
"One in name and in fame are the Sea-Divided Gael"

Thomas D'Arcy Magee,
Salutation to the Kelts.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the Australian National University, July, 1969.

Gregory Michael Tobin.
This thesis is the result of original research conducted by the author in the School of General Studies, Australian National University, 1966-69.

G.M. Tobin
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

This thesis could not have been written without the assistance of many people. I am especially grateful for the guidance and encouragement of Mr. N.B. Nairn of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. Mr. J. Gibbney provided valuable assistance based on his own research into the life of Hugh Mahon, and Mr. G.P. Walsh gave me the benefits of his detailed knowledge of the economic and social history of Sydney in the last century. Niall Brennan gave me access to the papers of the late Dr. Nicholas O'Donnell; Professor P.J. O'Farrell directed my attention to the Redmond Papers at the University of New South Wales Library, and Mr. A. Cahill of the University of Sydney greatly simplified my examination of the Moran Papers. I am grateful for being given permission to examine the Archives of St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, and the resources of the Historical Commission of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Professor Paul Bourke guided me through the Irish centres of Western Victoria, and his uncle, the late Martin Bourke of Koroit, helped me to catch something of the atmosphere of Irish life in that area in earlier days. The Research Committee of the Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon, provided generous financial support for my research; the staff of the Bridges Memorial Library helped me in many ways, as did their
counterparts at the National Library of Australia, the Mitchell Library and the Latrobe Library. Miss Christine McGruther and Miss Christeen Cochran typed the drafts and the final thesis, and their help has been invaluable.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife whose interest in the project has never flagged, and without whose encouragement the task would have seemed far more difficult of completion.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION (1)

CHAPTER I.  
The Irish community in the 1880's; New South Wales and Victoria.  

CHAPTER II.  
The Home Rule Movement: the opening phase.  

CHAPTER III.  
The Home Rule Bill of 1886 and its aftermath.  

CHAPTER IV.  
Crisis and disintegration.  

CHAPTER V.  
The aftermath: 1900-1916.  

- 1
- 60
- 126
- 249
Although the Irish constitute one of the major formative influences in the development of Australian society, they have as yet escaped the serious attention of historians. No coherent body of literature exists to place the Irish in their colonial context and assess the distinctiveness of their contribution to an emerging Australian ethos; yet this is not to say that the Irish have been totally ignored by local researchers - rather, they have been seen as a group of secondary importance, often to be found on the periphery of large and significant events or embroiled in violent controversy. Accordingly, we have studies of the Irish and Eureka, the Irish and the Labour Party, the Irish and conscription - but never of the Irish in their own right, as a distinct ethnic group coming to terms with a difficult and often hostile environment.

On the other hand, the absence of serious historical enquiry has not meant that the Irish have been allowed to run free in a conceptual void. A great deal is known about certain Irish stereotypes which exist quite independent of any body of formal literature. The image of the Irishman as the permanent radical is one of the most pervasive in the Australian calendar and can be traced in an almost direct line from the Castle Hill
rebellion of 1804 through to the incidents at Eureka and on to the great debate over the conscription issue. At a different level it has also been traced behind the great education controversy during the late nineteenth century and beneath the drive to establish the Labour Party; more recently it has been detected within — of all places — the Catholic Church in the late colonial period. Of all the Irish stereotypes, this radical image ranks as the most significant; but alongside it stand lesser images which in a sense buttress the central thesis: the Irishman as professional Anglophobe, the Irishman as publican or drunkard, the Irishman as chronically belligerent, and finally, the Irishman as the poorly educated proletarian, permanently condemned to the lowest rungs of society.

There can be little doubt that an earlier generation of historians recognised this picture and accepted it without any real question; accordingly they felt no need to focus attention on a group of unrepentant rebels, and a work like Henry Gyles Turner's two volume History of the Colony of Victoria could practically ignore the Irish as a group. But a later generation of writers found themselves more in sympathy with the radical impulse which the Irish seemed to personify and acknowledged that signs of that impulse could be seen in the late nineteenth century drive for reform and social betterment; to some
extent, the proverbial truculence of the group compensated for their fierce attachment to an obscurantist faith and earned them at least a temporary place as one of the more dynamic groups in colonial society. And so the Irish made their entry into Australian historical writing - but even then, via the tradesman's entrance rather than by the main door.

All the prevailing images have much to be said for them, and only the most patriotic of Irishmen would want to deny their basic validity. But it can be argued that too heavy a reliance on the stereotypes has lead to a failure to recognize that the Irish group-personality can be examined across a much broader spectrum, and that there are some points where it shades quite neatly into the general colonial pattern - so neatly that few outside the Irish community noticed what was occurring. It was hardly likely that an immigrant community cut off from their source by thousands of miles of ocean would manage to keep both their dreams and their hatreds completely intact; both were subject to erosion over the years, and both could suddenly renew themselves in response to stimuli from outside the community. As with any other group, the Irish reacted to their new environment in a variety of ways, and not least amongst these was the desire to conform and be accepted by the wider community. This is not altogether
surprising, given that they came from a predominantly peasant society welded together by deeply ingrained conservative attitudes and habits and made radical only to the extent of resisting subordination to English authority; once that element was removed, many of the stereotypes rapidly lost their force.

In the colonial context, many factors operated to produce a new Irishman, a composite figure incorporating both the drive towards insurgency and the willingness to conform and conserve. One of these elements was the way in which the agitation for political autonomy in the homeland impinged on the consciousness of the expatriate Irish, forcing them to debate at a fairly rudimentary level questions relating to the political relationship which should exist between component parts of the Empire, to the operations of government at all levels, and to the need for social and economic reform. Since none of these questions could be looked at entirely in the abstract, the probing which followed led to a heightened awareness of the advantages, both real and potential, of the social order within which they themselves operated. There were other aspects of the situation in the homeland which tended to alter their general outlook, and not all of these made for harmony and assimilation; but in the balance, the campaign for Home Rule which bridged the end of the
century threw more light than darkness across the Irish communities in the two largest Australian colonies. It is on the interplay between the world-wide drive for recognition of the Irish national identity on the one hand, and the structural changes occurring within those communities on the other, that this study attempts to focus.
The Great Famine of the 1840's destroyed one Irish nation, but created two in its place. Death and emigration sealed the fate of Gaelic Ireland and left those who survived to rebuild among the ruins of the old civilisation. But as a new and still impoverished Ireland emerged from the Trauma of the Famine, a second Irish nation, larger and more powerful than its counterpart, could be seen growing within the already established societies of the New World. Of the millions who swarmed out of Ireland in the late forties and early fifties, the vast majority headed across the Atlantic to the United States; many did not survive the journey in the crowded and disease-ridden coffin ships which handled the Atlantic traffic, and thousands more arrived in such weakened condition that landfall was simply a prelude to further suffering and death. But those who did survive made their way to the cities and factories of the East coast, and became a vital segment of the migrant labour force at a time when the United States was beginning to lay the foundations of her massive industrial complex. Their strongholds were to be Massachusetts and New York; Boston
and New York City were themselves inundated by waves of Irish immigrants, and Irish influence was to colour the political life of both cities well into the twentieth century. For decades they were to remain on the lowest rungs of society, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water for a burgeoning industrial society. Yet by comparison with Irish levels of prosperity, they lived well — well enough, in many cases, to save the passage money needed to bring their relatives to the new land. In later years, some of the fruits of this new-found prosperity would be applied not only to the rescue of their indigent brethren, but also to the aid of those who seemed most likely to win some form of national independence for Ireland. In the meantime, the Irish struggled through the painful adjustment to their new environment; within a

generation, men and women of peasant background and centuries
of peasant ancestry had learned to master the art of
surviving in the grim slums of urban and industrial America.
The city was to be their world, and they triumphed over it;
but very few were ever to have the opportunity to resume the
farming life they had followed in the homeland. As a group,
they remained trapped in their tenements, and the moving
frontier contributed very little to their induction into
the new society.

But not all the refugee Irish joined in the rush
across the Atlantic. Many took the shorter route eastwards
and became permanent settlers in English industrial centres,
merging their misery with that of the textile operatives of
Lancashire. Another group took what must have been the most
difficult choice of all – the long sea voyage to the South
Pacific, to the English colonies strung along the coastline
of Australia and New Zealand. Only a tiny fraction of these
who left Ireland in the half-century after the Famine took
the southern route in preference to the Atlantic; as a
general rule, ten times as many opted for the United States
in any given year. But the colonies to which they were

1. Based on the annual Emigration Statistics for Ireland
issued by the Registrar-General of Ireland between 1876
and 1916, published in the Sessional Papers of the House
of Commons. [Hereafter referred to as Emigration
Statistics, Ireland].
migrating were equally tiny in comparison to the United States, and what would have seemed a mere trickle of incoming settlers by New York standards could be regarded as a significant influx in Sydney and Melbourne. Moreover, those who did reach the southern colonies found themselves launched into societies which were still in their formative stages; basically they were outposts of English civilisation with very little institutional or social development which did not follow the basic English model, but nothing could alter the fact that the model had to be re-erected in a continent in which almost every element of the physical environment differed markedly from its English counterpart, and in which no historical framework existed to impede or modify the work of construction. Accordingly, the Irish found themselves projected into a fluid social context and whether they liked it or not, they were bound to become one ingredient in the formation of new colonial societies. The flavour which they could be expected to impart to the new social order would derive in turn from the circumstances of their own formation within Irish society - a society which had been for centuries cast within a mould as forbidding as any in Europe. Oppression and rebellion, hatred and frustration, humour and melancholy - all were vital elements of that mould. Few migrant groupings in the nineteenth century took with them to the land of their adoption such a volatile cultural heritage, and many who watched the spread of Irish settlement
through the Anglo-Saxon world wondered as to the eventual outcome of it all. Of those who did speculate, only the Irish were uniformly confident that the long term results would be beneficial to all concerned.

By the early 1880's, the larger of the Australian colonies had developed beyond the raw frontier stage of social evolution and were beginning to produce a tiny corps of social commentators who were equipped to make some sort of evaluation of their society and of the direction in which it was heading. Very few of these commentators had the chance to turn away from the broad questions of moral, social and political concern, and to examine the role of ethnic minorities in colonial society. Generally, when the Irish were discussed as a minority group, such discussion took place within the time-worn limits of sectarian controversy. But on occasion, the new periodicals which now marked the more sophisticated hopes of the small colonial intelligentsia devoted some space to articles bearing on what was termed the Irish Question. Usually it had been the implications for the Empire of the rising political ferment in Ireland which attracted attention; but from time to time, the Irish were looked at as a colonial problem as well as an Imperial one.

In early 1881, for example, when the Irish problem had just begun to plague the politicians at Westminster, the
Melbourne observer A.M. Topp made a serious attempt to analyse the problems that flowed from the incorporation of an Irish minority within a society governed by English institutions and accepting basically English values.\(^1\) In his view there was a basic incompatibility between the racial characteristics of the Celtic Irish and the Anglo-Saxon that had to be faced honestly and realistically if the English political system and its colonial derivatives were to be preserved in good order.\(^2\) The Celtic Irish were, after all, of vastly inferior racial stock, a fact which had been well recognised even in Roman times: they were still morally, socially and intellectually deficient compared to the Anglo-Saxon race that had traditionally governed them. Their deep, ingrained inability to perceive what is true and what is false and their great capacity for petty scheming and intrigue stood in contrast to the open honesty of the


\(^2\) The term 'Celtic' was used as a synonym for 'Southern Catholic', with an underlining of the element of racial distinction. In Topp's view, "of all possible distinctions between men, difference of race is the most vital and deep seated..." Topp, op. cit., p.16. The Irish themselves used the word "Gaelic" very infrequently, and then only with reference to the Irish language; but they were fond of referring to the Irish race in general as "the Gael", especially when the occasion demanded a patriotic speech.
Englishman, and made straightforward dealing between the two almost impossible. To made things worse, the Celtic Irish exhibited a pathetic lack of moral courage which compounded their other deficiencies, and it was patently futile to expect that a race so encumbered could be governed within the framework of institutions designed for the better integrated Anglo-Saxon.¹ The current state of near-anarchy in Ireland could be traced to the failure of English statesmen to realise that the Irish must be governed by strong executive authority and could not be expected to master such refinements of English liberty as the jury system and the franchise. In Topp's view, the whole problem was very relevant to colonial society, for the vast exodus of the Celtic Irish over the past 35 years had meant that few communities were now free of their distinctive social and political vices. The Celts were already becoming the dominant force in urban government on the eastern seaboard of the United States and were there exhibiting a talent for manipulative politics of a type which shocked English opinion; it was not so much the novelty of what they were doing which attracted attention, but rather the ease with which they were

---

1. "...To sum up: the Irish, in common with the Celts generally, have for ages been in the position of a subject and inferior race, and have, therefore, acquired the vices that come from a servile position". Topp, op.cit., p.16.
able to subvert processes which up till then had seemed adequate enough to ensure the reasonably honest conduct of political affairs.¹

Clearly Topp had good grounds for doubting whether it would be possible to fuse the political instincts of the Celt with the more traditional English values, especially when he argued from contemporary experience overseas rather than from racial theory, for both the Australian colonies and the United States had drawn their Irish component mainly from the same source - the Province of Munster - and unless there were undetected differences of social class between the two groups, they would have shared an identical political background and would have been formed by the same social environment. The implications of this fact could be quite alarming in the colonial context, for it has been argued that

"...the most conspicuous aspect of Irish life was that it was set in a context shorn of nearly every influence but raw power. In the ecclesiastical realm the Irish dwelt upon the uncontestable power of the Church; in the secular world, they were everywhere subjugated by the power of the landlord and Anglo-Saxon government authorities. It was inevitable, therefore, that the political ethos of the Irish became predominantly power orientated. The conditions of their existence were

unaffected by moral influences as a result of the nature of their conflict with England...¹

Given this background, the Irish could be expected to develop a profound respect for power, together with a complete distrust of law which in their experience had been simply a device used to strip them of both political and economic rights.² In the American context this disdain for law and constituted authority, together with a corresponding respect for unofficial sources of authority, meant that the Irish were well equipped to develop a new type of political machine which incorporated their own concept of the way government should operate and harnessed their voting power with chilling efficiency. The Democratic party was to be their vehicle and the control of urban government their objective; to an outside observer they appeared to have been remarkably successful in the last quarter of the nineteenth century — and yet there was another side to the coin. The Irish had proved that they could seize and hold power with remarkable skill, but they were to a large extent unable to exploit the fruits of their victory; rarely did they use


² "In Ireland gaols are popular shrines, like the ruined abbeys and Holy Wells. The only really venerated part of the court of justice is the dock..." William O'Brien MP, article in the *Catholic Press*, (Sydney) 14 Dec 1901.
their power to bring about social or economic change, or even to promote their own assimilation into American society. For the Irish, the fascination of power lay in its immediate use for small-scale objectives, and not in its long range possibilities. In the long run, the Irish dissipated their political strength and failed to produce the type of social upheaval which many of their critics had confidently expected. The Irish had not been conditioned by their background to think of change and social ferment as being essential features of a healthy community; rather, they looked on politics as the struggle by one group for the right to oppress and exploit another, and in such a struggle the loser could expect little mercy.

This inability to accept the tensions that are basic to the operation of a pluralist society, reinforced by the hostility of the Irish clergy towards social change and the traditional cleavage between Protestant and Catholic, made it difficult for the Irish to assimilate fully into the American community. They could blend in at the superficial level - they could become fiercely patriotic and pro-American in their attitude to national symbols. But they found it difficult to penetrate through to the deeper level which involved personal relationships and integration into the very
structural fabric of American life. In part this failure was due to rejection by the host society, which refused to compromise its Protestant orientation to allow for the full acceptance of the Irish. But the Irish as a group also contributed to their own isolation; their church and their school system tended to keep the racial and religious barriers higher than might have otherwise been the case and they were also at odds with one of the basic drives underlying American society in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the broad movement for reform. Their inability to understand or sympathise with the idealism of the reformers, even though they had as a group much to gain from the success of the reform programme, marks the division between a super-

1. Milton M. Gordon, "Assimilation in America; theory and reality", Daedalus, Spring, 1961, pp.263-285. Gordon argues that ethnic groups in general have never been assimilated into American society. Full structural assimilation was not favoured by Protestant America, and for socio-economic reasons the first-generation migrant found it impossible to attempt assimilation at this level. But the second generation often did try to integrate into the older social framework, and then on finding themselves rebuffed, returned to their communal institutions. The ethnic conclave tended as a result to be preserved and serviced by a high proportion of second generation migrants who had achieved assimilation at the behavioural level only. According to this view, acculturation rather than assimilation has been the characteristic result of the so-called melting-pot.

2. Ibid., p.281.

3. Levine op. cit., p.97.
ficial as distinct from a basic involvement in the American ethos.

And yet the Irish who settled in Australia seem to have reacted rather differently to their new environment. There were enough Irish-born in the colonies, relative to other nationalities, to constitute a distinct ethnic group - a minority, in the twentieth century meaning of the word. Differences in social, religious and economic background between the host society and the newcomers were sufficiently marked to make assimilation a genuine problem. But the Irish, and the community of which they were part, were both small in relation to the continent which they had settled; economic opportunity and geographic dispersal tended to work against the erection of physical ghettos of the New York variety, and the Irish were as a result propelled into colonial society more forcefully than had been the case in the United States. The absence of a formal party structure and the failure of the Irish to concentrate in cities meant that their involvement in politics took a different form.¹ They could not build citadels of power as their American counterparts had done - they could only prowl along the outworks of citadels already occupied by others. Nor was there a local

¹. It could be argued that the pragmatism often evident in the attitudes of Irish-Australian politicians can be traced to the same roots as that of their Irish-American counterparts. Levine, op.cit., p.68.
political philosophy that they could adopt as their own; in the United States, the Irish found it easy to become fervid supporters of republican institutions, but in the colonies, the local orthodoxy allowed very little room for manoeuvre. Loyalty to the Empire was the base line from which the Irishman must make his adjustment to the new society, and although at times he expressed criticism of both Queen and Empire when minority groups were being crushed in Ireland and Africa, in the main he seems to have been content to accept the overall imperial concept. Curiously enough, the colonial Irish may have made more progress in assimilating at the second, structural level than did their American counterparts, while at the same time being rather more qualified in their adhesion to the national symbols of the host society — adhesion which is itself characteristic of the behavioural level of assimilation. In this respect, Australian experience may have been the reverse of the American.

But there were other critical points of difference which marked the Irish community in Australia off from its American counterpart and considerably weakened the force of Topp's analysis. Despite their common origins, the Celtic Irish in the Australian colonies could not be considered as a replica of the Irish communities of Boston or New York, and their future role in colonial society could not be gauged by reference to the American model. They had by now formed themselves into a community structured to the special needs and
conditions of colonial society, and the result was in many ways quite distinctive.

Seven years after the publication of Topp's article, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy — by then the elder statesman of the Irish-Australian community — set out to review the course of the Irish settlement in Australia and to make some observations on its significance. According to Duffy, the stream of Irish migration into Australia since the forties could be broken down into three separate divisions: initially, there had been a wave of "young farmers and artisans from Munster", men who for reasons left unspecified by Gavan Duffy, chose Australia in preference to the United States. Many of these had become prosperous, and a few had become prominent in political life; probably Gavan Duffy had men such as Sir John O'Shanassy in mind. Provided that the terms "farmer" and "artisan" are somewhat scaled down, this general grouping can be accepted in the light of the statistics published by the Irish Registrar-General's Department in the late nineteenth century. There figures do not cover the period before 1876 with any accuracy; but from that point on they confirm that Munster was the prime source


2. Emigration Statistics, Ireland, 1876-1916.
of Irish migrants to Australia. The impoverished south-western province incorporating Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford Counties, was the greatest single source of population movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. It provided the bulk of the Irish migrants who departed for the United States and Australia, while from time to time Ulster was the major source of supply for Canada and New Zealand. Until the end of the century, half of those who left for Australia in any one year would be from Munster; of these, the biggest contingent usually came from Clare. In 1876, Clare was the only county to send more settlers to Australia than to the United States.\(^1\) Occasionally in the eighties her lead would be challenged by Kerry, Tipperary or Cork, which were never far behind her in numbers. The province of Leinster, by comparison, was not well represented until Kings County and Dublin County began to lift their figures in the eighties. Ulstermen generally moved either to Scotland or Canada until late in the nineties, when a trend towards Australia – which had been foreshadowed in the middle eighties – set in in earnest. By 1900, Ulster was challenging Leinster, which had in turn only just taken the lead in migration to Australia. It was not until 1907 that the northern province actually took the lead, but

\(^1\) Emigration Statistics, Ireland, 1876.
from there on she held her position by a healthy margin until 1915, when the war meant the end of the overall pattern of migration. By the same token, Munster's contribution fell off dramatically after the turn of the century. By 1903 County Cork could send only 5 migrants to Australia compared to 5,848 to the United States, and Clare only 8 compared to 1,474. Two years later only 2 emigrated from Clare to Australia, compared to 64 from Dublin, while in 1907 none at all left. Munster was to recover its position somewhat between 1907 and 1916, but its dominance had clearly ended for good. There can, however, be little doubt that by the turn of the century the vast bulk of Irish-Australians were the descendants of the men from Munster, for that province had poured many more of its sons and daughters into the Australian colonies over the period since 1876 than any other province. The bulk of them were, as Gavan Duffy suggests, men with a farming or labouring background; at no time could the group leaving Munster display the variety of skills which the Ulster contingent invariably exhibited; they were men and women of peasant stock, and many of them knew little else of life than could be acquired in the narrow atmosphere of a

1. Emigration Statistics, Ireland, 1903.
2. Emigration Statistics, Ireland, 1907.
poor and grossly exploited society.¹

It was this Munster component that contemporary observers in Australia identified as the Celtic Irish and which some regarded as an indigestible lump within the colonial body politic. The English and Scotch who travelled with them on the voyage out very often regarded them as a race apart, an uncivilised group whose mentality seemed unfathomable and whose behaviour was more often than not irritating in the extreme.² These comments, bigoted and racialist as they very often were, do reflect the obvious clash between a social background which contained some elements of education and moderate sophistication and one which had its roots in Gaelic culture and in centuries of

1. The Registrar-General's Office did publish a table giving a breakdown of the occupations of emigrants according to province. The Ulster group regularly included a large group of farmers and labourers, but also tradesmen and white-collar workers. The other provinces were represented almost entirely by unskilled emigrants.

2. "The Papists had what they called prayers in the steerage as usual this morning, and were hardly off their knees till they had a hard box among themselves - a most infernal lot of Blackguards are the dirty Irish Papists. Never had such an opportunity of judging..." Charles Elliott, diary of a voyage to Melbourne kept 18th July - 25th October 1861, Microfilm series of Immigrant letters, Northern Ireland reel, DOD957/3, National Library of Australia. See also Neil F. Coghlan; "The Coming of the Irish to Victoria," Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, vol.12, 1965, p.68 ff.
rural servitude. Many of the Celts were indeed a race apart; some spoke only Gaelic, many knew only the horizons of their own village. Others were excessively addicted to drink – the one social defect that their spokesmen and defenders invariably had to concede. But mixed in with these volatile elements were strains drawn from the deeply embedded folk-lore and mythology of their race, and from their unique association with the Catholic tradition: it is little wonder that the English or the Scottish low-landers found them strange shipboard companions, and carried this unfavourable impression through into later years. Yet it was to be the Celts who laid the foundations of the Irish-Australian community, in the numerical sense if no other.

The second of Gavan Duffy's three divisions was much smaller in numbers, but a great deal more influential. This was a group comprised mainly of the sons of the Irish or Anglo-Irish gentry, men who very often held some professional qualification, especially in Law. Some were

1. Local tradition in the Bendigo area includes reference to the use of Gaelic by railway construction workers. But by the end of the century there were very few Irishmen who spoke it as their native tongue.

2. The importance of this group in Victorian political history in the 1850's has been noted in Geoffrey Serle's *The Golden Age*, (Melbourne, 1963), p.49. Some impression of the numbers of Irish gentry who built legal careers in Victoria between 1850 and 1900 can be obtained from J.L. Forde, *The Story of the Bar of Victoria*, (Melbourne, n.d.).
from Protestant backgrounds, others were drawn from those Catholic families which had risen in status since Catholic Emancipation. Little is known of their motives for migrating, although it seems likely that the overcrowding of the Munster circuit contributed to the influx of lawyers into the colonies. But whatever the reasons behind their move, these often well-educated and socially literate men supplied a badly felt need in a raw society which had more skilled tasks to be carried out than there were men available. The new men fitted in easily; their social graces were evident, their political views were — according to Gavan Duffy — usually Tory in sympathy, and perhaps most significant of all, they were men who were accustomed to the exercise of power. Public position was in their view no more than their right and responsibility; consequently they moved easily into positions of power in the legislatures, in the upper levels of the administration, and in the professions — especially law. Gavan Duffy himself was a member of this group, and there is no more intriguing insight into the role of this group than the picture of Gavan Duffy himself — an Irish Catholic, and a man who had been put on trial for sedition — coaching his fellow members of Victoria's fledgling Legislative Assembly

in the intricacies of Parliamentary etiquette. As the only man present who had been a member of the House of Commons, he found it difficult to conceal his impatience at the ignorance and inexperience of would-be colonial statesmen.

The third of Gavan Duffy's groupings were the Ulster farmers. These were certainly reaching the colonies in greater numbers compared to those of other countries in the late 1890's and early 1900. But Duffy made his comment in 1888, and the movements of the Northern Irish prior to that point requires further and separate study. The growth of the Loyal Orange Institution may not provide an accurate indication of the growth of the Ulster community; yet the massive lift in its membership after the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868 would indicate that Ulster was already well represented by that point. These who came in the late decades were certainly better equipped for survival than their Munster or Leinster counterparts; their ranks contained a higher proportion of farmers,

clerical workers and skilled tradesmen than those from other provinces, and this together with their Protestantism, would have made their assimilation easier. Gavan Duffy makes very little attempt to discuss their importance, but is content to accuse the Ulstermen of endeavouring to reconstruct in the colonies the same type of domination over the southerner that they had enjoyed in Ireland. Plainly, he was more interested in the first two groups which had by the late 1880's developed into very evident forces within the overall community.

The years between 1850 and 1880 had been kind to the Irish gentry; this had been the period during which they had won their colonial reputations and had moved into comfortable and eminent positions. But the colonies were now becoming larger and more complex in their social structure; competition was becoming keener, and power more difficult of access. Moreover, the Irish gentry were not being reinforced from the homeland, and although some of them would linger on in public life into the next century, as a group their days were clearly numbered. New issues and new political forces would bring into positions of power a new type of leader. The old order was changing, and the role of the Irish gentry was changing with it.
This meant that by the end of the century, the responsibility for providing the new generation of leaders would rest solidly on the Celtic section of the Irish community. But the capacity of the Celts to respond to the challenge would depend on the degree to which they had projected at least some of their number further up the social scale. If the Celts as a group had been unable to better themselves in the new land, then it was unlikely that they would be able to produce men to take over from the Irish gentry; even if they could provide the men, these would be of a very different stamp to Gavan Duffy or Henry Bournes Higgins.

By the 1880's the Celts were well on the way to producing their own elite, but it was an economic rather than a political elite. There can be little doubt that many of the Munstermen of Gavan Duffy's first category had in fact prospered in the colonies, and some had become wealthy in their own right. Unlike their counterparts in America, the Irish who arrived in Australia in the post-gold rush era had a good chance of avoiding the urban slum and the blighting of economic opportunity that went with it, and they were fortunate in that they arrived at a time when agricultural rather than industrial expansion was the dominant form of economic activity. It is significant that generations of Irish-Australians were to recognise the ballads of Father
Hartigan as a faithful picture of Irish life in the colonies, for these were centred around the vicissitudes of farming and the social life of rural communities. In both Victoria and New South Wales, a large segment of the incoming Irish migration had found its way into agricultural or allied occupations by the 1880's: nearly half of Victoria's Irish, for example, lived outside the metropolitan area in 1880. Of these, many had congregated in the fertile farming districts of Central Victoria, especially around Kilmore and Kyneton; others had moved into the Koroit-Warrnambool area to re-create the potato growing economy of the homeland, while a further segment had spread across the other end of the Western District on the Geelong-Ballarat axis. These were all areas capable of intensive cultivation of cereals and root-crops; acreages were small, but the returns were good, and the major metropolitan markets were not too far distant. But already these older settlements were becoming overcrowded, and in many cases it became imperative for entire families to move so that the numerous younger sons could be given a start in life. One of the best examples of the type of

1. Father Hartigan wrote under the nom de plume of "John O'Brien". His collection of poems, Around the Boree Log, was enormously popular amongst the Irish community until after World War II.

2. Census of Victoria, 1880.

3. Advocate, 1 Sept, 1888.
overcrowding which could occur can be seen in the case of the Shire of Bungaree; in the early nineties, 90% of the 537 cultivators in the Shire were said to be of Irish descent. A few were working blocks of 40-60 acres; most had about 80 acres, and a very few had as much as 160 acres. By colonial standards, Bungaree would have been densely populated, and while the intensive potato culture still typical of the area would have provided plenty of employment, it is clear that further subdivision would have been an unattractive proposition for many. Even if land had been available in some of these older areas, the expenditure involved would now have been out of all proportion to the return expected. In the late 1880's £40-50 per acre was regarded as a normal sale price in the Koroit district, and as much as £100 had been paid in some cases; yet the land was showing signs of exhaustion after years of overcropping, and yields were falling off. Everything pointed to the desirability of finding new areas for settlement.

In some cases the Irish settlers did not have to move far; when the Robertsons at Colac subdivided their pastoral holdings into small agricultural lots in the 1880's,

1. Advocate, 14 Feb, 1891.
Irish families moved in from Mortlake and from as far west as Koroit. In their view, the Colac area had great potential as a potato growing centre, and might even rival Koroit and Warrnambool; but Mortlake and Garvoc were left denuded of their Irish population, and the local priest found his responsibilities considerably decreased. For many families, however, the movement involved was much more substantial, and often involved a new type of farming altogether. Those who left the Western District moved north into the Wimmera and tried to adjust to the larger acreages and the irregular rainfall of the wheatbelt. Some of these men succeeded fairly quickly: one visitor to the district in 1888 came across a Tipperary man who held 1400 acres of good land, 700 of which were in crop. His standard of living was good, and his sons were well provided for. As a group, the Celts had done well enough, according to the observer, to refute the old view that only the Anglo-Saxon had the qualities necessary for success under such difficult conditions.

1. Advocate, 9 July, 1887.
4. Advocate, 7 Jan, 1888.
Probably the most significant migration of Irish was towards the north and the north-east, with one small stream diverging towards the difficult Mallee country, another larger stream settling in the area bounded by Echuca, Bendigo and Seymour, and a further stream moving into the Goulburn Valley and stretching across to the Alps. In all these areas, contemporary accounts and census returns point to the rising importance of Irish-born settlers, many of them coming from the older communities around Kyneton, Kilmore and Geelong. The Sandhurst diocese was hard pressed to keep pace with the demand for pastors and buildings for the burgeoning townships in its northern and north-eastern sectors, but the families of those for whom these services were being provided had quickly established themselves despite the more difficult farming conditions of the district. It would not be long before they would be able to make their own moderate contribution towards the cost of the Church and school building programme which was now being pushed ahead.

As the Irish settlers and their families moved northward in the 1880's they merged into the most southerly branch of the older Irish community of New South Wales. Here

1. Advocate, 30 June, 1888.
again settlement had been centred around one or two key areas, with Bathurst, Orange and Goulburn being the most conspicuous.¹ But a combination of gold mining, railway construction and land selection had now begun to draw many families away from these strongholds and disperse them along a narrow corridor of territory stretching from Yass to Albury, with a westward fork in the direction of Young.² A few had even established themselves as successful pastoralists and had modified their style of life accordingly,³ but most were struggling to master difficult country and to

1. Irish farmers were still well established in these older areas in the late 1890's. A travelling correspondent for the Freeman's Journal found many instances of men who had done well from mixed farming - and this usually included potato growing - and whose sons were now attending the new Catholic colleges at Bathurst and Goulburn. Freeman's Journal, 7 and 11 July, 1896. At Stoney Creek and Cooyal, near Mudgee, the same writer found John O'Brien of Tipperary comfortably settled on a few hundred acres..." In his early days he had followed the diggings and the public works...now he combines agriculture with dairying..." The same case history could be repeated at many points throughout the colony.

2. For a guide to railway construction in southern New South Wales, see N.G. Butlin, Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900, (Cambridge, 1964), Ch. III, and C.J. King, An Outline of Closer Settlement in New South Wales, (Sydney, 1957), Ch. V. Census returns for 1891 indicated that the counties of Argyle, King, Murray, Harden, Wynyard, Goulburn, St. Vincent and Auckland contained between 500 and 1,000 persons of Irish birth. New South Wales Census, 1891, Table X.

