leader p.2; S.M.H., 13.2.1884, "Re-Housing The Poor: An Unfamiliar Aspect" p.4.
scale improvement works would be hampered by conflicting parochial jealousies among aldermen and their constituents in the different wards, and would also no doubt create dissatisfaction and opposition among ratepayers and vested interests which "would require a very courageous Mayor to withstand." What was needed, the Herald suggested, was the appointment by government of a special commission to tackle systematically the work of slum clearance and city improvement in Sydney.\(^92\)

The idea of state intervention had been given new meaning by Sir Henry Parkes in the aftermath of the smallpox epidemic in 1881, when in the course of a long and wide-ranging speech the Premier mentioned that the Government

have already taken serious steps in the direction of entirely reconstructing portions of this city. (Applause.)... so that we may wipe out, as with a sponge, many of the lowest parts of the city. (Loud applause.) Those parts which are now the hotbeds of fever and pestilence we intend to sweep away, and use the sites... to permanently beautify the city.\(^93\)

Parkes' comments received wide publicity.\(^94\) The Premier's words were given added relevancy by the assertions of local government "remissness" in Britain, both as regards working class housing conditions and slum clearance, which were reported in Sydney following release of the Bitter Cry. Reports of likely government intervention to "abolish the rookeries of London" were also widely circulated.\(^95\)

Misgivings as well as enthusiasm were however expressed concerning the direction of debate in the mother country. The Herald suggested tentatively that both Liberal and Conservative politicians appeared "somewhat overardent to multiply the functions of Government, and this cannot be done without limiting the area of private enterprise, or coming into competition with it."\(^96\) Laissez-faire prejudices joined with misgivings concerning the possibilities for patronage and corruption posed


\(^96\). Ibid., 7.1.1884, editorial p.6; and see 23.1.1884, editorial leader pp.8-9.
by increasing parliamentary intervention at the local level, and with reservations that greater state involvement, by sapping municipal initiative, would also undermine the mixed social and political virtues of local self-help. Although accepting the criticisms of local government administration provoked in Britain by the disclosures of the Bitter Cry, the Herald cautiously judged Chamberlain's scheme for municipal action to relieve the housing conditions of the poor preferable to the Pandora's box of state intervention seemingly implied by Salisbury's comments.97

The Fairfax evening daily had already voiced similar misgivings while assessing Parkes' speech of 1881. Although advocating City improvement schemes upon a grand scale, the Echo had then cautioned that

The Government is scarcely in a position to go into commercial speculation and buy up great blocks and rebuild and sell at a profit. This could be done in Paris; but our system of government hardly admits of it. It is principally in the way of control, of supervision,... that it can exercise its influence.98

The same point was made again, this time by the Daily Telegraph, in 1887 when it rejected M.P.'s "new Sydney" scheme. Parliamentary regulation of problem areas in the urban environment was necessary, said the newspaper, but "the idea of the Government stepping forward and anticipating private enterprise in the rebuilding of Sydney is a preposterous one."99

Opposition to the concept of government appointed experts dictating policy in a democratic country contributed to the failure by Parliament in 1885 to pass a general Public Health Bill incorporating powers for large scale slum demolition and redevelopment projects. The Bill had been introduced to the Legislative Council during the Stuart Ministry by the Attorney General, W.B. Dalley. Both men were interested in working class housing, the Premier having contributed financially to the Model Lodging House Company and Dalley lending his patronage to the proposed 1885 Sydney Workmen's Improved Dwellings Company.100 Their interest was reflected in the Bill's revolutionary proposal not only to demolish slum districts, but

97. Ibid., 10.1.1884, 'News By The English Mail Via Suez' p.5; also 21.1.1884, 'Mr. Chamberlain's Plan For Re-Housing The Poor' p.5. Salisbury was in fact himself concerned to counter radical calls for greater state interference in the wake of the Bitter Cry, and the Royal Commission that he had appointed to inquire into working class housing concluded that no drastic legislative changes were necessary; Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p.229.
98. Echo, 30.12.1881, editorial leader p.1; and note also Olsen, The Growth, p.53.
to rehouse their residents.\textsuperscript{101} A new and more powerful General Board of Health was to replace the existing body set up during the 1881 smallpox emergency, and each municipality in the colony was to be organised under it as a local board of health. Local boards were to be empowered to declare insanitary districts "unwealthy areas" and prepare plans for their resumption and improvement. Once approved by the General Board of Health, the plans and estimates were to be forwarded to the Minister for Public Works who would then resume the land. Implementing and financing such schemes would subsequently become a task for the local municipal council, which was to be given 30 years over which to spread repayments for improvement works.\textsuperscript{102}

The idea of an all-powerful centralised authority, independent of popular control, dictating policy across the country was however anathema to some politicians, and with only a minority of politicians in any case present to debate the Bill during its second reading, further consideration of the measure was adjourned.\textsuperscript{103} The Bill remained shelved when the parliamentary session ended. The new session brought with it a new Ministry. Amid the parliamentary in-fighting and great fiscal debates of the mid 1880s, sanitary reform was neglected. When next legislation embodying general slum clearance provisions came before Parliament, late in 1890, the question of administration by general board or local aldermen again produced controversy, but the question of rehousing the poor had been subordinated to simple slum demolition and City architectural adornment.\textsuperscript{104}

Parliamentary opposition to the 1885 Public Health Bill had been based upon the possible anti-democratic inroads of centralised nominee control. State intervention in City improvement schemes was further discouraged by

\textsuperscript{101} The Bill was planned to avoid "the arbitrary way in which the improvement of... Paris was carried out by Baron Haussmann"; moreover, by rehousing working people "on the same spot if possible, or at any rate in an equally convenient spot,... the great difficulty... of housing workmen near the work they have to do will thereby be obviated"; \textit{N.S.W. P.D.}, vol.17 (1885), p.559 (Mackellar). The initiative was copied from the Cross Acts, and the Bill as a whole was based upon the English Public Health Act of 1875; \textit{Ibid.}, p.362 (Dalley).

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.364-5 (Dalley).

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.561 (Dalley); 494-5 (Stewart); 496-501 (Macintosh). A special meeting planned by City aldermen to discuss the draft legislation was decided to be not after all necessary; see \textit{S.C.C.}, P. (14.10.1885), p.135.

\textsuperscript{104} See Chapter Sixteen.
the problem of financing such undertakings. Despite Parkes' foreshadowing in 1881 of definite state action in the field of city improvement, when Parliament reassembled in 1882 the Governor's opening speech contained only fleeting reference to the matter, and that at the very end of a long list of other ministerial policy initiatives.

What held back Parkes and his parliamentary colleagues from actually committing government to directly resuming and redeveloping city lands, let alone embarking upon rehousing the City poor, was the continuing problem of cost. In his banquet speech of December 1881 Parkes had promised city improvement "without the cost of a single penny to the public exchequer". The outcry which was then developing, however, at the well over 700,000 pounds in compensation claims demanded from the Government for its resumption of land along the west of Darling Harbour for a goods railway, warned many in Parliament that such a pledge was impossible, and strengthened the doubts in many minds concerning the wisdom of trends towards greater government involvement in community life.

Parliamentary shock and anger at the extent of the Darling Harbour compensation claims made perhaps inevitable the disappointment of those persons who subsequently proposed large scale state resumption of city lands for slum clearance. The allegations in Parliament of "gross and inextricable blunder" by Government in its handling of the land resumptions, echoing the charges made three months earlier in Copeland's censure debate against the Parkes Ministry, perhaps strengthened the Premier's wariness following the smallpox epidemic about involving himself

105. See W.F. Martin's disgruntled account of the Government's rejection in 1881 of his proposal for the state's resumption of slum districts in his West Sydney electorate; D.T., 8.4.1882, 'Railway Extension' p.3.
106. N.S.W. P.D., vol.7 (1882), p.3. Parkes was soon afterwards out of office, but once again Premier in 1889, he requested plans for a railway to run through western Sydney and terminate in the Rocks. The route, he stipulated, should "run through the slums, and thus make the improvement of the city and the city railway accompany each other." Roberts, 'City Improvement In Sydney', p.171.
109. This notwithstanding the care with which the promoters of such schemes laboured over their sums to demonstrate the profitability of their proposals.
in further state interference with community problems. Parliament as a whole was after the Darling Harbour compensation claims disinclined to act upon the criticisms made in the general community of City Council performance in the field of slum clearance. Successive governments likewise placed only the lowest priority upon requests for amending the Improvement Act to make the Improvement Board a powerful state instrumentality determining building standards, condemning unwholesome structures, and resuming City lands for large scale urban improvements.

Long inoperative as an appeal tribunal, and because of its lobbying for powers of its own to regulate building design and undertake large scale slum clearance schemes, also boycotted by the City Council, the Improvement Board sank increasingly into obscurity during the later 1880s and the 1890s. Aldermen during the City elections in December 1891 described the Board as useless and recommended that it be wound up. In August 1894 the City Council adopted almost without comment a resolution calling for the Improvement Board's abolition. Parliament meanwhile progressively reduced the Board's administrative staff and its government funding, and in December 1894 the Reid Ministry, swayed by the Board's own admission of its forced inactivity and the subsequent "almost useless" expenditure of public money on it, accepted calls in the Legislative Assembly that further assistance be stopped. The decision meant that Board members had been "practically suspended". After one and a half decades of limited and waning usefulness, the Improvement Board ceased to function.

Four years earlier, in the course of their continuing efforts to demonstrate the advisability of more comprehensive building regulations being enacted and transferred to their control, members of the Improvement

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110. The hints of scandal in connection with the compensation claims and which for a time fastened upon Thomas Garrett, a sometime supporter of the Ministry and ex-president of the Improvement Board, would hardly have eased Parkes' discomfiture; see the debate introduced by Reid on 29.11.1881, in N.S.W. P.D., vol.2 (1881), and note Garrett's denial of the allegations, p.2252; also D.T., 10.8.1882, editorial leader p.2.


Board had early in 1890 been provided with fresh ammunition with which to argue the deficiencies of existing City Corporation controls. A coroner's court had in early January named Corporation officials as being "guilty of great negligence", following two deaths caused by the collapse of a hotel condemned three years earlier by the Mayor.\textsuperscript{115}

The incident sparked a uniformly hostile assessment by the daily press of Corporation achievement. Editorials in the \textit{Daily Telegraph} and the \textit{Herald} announced that the legislative amendments so long sought by the Improvement Board to grant it expanded powers could no longer be delayed.\textsuperscript{116} The equally prolonged failure by Parliament to approve those extended powers, together with community hesitancy concerning the desirability of any form of central government intervention in the field of city redevelopment, gave prominence to another and more widely acceptable approach to the question of how best to administer comprehensive building controls and improvement works in Sydney. The only ultimate solution to the sort of municipal incapacity revealed by the hotel's collapse was announced by the \textit{Australasian Builder and Contractor's News} as being a "complete Metropolitan reform" through "the creation of a Metropolitan Board of Works for the whole of Sydney and the suburbs".\textsuperscript{117}

The support that had been expressed in the late 1870s, while Parliament was framing the 1879 City Corporation Act, for a metropolitan-wide municipal authority modelled upon the Metropolitan Board of Works in London, continued and strengthened through the 1880s and into the 1890s. Growing dissatisfaction with the Board of Works in London, culminating in 1887-9 with that authority's replacement by a new local government apparatus, the London County Council, had no parallel in Sydney. Support for the concept of a metropolitan board of works reflected the widespread enthusiasm expressed in Sydney for the London Board's wholesale replacement of slum districts by schemes for city adornment and beautification.\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{115} S.M.H., 8.1.1890, 'Inquests' p.11; also D.T., 6.1.1890, 'The Collapse Of An Hotel' p.5. Note the Improvement Board's reaction in \textit{ibid.}, 7.1.1890, 'The City Improvement Board's Explanation' p.5; S.M.H., 8.1.1890, 'Meetings' p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, 7.1.1890, editorial p.6; D.T., 8.1.1890, editorial leader p.4; also S.M.H., 8.1.1890, editorial p.6.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} A.B.C.N., 23.5.1891, 'Editorial Comments' p.396.
  \item \textsuperscript{118} \textit{For instance, see D.T., 14.12.1882, editorial leader p.2; Henry Dangar, 'Cleanliness', in S.M.H., 10.12.1884, p.7; E.N., 30.8.1886, in City Improvement Board newspaper cuttings, vol.1; D.T., 23.8.1887, 'A New Sydney' p.6, by 'A Petersham Owl'. The Board was...}
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Similar achievements, it was predicted, could be just as successfully realised by a like body in Sydney. The *Daily Telegraph* suggested that the nucleus for such an authority existed in the moribund Improvement Board. The idea of a new Sydney-wide municipal authority upon the lines of the London Board of Works or its successor, the L.C.C., was seriously considered within the Town Hall itself.

The suggestion was given considerable impetus by the increasingly obvious consequences of the years of ill-regulated city expansion in the suburbs. Commentators were struck by the anomaly that whilst in the City, Corporation officials busied themselves condemning uninhabitable buildings, beyond its boundaries "speculators and land jobbers are covering the suburbs with ill-ventilated, badly built, and unwholesome houses".

The existing arrangement of local government in Sydney fragmented metropolitan effort into a mass of petty parochial concerns, said the *Herald*. The newspaper blamed a similar confusion of effort in the City of London for producing the evils described by Mearns in the *Bitter Cry*. But just as the City of London appeared to the *Herald* as an example of the drawbacks of local city government, so the wider metropolis seemed to afford a solution to those difficulties. A new metropolitan board of health and works upon similar lines to the Metropolitan Board of Works in London was needed, argued the newspaper, so as to remedy the amateurism and parochialism of local councils in Sydney. Addressing City aldermen in

118. cont.

required by law to rehouse working people, a directive that the London authority regarded as an impediment to its activities, and which it sought to have watered down; see Wohl, *The Eternal Slum*, pp.132-3; 136-7.

119. See *D.T.*, 30.12.1881, editorial p.2; 7.6.1882, editorial leader p.2; *ibid.*, 12.9.1882, p.2; *ibid.*, 10.5.1883, p.2; *S.M.H.*, 20.2.1892, editorial leader p.8.

120. *D.T.*, 30.12.1881, editorial p.2; also *A.B.C.N.*, 5.3.1892, "Editorial Comments" p.180; and the letter by James Green, co-editor of the *A.B.C.N.*, in *S.M.H.*, 1.6.1891, 'A Metropolitan Board Of Works' p.6, by 'J.G. DE LIBRA'. Note also the suggestion by the Colonial Treasurer that the City Mayor be added to the Board, which would then be given complete control over insanitary buildings; City Improvement Board memorandum, 15.7.1890 (S.A., N.S.W. 4/6888).


122. *ibid.*, 28.7.1882, editorial leader p.2; also 17.12.1883, editorial p.7.

123. *ibid.*, 2.12.1885, editorial leader p.11; also 22.12.1883, editorial p.11.
August 1894 upon means of remedying the present "confusion of authorities within the metropolitan area", the Herald applauded the system of county councils adopted in the mother country and hailed the new L.C.C. as providing "our best exemplar... for local government under representative forms". The recent redevelopment work undertaken by the City Council in Moore Street was regarded by the newspaper as giving confirmation to that claim.124

124. Ibid., 22.8.1894, editorial p.6; see also 18.8.1887, editorial leader p.6; 1,12.1891, editorial pp.6-7.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN
Moore Street, 1890

In the early morning of 2 October 1890 a fire started in the large printing premises of the publishers, Gibbs, Shallard, and Company. The building was situated in the middle of a central City block between Pitt and Castlereagh Streets, a little more than a stone's throw away from the General Post Office. The blaze spread rapidly, engulfing closely packed warehouse and office buildings nearby. For a time the whole block to Hunter Street seemed doomed. Firemen ultimately halted the conflagration from spreading far northwards, and the flames did not extend south beyond the lane known as Moore Street, directly opposite where government was constructing Martin Place from resumed land along Post Office Street to show off the handsome facade of the G.P.O.¹

People flocked the next day to survey the damage,² Newspapers quickly dubbed the fire the worst conflagration yet experienced in the Australian colonies. The heart of Sydney's commercial centre was burnt out, it was said.³ Reaction to the fire was not however one of unrelieved gloom. A "capital opportunity" had been created for a grand scheme of City improvement.⁴ In Parliament, in the City Council, and in letters to the newspapers, it was suggested that the Government resume the gutted site and so extend to Castlereagh Street the handsome new street they were already constructing outside the G.P.O.⁵ Alternatively, the City Corporation might choose to undertake the work.⁶ A fine new boulevard could be run eastwards all the way to Macquarie Street and

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2. Echo, 3.10.1890, 'The Great Fire' p.5; E.N., 3.10.1890, 'Calamitous Fire' p.6; D.T., 4.10.1890, 'The Fire' p.5.
3. E.N., 2.10.1890, editorial p.4; Echo, 2.10.1890, 'The Great Fire' p.4; S.M.H., 3.10.1890, 'The Great Conflagration' p.5; D.T., 3.10.1890, editorial leader p.4; S.M.H., 6.10.1890, 'Summary Of News For Europe' p.7.
4. D.T., 3.10.1890, 'A Suggestion In Connection With The Fire' p.6; and ibid., editorial leader p.4.
5. N.S.W. P.D., vol.48 (1890), p.4256 (Dowell, 2.10.1890); p.4285 (Dowell, 7.10.1890); D.T., 3.10.1890, 'Discussion In The City Council' p.6 (Alderman Withers), and letters by Frederick Moorhouse and John Hinchcliffe in ibid.; letter by H. Tennant Donaldson in S.M.H., 3.10.1890, 'The Great Conflagration' p.5.
Parliament House. It could even be extended to Woolloomooloo Bay, and to Darling Harbour in the west.7

General interest centred upon the more specific and immediately relevant suggestions for resuming the fire-damaged frontages along Moore Street. Supporters of the proposed street improvement explained that by resuming these lands while they were still in a ruinous condition, compensation payments would be far less than would normally be the case for central City real estate. Here, for the first time, was an improvement scheme that was not rendered impractical by the enormous cost of resuming City land. To take full advantage of this "golden opportunity" however, it was necessary to act urgently, before property holders began to rebuild.8 Only the Government possessed authority to resume private property.