3. One of the most successful settlers was John Nagle Ryan, M.L.C., (1816-87), whose father had built up a large estate at Galong, near Burrowa. The younger Ryan enjoyed his role as the local squire, and built up a reputation as an uproarious host. He was a friend of William Bede Dalley, and entertained Dalley and his colleagues in style at Galong. His own parliamentary career seems to have been unremarkable. Freeman's Journal, 15 Jan, 1887.
survive a run of bad seasons; further east, strong pockets of Irish settlement were also evident in the Molonglo Plains area and along the coast from Jervis Bay to Bateman's Bay, while on the extreme South Coast another concentration occurred in the county of Auckland around Twofold Bay. The growth of the dairy industry and the extension of the railway accounted for the Irish penetration of the South Coast area. This general sector of southern New South Wales was to prove to be one of the most lucrative sources of aid to the Nationalist cause in Ireland. A sweep through the area was to be normal practice for most of the early fund-raising delegations which visited the colony during the period, and the fact that the local Bishop, Dr. Lanigan of Goulburn, was an outspoken and supporter of Home Rule added to the attractiveness of such a project.

Further north, concentrations of the Irish-born occurred along another corridor extending from Orange in the west through Bathurst and on to the Richmond-Penrith area, where it merged into the metropolitan sector. Beyond Sydney, the Irish could be found spread along the coast towards Newcastle and beyond there to Port Macquarie; inland around Muswellbrook, Armidale and Glen Innes, and then in a relatively strong concentration along the northern coast, and

1. New South Wales Census, 1891, Table X.
especially in the northern-most county of Rous which extended from Ballina to Tweed Heads. The county contained only 17,836 inhabitants in 1891, but just under 10% were Irish-born, and these figures reflect the considerable interest which the Irish showed in the whole Northern Rivers area. It was an interest which others shared; Coghlan noted that the rate of population growth was greater here than in most other rural areas of New South Wales, and regarded much of the land between the Richmond and the Tweed as having quite remarkable potential.

"...it is not improbable that this part of the colony will ultimately become more densely peopled than any other, the metropolitan and Northumberland districts excepted..."  

In general it would seem that in both colonies the stream of free Irish settlers which had by now swamped the original generation of involuntary pioneers had flowed

---

1. Ibid.

2. T.A. Coghlan, General Report of the 11th Census of New South Wales, (Sydney, 1894), p.107. Reports from the Freeman's Journal in the late 1890's and early 1900's testify to the continued interest in this area. Its rich soils and its dairying potential attracted very favourable comment, and although much of the land was still being cleared, some Irishmen had already done well. One dairy-farmer from Cork was already planning a return trip to Ireland, and others had built up quite sizeable holdings. Freeman's Journal, 24 Mar 1900. See also Louise Tiffany Daley, Men and a River: a history of the Richmond River district, 1828 – 1895, (Melbourne, 1966), p.153ff.
along rather similar channels. Roughly half had escaped through the urban centres which had been their point of entry and had followed the general drift of unskilled population out along the routes leading to gold-fields, construction projects, or agricultural settlements. But they do not appear to have fallen too far behind their Anglo-Saxon counterparts in the drive to convert themselves from wage-labourers into self-employed agriculturalists. Many of them certainly did remained trapped, and some failed to survive the hardships involved; but enough succeeded to justify reference to the emergence - not of a Celtic gentry, perhaps - but certainly of a Celtic yeomanry.

But what of the fifty per cent who had not moved beyond the major urban centres? Most of the urban Irish were confined to their traditional role as manual labourers and lived as close as possible to their place of work. In Melbourne they clustered in the inner ring of suburbs; West Melbourne and Hotham were close to the wharves, where unskilled work was available in good times at least; Richmond and South Melbourne, with their cheap housing and their new industries, were densely populated by Irish. The small minority who moved up the scale very often moved out to the

---

1. Census of Victoria, 1881, General Report, Table XXXIII.
more attractive parts of South Yarra and Hawthorn, but for most Irish families such moves were out of the question until the new suburbs of Brunswick and Coburg provided opportunities for their sons and daughters. It would be wrong to consider the inner ring of suburbs as slums at this stage; West Melbourne and Hotham would have been in many respects pleasant and attractive suburbs, and Richmond's seedy reputation was still to come.

Basically the same type of distribution can be seen in the Sydney metropolitan area. There - except for an outpost at Parramatta - the Irish again were to be found clustered in an inner city ring; they were most numerous in Balmain, Redfern, Paddington, Glebe, North Sydney and Leichhardt. These were not only old suburbs by 1891 - they were also among the most densely populated in the metropolitan area. Here again, the availability of unskilled employment and the relative ease of transport held the Irish close to the original nucleus of the city. Only where the growth of manufacturing provided a suitable attraction did the Irish

1. New South Wales Census, 1891, Table XI. Each of these suburbs listed over 1,000 Irish-born inhabitants in 1891. The Irish constituted from 6.5 to 8.9% of the total population of individual suburbs.

2. Balmain had a population of 23,475, with a density per acre of 26.38; Redfern 21,322 and 46.86 (the highest density in the metropolitan area): Paddington, 18,392, 44.11; Glebe, 17,075, 32.38; North Sydney 17,106, 3.73. T. A. Coghlan, General Report of the 11th Census of New South Wales, (Sydney, 1894), p.121.
venture towards the perimeter of the metropolitan area.¹

A cautious comparison of the fortunes of the two branches of the Celtic element - rural and urban - would seem to indicate that of the two the farmer had the better chance of achieving a small degree of economic independence as long as new tracts of country were being opened up. There can be little doubt that a good proportion of those who gained access to land in the period from 1860 onwards made a good living for themselves eventually, and built up some capital. Early in 1889, an editorial writer in the Advocate held up farming as the best possible occupation for incoming Irish migrants, for colonial experience had already shown

"...that this method of securing a competency and independence is certainly slow, but it is sure, and it is conducive of self-respect..."²

Accordingly, the friends of the Irish had always encouraged new arrivals to go on the land as quickly as possible, and to clear a block rather than depend on wages. It could be argued that this type of comment, when made by a city journalist, might be based on an unreal or optimistic view

¹. T.A. Coghlan op.cit., p.108.
². Advocate, 26 Jan 1889.
of the situation; but the same type of assessment was being made all over the colonies and by men who were in close contact with the Irish community. A year earlier, for example, Bishop Corbett of Sale advised the selectors among his congregation not to be wheedled out of their holdings by the attractive offers made by land syndicates: though their life was a hard one, they were still far better off than the tenantry in Ireland. The same theme had also been stressed by Bishop Dunn in Bundaberg, Queensland, when he exhorted priests and laymen to

"...leave no stone unturned, no argument unspoken, to make Irish Catholics select homesteads and keep to them. Their labour there is a labour the fruit of which perishes not. The wages earned in a protracted navvy-life, or the money won on the goldfields perishes... in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, within a year of its reaching the toiler's possession..."2

There were plenty of indications that this advice was based on the evident success of many of the Irish farmers.

---

1. Advocate, 30 June, 1888.

2. Freeman's Journal, 17 Feb 1883. Many American churchmen look a quite different attitude, and advised Irish settlers not to go West; the risk of losing the faith through lack of pastoral care was felt to be too high. Levine, op.cit., p.58-9.
The Bathurst correspondent of the Freeman's Journal felt that so much had been achieved in his district that the leading Irishmen in the community should establish a central fund to aid would-be farmers to get onto the land.¹ He pointed to the way in which the Irish in the Bathurst area had been quick to rent land when large estates were being broken up; some had now gained freehold possession, and others had selected lands around Orange and as far West as Parkes and Forbes. The results were obvious: while "... stalwart men of our race are cracking stones or begging for corporation work..." in Sydney, the Irish farmers in Bathurst

"...can all draw forth their cheque books like Leinster yeomen, and, asking you to make out a receipt, give their cheque for the amount. This, too, I have seen with my own eyes..."²

The degree of internal migration in the 1880's indicates that some Irish at least regarded farming as the best avenue to economic independence and a reasonable standard of living. In most cases, years of toil and privation still lay ahead of them as they cleared land and brought it into cultivation in Eastern Gippsland or along the Richmond River

¹. Freeman's Journal, 10 Mar, 1883.
². Ibid.
in northern New South Wales. But they had before them the examples of those who had already done well and had become men of influence in their own communities. The Meaghers of Bathurst, the Daltons at Orange - admittedly families which had made their mark by commercial rather than farming activity - stood out as beacons to the poorer Irish. Martin McKenna at Kyneton, though not as well known as the Daltons, was a further example of the level of prosperity which could be achieved in a farming community. In every district there were some men who were already making their plans for a visit home to Ireland, and there were many more who were content just to furnish their homes a little more generously and send their daughters to the newly established convent boarding schools.¹ Clearly, such prosperity did not reach right through the Irish rural community; many continued to live out the harsh existence of the battling selector. But the example was there, and the incentive with it. The land could be mastered, and when it did yield, confidence and hope were among its fruits.

By comparison, fewer of the urban Irish seem to have gained the same degree of economic independence. A small minority had already made massive fortunes from real estate deals or from large scale contracting, and some of

¹ Advocate, 19 May, 1888.
these remained quietly out of the public eye.¹ A slightly larger group appear to have made a comfortable living as wine and spirits merchants or produce suppliers, while an even more numerous group catered to the notable Celtic thirst in public houses scattered all over the colonies. But below these, the social pyramid flattened out dramatically; few Irishmen had the background necessary for entry into the skilled trades, although in some cases their sons were

1. The relatively unknown Thomas Monahan was reputed to be a multi-millionaire at the time of his death in Melbourne in 1889. He had begun his business career as a publican, and then had graduated to city real estate. Mathew Toohey, the founder of the Sydney brewing dynasty, had also operated profitably in city real estate in Melbourne's early years. On the other hand Michael Flemming of Moore Park, Sydney, who died in 1891, had prospered as a builder and contractor, and was believed to have built several hundred houses in the Surry Hills district alone. In his later years he became an unofficial adviser on property matters to Cardinal Moran and a number of religious orders. At the time of his death two of his sons were studying medicine in Dublin and one was a student at the new Seminary at Manly. John Walsh of Randwick specialised in railway contracting after having made his initial fortune in Queensland; his daughter married Peter Meagher, a member of the highly successful merchant family at Bathurst and Temora. In general, the Irish seem to have performed best in the type of business activity which did not require heavy initial capital or some preliminary business training; contracting, the liquor trade, and property speculation seem to have been the most favoured outlets, although a few were beginning to move into the more sophisticated insurance business by the end of the century, as instanced by the presence of several Irish-Australian directors on the board of the City Mutual Life Assurance Coy. in Sydney in 1891. *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Jan 1891.
receiving the appropriate training.¹ Many had to depend on unskilled employment or domestic service, while the more fortunate found themselves a secure billet in government employment. But as a group they remained essentially wage-earners, and their only hope of social betterment for their children lay in the availability of better education; this in turn depended on the speed with which the Church completed the construction of its education system and on the quality of the tuition given. Inevitably it would be several generations before the urban Celts could throw up from within their own ranks an elite of the calibre of the earlier generation of Anglo-Irish, and even when they did arrive they would lack

¹ The Winter brothers - Samuel Vincent (1832-1904) and Joseph (1833-1915) - who were key figures in Irish activity in Victoria in the late 1870's, had been brought to Melbourne after the death of their father and were apprenticed to the printing trade. Samuel had been active in the Catholic Young Men's Society, the St. Francis' Benefit Society and St. Patrick's Society and was secretary of the Released Irish State Prisoner's Fund in 1869. He was present in 1868 at the meeting at St. Ignatius' Church in Richmond which decided to establish the Advocate, and managed the paper for several years. He then took over the ailing Herald, and established himself as an editor of considerable ability and as a substantial businessman. Joseph took over the Advocate after his brother's departure and owned it till his death in 1915; shortly after, the paper was bought by Dr Mannix on behalf of the Archdiocese. Joseph seems to have been less forceful than his brother, but he was the key figure in the Home Rule Movement for over thirty years. He generally acted as treasurer or organising secretary for the various appeals made in the 1880's and was National Treasurer of the Irish National League. Advocate, 22 Oct 1904, 11 Dec 1915.
the polish and the confidence which had characterised the older Irish-born professional and semi-professional men. This did not mean that the urban Irish would be completely without influence in the general community, for there were now other avenues to power which did not require prior social standing or a high level of formal education – in particular the trade union movement and the Labour Party. Here the Irish might again employ their talent for politics, but in a different way; for there were no longer men like Gavan Duffy or Edward Butler whose personal claim to political office could be accepted by the broad range of the community. The Irish must now go back to the grass roots of social and political organisation and try to exert influence at that very basic level.

Whatever their place in colonial society, the Celtic Irish seem to have agreed that the society itself was essentially a good one; the basis for this view was partly the opportunity it presented for material well being, and partly the high degree of political freedom it extended to all comers.1 This is not to say that the Irish felt that

---

1. This and related themes were frequently referred to in speeches at St. Patrick's Day observances and at Nationalist gatherings throughout the period. On one occasion Tapley of the Advocate recalled the parting address of an Irish priest who had in 1861 accompanied a group of his parishioners – recently evicted from their homes – to Liverpool, from where they were to sail to Australia "... but you are going to a better land, a free country, where there are no tyrants, because there are no slaves..." Advocate, 4 Feb 1888.
intolerance was not a key element in colonial attitudes or that egalitarianism necessarily included all Irishmen within its scope. There were many times when the Irish showed bitter resentment towards their fellow colonists, accusing them of bigotry and a general animus towards the Irish race. The knowledge that large sections of the community regarded the Irish as an obnoxious and servile race had a great deal to do with the formation of Irish attitudes towards colonial society, and yet in the long run the leading elements of the Irish sector appear to have resisted the temptation to retreat behind their own walls. Instances of religious hostility were seen as aberrations rather than as essential characteristics of the society, and although it was incumbent on the Irish to defend their own position with all the invective at their disposal, the assumption clearly was that matters would eventually simmer down and higher values would prevail. As a group, the Irish accepted the Anglo-Saxon way without reservation, as far as social order was concerned. British attitudes towards law, towards civil liberties and towards the conduct of politics were accepted as the basis of social conduct. It was assumed

1. It has been too readily assumed that the attitudes embodied in the so-called "Kelly legend" were typical of those of the Irish in Australia: rather, they constituted one strain - and not the dominant one at that.
that in some respects colonial society had in fact improved on the original blue-print, and the local trend towards democratic innovation generally met with approval. But the leading Irish regarded themselves as part and parcel of the great Imperial order, and rejoiced in the power and prestige of British institutions; a widely accepted view was that the Empire had in the main been won by Irish blood and Irish valour, and that in fact Ireland's national claim was for her rightful place in the Imperial family. As a group, the Irish colonists were committed to the concept of a society regulated by law and governed by free and representative institutions - the very heart of the liberal credo. Their model was Westminster rather than Tammany Hall, and their most persistent complaint against colonial society was that in some perverse way, the full range of political and social liberty was being withheld from the Irish sector.

Yet there can be little doubt that the bulk of their fellow colonists treated Irish protestations of loyalty

1. "Now I don't believe in this cutting the painter business. It is only the assassin and the demagogue who want a revolution, and who cry out for physical force. What we want is moral force, freedom, and fair and equal laws for all. We have married and intermarried, we speak the same language, we are one big family; and all we ask for is a just mother who shall treat all her children alike (Cheers) These, I am satisfied, are the sentiments of all true Irishmen." John Curtain, J.P., Dookie, Vic, speaking at the Irish-Australian Convention, 1889 Advocate, 21 Sept 1889.
and good feeling with some reserve. The Celt had become a type of lightning conductor for colonial society, attracting and absorbing sudden tensions in the way the Chinese element had done during the gold-fields era. His obvious identification with Catholicism forced this role upon him in a society still divided by sectarian bitterness; his group loyalty and his obdurate commitment to a system of religious education drew the suspicion and hostility of many to whom the denominational problem was only secondary; and his unwitting flair for the comic situation, allied with his proverbial intemperance, gave plenty of opportunity for his fellow colonists to portray him as an amusing and somewhat ridiculous phenomenon.¹ The Celtic Irish in the late nineteenth century were being cast in the role so frequently given to an ethnically distinct and underprivileged group in a new society—partly despised, partly mocked, and yet at the same time feared for what they would might be if social restraints were ever removed from them. The Celts bitterly

1. Cartoons in the Melbourne Punch in the eighties portrayed the Irishman in what was by now the international stereotype—the bumptious and aggressive Celt. The more "respectable" Irish protested vigorously against the continued popularity of the "stage Irishman" at colonial theatres and concerts, and were at times saddened by the fact that many of the fellow countrymen found the caricature of their own foibles quite amusing, if skilfully done. For a detailed account of a parallel situation in the United States, see Carl Wittke, op.cit., ch. XXIII.
resented the implications of this role, and resented it all the more because they realised that the prevailing attitude towards them was not entirely based on myth. Intemperance and aggressiveness were weaknesses that were acknowledged and deplored, and those who had influence with the Celtic community coupled their declarations of loyalty to the social and political order with quiet admonitions to their weaker brethren.¹ As a group, the Celts were anxious to succeed and be accepted by colonial society, but they reserved the right to object vigorously to any trend which seemed likely to deny justice either to themselves or to homeland. It was this reservation that proved the major barrier to their acceptance by a community that demanded a complete jettisoning of any cultural baggage not clearly labelled as Anglo-Saxon in origin.

There can be little doubt that the Celtic element had improved their overall position once they landed in the colonies, but by local standards, they were beginning on the lowest rung of both the social and the economic ladder. The economic ladder proved to be the easier one to scale, especially for those who moved into rural occupations where

¹ "...Many of you would be prepared to lay down your lives for Ireland, but as a missionary, I have always said: Give me the man who will lay down his glass for Ireland. (Applause)" Archbishop Kelly, speaking at St. Patrick's Day gathering, Sydney, 1912, Catholic Press, 21 Mar 1912.
a readiness to work hard was the major determinant of success. Those who remained in the urban centres had to be content with a slower upward movement, for in this context only education or access to capital could lift a man out of the ruck — and the Celts had little of either. The social ladder, with its more complex gradients and pressures, proved far more difficult to climb, and it could be argued that another half century would be needed to conquer it. Of the elements which complicated this ascent, one of the most abrasive in the long run was to be the attitude of the Celts to the tragic story of their homeland, and in particular, to the new nationalist forces emerging there in the last twenty years of the century.

In many ways, the steps by which the Celts lifted themselves off the very end of the social scale were quite similar to those being used by most underprivileged groups in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The extent to which primary education was available, within the framework either of the State or the Catholic system, cannot be adequately gauged in a study of this kind, though this was clearly the first step in social advancement. But it is evident that during the eighties, those Celtic families that had already reached a level of economic independence and could plan the further education of their children had
a range of secondary boarding schools to choose from.\footnote{1} The advertising columns of the Irish-Australian press in the eighties carried an impressive range of notices advancing the particular claims of boarding schools spread throughout the colonies and already the teaching orders that conducted them were receiving locally born additions to the ranks. In addition, the number of day schools, especially in the metropolitan areas, was on the increase and the results of the annual examinations – to which considerable publicity was given – indicated that a small number each year were at least qualifying for University studies. But only a tiny minority had as yet achieved professional status, usually in law and medicine. It is impossible to estimate whether the decision to construct a separate educational system helped or hindered the majority of the Celtic element in their attempts to master the first rung of the social ladder. Certainly something of a vacuum occurred at the higher levels of the Irish community as the older Anglo-Irish faded out and were not immediately replaced by trained men of Celtic background.\footnote{2}

\footnote{1} The Advocate noted the establishment of a Convent of Mercy School at Warrnambool in 1883 and commented that it should not lack for pupils, considering "how many well-to-do Catholics there are in the Western District" \textit{Advocate}, 7 July 1883.

\footnote{2} The Melbourne Tribune in an editorial deploring the small number of Catholics in the local undergraduate body (the latter being about 600 strong), pleaded for the establishment of a Catholic University College. "...the students would go forth to hold the highest positions in the fields of law, engineering, medicine, teaching and literary work. These posts are now mainly held by others due to the absence of Catholic initiative in tertiary education" \textit{Tribune}, 10 Mar 1900.
But for those whose educational opportunities were a thing of the past, other more pressing problems were still likely to develop. Most Irish colonists were in the low income bracket, and were vulnerable when confronted by accident or sudden illness; by the eighties some protection against this type of situation was available through a number of Friendly Societies established to cater specifically for the Irish. The largest of these, the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, had originated in Ballarat and then amalgamated with a benefit society based on St. Francis' Church in Melbourne. By the mid-eighties, it had spread through Victoria and New South Wales, and had also established itself in New Zealand. Admittedly it did not cover even the bulk of the Irish community; but it catered for those who saw the value of judicious saving and earned enough to make saving practicable. But for those who did join its ranks, it provided more than simply insurance cover; the regular branch meetings provided experience in organisation and administration for those involved, as well as a certain amount of social contact and good cheer. At a later stage a similar organisation, the Irish National Foresters, was introduced from Ireland and came to occupy something of the

1. Its equivalent in Sydney, the Australian Holy Catholic Guild, appears to have originated as early as 1845. Freeman's Journal, 7 Feb 1891.
same role. These two organisations were generally regarded as reflecting national sentiment as well as enlightened self interest, and although they rarely took the initiative in national matters, their representatives were invariably consulted when activity was being planned. The Hibernians in particular were of obvious value to Nationalist organisers, for the size of their membership plus the frequency of meetings made them an invaluable aid in spreading information and providing the nucleus of an audience. But in terms of seniority, both these organisations yielded – in Melbourne at least – to the veteran St. Patrick's Society, which could trace its origins back to the angry 1840's when it was formed to provide a focal point for Irishmen of all religious persuasions. O' Shanassy had been a leading figure in the Society in his younger days, and Edmund Finn was later to recall his tall frame striding at the head of its processions for all the world like a Norman round tower in motion. For years, the Society had confined itself to organising the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, and apart from its work as a benefit society, made very little impact on the Irish community. It is possible that in the 1880's

1. The Geelong correspondent of the Advocate deplored the tendency of the Society to allow the benefit interest to predominate over the national aspect. He predicted – accurately enough – that in time the Society and its branches would become benefit groups only. Advocate, 19 Feb, 1881.
and 1890's the fact that it still clung to its non-
denominational platform may have impeded its field of
activity as a Nationalist forum; occasionally prominent
members put this forward as a reason for not involving the
Society in Home Rule activity. But the same restraint did
not apply to the Celtic Club, founded in Melbourne in 1887 as
a social retreat for all who could claim to be of Celtic
descent. Though membership was open to men of all creeds, it
exhibited a distinct affection for the Home Rule cause from
its earliest years, and despite its own internal problems
held to that position until the events of 1916.¹ By the
end of the century other social organisations had appeared to
cater for the needs of Irish settlers; in Sydney, the
Shamrock Club seems to have been formed to give aid to newly
arrived migrants, and may have been more working class than
most other Irish bodies of the type. Certainly its leading
lights took a rather more militant view of Irish affairs than
was fashionable amongst the colonial Irish; they came out in
favour of Parnell in the early nineties, and in the days when
the remains of the Wicklow chief, Michael Dwyer, rested in
the Devonshire St. cemetery, it had been the Shamrock Club
which had organised occasional pilgrimages to the site. There
were other groups which could be classified as semi-cultural

in interest; but these usually had a very short existence, and one of the few to survive for any length of time was the Irish Piper's Club in Melbourne.¹

It was in the cultural field, however, that the difficulties of the Irish settlers were most apparent. In one sense, the Celts could look to a unique and ancient cultural tradition, one which was rich and varied enough to be tapped for many generations. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, much of this tradition was being brought to light by the enthusiasts of the Gaelic revival, but very few of the Irish in Australia were equipped to make contact with this literary development — despite the occasional attempts to promote the study of the Gaelic language. Nor is there much indication that anything akin to an oral or folk tradition survive among the migrants, many of whom were from western part of Ireland were the last remnants of the Gaelic civilisation still survived.² The capacity of isolated rural

1. For many years the leading figure in the Pipers' Club was Morgan P. Jageurs, (1862-1932), a monumental mason and an avid student of Celtic art. The Jageurs imprint can be seen on the tombs of many prominent Irish personalities buried after 1880, and he was in part responsible for the Celtic cross becoming the standard motif in the Catholic section of many cemeteries. Jageurs was a foundation member of the Irish Land League, the Irish National League, the Celtic Club and the United Irish League; he succeeded to the presidency, of the latter body on the retirement of Dr. N.M. O'Donnell in 1916. Advocate, 5 May 1932.

2. One of the few indications of the survival of traditional customs is a reference to anecdotes concerning match-making in the Kirkstall area of Western Victoria. There is a possibility that the first generation of Irish settlers may have retained the old procedures governing the formal arrangement of marriages — for a few years, at least. Advocate, 3 Sept 1887.
communities in Ireland to preserve folklore and custom as a living element well into modern times has been adequately documented, and in cases where these customs have been firmly grounded on social or economic necessity, their grip has been a tenacious one.\(^1\) But there is hardly a sign that any element of folk culture survived the shock of translation to a new world; by the 1880's Gaelic seems to have virtually disappeared as a spoken language in the colonies, and efforts were being made to revive it purely as a literary interest. By the early 1900's, Dr. Nicholas O'Donnell could write of one Sydney hotel which had become a centre for Irish cultural activities and where even card games were conducted in Gaelic.\(^2\) He himself had become the fore-

---


2. Ryan's Hotel, George St. O'Donnell gave much of the credit for the distinctive Irish atmosphere to Eugene J. Ryan, a linguist and mathematician from Tipperary, who had been resident in Australia since 1884, Ryan drafted the inscription for the 1798 memorial in Waverley Cemetery and was one of the best known members of the Irish community in Sydney. He died 7th July 1905. *Advocate*, 15 July, 1905. Dr. O'Donnell's own collection of Gaelic texts is now in the Library of Newman College in the University of Melbourne. In the early 1900's, after the Advocate had purchased the first set of Gaelic type in Australia, O'Donnell conducted a regular Gaelic column in that paper. His involvement in Gaelic studies was so intense that he could even chide the great literary heroes of the 1848 revolt for their ignorance of the Irish language. *Austral Light*, 1 July, 1910. (Obituary to "Eva" of the *Nation* [Mrs Kevin Izod O'Doherty]).
most Gaelic scholar in the colonies, and had established something of a reputation abroad. But this interest on the part of a man who had never seen Ireland was in itself a reflection of the degree to which genuine Celtic traditions had disappeared among the colonial Irish. Most of these men and women had sprung from the generation which had been torn adrift by the Famine and the general disruption of the forties, and were culturally alienated even in their homeland. In the colonies they found themselves dispersed within a community so youthful and undeveloped that it still had to borrow, at a distance, from the English and Scottish cultural models. So in the main the Celts simply merged into the patterns of the society around them, and when there was some occasion which demanded a parading of national identity — as on St. Patrick's Day, or at an annual school concert, — they turned to the sentimental balladry of the period or to the vaguely nationalist songs which were appearing as an offshoot of the recent revival of Ireland's political fortunes. When formal oratory was called for — and that was frequently enough — the normal approach was to take the listener back to the days of Ireland's glory, well before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon. Here there was opportunity to present Ireland as the great cultural force in western Europe in the centuries which followed the decay of the Roman Empire. Ireland, the land of saints and scholars, the respository of all that was best in European civilisation, the land fated to
bring the torch of faith and wisdom to a benighted continent, the nation which stood as an example of a sane and temperate conduct of human affairs - these were the themes which were constantly rehearsed at St. Patrick's Day functions and in formal sermons.¹ There seems to have been an implicit agreement that the history of England since the arrival of the English was a matter which was too controversial and partisan to be brought to the fore at a national function in an English colony, though there was no reason why it should not be discussed at a more obviously political occasion. Cromwell was, in a sense, still in the realm of contemporary history as far as the Irish was concerned, and as such should be treated with a due regard to the susceptibilities of others. In later years, when as a community they became aware of a gradual loss of national identity, their litterateurs ransacked the past for heraldic motifs and vivid relics of Celtic civilisation. It

¹ The younger generation of Irish-Australians were often attracted to the study of Irish history for reasons which flowed from the cultural poverty of colonial society. O'Donnell caught the mood of this attraction in a poem published in the Advocate, 4 Oct 1890:

"The hills of my country are stern and lovely, Its foliage bright and its rivulets fast; But painfully real one sentiment only Pervades. 'Tis the present, and never the past. No history excites, and no stimulant potion Of legend rides Fancy on dalliant wing; But that little isle in the northern ocean Has cradled my race, and to it will I sing."
is not surprising that the traditional St. Patrick's Day procession in Melbourne took on increasingly the character of an historical pageant after the turn of the century, and that major events in the Irish political calendar were celebrated with complex tableaux. As the number of those who had been born and bred in Ireland dwindled to a tiny minority, the more talented of their sons tried to immerse themselves in the cultural values of a civilisation which in fact had very little relevance to them, and then tried to give their fellow Irish-Australians some sort of visual contact with the Irish dream; it is not surprising that many in the next generation again grew weary of their parent's devotion to the Irish cult and shied away from identification with things Irish.

If folk tradition disappeared quickly, some compensation for this could be found in the role of the

---

1. One of the best examples of this trend can be seen in the elaborate tableaux presented in Melbourne to celebrate the centenary of Robert Emmet in 1903. Entitled Epochs of Irish History, and scripted by Ronald Stewart, it presented the heroic view of Irish history. Advocate, 26 Sept 1903. The St. Patrick's Day procession disappeared in Sydney in the 1890's, and the celebration was centred on a sports meeting at Moore Park. Cardinal Moran disapproved of such procession because they divided the men from their families for a substantial part of the day - with unfortunate results for some.

2. Based on conversations with a number of the descendants of men who were prominent in Irish movements early in the century. The hostility of the younger generation towards their parent's over-indulgence in their Irish interest is often quite marked.
Church. Whatever influences were making themselves felt at
the upper levels of the Church in Australia, there can be
little doubt as to the tone of parish life. Doctrine and
discipline were those of the universal Church, but they
reached the faithful tinged with an Irish brogue. Most
pulpits were still occupied by Irish priests, many of them
products of All Hallows.¹ As far as can be determined,
the link between congregation and pastor seems to have been
a close one, especially in country areas where the priest
usually won gratitude and respect for his willingness to
suffer the same privations as his flock.² One is hard put
to discover instances of antagonism between priest and

1. Fr. T. J. Linane, "Priests on the Australian Mission
field prior to 31-12-1900," Hand written list in the
archives of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. According to
Fr. Linane's figures, All Hallows provided more priests
for the Australian mission than any of the Irish
ecclesiastical colleges.

2. "...the Irish religion is not a bond with the Church as
as organisation and still less with the Church as a
place, but rather as a personal bond between the Irish
people and their priests." Fr. James Shannon, C.S.C.,
ed., Roman Catholics and the American Way of Life,
(Notre Dame 1960) p.208. Quoted in Levine, op. cit.,
p.78. To some extent, the Irish often spoke of the
clergy - and more especially of the hierarchy - in terms
reminiscent of the the respect given to members of a
warrior caste. Note, for example, the account given by
Fr. Fitzgerald, O.F.M., of the departure of Dr. Mannix
and Bishop Shiel for Australia "...Dr Sheil met his
Grace at Westland Row station, and the two magnificent-
looking prelates were 'snapped', and they stood up like
men." Catholic Press, 20 Mar 1913. Mannix's height
and dignified bearing made a considerable impression on
his new flock; the contrast with the rather portly
and ageing Archbishop Carr would have been a very
marked one.
people, despite the authoritarian attitudes of some and the eccentricity of others. In many cases the faithful may have welcomed the firm and vigorous statement from the pulpit in preference to a more mild and liberal approach, for the demands of daily living were often severe, especially in rural areas; harsh conditions bred attitudes of mind which placed a high valuation on the man who knew his own mind and held to his opinion under stress. Duty, obedience, and filial loyalty were standards which farming communities regarded as basic to their survival quite apart from the their status within Christian teaching. So the average parish priest or curate would have had little difficulty in pitching his sermons at the right levels, for the bulk of his listeners had come, via their own experience, to accept his basic themes.

Such an attitude of mutual trust and forebearance would have been essential in the 1880's. The growth of the Catholic population and its increasing geographical dispersion meant that the demand for new buildings and facilities was heavy. The decision to persevere with a separate Catholic education system had already placed a heavy strain on resources both in terms of money and manpower. Churches and presbyteries were needed as well as schools; the latter often required convents to service them. If the Catholic Church in Australia exhibits to this day a marked preoccupation with bricks and mortar, the roots of such an
attitude might well be traced to the 1880's. From cathedral building in the two major capitals to raising a convent school in the remote area—whatever the scale of the task it presented great difficulties for those directly involved. Yet from one end of the country to the other, the carpenter and the stonemason were kept busy in the service of God.

But even while the physical church was, as it were, being knocked together with hammer and nail, the corporate life of individual parishes and congregations was becoming more complex as it catered for the needs of a locally-born generation which had nothing but its own colonial experience to fall back on. Sodalities and confraternities were developed to provide for the widest possible range of lay spirituality; total abstinence groups campaigned solidly against the acknowledged enemy of the Celt, and visiting missioners added their weight to the efforts of the local clergy at regular intervals.

1. Cardinal Moran was careful to ensure that appeals for the Irish cause did not clash with his own Cathedral appeal. See Ch. V.

2. In the 1880's, Father Hennebery became nationally known for his ability to persuade thousands to foreswear alcohol. His meetings had much of the appearance and flavour of a revivalist campaign, but he had only dented the surface of the problem: One of his successors, Fr. Hays, collected another 20,000 pledges from adults—and from countless numbers of children—during a tour of Victoria in 1905. Advocate, 18 Mar 1905.
There were still, however, needs of another type to be covered; by the 1880's, a higher proportion of young men with basic education were coming into the congregations, men who had lifted themselves out of the labouring and unskilled occupations, but had no hope of educational advancement or professional training. There was some recognition of the fact that unless the parishes made some attempt to cater for their special needs, they could well drift into a merely formal relationship with the church or, at the very worst, lose the faith completely. Accordingly some priests and prominent laymen became involved in providing facilities for self-improvement.

In Victoria, the Catholic Young Men's Society was organised to fill the role; debates, lectures, musical entertainments, and sometimes the production of a branch magazine, helped to keep the younger generation in touch with their parishes. From time to time efforts were made to weld the scattered branches of the Society into something akin to a political organisation, a forerunner of the later Catholic Federation. But the branches were too fragile to support such grandiose schemes, even when the urgency of

1. The Victorian Catholic Young Men's Society issued the Catholic Magazine as a quarterly from October 1888 to October 1891, but found it difficult to build up circulation. The journal then re-appeared as the Austral Light.
the education question made the need for united action obvious. The Society survived at the parish level, but not by any great margin.

It is not surprising, then, that neither of the two largest concentrations of Irish and Catholic population could produce a lay intelligensia of any magnitude. There were some laymen who recognised the need to develop a well informed and intellectually active body of men capable of forming Catholic taste and expounding the Catholic vision to the broader community. Men with the background and capacity of F.B. Freehill in Sydney, Benjamin Hoare and J.F. Hogan in Melbourne could provide the basic stimulus and leadership for such a movement. But the best examples of this approach in operation - the Catholic Magazine and the Austral Light, both written by laymen for a lay public - failed to find support in the Catholic community generally. By 1900, even the solid Austral Light had handed itself over to the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and lay initiative after that remained confined to the Catholic weekly papers. In a sense, the whole attempt was certainly premature; a literary monthly found it hard to survive when catering for a broader colonial audience, and the chances of even a less ambitious publication surviving must have been very remote indeed. The Celtic element was still too far down the educational ladder to provide a market for literary
publications of that type; in any case, many of those who read as a matter of habit may well have been more interested in current political and nationalist affairs than in the by-products of scholarship.

Taken as a whole, the Irish-Australian community had reached a crossroads by the 1880's. The disappearance of the older gentry had had a disturbing effect, for it meant that the Irish were now without recognised leaders who could hold their own in the social and political arenas and thus provide a sense of security and protection for their community. But although the Celtic element mourned the loss of their most effective shield, they took considerable encouragement from the fact that the more enterprising of their fellows had shown that it was possible for an Irishman and his sons to climb a little way up the economic rung, given the rather buoyant conditions then operating. Even so, the question of establishing their identity within the colonial community still remained, for that community still found it difficult to accept the Irish on anything near equal terms for a whole variety of reasons, some of them religious in character, others almost racist in their scope. Bereft of the type of intellectual leadership which could possibly have worked out some sort of acceptable identification with their new cultural environment, the Irish turned their attention back to the political condition of the homeland; instinctively they seem to have recognised that
many of the problems they faced in winning acceptance in the new land could be traced back to the tangled and painful Anglo-Irish relationship; if that relationship could be placed on a more equitable and friendly basis, then presumably many of the problems confronting the settled expatriate would disappear in their turn.
CHAPTER II

THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT: THE OPENING PHASE

"...there is no more dangerous simplification of [Irish] history than to regard the desire of the Irish people for independence as an immutable force, an historic nationhood, working through different generations and different leaders, but always recognisable as the immutable will of the folk...


As the last decades of the century approached, there were very few elements in the Irish scene which provided expatriates in the Australian colonies with any cause for comfort. Those in Ireland who had escaped the brutal scything of the population during the Famine years had little reason to be grateful for their deliverance, and thousands still continued to flee the homeland in any one year. Politically, Ireland's hopes seemed to have died with the failure of Young Ireland, and the sporadic violence of the Fenians only served to strengthen the bitterness on both sides; later commentators have seen the period between 1850 and 1875 as a void as far as Irish politics were concerned, and in one case it has been argued that the only group able to carry on anything like a political agitation were the Irish Bishops.¹

¹ E.R. Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, 1859-1873, (London, 1963) Introd. p.IX. Norman suggests that in the period between the collapse of the Young Ireland movement and the rise of the Irish Party, the responsibility of engaging in political activity within the existing constitutional arrangements devolved on the hierarchy, since the Fenians were operating in a totally different context. It was through the hierarchy that something approaching an Irish view of the education and land questions was formulated and argued.
Yet this whole situation was to change radically in the late seventies, and the general attitude of despair was to be replaced by a mood of tremendous confidence and hope for the immediate future; almost overnight, the so-called Irish Question emerged as a spectre which was to haunt both the Liberal and Conservative parties for over a quarter of a century, and Ireland was to become a focal point of concern for the Empire as a whole. To the Irish abroad, this transformation in the political situation in the homeland was a profound experience and at the same time an exhilarating one; the prospect of a rejuvenated Ireland, standing on its own feet among the self-governing units of the Empire, had a particular fascination for those Irish who had migrated to the Australian colonies, for it brought with it the glimmerings of a sense of accomplishment and of pride in race which was badly needed as a balm to wounded national pride. As a group, the colonial Irish had made an attempt to identify with many of the norms of the more respectable levels of colonial society: but the small elite that had risen out of the ruck and had overcome the handicaps which condemned many Irishmen to a near permanent place on the bottom of the social scale, was often acutely sensitive to the stigma attaching to an Irish background. The older Anglo-Irish group could feel themselves part of the British race and could share in the general pride in imperial achievement so
characteristic of the colonial middle-class; but those Celts who had achieved a moderate degree of social standing carried with them the awareness that they were members of a subject race, a race which had to reach back into the distant past for its authentic traditions, and they had to concede that for centuries their national life had been played out against a never-ending backdrop of defeat and humiliation. It was some consolation to be able to point to the spectacular achievements of Irish expatriates in every quarter of the globe and in every century; but a far more gratifying situation would be to see Ireland emancipated and making her own claim to national pride and self-respect, a self-governing entity within the larger British Empire that she had helped to build.

In the late seventies, the first signs of the later transformation of Irish politics appeared. By 1874, a loose grouping of Irish members led by Isaac Butt had taken up Home Rule as a basic platform and in doing so heralded the arrival of the movement which for the next forty years

1. As late as 1933, P.S. Cleary used the same approach to establish the claims of the Irish to be considered as nation-builders in the full sense. Using occupational classifications, he built up a formidable case based on the sheer bulk of the Irish contribution: the lists of Irish-born governors, judges, politicians, administrators and professional men is a lengthy one, although many of those referred to were of Anglo-Irish stock, or had rather minimal contact with Ireland itself. P.S. Cleary, op.cit.
to be the major vehicle for the expression of Ireland's national aspirations. The activities of this group were much more circumscribed than those of the later Irish Parliamentary Party; no real attempt was made to weld the Irish members into a tightly disciplined unit or to demand of individual members a strict adherence to a predetermined line of policy. The characteristic approach of the Home Rule party during the period 1875-1880 was to present at every opportunity the case for a transfer of some political authority to an Irish legislature; in doing so, the Irish members were careful to observe the forms of the House and to avoid disturbing its tone; their requests were usually couched in moderate terms, and their manner reflected faithfully the attitudes and interests of the landlord class to which most of them belonged. The more fervent nationalists of a later generation were quick to criticize the mildness of Butt and his colleagues and to point to their failure to achieve anything worthwhile for Ireland during the admittedly brief period — one parliamentary term — during which they were in the public eye. Yet a more fiery presentation of Ireland's claims would hardly have been practicable at that stage, even if the Irish members had been men of more radical persuasion. Ireland had suffered from an overdose of extremism of the Fenian variety, and there was little point in further irritating public opinion in England by futile threats. A decade
later, Irish Parliamentarians would be able to buttress their claims with formidable political weapons; but Isaac Butt and his colleagues had no such weapons at their disposal. In a very real sense, political realities dovetailed in very neatly with the conservative instincts of the Irish members.¹

By the end of the decade, however, there were indications that the basic character of the Home Rule movement was undergoing a profound change, and that a new faction was beginning to emerge and test its strength. Basic to this change was the continuing trend towards reform of the franchise, which had the effect of introducing a new and larger segment of the Irish population to the voting lists.² The results of this trend became increasingly evident during the 1880's, and to some extent as early as the election of 1880. In that year the conservative Home Rulers who had followed Isaac Butt and

¹ The only substantial studies of Isaac Butt's career in the 1870's are Terence de Vere White's The road to excess, (Dublin, 1946), and D. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, (London, 1964).

² C.C. O'Brien's Parnell and his Party, 1880-1890, (Oxford, 1957) remains the classic account of the rise of the Irish Parliamentary Party. O'Brien claims that the Ballot Act of 1872 had a marked effect on the Irish elections of 1880, in that it gave voters the chance to show their hostility to the landlord element without fear of reprisal. The outcome was the rejection of candidates with a landlord background, and their replacement by a more middle-class element. The election of Parnell to the chairmanship of the Party is seen as the first result of the change in the character of the Irish membership. O'Brien, op.cit., p.26.
his successor William Shaw were being challenged by a vigorous group of new members led by Charles Stewart Parnell. The latter, despite his lack of seniority and experience, was elected Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party in place of Shaw, and set about charting a new approach which would take advantage of changes in the political situation in England as well as Ireland itself. Though defeated, Shaw and his followers had at least achieved something of long term advantage: they had established the front line of the nationalist movement at Westminster, and it was to remain there until the Easter Rebellion of 1916. There would still be violence in the Irish countryside; there would still be wild speeches and mass meetings, and many political figures would spend some of their time in prison. But all of these activities would be fitted into an overall pattern which had as its objective the forcing of a political settlement in the House of Commons. Constitutionalism was to be at the core of nationalist activity; but with the whigs displaced, the range of tactical manoeuvre was enormously extended, and the Irish members were free to exploit every opportunity of producing fruitful tension within the parliamentary arena. The whigs had pioneered a new approach to Irish problems - but it was left to Parnell to fully exploit its potential.
The rise of Parnell was to be one of the major developments during 1880, but there was one other element which was to add further complexity to the picture. While Parnell was establishing his authority over the Parliamentary Party, a second front was being opened up in Ireland itself. The founding of the Irish Land League in 1879 triggered off a long campaign of agrarian agitation designed to produce direct and immediate solutions to the chronic problems confronting the Irish tenantry: high rents, uncertain returns, and the ever-present threat of eviction. The driving force behind the League was the ex-Fenian, Michael Davitt, who had revived the old theory that a nationalist movement grounded in the desperate need of the peasantry would be far more likely to win freedom for Ireland than a purely constitutional agitation. In many respects, the existence of the Land League operated to the advantage of Parnell; its grip on the peasantry and the potentially violent nature of some of its activities provided the

1. Thirty years before, James Fintan Lalor (brother of Peter Lalor) had argued that it was essential to "... link Repeal to some other question as a railway carriage to an engine; some question possessing the intrinsic strength which Repeal wants..." The one issue which met these requirements was the land issue: "... the land question contains, and the legislative question does not contain, the materials from which victory is manufactured". James Fintan Lalor, quoted in N.D. Palmer, The Irish Land League Crisis, (New Haven, 1940), p.108.
Parliamentary Party with a certain amount of leverage against the government of the day. But at the same time, the problem of controlling the League and ensuring that its activities were tailored to the needs of the Parliamentary Party was a difficult one, and one that probably only Parnell could have handled. For ten years he was to shape and direct the forces that were now becoming available to him from both fronts, and to choose the time and place at which pressure could be applied with the maximum effect; in that time he was to prove himself a superb tactician and a master of parliamentary technique.

Initially the Irish in Australia reacted slowly to the news of these developments in the homeland. This is not altogether surprising, for there was no organisation in existence equipped to act as interpreter of the new trends; the various benefit societies did not regard political comment as a proper sphere of activity. This meant that the only organisation which could have sponsored any form of corporate discussion of the Irish situation was the Catholic Church, but for a variety of reasons there was little likelihood that any initiative would come from that quarter; apart from the fact that the hierarchy was still to some extent absorbed in the final stages of the long struggle against the English Benedictines, there were several factors inhibiting churchmen from taking an active part in encouraging local manifestations of nationalist zeal.
Much of what was happening in Ireland at the time was developing without much reference to the Irish Bishops, and they in turn were somewhat cool in their attitudes to both Parnell and the Land League. In the elections of 1880, clerical support had often gone to the so-called Whigs – the followers of William Shaw – rather than to the Parnellites. Parnell's own candidacy in Cork had been opposed by the local clergy, one of whom had accused a Parnellite supporter of boasting

"...that he ate meat on Friday and ... was a follower of Garibaldi the assassin..."  

The Land League had also met with some clerical disapproval in its early stages, and even the redoubtable Dr. McHale of Tuam – the "Lion of the Fold of Judah", had intervened against it. To the Irish in Australia, by now long accustomed to seeing the Irish Bishops in the forefront of most legitimate nationalist activity, such a lack of clerical endorsement would have suggested grounds for caution and a general suspension of judgement.

With the possibility of clerical initiative virtually cancelled out, there was no reason why the Irish in the colonies should take any independent action. The fact that

1. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p.27.
2. Ibid., p.27
the Irish leaders at home seemed to be firmly committed to constitutional methods as the best hope of achieving a satisfactory settlement was a reassuring sign, given that it had taken years to live down the odium which had descended on the Irish after the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868. As long as the Irish leaders at home claimed nothing more than the right to the same degree of self-government which already obtained in the colonies, the local Irish, whatever their social or economic standing, could safely give their approval. But there was no real reason why they should do anything more; they were twelve thousand miles distant, and there was no obvious way in which they could hope to make any meaningful contribution to the struggle which seemed to be looming at Westminster. All that remained for them was to watch from afar, and hope that for once, events might turn in Ireland's favour.

Then the whole atmosphere abruptly changed in the early months of 1880, the point at which it became obvious that Ireland was once again faced with the frightful prospect of a famine as potentially disastrous as that of the 1840's. The position of the Irish farmer had already

---

been weakened in the late seventies by the world-wide depression which affected both agriculture and industry, and by the contraction of the British market; but then, on top of these trading difficulties, nature intervened in a manner all too reminiscent of that earlier grim decade. Wet seasons in 1877, 1878 and 1879 cut production drastically and brought distress in their train. As the value of the critical potato crop fell by 75% between 1876 and 1879, possibility of a complete failure in 1880 brought back vivid memories of the appalling mortality of the late 1840's. By the winter of 1879-80 half of the peasant population of western Ireland were without income or credit, and the potato crops which would normally have tided them over such a crisis were rotting in the ground. The thickly populated and backward counties of Connaught appeared ripe for disaster; yet the evidence pouring in from local officials, clergy and the press, had little impact on the administration at Dublin Castle, and even less on Westminster. The Government felt no real compulsion to introduce emergency measures to avert a disaster in western Ireland; as late as November 10th 1879, Beaconsfield referred to the Irish as an imaginative race, prone to exaggerate their distress and to slip too easily into political agitation as a cure-all for their troubles. Another English commentator put the

1. N.D. Palmer, op.cit., p.64.
2. Ibid p.66
3. Ibid p.77
view more bluntly - according to the landlord St. J.B. Joule, the deplorable conditions of the Irish peasantry in the west were due not to poverty, but to their own "innate and miserable savagery". But by the end of the year, the evidence was beginning to pile up in such large quantities that the question could no longer be evaded. The reaction of the British government was, even so, an extremely cautious one: instructions were issued to the Irish Commissioner of Public Works to encourage local authorities to borrow money for relief projects, while at the same time the Poor Law Guardians were warned to be ready for emergency appeals. No special machinery would be set up to cope with or, better still, forestall the crisis; the existing organisations were simply to deal with the new situation in addition to carrying out their normal responsibilities.

But as winter deepened, the misery in the west of Ireland became desperate enough to attract the attention of not only the Irish press but sections of the English and American press as well, and not all the detailed accounts filed by special correspondents sent to Donegal, Mayo and

1. Ibid p.76
2. Ibid p.80
Connemara could be disclaimed in London. However, a General Election was due in England and little had been done by the time Gladstone took over the administration. During the first session of the new Parliament, which met in March 1880, the Relief of Distress Act channelled an additional £1½ million into relief programmes, and the Liberals followed up by rather more vigorous use of existing administrative agencies. But this could not take effect until three to four months after distress had reached its most acute level; in the interim period, the suffering peasantry had had to depend for their existence on several hastily organised but highly effective private relief schemes. To these organisations belonged the credit for averting a disaster in western Ireland.

Two of these charities are of immediate interest: the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund and the Mansion House Fund. The former was directed personally by the Duchess, whose husband held the Lord-Lieutenancy until the Conservative defeat, and operated from December 1879 to October 1880; in that time it collected £135,245, mostly

1. Articles by one of the most effective of these correspondents - James Redpath - were subsequently reprinted in the Advocate during 1880.
from English sources, and had made a major contribution towards rectifying the situation in the west of Ireland.¹ The second Fund also dated from December 1879, but was initiated by the Lord Mayor of Adelaide concerning the need for money and the details of any organisation to which funds could be forwarded.² The incoming Lord Mayor, E. Dwyer Grey M.P., presided over its activities until the following December, by which time it had collected £181,350 of which over half had been received from Australasia—some £95,000 in all.³ By any standards, the Irish in the southern colonies had made a remarkable effort to bring aid to their afflicted brethren, and in doing so had demonstrated to their own satisfaction the advantages of unity and concerted action.

The background to this massive contribution is interesting in that it illustrates the lack of any organisation amongst the colonial Irish other than that provided by the Church. News of the disastrous state of  

1. Ibid p.89.  
2. Freeman's Journal 3 Jan 1880. The Mayor of Adelaide, E.T. Smith, had travelled through South-West Ireland and Connemara two years previously, and acknowledged the depth of distress there. This query to E. Dwyer Grey was intended to produce up-to-date confirmation of his own observations.  
Irish agriculture had been reaching Australia during the last months of 1879. By early January, the Advocate and the Freeman's Journal were carrying reports of a call by the Irish bishops for help in alleviating distress - a call which significantly carried with it a warning to the Irish peasantry that their suffering did not entitle them to use illegal or non-constitutional methods to obtain redress.¹ Within days Bishop Goold had authorised an appeal for funds and designated Sunday, January 11, as the day on which special collections would be made in the churches.² Within a week similar appeals had been launched by the Bishops of Sandhurst and Ballarat, and public meetings were being held to organise Relief Committees representing a broad cross-section of the community, both Catholic and Protestant.³ By the third week in January, reports were already coming in of similar activities in other colonies; appeals were already underway in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, while the first returns from collections made in Victoria showed that already £1500 was in hand.⁴ What followed over the next few months was to amaze the Irish community; what had begun as basically an Irish and Catholic

---

1. Advocate, 3 Jan 1880. Freeman's Journal, 3 Jan 1880.
2. Advocate, 3 Jan 1880.
3. Advocate, 10 Jan 1880. Freeman's Journal, 17 Jan 1880
   Argus 10 Jan 1880.
4. Advocate, 7 Feb 1880. The Sydney appeal was bolstered by £100 donations from Archbishop Vaughan, Dalton Bros., P.A. Jennings, Toohey Bros., and a number of other prominent figures. Freeman's Journal 17 Jan 1880.
appeal had suddenly been transformed into a general campaign with vigorous support from all sections of colonial society. Politicians, municipal councillors, and clergymen of various denominations appeared on the platform at public meetings called to draw attention to the distressed condition of Ireland, and by February 7th, a month after Goold’s appeal had been published, close on £20,000 had been collected in Melbourne and £16,000 in Sydney. By early March, these totals had grown to £25,000 and £20,000 respectively, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin reported that Australian funds had already saved many from starvation. The largest single donation to the Melbourne appeal was £500 from the wealthy grazier, W.J. Clarke, and the subscription lists indicate that a considerable number of citizens who would not normally have been concerned with Irish affairs had made substantial contributions. By the end of March, the leaders of the Irish community could look back with considerable satisfaction to a campaign which in three months had netted over £27,000 from Victoria alone and over £70,000 from Australia as a whole, and this had been achieved without

3. Advocate, 24 Jan 1880.
arousing sectarian animosities. There can be no doubt that the money raised was of great value to those organising relief in Ireland itself, and the colonial committees which wound up their affairs in early April had good reason to be proud of their achievement.

By this stage, the reports reaching the colony indicated that the crisis had been averted and that there were now grounds for hoping that normal weather conditions would be maintained during the forthcoming season. But the interest generated by the events of February and March did not recede immediately, and the Irish-Australian press continued to report Irish affairs in considerable detail. This was not always an easy task. The major difficulty was to interpret the significance of certain new trends within the nationalist movement in Ireland, and to do so without the benefit of knowledgeable contacts or up-to-date newspaper comment. The activities of the Irish Parliamentary Party were not in themselves difficult to analyse, for the whole moderate constitutional approach was part of the colonial political scene. The difficulty came when colonial Irish tried to fit the new land movement into the broader nationalist front and

---

1. The Ballarat correspondent of the Advocate reported that in his area Protestants, Jews, Deists and non-believers had given their support to the appeal. Advocate, 24 Jan 1880.
2. Advocate, 17 April 1880.
to determine the relationship between it and the Parliamentary Party. With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to understand the difficulties experienced, for in these months complex manoeuvering by the leaders of both groups produced a strange and shifting amalgam, as puzzling to many observers in Ireland as to those thousands of miles away.

The key to this situation was Michael Davitt's Land League. The near starvation conditions of 1879 provided an excellent opportunity to test his belief that in a predominantly rural community no one issue would have such immediate force as the question of land tenure, and that if the tenants could be shown that their only chance of survival lay in bringing about drastic changes in that system then the basis would be laid for a massive agitation. In April 1879, a demonstration at Irishtown, County Mayo, proved that the peasants would come out in their hundreds if the right leadership were at hand; the opportunity, once seen, was quickly exploited. Mass meetings were held all over the west country, and landlordism was execrated from dozens of platforms. By October 1879, as many as 20,000 people were attending meetings, and the scale of the agitation was causing concern in official circles.¹ By September, the infant Land League of Mayo

¹. Ibid., p.137.
was ready to transform itself into a national organisation, and by 21st October the formalities were complete; the Irish National Land League had taken up headquarters in Lower Sackville St., Dublin, and its supporters were in full cry throughout the western counties.

In its manifesto, the new League proclaimed its objectives as reduction of rack rents; encouragement of any move to give ownership to those who worked the land; protection for those in danger of eviction – in the main, practical objectives which papered over the tremendous difficulties facing any scheme for the destruction of landlordism which stopped short of actual expropriation. It also contained a plea to the Irish abroad to give financial assistance to the cause and show their sympathy for it.¹ By Christmas of 1879, the Land League was the most novel and exciting phenomenon to appear on the Irish political scene since the 1840’s.

To many of the colonial Irish, the Land League seemed the most practical approach to Ireland’s problems. Most of them had come from rural areas in the homeland, and knew at first hand the problems tenant farmers faced.

¹. Ibid., p.143.
Moreover, roughly half of the Irish-born in the colonies were in some way connected with farming in the new land. They knew something of the struggle between squatter and selector over the previous two decades, and of the difficulties of meeting financial commitments from a fluctuating farm income. A poorly educated group with a peasant background could make much more sense of a land-right agitation than of the legal and historical issues involved in the Home Rule campaign.

And yet there were difficulties for the colonial Irish to surmount; events in Ireland were moving at too rapid a pace and in too many directions at once for a distant observer to form a clear opinion. The Famine Relief Appeal had been a simple enough arrangement: the need was obvious, and the method of satisfying the need was quickly made available. But 1880 was an election year in England, and the outcome was a change of ministry - meaning new policies, a new administration and new hopes for Ireland. At the same time Parnell, who was still something of an enigma to the Irish overseas, now seemed to be in virtual control of both the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Land League. Accordingly the local Irish-Australian weeklies were fairly careful in their reporting of Irish affairs; the distress in rural districts stemming either from famine or from the results of eviction was fully
reported, but the complexities of the political situation proved difficult to unravel. The Freeman's Journal seemed sympathetic to Parnell, the Advocate more guarded. When reports reached the colonies early in 1880 that Parnell might be planning a visit to the colonies, the Advocate reacted unfavourably; a private visit would certainly be welcome, but an official visit would be an error of judgement. In a mixed community, the argument ran, it would not be prudent for a minority to offend the prejudices of the majority by countenancing such a controversial tour. Good taste and good feeling should make this self-evident. From time to time the same paper did defend Parnell against the more intemperate criticisms of his actions in the daily press, and played down reports of his hard-line speeches in the United States. But as yet there was no great warmth behind the Advocate's comments on Parnell, probably due to the fact that there had been no opportunity to assess his potential or forecast the line of policy he would adopt; on the few occasions that the paper attempted to make some sort of appraisal, it tended to be rather wide of the mark: in the light of later events, the columnist Tapley's estimate of Parnell after the latter had been elected

---

1. Advocate, 21 Feb 1880.
chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party was a particularly unfortunate one.

"The honorable gentleman does not, I fancy, possess that generalship which is of such great value in political warfare, but he has ability, pluck and go..."¹

What the Irish in the colonies needed was some concrete issue which would focus their attention and give them some opportunity to participate from a distance in some worthwhile activity which could be seen to have a definite bearing on current events in the home country — something, in fact, akin to the Famine Relief Appeal. By the end of 1880, a suitable issue was beginning to emerge; during the new parliamentary session the Irish members had shrewdly probed the intentions of the new Liberal ministry towards Ireland, and had embarrassed Gladstone by introducing a private bill to provide compensation for evicted tenants — a measure which the government belatedly took over after it had reached the second reading stage and converted into the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. The Parnellites had cause to be pleased with their progress up to this point; but in August the House of Lords rejected the measure by a large majority, and in doing so made a

1. Advocate, 22 May 1880.
disastrous rent in the credibility of the moderate constitutional approach. In the closing stages of the session, the atmosphere in the House changed markedly for the worse, and it seemed that there might be a full-scale rupture between the Irish Party and the Liberal ministry. When the session ended in September, Parnell crossed to Ireland to test the climate of Irish opinion in the light of the Lords' rejection of the Disturbance Bill. Within weeks his analysis was complete and his future line of action decided upon.

In the remaining months of 1880, the agitation in Ireland moved into a more violent phase; Parnell identified himself openly with the Land League and its policies, and by appearing to give his full approval to boycotting had now rallied the major political forces in Ireland behind him. Even the clergy were now giving him vigorous support, the influential Freeman's Journal in Dublin was behind him, and the Land Leaguers were naturally elated to find that their more radical viewpoint had prevailed. The new approach was not without its effects, and the landlords were the first to react to the pressure which Parnell could now bring to bear in the rural areas; in the last quarter of 1880, evictions dropped from 3,447 to 954.¹ The British government could hardly fail to

¹ N.D. Palmer, op. cit., p.271.
respond when all the indications pointed to the success of the new militant approach, and with a new parliamentary session in the offing, some demonstration of the ministry's refusal to be intimidated was required. Accordingly, Parnell and five other Irish Members were charged with conspiring to prevent the payment of rent, a move which did nothing to stem the incidence of boycotting but did a great deal to enhance Parnell's reputation amongst the Irish. The Dublin Freeman's Journal quickly set up a Defence Fund to cover the legal costs of the five arrested members, and in time this Fund, together with payments from the Land League, was to reach a total of £22,000.¹ The trial itself dragged on over the New Year and finally collapsed in late January when the jury failed to agree; for the government, the debacle was complete.

The reactions of the colonial Irish towards these events seem to have been initially rather uncertain, but as Parnell became more closely identified with the relief of the peasantry, the attitude towards him began to clarify. Both the Freeman's Journal in Sydney and the Advocate in Melbourne supported the suggestion from the Lord Mayor of Dublin that the local Irish be asked to support the Parnell Defence Fund, and both acted as collecting agencies.²

¹. Ibid.  
². Freeman's Journal, 27 Nov 1880.
But the money did not come in as readily as had been expected and a number of those who did contribute sent accompanying letters urging their countrymen to be more generous in their attitude to home affairs.\(^1\) Country addresses figured prominently in the subscription lists, and a number of priests made it clear that they were wholeheartedly behind the appeal.\(^2\) But the overall results were disappointing, and the Advocate had to concede this when replying to an attack on the Defence Fund by the Argus.\(^3\) The only explanation put forward was the possible dampening effect of the news that the Fund had already been heavily subscribed in the United States, leaving many to believe that there was no real necessity for the colonial Irish to become involved. But there were also indications that the more influential Irishmen were withholding their support from the Fund, fearing that if they did come out in favour of Parnell they would be regarded by the general public as condoning the anarchy in rural Ireland, which the daily press attributed directly to Parnell and the Land League. In Brisbane, where the Fund seems to have got off to a better start, the veteran Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty, a survivor of the Young Ireland

---

1. Advocate, 19 Feb 1881.  
2. Advocate, 1 Jan 1881, 12 Feb 1881.  
3. Advocate, 5 Feb 1881.
revolt, hinted at this when he discussed the poor response in the older colonies

"if the leading men [in Sydney and Melbourne] had come forward and done what he conceived to be their duty, there would have been any number of people to follow them. Here they suffered the same disadvantage. There were in Brisbane a comparatively large number of gentlemen of standing of Irish birth and sympathy, but they were not here tonight. Although he did not blame them, or question for a moment the reasons which actuated them in staying away, their absence was a misfortune to the people at home struggling to save life..."

The same point was made by a speaker at a meeting in Kilmore, Victoria, claiming that

"... prominent Irishmen, who had not been ashamed to flourish the green at other times, had shown no sympathy with this movement..."

This type of comment probably applied to men like Sir John O'Shanassy who had been very active in supporting the Famine Relief Appeal with its straightforward humanitarian character, but were less enthusiastic about giving their assent to a movement which was widely regarded as destructive of property rights. It was understandable that the older Anglo-Irish groups and the few Celts who had moved into positions which carried a certain amount of

1. Advocate, 5 Feb 1881.
2. Advocate, 19 Feb 1881. The Australasian, commenting on the Kilmore meeting, suggested that such men were not supporting the appeal because they were appalled at the anarchy in rural Ireland.
social prestige refrained from public identification with either the Land League or Parnell: the colonial press was generally extremely hostile to both, and there can be little doubt that the weight of public opinion was heavily against those who argued the merits of the Irish position. Furthermore, it was by this stage known that two of the most influential members of the Irish hierarchy were now at loggerheads over the propriety of the methods being used by the Land Leaguers, and it was rumoured that Rome was on the verge of intervention in the form of a papal pronouncement on the moral issues involved in boycotting. The fact that the Advocate devoted some attention to outlining the most favourable interpretation of Leo XIII's supposed views on the Irish situation may indicate that some uncertainty did exist in the minds of the local Irish; the clergy in particular would have had to exercise some caution in the matter, and some laymen would also have felt it prudent to abstain from open support for the Parnell Defence Fund. Yet, above these very understandable restraints, most of which resulted from an awareness that premature action might in the long run prove to be a source of embarrassment, there is also the possibility that some Irishmen had so modified their attitudes under the influence of colonial
conditions that they no longer would give even guarded support for a campaign of the type the Irish Land League was currently undertaking. Mid-way through 1880, a correspondent in the Advocate referred sarcastically to the way in which the political attitudes of many Irishmen altered after they had spent some years in the colony.

"What a curious anomaly it is to see many fortunate and successful Irish Catholics here who have sprung from the struggling, industrious and whilom down-trodden people of the old country, as well as many fortunate shepherds, bullock drivers, tea and sugar dealers, soap and candle makers, butchers, etc., turn rank conservatives in this country, while we see the representatives of the grandest old houses of a thousand years, such as the Cavendishes, Dukes of Devon, and Stanleys, Earls of Derby, etc., in the front of the Liberals at home. Truly, facts are stranger than fiction. Well may we say, Politics make strange bedfellows."