Linking the post office improvements with the Moore Street scheme "would create the grandest city square in Australia", predicted the Daily Telegraph. In an editorial leader carrying the general heading "City Improvement", the newspaper remarked that there were many unsightly spots in Sydney requiring removal by "beautification" schemes such as that now proposed for Moore Street.9 Public enthusiasm for the scheme underscored the general triumph of architectural adornment as a convenient community solution to the undesirable public health, social, and aesthetic consequences of City slums. Urging the Government to extend the new Martin Place through the fire-damaged properties opposite, one letter writer to the Herald argued that "Many readers here must be perfectly aware of the wonderful transition from degradation to the beautiful, as carried out by the Metropolitan Board of Works in London". Another correspondent noted that by redevelopment schemes in London similar to the one now being contemplated for Moore Street, "many miles of new streets now occupy, to the public advantage and comfort, spots that were hideous".10

The potential for urban redevelopment to benefit working people rather

8. D.T., 17.10.1890, 'Public Meeting At The Town-Hall' p.3; 4.10.1890, 'The Continuation Of Post-Office Street' p.5; also resolution by the City Improvement Board, dated 15.10.1890 (S.A., N.S.W. 5/3211).
9. D.T., 6.10.1890, 'Post-Office-Street Extension' p.3. Ibid., 13.10.1890, editorial leader p.4. Ibid., 3.10.1890, editorial leader p.4; also S.M.H., 6.10.1890, editorial p.4; E.N., 8.10.1890, editorial leader p.4.
than to mask social problems with a thin veneer of ornamental stonework passed almost unmentioned. One writer supporting the proposed resumptions did suggest to the Herald that land could be set aside to build public baths for labouring families living in areas such as the Rocks. Every other scheme so far proposed, he said, had promised "all for the bloated plutocrats and nothing for the people." His was a lonely protest. The financial attractiveness of the Moore Street scheme lay in the frontages of the new improved street being resold for more profitable purposes that would reimburse the cost of resumption and redevelopment. The Government had in carrying out the G.P.O. improvements resumed enough land to ensure a surplus for resale as new frontages, the Daily Telegraph pointed out, and such a scheme could not fail to be profitable. The same strategy, it was remarked, had already been undertaken successfully on a much larger scale by the London Board of Works and in Europe.

Support for the Moore Street improvement, however, was neither unqualified nor complete. Looking at the possible wider implications of the proposal, the Herald cautioned that it would not be wise "to extend hastily and incautiously the functions of the Government" so as to grant the state responsibility for "Haussmanising the city." That was a task properly belonging to a local Sydney authority, but without reforms in local city government after the example of the Metropolitan Board of Works or the new L.C.C., the newspaper's editorial staff were doubtful about the likely results of such an undertaking.

The Herald's lack of enthusiasm for direct state interference in the redevelopment of city lands was shared by Sydney Burdekin, then the City Mayor. Burdekin's immediate reaction was to dismiss the Moore Street

11. Letter by 'Looking Forward' in ibid.
12. For instance, see letters by Donaldson and Moorhouse in ibid., 3.10.1890, 'The Great Conflagration' p.5; D.T., 6.10.1890, editorial p.4; 17.10.1890, 'Public Meeting At The Town-Hall' p.3; also E.N., 17.10.1890, 'Post Office-street Extension' p.3 (Pilcher, Knapp, John Young); letters by Watson Martin and Fullwood in S.M.H., 11.10.1890, 'Proposed Extension Of Post Office-Street' p.10.
13. D.T., 3.10.1890, editorial leader p.4; ibid., 13.10.1890, p.4; and see the letter by 'Always Onward' in S.M.H., 9.10.1890, 'Proposed Extension Of Post Office-Street' p.10. It had been predicted that the G.P.O. Approaches Improvement Bill would be implemented without costing the public a shilling, and might even produce "a considerable surplus." N.S.W. P.B., vol.39 (1889), pp.2933 (D. O'Connor), 2935 (Dibbs).
scheme as enormously costly and of dubious utility. Scepticism concerning the priority of improvement work along Moore Street while "wretched slums" yet remained elsewhere in the City was shared by the Premier, Parkes, who announced that

He could put his finger on a number of spots where improvement was more urgently required than at Moore-street... There were many parts of the city which were... gradually becoming intensified seedbeds for disease and very injurious to life, and the best purposes of ornamentation and accommodation would be served by these places being destroyed and good streets made out in their place, and with the good streets good buildings.

Parkes was also perturbed by the wider implications for private property resulting from the clamour for government resumption of City land. General intervention in City beautification schemes was in any case "not legitimately the business of the Government", said Parkes, perhaps remembering the muddle at Darling Harbour a decade earlier.

A week after the Moore Street fire the Minister for Works announced that Cabinet had resolved against extending the G.P.O. improvements to Castlereagh Street. A disappointed Improvement Board, which had hoped that a government go-ahead with the Moore Street scheme would have resulted in it being at last granted the general authority "to initiate... this... [and] many other much-needed improvements", urged a reconsideration of Cabinet's decision. Parkes was unresponsive, saying that the task was one for the City Council and not for central government. Others in Sydney were also pointing out that the Moore Street project could be just as effectively performed by the City Council if it were vested with the necessary authority, and on 9 October Alderman Manning put forward a resolution calling for the City Corporation to be so empowered. When
Manning's motion was debated on 14 October, aldermen unanimously agreed that Parkes be approached to grant the City Council specific powers enabling the reconstruction of Moore Street from the new Martin Place as far as Castlereagh Street. 21

Much more wide-ranging possibilities were also mentioned during the debate. The centre of Glasgow had been rebuilt by city aldermen, said Manning, and the Birmingham corporation had also "bought up a great tract of slums and narrow passages in the heart of the city, and there laid out that now beautiful avenue called Corporation-street". The time was now opportune in Sydney, he said, "for the council to put in its claim as the proper authority to deal with such matters." 22

Manning drew particular attention to Chamberlain's claim that the leasing out of resumed and redeveloped city lands would make Birmingham the richest borough in the kingdom. Other aldermen suggested that in Sydney also, the resale of frontages would cover all the expenses of resuming Moore Street and perhaps even produce "a million of money" in profit. 23 That possibility in the opinion of some aldermen raised worrying ethical considerations. To resume more land from property owners along Moore Street than was actually required for the street improvement, simply in order that by its resale the public be saved expense, was according to Burdekin "a thoroughly bad and vicious principle". 24 Manning suggested instead the adoption of "the principle of 'betterment'" used in city improvement schemes in North America and adopted also by private developers in Sydney and Melbourne. 25 Only sufficient land for the street widening would be resumed, and the cost of the improvement would be shared between the nearby property holders who would benefit most from the scheme, and a general rate levied from the whole community.

The matter of funding had still not been properly resolved when a deputation from the City Council called upon Parkes several days later.

21. See the S.C.C. debate in D.T., 15.10.1890, 'The Extension Of Post-Office-Street' p.6. Aldermen were then completing plans for another ambitious improvement scheme, the construction of the elaborate Queen Victoria Markets; ibid., 31.10.1890, 'George-Street Markets' p.4.
22. Ibid., 15.10.1890, 'The Extension Of Post-Office Street' p.6.
23. Ibid. (Manning, Withers, Hardie); also E.N., 15.10.1890, 'Municipal' p.2.
Several aldermen suggested that sufficient land be resumed to enable expenditure to be recouped through the resale of the new street frontages. Burdekin countered by advocating that the betterment principle be used to finance the undertaking. Parkes, his qualms about arbitrary interference with private property reassured by the specific nature of the proposal and by Burdekin’s comments upon the small extent of the resumptions needed, replied that the request seemed a simple and “a very reasonable one”.26 Manning promptly moved in the City Council that a Bill be prepared to confer upon the council powers of resumption of land and widening, extending and improving streets in the city of Sydney, to resume land in the locality of said streets, to re-sell same, and to borrow money for the aforesaid purposes.

The motion was carried without dissent.27 Suggestions for the resumption and resale of land had prevailed despite Burdekin’s objections. More significant still, authority to redevelop Moore Street had been extended to allow general improvement schemes across the City.

The Herald saw the intended legislation as being linked to the broader question of local government reform. A lead editorial pondered “whether by entrusting such extensive powers to the Council that body would be raised to a higher standard of trustworthiness and efficiency”. Or alternatively, might not the interests of city government be better served by imitating the promising example of the L.C.C., and creating “upon a broader foundation” a new “metropolitan municipal authority with large resources at its command, and with powers equal to its need?”28 Such considerations were judged as irrelevant by journalists on the Daily Telegraph. Legislation of any kind meant delay, and insofar as Moore Street was concerned, time was not available if the land was to be purchased at reasonable cost before rebuilding there began.29

The Daily Telegraph’s misgivings seemed to be borne out as November passed and the end of the parliamentary session approached without the promised legislation being introduced by Parkes. Burdekin had in fact presented the City Council Bill to the Premier in early November,30 but

26. Ibid., 17.10.1890, 'Extension of Post-Office-Street. Deputation To The Premier' p.3; E.N., 17.10.1890, 'Extending Post Office-Street' p.3; and see the criticism of Burdekin’s stance in D.T., 20.10.1890, editorial leader p.4.
Parkes had baulked at the modifications made by aldermen since their meeting with him in mid October. The Premier's objections stemmed in part from the general powers which aldermen were now claiming but most of all from the clauses relating to the resumption and resale of private property, and he ordered a redrafting incorporating the betterment principle instead. Land resumptions in Post Office Street for later resale as frontages to the new Martin Place had yet to be finalised, as property owners dissatisfied at the compensation offered to them produced "almost unprecedented legal difficulties" for the Government. Parkes had no wish to lay himself open to later controversy by passing a general law based upon similar resumption provisions.

On 3 December 1890 Parkes asked leave in the Legislative Assembly to bring in a Metropolitan Street Improvement Bill, "to authorise and enable the Municipal Council of Sydney to carry out street improvements within the said city... and... to make special provision in respect of a projected improvement of Moore-street". The measure was hedged around with safeguards against arbitrary misuse. The City Council was to be empowered to resume lands only after obtaining government approval in each instance. Notification of such approval was to be published in the Government Gazette and in two daily newspapers for a period of four weeks, and plans showing details of the proposed improvement were to be made available at the Town Hall for public inspection. Ratepayers were to have 60 days in which to petition the Governor to revoke consent for the proposed scheme.

Improvements were to be financed under the betterment principle. The City Council was empowered to borrow up to 250,000 pounds each year, to be repaid over 100 years at an annual rate of interest not exceeding four percent. Property owners in a designated "improvement area" surrounding the redevelopment scheme and who would benefit most financially from the

31. Accounting for the delay in tabling the document, Parkes explained that "in the judgment of the Government, the bill is a little too comprehensive; it gives too unrestricted powers to the municipality, and I am endeavouring to have it in some way recast"; ibid., p.5208 (Parkes); also p.5435 (Parkes).


33. N.S.W. P.D., vol.47 (1890), p.3114 (Bruce Smith); also vol.50 (1890), p.6437 (Bruce Smith); and see D.T., 7.10.1890, 'The Proposed Extension Of Post-Office-Street' p.5.

34. N.S.W. P.D., vol.50 (1890), p.5870 (Parkes); see the clause by clause description of the Bill in L.A. committee, pp.6308-10, and Suttor's summary of the Bill in the L.C., p.6542.
improvement work were to pay half the project's cost. Appeal to the Supreme Court might reduce the property owners' share of the expense to one quarter. The ratepayers generally were to pay one half of each project's cost, to be levied by a special street improvement rate. Although the measure still retained the wider improvement powers proposed by Manning and his colleagues on the City Council, there was not one provision in it nor was there a word spoken in the Legislative Assembly regarding assistance and rehousing for displaced tenants. The elimination of unhealthiness and poverty from the City was to be a physical process by brick, mortar, and stone, rather than by social and sanitary reforms, philanthropy, and education.

The proposed legislation passed smoothly and rapidly through the Legislative Assembly. In the Legislative Council, too, general support in principle was expressed for the wideranging scope of the measure, and for the comprehensive slum clearances which it foreshadowed. W.H. Suttor, who as Vice President of the Executive Council had undertaken to guide the measure through the upper chamber on Parkes' behalf, pointed out the Bill's relevance in view of those "portions of the city in which any number of old rookeries still exist. At the 'Rocks', for instance, as well as in other parts of the city, it is necessary to carry out improvements." The L.C.C. and the Board of Works had "revolutionised London" by rebuilding some of "the worst quarters" in the city, said R.B. Smith, and he added enthusiastically that the measure now before them conferred similar powers.37

To vest such wideranging improvement powers with the City Council was regarded by some Legislative Councillors with misgiving. Some predicted that the Corporation would be too extravagant. Others, while applauding the "magnificent improvements" that had been achieved in London, questioned whether the City Council in Sydney possessed sufficient "good taste and discernment" for equivalent powers to be entrusted to it.39

35. Ibid. The rate was originally proposed to be fixed at one halfpenny in the pound, but was raised by the L.A. to a maximum of one penny; pp.6310-2.
36. As Parkes remarked during its second reading, "there seems to be scarcely any objection to this bill." Ibid., p.6308.
37. Ibid., p.6620 (Suttor). Ibid., pp.6552-3 (Smith); also p.6621 (Webb). Note also the comments on p.6555 (Simpson); p.6559 (Sir Wm. Manning); p.6562 (Garran); p.6563 (Dangar, & interjections by Simpson & Suttor).
38. Ibid., p.6554 (Charles). City ratepayers were already overtaxed, said Lucas, p.6545; also p.6549 (Davies).
39. Ibid., pp.6563-4 (Dangar); also p.6549 (Davies).
The problem was said to be the "localism" which characterised municipal affairs. A metropolitan-wide board of works "or some outside body which is not influenced by the ratepayers or by local considerations" was needed for the proposed measure to be implemented satisfactorily, said R.E. O'Connor. That Parliament, by emphasising the localised nature of municipal responsibilities when framing municipal laws, was itself at fault for making local government ill-equipped for undertaking widescale works, was overlooked by politicians.40

Doubts about the City Council and its likely treatment of the rights of property were dismissed by other speakers.41 Greater controversy arose over the betterment principle. The policy adopted under the G.P.O. improvement scheme, of appropriating sufficient land to subsidise development costs through the resale of new street frontages, was damned by proponents of the betterment principle as "immoral" and "quite indefensible".42 Present in the chamber however was Sir William Manning, the prominent jurist, politician, and the Chancellor of Sydney University, who had been one of the greatest supporters of the Martin Place scheme. Manning now defended the resumption and resale of frontages, while viewing the new betterment principle with suspicion. The untried system would probably entail much expensive litigation and might, he warned, be found in practice to contain "a great deal of injustice".43 Other speakers sided with Manning, warning of the unknown and possibly undesirable consequences for property holders within the proposed improvement area and for ratepayers generally.44

It was unfortunate, said Legislative Councillors, that so comprehensive a Bill, raising new and complex questions about administration and funding, should be "brought before the House in such a hurry at the fag-end of a

40. Ibid., p.6557 (R.E. O'Connor). See the discussion of City municipal government in Part II above.
41. N.S.W. P.D., vol.50, pp.6552-3 (R.B. Smith); p.6556 (Simpson); p.6559 (Sir Wm. Manning); p.6561 (Webb); pp.6623-4 (MacLaurin). It was pointed out that property rights were amply safeguarded in the Bill; p.6542 (Suttor); p.6550 (MacLaurin); pp.6555-6, 6627-8 (Simpson).
42. Ibid., p.6551 (MacLaurin); also p.6557 (R.E. O'Connor); pp.6561-2 (Webb).
44. For example ibid., vol.50 (1890), p.6543 (Trickett); pp.6545, 6547 (Lucas); p.6548 (Macintosh); p.6549 (Davies).
The cause of this unwise haste was the need to act quickly on Moore Street, said R.E. O'Connor. An obvious solution presented itself to him. After he had debated the matter privately with Dr Andrew Carran, former editor of the Herald, the two men resolved to propose amendments stripping the measure of its general provisions and confining it specifically to Moore Street.

The suggestion accurately matched opinions already expressed by previous speakers, and Manning promptly put his considerable influence behind the amendment proposals. Garran explained that only the Moore Street plan was at all urgent, and that by first applying City Council administration of the betterment principle to this project alone, Parliament would have in the Martin Place and the Moore Street schemes two experiments to guide them in framing more general legislation. After protracted debate O'Connor's amendment proposals prevailed, when a crucial division was carried by 21 votes to 13. The Metropolitan Street Improvement Bill became the Moore Street Improvement Bill. With the parliamentary session at its end, the amendments were accepted in the Assembly without debate. On the following day, 20 December 1890, the Moore Street Improvement Act received royal assent.

In an editorial leader that same day the Herald, closely reflecting the opinions of Andrew Carran, explained that the Metropolitan Street Improvement Bill was not a measure to be carried out at a gallop. It embodied a new principle, and under healthy conditions the introduction of that principle and the extent of its application would have been the subject of careful consideration and full debate.

The new Act was a valuable companion measure to the Martin Place legislation, said the newspaper, providing "for the experimental
introduction of a system under which extensive improvements might be executed without unreasonable delay. The Daily Telegraph had a different interpretation. Ignoring the expressions of support that had been voiced for the City Council in the Legislative Council by both opponents and supporters of O'Connor's amendments, the newspaper concluded that by changing the measure "from a general to a particular one", the chamber had "decided thereby that the City Council were competent to deal with the widening of Moore-street, but it was not desirable that they should have similar powers over the rest of the city."

City aldermen reacted angrily to the reported slight and claimed that the Legislative Council had "completely destroyed the value of the measure." The Herald's response was unsympathetic. Commenting upon rumours that aldermen would ignore the Moore Street Act in protest at the amendments, the newspaper condemned any such reaction as "unreasonable" and "childish". The statute was intended not only as a trial of the betterment principle, but as a test of the City Council's "adequacy and competency for the works and duties it is established to perform". Were the City Council to refuse this present work, the newspaper predicted, "All that would happen would be the calling into existence by Parliament of a larger, more comprehensive body for the work."