This assessment was made in the light of local politics, and did not specifically relate to the question of nationalist support. But it could be argued that given the nature of the struggle going on in both Ireland and the House of Commons in the early 1880's, such a mutation of political attitudes would have considerable impact on the nationalist attitudes of those directly concerned. Certainly the point was made repeatedly in later years when the Home Rule movement in the colonies found itself in the middle of more severe controversies and the absence of the more prosperous from the ranks was keenly felt by the hard-

---

1. Advocate, 8 May 1880
core nationalists. Even the latter were to some extent affected by the moderating influences of the colonial environment; for instance, none of his contemporaries could match the dedication of Joseph Winter to a whole range of Irish causes – and yet the paper he controlled was commended by one of its regular contributors for the sober tone of its editorial comment on Irish affairs, and commended in terms which pointed up the realities of the colonial situation

"Irishmen must always bear in mind that within the four seas of Ireland is the only suitable place for the writing of newspaper leading articles in what is called the slashing style – glowing with patriotic ardour and buoyant with the hope that a revival of national life is still in store for old Ireland. On Irish ground is the fit and proper place for speeches and newspaper writing racy of the soil; but in British colonies where the Irish are but a comparatively small proportion of the population, let moderation never be exceeded..."¹

Parnell's acquittal meant that funds were no longer required with the same urgency. But the agrarian crisis in Ireland was if anything worsening, and the government was faced with a virtual insurrection; officially, the Land League countenanced only peaceful methods of intimidation, but it was impossible to prevent the peasantry from resorting to violence and terror and much of the south-western section of the country experienced an almost complete breakdown of law and order. In the early months of 1881, the Gladstone

¹. Advocate, 1 Jan 1881.
administration found itself forced to defer any notion of immediate reform and to draft repressive legislation in an attempt to halt the slide towards complete anarchy. Despite fierce obstruction from the Irish members, the Protection of Life and Property (Ireland) Act—better known as the Coercion Act—became law in March 1881, suspending the Habeas Corpus Act and giving the administration power to imprison any "reasonably suspected person". Then the government turned to the question of reform, and Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 became the first of a series of attempts to remove the root cause of Irish discontent.

Between March and October of 1881, despite the comprehensive coercive powers now available to the administration, the intensity of the land war increased. The landlords had taken encouragement from the apparent firmness of the government and had pushed the rate of eviction to record levels. Riots, shootings and destruction of property followed, and in some areas anarchy became the normal condition; the Land League seemed stronger than ever, despite widespread arrests, and there was no certainty that even the passage of Gladstone's Land Bill would do anything to calm the situation.¹ The reports coming out of Ireland told of the distress of thousands of

¹ N.D. Palmer, op. cit., chs. XII, XIII.
evicted tenants, of the brutalities associated with the process of eviction, and the close identification of the Land League with the struggle; on the other hand, English sources stressed the crime rate, the constant agrarian outrages, the breakdown of the rule of law, and the impossibility of restoring the situation without the use of massive force. To the Irish in the Australian colonies, it seemed that Ireland was once again being torn apart, and that help must be given to those who had become virtually refugees in their own land.

Accordingly, the second half of 1881 saw the earlier movement to collect funds for the Parnell fund being transformed into a campaign to establish branches of the Land League in the colonies. Often, the establishment of a Land League branch was a spontaneous gesture on the part of a local community; on other occasions, it was difficult to see any line of demarcation between a local appeal for the Parnell Fund and the setting up of a Land League branch – the one simply grew out of the other. The whole process suffered from the lack of leadership and from the absence of any clear organisational pattern. The Queensland Irish seem to have been ahead of their counterparts in other colonies in getting the League underway, possibly due to the presence of Kevin Izod O'Doherty; by contrast, there were complaints in Sydney that the leading Irishmen
had not moved fast enough and that only "men and women of the labouring classes" were doing anything practical to aid the League.\(^1\) In Victoria, the Advocate had been collecting for a Land League Defence Fund from the beginning of the year, and had run this alongside the older Parnell Defence Fund.\(^2\) By February, a similar Fund was being set up in Adelaide.\(^3\) But the formation of actual branches of the League did not gather momentum until the later months of the year, when for the first time a full-time organiser became available and for the first time something akin to central direction began to operate.

The circumstances under which John W. Walshe took up duties as the representative of the Irish Land League are somewhat obscure. Davitt, in his account of the formation of the Land League, suggests that he was sent by the League as the result of a request from sympathisers in Australia.\(^4\) It is possible that the request may have come from Joseph Winter and his associates in Melbourne, or it may have stemmed from the small and vigorous group at Gympie in Queensland who claimed the honour of having formed the first branch of the Land League as early as 1880. There are some

\(^1\) Freeman's Journal, 21 May 1881.
\(^2\) Advocate, 8 Jan 1881.
\(^3\) Advocate, 5 Feb 1881.
\(^4\) M. Davitt, op.cit., p.384.
indications that the Melbourne group may have been the source, as Davitt refers to a meeting held there in January 1881 at which the Minister of Lands, Francis Longmore, presided, and at which the desirability of giving aid to the Land League was discussed. It is probably significant that Walshe came first to Melbourne, was received by Winter, and then began his organising work in Victoria during 1881.

During the second half of the year Walshe crossed and recrossed Victoria, holding meetings and collecting funds for the relief of evicted tenants in Ireland. Usually a branch of the Land Leage was formed in each area as a result of his visit, so that the work of fund raising could be carried on by local committees. By August of 1881, branches were operating in the North-East, Gippsland, the Western District and even in some parts of the northern district. In October, Walshe postponed a projected visit to South Australia to visit country centres; the contrast with the earlier campaign in support of Parnell is striking. Admittedly, some did from time to time complain that not all the Irish colonists were giving the assistance which the cause deserved, but the lists of

1. Ibid., p.383.
branches formed and the subscriptions received do not appear to justify such criticisms.¹ Nor did the strictures of the daily press appear to have had much effect; the *Argus* attacked the Walshe visit in November, but his meetings continued to be well attended and enthusiastic, so much so that by November 12th, £2250 had been collected and forwarded to the headquarters of the League.² By January of 1882 the *Advocate* was able to draw the attention of its readers to the much improved situation in Ireland, and to attribute this happier state of affairs to the activity of the Land League; as a correspondent in the same issue remarked, an organisation which had proved that it could make itself feared by the British government well deserved the support of the local Irish.³

Early in 1882, Walshe transferred his activities to Tasmania, and his place as key-note speaker in Victoria was taken by Pierce Healy. Walshe appears to have been in bad health at this stage, and his activities were

¹ *Advocate*, 10 Oct 1881.
² The size of the contributions caused some surprise. The *Argus* attacked Walshe for "grinding the faces of the poor". Irish selectors already lived a hard life; was it necessary to bleed them for a doubtful cause? *Advocate*, 12 Nov 1881.
³ *Advocate*, 7 Jan 1882.
considerably restricted; but he did manage to attend a meeting at Launceston and was warmly received by the local Irish. One significant outcome of his visit to Tasmania was a change in the name of the main unit of the Land League, the Victorian Central Committee of the Irish Land League; at Walshe's request, this body now referred to itself as the Australian Committee, so that funds collected in other colonies could be remitted through it without arousing inter-colonial jealousies.1 With this change made, Walshe began to make plans for a visit to New Zealand, the assumption being that Healy would continue to carry on organising activity in Victoria. He had apparently asked the parent organisation in Ireland to send him an assistant, but according to Egan, no one could be spared at this stage.2

By March, Walshe had changed his plans, and had decided to visit New South Wales before going to New Zealand.3 As there seemed to be no slackening off in the rate at which new branches were being formed in Victoria (often at the behest of the local clergy), Walshe took Healy with him and addressed his first meeting in Sydney late in March.4

1. Advocate, 18 Feb 1882.
2. Advocate, 18 Feb 1882.
3. Advocate, 4 March 1882.
4. Advocate, 1 April 1882, Freeman's Journal, 8 April 1882.
His initial reception may not have been as warm as he would have hoped; no branch of the Land League seems to have been formed after his opening meeting, and the *Freeman's Journal* noted some weeks later that New South Wales – with the exception of country towns such as Temora – was not showing as much generosity towards the cause as had Victoria.¹ But there was no such criticism of the Irish within the diocese of Goulburn; Bishop Lanigan gave Walshe an enthusiastic welcome, and his clergy took care to ensure that their congregations were aware of Lanigan's attitude.²

The two organisers moved through the area, Walshe speaking at Yass and then both at Burrowa.³ Then Walshe interrupted the tour to return to Melbourne by train, apparently to consult with the Central Committee. But plans were being laid for a score of meetings in New South Wales country districts on his return. It was at this point that news reached the colonies of the disastrous Phoenix Park murders, probably the most abrupt jolt the Home Rule cause was to receive until the Parnell scandal became public some years

---

2. *Freeman's Journal*, 29 April 1882
3. Local reactions varied: the parish priest at Burrowa felt that he could now come out in the open support of Walshe, since Lanigan had given his approval. But the Burrowa Times was reported to have attacked the Land League meeting – on the grounds that Healy had not advertised it in the local press. *Freeman's Journal*, 6 May 1882.
later. The Irish-Australian press echoed the general shock and revulsion, but soon found it necessary to defend the orthodox Nationalist position against the fury of anti-Irish opinion in the colony, now inflamed by both the murders and the so-called Grattan Address. No further meetings seem to have been held in New South Wales until mid-July, either because of the state of public opinion or because of Walshe's absence. When Walshe did return to the platform, his health curtailed his activities, and for the first time his place was taken by a young Irishman who had only recently arrived in the colony — the ex-journalist Hugh Mahon. For the next two months Mahon seems to have taken over from Walshe, speaking at meetings through southern New South Wales and proving adept at handling interruptions and counter-resolutions put forward by the occasional Protestant clergyman. By the end of August, Mahon's name appeared beside that of Walshe as signatories to a manifesto calling on the Irish in Australia to support the Land League and he was cited as

---

1. The now illegal Land League had been replaced by a new organisation, the Irish National League.
2. This had aroused great interest in Victoria. Five Members of Parliament had signed an address drawn up in honour of the Grattan centenary. Great exception was taken to the word "despotism" as applied to the government of Ireland.
3. Healy had apparently moved to South Australia by early July. *Freeman's Journal*, 8 July 1882.
the representative of the Australian Central Committee.\footnote{Freeman's Journal, 26 August 1882.}
The tempo of fund raising stepped up in the later months of the year, as the Sydney press stepped up its attacks on the local activities of the Land League and laid heavy stress on the fact that the parent organisation in Ireland had been declared illegal. Mahon and Walshe appear to have made good use of the free publicity these attacks earned them, and took care to point out that they had the support of Bishop Quinn at Bathurst as well as that of Bishop Lanigan.\footnote{Freeman's Journal, 30 September 1882.} But in the midst of their successful country tour, they were recalled to Melbourne to attend a meeting of the Central Committee. A new situation had now developed in Ireland.

Though few realised it, the Irish National League was designed by Parnell as a political rather than an agrarian organisation, one which would provide finance and electoral assistance for the Parliamentary party. It would be under this control, and would mark the transition from the older strategy of tenant agitation combined with political action to the newer approach of achieving control of the balance in the House of Commons. Under the circumstances, the colonial leadership could not leave their
own organisation unchanged, and the obvious move was to remodel along the lines of the new body in Ireland.¹ But there was even bigger news in the wind; for some time the Central Committee had been requesting assistance from the Nationalist leaders in Dublin, but to no avail. In December of 1882, however, news reached the colonies that John Redmond, the young member for New Ross in the House of Commons, had already left for Australia. A cable from Parnell to Walshe confirmed the reports, and the colonial Home Rulers began to make preparations for his reception.²

Redmond's visit was to be of great significance for the local Irish. Although nothing much was known of him in Australia, he was precisely the type of envoy the colonies needed. His family background was impeccable, he was well educated, and above all he was a member of the House of Commons, albeit a junior one. This in itself would be a great asset as far as colonial public opinion was concerned. On top of this, his recent contact with Parnell and the Nationalist leadership would put him in a good position to explain current trends in policy and lay down guide lines for the operation of the new National League. If he should prove to be an able platform speaker, so much the better.

¹. Freeman's Journal, 4 November 1882.  
². Freeman's Journal, 9 December 1882. Redmond knew as early as February 1882 that the trip was being planned. Redmond to Mahon, 25 Feb 1882. Mahon Papers, Series 1, 937/286.
The Central Committee moved quickly. Advertisements in the Irish-Australian press carried an outline of the new strategy laid down in Dublin, and invited sympathisers to organise meetings at which Redmond could give his view of the Irish situation. Walshe, who had been holding meetings as far north as Rockhampton over the Christmas-New Year period, was recalled to Melbourne and instructed to meet Redmond at Adelaide. By now it was known that William Redmond had joined his brother in the venture, and when their ship docked at Adelaide in February, Walshe led the extensive welcome arranged by the Adelaide branch of the Land League.

The opening meeting of the tour proved successful, and after establishing the Adelaide branch of the Irish National League, Redmond left for Sydney; Victoria was to be by-passed to avoid clashing with what was already a bitter general election. The Sydney press gave the envoys a hostile welcome, and charges of sedition were freely aired; the organisers found several halls refused to them, and Redmond found it necessary to carry on a lively debate through the correspondence columns. The furore owed

1. Advocate, 6 January 1883.
2. Freeman's Journal, 13 January 1883; Advocate, 20 January 1883.
3. Advocate, 17 February 1883.
much of its strength to the current revelations concerning the Phoenix Park murders. By strange coincidence, the Dublin authorities had made their first break-through in their investigation of the crime just as the Redmonds reached Australia, and as the cables indicated that the Land League had been implicated, the colonial press had plenty of ammunition to throw against the envoys. Excitement ran high both in Sydney – where an anti-Redmond meeting at the Protestant Hall developed into a near riot – and in Melbourne, where the Grattan Address and the general election had raised a good deal of sectarian heat. But the controversy made John Redmond's reputation as far as the rank and file Irish were concerned. His excellent platform performance, general demeanour and obvious competence won him many admirers, and in time even the more critical journalists reluctantly conceded that he was a very able spokesman for his cause. Following the

---

1. Freeman's Journal, 10 March 1883.
2. Years later, Redmond gave his own account of the atmosphere in Sydney on his first visit there. "When I arrived at Sydney, the Phoenix Park murders were still the talk of the colony. I received a chilling reception. All the respectable people who had promised support kept away. The priests would not help me, except the Jesuits, who were friendly to me as an old Clongowes boy. A leading citizen who had promised to take the chair at my first meeting would not come. Sir Henry Parkes, the Prime Minister, proposed that I should be expelled from the colony, but the motion was defeated. The Irish working men stood by me, and in fact saved the situation. They kept me going until a telegram arrived exculpating the Parliamentary party. Then all the Irish came round, and ultimately flocked to my meetings." Quoted in D. Gwynn, The Life of John Redmond, (London, 1932), p. 52-53.
initial meetings in Sydney, Redmond began moving through the country areas pioneered by Walshe and Mahon, establishing branches of the National League and collecting money. He seems to have had little trouble in getting support from most sections of the Irish community, but there is some evidence that the wealthier Irish in Sydney found it wise to keep well clear of him, and Redmond was reported as having promised to report their failure to give support when he returned to Ireland.¹ For years after, this alleged cowardice would be cited as evidence of the unreliability of the more successful Irish in matters of national concern.²

Redmond's first contact with his rural supporters occurred as he moved out into the Central West of New South Wales. In Orange he was welcomed by the Dalton family,

1. Advocate, 24 February 1883. The only Member of Parliament to attend Redmond's Sydney meeting was Daniel O'Connor, who took his seat out of sight in the wings. In the course of his address, Redmond complained that most of the prominent men who had paid their respects on his arrival had not come to the meeting "although he was informed that one of them was skulking behind the curtain". Advocate, 3 March 1883.

2. Three years later, when the Home Rule cause had become suddenly respectable, the Bulletin pointed to prominent men who had kept clear of the Redmonds and were now very ready to appear at Irish functions and be feted in return. One of the few to escape the Bulletin's censure was Mr. Copeland, M.L.A., who had risked his Ministerial status by attending the St. Patrick's Day banquet in 1883. He had become drunk during the festivities, and his speech rapidly developed into a disastrous failure; but the Irish remembered his loyalty at a time when others found it safer to stay at home. Bulletin, 27 March 1886.
probably the most influential Irish dynasty outside Sydney; in time both he and his brother William were to become members of the family by marriage, and one of the Dalton sons was to join them on the Irish benches in the House of Commons. Despite the local influence of the Daltons, Redmond was again refused the use of the larger halls and was forced to speak in a shop building. But he appears to have held to his moderate tone in most of his public speeches, despite provocation. At Bathurst, for example, he angrily rebuked one of the preliminary speakers at his own meeting when the over-zealous local launched into a fierce attack on all things English.

By St. Patrick's Day he was back in Sydney and planning to leave for Queensland with Walshe. The intention seems to have been to conduct meetings in Brisbane, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Gympie, Charters Towers and

1. Advocate, 17 March 1883.
2. Freeman's Journal, 17 March 1883. In the following month Sir Henry Parkes moved that the Legislative Assembly forward an address of loyalty to the Queen as a way of rebutting Redmond's justification of the Land League. The Colonial Secretary, Stuart, refused to be drawn, arguing that such an address would be superfluous, and probably would be regarded as an intrusion into Imperial affairs. Parkes' motion was defeated 48/25 N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates, First Series, vol 9, 1883, p.1548ff.
Cooktown, to then return overland through northern New South Wales, working by degrees down to Sydney, and then give further lectures through the southern districts. William Redmond and Hugh Mahon also travelled north to Queensland, but did not undertake the full itinerary. William's health had been giving concern, and it was hoped that he would return to Adelaide to recuperate with friends there.

The Queensland tour seems to have been rather more free of tension than the initial foray into New South Wales. The Brisbane press was a little less hostile, and the local Irish gave Redmond an enthusiastic welcome. At Gympie, the mining town which could claim to have founded the first branch of the Land League in Australia, the local priest, Father Mathew Horan, led his flock to meet the visitors; the incident caught the fancy of one observer.

"Looking at the scene, the earnest, self-sacrificing Soggarth Aroon at the head of his enthusiastic people, a new comer might be pardoned for becoming oblivious to his surroundings and imagining himself once more among the mountains of Tipperary or on the hillsides of Wexford, watching with eager eyes and throbbing heart the struggles of a down trodden peasantry." 

3. Freeman's Journal, 14 April 1883.
But once across the border on the return visit to New South Wales, the atmosphere became much more complex. Once again, public halls were refused to the visitors, and at Tenterfield, Redmond addressed the local Irish after Sunday Mass, using a temporary platform erected in the Church grounds.\(^1\) In Armidale he was cheered through the streets, but had to speak in a warehouse. Further afield, there were signs of danger; across the Tasman, Bishop Luck of Auckland announced that he would not attend Redmond's meetings for fear of re-creating old world quarrels in New Zealand.\(^2\) Those who looked closely at Vaughan's remarks at a school opening at Balmain may have read an additional meaning into words which related specifically to the education question

"I know the English mind. Englishmen are prejudiced, but they are eminently just, and when the scales drop off payment by results will come...I do not advocate 'fighting' for that act of justice

---

(Hear, hear), let us keep quiet, and do our own work, and it will come...Any see-saw that keeps up a ferment and keeps Catholics out of public life had better be avoided, if possible..."  

Vaughan's advice did not go down well with his Irish flock: as the Advocate commented, the Irish had already waited many centuries for a just solution to their national claims, and were not inclined to accept such a passive approach.  

But if the atmosphere in Sydney was not entirely satisfactory, the same could not be said of the southern districts of New South Wales. Leaving Walshe to go on and report to the Central Committee in Melbourne, Redmond moved down towards the border, speaking at Goulburn,

---

1. Freeman's Journal, 21 April 1883. Vaughan's fears were understandable, given the strength of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic feeling. The Victorian Methodist weekly, The Spectator, had already pointed to the risks involved in a situation which might drive the Catholic Irish into a solid Redmondite bloc and the remainder of the community into an opposing position. The end result could be the virtual exclusion of Catholic politicians from Parliament. The Spectator, 23 March 1883. One other result could be exclusion from minor public office. James Dalton and several of his associates at Orange were removed from the Commission of the Peace for signing what Francis Abigall, M.P., described as "a disloyal and seditious address of welcome to Mr. Redmond on his arrival at Orange. New South Wales Parliamentary Debates, First Series, 1883 Session.

2. Advocate, 2 June 1883.
Burrowa, Young, Murrumburrah, Cootamundra, Wagga and Temora. At Temora, which had been the stronghold of the Land League, he was met by a cavalcade of about a thousand men on horseback, and the subsequent meeting was a major success. After completing this swing through the Riverina, he crossed the border at Albury and faced up to a Victorian tour which would take him to over forty different centres.

At Albury, Redmond took train for Melbourne, and was met at Spencer Street station by the executive members of the Central Committee of the Land League. No doubt they were anxious about the outcome of the visit, for the general atmosphere could not have been more unfavourable. The furore over the Grattan Address, the bitterly fought general election which had produced considerable sectarian feeling, and the disastrous impact of the Phoenix Park revelations, all combined to make Redmond's tour a centre of controversy. As in Sydney, hall managements had already refused to make their premises available, and the local press maintained a continuous attack on both Redmond and the Nationalist movement generally. So damaging was this attack that Redmond felt obliged to devote

the last of his three major meetings in the city to a rebuttal of the accusations against the Land League, while at the same time keeping up a running battle with the *Age* through its correspondence columns.

In the first instance the *Age* had attacked both the Redmonds as extremist agitators, who were the agents of Parnell and of all those who stood for a violent solution to Ireland's problems. But the tone of John Redmond's address did not lend itself to further specific attacks of this kind, so he was accused of veiling his real intentions, and of deliberately giving an impression of moderation. Repeated references were made not only to the current judicial proceedings in Dublin arising out of the Phoenix Park enquiries, but also to the tone and content of speeches made at the recent Irish-American

---

1. *Age*, 4 June 1883. This theme had been developed in its most extreme form by the Melbourne evangelical weekly at the time of the Sydney visit. "[The Redmonds] are incendiaries... These gentlemen are the representatives of a cause which stands practically in the same category with Nihilism; it is stained by outrages and assassinations, it wages war not so much on any particular policy as on morality and society..." *Southern Cross*, 17 March 1883.
2. *Age*, 6 June 1883.
Convention in Philadelphia, which lent itself to charges that the Fenian movement was still at the core of Irish Nationalism both at home and abroad.¹ Less value could be gained from charges that the funds donated to the Land League were not properly accounted for, the implication being that they had been used to provide a comfortable living for otherwise idle Nationalist parliamentarians. But Redmonds' critics were given a fresh opening by the news that the Papal authorities had taken some action - the details were still not clear - which seemed to be directed against the involvement of the clergy in Ireland in Nationalist activity. Over the next few weeks the Australasian repeatedly asked how the local Catholic clergy could reconcile their support for the Redmonds with their pledge of obedience to Papal authority.²

There can be no mistaking the heat generated by the Redmond visit; two months later the Australasian conceded that there were signs that some municipal councillors who had been prominent supporters of the Redmonds were now being punished by their electors in the current elections: Brophy at Ballarat, Carroll at Hotham,

¹. Age, 11 June 1883, Australasian, 2 June 1883. The Australasian tended to emphasise this line of argument. ². Australasian, 16 June 1883.
and McMahon at Fitzroy were cited as victims of an anti-Irish reaction which the paper deplored but blamed on the Irish visitors in the first place. But it is difficult to gauge the deeper significance of the June debate between John Redmond and the daily press. In a sense, that debate should have thrown some light on the issues involved in the Irish Question as it then stood; the major newspapers and the Redmond brothers were equipped to engage in debate at a fairly high level, and mutual illumination might have been the result. But the whole discussion was compromised by the understandable failure of the Press to distinguish between the Parnellite approach and the violent diatribes of the Irish-American leadership, and by the inability of Redmond to lay the Fenian ghost once and for all. To the press, Redmond was bound to give an impression of insincerity, despite his effective and attractive platform style; on the other hand, the visitors felt that the local press was misinformed, dependent on slanted cable messages, and completely unwilling to give the Irish viewpoint a fair hearing. Certainly the colonial press was very wide of the mark in its assessment of Redmond, but in the light

of the often defective information reaching the colonies from London, this is not altogether surprising. Finally, there was one other element which complicated the situation, at least from the point of view of the Age; as the major defender of the Liberal point of view, the Age felt some embarrassment that Redmond's arguments were couched in terms which came very close to the central tenets of the liberal philosophy. The paper on occasion conceded the need for some form of limited self-government for Ireland, stopping well short of the full Home Rule position, and this left an opening which the rival conservative Argus was quick to exploit by charging disloyalty.¹ So the Age was anxious to ensure that Redmond be clearly tagged as an outcast from the liberal camp. As early as 7th June, an editorial argued that the whole land league approach was anti-national, particularist, and doomed to failure.

"The Irishman is not a Liberal seeking to consolidate a nationality, but a revolutionist seeking to break up a political union for which he can substitute nothing."²

1. Age, 19 June 1883.
2. Age, 7 June 1883.
It was therefore the duty of the Liberal organ to warn its followers against giving support to the Redmond visit, even at the cost of incurring the wrath of the Catholic press and pulpit. Nothing could excuse a campaign which must result in the dismemberment of the Empire.

In all, the general public would have been little the wiser when the controversy died down; traditional prejudices remained intact on both sides of the argument. There is, however, some evidence that the clash had created a rift within the Irish community in Melbourne as its counterpart had done in Sydney. When Redmond arrived in Melbourne the Advocate carried a leader which examined the whole purpose of the visit, and argued that the basic need was for unity and an effective organisation amongst the Irish, so that aid could be given to the embattled Nationalists at home. The Australian-Irish were fortunate in that they did not suffer from the rifts which had torn the American-Irish apart, but there was still a need for greater cohesion

1. Age, 19 June 1883.
and more activity.\textsuperscript{1} If this was the basic aim, it was to be only partially achieved; as in Sydney, many well-placed Irishmen found it expedient to stay clear of the Redmonds. A correspondent signing himself "A Loyal Irish Catholic" rejoiced

"to see Catholic leaders, both politically and socially, conspicuous by their absence and it bodes well for the educated Catholic mind will no longer be led like so many asses at the beck and call of the clergy... this breaking away of the leaders just now cannot but be productive of infinite good when this miserable Redmond business shall have passed away for ever..."\textsuperscript{2}

Others did not read quite as much significance into the incident. Frank Gavan Duffy, for example, took the unusual step of upbraiding William Redmond for his reference to the absentees as cowards. Speaking from the platform at John Redmond's second lecture at St. Patrick's Hall in Melbourne he pleaded for a more charitable interpretation of their motives; as one who had been brought up and educated amongst Englishmen, and many of whose close friends were English, he could understand the dilemma of others in a similar position who had to choose between giving public witness to their national sympathies and breaking valued friendships.\textsuperscript{3} His remarks were not

\textsuperscript{1} Advocate, 2 June 1883.
\textsuperscript{2} Age, 20 June 1883.
\textsuperscript{3} Advocate, 16 June 1883.
well received, and both the following speaker W.H. Gunson and then John Redmond himself found it necessary to choke off any further comment on what Gunson described as a "misunderstanding". The rank and file Irish were less inclined to forget the incident and the circumstances which had produced it. For years after the wealthy Irish were to be regarded as suspect; money, social position and ease were regarded as corrupting agents which destroyed honest national sentiment; political office was even more destructive of loyalty and honour, but this was generally taken for granted. It was the defection of those who feared for their social or professional standing which drew the more bitter criticism.

As could be expected, the press noted the absences abstentions and used them against Redmond and his mission; it was an effective tactic, for the men concerned were known to the local Irish and their attitude roused antagonisms much more effectively than events on the other side of the world. The Advocate had to concede that prominent Irishmen were not participating in the campaign, but argued that it was wrong to regard only

1. Editor of the Advocate for 33 years till his death in 1901.
those who were Members of Parliament or lived in Toorak or St. Kilda as leaders of the Irish community; what of the clergy, the professional and mercantile men who had attended - were they to be completely discounted? The reference to the clergy was to be made on more than one occasion during those lively weeks; their adherence to the cause was seen as being in line with the traditional alliance between the Irish priests and their flocks on national as well as religious matters. Perhaps the writer was making an unconscious distinction between the priests and the hierarchy, for Cardinals McCabe and Cullen could hardly be fitted into this warm and comforting myth. Strangely enough, the local member of the hierarchy was less attracted to the Redmond mission than the Advocate would lead one to believe. Bishop Goold complained in a letter to Ireland that if the Home Rule principle were strictly observed, the Redmonds would have remained home - "keep your red hot politicians at home where they are needed".

But apart from the defections among the upper levels of the Irish community, Redmond had little to worry about. He was receiving firm support from the men whose

1. Advocate, 30 June 1883.
assistance was crucial in the long run, the lower middle class Irishmen like Thomas Fogarty and Joseph Winter, who could be relied on to keep the administrative machine running. It was these men, and their counterparts in the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society and the Catholic Young Men's Society, who would be able to tap the financial resources of the local Irish. As long as Redmond could hold their support and avoid making enemies of the parish clergy, he had little to fear. The endorsement given by a professional man of the standing of Henry Bournes Higgins was some compensation for the failure of others. But in the long run it would be the rank and file Irish who would fill the subscription lists, and they were now solidly behind Redmond. At the end of the first week of the Victorian visit, £1000 was already in hand, and Redmond had yet to begin his country tour where large contributions could be expected.¹

By the third week in June he had completed the metropolitan section of the campaign. He had given three major addresses in St. Patrick's Hall, and had spoken at Richmond, Emerald Hill and Hotham. It was then planned that he would visit Geelong and Sunbury before beginning the more strenuous tour of country centres. So many

¹ Advocate, 23 June 1883.
requests for meetings had been received that it became necessary to divide the work up between John Redmond, who would concentrate first on the Western District, and William Redmond, who with John Walshe would cover the Northern and Central districts. Before leaving Melbourne, however, John Redmond chaired a meeting of the now outdated Australian Central Committee of the Irish Land League and sponsored the arrangements by which this body turned itself into the Irish National League. There was only one other major decision made; on Redmond's advice and following the pattern of both the Irish and the American organisations, the Committee agreed to organise a National Convention of the Irish National League and all kindred bodies which was to meet in Melbourne in the following September.¹ This Convention would lay down general lines of policy and give a focal point to the reorganisation currently underway in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. Delegates would be invited from New Zealand, which the Redmonds planned to tour beforehand. Unity and solidarity would be the theme of the Convention, and faction would be destroyed before it had a chance to rear its ugly head.

¹ The committee meeting was held on 9th June. Advocate, 16th June 1883. The Convention itself was eventually held on 7 Nov 1883.
Once this had been announced, the Redmonds began their country tour. The pattern was much the same as in New South Wales; local hall trustees often refused the use of their facilities before a request had been made, and lively arguments were usually the result. But the Irish farmers and labourers turned out in force to hear the young spokesmen, and they were not backward in contributing to the cause. Soon both Redmonds carried the dignity of membership of the House of Commons; a vacancy had occurred in Wexford, the traditional stronghold of the Redmond family, and the National League committee in Melbourne cabled Parnell requesting that William Redmond be nominated as the representative of the Irish in Australia. His victory in absentia over a formidable opponent in The O'Connor Don

1. Advocate, 7 July 1883. Even in Kilmore, an Irish stronghold, Redmond's meeting had to be held in a shed made available by the Shire Council, as the usual halls had been refused. But the meeting yielded £220 - a highly satisfactory result. As early as March, Daniel Brophy, the leading Home Ruler in Ballarat, had reported that Redmond could not anticipate holding a profitable meeting there..."as there seems to be a feeling that his visit would not be advisable, owing to the strong opinions of the local press, which goes as far as to say that loyal citizens should unite and drum him...out of town and I am assured by a leading gentleman of the other side that it is already determined that Mr. Redmond shall not get a hall in Ballarat. I would advise you to write to Dr. Moore [Bishop of Ballarat] and in the meantime I will consult some of our leading men and let you know the result". Daniel Brophy to Joseph Winter, 3 Mar 1883. Winter Papers.

was taken in the colonies to indicate the influence of local Irish opinion, though it seems unlikely that either Parnell or the electors in Wexford needed such stimulus; to the managers of the Parliamentary Party, a Redmond as candidate in Wexford would have seemed an obvious choice. But the local Irish regarded William Redmond as their man in the Parliamentary Party and in the House of Commons, and came in their hundreds to hear the brothers speak. At Warrnambool, where they made a joint appearance, they were met by a mile-long procession of vehicles, involving about 500 people.¹ After every meeting, substantial amounts were sent on to the Central Committee in Melbourne for transmission to Dublin, and there could be little doubt that the tour was now a success financially.²

But while the country tour was in progress the key officials of the Irish National League were kept busy making arrangements for the forthcoming Convention; delegates were expected from all colonies and New Zealand, and it took some coaxing to get the newly formed branches to nominate their representatives. In the meantime, the

1. Advocate, 14 July, 1883.
2. £9,000 had been sent to Ireland by early August. Advocate, 4 August, 1883.
colonial dailies were provided with an unexpected windfall; the police authorities in Ireland had made arrangements for some of those who had turned Queen's evidence in the Phoenix Park trial to take ship for the colonies under assumed names. The details became known just before the men concerned reached Australia, and a general furore resulted. The authorities in each colony resented the way in which the matter had been handled, and looked around desperately for some extra-legal method of refusing the informers permission to land. Eventually they were re-embarked, but the incident had provided the type of publicity that the local Irish leadership was anxious to avoid. A special meeting of the Irish National League in Melbourne congratulated James Service on his forceful handling of the crisis and made it clear that the colonial Irish wanted no truck with informers.¹

The Redmonds themselves appear to have kept clear of this episode. Early in August John Redmond completed his engagements in North-Eastern Victoria and then went on to Sydney, presumably to make arrangements for his marriage there in the following month.² His brother was to visit

1. Advocate, 4 August 1883.
2. The provincial press commented on the mildness of Redmond's views..."there was not one word of sedition uttered, and every sentence was mild and conciliatory...we were rather disappointed...for we had been told that his language was on occasion rather strong. Ovens and Murray Advertiser, quoted in Advocate, 4 Aug 1883.
Tasmania for meetings there and eventually go on to New Zealand, with the tireless Walshe making the preliminary arrangements. Both were in Sydney for the Redmond-Dalton wedding early in September, and then travelled to New Zealand shortly after.1 By early October, John Redmond had joined them for a shortened tour of the colony; it was essential for all three to be back in Melbourne by the time the Convention opened on the 7th of November.

1. John Redmond married Johanna Mary Dalton at St. Mary's Church, North Sydney, on 4 Sep 1883. The bride was the half-sister of the two Dalton brothers who were among the wealthiest Irishmen in the colony. James Dalton had extensive pastoral interests in and around Orange, and his mansion "Duntryleague" was an accurate reflection of his local standing. His brother Thomas established the flourishing Sydney-based import firm of Dalton Brothers, which is still in existence - though no longer under the control of the family. The wedding caused something of a stir in some quarters: the Mahon Papers contain two letters which give a graphic description of a fracas at Pfhalert's Hotel on the day before the event. The Redmonds were staying at the hotel, whose licensee was the formidable Thomas Curran, later to be an Irish member of the House of Commons. Curran and J.G. O'Connor disapproved of the wedding and O'Connor accused Redmond of being an adventurer who had come out to seek a wife and fortune. In the ensuing discussion William Redmond was knocked down by Curran, who then ordered both "scrubbers" off his premises. As a result, Curran's standing among his associates in the Home Rule movement declined appreciably. The whole incident may have stemmed from Redmond's failure to include Curran amongst the invited guests. F.B. Freehill to Mahon, undated letter in the Mahon Papers, Series 1, 937/274. Flora Shackleton to Mahon, 3 Sep 1883, Mahon Papers, Series 1, 937/289. Johanna died several years later, and John Redmond remarried; but the family link was kept up as the result of the later marriage of William Redmond and Eleanor Dalton, daughter of James Dalton of Orange. William and Eleanor returned to Australia on a number of occasions, and eventually Eleanor returned to spend her last years in Orange, dying there in 1947. The Daltons had one other link with the Redmonds: John James Dalton, who had trained as a barrister in London, became a Home Rule member of the House of Commons and remained a fervent supporter of John Redmond after the Parnell crisis of 1890/1. He also returned to Orange and spent his last years there.
This gathering of delegates from all colonies except Western Australia, and from New Zealand, provoked intense interest among Irish-Australians. Most of those attending had been nominated by their branches within the previous two months; many had come vast distances to attend a meeting of less than twelve hours duration, and although the proceedings took the form of a series of speeches rather than a debate or discussion, the delegates appear to have been highly satisfied with the outcome. At first sight, there appears to have been little justification for the Convention; there were no contentious issues to be discussed – at least, not in public – and all that emerged was a set of resolutions which probably would have been accepted without much discussion by the Central Committees in the colonies. Most of the speeches rehearsed Ireland's wrongs, praised Parnell, the Redmonds, or fellow delegates. The most concrete proposals adopted were those setting a final date for collections for the Parnell testimonial and pledging each of the colonies and New Zealand to provide enough finance to maintain one member of the Parliamentary Party. But if the discussions lacked substance, there could be no mistaking the tone of the meeting; the delegates saw themselves as an embattled minority, fighting for a great cause but scorned by the society of which they were now part. It was morale which counted now, the
realisation that they had allies scattered all over the continent, that they had the encouragement of Parnell and the Redmonds, and that they could withstand the hostility of the press and of public opinion. For the press was still their major opponent; the Convention was attacked and lampooned in major dailies throughout the colonies and the old cry of sedition and factionalism was raised repeatedly. Under these circumstances, a certain amount of dignified whistling in the dark was both understandable and desirable. Moreover, the shield which had been their main protection over the previous ten months was soon to leave them. The Redmonds made their last visit to Sydney in early December and then sailed for San Francisco; their departure meant that the local Irish leaders had to

---

1. The Age, Argus, and Daily Telegraph (Melbourne), the Courier Mail (Brisbane) and the Sydney Morning Herald were critical of the Convention. According to the Sydney Morning Herald “An Irish convention in Australia is a mischievous anomaly, however considered. Irish Australian it cannot be, because an Irish Australian is a creature of whom we cannot possibly conceive. He is or he is not one of us...” Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Nov 1883. One of the few defenders of the Irish position was the Sydney Bulletin.
fend for themselves, and to do so successfully would require both unity and determination. If the Convention achieved anything, it was the development of a sense of cohesion and unity, a feeling that the colonial organisation had been welded into the international Nationalist movement. As the Advocate stated in a pre-Christmas review of the year's activities

In the history of Irishmen in these colonies nothing has previously occurred which, in a manner so significant, has given proof of their unity in the cause of Ireland. Heretofore it was not a matter of great interest to the Irish race how the small section of it settled in Victoria thought or acted; but now all that is changed. Henceforward the people at home, and the exiles in the other parts of the world will feel much concerned in all that relates to our interests as colonists, but more especially in all that we have been doing, or are proposing to do, as Irishmen for Ireland. We—our words and our works—have become a factor in the national power. Our identification with the Irish party in Dublin...is now complete...

1. Walshe remained in Australia; Timothy Harrington, secretary of the Irish National League in Dublin, regarded Walshe as being "...in charge of the movement..." in the colonies. Timothy Harrington to Thomas Fogarty and Joseph Winter, 7 Feb 1884, Winter Papers.
2. Advocate, 29 December, 1883.
One can sense here something of the loneliness of the Irish community, torn between the natural desire to give aid and comfort to their suffering kinsfolk and the equally strong desire to retain the goodwill of their fellow colonists. For those who had already made good and could afford to risk the ill-will of their local compatriots, the choice was more straightforward; they could find prudent reasons for not coming forward when the Redmonds were the focus of attention. To those at the other end of the scale, the choice was all the easier because it meant very little to them what happened in the homeland. But for the increasingly large group of those who had secured a very moderate competence and the lower middle class values that automatically accompanied it, the problem was much more difficult. Their response seems to have been both to attack and to defend at the same time – to rally round the Redmonds because it would have been churlish and disloyal not to have done so, but at the same time to hope desperately that the time would come when colonial public opinion would swing to the view that a request for political autonomy on Ireland's behalf did not taint the bearer. When that day arrived, the colonial Irish could have the benefits of both their good reputation as new settlers and their emotional ties with the old land. To their critics, it seemed an illogical and dishonest
procedure, one which flowed from the deviousness of the race. Yet to the modern observer, it was an arrangement that had much to be said for it, in that it satisfied the needs of the host society by ensuring that its Irish component did not disturb the general tone of the community, while at the same time providing a harmless emotional backstop for a previously alienated minority.
1883 had been an exciting year for colonial Home Rulers, but those who believed that the movement had now been provided with solid foundations were soon to be disillusioned. To some extent, the departure of the Redmonds was bound to produce something of an anti-climax; no local Irish personality could hope to match the enormous prestige which they derived from their contacts with Parnell and the Irish Party and from their personal involvement in the political struggle. But even apart from this, the colonial Irish were feeling the indirect effects of policy shifts within the Nationalist movement in the homeland, shifts of which they were almost entirely unaware.

When the Redmonds arrived in Australia, one of their tasks had been to liquidate the old Land League organisation and replace it with Parnell's new creation, the Irish National League. On the surface, this reorganisation - which followed a pattern already carried through in Ireland - appeared to be a straightforward attempt to get around the problems which followed the prohibition of the Land League by the British government;
but it is also likely that Parnell was using the situation to carry through a restructuring of the Nationalist movement as a whole. O'Brien has argued that after the Kilmainham treaty of April 1882, Parnell preferred to see the Land League disappear, taking with it the agrarian agitation which had been its special province but was now felt to be no longer appropriate. Its place would be taken by the National League, designed to provide financial and electoral support for the Irish Party at Westminster and to operate as a party machine in the twentieth century meaning of the term. So at the very time that the Redmond brothers were causing so much excitement in Australia, Parnell and his associates at home were doing their best to damp down activity in the Irish countryside. They could point to the useful gains already made under the Arrears Bill, which eased some of the difficulties of peasants under threat of eviction, and they could argue that it was futile to maintain agitation while coercion legislation was still in force. But behind all of the considerations there stood

1. Parnell and other prominent Nationalists had been arrested in October 1881. Under an agreement of April 1882, the British government released Parnell in return for his aid in stemming the tide of violence in Ireland.


3. Ibid., p.83 ff.
the obvious fact that a General Election would be held in 1885, and that if the trend evident in by-elections were to be maintained, the Irish Party in the new Parliament would be double its existing strength.\(^1\) The obvious task in 1884, then, was to perfect party organisation and to make the delicate soundings which were necessary before Parnell and his group could decide on the best means of exploiting the parliamentary advantages which would almost certainly accrue to the Irish Party. If Parnell could master the complexities of the situation, there was some possibility that the Irish members could hold the balance of power in the Commons, and use this position to force through a Home Rule measure. Clearly, long range planning and a careful husbanding of resources must take priority over agrarian agitation.

For the colonial Irish, this meant that for the first twelve months after the departure of the Redmonds, news from the homeland lacked something of its usual drama. For some months, the activities of the Redmonds, first in America and then on arrival back in Ireland, were a source

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, p.86. The Franchise Act of 1884 eventually trebled the size of the Irish electorate. This, plus the solid support given to Parnell's followers as against Liberal and Conservative candidates, meant that the Irish Party could hold as many as 80 votes in the Commons.
of interest; any comments made about the success of the Australian segment of the tour were printed in detail.¹ But the high state of excitement could not be maintained indefinitely, and the colonial arm of the Irish National League now shaped up to the task of carrying through the decisions made at the Irish-Australian Convention in November. Attention was focussed initially on the Parnell Testimonial Fund, and when this closed the Federal Council reminded the branches of their obligation to support individual members of the Parliamentary Party via the Payment of Members Fund. Money did continue to come in, but not with the readiness evident during the Redmond visit. The brittleness of the organisation was as evident now as in the earlier Land League period; branches could be formed readily enough, but they had no real point or purpose except to receive donations; consequently, interest was hard to sustain. By the end of 1884, the Federal leadership was again looking for a visiting speaker, and had some hopes of inducing Michael Davitt to undertake a tour.² But the likelihood of a general election in the

1. Advocate, 26 April 1884.
2. Advocate, 10 Jan 1885. In late 1884 the Federal Council had made a formal request to John Redmond to supply a lecturer as soon as possible.
following year made it difficult for any of the prominent Nationalist leaders to be absent for any length of time. So the colonial Irish had no option but to wait for the great event.

The elections were held through late November and December 1885, and the results were a complete vindication of Parnell's political judgement. Gladstone's Liberals won 333 seats, the Conservatives 215, and the Irish Party 86.¹ The result was to give the Irish members the balance of power, and although this situation was an embarrassment to both the major parties, the Liberals were placed in a peculiarly difficult position: they could not take over from Salisbury's caretaker ministry with a clear majority in their own right, nor could they ignore the fact that the Irish constituencies had made an unmistakeable request for the introduction of a Home Rule measure along the lines advocated by Parnell and his colleagues. Such a clear

---


L.P. Curtis, *Conciliation and Coercion in Ireland, 1880–1892*, (Princeton, 1964) p.64. To avoid giving the Liberals a comfortable majority, Parnell had instructed his followers in Great Britain not to vote for Liberal and Radical candidates.
statement of electoral opinion could not be avoided indefinitely without compromising basic Liberal principles, and this view, together with Gladstone's dread that the Irish problem might well destroy the two-party system, combined to force the conclusion that far-reaching concessions would have to be made.

But there were difficulties to be overcome before the Liberals could come to some form of arrangement with the Irish Party, and for once most of them were not Parnell's responsibility to solve. Secure in the strength of his new position, he could afford to wait for the Liberals to take the initiative and then react as the occasion required. But the Liberals were in something of a quandary; Gladstone could not be sure how his own party would react towards a Home Rule measure being put forward under Liberal auspices, and the views of Joseph Chamberlain and the Marquis of Hartington had to be carefully weighed. Eventually Gladstone decided that the risk of a split within his own party was not so acute as to preclude an alliance with the Irish members. When Parliament reassembled with the Conservatives still occupying the Treasury benches, Gladstone and Parnell carefully probed each other's intentions, and finally on 26th January the Liberals and the Irish joined forces to bring down the Conservative Administration on an
amendment to the Address in Reply. Gladstone formed a
Ministry, and Parnell immediately entered into negotiations
with the new Chief Secretary for Ireland, John Morley; by
early April, preparations for a new Irish measure were well
advanced, and on 8th April Gladstone made the critical
announcement in the House of Commons, committing a major
English party to the Home Rule cause for the first time.

In the colonies, Home Rule sympathisers were
clearly elated at the turn of events. When the results of
the General Election were known, and the strength of Parnell's
voting position realised, the implications for Ireland were
clear. Parnell could be relied on to use his advantage to
the full, and the only matters remaining open for debate
were the tactics to be employed and the timing of the eventual
coup. Some saw in this new turn of events the hand of a
beneficent God, who had at last turned his countenance upon
suffering Ireland; writing from Colac, Father Nelan referred
to the role of the Irish abroad in the working out of a far
greater design

"A kind and beneficent Providence has done a
great deal for us Irish in this new land... When adverse fortune induced us to sever the
ties that bound us to kith and kin, we
possessed little else but our health and our
holy confidence in the God of our Fathers.
Today the same merciful Father...has blessed
our efforts to a superabundant degree. He
has given us abundant harvests and has gathered the wheat into our barns, and has he not done this for a purpose.?

The fruits of the new land would nourish the old. Now the end was in sight, and Ireland would shortly come into her rightful inheritance.

To the immense satisfaction of Australian Home Rulers a colonial Irishman had been elected in an Irish constituency, and this event more than any other acted as a focal point for celebration in the colonies. Kevin Izod O'Doherty had been elected as one of the members for Meath, the election itself taking place while the veteran Nationalist was on his way back to Brisbane to wind up his affairs. When he arrived at Cooktown early in January he heard the first news of his success, and for the next few weeks his statements and activities provided a constant source of interest in the Irish-Australian press. In late January he resigned the presidency of the Brisbane branch of the Irish National League and, after the customary banquet given by his admirers, began to move down the east coast on his way to Adelaide, where he was to take ship for England. The leading Irishmen in Sydney entertained

1. Advocate, 30 Jan 1886.
2. Freeman's Journal, 9 Jan 1886.
3. Advocate, 26 Jan 1886.
him at a complimentary picnic on the Parramatta\(^1\), while in Melbourne he was feted at a banquet at St. Patrick's Hall; here O'Doherty spoke of an earlier gathering, when he, together with Smith O'Brien and John Martin, had been entertained by the Melbourne Irish upon their release from Van Diemen's Land. On that occasion, John O'Shanassy had occupied the chair; now the former Young Irelander looked ahead to the day when he would return to Australia as Commissioner for a Home Rule government in Ireland.\(^2\)

There can be little doubt that in O'Doherty the colonial Irish saw a symbol of the connection between their own efforts and those of the courageous Parnellites at home, and that any function to do him honour provided an opportunity for a heightened identification. When the Warrnambool branch of the Irish National League decided to send a message of encouragement to Parnell, it was to O'Doherty that they entrusted it.\(^3\) But his departure would mean some changes on the local scene. At a meeting of the Federal

---

1. *Age*, 26 Jan 1886.
2. Included in the official party at the Melbourne banquet was Sir Bryan O'Loghlen, whose brother Colman had been defence counsel at O'Doherty's trial in 1848. *Advocate*, 6 Feb 1886.
Council of the Irish National League held soon after his arrival in Melbourne, O'Doherty offered his resignation as Federal President, but was asked to retain the position until another Convention could be called, this in turn being dependent on the arrival of a new envoy from Ireland.¹ Finally, before leaving Adelaide, O'Doherty made a general appeal for support for the Payment of Members Fund, stressing the inroads made on Nationalist finances by the recent General Election.

With O'Doherty gone, there was no obvious focal point for Home Rule activity. Gladstone had not yet shown his hand, and Parnell's moves were still hidden to the average observer. Sir Bryan O'Loghlen referred to this problem when he addressed the St. Patrick's Day banquet in Melbourne, and asked what practical measures the local Irish could take. His own suggestion was the conventional one; a large public meeting which would attract a cross-section of the community and do something to swing public opinion in the colony behind the Home Rule objective. It was clear that the Payment of

1. **Advocate**, 6 Mar 1886. Before leaving London, O'Doherty informed "Tapley" that although some of the leading Nationalists would like to make a tour, the political situation was such that none could be spared. **Advocate**, 13 Feb 1886.
Members Fund was not attracting a great deal of support; Father Nelan at Colac compared the response of the Irish-Australians unfavourably with that of the Irish-Americans, and it seems worthy of note that the only groups which appear to have made a special effort for the Fund in the early months of 1886 were from poor areas. In Brunswick, the local branch of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society formed a provisional committee to aid the fund and heard their Chairman urge them "...to help the cause, notwithstanding that their district was poor, and the majority of them labouring men." Earlier, a group of Irish sympathisers at Mitta Mitta, "the great majority of...[whom]...have to labour for their bread" contributed to the fund, but their spokesman stressed that they could not afford more than one shilling each. The secretary of the Geelong branch of the Irish National League felt obliged to apologize for the meagre contribution – £6.16.6 – which he sent in during January, and ruefully compared this sign of fading interest with the great enthusiasm evident amongst the Geelong Irish during the Redmond visit three years

1. Advocate, 30 Jan 1886.
2. Advocate, 6 Feb 1886.
3. Advocate, 23 Jan 1886.
earlier. There were some exceptions; an ad hoc committee at Tatura quickly collected over £23; Yan Yean branch sent in just under £20 and Warrnambool branch £25 in late January. But the flow did not begin to thicken until after St. Patrick's Day, and from that point on the emerging crisis at Westminster took over and generated a much wider basis of support as the weeks went on.

Even less activity seems to have taken place in New South Wales during the same period, but here at least part of the explanation may lie in the unhealthy condition of the Central Branch of the Irish National League. In late 1885, some form of upheaval seems to have occurred within the Branch; J.G. O'Connor resigned as president, and the services of the secretary, Richard Hannigan, were dispensed with. Hannigan apparently regarded his removal as invalid and in advertisements in the Freeman's Journal asked that correspondence from country branches be still forwarded to him and referred to the present committee as

1. Advocate, 9 Jan 1886. The total receipts of the Geelong branch for the year 1885 amounted to only £27.12.6. Yet the Geelong branch of St. Patrick's Society - a benefit organisation - listed 262 members for the same period.

2. Advocate, 30 Jan 1886.

3. Advocate, 30 Jan 1886.
"self-constituted." ¹ F.B. Freehill appears to have taken over the Presidency, and meetings were held - somewhat infrequently - at the Miner's Arms Hotel whose licensee, William Walsh, was a senior member of the Committee. Late in February, Hannigan apparently gave up the fight and handed over his records to the Committee. ² The whole incident did not attract very much attention, but disaffection within the key branch in the colony could hardly have helped the ailing Payment of Member's Fund. As in Victoria, there were some instances where the poorer Irish in an area would take the initiative and make their own collection for the fund; for example, labourers working on the railway from Bungendore to Michelago collected £47 in late March. ³ But in the main, the only source of revenue for the Fund was an occasional moderate donation from a country branch and the sizeable amounts collected at the St. Patrick's Day demonstration at Botany; without the latter event, the New South Wales total would have been unattractively small. In the light of this indifferent performance, it is possible that O'Doherty's comment at

¹. Freeman's Journal, 2 Jan 1886.
². Freeman's Journal, 20 Feb 1886.
³. Freeman's Journal, 3 April 1886.
his Melbourne banquet may have some point:

"Sydney had made a great advance. The young blood was coming forward, and the old fogies were making less effort and he believed that the advocacy for self-government for Ireland would receive more support from the young bloods then from the old stock..."¹

In both colonies a slackening of tempo is evident in the early months of 1886. The relative calm and the general hopefulness of the situation in Ireland, together with the absence of an Irish delegate, were in themselves sufficient explanation for the general lack of activity. But there were other elements which probably had their effect; the Sydney Irish had perhaps had a surfeit of entertainment in the previous six months; the reception to Cardinal Moran, the Plenary Council, and the New South Wales elections had dominated the Irish-Australian press in late 1885. In Victoria, a General Election was not due till 5th March 1886, so that Victorian Irishmen were involved both in watching the contest develop and analysing the results until late in March, well after the fall of the Conservative ministry in London. But even so, the Irish Question had some side effects: six weeks before the election there were signs that the Catholics did not

1. Advocate, 6 Feb 1886.
expect to do well at the polls, and some felt that the situation in Ireland was partly to blame. An Advocate editorial as early as 16th January deplored the lack of organisation among Catholics and warned them to bestir themselves as a group before it was too late. A fortnight later "Eamon" analysed the Catholic prospects in more detail: Catholics were not as well organised and active as the Nationalists in the recent Tipperary election, either because they were indifferent to the Education question or because they felt completely helpless. The latter feeling could in turn be based on the realisation that the Catholic vote was too dispersed to be really effective, that the death of O'Shanassy and the departure of Gavan Duffy had seriously weakened the leadership, and that the Catholic candidates were "selfish and cowardly, and of no use to the Catholic cause." In a later assessment he included a further element: the current trend was against Catholics or Irishmen in politics; no Catholic, for example, held a place in the Deakin-Gillies Ministry. The reason for this trend seemed clear enough to the commentator:

"...The Grattan Address, the Redmond mission, and the Home Rule movement in Ireland."^2

1. Advocate, 10 April 1886.
2. Advocate, 6 Feb 1886.
When the results were posted, they were regarded by the *Advocate* as a Catholic defeat. Peter Lalor had been returned in Grant, five other Catholics were re-elected and a Catholic won a place at Geelong. But J. Gavan Duffy had been defeated in Dalhousie and the recriminations over this contest lasted for months. Three other Catholic candidates were unsuccessful, including Cr. W. Ievers—a keen supporter of Home Rule. In discussing Gavan Duffy's defeat, the *Advocate* placed most emphasis on a reaction based on the success of the Home Rule campaign in the recent election for the House of Commons:

"The Irish situation was not for Irishmen nearly so favourable at the time of the Grattan Address as it is now, and... consequently the prejudices of Protestant Englishmen on the subject were not then nearly so strong as they have since become." ¹

It was against this background of long standing colonial hostility to the Home Rule cause that the impact of Gladstone's statement in April had to be measured. To the Irish, it seemed the most thrilling event since the Act of Union had blighted Ireland's national life; the end of generations of struggle was now in sight, and it would be only a matter of time before the "Old House in College Green" would be the scene of the inauguration of an Irish

---

¹ Advocate, 10 April 1886.
parliament which would in turn usher in an age of progress and well being for the homeland. Cardinal Moran caught this mood of expectation - itself one of the key elements of the Home Rule ethos - when he spoke to an Hibernian gathering in Sydney late in April:

"...we hail with joy the rising sun of this new era of prosperity and peace. Its rays shall soon bathe with glory the emerald gem of the western world, and, reflected upon many lands, shall bring the consolation of gladness to the sea-divided sons of Ireland..."

Again, according to one Sydney Home Ruler, the benefits to Ireland would go beyond the merely material - "Home Rule would enable the Irish people to be honest, industrious and truthful to the highest degree..."^2

These rather fanciful predictions were only one part of the general reaction of the colonial Irish; there were more practical moves to give encouragement to Gladstone in what most acknowledged would be a difficult essay at the whole Irish problem. The Federal Council of the Irish National League met in Melbourne in April and forwarded both its thanks to Gladstone and Parnell and a further contribution of £500 to the Payment of Members Fund,^3 while in Sydney eighteen prominent Irish Nationalists

---

3. *Advocate*, 17 April 1886.
contributed £150 to the Fund during a meeting at the Occidental Hotel. At the same time, F.B. Freehill was encouraging the construction workers at the Prospect Dam to maintain their impressive record as contributors to the cause, and in country centres in both Victoria and New South Wales, local Irishmen held meetings to express support for Gladstone. Finally, in addition to these more sober responses, there was a tendency to gloat at the discomfiture of those who had for years taken a positive stand against any form of autonomy for Ireland — especially the Argus and the Loyal Orange Institution — and to note that while it was deemed to be improper for the Catholic Irish to take a lively interest in the political affairs of the homeland, such restrictions were not seen as applying to Orangemen and others who felt the Union to be in danger.

Most of these reactions were quite predictable, given the emotive element now involved in the Home Rule issue. The Celtic Irish felt that their hitherto unpopular viewpoint had been triumphantly vindicated, and the jibes of their opponents had turned back upon them; Ulstermen,

2. Ibid.
on the other hand, generally felt betrayed by men to whom the defence of the Union had been entrusted; if Gladstone's scheme should succeed, Ulster would be dragooned into a situation where a Catholic rather than a Protestant ascendancy would prevail. Only the machinations of Rome could account for such a reversal of attitudes on the part of the man who had once been the champion of English Protestantism against papal pretensions, and who had more recently enforced coercive legislation on Ireland itself; at the Battle of the Boyne celebrations in Sydney in July, Gladstone was actually referred to by one clergyman as a "Jesuitical Prime Minister", and there can be little doubt that the shock of the whole episode did much to reinforce and encourage the bitterness between Catholic and Protestant Irish in the colonies. But the most intriguing response of all came not from those directly concerned with the Irish question, but rather from the daily press and from some colonial politicians who now found themselves forced to revise their attitudes in the light of Gladstone's conversion.

Although the broad outlines of Gladstone's measure were known as early as April, complete texts were not

available for some weeks, and initial press reactions had to be somewhat guarded. The Age at first refrained from detailed comment, and concentrated rather on the difficulties which Gladstone would have to surmount. But Cardinal Moran's speech in Sydney drew hostile comment: why did Nationalists refuse to acknowledge the more creditable aspects of English rule, especially the financial aid given over the years? Was it right for Moran and others to slide over the element of violence which lay beneath most Irish political activity? Why regard the Irish National League as a "body of tender-hearted patriots" when it was in fact "one of the most bloodthirsty tribunals that has ever terrorised over a civilised community since the French Revolution gave birth to Robespierre." But the Age conceded the difficulties inherent in the current political and constitutional situation "...we are quite willing, and always have been willing, to admit that some form of self government the Irish people are entitled to ask for and to get, as long as they have reasons, as they undoubtedly have had in the past, for believing that Irish interests will not receive fair play in a legislature sitting in London, in which Irish absentee landlords and English manufacturers occupy a commanding position, unassailable by argument or remonstrance."
The Daily Telegraph, probably the keenest supporter of the Home Rule position amongst the Sydney press, went further and argued in an editorial on the eve of the July election that the basic question was whether England would remain "true to her own principles of representative government" or whether she would simply rule Ireland as a conquered country.¹ By contrast, the Sydney Morning Herald took a more critical - though still very moderate - view of the general situation; its leaders disputed two of the more popular arguments used to justify Home Rule: the view that if a portion of the Empire requested self-government and could furnish evidence of competence, it should be granted its request; and that the granting of local autonomy to Ireland would produce the same beneficial results as were already evident in the colony. The first of these approaches had been put forward by the veteran politician Sir John Robertson: but would it not mean that any portion of the colony which met these conditions could justify its withdrawal from New South Wales, and that the Southern States had been in the right in 1861? The second view, which had been a stock argument amongst the colonial Home Rulers for some years, could be criticised in that

¹ Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1886.
it did not take account of the vast differences which separated the Irish and the colonial example: the granting of self-government to the colonies had worked smoothly due to a basic affinity between both parties to the arrangement, but it was unlikely that Britain would refrain from exercising her reserve powers in the case of Ireland, where friction was so built in to the relationship with England that collisions would be inevitable.¹

The very fact that the *Sydney Morning Herald* could discuss the merits of the Home Rule case to that degree of detail indicates the change in atmosphere which followed Gladstone's reversal of attitude. An issue which could attract a bevy of local politicians — including men of the calibre of Sir John Robertson, Sir Patrick Jennings, and Edmund Barton — to take part in a highly successful public meeting in late June could hardly be taken lightly by the colonial press; even Sir Henry Parkes, who was away from Sydney and could not attend, showed his sympathy with the aims of the meeting: his letter of

apology referred to his "utmost faith in Gladstone's motives, and in the wisdom of his present course of action." ¹

A month or so later, Parkes was noticed in the crowd attending a similar demonstration in Melbourne, and his overall conduct on the Irish Question caused some concern amongst leading Orangemen in his own colony: when he attended the 12th of July celebrations in Sydney, he found the atmosphere less than enthusiastic towards him. In a witty and impromptu address, he managed to retrieve the situation without in fact making any statement that could be held against him by his political opponents. ²

If Parkes, Robinson, Jennings and Barton were prepared to support the Gladstone approach, the colonial press could not afford to dismiss the Irish sense of grievance as misconceived and exaggerated. Moreover, the

1. Sydney Morning Herald, 29 June 1886.

2. The Echo, 13 July 1886. During the course of the year, cartoons in the Bulletin frequently played on Parkes' dilemma in having to choose between the Home Rule and the Orange cause. The fact that Parkes was virtually Leader of the Opposition while the ministry was lead by Jennings - well known as the leading Irishman in the colony - may have given the situation an interesting local political twist. It is interesting that some observers likened Parkes' tactics in prolonging debates in the House during 1886 to the obstructionist technique perfected by the Irish members in the early 1880's, while at the same time noting his great admiration for Gladstone. The Echo, 8 Jul 1886.
The fact that both the English and the Irish electorates appeared to have given a mandate for some sort of settlement of the Irish problem carried considerable weight with colonial opinion in general:

"The contest for Home Rule is a fair one, and now at least it is being fought with fair weapons...it is simply impossible that men with British instincts, in whatever part of the globe they may be found, should fail to sympathise with a struggle for legislative independence carried out in such circumstances."¹

For a few months the colonial Home Rulers enjoyed the unaccustomed luxury of being taken seriously by most of the major newspapers in both Victoria and New South Wales; never had the prestige of the Parnellite cause stood higher, and the local Irish watched the unfolding drama at Westminster with a good deal of optimism. Both the Advocate and the Freeman's Journal gave extensive coverage to the debates as the texts came to hand, and the Advocate used supplements to cater for the suddenly increased demands on space. But despite the general publicity, there does not seem to have been any immediate increase in the flow of contributions to the Payment of Members Fund or any sign of a reactivation of the many dormant branches of the National League; in part this could be due to the speed at which developments were taking place in London, and to

---

¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 29 June 1886. By contrast, the Argus referred to the Home Rulers as "the partisans of disruption." Argus, 15 April 1886.
the assumption that the cause was now safe and that there would soon be no need to collect funds at all. But by the end of May cable messages were beginning to carry warnings of an approaching crisis: as the shrewder commentators had expected, Gladstone's measure was never to reach the House of Lords, traditionally the destroyer of Irish hopes. The Liberal Party split under the pressure, and early in June the Bill was lost at the second reading stage; Gladstone resigned, and the electorate was now given the opportunity of giving a decision on the basis of a specific reform programme. The result would determine whether Home Rule would be persisted with or completely discarded, and as soon as this was realised, the colonial Irish shook off the torpor of the previous months and hastily made ready to assist Parnell and Gladstone in the July election.