The City Council's finance committee met on that same day, 8 January 1891, and Alderman Manning moved that the Moore Street Improvement Act be immediately implemented. At the conclusion of a protracted debate extending over two meetings, nine aldermen were in favour of Manning's motion and nine against it, and Burdekin gave his casting vote in favour of the resolution in order that it might be referred to the full City Council for further discussion. The Mayor pinpointed the source of aldermanic

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52. S.M.H., 15.1.1891, 'Municipal Councils, Sydney' p.6 (Meeks; also Taylor & M. Chapman). John Harris maintained that the L.C. had altered the measure so as to protect the owners of unwholesome properties (ibid.); such a reaction had been predicted in the L.C. by opponents of the amendment; see N.S.W. P.D., vol.50 (1890), p.6533 (R.B. Smith); also p.6550 (MacLaurin). Burdekin said that the L.C. "had treated the Corporation very badly." Echo, 3.2.1891, 'Moore-Street' p.6; also S.M.H., 9.1.1891, 'Municipal Councils, Sydney' p.3 (Dean, Manning).
53. Ibid., 8.1.1891, editorial p.4. The Herald's comments were criticised in turn by the E.N., 9.1.1891, editorial leader p.4.
misgivings when he explained that the Bill, which had been framed by aldermen to enable general improvements in the City, to be financed by the resale of frontages, had been "completely altered" by Parliament and so curtailed in its application by the Legislative Council "that now it was only possible to carry out improvement so far as Moore-street was concerned, and on a totally different basis" to that originally envisaged.54

Aldermen expressed themselves strongly in favour of large scale City improvements, and while some suggested that the present measure be accepted as the first instalment of "greater powers" in the future,55 others expressed regret and even resentment that their request for more general authority had been rejected.56 Michael Chapman, who probably knew more of City slum districts than any of his colleagues, announced forthrightly that it was absolutely necessary for the City Council to be empowered to undertake works of improvement, and to clear away the rookeries of the city. There was a great need for such works in many places... In regard to Moore-street, he did not think the work was required, and he would be no party to sanctioning it so long as so many of the streets and alleys remained as they are. (Hear, hear.)57

Manning and a number of other aldermen calculated that the widening of Moore Street could still be carried out under the revised provisions of the Act without imposing a heavy extra burden upon the ratepayers.58 The betterment principle was however vigorously assailed by aldermen who favoured reselling land to recoup outlay, as had been proposed in the original Corporation Bill.59 Speakers denied that they were motivated by ward jealousies and "localism". Objections stemmed rather from the unfairness of the whole City being taxed for the benefit of "a few who owned property facing the proposed street", since there was no prospect under the limited powers granted to the City Council of other districts.

55. Ibid. (Riley, also Taylor); ibid., 9.1.1891, p.3 (Riley, & see Manning).
56. Ibid., 15.1.1891, p.6 (Lees, Martin, Harris); Echo, 4.2.1891, 'The Widening Of Moore-Street' p.7 (Hart).
58. S.M.H., 9.1.1891, 'Municipal Councils. Sydney' p.3 (Manning, Hardie, Playfair); ibid., 15.1.1891, p.6 (Lees, Martin, Jeaneret).
59. For instance, see ibid., 9.1.1891, p.3 (Playfair, Riley); ibid., 15.1.1891, p.6 (Riley). It was objected also that the untried betterment system would entail much expensive litigation; ibid. (Taylor, Meeks, Fowler).
being compensated by having improvement works of their own.60

In seconding Manning's resolution for the new statute's implementation, Alderman Jeanneret warned that unless the Moore Street project was successfully completed by the City Council, Parliament would never grant the more comprehensive powers that had been asked for. It was a consideration that was repeated during later discussions as aldermen digested the warning of possible local government reform made by the Herald.61 Alderman Meeks however sounded a note of defiance. "They had been told", he said,

that if they did not pass this resolution the Government would abolish the council and establish a board of works. If that was intended as a threat, they might as well at once hand everything over to the Government.62

Meeks' resentment at being bullied into enforcing what he saw as an unworkable and unjust law, and the resentment of his colleagues at being denied the powers they had requested, highlighted the disabilities the City Council laboured under because of its powerlessness to undertake major new initiatives in City administration independently of Parliament.

The Herald's judgement of City Council proceedings, however, was harsh and uncompromising. The tied vote was "most unsatisfactory", and raised the question whether "the reform of the municipal government of the metropolis" was needed before improvement works could be undertaken effectively.63 The dissatisfaction of the newspaper's editorial staff with existing municipal administration was reinforced by signs of emerging ratepayer resistance to the Moore Street scheme upon hearing the predictions made in the City Council of likely increased taxation under the betterment principle.64

Notwithstanding the Herald's misgivings that narrow "ward feeling"65 among ratepayers and aldermen would defeat the project, Manning's motion was narrowly passed by 10 votes to nine when the full City Council met to

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60. Ibid. (Lees); ibid., 9.1.1891, p.3 (Manning). Ibid. (Harris, also Hart); ibid., 15.1.1891, p.6 (Meeks). It was objected that the only people likely to benefit from the scheme "were a syndicate who held property in the neighbourhood." (Harris, Rainford, H. Chapman).
61. Ibid., 9.1.1891, p.3 (Jeanneret, & H. Chapman). Ibid., 15.1.1891, p.6 (e.g. Lees, Martin, Jeanneret).
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., editorial p.4, and compare with E.N., 14.1.1891, editorial p.4.
64. See Echo, 23.1.1891, 'Municipal Movements' p.4; E.N., 28.1.1891, editorial p.4; Echo, 4.2.1891, 'The Widening Of Moore-Street' p.7 (Aldermen Meeks & Rainford).
debate the issue on 3 February. When on 25 February a deputation of Moore Street landholders called on Burdekin to request a definite statement of intention by the City Council, the Mayor replied that the land would be definitely resumed and that Corporation officials were already preparing the necessary plans. After further delays over arranging the details of the scheme, City aldermen on 28 July 1891 passed a resolution formally resuming the designated lands. Authority was simultaneously given for raising debentures to the extent of 250,000 pounds to partially finance the scheme. By mid December the assessors' valuations of the resumed lands were completed, and the compensation owing to property holders ordered to be paid.

With the work of redevelopment thus well in hand, a long Herald editorial spoke hopefully of more general improvement projects and of the possible granting of "larger powers" to the City Council. The writer was however careful to emphasise that if the City Council bungled the present undertaking, and if the Moore-street enterprise proves a failure, it will confirm the opinion which many hold, that improvement of the city on a proper scale is beyond the competency of the City Council, embarrassed as it is by the distracting influence of the ward system; and that a Metropolitan Board of Public Works... will be a necessity for the work.

Problems had in fact already arisen in implementing the betterment principle, and in September 1891 the City Council had approved an amendment Bill for presentation to Parliament. Difficulties had been met in the arrangements for levying a special improvement rate, and the amendment

66. S.C.C., P. (3.2.1891), p.293; E.N., 4.2.1891, editorial p.4; Echo, 4.2.1891, 'The Widening Of Moore-Street' p.7. J.D. Young immediately gave notice of his intention to move that the resolution be rescinded, but on 17 February, "after a brief but warm debate", Young's motion was defeated; ibid., 18.2.1891, 'The City Council' p.6.
67. Ibid., 25.2.1891, 'Moore-Street' p.7.
69. Ibid. (28.7.1891), pp.376-85. In May 1892 the Mayor read to aldermen a cablegram received from London that tenders submitted for the Moore Street improvement debentures had exceeded the target to reach 285,900 pounds; ibid. (10.5.1892), pp.497-8.
71. S.M.H., 1.12.1891, editorial pp.6-7. The creation of a metropolitan board of works was also being urged by critics of government's handling of the Martin Place project outside the G.P.O.; see for instance A.B.C.N., 29.8.1891, 'Editorial Notes And Comments' p.180; N.S.W. P.D., vol.56 (1891-2), pp.4510-1 (Macintosh); A.B.C.N., 4.6.1892, 'Editorial comments' p.388.
enabled the cost to be borne instead from the general City revenue.\textsuperscript{72}

The Bill passed smoothly through both Houses and quickly became law. In the Legislative Council however, misgivings were expressed concerning the financial burden which the betterment principle was placing upon the citizens. The payments levied upon property owners within the improvement area were likewise claimed to be proving enormous.\textsuperscript{73} The validity of both complaints was accepted in February 1892 by a lead editorial in the Herald. Encouraged by the recent successful sale of allotments at Martin Place, the newspaper predicted that in future redevelopment works the betterment principle would "give place to the system of resumption and resale", and announced that

It is not improbable that there is not a quarter of Sydney in its unimproved parts but, under a properly-empowered Metropolitan Board of Works, could be swept of buildings, be rearranged, and improved on a scale of grandeur commensurate with the noble situation of the city, and be sold again without any loss.\textsuperscript{74}

That proposal was given renewed relevancy when midway through 1892 the City Council was again embarrassed by the discovery of another shortcoming in the Moore Street Act. As Sir William Manning had warned in Parliament, the betterment principle did not provide satisfactory controls over new buildings erected along adjoining frontages of the finished street. Land resumptions left a "mere ribbon of land", some seven feet in depth, in private hands at the corner of Moore and Castlereagh Streets, and which promised to be totally out of keeping with the nearby improvements.\textsuperscript{75}

Seeking to turn the incident to its own advantage, Improvement Board members again approached the Government to grant them full control over building sanitation and redevelopment work in Sydney, warning of the "terrible cholera scourge" then spreading in cities overseas. Commenting upon the Board's representations, the Herald criticised the City Council for mismanagement and Parliament for "slovenly inattention" to its legislative responsibilities. The incident stood in the newspaper's judgement as yet one more example of the ill consequences resulting from


\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., pp.4510-2 (R.E. O'Connor, Macintosh, Dangar).

\textsuperscript{74} S.M.H., 20.2.1892, editorial leader p.8. Resumptions for the Martin Place scheme had cost some 528,000 pounds, and the resale of land was now estimated by the Herald to have so far returned approximately 458,000 pounds; ibid., and N.S.W. P.D., vol.53 (1891-2), p.1161 (Suttor).

the absence of a "comprehensive system of metropolitan government". An
editorial writer expressed pessimism concerning the likelihood of
Parliament's establishing a new metropolitan municipal authority to
undertake more general works of slum clearance and city beautification in
place of the City Council and "that melancholy shade of legislative good
intentions", the Improvement Board. For that welcome event, he concluded
sarcastically, "we shall have to wait till... a remote, and we trust more
fortunate and better legislated for, posterity." 76

76. Ibid., pp.1-2. S.M.H., 12.7.1892, editorial p.4.
CONCLUSION

The City Corporation had, by the start of 1892, ordered the repair or demolition of well over 2,500 insanitary buildings, the equivalent of half the buildings then standing in Balmain, the most populous suburb in Sydney. Approximately 1,900 buildings had been pulled down at the Corporation's orders since 1879, 600 more than the total number of buildings in the City's Brisbane Ward, or in the fashionable railway suburb of Burwood. By the end of 1896, the total number of buildings condemned since 1879 was approaching 3,000, over 2,000 of which had been demolished. In November of that year the colony's first Public Health Act belatedly granted the Corporation firm authority to cause the demolition of buildings unfit for human habitation. The initiative in further slum clearances was however taken not by the City Council but by the N.S.W government which, following the outbreak of bubonic plague in Sydney early in 1900, resumed the Rocks and the whole of the Darling Harbour waterfront east to Sussex Street.

Rehousing working people remained a secondary consideration. The 1900 epidemic excited some middle class interest in reforming slum dwellers, as well as in simply demolishing insanitary areas. That interest was paralleled within the N.S.W. Labor Party, which had been formed in 1891. In 1912 the state's first Labor government legislated to enable itself and the City Council to resume land and erect workmen's dwellings. While the N.S.W. government embarked upon laying out the Daceyville model working class suburb near Botany Bay, the City Council, then also controlled by the Labor Party, between 1914 and 1927 completed four housing projects for working people in Pyrmont, Woolloomooloo, and Chippendale. Changing political fortunes for Labor, war, and depression, halted further City Council initiatives in the provision of working class housing until the late 1950s. State projects likewise were practically halted by non-Labor governments after 1924. It was not until 1941, when the McKell Labor Government launched the N.S.W. Housing Commission, that public housing began to assume its present-day significance.

The administration of city health had been reorganised under the

1. Appendix Seven.
supervision of government-appointed experts by the Public Health Act of 1896, which expanded the existing Board of Health and designated municipal bodies across the colony as local health authorities, which would report to the central Board and be subject to its directions. The statute set down for the first time comprehensive regulations dealing with the notification and combatting of infectious diseases. Local authorities were at last empowered to impose sanitary regulations for common lodging houses. Additional clauses complemented existing laws relating to house sanitation and nuisance removal, unwholesome and adulterated food, dairies and cattle slaughtering. Responsibility for water and sewerage had already been taken over from the City Council by the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, composed of government appointees and elected City and suburban aldermen, which was established in 1888.

City Corporation public health administration, so often disparaged during the nineteenth century, was further blackened in reputation by the sanitary disclosures in 1900 which accompanied the bubonic plague. Within the City Council during the 1890s and onwards into the next century, opinion inclined increasingly in favour of proposals to overcome existing municipal inadequacies by forming a new and larger unit of metropolitan local government. Support in the community generally for a new metropolitan municipal council found expression in the loose movement calling for a Greater Sydney. The plans put forward by different governments for the formation of a single metropolitan municipal government all foundered however.

5. 60 Vic., no.38 (Part II). The Board continued to oversee municipal health administration until 1972, when the Department of Public Health was reorganised as the N.S.W. Health Commission; see Larcombe, The Stabilisation, p.136.
6. 60 Vic., no.38 (Parts 4-10).
8. The Chief Medical Officer of the Government, Ashburton Thompson, wrote to the Premier drawing attention to the years of "maladministration" by the City Council; Kelly, A Certain Sydney, n.p.
9. The City Council was abolished between 1928-30 and replaced by a second City Commission, preparatory to the planned establishment of a new metropolitan-wide municipality; Larcombe, The Advancement, pp.41-60. In 1948 Glebe, Darlington, Redfern, Paddington, Newtown, Erskineville, Alexandria, and Waterloo were joined to the City; ibid., p.121. The City was however reduced to its pre-1948 boundaries by the state Liberal government in 1967, in order to break Labor's long domination of the Town Hall; ibid., pp.138-58.
Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

In December 1890 while the Legislative Assembly was still considering the City Council's Metropolitan Street Improvement Bill before sending it on to the Upper House, the Herald had devoted a lead editorial to considering why "so much complacent satisfaction" was derived from the time wasted in devising vast paper schemes for city improvement. The newspaper recalled Parkes' foreshadowing in 1881 of comprehensive plans for slum clearances, and suggestions by the new Sydney "enthusiasts" in 1887 for the state to resume much of the metropolis. Equally appropriate examples, had the writer thought to mention them, were the suggestions for low-cost working class model dwellings in the City and for improved workmen's commuter services to the suburbs, both of which were periodically aired in Sydney, only to fall as seed upon stony ground. It was in the nature of all human things, the writer conceded, for there to be a large margin between the grand concept and its realisation, but in Sydney, he suggested, the margin "is certainly excessively wide." 12

A major reason for the lack of achievement in undertaking large scale works of City redevelopment was the lack of authority possessed by the City Council for embarking upon such projects, and the consequent dependence of City aldermen upon an otherwise preoccupied and slow to respond Parliament.

In the Legislative Assembly in July 1900, Michael Chapman's brother Henry responded to criticisms of his colleagues in the City Council for not demolishing insanitary slum districts by pointing out that the Corporation had never been granted the necessary power:

They have applied for such power over and over again. When the Moore-street Improvement Bill was before the House, and we could have been granted power to resume sufficient land to pay for the whole cost of making that street, what were we allowed to do? Simply to purchase 100 ft. to make that street. There it is today, an unsightly street,... all because we could not get power that would have enabled us to resume sufficient land on both sides and sell the frontage and recoup ourselves the whole cost of the improvements. 13

Funding and cost-recovery, as Chapman's complaints made plain, were another crucial consideration tending against large scale slum clearances in Sydney.

Both, in a wider sense, were expressions of the differing perceptions among people which shaped image- and decision making in the community. Differing opinions, the result of differing perspectives upon events and places, produced conflicting assessments of priority and value, of means and ends, success and failure, of the balance between freedom and power and the division separating the justifiable from the unjustifiable. The subsequent flux of conflicting ideas and prejudices within and between Parliament, the City Council, and other groups and interests in the Sydney community, entailed deadlock and frustrating delay in City redevelopment. It also shaped the developing emphases of City improvement proposals and of public health administration generally. There was no deliberate master plan for the redevelopment of Sydney. The large measure of slum clearance achieved during the nineteenth century began as the result of an assumption, mistaken yet widely held in the community, that the City Council had been granted authority by the 1879 Improvement Act to demolish insanitary dwellings. The subsequent development of Corporation mayoral tours to condemn some thousands of unwholesome buildings was largely the outcome of the rivalry between City aldermen and the Improvement Board as the latter, swayed by the frequently ill-founded community criticisms of local government achievement in the field of public health, claimed that Parliament had intended themselves to undertake responsibility for building regulation and slum clearance.

The development and content of slum clearance undertakings highlighted the extent within the community of ignorance and fear, self-centredness and prejudice, the abundance of misconceptions and false assumptions and the paucity of reason and of humanity. Just as rational assessments of the City Corporation, of its successes and failings and the degree of sincerity and competency among its personnel, were frequently abandoned for all-embracing ridicule and condemnation, so were many thousands of the City working classes commonly stigmatised as the debased fringe-dwellers of society, living with a minimum of participation in normal community life. It was a prejudice suggested by the cultural arrogance of the middle classes, and by their attempted rationalisation of continuing poverty. It was sustained by the sense of self-importance evident within all individuals. The persistent nineteenth century anxieties about city health and slum-bred disease gave momentum to the stereotyping of the lower orders, and found practical expression in the self-interested demands for the erasure of the unwholesome slum environment. Those demands often contained little or no acknowledgement of the disruptive effects upon the City working classes of large scale demolitions, or interest in their
rehousing in improved dwellings.

There were in reality no stereotype figures in Sydney, neither villains nor heroes. The corrupt alderman, the exploiting landlord, the slum dweller who was too intent on drink and debauchery to care for his or her children, were in general fictions. There were undeniably many names that claim attention as possible heroes: Aaron, Graham, Dansey, and Seymour, Chapman, Palmer, and Riley, Professor Smith and Bradley and Sir Alfred Stephen, Dean Cowper and the City missionaries. The claims of all however falter, their good intentions blemished by idiosyncracies learned from the society in which they lived, and which in turn mirrored the inadequacies of man's attempts to organise his social life. Arthur Miller, addressing a present-day audience, said of the past that "one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday." To pity is to recognise wrongs and inequalities which before went unrecognised, and from pitying there emerges the hope, however slight, of a slow amelioration in the continuing imbalances of human society.

### Table 1.1: Metropolitan population increase, 1846-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W. (1891) (boundaries)</th>
<th>City of Sydney</th>
<th>Census suburban estimates</th>
<th>Census metropolitan estimates</th>
<th>approximate suburban totals</th>
<th>approximate metropolitan totals</th>
<th>metropolitan as % of N.S.W total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>154,205</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,832</td>
<td>45,190</td>
<td>6,954</td>
<td>45,312</td>
<td>29.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>191,099</td>
<td>44,240</td>
<td>9,684</td>
<td>53,924</td>
<td>9,684</td>
<td>53,924</td>
<td>28.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>252,640</td>
<td>53,358</td>
<td>15,815</td>
<td>69,173</td>
<td>29,578</td>
<td>82,936</td>
<td>32.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>350,860</td>
<td>56,840</td>
<td>36,846</td>
<td>93,686</td>
<td>38,949</td>
<td>95,789</td>
<td>27.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>503,981</td>
<td>74,566</td>
<td>60,324</td>
<td>134,890</td>
<td>63,210</td>
<td>137,776</td>
<td>27.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>751,468</td>
<td>100,152</td>
<td>120,832</td>
<td>220,984</td>
<td>124,787</td>
<td>224,939</td>
<td>29.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1,123,954</td>
<td>107,652</td>
<td>275,631</td>
<td>383,283</td>
<td>280,192</td>
<td>387,844</td>
<td>34.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: N.S.W. Censuses 1851-91, and Coghlan, General Report, p.120.

The suburban population totals given in each census are under-represented, those in censuses before 1861 listing only a scattering of "Sydney Hamlets", and later returns only including those suburban districts formally incorporated as municipal areas. Revised figures prepared by Coghlan in the 1890s are also inaccurate, since the N.S.W. Statistician added together population totals based upon municipal areas with other totals from much wider census districts. I have attempted to correct Coghlan's figures, and have traced a number of non-incorporated suburban districts by analysing the census population statistics by parish and electoral district. Many omissions still remain, and the figures should therefore be regarded only as approximations. Suburban expansion, spilling over administrative boundaries, does not lend itself to easy classification, and many peripheral suburban communities are consequently still overlooked in Coghlan's and my own figures. For example, if the rapidly growing population of the industrial district around Granville and Auburn, situated on the railway line between Parramatta and Sydney, is included in the 1891 figures, the total metropolitan population rises to over 394,000.
Table 1.2: City wards - by population and as a percentage of the City total, 1851-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gipps</td>
<td>6,862</td>
<td>7,444</td>
<td>7,220</td>
<td>8,969</td>
<td>10,983</td>
<td>10,845</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15.51</td>
<td>13.95</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>12.05</td>
<td>10.99</td>
<td>10.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>6,220</td>
<td>6,931</td>
<td>6,304</td>
<td>7,269</td>
<td>7,219</td>
<td>4,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>9.76</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>4.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>13,211</td>
<td>5,915</td>
<td>8,154</td>
<td>11,075</td>
<td>12,347</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.22</td>
<td>24.75</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>10.95</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,061</td>
<td>10,134</td>
<td>15,780</td>
<td>19,177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>13.61</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>5,456</td>
<td>5,415</td>
<td>5,154</td>
<td>5,258</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>4,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>4,997</td>
<td>5,123</td>
<td>4,513</td>
<td>7,945</td>
<td>8,083</td>
<td>7,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>10,959</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>15,880</td>
<td>18,792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.43</td>
<td>16.12</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>17.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>8,268</td>
<td>14,694</td>
<td>25,537</td>
<td>29,727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.66</td>
<td>29.74</td>
<td>25.57</td>
<td>27.79</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>44,240</td>
<td>53,358</td>
<td>56,394</td>
<td>74,423</td>
<td>99,857</td>
<td>106,938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: N.S.W. Censuses, 1851-91.
The discrepancy between the City totals in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 is accounted for by the small population living on the islands of Port Jackson.

Table 1.3: Metropolitan population distribution, 1846-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>38,358</td>
<td>44,240</td>
<td>53,358</td>
<td>56,840</td>
<td>74,566</td>
<td>100,152</td>
<td>107,652</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Km</td>
<td>6,614</td>
<td>9,211</td>
<td>5,425</td>
<td>19,034</td>
<td>44,348</td>
<td>86,584</td>
<td>161,727</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Km</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>4,204</td>
<td>9,247</td>
<td>25,539</td>
<td>92,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Km</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>3,107</td>
<td>3,858</td>
<td>23,298</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>45,312</td>
<td>53,924</td>
<td>70,061</td>
<td>80,487</td>
<td>131,268</td>
<td>216,133</td>
<td>385,367</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>45,312</td>
<td>53,924</td>
<td>82,936</td>
<td>95,789</td>
<td>137,776</td>
<td>224,939</td>
<td>387,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ibid.
The above figures form only a crude guide, because of the difficulty of tracing non-incorporated metropolitan areas in the census tables. The outermost districts especially are under-represented.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5 Km</th>
<th>10 Km</th>
<th>15 Km</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1851</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nth Sydney</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1861</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
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<td>800</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
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<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nth Sydney</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1871</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Darlington</td>
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</table>

Source: Ibid.
Table 1.5: The city landscape. City wards and selected suburbs, 1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stores, offices, etc, as % of total buildings</th>
<th>all buildings</th>
<th>concrete</th>
<th>adobe</th>
<th>iron weather</th>
<th>un-specified</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>pise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gipps</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>29.02</td>
<td>67.63</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
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<td>46.73</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>78.05</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>89.26</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
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<td>Denison</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>11.42</td>
<td>79.85</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>43.56</td>
<td>19.35</td>
<td>76.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9.05</td>
<td>87.86</td>
<td>0.55</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12.15</td>
<td>83.81</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>89.34</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City total (including Port Jackson)</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>83.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
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<td>78.34</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>20.32</td>
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<td>43.69</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>37.90</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>55.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Dock</td>
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<td>55.69</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>37.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
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<td>3.47</td>
<td>88.63</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>39.53</td>
<td>15.43</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>43.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstville</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>49.19</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>59.02</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>31.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>72.03</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>25.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>80.73</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>85.73</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>13.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nth Sydney</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>56.20</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>83.04</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>54.02</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>79.35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>18.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>67.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>68.29</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
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<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>36.50</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>69.32</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>19.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban total</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>68.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: N.S.W. Census, 1891, pp.544-5.
Table 1.6: Persons per inhabited City dwelling, 1851-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gipps</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denison</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (excluding islands Pt. Jackson)</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>5.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: N.S.W. Census, 1851-91.

The 1871 Census table on p.xiv is inaccurate, basing its calculations on total dwellings rather than inhabited dwellings. It is also wrong in assuming that the 1861 figures represent total dwellings. The 1861 Census report, p.10, explicitly says the figures exclude untenantable and unfinished dwellings, shops and offices.

Table 1.6 should be used only for tracing changes within each City ward. Attempts to draw comparisons from the table between City wards are misleading because of the differences in building sizes between each district.

Table 1.7: City population density per acre, 1851-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>persons per acre</td>
<td>15.36</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>19.42</td>
<td>25.79</td>
<td>34.67</td>
<td>37.16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: ibid., 1851-1901.
Table 1.8: House sizes per City ward, 1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1-2 rooms % rank-</th>
<th>3-4 rooms % rank-</th>
<th>5-6 rooms % rank-</th>
<th>7-10 rooms % rank-</th>
<th>11+ rooms % rank-</th>
<th>Indefinite %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gipps</td>
<td>6.13 (4)</td>
<td>33.50 (3)</td>
<td>29.70 (6)</td>
<td>21.36 (3)</td>
<td>9.10 (4)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>14.83 (1)</td>
<td>35.47 (2)</td>
<td>23.85 (7)</td>
<td>11.77 (7)</td>
<td>13.91 (2)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>3.29 (7)</td>
<td>33.43 (4)</td>
<td>45.85 (1)</td>
<td>12.17 (6)</td>
<td>4.51 (6)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.55 (5)</td>
<td>40.76 (1)</td>
<td>42.50 (3)</td>
<td>8.76 (8)</td>
<td>2.95 (8)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>9.27 (2)</td>
<td>20.11 (8)</td>
<td>16.37 (8)</td>
<td>23.66 (2)</td>
<td>28.40 (1)</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>8.83 (3)</td>
<td>30.30 (5)</td>
<td>32.36 (5)</td>
<td>18.74 (5)</td>
<td>8.50 (5)</td>
<td>1.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>1.68 (8)</td>
<td>23.39 (7)</td>
<td>35.84 (4)</td>
<td>26.75 (1)</td>
<td>10.64 (3)</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>3.40 (6)</td>
<td>27.26 (6)</td>
<td>45.69 (2)</td>
<td>19.18 (4)</td>
<td>3.54 (7)</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City average | 4.51 | 30.77 | 39.43 | 17.69 | 6.68 | 0.90

Source: N.S.W. Census, 1891, p.545

The 'indefinite' category includes gaols and asylums.
APPENDIX TWO

Major difficulties confront any attempt to reconstruct the social composition of nineteenth century Sydney. Analysis must be based upon the occupational statistics contained in N.S.W. census tables. Frustrating gaps in these sources inhibit work on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Sydney. Census records for 1881 were destroyed by fire in the following year. Data in the census of 1891 and again in 1901 are arranged in tables which give metropolitan totals only, so rendering comparisons between City wards impossible.

The only census records available that are both usable and relevant to my period of study are those of 1871 and, to a lesser extent, 1861. Even here, analysis is hampered by the form in which the tables are presented. The terminology employed in the census classifications is ambiguous. To take one example, the employees of small-scale independent blacksmiths and of other artisans such as cutlers or locksmiths are grouped together with the employees of large foundries and engineering works. Moreover, as the example indicates, the classification used is a crude industrial one. As Geoffrey Crossick has pointed out,

It is not a sociological classification, for it in no way distinguishes social strata except where they can be confidently said to coincide with occupational groups. In particular, it is difficult and often impossible to separate employer from worker, clerk from professional, and skilled from semi-skilled and unskilled within a given trade or industry.1

While agreeing with Gareth Stedman Jones that where one is confronted with faulty data, approximations are better than no analysis at all, I share Crossick's misgivings concerning the value of trying to impose upon already imprecise census classifications by industry the further impediment to accuracy of social rankings of one's own.2 To avoid the risk of compounding inaccuracies by attempting to retabulate Sydney occupational statistics,3 I have retained the original census headings. These have been modified slightly so as to highlight such divisions in social structure as are suggested by the nineteenth century industrial classifications themselves. For example, subclass three of the

3. See the attempted ranking of the 1871 Sydney census returns according to social status in Fisher, 'Life And Work In Sydney', pp.41-2.
'Commercial' classification in the 1871 census, consisting of general dealers, hawkers, and shopkeepers, has been combined with subgroup four in the 'Personal Offices' classification, which is composed of fishmongers, fruiterers, and others engaged in the distribution of food and drinks. Similarly, professions like surveying, engineering, and architecture have been linked together with law, medicine, and the clergy, whereas I have grouped schoolteachers in a separate heading together with vague related occupations like "professors" and teachers of music. My aim throughout has been to preserve as much as possible such precision as is contained in the original census classifications, while preventing the headings from becoming unmanageably cumbersome. More extensive reworking of the census material would in my opinion produce tables of dubious value either as finished statements of fact or as tools for further analysis.

My occupational classifications are as follows:

1a commercial and financial - auctioneers, bankers, brokers, merchants.
1b retail and distribution - general dealers, hawkers, shop keepers, fruiterers, milkmen, fishmongers.
1c clerical and assistants - merchants' and bankers' clerks, shop assistants.
2 hotels and accommodation - hotelkeepers and assistants, lodging house keepers.
3 miscellaneous occupations - carriers, cabmen, actors, musicians.
4a self-employed tradesmen in the superior arts - clockmakers, engravers, jewelers, printers.
4b hired workmen and apprentices.
5a self-employed tradesmen in metal and engineering - blacksmiths, founders, locksmiths, cutlers, boilermakers.
5b hired workmen and apprentices.
6a self-employed tradesmen in wood and furniture - cabinet makers, carpenters, wheelwrights, shipwrights.
6b hired workmen and apprentices.
7a self-employed tradesmen in the building industry - builders, bricklayers, brickmakers, masons, potters.
7b hired workmen and apprentices.
8a self-employed tradesmen in leather and skins - bootmakers, curriers, fellmongers, saddlers, tanners.
8b hired workmen and apprentices.
9a self-employed tradesmen in miscellaneous trades - barbers, tailors, french polishers, hatters, ropemakers, paperhangers.
9b hired workmen and apprentices.
9c needlewomen - dressmakers, milliners, seamstresses, sewing machine workers, shirtmakers, staymakers.
10 production of food and drinks - butchers, bakers, brewers, confectioners, dairymen.
11a shipping officers.
11b seamen and wharf labour - ballastmen, lightermen, lumpers, stevedores.
12 unskilled labour - bill stickers, fencers, quarrymen, sawyers, labourers.
13 mining - miners in precious metals and coal.
14a agricultural proprietors - sheep farmers, graziers, market gardeners, florists, nurserymen.
14b agricultural hired labour.
15a government service - civil officers.
15b police.
15c defence.
16a higher professions - clergy, lawyers, judges, doctors, architects, authors, artists, engineers, surveyors.
16b semi professions - teachers, chemists, dentists, chiropodists.
16c clerical and students - law and medical students, lawyers' clerks, doctors' and chemists' assistants.
17 domestic service.
18 asylums and gaols.
19a outside the workforce - scholars.
19b others at home.
20 unspecified.

The arrangement of the 1861 census material contains a number of shortcomings which place impediments in the way of accurate comparisons with the more precisely tabulated returns of 1871. The 1861 census gives very little information concerning women in the workforce. Comparisons with the 1871 category 9c - needlewomen - is prevented by dressmakers, milliners, and seamstresses all being included within the broader category of miscellaneous occupations.

Class 1a - commercial and financial - is over-represented in 1861, containing hawkers, dealers, and some shopkeepers in addition to bankers, accountants, and merchants. Class 1b - retail and distribution - is consequently under-represented. Class 1c - clerical and assistants - is also included within the commercial and financial classification. I have therefore included a general total from the three groups, for the purpose of comparison with 1871. I have adopted the same approach with the
professions, since class 16a - higher professions - is over-represented also, containing clerical assistants, students, chemists, and dentists. Class 16b - semi professions - consequently contains only teachers and "professors".

The larger size of class 20 - unspecified - in 1861 does not affect comparisons between the different sections in the workforce in 1861 and 1871, since the Government Statistician explained that the overwhelming bulk of this class consisted of children outside the workforce.\(^4\) As can be readily seen, class 19b - others at home - is greatly under-represented. Girls aged under seven and boys under 11 who were living at home, but who were not listed as scholars, were not placed in this category as they were in 1871 but were instead included among the unspecified. By adding the number of scholars to the unspecified category, and then subtracting from this new total all those children within these two age groups, those listed as unspecified are reduced by approximately one half. The calculation of course leaves older school children still listed within the unspecified category, while the number of those recognised as being outside the workforce remains under-represented. If however the sum is altered to subtract all children aged under 15 years (the upper age limit recognised by the N.S.W. Statistician as including dependent children), the unspecified category is further reduced to slightly below the 1871 levels. Allowance for a small percentage of these children already having been included elsewhere as members of the workforce makes the 1861 and 1871 totals both for class 19 - outside the workforce - and class 20 - unspecified - approximately tally.

\(^4\) The 1861 Census Synopsis, p.2, states that the unspecified category consists "chiefly [of] Children".
Table 2.1: 1861 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City Ward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gipps</th>
<th>Brisbane</th>
<th>Phillip</th>
<th>Denison</th>
<th>Bourke</th>
<th>Macquarie</th>
<th>Fitzroy</th>
<th>Cook</th>
</tr>
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<td>1a Commercial &amp; financial</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>354</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b Retail &amp; distribution</td>
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<td>128</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>105</td>
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<td>1c Clerical &amp; assistants</td>
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<tr>
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<td>449</td>
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Table 2.2: 1861 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City ward (percentages)

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<th>Phillip</th>
<th>Denison</th>
<th>Bourke</th>
<th>Macquarie</th>
<th>Fitzroy</th>
<th>Cook</th>
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<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>4.29</td>
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<td>2.65</td>
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<td>lc Clerical &amp; assistants</td>
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<td>15.79</td>
<td>11.97</td>
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<td>15.94</td>
<td>19.64</td>
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<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<td>5.89</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>4.36</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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<td>0.86</td>
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<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.60</td>
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<td>0.16</td>
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<td>0.13</td>
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<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>3.18</td>
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<td>2.29</td>
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<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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<td>2.83</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.52</td>
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<td>3.30</td>
<td>5.73</td>
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<td>4.79</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>2.19</td>
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<tr>
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Table 2.6: 1871 occupational classifications among males of all ages, by City Ward (percentages)

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<th>Denison</th>
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Table 2.7: 1871 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by City ward

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<th>Bourke</th>
<th>Macquarie</th>
<th>Fitzroy</th>
<th>Cook</th>
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</tr>
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<td>1c Clerical &amp; assistants</td>
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Table 2.8: 1871 occupational classifications among females of all ages, by city ward (percentages)

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<td>21.50</td>
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The social composition of suburban communities was determined in part by the cost of transport to and from the City. High train fares in the 1850s were alleged to be restricting the development of commuter traffic.\(^1\) Bus fares early in the 1860s cost sixpence a ride even to the very nearest suburbs, and one shilling to Waverley or Double Bay.\(^2\) The short ferry trip to Balmain and the North Shore was threepence.\(^3\) By the late 1880s bus fares had dropped to threepence for all but the most distant suburbs.\(^4\) Ferry fares to Balmain during the previous decade still ranged from twopence to threepence, and to the North Shore cost between one and two pence. Ferry travel further afield remained prohibitively expensive.\(^5\) The cost of suburban rail travel had by contrast declined considerably, and from May 1881 workmen's tickets were offered at specially reduced rates. In December 1887 however, the Herald was still protesting that the effect of high suburban rail fares was "to compel...[people] to crowd into the city".\(^6\) Special workmen's fares did not become available on the tramways until May 1887, some seven years after the tram service began, and even then were labelled by one working man writing to the Daily Telegraph in 1890 as excessively dear.\(^7\) Discussing the implications for working people of commuter costs and tram fares in particular, a lead editorial in the Herald midway through 1882 had directed attention to the large numbers of persons in a city like Sydney whose wages are not high, at least not high enough to enable them to live where they can get elbow room and fresh air. There are fathers of families, for example, who work in the city and earn not more than two pounds a week. It is all very well to tell such a man that he must live in the suburbs; but how can he? Let us suppose that the suburb is Waverley. Merely to travel to and from his work the man has to pay 6d. a day, or four shillings a week. This is a sum which thousands of labouring men could not honestly pay. Our city and suburban tramway, although they have made travelling more comfortable, can hardly be said to have made

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1. Table 3.1; see the petition by Burwood residents, 7.10.1859, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1859-60, vol.3, p.109.
2. Table 3.3; Waugh, The Stranger's Guide, p.66; Whitworth, Baillifere's, p.520.
5. Ibid. (see under Balmain, Gladesville, Hunter's Hill, North Shore, Ryde); Gordon and Go6th, The Australian Handbook (1888), pp.194, 211, 227; Fielding's Visitor's Companion, Sydney, 1879, pp.50-1; see also the letter of complaint appearing in S.M.H., 18.10.1875, 'The Balmain Steam Ferries' p.3.
7. Tables 3.4 and 3.5; see V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1887, vol.1, no.15 (31.3.1887), p.80; no.29 (5.5.1887), p.161. D.T., 31.3.1890, 'Condition Of Our Tramways To-day. IV' p.3.
it much cheaper or more expeditious. 8

Notwithstanding the reducing cost of commuter travel, fares still remained in the 1870s and 1880s not inconsiderable, and the bulk of working people commuted by foot.