A new election following so hard on the campaign late 1885 would in turn place heavy demands on Nationalist funds, and in a situation of this type the colonial Irish were usually quick to respond. An all out effort would have to be made in the English and Irish constituencies so that Gladstone would be given a resounding confirmation of his policies and the gains made by Parnell firmly secured. Funds would therefore be required quickly, and accordingly
the Irish began the urgent task of reviving the fund-raising machinery which had proved so satisfactory in the past. The Payment of Members Fund was allowed to continue, but in early June a new appeal had been launched based on an Irish Parliamentary Fund which would be used to assist in the coming crisis. In Victoria, the Fund was to be managed by a new committee headed by John Gavan Duffy, with Michael McDonald as Vice-President, Joseph Winter as Secretary, and Rev. J.H. O'Connell and W. Quirk as Treasurers, and comprising members drawn as far as possible from all over the metropolitan area.¹ Within a month, the new fund had already reached £1400, and meetings were being held in many country centres. Even after the cables began to reveal that the Liberals had been defeated, additional funds continued to come in. By the end of July £1000 had been forwarded to Ireland for election expenses, and a further £500 had been forwarded to the Payment of Members Fund; in one week, as much as £750 had been collected.² By early August, another £2000 was in hand for the Parliamentary Fund, and this figure can be compared with the total of £2750 which had been collected for the much

1. Advocate, 19 June 1886. The formation of a new organisation was felt to be a more satisfactory arrangement than simply enlarging the operations of the existing Irish National League machinery.

older Payment of Members Fund to the same date.\textsuperscript{1} By the end of September, when preparations were being made to have the Parliamentary Fund wound up, £2,000 had been remitted and a further £1,000 was still in hand.\textsuperscript{2}

It seems clear from the subscription lists that in Victoria the new Fund drew support in many areas where the older Payment of Members Fund had not been able to tap. Moreover, there was a sense of urgency in many of the letters that accompanied the subscription lists, and usually published in the Advocate; again and again reference is made to the temporary nature of the defeat: Home Rule has been merely shelved for the time being, but it cannot be destroyed. It is also noticeable that the main burden of fund raising fell on the rural Irish. Very little sign of activity can be detected in the suburban areas until quite late in the piece, and even then the response was not as marked. Finally, there are signs that the heaviest support came from towns and farming areas in the Northern and North-eastern sectors of the colony – a possible reflection of the migration of the Irish farming element from their traditional strongholds in Central and Western Victoria.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Advocate}, 14 August 1886.
\item \textit{Advocate}, 25 September 1886.
\end{enumerate}
In New South Wales, June also saw a quickening of activity; a new branch of the Irish National League was formed at Paddington, and a large group of Irish labourers at Prospect showed their willingness to contribute heavily. Then the older centres of Nationalist sympathy - Orange, Bathurst, Cootamundra, Temora and Newcastle began to weigh in heavily with donations and resolutions of support. Southern towns such as Bega and Cooma showed marked interest, while large subscriptions came from the MacLeay River area. Again it was noticeable that the rural Irish provided the bulk of the funds, and that with the exception of the central branch at Sydney, and new branch at Paddington, the metropolitan Irish appear to have been comparatively inactive.

At the height of the fund-raising campaign the local opponents of Home Rule on occasion provided the Irish with the type of incident which did little to promote social harmony but much to promote the flow of funds. Early in June, when the threat to the Home Rule Bill was evident, plans were made to hold a meeting in

2. Bathurst I.N.L. branch claimed it had boosted membership by 40 to 200, and pointed to the £400 which the town had contributed to Nationalist causes since the early eighties. *Freeman's Journal*, 10 July 1886.
Melbourne to express sympathy and support for Gladstone. Application was made to the City Council for use of the Town Hall, but the Council rejected the recommendation of its Public Works committee and refused by a margin of one vote to hire the Hall. In doing so, the Council was influenced by a petition which had been presented by citizens of Lonsdale Ward and supposedly drawn up at an impromptu meeting at Scott's Hotel.¹ The incident created a great deal of interest amongst the Victorian Irish, and gave a local and topical flavour to the great struggle taking place in the House of Commons. The Home Rulers claimed that Orange influence had been responsible for a denial of free speech and of public discussion, and by way of rejoinder a huge open air meeting was held at Carlton late in June; about 8,000 attended to hear a battery of speakers ranging from Sir Bryan O'Loghlen to W.E. Murphy, Secretary of the Trades Hall Council.² The

1. Advocate, 19 July 1886.

meeting was orderly and good-humoured, a point which the organisers felt could not be lost on the Councillors who had claimed that if such a meeting were allowed in the Town Hall, disturbances might well result. The whole incident did much to make the colonial Irish realize the tenseness of the situation at Westminster and the strength of the opposition to the Home Rule Bill. The apathy of several months earlier was no longer much in evidence.

As contributions poured in from the country areas of Victoria and New South Wales during June and July, the Irish leadership tried to press home its advantage. In Melbourne the volatile David Gaunson seized the chance to move a pro-Home Rule resolution in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, and after extracting the maximum publicity from the gesture, withdrew it before a vote was possible. In Hobart, 500 people attended a Home Rule meeting chaired by James Gray, M.H.A., and attended by some Presbyterian clergymen. The Home Rule meeting at the Masonic Hall in Sydney in July kept the whole question before the public — though news of Gladstone's

1. *Advocate* 19 July 1886.

2. *Advocate* 19 July 1886. Gray was an Ulster Presbyterian, but an ardent Home Ruler.
defeat was already reaching the colony. Further north, the Irish communities at Ipswich held a series of meetings and cabled their support to Gladstone. But in Brisbane, Bishop Dunne seemed rather less than enthusiastic.

"...as a preacher, he did not take part in political matters. He considered his first duty was to his charge. Besides, he believed that much agitation among the Irish in Australia was open to the danger of taking peoples' minds away from settling themselves in homes in this country, and providing for the independence, bye and bye, of their families. Excessive separate movements would also lend to isolate them among their fellow colonists and perhaps to challenge into existence and foster hostile organisations ...but he had no quarrel with the Home Rule movement."^2

It is not surprising that O'Doherty regarded Bishop Dunne as "one of the Cardinal McCabe school of politics"^3 and a blight on the Home Rule movement in Queensland.

But there was a limit to the usefulness of public meetings once the extent of Gladstone's electoral defeat was generally known. The defeat would disappoint many of the rank and file, and cause a falling away of influential

1. *Freeman's Journal*, 17 July 1886. A significant section of the Sydney press was now thought to be sympathetic. The Globe, Daily Telegraph, Evening News and Bulletin were regarded as pro-Gladstone.


supporters; no matter how much stress was placed on the temporary character of the setback and the inevitability of final victory, morale was certain to fall off. The problem was now the find some way of keeping up the strength of the Home Rule movement and providing it with a focal point. In the past, the most effective Irish activity had been centred around either a natural disaster such as famine, a political crisis — usually an election or a state trial — or alternatively, the visit of an Irish politician. In late 1886, no such focal point was immediately available, and the Home Rulers had little hope of keeping up the enthusiasm which the House of Commons debate and the subsequent election had generated.

It is significant that late in the year discussion began to centre around the need for another Convention of Irish-Australian organisations to emulate that of 1883. The idea probably developed from a number of sources; the Irish in America had recently held a large Convention, and their example almost certainly something to do with the move; but the basic considerations were local ones. There was, for example, a real danger that the Home Rule movement in the colonies would become fragmented and lose its effectiveness. The Irish National League in both Victoria and New South Wales does not appear to have been providing
the leadership which had been so noticeable in earlier years; the bulk of the funds raised during mid 1886 in Victoria had been collected by the more broadly based Irish Parliamentary Fund Committee, which admittedly did include many prominent Leaguers. There may have been more serious indications of rifts within the movement which were not spelled out in public; an Advocate editorial in August took up the whole question of unity, and deplored the tendency to split off from existing organisations and form sectional effects. The writer apparently had in mind earlier dissensions among the Sydney Irish, and suggested that a new convention would be the best way of avoiding divisions and wasteful duplication of effort.¹ The suggestion was followed up in a more detailed editorial in late September, in which specific reference was made to both the 1883 convention in Melbourne and the 1886 Chicago convention; an Australian convention would be best held in Sydney before the Spring session of the House of Commons, so that a challenge could be given to Salisbury's claim that the election decision was final and irrevocable.² Some support was given to the idea by a correspondent who suggested that

¹ Advocate, 14 Aug 1886. The erection of a branch of the Irish Parliamentary Fund at Hotham on 11 July may have stimulated this line of thought. (Advocate, 21 Aug 1886).

² Advocate, 25 Sept 1886.
Justin McCarthy, M.P., be invited to attend on his way back to Ireland from the United States.\(^1\) Further endorsement came from the secretary of the Irish Club in Launceston, from the Sydney Express,\(^2\) from the Tasmanian Catholic Standard,\(^3\) and from the Irish National League branches in South Australia.\(^4\) Yet no immediate action resulted, possibly due to several developments; the appointment of Dr Carr to the Archbishopric of Melbourne absorbed the interest of many of the leading Irishmen there during late 1886 and early 1887 - (fund raising and the organisation of a suitable reception were both involved); the branches of the Irish National League seem to have become remarkably inactive; and finally, the policies of the Salisbury administration towards Ireland produced a new and rather unexpected situation in early 1887. The latter development was of considerable significance, and provided the backdrop to Nationalist activity in the colonies during the course of that year.

While Parnell and his colleagues had been engaged in their bid for a constitutional solution to Irish problems,

1. Advocate, 2 Oct 1886.
3. Advocate, 16 Oct 1886.
Westminster had naturally enough been the focus of attention. But divisions in the House of Commons had little immediate relevance to the basic problems of the Irish peasant. The elements which had produced the Land War of the early eighties were still operative, despite the moderate success of the Land Bill of 1881, and it only required a further fall in farm incomes or a spate of rack-renting to trigger off another phase of the Land War. The defeat of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill meant the collapse of the remedial land legislation which was to accompany it; now there was no hope of relief, and no political reason for the exercise of restraint. Consequently the way was open in late 1886 for a revival of the land agitation, for rents were payable in late November and large numbers of the peasantry were so badly affected by falling price levels that they were unable to meet their commitments.¹ The Irish party gave warning that a land crisis was imminent, and that unless the administration made quick provision for an abatement of rent, large scale evictions would inevitably result. When this appeal was rejected in the House, the Irish National League began to make preparations for the struggle ahead and appealed for funds to aid those evicted. But the struggle which did

take place was not simply a replica of the agitation of the earlier eighties; new leaders were to emerge, and new tactics evolved to supplement the now familiar boycott.

In late October 1886, a number of Nationalist Members began to propagate a scheme by which tenants in financial difficulties might stave off eviction and possibly win much needed reductions in rent. Under this scheme, all the tenants on the estate involved should agree amongst themselves as to what rentals were realistic and just; they should then ask the landlord to agree to the revised levels and should he refuse, they should then pay part or all of the rent to two or three trustees from their own ranks. This trust fund would then be used for the support of any tenant evicted from the estate. This new approach to the land question, soon to be known as the Plan of Campaign, came to be almost immediately associated with John Dillon and the newspaper editor William O'Brien. Parnell remained in the background and may in fact have been out of sympathy with the Plan; the danger of a revived Land War alienating the English liberals was a very real one, and Parnell appears to have had grave doubts as to whether the risk was worthwhile.¹

¹ Ibid., p. 319 ff.
During November, the Plan was put into operation on a number of key estates, with Dillon and O'Brien providing advice and supervision. The new tactic was bound to attract attention, and the Conservative administration felt itself obliged to take some positive action against the Plan before it spread further. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, found himself somewhat unwillingly cast in the role of "Buckshot" Forster; late in November he instigated proceedings against Dillon and had the plan declared an illegal conspiracy. Although the case against Dillon collapsed in February 1887 — after he had extracted the maximum publicity from the affair — the operation of the Plan was seriously inhibited\(^1\). This time Parnell had, after consulting the leaders of the Liberal Party, taken quiet steps to prevent the Plan from being extended to other estates, while the Government reacted to the embarrassment of the conspiracy trial by removing Hicks-Beach and replacing him early in March by Arthur Balfour. All the signs pointed to a hardening attitude on both sides, and the Government began to provide itself with a stronger legal basis on which to mount a counter-attack on the Plan of Campaign. As early as January 1887

---

\(^1\) Ibid., p.319.
Cabinet had agreed in principle to a new Coercion Act; by March it had been introduced into the House, and after a long drawn-out fight it was passed in mid-July.  

The Nationalists had reacted to the possibility of coercion by fighting hard in the House and trying to extend the Plan at the same time; but once the Bill had passed, Balfour had very wide powers at his disposal, and was able to bring heavy pressure to bear. He could prosecute the leaders of the agitation, proclaim organisations - as happened in the case of the Irish National League in August 1887 - and he could act against boycotting and conspiracies against rent. His use of these powers was to make his name hateful to the Irish, but it must also be acknowledged that he and many of his advisers had a better grasp of the realities of the Irish land system than most contemporaries gave them credit for. The Nationalists of the day were unaware that men like Balfour and Redvers Buller shared their own contempt for the landlord element and were convinced of the necessity for reform. In the long run it was to be largely as a result of Balfour's work that the chronic injustices of the land tenure system

1. Ibid., p. 321.
were to disappear and the anger that had fuelled Irish Nationalist sentiment for so long was to lose much of its bite. But in 1887 Balfour was seen only as the ineffectual dilettante who had been given extensive powers with which to crush Ireland in the interests of the landlord class.¹ The significance of his sponsorship of a Land Bill at the same time as his Coercion Bill was not readily recognised; although it did not cut the ground from under the Plan of Campaign, it at least recognised that the 1887 Land Act was not a final solution to Ireland's problems and paved the way for further remedial legislation.

In many respects, the situation that had now emerged in Ireland was potentially an extremely dangerous one. Dillon and his colleagues had swung the main force of the Nationalist movement into an area which gave insufficient room for manoeuvre. Once estates had been committed to the Plan of Campaign, a heavy moral responsibility rested on those who had encouraged the tenants to this action. Should the Campaign collapse on an estate, the

1. John Redmond described him for the Advocate as a "languid and blasé swell," and "too fine and transcendental a mortal for the rough and tumble work of everyday political life." Advocate, 23 April 1887.
distress that resulted would in part be laid at the door of Dillon and O'Brien - so it was critical that they provide constant encouragement and direction. But Balfour now had the power to remove either of these men from the scene for extended periods, so they must be able to make provision for such forced absences. Should they fail, they themselves would lose face, crime would increase, and the way would be left open for a more extremist approach to Irish problems. Bloodshed and possibly another hopeless rising would follow, and the whole Home Rule agitation would be hopelessly compromised. To compound the difficulty, the success of the Plan was not dependent solely on leadership and organisation; finance would as ever be the critical factor. Once the resistance became prolonged, the tenants would outrun their own funds even though these were made up in the main of withheld rents. Once this occurred the Irish National League would be forced to decide between providing financial backing or leaving the tenants stranded and at the mercy of the landlords. There was, in fact, no choice at all.

These difficulties were, in themselves, enough to make the situation critical, but danger also threatened from another quarter. The fact that the basic idea behind
the Plan raised questions about the sanctity of contracts and the right to withhold rent placed the clergy in a difficult position. At a very early stage Archbishop Croke gave his approval to the scheme as did Archbishop Walsh, and with this backing many of the clergy had been active in promoting the Plan. But Bishops O' Dwyer and Healy were antagonistic to the Plan and especially to clerical participation in this type of agitation. It was their complaints which led to the visit to Ireland by a Papal envoy, Monsignor Persico, during mid-1887, and in time paved the way for the Papal Rescript issued in April 1888. This rescript, based on Monsignor Persico's observations, and on the representations made by an English mission to Rome in late 1887, represented a major crisis for the Plan of Campaign and for Irish Nationalist activity generally. Both the Plan of Campaign and boycotting were condemned, and the Irish Bishops were instructed to ensure that the clergy did not become involved in such activities. For Nationalists at home and abroad, the result could only be severe embarrassment and a sense of betrayal.

The Papal announcement in April raised tactical problems for the Irish leadership, both clerical and lay. Bishop O'Dwyer was one of the few who could pleased by the turn of events, and his line of action was clear; the clergy in the Limerick diocese were instructed to cease any association with the Plan of Campaign. Archbishop Croke, on the other hand, had been so clearly committed to the Plan that he could almost have been regarded as a co-director with O'Brien and Dillon. This position was clearly a delicate one, but he recovered neatly by adopting the attitude that the Rescript did not condemn the Plan as such, but only such activities as corresponded with those condemned in the text; in this view, the Plan of Campaign did not fit the description of the organisation which had been set out in the documents, therefore it remained free of censure. But Dillon and O'Brien could hardly cover themselves in this way alone; charged with the heavy responsibility of protecting the tenants who had taken great risks in their name, they had to ensure that the Papal announcement did not cause a massive erosion of support for the Plan; consequently, Dillon very quickly

1. Ibid., p. 327.
took up a more militant position; the Papal authorities had intervened in a heartless manner and with little real knowledge of the sufferings of the Irish; they had been too much influenced by the views of English Catholics; and in any case, Rome had no right to interfere with political activities which were grounded in the cause of Irish liberty.¹ Irish loyalty to Rome was confined to the spiritual order, and in no sense could an Irish Nationalist accept the right of the authorities at Rome to stand in the way of the pursuit of legitimate Irish interests.

As it happened, there was no great need to develop this line of thought further; the bulk of the Irish clergy found it possible to reconcile aid to the Plan with the position laid down in the Rescript, and Dillon's major problems did not come from that quarter. The papal problem quickly lost some of its menace, and other difficulties took its place - difficulties which developed from Dillon's imprisonment for six months in June 1886 and from the financial needs of the tenants. But to the Irish abroad, the Papal episode was a source of considerable confusion and embarrassment, and the colonial Irish were no exception.

¹ Ibid., p. 327.
Since the defeat of the Home Rule Bill in mid-1886, the colonial Irish had found it necessary to adjust to a new situation. To a degree, news of the formulation of the Plan of Campaign took the place of the mooted Irish-Australian convention; that project had come to nothing. But by Christmas, detailed information concerning the Dillon-O'Brien tactic launched in October 1886 was now coming to hand. The initial reactions of the Irish-Australian press were favourable; as usual, colonial support was attracted to any attempt to tackle the Irish land problem.¹ Money was quickly forthcoming for the Evicted Tenants Fund which had been recently established in Ireland, and the Irish in New South Wales were noticeably quick off the mark in this regard.² But, as late as March, "Tapley" complained that the Evicted Tenants Fund was not being given adequate support in Victoria, though it is clear that funds were still coming in for the Parliamentary Fund.³ This seems puzzling, as the Advocate

1. Advocate, 8 Jan 1887.
2. The suggestion that a new fund be opened for evicted tenants came from Joseph Bergen, a member of the Central Committee of the National League in Sydney. Freeman's Journal 4 Dec 1886. By January of 1887, over £1,000 had been collected in New South Wales. Freeman's Journal, 8 Jan 1887.
3. Advocate, 12 Mar 1887. South Australia was also slow to collect for the new Fund, but this was probably due to the prevailing depression. Advocate, 19 Mar 1887.
was devoting a good deal of space to reports of evictions and distress, and to descriptions of the operation of the Plan of Campaign. Part of the problem may have been the failure of the Irish organisations to give the necessary lead and re-activate the traditional fund raising machinery. It is perhaps significant that the tone of the St Patrick's Day celebration in Melbourne in 1887 seems to have been less enthusiastic than in earlier years; no really prominent Irish citizen was available as the key-note speaker at the traditional banquet and those present had to be content with hearing middle rank Nationalists – Dr McInerney, Cr. Ievers and W. Murnane. By contrast, the demonstration at Botany was well attended by prominent politicians, and the speeches were confident in tone. At the banquet that followed Kevin Izod O'Doherty gave the main address, and the whole celebration seems to have been much more vigorous than its Melbourne counterpart.¹ Nor does the Victorian section of the Irish National League appear to have been active in the early months of 1887 and this in

¹ O'Doherty had moved to Sydney in late 1886, and had set up practice in Castlereagh St. He also became an honorary at St. Vincent's Hospital, but resigned this mid-way through 1887. Freeman's Journal, 25 June 1887.
turn left the full burden of maintaining enthusiasm to the Advocate. Only on one occasion did the League show a flicker of life: in April 1887 the Earl of Aberdeen arrived in Melbourne via Adelaide on a short visit, and his presence was seized on as a chance to parade the virtues of the Home Rule cause. The local Irish leadership was well aware of the impact on colonial opinion of statements made by a peer who had held high office under Gladstone and had been involved in the drafting of the Home Rule Bill of 1886. But the Aberdeen visit, though highly successful, was merely a passing event and if anything highlights the general inactivity of the League in Victoria. It would have been understandable that some slackening off in enthusiasm would occur, especially when it became evident that the Irish situation was deteriorating and that Home Rule would not be achieved as quickly as had been hoped. A sense of dejection and isolation can be detected in complaints about the hostility of public opinion in Melbourne, the constant antagonism shown by the daily press, and the failure of the Liberals in the colony to take the same enlightened view of Irish affairs

1. Advocate, 16 April 1887, 23 April 1887.
2. Advocate, 2 April 1887.
as their counterparts in England. Likewise, there was a somewhat bilious tone in Irish-Australian reactions to discussions concerning the proper celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. How could the Queen's Irish subjects join in such rejoicing when they were denied just administration and when unnecessary poverty and distress blighted their nation? The question dominated most comments in the Irish-Australian press.

During the winter months of 1887, the news from Ireland gave little cause for relief from the prevailing sense of depression. Gradually the outlines of Balfour's Coercion legislation took shape, and as it became clear that the measures envisaged were extremely severe and

---

1. Advocate, 9 April 1887. The Age was attacked as hypocritical in its criticism of the Plan of Campaign: had not the Age, at the time of the "Black Wednesday sensation advanced the interests of a political party as justification" for the perpetration of social and political crimes of a most revolutionary nature?" In a later issue, "Tapley" described Melbourne as "as miserable exception to the just and liberal views on the subject [of Home Rule] which prevail in other capital or large Australian cities. The Liberals here are still in political swaddling clothes, and the old dame from whom they receive their lessons adheres...to ancient customs and prejudices. But all this is not surprising - men with the courage and ingenuity of reformers are not found among mediocrities...." Advocate, 16 April 1887.
would enable the British government to cripple the Plan of Campaign, a reaction began to develop. Late in May, plans were made to hold a large scale public meeting in Melbourne to protest against the Coercion Bill. But it was significant that on this occasion a number of Protestant clergymen were closely identified with the movement, the most conspicuous being the Rev. Dr. Charles Strong. The main meeting which took place in Carlton in early June, attracted a crowd of about 10,000 to hear Sir Bryan O'Loghlen, Henry Bournes Higgins, Nicholas F. Fitzgerald and Prior Butler denounce the latest assaults on Irish liberty. As in 1886 the increased interest evoked by this new controversy stimulated the flow of donations, mostly into the Parliamentary Fund, but there was still little evidence of a re-activation of the local Irish National League. Had the League been in a healthy condition there would have been no necessity for Tapley to comment that the Carlton meeting

"...ought to be the rallying point out of which an organisation should spring to work in the interest of the Irish National cause..."¹

¹. Advocate, 11 June 1887.
Yet the Sydney branch of the League appears to have been in operating order; a meeting in July to protest against Coercion brought out a crowd of about 5000 — including Henry Parkes — and in late July the League was in contact with Timothy Harrington in Dublin, apparently asking for the assistance of a top-level Irish delegation. The Sydney Irish were also sponsors of a collection for a testimonial for Kevin Izod O'Doherty, which received practically no support in Melbourne. As late as August 1887, an occasional correspondent was still demanding whether the Victorian branch of the League had taken any real steps to aid the Evicted Tenants Fund, and even suggested methods by which Irish sympathisers could be regularly canvassed for funds.

But there was very little to indicate that the Victorian Central Committee was coming to life; regular meetings appear to have been held, but these did not produce

1. Advocate, 16 July, 23 July 1887. Freeman's Journal, 16 July 1887. Parkes gave his support to the Sydney meeting but was not able to attend. Five Members of Parliament were present, but it was conceded that the group on the platform was not as impressive in its range as that which appeared at the great Home Rule demonstration of 1886. W.H. Traill, the former editor of the Bulletin, was among those present.
the traditional call to the Irish colonists to rally to the support of the Evicted Tenants Fund, nor was any real attempt made to sponsor mass meetings or send organisers into the country areas. Some meetings were held in the rural Irish strongholds early in 1888, but these seem to have been the result of local initiative, and owed little if anything to the guidance of the Central branch in Melbourne.

There is some possibility that this relative inactivity may have been due to the temporary preoccupation of Joseph Winter, who had for years occupied a key position in the financial machinery of the League. Late in 1887, an anonymous correspondent accused Winter in the columns of the Age of having failed to account for £1000 out of the total collected in Victoria since the early eighties. Winter sued the Age for libel, and though he eventually won the case during 1888, the experience may well have caused him to withdraw from the financial activities of the League well before he actually resigned as Treasurer of both the Federal and Victorian
organisation. A further source of distraction may have been the founding of the Celtic Club, a project which involved many of the leading personalities of the League. Whatever the reason it is remarkable that for once no local Irish personality was able to provide a focal point for activity in the way John W. Walshe had done in 1882–3, or that Dr. O'Donnell was to do in later years. For a time Marshall Lyle – a Protestant Irishman who had been in the colony just over a year – appears to have tried to provide some stimulus. It was Lyle who initiated an appeal for funds to assist Fr. McFadden, an Irish priest who had recently been imprisoned for activities connected with the Plan of Campaign; but even this appeal lagged badly, despite Lyle’s efforts to rally his Catholic compatriots. Lyle was also prominent as a speaker at the opening of the Celtic Club, and for a time appears to have

1. John Redmond suggested that to avoid such allegations in future, visiting delegations should have their expenses covered by the Dublin headquarters of the League. "In our case, I know, the expenses were very heavy – perhaps we could have done it cheaper – but the League here are quite satisfied. In future missions the expenses will be lighter, for I am quite sure that no one...will go over half the ground that we did...I am glad you are starting the Member’s Fund, and I sincerely trust that slanders about the former funds will not militate against its success..." J.E. Redmond to Joseph Winter, 26 Aug 1887. Winter Papers. A receipt in the Winter Papers dated 15 Dec 1883 gives the total expenses incurred by the Redmonds and J.W. Walshe as £2657-10-3.
been the most vocal supporter of the Home Rule cause in the colonies.

At this rather awkward stage, news reached the colonies concerning the projected visit of Monsignor Persico to Ireland and of the probable link between this visit and official pressures from London. The situation was not by any means a novel one; during the Redmond visit in 1883, Home Rulers had been confronted by an unfavourable papal instruction concerning the role of the Irish clergy in the Parnell Testimonial appeal. On that occasion the crisis had passed over without too much embarrassment. But there was always the possibility that a papal announcement might seriously compromise the whole Nationalist movement. As a result, the Irish-Australian press watched the progress of the Persico mission with considerable interest; in early April 1888, the Advocate noted in an editorial that Monsignor Persico's visit could hardly be welcomed by the Irish, reflecting as it did the effectiveness of English pressure on Rome. But as it seemed clear that the Papal visitor had been impressed by what he had seen in Ireland, some good might in the long run result from the whole unhappy venture.¹ By the end of April, however,

¹. Advocate, 14 April 1888.
the cable messages were reporting that a Papal pronouncement
had been made which in effect condemned both the Irish
National League and the Plan of Campaign. Unwilling to
trust either the daily Press or its sources, the
Victorian branch of the Irish National League cabled the
headquarters of the League in Dublin for more detailed
information, and received reassurance that Papal condemnation
had not fallen on the League itself. ¹ But there was no
indication as to the fate of the more controversial Plan
of Campaign, and the Advocate found it difficult to preserve
a calm and optimistic tone while waiting for the full
text to come to hand. Arguing that it would be impossible
for the Pope to pronounce against the legitimate pursuit
of Ireland's national interests, the paper warned the
local Irish not to become angry with the Papacy while the
matter was still clouded.² A week later, the picture was
still confused, although editorial opinion conceded that
the efforts of the English government had probably brought
about some form of condemnation of the Plan or of its
more controversial elements. A Sandhurst correspondent

¹. Advocate, 5 May 1888.
². Ibid.
reported that the issue had been discussed by local Home Rule supporters after each of the Sunday masses there and that in general a Papal intervention in purely political matters would be greatly resented. In Sydney Cardinal Moran expressed the view that the Irish National League would not be affected in any way, and denied that the he himself was on his way to Dublin to replace Archbishop Walsh.

Early in June, the full text of the Papal rescript became available and detailed comments were possible. An Advocate editorial acknowledged the damage done to the National cause; even though the League itself had escaped censure, there could be no avoiding the fact that most local members of the League had been wholeheartedly behind the Plan, and now felt that they had been betrayed by Rome; but the editorial also made the point that the Rescript posed no problems of conscience for local Home Rulers. There was no reason why the collection of funds could not go on, with the assumption being that the money sent to Ireland would be put to legitimate use by the

1. Advocate, 12 May 1888.
2. Ibid.
Nationalists there.\(^1\) Even so, the episode had had a depressing effect, and even the statement by the Irish episcopate narrowing the whole issue down to the moral aspect did little to revive interest. As the Advocate noted, "the problem for us is that we always regarded the Plan of Campaign as a political organisation; therefore it would seem that decree does inhibit political freedom..."\(^2\)

In Sydney, the reaction to the Rescript was much more pronounced. A large protest meeting was held there early in June, and although the speeches were respectful in tone, there was no mistaking the major point being made; the Papacy had incorrectly interfered in Irish affairs, and such interference could not be accepted.\(^3\) From this meeting came a decision to call an Irish-Australian convention to express solidarity with the embattled Nationalists at home, and as it was felt that such a Convention should assemble within weeks, it was to be confined only to New South Wales. The Advocate,

\(^1\) Advocate, 9 June 1888.  
\(^2\) Advocate, 9 June 1888.  
\(^3\) Ibid.
while conceding that the time was ripe for a convention "...to help bind up the wounds and soothe the irritation in Ireland...." regretted that the meeting would not be on a National basis. The earlier convention of 1883 had decided that the next meeting would be held in Sydney, and with a little more planning the current New South Wales gathering could have been turned into a major national event. In any case, despite the Advocate's hope that the Sydney convention would not produce rash statements which would weaken the national cause, the resolutions passed came out clearly against Papal interference and in favour of the Plan of Campaign. With that gesture completed, the colonial Irish pushed the whole issue of the Papal Rescript into the background, and made very little further reference to it.

Apart from this episode the pattern of Nationalist activity showed no great change during the remainder of the year. In the absence of active leadership from within the ranks of the Irish National League, several Protestant clergymen took over the role as chief propagandists

1. Advocate, 16 June 1888.
for the Home Rule cause in Victoria - or rather shared it with another Protestant, Marshal Lyle. Rev. George Walters, a Unitarian minister who had been in Melbourne for four years, became so active as a lecturer on the Irish question that by June he had run into difficulties with his own congregation and had to give up his position. At the same time Rev. W. Kildahl, a Congregationalist from the Kyneton area, was also active on Home Rule platforms, speaking both in the suburbs and in the Wimmera, and at Sandhurst. Both were regarded as valuable converts to the Irish cause and their adhesion was seen as evidence of the broadening of public attitudes towards Home Rule. Walters and Kildahl helped to fill in what had now become a familiar gap - the interval between crises in Ireland itself. For the Melbourne Irish, the festivities connected with the opening of the Celtic Club provided something of a diversion; for Irishmen everywhere, the furore over the death of John Mandeville after his release from Tullamore gaol meant a more bitter reaction. But the full-scale crisis was to come later in the year, and to provide the stimulus for a revival of the traditional form of

1. Advocate, 2 June 1888.
2. Advocate, 7 July 1888.
3. Advocate, 21 July 1888, 28 July 1888. It was claimed that Mandeville's death was due to maltreatment during his imprisonment.
nationalist activity - emergency fund raising. Like most of the great crises of the 1880's, this was to centre around the central figure of the Nationalist movement - Charles Stewart Parnell.

In the light of later developments, the period between 1886 and 1888 was to mark the high plateau of the Home Rule movement in the colonies. For a few exciting months in 1886, it had seemed that the bitterness and sense of futility which had marked the earlier years had been justified at last; the soundness of the Irish claim had been accepted by the most influential English statesman of the day, and nominally at least by his party. Inevitably this meant that in the colonies a small but respected section of the community was bound to reconsider its attitudes and look more seriously at the views of Parnell and his followers, and because the Irish valued the esteem and approval of substantial and representative men within the broader community, they found the prevailing atmosphere warm and comforting to a bruised sense of national pride. But at the same time, the defeat of the Liberal party at the July poll released many of these well-wishers from their pledges, for there could be little doubt that the English electorate had given a verdict
against Home Rule under the arrangements suggested by Gladstone. In the months that followed, the Conservative ministry began clamping down on Ireland with all the familiar machinery of coercion; bitterness and anger were the only possible reactions on the part of the colonial Irish, and as their hopes withered so did the organisation they had so imperfectly constructed.