Transport journey times likewise exerted a real although rather less significant influence upon suburban settlement patterns. The slowness of trams was said to be a disadvantage to people wishing to be early to work. 9 All save the most outlying parts of the metropolis, however, were within an hour's journey by bus, and the trip to the inner City from Woollahra or Randwick took no longer than to walk from Redfern or Surry Hills. 10 The rail journey from as far out as Burwood could be even faster, but the attraction of train travel was lessened by the terminus being located on the City's southern boundary, 15 minutes to a half hour's walk from working places in the City. 11 A passenger platform was needed at the Darling Harbour goods terminus, declared "A Working-Man" in 1877, so that "working-men could be landed within five minutes' walk of all the large factories of the city, as well as those around Pyrmont." 12

Far more prohibitive an obstacle to the spread of working class settlement beyond walking distance of the City than either cost or travelling time was the timetabling of transport services. Factory workers and labouring men generally were as a rule by the middle 1870s working a ten hour day, the bulk of them from six o'clock in the morning until six at night, and perhaps varying during the winter to between eight in the morning and seven.13 During the 1860s it had been common to work from daylight to dark. A nine or eight hour day was becoming general by the mid and latter 1880s, 14 although bootmaking and clothing factories continued to work their hands from six till six, and some boilermaking and

10. Table 3.6.
11. Table 3.7; see S.M.H., 7.1.1875, editorial p.4; also letter by 'Burwood' in ibid., 8.9.1875, 'The New Timetable' p.5.
engineering works, as well as coal lumpers and dock labourers, worked long hours.\textsuperscript{15} Dr Andrew Garran, former editor of the \textit{Herald}, said in Parliament during 1896 that very few factories still began work before seven each morning, but draft legislation to prohibit child labour before seven o'clock and after six was amended by his colleagues to before six and after seven at night.\textsuperscript{16}

Clearly, throughout the nineteenth century, working class working hours made public transport generally inaccessible to them. Omnibus services were geared to the needs of the middle class office workers, and did not begin running in the mornings until after working people were at work. Return services in the afternoon to outer suburbs like Ashfield and Burwood, Five Dock or Canterbury, had ended before factory hands had heard the whistle blow.\textsuperscript{17} Railways, too, were an essentially middle class form of commuter transport. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, only one or at most two suburban trains arrived daily in the City along the busy Parramatta line before six o'clock each morning, and four trains daily were the greatest number arriving before seven. By contrast, eight suburban trains were then arriving daily between eight and nine o'clock every morning. The same pattern was repeated on the Illawarra line. Afternoon services leaving Sydney were more evenly spread, but were more frequent during the middle class exodus from the City between five and six o'clock.\textsuperscript{18}

Richard Wynne, a Pitt Street businessman, had in the mid 1860s pointed out the need for rail services to be made more convenient for the working classes, so that they might go and live on the line. I cannot get any of my men to live near my place of business, because there is no decent accommodation for the labouring classes at the north end of Sydney; but they cannot live along the line now, on account of the trains not suiting their working hours; they are obliged to go and live at Redfern and other places, and are often late on account of the distance.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.3398; The Second Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, pp.82-3; \textit{Official Report of the Fifth Intercolonial Trades Union Congress}, p.98; \textit{Official Report of the Sixth Intercolonial Trades and Labor Union Congress}, p.57. Shop assistants also worked long hours, and especially on Saturdays, the pay-day and shopping day of many working people; for example, see \textit{Official Report of the Fourth Intercolonial Trades Union Congress}, Adelaide, 1886, pp.91-2.
\item \textsuperscript{16} N.S.W. P.D., vol.86 (1896) pp.4189-90.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Table 3.8; see the remarks by Mr Hales, manager of the Sydney United Omnibus Company, to the Metropolitan Transit Commissioners, reported in \textit{S.M.H.}, 28.12.1876, p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Tables 3.9 and 3.10.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Report from the Select Committee on the Pitt Street Tramway, qu.137, pp.568-9.
\end{itemize}
Services did improve in 1881 with the introduction of workmen's tickets, current for trains arriving in the City before eight in the morning, and leaving on weekdays between four and seven o'clock and on Saturdays between one and half past two in the afternoons. Still, most trains arrived each morning after the time when workmen's fares had ceased to apply. Workmen's trains, it was alleged in Parliament during 1889, were "frequently crowded", and in 1890 the member for suburban Canterbury remarked how "every morning along the suburban lines, at 5 or 6 o'clock, you will see workmen hustled and jostled together in crowded cars. The Department cannot find standing room for them in the trains."

On the tramways, too, facilities for working class transportation formed only a secondary consideration. A special early morning tram, starting between five o'clock and half past five each morning, ran during the middle 1880s from the railway station, from Waverley, from Newtown and Waterloo, Leichhardt, Glebe and Forest Lodge. Owing to representations from the local member, the 5:20 afternoon tram to Botany was rescheduled early in 1887 to leave 10 minutes later, so as to enable working people to make use of the service home. Special workmen's trams were not commenced until later in that same year, but the services were limited in number and were available only for the morning journey into the City. Evening return trips were not offered. Although many working people did regularly travel by tram, bus, or train, and use the shorter ferry routes, their patronage was in the face of considerable difficulties.

23. Table 3.5; see V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.) 1887, vol.1, no.54 (30.6.1887), p.311; Tbid., 1891-2, vol.1, no.6 (28.7.1891), p.23; also D.T., 31.3.1890, 'Condition Of The Tramways To-day. IV' p.3.
Table 3.1: Single railway fares to suburban stations on the Parramatta, Illawarra, and northern lines, 1858-88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles from Sydney</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1864</th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1884</th>
<th>1888</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1st Class</td>
<td>2nd Class</td>
<td>1st Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6d</td>
<td>4d</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3d</td>
<td>4d</td>
<td>3d</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1/3</td>
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<td>1/3</td>
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<td>1s</td>
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<td>5d</td>
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<td>1s</td>
<td>1/4</td>
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<td>8d</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebush</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>1/3</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>1/4</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>11½</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>1s</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>8d</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
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<td>2s</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>2s</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>2/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sydney to         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Eveleigh          | 1     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Erskineville      | 2     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 2d    |
| St Peters         | 2     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 3d    |
| Marrickville      | 3     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4d    |
| Tempe             | 4     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4d    |
| Arncliffe         | 5     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4d    |
| Rockdale          | 6     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 5d    |
| Kogarah           | 7     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 8d    |
| Hurstville        | 9     |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 10d   |
| Ryde              | 12    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 1/3   |
| Carlingford       | 15    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 1/11  |
| Pennant Hills     | 18    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 2/6   |
| Hornsby           | 21    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 3/2   |

Source: Supplements to N.S.W. Government Gazette

1. I have been unable to trace a copy of the scale of passenger fees current between March 1873 and November 1875, and have consequently substituted for 1874 the new fares published in Supplement to N.S.W. Government Gazette, 1875, vol.2. no. 300 (5.11.1875), p.3585.
Table 3.2: Workmen's weekly railway ticket concessional fares on the Parramatta and Illawarra railway lines during the 1880s

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYDNEY to -</th>
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<th>SYDNEY TO -</th>
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<td>Eveleigh</td>
<td>9d</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>1s</td>
<td>St Peters</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanmore</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersham</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Tempe</td>
<td>1/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Arncliffe</td>
<td>2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Hill</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Rockdale</td>
<td>2/2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kogarah</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Homebush</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rookwood</td>
<td>3s</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3/9</td>
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</table>

Source: ibid.
Table 3.3: Omnibus single journey fares, 1861-88

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<tr>
<td>Circular Quay - railway terminus</td>
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<td>3d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City - Woolloomooloo</td>
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<td>4d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td>3d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Southern Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City - Redfern</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td>4d</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
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<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>4d</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>3d</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>9d</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peters</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Western Sydney</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City - Glebe</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td>4d</td>
<td>3d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Lodge</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>9d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3d</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Point/Double Bay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>1s</td>
<td>8d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>1s</td>
<td>4d</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Table 3.4: Tramway single journey fares, 1881-8

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<th>Line</th>
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<th>1882</th>
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<td>Circular Quay-railway terminus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City - Surry Hills</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City - Redfern</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td></td>
<td>2d</td>
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<td>Botany</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Randwick</td>
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<td>Bondi</td>
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<td>5d</td>
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Table 3.5: Workmen's concessional tramway fares, 1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Route</th>
<th>Fare</th>
<th>total no. of trams running</th>
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Source: D.T., 31.3.1890, 'Condition Of The Tramways To-day. IV' p.3.
### Table 3.6: Approximate omnibus journey times in minutes, 1866, 1876, and 1889

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<tr>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
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Source: N.S.W. Government Gazette and Supplements.
Table 3.7: Approximate journey times between selected suburban stations on the Parramatta and Illawarra railway lines, 1858-88 (figures given are in minutes)

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<th>1868</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1884</th>
<th>1888</th>
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Source: Supplements to N.S.W. Government Gazette.
Table 3.8: Omnibus timetables, 1878-80. The figures show the time of the first departure from the suburb, the last departure from the City, and the frequency of services. The times given are for weekdays.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Circular Quay-railway terminus</td>
<td>8.00am-10.00pm</td>
<td>to meet trains</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>City - Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>8.20am-9.45pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>8.30am-8.30pm</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| II. Southern Sydney |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| City Redfern        | 8.00am-8.30pm | 10 mins | 8.00pm-10.00pm | 20 mins |
| Newtown (Enmore)    | 8.00am-10.00am | 5 mins | 9.30am-4.30pm | 10 mins |
| Waterloo            | 4.00am-7.00pm | 5 mins | 6.30pm-11.00pm | 8 mins |
| Alexandria          | 7.40am-8.30pm | 10 mins | 8.00pm-10.10pm | 20 mins |
| Petersham           | 8.00am-9.25pm | 30 mins |
| St Peters           | 7.40am, 8.00am-10.00pm | 30 mins |
| Canterbury          | 8.15am-9.15pm | approx. 50 mins |
| Botany              | to Sydney: 8.00am, 10.45am, 3.15pm |
|                     | from Sydney: 9.30am, 12.15pm, 5.00pm |
|                     | to Sydney: 8.00am-6.00pm, hourly, & 8.00pm |
|                     | from Sydney: 9.15am, 10.30am-7.30pm, hourly & 9.15pm |

| III. Western Sydney |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| City Glebe          | 8.00am-7.33pm | 6-8mins | 7.01pm-11.00pm | 10 mins |
| Balmain             | 8.00am-9.00pm | hourly |
| Ashfield            | to Sydney: 10.25am, 4.25pm |
|                     | from Sydney: 10.15am, 4.15pm |
| Burwood             | to Sydney: 8.00am, 11.15am, 4.15pm |
|                     | from Sydney: 9.45am, 12.45am, 5.45pm |
| Five Dock           | to Sydney: 8.00am, 11.00am, 4.15pm |
|                     | from Sydney: 9.45am, 12.45am, 5.45pm |

| IV. Eastern Sydney |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| City Paddington     | 8.20am-8.35pm | 15-45 mins |
| Darling Point       | 8.30am-8.00pm | hourly |
| Double Bay          | 8.30am-10.30am | 30 mins | 10.30am-3.30pm | hourly |
|                     | 3.30pm-7.00pm | 30 mins | 8.00pm-9.00pm | hourly |
| Woollahra           | 8.00am-7.30pm | 10 mins | 7.00pm-10.00pm | 15 mins |
| Randwick            | 8.45am-9.30pm | hourly |
| Waverley            | 8.00am-8.30pm | 10 mins | 8.30pm-10.00pm | 15 mins |
| Bondi               | 8.00am-9.57am | 15 mins | 9.00am-4.57pm | 30 mins |
|                     | 4.00pm-8.00pm | 15 mins | 9.00pm |

Source: Transit Commissioners' by-laws, in ibid; Fielding's Visitors' Companion, pp.53-6.
Table 3.9: Railway timetables on the Parramatta line, 1858-88 (weekdays only). Figures refer to the number of passenger train arrivals and departures at the City terminus.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1864</th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1884</th>
<th>1888</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Source: Supplements to the N.S.W. Government Gazette.

Table 3.10: Railway timetables on the Illawarra line, 1884-81

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Source: ibid.

1. Tables 3.9 and 3.10 do not include express and funeral trains.
### Table 4.1: Death rates for all ages, per 1,000 of mean population, 1857-91

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Table 4.2: Death rates among five year olds, per 1,000 of mean population, 1871-91

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Source: Coghlan, The Wealth...1892, p.820.
Table 4.3: Deaths under five years of age as a percentage of total deaths, 1857-91

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Source: Annual reports of the Registrar General, and N.S.W. Statistical Registers.
### Table 4.4: Deaths under five as a percentage of total deaths in each City ward, 1872-81

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<th>Bourke</th>
<th>Macquarie</th>
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</table>

Source: Annual reports of the Registrar General. The percentages are ranked from 1 (highest proportion of deaths under 5) to 8 (lowest proportion of deaths under 5). The Bourke Ward figures are distorted because the Infirmary was located in the district.

### Table 4.5: Deaths in the City among children aged under one to five, as a percentage of total deaths under five, 1872-81

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<td>3.89</td>
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Source: ibid.
Table 4.6: Death rates among infants (under one year old) per 1,000 births, 1871-91

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Source: Coghlan, *The Wealth...1892*, p. 791.
The classification of mortality statistics used by the Registrar General during the 1870s and most of the 1880s was as follows:

**CLASS ONE - ZYMOTIC DISEASES**

Order 1 - miasmic diseases - scarletina, measles, diarrhoea, influenza, fevers etc.
Order 2 - enthetic diseases - syphilis, gonorrhoea, etc.
Order 3 - dietic diseases - privation, scurvy, delirium tremens, etc.
Order 4 - parasitic diseases - thrush, worms, etc.

**CLASS TWO - CONSTITUTIONAL DISEASES**

Order 1 - diathetic diseases - gout, dropsy, cancer, etc.
Order 2 - tubercular diseases - scrofula, phthisis, etc.

**CLASS THREE - LOCAL DISEASES**

Order 1 - diseases of the nervous system - apoplexy, insanity, convulsions, etc.
Order 2 - diseases of the organs of circulation - heart disease, aneurism, etc.
Order 3 - diseases of the respiratory system - bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, pleurisy, etc.
Order 4 - diseases of the digestive organs - gastritis, enteritis, etc.
Order 5 - diseases of the urinary organs - nephritis, diabetes, etc.
Order 6 - diseases of generation - ovarian dropsy, uterine diseases, etc.
Order 7 - diseases of the joints - arthritis, etc.
Order 8 - diseases of the integumentary system - phlegmon, ulcer, skin disease, etc.

**CLASS FOUR - DEVELOPMENTAL DISEASES**

Order 1 - diseases of children - cyanosis, spina bifida, teething, etc.
Order 2 - diseases of adults - childbirth.
Order 3 - diseases of old people - old age, etc.
Order 4 - nutrition - atrophy, debility.

**CLASS FIVE - VIOLENCE**

Order 1 - accidents or negligence.
Order 2 - wounds in battle.
Order 3 - homicide.
Order 4 - suicide.
Order 5 - execution.

In 1887 the N.S.W. Government Statistician, copying from the General Registry Office in London, revised the above classifications. The new system was very much like the old. Diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera were however subtracted from the class of miasmic diseases and formed into a new class, as were remittent fever and beriberi. Another new class called septic diseases, including puerperal fever, erysipelas, and septicaemia, was also included under the heading of zymotic diseases. This slightly revised classification of deaths continued to be used for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

2. See Coghlan, The Wealth...1900-01, pp.1012-3.
Table 4.7: Registrar General's mortality classifications. Major causes of death in the City, 1874-81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of death</th>
<th>1874 under all</th>
<th>1875 under all</th>
<th>1876 under all</th>
<th>1877 under all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miasmic diseases</td>
<td>21.93%</td>
<td>27.49%</td>
<td>20.22%</td>
<td>20.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other zymotic diseases</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>3.87%</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubercular diseases</td>
<td>6.46%</td>
<td>7.53%</td>
<td>11.79%</td>
<td>6.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous diseases</td>
<td>16.83%</td>
<td>17.54%</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
<td>12.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulatory diseases</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory diseases</td>
<td>11.05%</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>11.21%</td>
<td>9.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive diseases</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>3.55%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's diseases</td>
<td>10.88%</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
<td>4.18%</td>
<td>9.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>21.25%</td>
<td>14.96%</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
<td>12.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>97.92%</td>
<td>97.60%</td>
<td>85.07%</td>
<td>97.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of death</th>
<th>1878 under all</th>
<th>1879 under all</th>
<th>1880 under all</th>
<th>1881 under all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
<td>Under 5 ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miasmic diseases</td>
<td>20.92%</td>
<td>27.69%</td>
<td>20.46%</td>
<td>20.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other zymotic diseases</td>
<td>5.53%</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>3.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubercular diseases</td>
<td>6.76%</td>
<td>7.72%</td>
<td>11.33%</td>
<td>7.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous diseases</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>15.06%</td>
<td>13.35%</td>
<td>19.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulatory diseases</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>5.04%</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory diseases</td>
<td>10.76%</td>
<td>10.76%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>9.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive diseases</td>
<td>5.69%</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>7.71%</td>
<td>9.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's diseases</td>
<td>14.15%</td>
<td>10.46%</td>
<td>4.61%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>16.15%</td>
<td>12.03%</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>17.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>96.87%</td>
<td>94.58%</td>
<td>81.11%</td>
<td>97.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual reports of the Registrar General.
Table 4.7 is not intended to show accurately the causes of death but rather to indicate the contemporary exaggeration of the importance of epidemic disease, given the medical information then available in Sydney. That exaggeration is shown more plainly in Table 4.8. Throughout the nineteenth century, by far the greatest cause of the infant deaths which so boosted general City mortality totals was recorded by contemporary statisticians not among feared infectious diseases like measles and scarlatina but rather in the continuing high levels of diarrhoea and related maladies such as atrophy and debility, convulsions and teething. Even among the causes of total deaths from all ages in Sydney, these illnesses were commonly as great or even a greater scourge than were the commonly recognised infectious diseases.¹

Table 4.8: Diarrhoea-related mortality in the City, 1874-81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cause of death</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th></th>
<th>1875</th>
<th></th>
<th>1876</th>
<th></th>
<th>1877</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>all</td>
<td>under</td>
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<td>under</td>
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<td>under</td>
<td>all</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
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<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total, miasmic diseases</td>
<td>29.27</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>37.89</td>
<td>27.98</td>
<td>30.95</td>
<td>22.96</td>
<td>22.59</td>
<td>25.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miasmic diseases less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diarrhoea</td>
<td>15.82</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>24.92</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>17.62</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convulsions</td>
<td>13.45</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>14.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teething</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>9.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutrition</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total, diarrhoea-related</td>
<td>45.84</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>41.28</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>35.73</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>48.39</td>
<td>44.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1878</th>
<th></th>
<th>1879</th>
<th></th>
<th>1880</th>
<th></th>
<th>1881</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>under</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total, miasmic diseases</td>
<td>20.92</td>
<td>27.69</td>
<td>20.46</td>
<td>20.58</td>
<td>24.91</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>22.80</td>
<td>17.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miasmic diseases less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convulsions</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>14.34</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>12.99</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teething</td>
<td>11.84</td>
<td>10.95</td>
<td>15.03</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutrition</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total, diarrhoea-related</td>
<td>36.13</td>
<td>17.90</td>
<td>50.32</td>
<td>43.91</td>
<td>18.87</td>
<td>49.02</td>
<td>39.57</td>
<td>19.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ibid.
1. See also M. J. Lewis, "Populate or Perish": Aspects of Infant and Maternal Health in Sydney, 1870-1939', Ph.D., Australian National University, 1976, Appendix 3, p.325.
Only with the diminution of diarrhoea-related illness around the turn of the century, subsequent upon the slow improvement in city sanitation, did the way become open for significant improvement in Sydney's health. Diarrhoea-boosted infant mortality had begun to decline slowly in Sydney from the latter 1880s, as sewers and water mains were extended and upgraded, as street cleaning and garbage removal became more widespread and more frequent, and as stricter regulations over the sale of milk and meat encouraged a gradual improvement in diet. It was only during the first three decades of the twentieth century however, a period corresponding to the progressive disappearance from the city of horse transport and the massive sanitary problems which this posed, that diarrhoea-related infant mortality was substantially overcome.

1. Lewis, 'Populate or Perish', p.95; see Cannon, Life in the Cities, p.53.
APPENDIX FIVE

Local government in Sydney was responsible to an electorate intended to consist only of ratepayers. This meant that women in the suburbs could vote by reason of property held in their names, although in the City the same right did not apply until 1887. But while the property-based franchise enabled a scattering of women to be enrolled as electors it also ensured that a majority of the total adult population, male and female, were excluded from the suffrage. In the City just under 40 percent of the adult population were enrolled as voters in 1861 and again a decade later, but by 1891 that figure had sunk to only 35 percent of the population. In most suburbs too, a minority of inhabitants, and sometimes a mere handful, were able to vote.

In the original Corporation Act of 1842 the franchise had been confined to adult male ratepayers occupying a dwelling calculated to have an annual value of at least 25 pounds per annum, though the qualifications were loosened slightly in 1850 to include dwellings assessed at over 20 pounds per annum. In the City of Sydney after the 1857 Corporation Restoration Act, and in the suburbs following the Municipalities Act of 1858, the municipal franchise was again widened when all mention of a minimum property qualification for ratepayers was dropped. This same ratepayer franchise was reaffirmed for City and suburbs by Parliament in the municipal Acts of 1867 and 1879.

Whilst only a small minority of local residents could participate in municipal elections, within this limitation a slight modification from a strict ratepayer- towards a more general householder-franchise had been possible under the Acts of 1857 and 1858 in City and suburbs, with both owner and the actual occupier, though never the sub-tenants, receiving a vote. The definition of ratepayer adopted in the 1857 Corporation Restoration Act and which remained in force until 1879 was alleged in 1884 to have been "so loosely drawn that it gave the power of voting to every householder whether he paid rates or not." For while Parliament in debating the Corporation

1. N.S.W. P.D., vol.8 (1883), p.1069 (Melville); see the answer by the Mayor to a question by Alderman Hordern, in the D.T.'s report of City Council proceedings, 10.6.1881, p.2. The Sydney Corporation Act Amendment Act of 1887 (51 Vic., no. 23) extended the franchise to all female tenants over 21 years of age.
2. Table 5.1.
4. 20 Vic., no.36 (clauses 5 and 6); 22 Vic., no.13 (clauses 10 and 11); 31 Vic., no.12 (clause 52); 43 Vic., no.3 (e.g. clause 8).
Restoration Bill in 1857 had rejected the principle of universal male suffrage and adopted instead the concept of a more restricted ratepayer-franchise, the actual definition of a ratepayer was only very loosely drawn to include "every person named in the Electoral Roll whose qualification is not stated therein to be that of salary lodging or board and lodging".7 Implementation of the concept of ratepayer-voting in the suburbs was just as vaguely dealt with, the 1858 Act allowing that "every person named in the Electoral Roll having a freehold leasehold or household qualification shall prima facie be deemed a rate-payer."8

The outcome of this imprecision over technical detail was mentioned critically by the Sydney Town Clerk in 1874:

At present the voters' list often contains the names of several persons for one premises - the name of the proprietor, the name of the lessee, the name of the sub-lessee, and the tenant. That is to say, that there are sometimes four names registered on the voters' list for one particular house.

381. Notwithstanding its value, or irrespective of its value? Yes, quite irrespective of the value of the house; it may be a house of only £5 a year.
382. And for that house all those persons claim to have their names on the list? Yes, and they exercise the right of voting, and there is nothing to prevent their exercising it.9

Reform of suburban councils under the Municipalities Act of 1867 permitted this muddled situation to continue unchanged, as the Mayor of Paddington explained in 1874:

1367. Do you allow both the owner and the occupier to vote? Yes.
1368. Although the owner may pay the rate, and the occupier pays nothing? Yes.
1369. You allow them both to vote? Yes.
1370. Although the tenant only pays the rate? They are both allowed to vote.
1371. For the same property? Yes, for the same property.
1372. Do you think that that is the intention of the present Act? From the reading of it, I should imagine it was.

...1375. Are you not aware that there is a clause in the Act which provides that the person who pays the rates shall vote? I am; but then there is another clause which says that the name of the occupier shall be on the roll, and the Act also provides that any person whose name is on the roll shall be entitled to vote.10

7. 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 6); the Legislative Council decision to restrict the franchise to ratepayers is reported in S.M.H., 29.1.1857, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.4; ibid., 31.1.1857, p.4; 4.2.1857, p.4; the Assembly voted by a wide margin to accept the alterations; ibid., 21.2.1857, p.4.
8. 22 Vic., no.13 (clause 11).
10. Ibid., pp.148-9. See also the speech by Lucas during the second reading debate in the Assembly of the future 1879 Corporation Act; S.M.H., 4.10.1878, 'New South Wales Parliament' p.3.
In any case, since property owners automatically received the franchise they were often prepared to let the rates be paid in the lessee's name so the latter might qualify to vote also.  

In the City, however, the trend towards a householder municipal franchise was halted when under the 1879 Corporation Act the franchise was re-defined to ensure that only the person actually paying rates could vote. The outcome was to reduce sharply the City electorate. One City auditor calculated that 14,399 persons had in consequence been "disenfranchised" for the 1880 City elections, and 12,131 in 1881. Daniel O'Connor claimed in Parliament during 1886 that as many as three quarters of those who had been enrolled as electors before the revised Corporation Act had lost their vote. For as the Government had previously acknowledged in October 1878, with landlords insisting upon paying rentals in order to maintain their own electoral influence, total voters "would in all probability be considerably reduced" by the new arrangements. Disenfranchised tenants found themselves, as working class lodgers and sub-tenants throughout the metropolis had always been, denied any say in city government.

The confusion surrounding interpretation of municipal franchise qualifications had already over the years gradually conditioned the public into believing that franchise limitations went beyond even what the law laid down. There were, it was said in 1883, dozens of ratepayers in each suburb who while paying their taxes were yet left off the electors' roll. Confusion was such that, even in Parliament itself, it was suggested during the 1880s that voting in the City be widened by lowering an imagined minimum property qualification for the franchise from 20 pounds to 15 pounds per annum. Only one member pointed out that since 1857 there had been no minimum property qualification for ratepayers, and that the 25 pound limit was merely a demarcation line between a person receiving one or two votes under the sliding voting scale that had been introduced to the City in 1879. Restricting the franchise to those whose property was valued at 15 pounds per annum, far from being the liberalising measure that was intended, would in

11. See the comment by the Mayor of Redfern in S.C.W.M., qu.970, p.133.
12. 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 8). Joseph Carroll (City Auditor), 'Disfranchisement Of City Ratepayers', in D.T., 17.9.1881, p.6; also 18.11.1882, editorial p.2; 27.3.1883, editorial leader p.2. See the speeches by O'Connor in N.S.W. P.D., vol.19 (1885-6), pp.1626, 1937; vol.20 (1885-6), p.2098. See Table 5.1.
13. Letter from the Colonial Secretary, 18.10.1878, in V. & P. (N.S.W. L.A.), 1878-9, vol.7, p.197. It was not until 1887 that the law was revised to give all tenants over 21 years one vote, whether they paid rates or not; 51 Vic., no. 23. Not until the 1902 Sydney Corporation Act was the franchise extended further, to lodgers living in dwellings with an annual value of at least 10 pounds; see Larcombe, The Stabilization, pp.39-41.
14. N.S.W. P.D., vol.8 (1883), pp.1069-70. Frederick Riley, later to become City Mayor, told electors in 1879 how he had been told that "probably one-half of the electors...would be struck off the roll." S.M.H., 29.11.1879, 'Municipal Elections' p.3.
fact have disenfranchised those persons with property valued under 15 pounds per annum who under existing legislation were already entitled to vote.15

Tightening of the City franchise in 1879 greatly fuelled popular discontent with the unrepresentative character of local government. Angus Cameron, who represented West Sydney in the Legislative Assembly, told Parliament in 1883 that "a great majority of electors have with a great deal of force grumbled at the taking away of their rights under the last Sydney Corporation Act." The effect of that law, remarked one Daily Telegraph editorial writer,

has been to throw a vast proportion of elective power into the hands of a few wealthy men, who own extensive city properties, and, by paying the rates themselves, are enabled to deprive their tenants of a right which should be exercised by every citizen.

Contrasting this situation with the universal male suffrage prevailing at Legislative Assembly elections, the newspaper stigmatised the municipal franchise as "a standing disgrace to the community".16

Local government affairs, it was sometimes pointed out, were after all of equal relevance to tenants and property owners,17 and for City working people the unfairness of the local franchise was perhaps made to seem the more acute by their powerlessness to counter at the polls the opposition by some landlords to improved sanitary regulation and local services.18 The pill was made the more bitter to swallow since everyone knew that while the landlord nominally paid the rates that were the qualification for the franchise, a tenant's rents were adjusted to cover this cost.19 The motive of landlords was no doubt in large measure financial, but during parliamentary debates on the municipal franchise during the 1880s it was said that a more covert political purpose existed. It was alleged in the

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15. N.S.W. P.D., vol.26 (1887), P.1423 (Jacob); and see ibid. for the efforts by O'Connor during 1883, 1884, 1886, and 1887 to steer a Sydney Corporation Act Amendment Bill through Parliament.
17. While attacking the franchise proposals of the 1867 Municipalities Bill, Robertson had ridiculed the idea "that the property-holders had a greater interest in the public health than other people"; S.M.H., 29.11.1867, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.2. See also N.S.W. P.D., vol.8 (1883), pp.685-6 (Garrett); vol.20 (1885-6), pp.2105-6 (Davies); vol.26 (1887), p.1153 (Riley).
18. S. & H.B. committeemen reported in 1875-6 that complaints about landlord inattention to house sanitation were universal among working people; see above, Chapter Seven.
Legislative Council during 1887 that "in most cases the landlords insist upon paying the rates, in order to retain the voting power. The humbler classes, who really do pay the rates, have no voice whatever in the election of aldermen."  

The image of Mr Moneybags thus striving for political monopoly in municipal affairs was given added credibility by the trend towards weighting the franchise in favour of big property interests. Plural voting by right of properties held in different wards within a municipality had been possible in Sydney since mid-century, when in the City a stipulation that no citizen should receive more than one vote was dropped. Cumulative voting within each municipal ward was next introduced, to the suburbs in 1867 and to the City in 1879, giving up to four votes per ward to an individual according to the value of property for which rates were paid. The design of cumulative voting, said the Council Clerk of Newtown in 1874, was to give "the holders of property the advantage over mere numbers." A Daily Telegraph leader however, criticising the inequity of granting property owners perhaps 20 votes each in the one municipality and the tenant none, damned the 1879 Act as "the rankest Tory legislation that has ever disgraced the statute book of the colony". The whole direction of the measure was wrong, said the newspaper:  

A city is not made up of one class, and for one class to arrogate to itself the right to monopolise the governing power is not only wrong in principal but vicious in practice.  

Vicious in practice. The newspaper was repeating one of the central criticisms of the existing municipal franchise, that of the manipulation of elections by wealthy property owners, made by O'Connor and his supporters during the half dozen attempts they made between 1883 and 1887 to push through Parliament legislation designed to liberalise the City local government franchise. Property owners whose assets totalled more than the 150 pounds necessary to receive the maximum four votes per City ward frequently divided up their properties under other names to increase their electoral influence further. The tactic struck many as a questionable act which nullified the voice of ordinary citizens by concentrating power in the hands of a clique of landlords, who then distributed their votes not among their tenants but among "servile followers". City Aldermen Hart was said
in Parliament by his colleague, J. D. Young, to control 200 votes in Gipps Ward, and another gentleman was alleged to hold the votes for over 400 houses. Under this existing form of ratepayer suffrage, it was claimed in the Legislative Council during 1887, a City of 138,000 inhabitants and perhaps some 30,000 householders could yet boast an electorate with only 7,946 votes. This was bad enough, said O'Connor in the same year, but worse, this already pitifully small number was in fact controlled by a handful of about 700 people:

There were men who had twenty, thirty, and as many as fifty houses in wards in the city; but the act did not allow any man to vote more than once in one ward. The landlords, to secure the voting power to themselves, paid the rates in the names of dummies, not in the names of tenants. This was the scandalous state of affairs of which he complained: that there were only 700 people in the city who really exercised the power of electing the twenty-four aldermen.26

It was alleged that the small groups who controlled the votes and who thus dictated council policy often themselves lived outside the City, while resident householders who felt most directly the results of local government decisions were either unenfranchised or out-voted. Suburban electoral returns lent support to that claim, for non-residents did generally form significant minorities, occasionally even the majority, within suburban municipal electorates.27 Just how many votes such non-residents could command under cumulative voting is not known. What is known however is that they showed very little interest in exercising their right to vote.28 These were at least one group of property owners with apparently little ambition to influence municipal affairs. Yet rumour and allegation produced in popular imagination a different reality wherein a cynical minority controlled local government elections.

The inference to be drawn was that since voting power was seemingly manipulated by a few large property owners, municipal councils could be little more than the mouthpieces of property. Attacking the 1879 Corporation Act's franchise provisions, the Legislative Assemblyman John Macintosh, himself a former City alderman, claimed that

Property owners were responsible in a large measure for cramming people into small lanes, where they erected houses without regard to the comfort and health of their occupants. And, if the right were given to them alone of electing members of the City Council, the inhabitants would be cramped up still more than they were. He hoped the day would never

25. Ibid., vol.20 (1885-6), p.2105 (Young) and p.2113 (O'Connor); also vol.8 (1883), p.692 (Cameron).
27. Ibid., vol.20 (1885-6) p.2105 (Davies). See Table 5.2.
28. Table 5.3.
come when they alone would have the voting power in the city of Sydney.
(Hear, hear.)