And yet there still remained the mirage in the distance; Home Rule had come so close to realisation, and in such unexpected circumstances, that it was inconceivable that they would not return again and be grasped more solidly. It was difficult for the colonial Irish to understand that in one important respect the whole situation had changed irretrievably for the worse: the emergence of the Ulster problem, itself an unexpected by-product of the Gladstone measure, meant that in the long run not even a settlement which had won the approval of the combined Irish and English electorates had any real chance of survival in the face of an intransigent North. Home Rule would never be the final cure for Ireland's complex set of neuroses, but those who had left the homeland many years previously were in no position
to grasp that unwelcome fact; they were not of course, the only ones to misjudge the strength of Unionist sentiment in both England and Ireland - the same charge could be made against a number of Nationalist leaders at Westminster. But for the colonial Irish, already insulated by twelve thousand miles of ocean, this misunderstanding of the situation in Ulster became one further element in an increasingly unrealistic and outdated concept of how things stood in Ireland.
CHAPTER IV

CRISIS AND DISINTEGRATION

By mid-1888, relations between the Salisbury Administration and the Irish Nationalist movement could scarcely have been worse. Both sides had developed methods a good deal more sophisticated than those which had operated in the early years of the decade; Arthur Balfour had brought a new toughness and cunning into the conduct of the Irish administration, but his strength was matched by the effective organisation of the Plan of Campaign. The struggle was now well and truly joined, and neither side allowed very much room for compromise.

It was against this background that the Government made the unfortunate decision to appoint a Special Commission to enquire into changes made against Parnell in a series of articles in The Times entitled "Parnellism and Crime." It was confidently hoped that the Commission would sheet home Parnell's complicity in the Phoenix Park murders of 1882 and in the general pattern of agrarian crime; if this could be achieved both Parnell and the Nationalist movement in general
would be fatally compromised, and the Government would have little difficulty in crushing the Plan of Campaign. But the whole enterprise had been bungled from the start, and the most damaging charges against Parnell were based on letters which his counsel had little difficulty in exposing as forgeries. The hearing itself spread over 128 days, but the critical point was reached on 22nd February 1889, when Sir Charles Russell's examination of the forger Richard Piggott brought about the collapse of the case against Parnell. When the latter entered the House of Commons on 1st March, he was greeted with the first standing ovation for seventy years. The Government had been completely humiliated, The Times was subsequently forced to settle the matter for damages of £5,000, and Parnell stood completely vindicated in the eyes of both English and Irish public opinion.

When the enquiry first opened, however, there was no guarantee that a favourable result could be

2. The spectacular collapse of the charges against Parnell drew attention away from the other findings of the Commission, some of which were very critical of the Land League and its activities.
expected. It was known that the Government was confident of a crushing victory, and was aiding counsel for The Times in the gathering of evidence. Parnell's adherents abroad had good cause to fear, and they understood the implications of a defeat for the Nationalist movement as a whole; it was not long before the colonial Home Rulers were collecting money for a fund to cover Parnell's legal costs.\(^1\) By the end of the year, something of the old excitement had returned; large meetings were being held in country areas, and substantial amounts were being collected. But although the Irish National League sponsored the new fund, some of the country centres tended to forward their drafts direct to Archbishop Walsh of Dublin, now very much in favour for his stand on the Papal Rescript.\(^2\) Whether this denotes the weakness of

---

2. Advocate, 5 Jan 1889, 19 Jan 1889. Parnell Defence Fund Committees at Sandhurst and Ballarat both sent drafts in excess of £200 direct to Archbishop Walsh. On a later occasion, Dr. Walsh forwarded to the Freeman's Journal (Dublin) a draft for £100 received from St. Patrick's Society, Melbourne, but advised the Editor not to print the letter which accompanied the draft for fear of involvement in contempt of court proceedings. The patronising tone of the Archbishop's letter may have lost him some admirers in the colonies. Advocate, 23 Mar 1889.
the League organisation, or simply the desire to have a district effort given full recognition in the Irish press, cannot be determined. What central direction did exist seems to have come from another *ad hoc* committee, the Parnell Defence Fund executive, rather than from the Central Committees of the Irish National League. But just as the effort was gathering momentum in early 1889, the collapse of *The Times* case in February took much of the urgency out of the appeal; Parnell had once again emerged triumphant from an extremely dangerous situation, and although his critics could take some comfort from many of the other findings of the Commission when it eventually published its report, there could be no mistaking the fact that the Irish leader had won convincingly on the key issue of the enquiry — his own standing as a political leader. Under these circumstances, it could be expected that the renewed activity among the colonial Irish would now taper off as the sense of crisis faded. But for once this did not occur; the Parnell appeal became the forerunner of what was to be the most spectacular fund-raising campaign of the Home Rule period, more successful in fact than the legendary tour of the Redmonds in 1883.
In the intervening five years, there had been frequent requests for the despatch of another top level delegation to the colonies to stimulate Nationalist activity and tap the financial resources of the Irish and Irish-Australians. Michael Davitt had been favoured as a possible lecturer; his record as a Nationalist was unique, and he had contributed regular newsletters to the *Advocate* for some time. He was probably corresponding with Joseph Winter by this stage, and Winter would almost certainly have been anxious to have him make the trip. But in August 1888 the *Advocate* columnist "Tapley" was advised by Davitt that although he would be unable to make a tour in the near future, Parnell was planning to send Prof. Swift McNeill and Sir Thomas Esmonde, both members of the Parliamentary Party, on an Australian tour.¹ Nothing more was heard of McNeill, but cable messages indicated that John Dillon, T.D. Sullivan and Esmonde planned to visit the colonies towards the end of the year. Eventually John Deasy replaced Sullivan, and the three-man delegation reached Australia in March 1889. A recent study has indicated that Dillon’s decision to

---

¹ *Advocate*, 11 Aug 1888.
tour the colonies was a result of the desperate financial position of the Plan of Campaign.¹ Large amounts of money were needed to support the tenants who had joined battle with their landlords, especially as the government was assisting the latter as much as possible. William O'Brien, Dillon's major partner in organising the Plan, had been prosecuted under the Coercion legislation, and when he was imprisoned, the main burden fell on Dillon. It was not known outside the inner circles of the Party that Parnell had been unwilling to release funds from the main bank accounts in Paris to keep the Plan in operation, and this left Dillon with the alternatives of either seeing the Plan collapse - with drastic results for the tenants involved - or seeking funds elsewhere. The Australian tour, as a result, was to have an urgency that had not been evident during the Redmond visit five years earlier: for once, a large segment of the Nationalist campaign in Ireland did literally depend on the generosity of Irish-Australians.

Dillon's reputation as the protector of evicted

¹ F.S. Lyons, op.cit., p.334.
tenants preceded him, and when the three envoys arrived in Australia – Deasy and Esmonde in March and Dillon in April – they received an enthusiastic welcome.¹ The campaign opened in Adelaide on the 12th of April before an enthusiastic crowd, and thousands of supporters met the delegates when they arrived in Melbourne to begin the Victorian segment of the tour; the horses were taken out of their vehicle, and excited supporters drew them

1. Deasy had arrived in Sydney in early March, but he did not attend the St Patrick's Day demonstration at Botany, apparently because he had been instructed not to make any public speeches until Dillon arrived. Freeman's Journal, 23 Mar 1889. This may have been a wise precaution, for Deasy did not prove to be a complete success on the tour. He seriously embarrassed his supporters by complaining that his mail had been opened after he had paid an extended visit to his cousin's property near Branxton, New South Wales. Sensing a chance to embarrass the envoys, several Members brought pressure on the Postmaster-General, Daniel O'Connor, to hold an enquiry. Reluctantly O'Connor did so, and the Royal Commission which followed exonerated the Branxton postmaster, establishing that the most likely suspect was his cousin's wife: Deasy had been paying considerable attention to her daughter, and apparently was brought under surveillance as a result. (Minutes and evidence of a Royal Commission into alleged tampering with letters addressed to Mr John Deasy, Col. Sec. Inwards Corres. 4/887.4, State Archives of N.S.W.) Deasy's humiliation did not win him admirers among the colonial Irish, but delighted their opponents. "...now all Australia has been disturbed by the...momentous subject of Mr Deasy's mother-in-law. The mystery of the violated letters is solved at last, and Mr Deasy has the satisfaction of having set all the South Seas roaring with laughter." Spectator (Melbourne), 21 June 1889. See also New South Wales Parl'ly Debates, First Series, 1889 Session, pp. 1403-04, and the report of the Royal Commission in New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings, 1889 Session, Vol. 5, p. 867 ff.
as far as the Hibernian Hall—itself a testimonial to the earlier Redmond visit—in Swanston St.\(^1\) The first of Dillon's Melbourne meetings was packed out, and equally successful meetings were held at Ballarat and Sandhurst. His two assistants then concentrated on visiting the smaller country centres, while Dillon moved through to New South Wales. The larger towns like Ballarat were producing results even more spectacular than those of the 1883 tour, and despite the fact that money was still being collected for the Parnell Defence Fund, it was evident that the tour would be a financial success.\(^2\)

In Sydney, Dillon found the local branch of the National League in good working order; Freehill and his colleagues had been able to organise a massive demonstration to mark his arrival, with an estimated 40,000 people involved, and about 3000 attended his opening meeting in Her Majesty's Theatre.\(^3\) With admittance charges ranging from 10/- to 2/6, and with

---

1. *Advocate*, 4 May 1889.
heavy donations from the leading Home Rulers, a return of nearly £2,000 was achieved. Then, leaving his critics to organise protest meetings in the city and at Balmain, Dillon moved off to the Dalton stronghold at Orange and was met by a procession complete with brass band and a collection list totalling £450. While his colleagues fulfilled a few speaking engagements in country areas, Dillon moved quickly on to Queensland for an extended tour. Despite the enthusiasm of the Irish outside Sydney, the other delegates decided to defer the New South Wales section of the tour until later in the year and concentrate first on Victoria; by May they were back in the southern colony and ready to take up about sixty invitations to speak to Irish gatherings in widely dispersed centres.

By this stage Dillon had decided to do more than simply collect funds for the cause; it was clear

---

1. Donations of £100 were received from J.T. and T. Toohey, Dalton Bros., Thomas Dalton, Thomas Curran and M.J. Kinnane.

2. Freeman's Journal, 1 Jun 1889. Several anti-Home Rule meetings were held in the wake of the Dillon visit; one held at Balmain developed into a minor riot as the Home Rulers intervened, and at another meeting the Rev. Dill Macky - later to be a prominent organiser of the Protestant Defence Association - took an active part. Australasian, 25 May 1889.
that the Victorian branch of the National League was in a parlous condition and badly in need of reorganisation. Dillon accordingly made arrangements to call a new Irish–Australian convention in Melbourne later in the year, and gave it the task of reforming the Victorian organisation. On this occasion there would be no attempt to bring in delegates from other colonies except as observers, and the convention was to be a scaled down version of the Redmond gathering of 1883. While the Central Committee in Melbourne went ahead with preparations, Dillon extended his own tour as far north as Cairns, where he collected £350, while his two colleagues concentrated on Victorian country centres. The return from these centres made the visits well worth the effort; Kyneton yielded over £200, and Camperdown and Colac gave well over £100 each.1 By August, the total return made it possible for the organisers to talk of remitting £500 per fortnight to Dublin.2 A month later Dillon completed his Queensland tour, which he claimed would yield about £8,000 when all contributions were complete, and began

---

1. Advocate, 6 July 1889. Esmonde later claimed to have held 36 meetings in Victoria. Advocate, 3 Sep 1889.
another series of successful meetings in the North Coast and New England districts. But by late September he was back in Melbourne for the Convention which was to put the League on a sound organisational basis.

Nearly 400 delegates attended the meeting—about twice the number at the 1883 Convention—and the bulk of them were accredited by hurriedly organised branches or public meetings throughout Victoria. Not many of them were nationally known figures of the stature of Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty or John Macrossan; but they were reported to be men of substance within their own communities who could be expected to be moderate and sober in their views. Their respect for Dillon was evident; unlike the young Redmonds, Dillon came with his reputation well established and his association with the plight of the tenants ensured him a strong following in the colonies. It was to be his personality which dominated the relatively brief proceedings.

The Convention opened on an encouraging note: the Treasurer reported that £5,700 had already been remitted

1. *Advocate*, 3 Sept 1889.
to Dublin on behalf of the Irish Delegates Fund, and a further £1,300 was in hand. These amounts were over and above those collected for the older Funds, some of which were still technically in operation. Dillon's speech was well received, and laid emphasis on the urgent need for funds for the Irish cause, funds which would be forthcoming only if the League was properly organised; on several occasions, he and other speakers drew a parallel between the Irish cause and that of the London dock workers, who had been given heavy financial assistance from the colonies: the docker's cause was a just one, but did not the Irish cause have an even greater claim for assistance?

The main business of the day, however, was the election of the new committee of the Irish National League. For a moment it seemed that the Convention would in fact develop into an open forum: one delegate came close to upsetting the orderly pattern of proceedings by trying to have the outgoing President, Michael McDonald, re-elected by acclamation. The attempt failed, but there were also signs of resentment from the country delegates when

1. Advocate, 21 Sept 1889.
the formidable Prior Butler tried to give them a thumbnail sketch of the qualities of the various candidates for office, a move which was felt to be unnecessarily patronising. The eventual choice for President was Dr Nicholas O'Donnell, who was to be supported by an abnormally large committee of 36. Proceedings closed with the traditional banquet and the three envoys took up the normal routine of the lecture tour. But Dillon took the precaution of attending the first meeting of the new committee, and stressed the need to establish as many branches as possible. There was plenty of evidence of the possible advantages of a permanent fund raising apparatus; in a list of Victorian contributions sent to Dr. Kenny in Dublin 8 out of a total of 20 centres had given in excess of £100 to the Delegates Fund, and 10 in excess of £50. To Dillon, acutely aware of the financial plight of the Plan of Campaign, it must have seemed obvious that this potential should be tapped more efficiently.

By October, the delegates were ready to move north again; Dillon and Deasy held meetings at Wagga,

1. Advocate, 21 Sept 1889.
3. Advocate, 5 Oct 1889.
Young, Murrumburrah and Grenfell late in the month, and were again well received.\(^1\) Then the work of canvassing appears to have been divided up, with Dillon moving to Sydney, Deasy holding meetings in Penrith, Mudgee and Gulgong, and Esmonde covering the northern districts.\(^2\)

With £26,000 collected in roughly six months, Dillon and Esmonde sailed for New Zealand, leaving Deasy to continue the work in New South Wales. Several weeks later he was joined by J.R. Cox, the Member for East Clare, who was visiting the colonies for health reasons, and both men returned to Victoria to conduct meetings in areas not covered during Dillon's visit. In February 1890 they addressed gatherings in Prahran, Port Melbourne and Essendon, and in March they visited some country areas.\(^3\)

Late in April, Deasy was back in England, his arrival almost coinciding with Dillon's return via the United States.\(^4\)

At no other point in the entire period did developments in the colonial extension of the Home Rule

---

1. Advocate, 12 Oct 1889.
3. Advocate, 22 Feb 1890, 15 Mar 1890.
4. Advocate, 7 June 1890.
movement have as close a bearing on the tactical situation in Ireland itself. The £30,000 which Dillon took back with him from that tour was of critical importance in rescuing the Plan of Campaign from collapse, and it gave O'Brien and Dillon the opportunity to keep the tenant issue alive over and against Parnell's apparent disapproval. The colonial Irish could not be aware of the full implications of the visit, although they were obviously impressed by the size of the financial outcome; but the subtle differences of policy within the Nationalist movement were well concealed from distant observers. The colonial Irish were more sensitive to changes in the local scene, especially the greater degree of tolerance shown by colonial society towards the whole idea of a fund-raising tour. Despite the bitter hostility between the Government authorities and the Irish National League in Ireland itself, the Envoys were not confronted by the solid wall of hostility which had made the Redmond's task so difficult five years earlier. Dillon later remarked that he had been given a reasonable treatment by the bulk of the colonial press, with the significant exception of Melbourne, where the Age and the Argus remained hostile. ¹

¹. Advocate, 7 June 1890.
Public figures had found it easier to give open support than in 1883, and there were fewer cases in which local bodies had denied the use of halls to the visiting speakers. But much had happened since the Redmond visit, and the conversion of Gladstone to Home Rule in 1886 made it difficult for uncommitted colonials to take a violently hostile attitude toward Dillon and his associates.

But the success of the visit in terms of the situation in Ireland far outstripped its value for the National League in the colonies. In New South Wales the main metropolitan branch continued to meet regularly, and some activity was reported from Balmain and Newcastle; but the rural branches appear to have once again withered as soon as the immediate stimulus had gone. But at least the nucleus of the New South Wales organisation was intact, and its leaders were active; by contrast, the Victorian branch failed to justify the special attention which Dillon had paid to it. In the first months of 1890, while the excitement engendered by the Dillon visit was still simmering, the Central Committee of the League in

1. *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Mar 1890, 10 May 1890.
Melbourne sent out thousands of copies of rule books to areas where branches could be expected to develop. But within twelve months of the original Convention the Committee had to concede failure; only five country and four suburban branches were in working order and the Committee made a plea for an intensified effort before the next annual meeting of the League, due in early November.¹ By October, the Committee was discussing the possibility of appointing a full-time travelling secretary to organise the country branches; but so few Committee members were in attendance that the matter had to be shelved.² Later in the month, James Gill was sent on a hurried trip to Northern Victoria to organise branches, and by the time the annual meeting got under way on 5th December he had already formed branches at Mooroopna, Shepparton and Tatura.³ But the situation was so bad that the annual meeting inevitably developed into a type of post mortem. O'Donnell gave a frank report on the rapid deterioration of the League after the departure of the envoys: many of those who had accepted appointment

1. Advocate, 27 Sept 1890.
2. Advocate, 4 Oct 1890.
3. Advocate, 1 Nov 1890.
to the Central Committee had never attended meetings: many country branches had collapsed soon after formation simply because they had no purpose except to enrol members and collect subscriptions. There appear to have been very few branches which had survived intact from the Redmond visit of 1883, and there seemed little likelihood of the situation improving unless those who attended the annual meeting returned to their districts determined to get the League on its feet.

At first sight, the failure of the League to take firm root is difficult to explain. Generally it seems to have been given the support of the rural clergy and the more prominent local personalities, and although clearly the absence of any meaningful programme was crippling, it is surprising that more effort was not made to cultivate the social aspect. The various Friendly Societies seem to have livened up their business meetings in this way, although it must be conceded that the members of these groups had solid personal reasons for attending meetings regularly and this made it relatively simple for the organisers to graft other activities on to the benefit stem. It could also be argued that in country

1. Advocate, 8 Nov 1890.
districts the problems of distance and the difficulties to travel made any form of group activity except church attendance almost impossible. Yet it is interesting to compare this situation with the considerable success which farming organisations in the United States - such as the Grange - achieved in maintaining regular social contact amongst farming communities operating under conditions roughly comparable to those in the Australian colonies. One can only conclude that Irish sentiment in the colonies was only strong enough to sustain periodic bouts of fervour, and these could only be triggered off by the presence of a prominent Irish Nationalist on the platform. Under these conditions, the colonial Irish would dig deep into their available cash, but once the moment had passed they showed no interest in the dull routine of organisation and the collection of subscriptions. It is possible that under normal circumstances many of them were in any case making constant remittances to their own families; again, American experience would indicate that this was very likely the case, but there is at present no way of estimating the incidence of such contributions in the colonial context.
In the long run it proved impossible to revive the Irish National League as a viable organisation in Victoria, but this was not due simply to the inability of men like Nicholas O'Donnell to whip up enthusiasm among the rank and file. Within weeks of the annual meeting of 1890, at which the defects of the League had been so thoroughly exposed, the Parnell scandal broke, and the Home Rule movement in Australia became one of the many victims of that disastrous affair.

If 1886 had been a proud year for Irish Australians, 1891 was equally one of humiliation and confusion. The divorce case, following so rapidly after Parnell's vindication in *The Times* enquiry, caught the local Irish unprepared. When the first reports of Parnell's involvement reached Australia, the tendency was to regard them as simply heralding another vicious attack on the great man. Captain O'Shea was seen as the villain of the piece, and one commentator expressed the hope that eventual exposure would not only humiliate O'Shea but destroy him completely, so vicious was his behaviour.¹ But the *Advocate* itself took a very cautious

---

¹ *Advocate*, 19 Jan 1890.
line during 1890; possibly this was due to a natural dislike of the subject matter, but it is also possible that Winter may have suspected that this was no ordinary attack on Parnell. Enquiries could have been made by those who were in direct contact with members of the Parliamentary party during the long period which elapsed between O'Shea's filing of the suit and the actual hearing (24 Dec 1889 – 15 Nov 1890), while John Dillon may have warned some of the local Home Rulers that damaging material would be brought to light once the case came to court.¹

After November 15th, matters came to a head with remarkable speed. A meeting of the Irish National League in Dublin on November 18th decided to stand by Parnell. Five days later a meeting at Leinster Hall did likewise. But within days Gladstone's letter setting out his unwillingness to see Parnell retain the leadership had been received. A series of meetings in Committee Room 15 at the House of Commons culminating in the acrimonious debate on December 1st, produced the split

¹ O'Connor claims that Parnell's colleagues were aware of his relationship with Mrs O'Shea well before the suit was filed. Sir James O'Connor, History of Ireland, (London, 1926), Vol II, p.142.
within the Irish Parliamentary Party. 44 members withdrew and elected Justin McCarthy as their Chairman; 29, including the Redmonds, remained with Parnell. For more than a decade, the bitter quarrelling between these two factions was to tear the Nationalist movement apart and to humiliate Irishmen at home and abroad.

The crisis had developed so quickly that the colonial Home Rulers were stunned at the turn of events. The splendid figure who for more than ten years had dominated the Irish scene and who had to a larger extent been responsible for placing the whole Irish question in the forefront of Imperial politics, was now exposed as an adulterer. His leadership had been rejected by Gladstone, by the Irish hierarchy, and by a majority of the Parliamentary Party; the political consequences of his lapse had already proved catastrophic. Parnell had done much to add dignity to the Irish cause over the past decade; now, the very squalor of his offence seemed to degrade it. Much of the bitterness directed against Parnell in the colonies during the remaining months of his life could in part be attributed to the sense of betrayal on the part of men who had been intensely concerned with building up an image of probity and respectability.
in the face of a critical and hostile colonial society.

Once the initial shock wore off, the local leadership, already struggling to rebuild the League, found itself confronted with an entirely new set of problems. It was one thing to regret and condemn Parnell's lapse, but to decide the future role and orientation of the Home Rule agitation in the colonies, in the light of that event, was a problem of a different order. Here, for perhaps the first time during the course of the Home Rule campaign, the Irish-Australian community was forced to make decisions on the basis of an independent appraisal of the Irish situation; yet this situation had become increasingly complex. Parnell had been deposed, but still claimed the leadership of the party; amongst his supporters were the Redmond brothers, whose visit to Australia seven years before was already part of local legend, and whose claims on Irish-Australian loyalty could not be lightly dismissed. Moreover, the Central Branch of the Irish National League in Dublin — the key branch in the whole League organisation — was held by the Parnellite faction, as was the quite influential Freeman's Journal in Dublin. Yet the group led by Justin McCarthy could reasonably claim that it represented the views of the
majority of the Parliamentary Party; it was already receiving the backing of the Irish hierarchy and it would also claim the clear support of Michael Davitt, who in turn had a keen following in the colonies. To make the choice even more difficult, John Dillon had not as yet declared himself for either faction. He and William O'Brien had been in the midst of their fund-raising tour of the United States when the crisis broke; their campaign collapsed immediately, and both men returned to France; at Boulogne they entered into a series of negotiations which were intended to bring the factions together before the split became permanent, and when these negotiations failed they returned to Ireland to surrender to the authorities and serve the six-month sentences which had been hanging over them since the previous year. This meant that their attitude would not be generally known for some time.

The extent to which the colonial Irish looked for a lead from these men can be seen in the way that the Sydney branch of the Irish National League deferred giving its support to either faction until Dillon and
O'Brien were released and their views made known.¹ This deference to the organisers of the Plan of Campaign is understandable under the circumstances. Both were identified with the tenant right movement as distinct from Parliamentary activity. Dillon had come to Australia to seek help for a branch of nationalist activity which had always attracted a favourable response in Australia - the sustenance of evicted tenants. The fact that the Plan of Campaign had engaged the landlords head on, and had appeared close to achieving a dramatic victory against at least some of them, made it even more regrettable that the crisis should have developed at this juncture. Without American money, the Plan would inevitably collapse, but the split had the effect of shutting off the supply of funds. Consequently, Irish-Australians were sympathetic towards the attempts by Dillon and O'Brien to restore unity to the Parliamentary party and the nationalist movement as a whole.

The action of the Sydney branch of the League pointed up the dilemma which confronted the nationalist leadership throughout the colonies. The individual branches

---

¹. Freeman's Journal, 23 May 1891.
were replicas of the organisation in Ireland; they existed almost entirely for the collection of funds and their transmission to Dublin. But since the split, the Central Branch in Dublin was already identified with the Parnellite faction, and the colonial branches had to face the fact that funds forwarded to that branch would probably be used to support that faction. This possibility clearly did not appeal to the key personalities in Melbourne and Sydney, who appear to have been anxious to avoid supporting either faction. Yet in some cases they were under pressure to take a firm Anti-Parnell line. As early as January 3rd, i.e., about one month after the proceedings in Room 15, a meeting of the Bendigo branch of the Irish National League passed a motion expressing "regret and indignation" at Parnell's action in retaining a claim to the leadership and turning his attacks on Gladstone. Councillor O'Neil argued that:

```
...if the League in Australia failed to speak out, it would be said that the Irish in Australia condoned the misconduct of Parnell.
```

1. Advocate, 3 Jan 1891.
Another referred pointedly to the stand already taken by the Irish clergy, and the motion passed with a few members dissenting. When the report of the meeting appeared in the Advocate it attracted criticism from "Justicia," who took both the Advocate and the Bendigo branch to task for their attitude towards Parnell, pointing out that if Parnell were to be criticised in retrospect for his supposed defiance of the clergy in the eighties, the same comments must in all fairness be made against such men as Davitt and the McCarthy-ites. But the Bendigo branch was not to be put off; it attacked the apathy of the Melbourne branch in failing to get behind Justin McCarthy, and went as far as suggesting that the branch officers should resign.

...there is no doubt that we want a little more leaven thrown into Melbourne nationalism - we want a few men like Winter, McDonald etc - men who are not the slaves of expediency, but who resemble that King who did not hesitate to condemn his own son for a grave infraction of the law.

One local correspondent took an even more serious line: "W.G.", of Sandhurst labelled "Justicia" as a liberal - catholic, one who betrayed a deep rooted hostility towards

1. Advocate, 17 June 1891.
2. Advocate, 17 Jan 1891.
priestly interference and who would do better to remember that his duty to Catholicism took precedence over his nationalist sympathies.¹

Nor was Bendigo the only branch to move further than the metropolitan branch. Over the period 17th - 31st January, the Sale correspondent of the Advocate regularly attacked the Melbourne branch for its silence on the leadership issue.² The attack was taken up by another Sale nationalist, John Cullinane, who claimed that nine-tenths of the Irish in the district were in favour of Justin McCarthy.³ These public attacks on the Melbourne branch are somewhat unusual, and require some explanation. It would be easier to understand the vigour of these attacks if the Advocate itself had already taken up a strong line against Parnell, but this was not the case. Initially its editorial policy was neutral, and it avoided making any explicit comments that might stir up factional animosities;⁴ on one occasion it had even been mildly criticised for appearing to encourage "a few cranks to

1. Advocate, 24 Jan 1891.
3. Advocate, 14 Mar 1891.
4. Advocate, 24 Jan 1891.
form a hostile clique against McCarthy." As the weeks passed, the tone of the paper became increasingly critical of the Parnellites, but its attitudes still lagged behind those which had already formed in both Bendigo and Sale. Perhaps part of the explanation for the early growth of anti-Parnellite feeling outside Melbourne can be drawn from a comment made by Canon O'Mahoney of Cork in relation to a similar situation in Ireland itself:

...the farmers, who are the preponderating influence in the Irish electorate are, as far as I can judge in this country, almost unanimously against him. His supporters consist of some honest but harmless enthusiasts - the Tories, the Vintner's Association and the Physical Force men...  

It is at least possible that more settled and prosperous Irish in the country areas had more reason to be hostile to Parnell than their counterparts in Richmond and Hotham: the circumstances of his fall may well have been more acutely embarrassing to a group traditionally concerned with respectability and sensitive to clerical opinion. Possibly the fact that Parnell's disgrace had crippled the Plan of Campaign may have made his actions

1. Advocate, 31 Jan 1891.
2. Advocate, 14 Feb 1891.
seem even more reprehensible, given their own sympathy with the struggles of the Irish tenantry. Whatever the reason, the rural Irish swung away from Parnell with remarkable speed.

The Sydney branch was also being accused by some of its affiliates of taking too moderate a line on the leadership question. The John Mandeville branch at Newcastle appeared to be moving against Parnell in January and at the annual meeting of the League, Freehill found it necessary to justify his committee's decision to remain neutral for the time being. The John Mandeville branch then became openly critical of the Sydney branch, and there were suggestions that it might take separate action on the matter, despite the fact that Parnell still had an occasional supporter amongst the branch membership. Both the Sydney and Melbourne branches found it increasingly difficult to keep clear of a damaging general discussion of the leadership issue. The Anti-Parnellite sentiment described above did not represent the full range of Irish-Australian opinion, for Parnell was not without supporters in the colonies. "Tapley," a regular columnist for the

Advocate, commented as late as March 14th:

"...to my astonishment, I know that there are many good men in Melbourne who are ready to defend Parnell in his usurpation of power."¹

In Sydney, the more fervent supporters of Parnell had already taken action. Early in February a meeting chaired by John McGuiness, who had until January 6th been Treasurer of the Sydney branch of the Irish National League, had passed resolutions in support of Parnell and had forwarded cables to that effect.² Thus there were clear indications that the Home Rule movement in Australia could be split just as drastically as in Ireland itself. In the light of this situation, the reluctance of the League's leaders to depart from a policy of strict neutrality was understandable; such a split would not only contribute to the general confusion surrounding the national cause, but would also weaken the Irish minority in relation to colonial society in general.