The linking together of selfish property interests with Sydney aldermen was a conclusion made especially easy for Sydney's unenfranchised majority, for whom metropolitan councils must have seemed alien bodies policing regulations remotely conceived and arbitrarily decided upon. As early as 1850 the People's Advocate, the radical mouthpiece of the Constitutional Association, was maintaining that a restricted franchise had produced a City Council of "men who know little, and care less, for the wants and wishes of the citizens." The newspaper continued, "The majority of the present City Councillors know well enough that with an extended franchise they would no longer retain their seats, and hence arises their opposition to anything in the shape of reform." Some 20 years later, during the annual City municipal elections, the Daily Telegraph editorialised that municipal matters have, unfortunately, fallen to such a level that very little public interest is taken in the elections. This, no doubt, is due in large measure to the fact that two-thirds of the electors were struck off the roll under the provisions of the new Act which came into operation a little more than a year ago. At the present time the City Council may be said to represent the owners of property, and not the citizens as a whole.

Popular stereotypes of the cynical and self-interested alderman disregarded the misgivings expressed within the City Council itself at the 1879 alterations to the municipal franchise. Riley, who as City Mayor in 1887 spoke in support of a widened suffrage during Legislative Assembly debate on O'Connor's amendment Bill, had already voiced his opposition to the existing franchise provisions during the municipal elections of 1879. Campaigning during the 1883 City elections, Alderman Matthew Harris likewise made plain his conviction that the franchise should be extended to every householder so as to include automatically tenants as well as landlords.

The efforts by O'Connor and J. D. Young in Parliament to amend the Corporation Act had in fact originated in the City Council, when early in 1881 Young had received O'Connor's support in tabling a resolution declaring the present franchise unsatisfactory. The motion, which proposed instead a householder suffrage, was easily defeated, by 12 votes to six. In May 1886 however the voting was reversed, when upon Riley's initiative City aldermen resolved by 12 votes to seven to support the principle of a householder

suffrage. The City Council decided without a division in July that the City Solicitor immediately prepare a Bill “providing for the election of Aldermen by Householders in the City”.32

Unsympathetic popular stereotypes nonetheless prevailed. Many aldermen were indeed wealthy men. The election of one man who was not, the parliamentarian John Davies, raised so many eyebrows than Angus Cameron protested on Davies' behalf during the 1882 municipal elections "against a man being condemned because he was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth."33 The City Council, in spite of the ridicule it frequently attracted from the press, was a social club of some exclusiveness. Mayoral balls and banquets were important and extravagant social events.34 The mayoral ball held in honour of the visiting princes and naval officers during the 1881 visit of the British Detached Squadron was particularly celebrated for its "great magnificence", and at the year's close Mayor Harris was praised for the "princely liberality" with which he had "dispensed the patronage of his office ".35 The Mayor's picnic was a high point in each year's social calendar. In 1884 some 700 ladies and gentlemen were entertained lavishly by Mayor John Hardie at the top pleasure resort of Clontarf. A special steamer ferried guests to and fro, and a band provided music for dancing. The N.S.W. Premier, Stuart, was among a large number of parliamentarians present, along with representatives of the army and navy.

One jaundiced article-writer had commented during the City Council elections in 1882,

the citizens of Sydney... have no such building as a Town Hall, but ... instead of that they have a banqueting hall. Not a week passes scarcely but there is more or less eating, drinking and guzzling carried on at our so-called Town Hall. There is a never ending list: Mayoral luncheons and quarterly spreads; then there are banquets to the incoming mayor, banquets to the outgoing mayor, and return banquets both ways... As a citizen, I protest against all these sorts of things being carried on at the place of business belonging to the ratepayers, and constructed out of money levied from them.36

34. It has been suggested that the social attraction of membership in the local Town Hall is one of the major reasons for men seeking municipal office; Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp.170-1. See, for example, the long article describing 'The Mayor's Ball' in S.M.H., 10.12.1880, p.3; and the account of the citizens' ball for the Mayor in D.T., 17.8.1881, p.3.
36. D.T., 19.3.1884, 'The Mayor's Picnic' p.8; S.M.H., 19.3.1884, 'Mayoral Picnic' p.7. Ibid., 27.11.1882, 'The Municipal Council - Misgoverned Sydney' p.9. Alderman Rainford was elected to the City Council in 1890 after a campaign based upon the claim that assessments were too high and that money was lavished on banquets and "junketing"; E.N., 28.11.1890, editorial p.4.
For the first decade of the City's incorporation this provocative exclusiveness had been deliberately enshrined in Corporation statutes. While in 1842 the municipal franchise had been granted to the occupiers of buildings rated at the annual value of 25 pounds, only the holders of property rated at 50 pounds annually were entitled to stand for election. This restrictive provision was tightened further in 1850, for although the franchise was lowered to include the 20 pounds householder the property qualification for candidates for municipal office was increased to 100 pounds annually.37 Upon the restoration of the City Council in 1857 it was enacted that any person qualifying as an elector was eligible also to become an alderman,38 although in practice still, access to municipal office remained limited since no payment existed for local government representatives. Authority had been available since 1842 for aldermen to grant an allowance to the Mayor, and by the late 1880s and early 1890s this was fixed at 1,000 pounds a year. This amount, however, was said by some aldermen to be inadequate, and certainly, only very wealthy men seem to have been able to afford to become Mayor.39 More importantly, aldermen themselves were never compensated for the time needed to be devoted to municipal duties. The 1857 Corporation Restoration Act did for the first time authorise the City Council to determine salaries for aldermen as well as the Mayor, but the City Council did not make use of the clause. The new Corporation Act of 1879 finalised the matter by deleting the previous authorisation for the payment of aldermen.40 Municipal office was generally speaking inaccessible to wage and salary workers, and tended to remain the preserve of men of means with time to spare.41

37. 6 Vic., no. 3 (clauses 12 and 49). 14 Vic., no.41 (clauses 6 and 17). 38. 20 Vic., no. 36 (clause 7). 39. See 6 Vic., no.3 (clause 66); 20 Vic., no. 36 (clause 59); 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 66). See the discussion of the mayoral allowance in E.N., 19.11.1890, editorial p.4. 40. 20 Vic., no.36 (clause 59); the Bill had originally proposed to guarantee the Mayor a salary of 1,000 pounds and aldermen an allowance not exceeding 100 pounds annually; S.M.H., 17.12.1856, 'Parliament Of New South Wales' p.5. See 43 Vic., no.3 (clause 66). 41. See Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p.10.
Table 5.1: Municipal electors as a proportion of total adult population in the City and selected suburbs, 1861-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1861 adults resident voters</th>
<th>1871 adults resident voters</th>
<th>1881 adults resident voters</th>
<th>1891 adults resident voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>30,021</td>
<td>11,912</td>
<td>39.67</td>
<td>38,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>55.57</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>24.69</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>1,646</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>38.45</td>
<td>2,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>45.46</td>
<td>11,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>38.45</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Dock</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>50.98</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>36.95</td>
<td>2,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>61.72</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>41.20</td>
<td>1,097</td>
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<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>43.29 a,b</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>43.29 a,b</td>
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<td>67.42 a</td>
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<td>360</td>
<td>49.86</td>
<td>474</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>1,953</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>42.24</td>
<td>2,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.St.Leonards</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>57.65</td>
<td>489</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Leonards</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>37.55</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>Victoria</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>43.18</td>
<td>380</td>
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<td>1,286</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>38.49</td>
<td>1,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>29.92</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
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<td>528</td>
<td>27.44</td>
<td>2,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Waverley</td>
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<td>141</td>
<td>32.86</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>73.35</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>38.98</td>
<td>2,038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: N.S.W. Statistical Register and N.S.W. Censuses.

Figures marked 'a' include non resident voters; figures marked 'b' include patients in hospitals and asylums. The destruction of the 1881 census records by fire, the non-availability of information for suburban districts before their incorporation, and the frequent failure of local authorities to provide returns, account for the incompleteness of this and following tables.
Table 5.2: Proportion of non-resident municipal electors to total electors in selected Sydney suburbs, 1860-90
(percentages refer to non-resident electors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>1,417</td>
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<td>757</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>213</td>
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<td>9.72</td>
<td>6,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39.47</td>
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<td>1,930</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>11.05</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>54.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>27.29</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonaldtown</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td>649</td>
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<td>Manly</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>15.13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24.59</td>
<td>493</td>
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<td>324</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>50.61</td>
<td>361</td>
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<tr>
<td>E.St Leonards</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>16.70</td>
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<td>St Leonards</td>
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<td>7.72</td>
<td>772</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>63.79</td>
<td>1,006</td>
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<tr>
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<td>179</td>
<td>61.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13.31</td>
<td>765</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.
Table 5.3: Non-resident electors in selected suburbs who voted at the last municipal elections, as a percentage of the total number of electors who voted, 1860-85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1865</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1885</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Dock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>8.16</td>
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<td>10.11</td>
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<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.17</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19.04</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
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<td>Marrickville</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. St Leonards</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonards</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5.08</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.35</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
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</table>

Source: ibid.
Municipal elections which were not contested are marked n.c.; electoral returns for 1890 are not available.
Table 5.4: Electors in selected suburbs who voted in the last municipal elections, as a percentage of total electors, 1860-85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1865</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1885</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>37.97</td>
<td>41.66</td>
<td>24.33</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>33.31</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>10.82</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
<td>72.98</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>43.24</td>
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<td>n.c.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonaldtown</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>51.79</td>
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<td>35.55</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>32.02</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. St Leonards</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>26.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonards</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>46.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>35.11</td>
<td>37.57</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>35.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>58.59</td>
<td>67.35</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>36.08</td>
<td>21.63</td>
<td>23.01</td>
<td>23.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>32.51</td>
<td>44.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>18.73</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>85.98</td>
<td>45.57</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>27.63</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.
Municipal elections which were not contested are marked n.c; electoral returns for 1890 are not available.

Suburban electoral returns after the introduction of cumulative voting suggest that the likelihood of an individual exercising his or her right to vote increased in proportion to the number of votes that individual held, but the inconclusiveness of the available evidence, and the absence of statistics relating to the City, does not allow the point to be stressed unduly. See Table 5.5.
Table 5.5: Percentages of each category of electors in selected suburbs who voted at the last municipal elections, 1871-85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1885</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vote</td>
<td>votes</td>
<td>votes</td>
<td>votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>42.35</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>34.06</td>
<td>30.31</td>
<td>39.16</td>
<td>31.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>41.12</td>
<td>47.32</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>25.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>16.17</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>20.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Dock</td>
<td>34.64</td>
<td>40.38</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>73.80</td>
<td>66.66</td>
<td>77.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>73.80</td>
<td>66.66</td>
<td>77.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>34.40</td>
<td>59.00</td>
<td>39.47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonaldtown</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>34.40</td>
<td>59.00</td>
<td>39.47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.St Leonards</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>80.30</td>
<td>70.37</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonards</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
<td>n.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>35.89</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>12.57</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>14.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>15.55</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>19.43</td>
<td>25.88</td>
<td>29.75</td>
<td>18.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>27.48</td>
<td>41.73</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>48.38</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.

1. 1871 is the first year for which these returns were published; no information is available for 1890.

Just how acutely the bulk of voters were aware of the reallocation of electoral influence under cumulative voting is uncertain. The emphasis after all was upon the addition of votes as a reward for increasing respectability, and not upon the diminution of the voting power of the many relative to the disproportionate addition of electoral influence by a few. The trend over time was moreover for more people to receive more votes, and it is therefore problematical how much credence a citizen who in 1870 had possessed only one vote but who in 1890 enjoyed two would have placed on rumours, however persistent, that municipal elections were controlled by a few. The trend over time was moreover for more people to receive more votes, and it is therefore problematical how much credence a citizen who in 1870 had possessed only one vote but who in 1890 enjoyed two would have placed on rumours, however persistent, that municipal elections were controlled by a few.
Table 5.6: Distribution of electoral influence in selected suburbs, 1871-90 (The first figure shows each category of voters as a percentage of total electors. The second figure shows the total votes available to each category of electors, as a percentage of all the votes available in each municipality.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 vote</td>
<td>2 votes</td>
<td>3 votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>81.54</td>
<td>15.23</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>66.32</td>
<td>24.78</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>37.87</td>
<td>22.72</td>
<td>33.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>80.25</td>
<td>16.08</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>64.65</td>
<td>33.83</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Dock</td>
<td>59.47</td>
<td>37.36</td>
<td>8.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>51.21</td>
<td>34.81</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>30.41</td>
<td>41.35</td>
<td>14.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>68.42</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>47.36</td>
<td>29.14</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonaldtown</td>
<td>72.66</td>
<td>19.71</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>84.12</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>48.97</td>
<td>37.02</td>
<td>6.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>65.95</td>
<td>23.64</td>
<td>8.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.21</td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>18.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.12</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.66</td>
<td>41.60</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.6: Distribution of electoral influence in selected suburbs, 1871-90 (The first figure shows each category of voters as a percentage of total electors. The second figure shows the total votes available to each category of electors, as a percentage of all the votes available in each municipality.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 vote</td>
<td>2 votes</td>
<td>3 votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. St Leonards</td>
<td>67.24</td>
<td>25.08</td>
<td>6.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonards</td>
<td>47.42</td>
<td>25.30</td>
<td>12.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>63.04</td>
<td>28.26</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>42.95</td>
<td>38.42</td>
<td>14.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>61.71</td>
<td>30.92</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>41.83</td>
<td>41.92</td>
<td>11.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>69.42</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>47.49</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>17.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>53.81</td>
<td>34.09</td>
<td>8.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>42.23</td>
<td>16.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ibid.

1. 1871 is the first year for which these returns were published.
## APPENDIX SIX

Table 6.1: Yearly salaries (in pounds) of selected City Corporation officers, 1857-99

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1859</th>
<th>1865</th>
<th>1869</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1879</th>
<th>1885</th>
<th>1889</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1899</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Clerk</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Treasurer</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Engineer</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>800+</td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Surveyor</td>
<td>325+</td>
<td></td>
<td>550</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
<td>700+</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Architect</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>275+</td>
<td></td>
<td>800</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Building Surveyor</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Engineer</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Surveyor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Solicitor</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHO</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector of Nuisances</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>350+</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Inspector</td>
<td>200+</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C.C., F.C.R.

Those figures followed by the letter h. represent special horse allowances.
Table 6.2: Written notices served and prosecutions undertaken by the Inspector of Nuisances for the abatement of health nuisances, 1867-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Notices served</th>
<th>Prosecutions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1,451</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1,483</td>
<td>1,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1,515</td>
<td>2,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>2,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>2,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>1,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>2,066</td>
<td>2,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>1,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,307</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C.C., L.R. (Seymour).
APPENDIX SEVEN

City buildings condemned by the Corporation as unfit for human habitation 1879–96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total ordered</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>repaired or</td>
<td>demolished</td>
<td>demolished</td>
<td>repaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demolished</td>
<td>vacated</td>
<td>vacated</td>
<td>vacated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1879-Aug.1880</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1879-Nov.1880</td>
<td>315</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1880-Nov.1881</td>
<td>approx. 450</td>
<td>approx. 350</td>
<td>approx.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1879-Nov.1881</td>
<td>approx. 800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1879-Nov.1883</td>
<td>approx.1,300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1879-Nov.1887</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>284</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Returns by the City Building Surveyor and City Architect, in S.C.C., L.R., and P.M.C.C.S.; S.M.H., 15.12.1887, 'Artisans' Model Dwellings' p.5 (Mayor Riley). No annual reports by the Building Surveyor and Architect are listed in the S.C.C. indexes to letters received for the years 1882-6.
APPENDIX EIGHT

Distribution of recorded smallpox cases in City and suburbs, 1881

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>no. of infected houses</th>
<th>no. of people quarantined</th>
<th>no. of smallpox cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George &amp; Cumberland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrmont</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex Street &amp; district</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haymarket</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolloomooloo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camperdown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druitt Town</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macdonaldtown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennant Hills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: calculated from Appendix A, in Report of the Board of Health Upon the Late Smallpox Epidemic, p.964.

1. The available figures do not include Chinese.
APPENDIX NINE

Occupations of Householders in Condemned Buildings

The following tables serve only as the roughest of guides to the social composition of those people occupying premises that were ordered to be demolished by the City Corporation. Some difficulty was experienced while compiling lists of identifiable addresses in accumulating sufficient examples to provide even meagre bases for analysis. In the event, I relied heavily on reports in the Evening News, Herald, and Daily Telegraph, and for the years 1890 and 1891 upon printed returns by the City Building Surveyor. Greater rewards might await a more comprehensive study with enough time to locate the fragmented and widely scattered manuscript material in the Sydney Town Hall archives concerning condemned buildings.

Compounding the problem of locating addresses was the difficulty of linking those that I did find with the names of their occupants provided by existing post office directories. The absence of a number of issues of Sands' Sydney Directories meant that no analysis could be attempted for certain years, so that the chronological spread of the following tables is determined as much by the availability of evidence as by a wish to present a properly representative sample.

A further problem was the all too frequent failure of the directories to specify occupations of inhabitants, and the uncertain reliability of those descriptions that were given. One particular resident was described in succeeding editions of Sands' Directories as bootmaker, greengrocer, and again bootmaker, and on another occasion a man was described as a cab proprietor and in the next year merely as a cabman. How was this information collected, and are these examples truly accurate descriptions of changing occupation and status, or are they simply errors? It is also frequently impossible to discover from the clues given by the directories whether a particular building was a business or a dwelling or both, and in the following tables therefore no distinction has been made between working places and private residences.

One further difficulty needs to be mentioned. The classifications used in the following tables are liable to set up false comparisons between different occupations, suggesting a uniformity of status and prosperity within trades which might not in fact have been the case. There must in reality have been considerable overlapping between my classifications, and consequently the arbitrary divisions that I have introduced produce at times some uneasy fits.
These drawbacks aside, I feel that some valid conclusions can cautiously be made. Most important, in view of the repeated contemporary emphasis upon the uniformity of dirt and degradation among the residents of areas inspected by City Corporation tours, is the diversity in fact revealed among the occupants of condemned buildings. Unconsciously influenced by the usual contemporary descriptions of the 'lower orders', I was a little surprised at the number and variety of trades revealed, and especially at the size of my 'petty trade and smaller commercial' classification.

The tables are remarkable for the consistently small numbers represented in the 'unskilled' category and by the equal consistency with which the 'petty trade and smaller commercial' column figures prominently. In part this may serve to question the tables' validity in suggesting distinctions between, for example, a hawker and a confectioner when there is so little evidence available upon which to base any such contrasts. Even granting this drawback however, the differences between the numbers apportioned to the two classifications illustrates the fallacy of outsiders' common perceptions of almost universal deprivation and wretchedness within City working class districts.

Undoubtedly, the tables' unskilled category is underrepresented. Judging by the location of buildings tenanted by many of those people whose occupations are unknown, it is possible that a significant proportion of these folk were in fact unskilled. A less tentative hypothesis is the likelihood that since sub-letting was general among working class districts the usually single name which corresponds to each address in the directories was only that of the principal lessee, whereas subtenants went unrecorded. It is among this invisible group that the unskilled and least prosperous among working people were most likely to have been found.

What is significant about the tables is that, taken together, the first three columns suggest a social pyramid of considerable complexity, ranging upwards from the casually employed to encompass a whole disparate array of wage workers and the self-employed, among whom could be found infinite gradations of prosperity and hardship. There was nothing monolithic about the social composition of the City districts from which these samples were drawn, despite the common working class tag which they carried. Still less was there in these districts any one clear culture of the lower orders linked by widely shared attitudes and behaviour, but instead a collection of individuals, each with ambitions and prejudices of their own, some of them perhaps feeling self-satisfaction with their status in relation to
those whom they categorised as being beneath them, and others perhaps
determined to elevate themselves further up the social ladder.

The mental impact of slum clearance upon evicted tenants must naturally
have been influenced by the degree of working class mobility normal within
the local area and about the City. It was remarked at times that working
class tenants were seemingly always on the move and rarely stayed at one
address for long, a tendency which conceivably may have lessened the
trauma of eviction from condemned premises. Evidence gathered by the
Sewage and Health Board, however, suggests that numbers of working people
lived quite settled lives. It is impossible now to gauge the past
movements of sub-tenants in those buildings that were ordered to be pulled
down, and tracing those tenants whose names are available is hampered by
the absence of a complete run of post office directories. The results
obtained from tracing the addresses of those in the previous year whose
dwellings were in the next condemned by the Corporation are confusing.
Generally however, the same occupants are listed by the directories for
both years.

Thirteen of those buildings condemned in November 1884 and whose
occupants have been identified can be traced in the post office directory
of the previous year. Nine of these premises were occupied by the same
tenant in both years and four had changed occupancy. Twenty buildings
condemned in January 1885 can likewise be traced in the directory for the
previous year. Sixteen of these premises were occupied by the same tenant
in both years and again only four had changed occupancy. Eighty buildings
condemned during 1890 can be traced in the directories for 1890 and 1889.
In 48 of these the occupancy remained unchanged, but 32 of the addresses
are listed as having new tenants. Twenty-three of the buildings condemned
during 1891 may be traced in the previous year's directory. Eighteen of
these premises were occupied by the same tenant in both years and only five
had changed occupancy. The previous movements of occupants in those
buildings condemned in January 1884 however contrast strongly with the
general pattern apparent in the above examples. Twenty-two of the

1. Aaron had early drawn attention to the matter; S.C.C., L.R., 1857,
2. See S. & H.B., 11th R., qu.243, p.586 (4 years), p.588 (3 years);
qu.247, p.591 (7 years); qu.251, p.597 (1 year, 17 years); qu.256,
p.604 (5 years), p.605 (5 years); qu.258, p.606 (7 years); qu.262,
p.612 (32 years). The last of these was regarded as outstanding, but
the others seem to have been noted only in passing and to have been
judged unremarkable.
condemned buildings can be traced in the 1883 directory. Nine of these premises were occupied by the same tenant in both years but thirteen of them had changed occupancy. The sample is however possibly unrepresentative, being drawn heavily from one street located in the unwholesome district alongside the City's southern markets.

While bearing this uncertainty in mind it is nonetheless on the whole, I think, fair to suggest in conclusion that the following occupation classifications do help explain the apparently hostile reaction of many working people and those among the lower middle classes affected by Corporation tours of 'rookerl.es'. As the tables demonstrate, these were often people with skills and sometimes a modest business of their own, and many were unlikely to take kindly to having their homes described as being unfit for human habitation. They were still less likely to take kindly to the dislocation which evictions caused to the local economy about their neighbourhood. The apparently large number of occupants of condemned buildings who like fruiterers or grocers depended for their livelihood upon local trade, or who, like bootmakers and carpenters, were presumably employed in nearby factories and workshops, hints at the strong ties which bound these people to the local neighbourhood. For many of those evicted therefore, the suggestions by middle class sanitary reformers that they move to the suburbs were meaningless, and unless they could squeeze into alternative nearby accommodation the demolition of their homes would have entailed certain inconvenience and possible hardship.3

Table 9.1: Buildings condemned for demolition during January–May 1881—occupations in still occupied premises, 1882 (there being no 1881 directory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unskilled &amp; Petty trade</th>
<th>Semi-skilled &amp; professional</th>
<th>Semi-skilled &amp; professional</th>
<th>Larger commercial &amp; professional</th>
<th>No. of occupation premises specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stevedore (2)</td>
<td>Grocer (2)</td>
<td>Upholsterer (2)</td>
<td>Teacher (2)</td>
<td>Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcarter</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Veterinary surgeon</td>
<td>Bedding-manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding-house</td>
<td>Newsagent</td>
<td>Engineer (2)</td>
<td>Cabinet-maker (3)</td>
<td>Cabinetmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenter (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engine driver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farrier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saddler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Locksmith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bootmaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bellow maker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 5 17 3 12 18

3. See Appendix Ten.
Table 9.2: Buildings condemned for demolition, September 1881—occupations in still occupied premises, 1882 (there being no 1881 directory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unskilled &amp; petty trade</th>
<th>Semi-skilled &amp; smaller commercial</th>
<th>Semi-skilled &amp; skilled commercial</th>
<th>Larger commercial &amp; professional</th>
<th>No of premises occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tobacco-twister (2)</td>
<td>furniture dealer (2)</td>
<td>chimney-sweep (2)</td>
<td>veterinary surgeon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangler</td>
<td>general dealer (2)</td>
<td>bricklayer</td>
<td>solicitor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dairyman</td>
<td>dealer (3)</td>
<td>stonemason</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardener</td>
<td>general agent</td>
<td>cabinet-maker (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charwoman</td>
<td>salesman</td>
<td>carpenter (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hawker (2)</td>
<td>shipbroker</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocer (4)</td>
<td>bootmaker (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confectioner</td>
<td>(2) farrier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ginger beer maker</td>
<td></td>
<td>midwife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hatter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cab proprietor (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dray proprietor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boarding house (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lodging house (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 28 16 2 6 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.3: Buildings condemned for demolition, 14 January 1884 - occupations from Sands' 1884 directory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drayman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salesman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.4: Buildings condemned for demolition, 19 November 1884 - occupations from Sands' 1884 directory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.5: Buildings condemned for demolition, 14 January 1885 - occupations from Sands' 1885 directory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9.6: Buildings condemned for demolition during 1890 - occupations from Sands' 1890 directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unskilled &amp; smaller &amp; skilled</th>
<th>Semi-skilled &amp; professional</th>
<th>Larger commercial &amp; professional</th>
<th>No of occupation occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dealer (6)</td>
<td>bootmaker (3)</td>
<td>ironmonger</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agent</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>produce-merchant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storekeeper</td>
<td>engineer (2)</td>
<td>produce-agent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>produce-merchant</td>
<td>tinsmith &amp;</td>
<td>cabinet-maker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
<td>ironworker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commission-agent</td>
<td>saddler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butcher (2)</td>
<td>maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stationer &amp; midwife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookseller</td>
<td>blacksmith (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tailor &amp; outfitter</td>
<td>mariner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commercial-traveller</td>
<td>painter &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cab-proprietor</td>
<td>hanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proprietor</td>
<td>brass-founder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newsagent</td>
<td>founder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poulterer</td>
<td>engraver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undertaker &amp; diesinker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruiterer</td>
<td>jeweller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hairdresser</td>
<td>watch-maker &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fishmonger</td>
<td>maker &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greengrocer</td>
<td>jeweller (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confectioner</td>
<td>dentist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paperbag-cook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>importer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tailor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining-rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wine &amp; spirit merchant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newsheet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proprietor (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W. Carrying Co. Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luggage Co.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 23 14 29
Table 9.7: Buildings condemned for demolition during 1891 - occupations from Sands' 1891 directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unskilled &amp; smaller commercial</th>
<th>Petty trade &amp; skilled</th>
<th>Semi-skilled professional</th>
<th>Larger commercial &amp; professional</th>
<th>No premises specified</th>
<th>No occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dairykeeper</td>
<td>jeweller (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharebroker</td>
<td>bootmaker (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruiterer</td>
<td>stonemason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant</td>
<td>electrotyper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocer</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chemist</td>
<td>carpenter &amp; broker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agent (2)</td>
<td>engraver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lawn tennis</td>
<td>watchmaker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depot</td>
<td>electro-plater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chiropodist</td>
<td>plater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bootmaker &amp; printer</td>
<td>importer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>importer</td>
<td>picture-framer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draftsman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 13 12
APPENDIX TEN

Movements of householders displaced by Corporation demolition orders

Attempts to trace the occupants of condemned dwellings were rendered well-nigh impossible by the paucity of surviving information. Even when the addresses of condemned premises could be obtained from newspaper reports or City Council archives, the absence of a complete run of post office directories or, when the necessary editions were available, the omission by their publishers of relevant addresses and sometimes whole streets, made the tracing of evicted residents in sufficient numbers for valid analysis extremely difficult. The following two tables, based on returns by the City Building Surveyor of buildings ordered to be demolished in 1890 and 1891 and upon the Sands' Sydney Directories for those years, therefore form an inadequate sample, and any conclusions to be drawn from them concerning the consequences for evicted tenants must be tentative.

From returns prepared by the Building Surveyor it is possible to obtain the addresses of 121 premises ordered to be demolished during 1890. In the case of 34 of these premises there is insufficient information available in the post office directories to proceed with them further. Another 18 are obviously business premises and have therefore been excluded. This leaves 69 premises that are listed in the Sands' directory for that year as probable private residences. It is possible from these premises to obtain the names of 70 people who were living in them when the buildings were condemned. Of these only four were the building's owners, the remainder being tenants. Despite the Corporation notices served upon the owners of these premises, 25 of the occupants in 1890 were still listed as occupying the same condemned premises in the 1891 directory. Another 45 people had moved elsewhere by the time that the 1891 directory was compiled. The following table seeks to detail their immediate movements after eviction.
Table 10.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY SUBURBS</th>
<th>CITY SUBURBS</th>
<th>CITY SUBURBS</th>
<th>CITY SUBURBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890 address</td>
<td>1891 address</td>
<td>1890 address</td>
<td>1891 address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Cambridge</td>
<td>85 Gloucester</td>
<td>350 Sussex St</td>
<td>Marrickville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Gipps)</td>
<td>St (Gipps)</td>
<td>(Denison)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 Clarence</td>
<td>111 Clarence</td>
<td>64 Judge St</td>
<td>Paddington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>(Fitzroy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 Clarence</td>
<td>197 Clarence</td>
<td>34 Lower</td>
<td>Redfern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>Campbell St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Cook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158 Elizabeth</td>
<td>156 Elizabeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Macquarie)</td>
<td>St (Macquarie)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 Erskine St</td>
<td>62 Erskine St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 George St</td>
<td>13 George St</td>
<td>West (Phillip)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西 (Phillip)</td>
<td>284 Kent St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 Kent St</td>
<td>284 Kent St</td>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>377 Kent St</td>
<td>74 Crown St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td>(Fitzroy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202 Kent St</td>
<td>Queen's Place</td>
<td>(Bourke) or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lane (Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209 Sussex St</td>
<td>94 George St</td>
<td>West? (Phillip)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>393 Sussex St</td>
<td>391 Sussex St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Denison)</td>
<td>St (Denison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Taylor St</td>
<td>9 Chambers St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Cook)</td>
<td>St (Cook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 Taylor St</td>
<td>60 Taylor St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St (Cook)</td>
<td>St (Cook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Untraceable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That well over half the sample are untraceable makes it unwise to draw any definite conclusions. What however is immediately apparent from even a glance at the addresses of those who can be traced is that virtually all the tenants moved very little afield from their old dwellings. The great bulk remained in the same street, sometimes only several doors away from their previous homes, and of the others who remained in the City, all but
two travelled only one street or at most several blocks away from their last address. Despite the hope of Dansey and other middle class observers that the occupants of condemned tenement buildings in the City would move to the suburbs, only three people in this sample were willing or able to do so.

Whether the new homes of those who remained in the City were better or worse than their old, it is impossible to say with any certainty. Judging from the similar addresses to the old, they were probably very much the same. Residents about Darling Harbour remained near to the harbour; the one resident of the Rocks remained in the Rocks. The move from Kent Street to Washington Lane, or even worse to Queen's Place, was a definite step down the social ladder. It is conceivable that the large number of people of whom there is no trace in the 1891 directory suffered a similar deterioration in their living standards, as they sank from the status of tenant with a separate mention in the post office directory to the anonymity of a subtenant boarding with others. The large size of the 'untraceable' category is due to the impossibility, given the available data, of determining the correct 'John Jones' or 'Mrs King' from others of the same name.

The evidence retrievable concerning occupants of buildings condemned during 1891 is still more scanty than that available for 1890, and would be of little use were it not that the few insights thus afforded of movements by evicted tenants seem to reinforce the tentative conclusions already made for the previous year. The Building Surveyor's returns give the addresses of 36 premises that were ordered to be demolished during 1891. For 10 of these buildings there is not enough information available in the directories to study them any further. Another five are business places and have therefore been excluded from the sample. This leaves 21 buildings that are listed in the 1891 directory as likely private residences and for these it is possible to obtain the names of 23 occupants when the buildings were ordered to be demolished. All 23 were tenants and not the owners of the premises they occupied. Despite the Corporation orders, five of these 23 occupants were still listed as occupying the same condemned premises in the 1892 directory. A total of 18 people had moved elsewhere by the time that the 1892 post office directory was compiled.
Table 10.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>SUBURBS</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Untraceable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891 address</td>
<td>1892 address</td>
<td>1891 address</td>
<td>1892 address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 Bathurst St</td>
<td>71 Bathurst St</td>
<td>11 Bridge St Woollahra ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brisbane)</td>
<td>(Brisbane) (Bourke)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Bridge St</td>
<td>253 George St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bourke)</td>
<td>(Bourke)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Bridge St</td>
<td>18 Bridge St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bourke)</td>
<td>(Bourke)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205 Devonshire St</td>
<td>4½ John St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cook)</td>
<td>(Cook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539 Kent St</td>
<td>68 Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Denison)</td>
<td>St (Brisbane)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 5 | 1 | 3 | 9 |

Again, conclusions are hampered by the high proportion of tenants whose new addresses are untraceable. As in the 1890 sample, however, it seems that virtually all occupants of condemned buildings remained in the City, with even the one possible move to the suburbs being based on uncertain evidence. Of those moving to new addresses in the City, two remained in the same street in which they had lived before and the remaining three moved only a block or so further away. Although the change from Bridge Street to suburban Woollahra, if indeed made, would probably have meant a rise in status, a change of address from Devonshire Street to John Street or from Kent Street to Washington Street was of dubious advantage.
### APPENDIX ELEVEN

**CHRONICLE OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overseas</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>City Mayors</th>
<th>CHO Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Cholera in Britain</td>
<td>Quarantine Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney Police Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Whig Royal Commission Report on Municipal Corporations</td>
<td>Sydney Building Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney incorporated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Henle &amp; specific aetiology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Leicester appoints 2 MOHs</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Hoskings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Duncan appointed MOH, Liverpool</td>
<td>London City Sewers Act;</td>
<td>J. Wilshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Simon elected MOH. British Public Health Act</td>
<td></td>
<td>G. Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>London City Sewers Act</td>
<td>City Corporation &amp; Sewerage Acts</td>
<td>H. McDermott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Common Lodging Houses Act</td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Broughton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney Sewerage Act. City Council suspended</td>
<td>J. Josephson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Lodging Houses Bill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smallpox in Pt. Jackson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Lodging Houses Bill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney Corporation Restoration Act, incl. compulsory appointment of a CHO</td>
<td>G. Thornton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aaron elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>City Mayors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Smallpox in London. MOHs appointed in Glasgow &amp; Leeds</td>
<td>Municipalities Act. Common Lodging Houses Bill</td>
<td>J. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parkes' select committee on the Sydney working classes appointed</td>
<td>C. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cholera in Britain. Pasteur working on fermentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Spence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>British Sanitary Act</td>
<td>British Sanitary Act</td>
<td>Hearn, Plutology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Smallpox in San Francisco</td>
<td>Municipalities Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Smallpox in Melbourne</td>
<td>Compulsory Vaccination &amp; Smallpox Prevention Bills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic begins in Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>British Public Health Act, incl. compulsory appointment of MOHs</td>
<td>Smallpox in Pt Jackson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Smallpox in Melbourne</td>
<td>Common Lodging Houses Bill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>British smallpox epidemic ends</td>
<td>Dansey proposes a model lodging house</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>City Mayors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smallpox at Millers Point</td>
<td>J. Merriman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td></td>
<td>Model Lodging House Co. formed; Common Lodging Houses Bill</td>
<td>J. Merriman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>George's Progress and Poverty published in U.S.</td>
<td>City Corporation &amp; Improvement Acts</td>
<td>C. Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoral tours of buildings unfit for human habitation begin</td>
<td>J. Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic; Board of Health established; Infectious Disease Supervision Act.</td>
<td>J. Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td></td>
<td>Model lodging house opened</td>
<td>J. Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Smallpox in Victoria; cholera in Europe &amp; Asia</td>
<td>Smallpox 'in Sydney</td>
<td>J. Hardie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smallpox in Pt Jackson</td>
<td>J. Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Lodging Houses Bill. Riley proposes model working class housing</td>
<td>A. Riley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td></td>
<td>Centenary of Sydney's foundation</td>
<td>J. Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Cholera in Europe</td>
<td>Moore St fire &amp; Moore St Improvement Act</td>
<td>S. Burdekin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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IV PHOTOGRAPHS

V PRIVATE PAPERS

VI NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

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  b. Articles
  c. Theses

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  b. Articles

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