¹ Advocate, 14 Mar 1891.
² McGuiness had tried to speak at the annual meeting of the League in Sydney in January, but was ruled out of order because he was still under suspension from a previous meeting; he countered this ruling by shouting "We will have no King but Charlie..." Freeman's Journal, 31 Jan 1891.
Under normal circumstances, the central branch committees might have been able to fend off criticism and maintain a neutral position while the situation in Ireland clarified. But circumstances did not remain normal: almost immediately the warring factions in Ireland moved to gain the support of the Irish overseas, and in doing so forced the Irish-Australian leadership to examine its policies afresh. As early as January 1891, reports were beginning to appear in the daily press to the effect that both factions were preparing to send envoys to Australia.¹ The possibility of a visit by Parnell himself was canvassed, and produced unfavourable reactions. But by the end of February it had become much more likely that the Anti-Parnellites would send a delegation consisting of two M.P.'s, J.R. Cox and T.D. Sullivan. The colonial central branches reacted quickly: the Melbourne branch forwarded an appeal to Archbishop Walsh of Dublin to prevent delegates being sent by either faction.² The Sydney branch did likewise, attempting to forestall a visit by cabling Justin McCarthy, but the latter's reply

¹ Advocate, 31 Jan 1891.
² Advocate, 7 Mar 1891. This move was strongly criticised by the Sale correspondent - "neutrality in the present state of Irish affairs is criminal."
to F.B. Freehill, the President of the Sydney branch, indicated that Cox had already left. Whether they liked it or not, the local leadership of the league would have to decide how Cox would be received during his stay in the colonies – and it was precisely this type of problem which was likely to cause an upheaval amongst the rank and file nationalists. Early in March the Sydney branch had debated the whole question of the forthcoming visit, and had agreed with Freehill that neutrality was still the best course to take. Shortly after, Cardinal Moran issued a statement on behalf of a section of the hierarchy which had just met in Sydney; the bishops deplored the projected visit on the ground that it would lead to serious divisions in the ranks of "the Irish Catholic people of Australia". Yet the Irish National League branch at Adelaide – Cox's first port of call – took a somewhat different approach to the problem. While deploring the fact that the local

1. Advocate, 7 Mar 1891.
2. Advocate, 7 Mar 1891.
3. Advocate, 14 Mar 1891, Freeman's Journal, 14 Mar 1891. Those present were Moran (Sydney), Carr (Melbourne), Murphy (Hobart), Moore (Ballarat), Luck (Auckland). Later in the month, the Freeman's Journal reported that there had been general approval of the decision not to have the usual speeches at the St. Patrick's Day demonstration at Botany lest divisions should come to the surface. Freeman's Journal, 21 Mar 1891.
Irish had not been consulted before Cox departed, a meeting decided that he be welcomed on his arrival; later, this branch would give its support to Cox.¹

The branches in Melbourne and Sydney found it much harder to decide their attitude to Cox once he had arrived in the country. Reports were now reaching the country concerning the very strong anti-Parnellite line being taken by the leading members of the Irish hierarchy; the Advocate was rapidly becoming more anti-Parnellite in tone, especially after Parnell failed to follow up his challenge to Healy in the Cork electorate. By early April, the paper was referring to Parnell's "want of courage and good faith" in the matter, and expressed the hope that he would realise that his value to Ireland lay in a role other than that of leader.² But what appears to be what brought the editorial policy of the paper out more strongly against Parnell was the intervention of two of his supporters, John Redmond and his brother-in-law, James Dalton M.P., both of whom wrote to the Advocate in April strongly defending their leader's policies and actions.³

1. Advocate, 14 Mar 1891.
2. Advocate, 4 April 1891.
3. Advocate, 11 April 1891.
The arguments presented were, in the main, fairly conventional ones; but what appears to have stung the Advocate was the implied criticism of the part played by the Irish clergy in Parnell's downfall. "Has it come to this", asked an editorial,

that the Irish race, at the suggestion of a few hundred politicians, few of whom have made their mark or command any other influence in the House of Commons than their votes in a division list give them, were prepared to reject the counsels of the priests and bishops of Ireland, and put their ecclesiastical guides aside as foolish meddlers in national affairs?...if the spiritual bond which so closely unites the priests and people of Ireland were from any cause relaxed, and if the Irish Catholic could and did remove obedience to the teaching of the Church, yet another tie, hardly less strong or sacred would survive the consequences of the religious apostacy of the children of St. Patrick...

Clearly the lines of the debate were hardening; the Parnellites could now be portrayed as in direct opposition to clerical authority and opinion, and the columnist "Tapley" could quite reasonably speculate as to why so many Irishmen still continued to support Parnell in the face of the Church's clear denunciation of him. The bond between clergy and people was not to be taken lightly in

1. Advocate, 18 April 1891.
the colonial context: "You may travel through America," commented Bishop Corbett of Sale, "and you will not find the tie between priests and people stronger than it is in Australia."¹ The Church in Australia had already survived what some regarded as an attempt to destroy that tie - the Education crisis; it would not take kindly to any individual or group which appeared likely to renew the attack on another front.

All this made it difficult enough for the leaders of the League to maintain a middle-of-the-road policy; yet worse was to come. The Anti-Parnellites in Ireland were now in the process of establishing a new organisation, the National Federation, as a counter to the Parnellite Irish National League; this move made the polarisation of the Nationalist movement more evident, and made inevitable that the colonial branches of the Irish National League would have to consider questions of identity and affiliation as well as policies. Then the much respected Archbishop Croke of Cashel made it clear that in his view the Irish in Australia and New Zealand were "solidly against" Parnell.² All the indications suggested a swing

¹. Advocate, 18 April 1891.
². Advocate, 25 April 1891.
of influential opinion against the former leader, and under these circumstances it would be difficult for the League leadership to maintain its neutral stand. The issue came to a head at a lively meeting of the Sydney branch of the League in May, a meeting which chaired by F.B. Freehill and attended by Cox. The meeting got off to a bad start: three members of the "Parnell leadership Committee" were refused admittance, and a minor fracas developed until police assistance was obtained. During the course of the meeting, Cox was invited to outline his position; in doing so, he laid heavy stress on the need to give immediate aid to the evicted tenants and disclaimed any intention of canvassing the leadership question.¹ After lengthy discussion, a compromise was accepted: such funds as were available for tenant relief would be sent to the Mansion House Committee as suggested by Cox — there being no doubt about the Committee being politically neutral — and a convention of Irish organisations would be called to discuss the attitude which Irish Australians in general should take towards Parnell and his supporters.

The Convention took place a few weeks later; representatives of the League, the Hibernian Society and

¹. Freeman's Journal, 2 May 1892.
the Shamrock Club attended; Cox again spoke to the gathering, and emphasised the urgency of the situation in Ireland, especially for the evicted tenants; but the meeting refused to back him, preferring to accept the suggestion put forward by J. Toohey that the Sydney Irish suspend judgement on the whole Parnell question until Dillon and O'Brien were released in a month's time.¹

Apparently Cox refused to let the matter rest, and went ahead with arrangements to hold his own meetings without League sponsorship. Despite reports that both Cardinal Moran and Archbishop Carr were opposed to any meetings being held while the split in Ireland remained unhealed, Cox gained some influential supporters; his organising committee included J.G. O'Connor, formerly prominent in the National League and now a member of the Parnell Leadership Committee; the veteran Land Leaguer J.W. Walshe; and senior officials of both the National League and the Shamrock Club.² His initial plan seems to have been to hold meetings in Sydney and Newcastle, but the timing of the General Election in New South Wales

1. Age, 27 May 1891.
2. Freeman's Journal, 6 June 1891, 13 June 1891.
forced a postponement till the end of June. Further delays were explained as due to a desire to meet the wishes of many prominent friends of the Irish cause who were anxious to await the release of Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien. Eventually, the main meeting took place in Sydney on 22nd August, but although Cox was able to arrange for a number of well-known personalities to join him on the platform, the attendance was disappointing: only £115 was collected, and the bulk of that sum came from a few large contributions. A month later he was canvassing in New Zealand, where he received a more encouraging reception; any further movements were then cut short by the news of Parnell's death, and by early December he was in Adelaide on his way home to Ireland. His tour had yielded about £3,000, with South Australia and New Zealand being the major contributors; New South Wales had clearly been a major disappointment.

1. Freeman's Journal, 13 June 1891.
and he regarded the Nationalists there as quite divided.\(^1\) Clearly, Parnell still held some support in Sydney.

However, the news of Parnell's death in October provided a release for those who disapproved of his conduct but felt that some loyalty was due to the man who had done so much for the cause. The Victorian Central Committee of the Irish National League - which had not met for some months - held a special meeting to consider this unexpected development. The result was a swing to the pro-McCarthy position.\(^2\) For the Advocate, the swing was less difficult: editorial opinion had been hardening against Parnell for some months, and it had given only nominal adherence to the doctrine of neutrality. By the end of the year McCarthyism had become the new orthodoxy in Victoria.

To the colonial Irish, it seemed obvious that Parnell's death removed the last barrier to reunification of the factions; if the leaders did not realize this, then

---

1. Advocate, 5 Dec 1891. The South Australian branches of the I.N.L. under the presidency of P. McM. Glynn, had already declared their support for the McCarthyites, and had renamed themselves as branches of the Irish National Federation. Advocate, 3 Oct 1891.

2. Advocate, 24 Oct 1891. The situation in New South Wales was more difficult, due to the more pronounced split. The Parnell faction had the support of some prominent men, including John Meagher of Bathurst, and the Parnellite view could not be lightly ignored. Freeman's Journal, 17 Oct 1891.
public opinion in Ireland could be relied on to make the point clear. But this view grossly oversimplified the situation in Ireland, as the defeat of Michael Davitt by John Redmond at Waterford very quickly showed. Some colonial observers reacted vigorously to this strange behaviour on the part of an Irish electorate

...Waterford's stupid signature will stand severely and shamefully alone on the nation's register.....if it does not stand alone Irish-Australians, at all events, ought to insist on knowing the reason why. We have done much for the Irish people...but we never suspected that our aid was to be perverted and employed to propagate idiotic political exhibitions...1

But there was to be little relief from this situation over the next few years. The Irish electors refused to wipe out the small detachment of Parnellites centred around John Redmond, and the split became if anything accentuated. Although the colonial Irish were in the main committed to supporting the majority of the Parliamentary Party under McCarthy, they did so with very little gusto. As economic depression bit deeper into the lives of colonists of every

1. Advocate, 16 Jan 1892. The Freeman's Journal had earlier expressed the hope that Redmond be crushed by the elections in Ireland. Freeman's Journal, 14 Nov 1891.
persuasion, the Irish and Irish-Australians found it harder to give financial support to the faction-ridden movement in the homeland.

From this point on, the colonial Irish became progressively more disillusioned with the Nationalist movement in the homeland. Opinion hardened against the two Redmonds, who less than ten years before had taken Irish-Australia by storm, and their refusal to accept the leadership of Justin McCarthy was roundly deplored. Yet there does not seem to have been much real enthusiasm for McCarthy, a relatively unknown figure in the colonies. To a large extent, colonial Home-Rulers came to regard Michael Davitt as the only Nationalist worthy of real respect. His record of personal suffering for the cause, his detachment from the parliamentary organisation, and his constant zeal for the national rather than party interest won him the affection of the colonial Irish, and his regular newsletters in the Advocate became the major source of comment on the political condition of Ireland and on the fate of the evicted tenants. ¹

¹. Davitt contributed regularly to the Irish-Australian press over many years; John Redmond did likewise except during the troubled nineties, and later the Irish-Australian journalist and M.P., J.F. Hogan, became the main interpreter of the Irish scene.
But as time went on without any sign of reconciliation and as political debate in Ireland degenerated into abuse and character assassination, the Irish abroad turned away in disgust. The activities of the murderer Deeming, or the great contest between national tug-of-war teams in early 1892 attracted more interest locally. Then, mid-way through 1892, the atmosphere suddenly changed; the General Election in the United Kingdom, though it caught the Irish party weak and exposed, brought a liberal victory and the return of Gladstone.

For a few months it seemed that the impasse had been broken, and that the return of Gladstone to office would produce a Home Rule measure in spite of the split within the Irish Party. In June and July locally organised meetings began to collect for the election expenses of the McCarthyste majority, and when it was known that Gladstone would in fact take office, excitement ran high. Sir Bryan O'Loghlen foreshadowed a motion in the Victorian Legislative Assembly endorsing the decision of the English and Irish electorate in returning a Home Rule ministry, and predictably the Age took umbrage at the move. The eventual introduction

1. Advocate, 23 July 1892. Sir Bryan O'Loghlen had been so jubilant at the election news that he called to see Winter at the Advocate office and congratulated his fellow countrymen throughout the colonies on the great change in Ireland's political fortunes. Advocate, 16 July 1892.
of Gladstone's final Home Rule Bill convinced some of the more fervent Nationalists that the end was at last in sight. The drafting of the Bill had taken some considerable time, and it was not until well into 1893 that the colonial Irish were able to study the details of Gladstone's New Order. The remnant of the old Home Rule organisation was too weak to do anything more than conduct an ineffective campaign for funds. In Victoria, the Rev. W. Currie, a Congregational minister with an almost fanatical interest in Home Rule, began a one-man campaign to awaken interest in Gladstone's measure. During 1893 he held meetings - apparently on his own initiative - all over the colony, and took care to explain the details of the Bill to the local sympathisers. The response varied; in some cases, larger public meetings were held later to demonstrate solidarity with the Gladstonian Liberals; in others, the locals preferred to wait on the outcome of the debate in the House of Commons and to defer any action till then. Currie did have some success in convincing the country Irish that the Melbourne Home Rulers were being dilatory in their handling of a projected mass meeting in the city, and his reports back to the Advocate stressed the foolishness of waiting until the Bill reached its second reading.¹ By contrast, the

¹ Advocate, 18 Mar 1893.
New South Wales Irish had gone ahead and made the Home Rule viewpoint known at the St. Patrick's Day demonstration at Botany. In due course Melbourne had its meeting, and the customary telegram of encouragement was sent to Gladstone, but beyond that little could be done. Country correspondents continued to belabour the Melbourne leadership for failing to organise a full-scale appeal, but even the return of the two veteran organisers Joseph Winter and Michael McDonald to the Central Committee of the Irish National League brought no change of policy. The reason for this general inactivity was not difficult to discern: Victoria had now moved into the great depression which destroyed so many of the great hopes and dreams of the previous decade. In May the financial situation of the colony had become so desperate that the Government declared a five-day bank holiday, and there were few who were not in some way affected by the gloomy events of those weeks. Under the circumstances the League leadership could hardly be blamed for avoiding a fund-raising campaign of the traditional type.

And yet Irish-Australians were not without some direct contact with the Irish political scene; three of their number now held seats in the House of Commons, and there was occasional talk of an "Australian Party" within
the Irish Parliamentary Party. The presence at Westminster of the Irish-Australian journalist J.F. Hogan, formerly of Geelong and Melbourne, and the two Currans from Sydney gave their compatriots in the colonies the impression, at least, that they were still involved in the great events being transacted at the very heart of the Empire. But overconfidence about the prospects of Home Rule were general, despite these on-the-spot contacts, and few Irish-Australians had any real comprehension of the forces building up against Gladstone's measure, both in Ulster and in the House of Lords. The enthusiast who declared at a meeting at Rochester in Victoria that

"...all angry discussions between political opponents in Ireland will cease, and everywhere throughout the world the English, Scotch and Irish, proud of their citizenship in a common Empire, will unite in one grand British corroberee to celebrate a real and lasting union."2

1. Thomas Curran, M.P. for South Sligo, had come to the colonies as a boy and had made his fortune in Sydney. According to F.S.L. Lyons, his election in 1892 — and that of his son T.B. Curran — was the result of his gift of £10,000 to the funds of the McCarthyites. F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish Parliamentary Party, 1890-1910 (London, 1957) p. 146. Curran senior established something of a record in the House by making his maiden speech immediately after he had been sworn in; he had been laughed at for a supposed ignorance of parliamentary procedure, and took the opportunity to correct the House on the matter. In later years he aroused the ire of some of his electorate by supporting the dissident Tim Healy.

2. Advocate, 3 June 1893.
caught the most of his audience and typified the naive confidence of the period, but he obviously had little idea of the obstacles which still had to be overcome. The eventual failure of Gladstone's Bill and the retirement of the great man himself meant the collapse of these high hopes and a return to the black mood which had followed the fall of Parnell, and in the months which followed, the colonial Irish lapsed into a state of almost complete apathy. Some took refuge in the bitter pleasures of factional dispute; Sydney became the scene of a revival of the barren debate over the rights and wrongs of the Parnell affair which had been choked off with so much difficulty three years before. In October 1894, a group of Parnellites launched a new weekly, the Irish Australian, which was to survive precariously for just on twelve months. During that period it changed hands several times, and eventually its assets were taken by a syndicate which

1. Gladstone's standing with the colonial Irish had never been higher. When his retirement was confirmed, Archbishop Carr of Melbourne eulogised the veteran statesman in biblical terms. "...he has come now, like the leader of the Israelites of old, to the mountain which overlooks the Promised Land of Home Rule for Ireland... we hope that it will be given to him to enter the land which will afford to the people of Ireland rest and contentment after a wearying journey for 700 years in the Wilderness (Cheers) Meanwhile he has transferred to another Josue the place which he has so nobly filled..." Advocate, 24 Mar 1894.
founded the Catholic Press as a rival to the veteran Freeman's Journal. The influence of the Irish Australian is difficult to measure; at one stage it claimed to have 3000 subscribers, but it never became a commercial proposition. A number of clergymen appear to have been associated with it, while its main supporters had been prominent in the earlier Parnell Leadership Committee.

1. The Irish Australian, published weekly in Sydney from 6 October 1894 to 21 September 1895. Originally owned by F.L. Shawelhood, its assets were transferred to the Irish Australian Newspaper Coy. on 6 December 1894; the company was reorganised on a limited liability basis in March 1895, and 2000 shares were offered at 10/- each. This reorganisation failed to produce results, and a meeting of clergy in 1895 decided to form a new company which would replace the paper with a new weekly, the Catholic Press. In its brief career, the Irish Australian never reached any real standard as a journal; letters and news items were often repeated in consecutive issues, and the general coverage deteriorated. Though it posed as a rival to more expensive Freeman's Journal, it never provided a serious challenge.

2. Of these, the most prominent was Michael E. Reidy. He was still secretary of the Parnell Club, and a keen student of contemporary Irish politics. He was also prominent in the movement to erect a monument to John McGuinness, who had led the campaign in favour of Parnell in the early nineties. McGuinness, (who had become a Catholic just prior to his death) and Reidy were close friends of Fr. Le Rennetel, the French parish priest of St. Patrick's, Church-Hill, who had for many years been a prominent supporter of the Home Rule movement and was warmly admired by his Irish flock. Irish Australian, 22 Jan 1894.
Its rather ragged columns did reveal the extent of the rift which still existed among the Sydney Irish, and highlighted the prevailing concern for the future of Irish sentiment amongst the growing numbers of Australian born colonists. The need to provide facilities for formal instruction in Irish language and history was frequently canvassed, but very little action resulted; finally the paper collapsed and made way for the much better organised and much more formidable Catholic Press; and it is typical of the period that the newcomer was the brainchild of a group of clergy who believed that the Sydney diocese needed a more reliable organ than the Freeman's Journal. Lay initiative was no longer equal to the task.

By mid-1895, there were signs that the sense of frustration and helplessness engendered by events in Ireland would work itself out in increasingly bitter argument amongst the more enthusiastic nationalists in Sydney and Melbourne. But the danger was averted by the arrival in the colonies of Michael Davitt, probably the only Irish leader who could

---

1. Even the long established Freeman's Journal was finding it difficult to keep afloat, given the difficult economic situation in the mid-nineties. Some sections of the paper had to be discontinued to relieve financial strain. Minute book of the Freeman's Journal Publishing Company, St Mary's Cathedral Archives, Sydney, p.55.
attract the respect and loyalty of both factions; Davitt's reputation amongst the colonial Irish had not been damaged by the bitter quarrels which had followed Parnell's death, and his constant identification with the distress of the peasantry had won him general praise. Though he came to the colonies to carry out a private lecture tour, his presence was bound to have some effect on the local scene; the Home Rule movement in the colonies was so badly in need of stimulus that the opportunity which now presented itself was quickly grasped. F.B. Freehill led the united Irish societies in Sydney in organising a mass welcome on the lines of the memorable Dillon affair six years earlier, and on this occasion some trade unionists took part in the procession in recognition of Davitt's long standing involvement in the labour movement.¹

¹. Freeman's Journal, 13 July 1895. Moran did not share in the general enthusiasm - initially at least. In a letter to Carr, written when the Davitt tour was first mooted, he had commented unfavourably on the scheme. "...as regards Michael Davitt, I don't know whether he proposes to visit Australia. So long as disunion prevails at home we cannot be expected to hold collections for them. I am told that the proposed tour of Davitt is intended to aid him personally. I told our leading nationalists here that if Davitt came to Sydney I will have nothing whatever to say to him, and he replied that he considered me to be quite right in marking out such a course.

There is an advantage on the part of Sydney that it is further removed from the home countries than is Melbourne. Hence you are the first to be visited by these distinguished strangers. They probably will have learned wisdom ere they arrive in Sydney." Moran to Carr, uncatalogued letter in Archives of the Archdiocese of Melb.
Although Davitt had intended originally to give a series of special lectures to help recoup his personal fortunes, his role very quickly became that of a party fund-raiser. The calling of an unexpected General Election had placed a heavy drain on the finances of the McCarthyite group, and McCarthy had once again resorted to the traditional appeal for aid from the overseas Irish. Despite the poor financial condition of both colonies, Davitt was able to obtain the support of both Freehill and O'Donnell for a drive for donations; Freehill and the Sydney brewer John T. Toohey gave their personal guarantee for a total of £1000, which Davitt forwarded to McCarthy before the collection began. On the other hand, the Irish National Federation in South Australia forwarded money for the assistance of evicted tenants only, and made it clear that political activity would not be subsidised until factionalism ceased at home.

By August, some country centres were contributing to the appeal, but the effectiveness of the campaign seems to have been limited by the extent to which Davitt could

1. *Advocate*, 20 July 1895.
2. *Advocate*, 2 Apr 1895.
make personal appearances. In the absence of any worthwhile organisational links with the country centres, heavy reliance had to be placed on the visitor's own lectures, and some of the takings still had to be devoted to his personal income. Moreover Davitt's health, and possibly personal worries, made it unlikely that he would undertake as exhausting a tour as Dillon or the Redmonds had done in earlier years.¹ So his impact was necessarily rather confined to Sydney and Melbourne and here he was able to do something to kindle the old nationalist sentiment, and in particular, to damp down the factionalism which had crept into the Home Rule movement in Sydney. At the farewell picnic arranged for him in Sydney, presentations were made on behalf of both the McCarthyite and Parnellite groups, and Davitt took the opportunity to stress the virtues of a united front.² In Melbourne, where the Parnellites appear to have been much less of a problem, the same theme was taken up again, but this time with reference to the dissensions within the Irish group in the House of Commons; Davitt was left in no doubt as to the embarrassment felt

¹ Davitt's young daughter had died in Ireland while he was en route to Australia.
² Freeman's Journal, 21 Sept 1895.
by the colonial Irish at the continued squabbling amongst
the politicians in the homeland.¹

Once Davitt had departed, the last vestiges of a
formally organised Home Rule movement virtually disappeared
in both Sydney and Melbourne. When F.B. Freehill was
appointed Consul for Spain in 1896, the usual complimentary
dinner did not materialise: the Irish National League, which
he had led for so many years, and which would in normal
circumstances have arranged such a function, had gone out
of existence.² The Melbourne organisation was in little
better condition; Joseph Winter and N.M. O'Donnell were able
to work up some enthusiasm amongst the Irish in Victoria
during the visit of the former member of the Irish party,
Edward Blake, in the early months of 1896. But as events
were to prove later, the Victorian group was able to make
one last convulsive effort in support of the Pan-Irish
convention in Dublin. A hurriedly called meeting of
nearly 200 delegates in July 1896 authorised the sending of
a delegate to the Dublin gathering, which it was hoped

¹ Advocate, 23 Nov 1895.
² Freeman's Journal, 15 Aug 1896. Freehill, a Sydney
solicitor, was later to be given the rank of colonel
in the local Irish volunteer regiment, made a Papal
Chamberlain and a Knight of St. Gregory. He died in
Sydney, 12 Mar 1908.
would hammer out a basis for reunion of warring factions. 1

The veteran Kilmore politician Thomas Hunt was appointed
delegate for Victoria with instructions to support the
principle that the views of the majority of the elected
representatives of the Irish people should provide the
basis of any settlement; but the discussion over these
instructions revealed that several newly arrived priests
were rather more in sympathy with the most dissident of
all the Irish politicians, Tim Healy, and were prepared
to question whether the majority view in the Parliamentary
Party really represented the feelings of the Irish
electorate. 2 Hunt made a dash to join the Convention
in September, and was back in Melbourne to make his report
by November. 3 But the Sydney Irish were unable to
convene until there was insufficient time left to send
a delegate, and only the usual cable messages were sent.

Clearly, the orthodox Home Rule organisation had withered,

1. Advocate, 18 July 1896.

2. Ibid.

3. Hunt had also been accredited by the South Australian
Home Rulers as then delegate to the Convention. Hunt
made little impact on the Convention, but the journey
itself had some effect on his own political attitudes.
When he left Australia, he regarded himself as a Liberal
but with a preference for Free Trade; but his observa-
tions on the effect of competition from the Continent
on Irish agriculture had converted him to support of
moderate protection. Advocate, 14 Nov 1896.
and even the Parnellite group seems to have lost its drive; the departure of Michael Reidy for the West Australian gold fields probably deprived it of its most active spokesman.

Nothing testifies more clearly to the decay of the old nationalist organisation in Sydney than the activities of Cardinal Moran from 1895 onwards. Although he was an advocate of Home Rule as the answer to Ireland's comprehensive range of problems, he was less than enthusiastic in his attitude to some of the personalities involved; he had disapproved of Davitt's visit, arguing that dissension at home should cease before any further appeal was made to the colonies, and that in any case local economic conditions made such an appeal unrealistic. But he also appears to have had some reservations about the form and character of Irish nationalist activity in the colonies, and now took steps to bring local practice more into line with his own ideas. The major target was the annual observance of St. Patrick's Day, the highlight of the Irish and Irish-Australian calendar. Previously the form of the celebration had been determined by a meeting of representatives of the various Irish societies, usually under the chairmanship of Freehill; the tone of the speeches had usually been strongly pro-Home Rule, and any proceeds were used in the maintenance of evicted tenants in Ireland. But in 1895 the festivities commenced - at Moran's
request – with members of the societies attending Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral, and for the first time since his arrival in 1884, the Cardinal attended the St. Patrick's night concert.¹ This proved to be the forerunner of a quite forceful intervention early in the following year, when Moran took over the conduct of the entire festivities. The planning meeting was called on his initiative, and under his chairmanship a new set of arrangements were pushed through: the religious character of the day would be emphasised by the Mass at the Cathedral; all proceeds would be divided among the local Catholic Benefit societies and the character of the banquet would be altered. Instead of being a gathering of devotees of the Home Rule cause, it would revert to its earlier role as a forum for the great of the land, whatever their religious or national affiliation. The Cardinal would preside, and invitations would be sent to the Governor, the Premier, and to members of the Ministry; and 1896 would see the first trial of the new style of observance.

The whole idea met with the approval of the Catholic journals. The Catholic Press, which had begun operating in November 1895, felt that the Cardinal had rescued the commemoration from collapse, while the Freeman's Journal welcomed the return "to the best traditions of the past",

¹. Freeman's Journal, 16 Mar 1895.
when the celebrations had been so arranged that

"...the best men in the country found it not impossible to meet in friendly celebration of a day that can never cease to be regarded as a National festival..."1.

Certainly the "best men" of the colony did grace the Cardinal's table in the last years of the century, and there was less evidence of that

"...semi-political sentiment which, however worthy of the occasion and of those who co-operated, narrowed to some extent the character of what should be broad enough to enfold patriotic Irishmen of every shade of thought."2

But the emphasis had clearly shifted, and now conformed more to Moran's own view of the place of Irish Catholics in colonial society. In future, the Irish would stress their loyalty and good citizenship; they would maintain their interest in home affairs, but they would be careful to avoid "...anything which could give offence even to the humblest of our fellow citizens."3 The aim would be to prove "that they who love Ireland most are at the same time the best citizens of Australia."4

4. Ibid.
Moran's determination to place his own personal stamp on the St. Patrick's Day observance needs to be seen against the background of his views concerning the best ways of achieving acceptance for Catholics within the community in general. But these views in turn reflected a rising tide of confidence amongst some sections of the laity as well, confidence based on the enormous physical growth of the Church within one generation. An editorial in the Freeman's Journal in mid 1896 caught this mood very neatly; in discussing what it regarded as the declining power of the Orange lodges, the writer argued that Orangeism was a problem only when Catholics were poor, uninfluential and numerically weak.

"The time was when the Catholics formed a comparatively obscure and, by the nature of the case, somewhat militant faction. That time has gone by today, every fourth person... is of the Catholic faith, our churches and schools dot the face of the landscape, our colleges are in the van of educational progress, our citizens are among the most responsible and solid of the community. A glance back shows us the immense strides in this onward way that Catholic interests have made since Cardinal Moran first came to Sydney. In numbers, in efficiency of organisation, in efficacy of charitable enterprises, in the advancement of our own independent system of education, and in

1. This aspect is discussed in P.J. O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, (Melbourne, 1968), Ch. IV.
the local standing and influence of Catholics as individuals and as a body, the progress has been most marked. That question of precedence which has been settled at Government House in favour of the Cardinal...is itself become an evidence of the progress of the Church..."1

To a large extent, this assessment of the Church's physical strength was a valid one, but it was unwise to assume that the parading of such strength would persuade the rest of the community that Catholics were entitled to acceptance and integration. The editorial writer naturally stressed the benefits which had already become evident

"...with advancing development has come an increased sense of responsibility, a more pronounced feeling of individual and corporate dignity, and a steadier weight in the discussion of the best interests of the country..."2

But others in the community, far from welcoming these confident assertions, concentrated their attention on the hard facts as both they and the Freeman's Journal saw them

"In New South Wales, (the Cardinal)...stands at the head of a Catholic organisation numbering 300,000 taxpaying, voting, and property-holding or produce-consuming persons..."3

To some, this mean that Romanism was no longer simply an insidious fifth column threatening the foundations of the Protestant status quo, but an army in being, marshalled and

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
led by an ambitious and assertive Prince of the Church. It is not surprising that Moran's attempts to assert the strength of the Catholic position produced in time a vigorous reaction in the form of organised anti-Catholicism, and that his dream of widespread acceptance of the Catholic element in the colonial society was to be rudely shaken.

And yet, though his main assessment was basically unsound, Moran had at least recognised that under existing conditions, the colonial Irish would be better occupied in working out their relationship as a group with their host society than in becoming involved in the pointless manoeuvrings of the politicians at home in Ireland. The decay of the older Home Rule organisations, the dearth of new and talented men to provide leadership and the emergence of factions among the Sydney Irish since the Parnell affair - all combined to give Moran the opportunity he needed. From that point until his death in 1911, the Cardinal was able to control the political aspects of any Nationalist activity, and to generate interest in the Irish Parliamentary party as he saw fit. As long as Irish politicians refused to mend their quarrels, Moran saw no reason for the colonial Irish to become involved. In Melbourne much the same situation obtained, though Archbishop Carr's involvement was nowhere near as forceful as that of Cardinal Moran. In both colonies, the few
remaining enthusiasts had to content themselves with attempts to explore some of the ramifications of the Gaelic revival; language study and probings into the more remote reaches of Irish history became substitutes for a political interest that had now turned sour for men who had tasted the exhilaration of the Parnellite era. There were occasional brief periods of activity, but these usually centred around clashes with the anti-Catholic movements in which the new militancy of both sides produced a violent and dangerous atmosphere. The situation became more difficult as relations between the British Government and the Boers became a public issue, one which produced divisions within the Catholic community and provided a ready-made touchstone for those who questioned the loyalty of settlers of Irish descent. As the century drew to a close, the energies which ten years earlier had been channelled towards Ireland were now being husbanded for conflicts much nearer to home. The sectarian issue had moved into a new and bitter phase.

There was, however, one more gesture to be made before the century faded out, a gesture which in some ways typifies the mixture – and perhaps confusion – of national sentiment in the minds of the colonial Irish. In 1897, a few enthusiasts launched a drive for funds to erect a substantial memorial in Waverley cemetery, Sydney, to the
Wicklow chief, Michael Dwyer, whose remains rested with those of his wife in the old Devonshire St. Cemetery. The transfer of the grave to Waverley and the erection of a monument was seen as a fitting commemoration of the rising of 1798, in which he had been involved, and for several years committees led by Dr. Charles MacCarthy in Sydney and N.M. O'Donnell in Melbourne worked with considerable energy to raise the necessary funds. Eventually the monument was completed in 1900, and its unveiling was the occasion for a large scale demonstration of Irish sentiment. It still stands in Waverley cemetery as the most remarkable relic of the Home Rule era; its design blends so many of the elements which to the colonial Irish seemed to represent the lonely splendour of the Celtic tradition - the superb tracery of the Celtic cross, the distinctive script, and above all, the long list of the names of those who had won renown and death in the rising of 1798. The very size and complexity of the monument testifies to the vigour of the community which erected it - and yet this remarkable tribute to the heroes of another century is significant at another level. The decision to honour Michael Dwyer and his fellow patriots owed little or nothing to inspiration from the homeland or to any stirring event on the contemporary political scene. Cut off, as it were, from the mainstream
of Irish politics by the continuing rift within the Irish party, the colonial Irish turned back to the golden era of modern Ireland, the brief period of Grattan's Parliament, and to the one man who provided a physical link between that era and the newly-founded Australian colonies. The memorial they erected symbolised the belief that Irish traditions, Irish values and Irish culture were worthy in themselves, and deserved the affection and respect of those whose forebears had been of Irish stock; and yet it can also be seen as something of a finale, a closing tribute to a generation of Irish men and women that was now rapidly passing from the colonial scene.
CHAPTER V

THE AFTERMATH : 1900-1916

The years between 1900 and 1916 mark the long twilight of the Home Rule movement in both Victoria and New South Wales; except for one or two flashes, there was little to compare with the excitement and promise of the 1880's until the Liberals returned to power in the House of Commons in 1906. Even then, it was the leadership rather than the rank and file of the movement which drew most encouragement from the turn of events.

The humiliating squabbles amongst the nationalist leaders had had a devastating effect on the overseas branches of the movement, and not even the re-unification of the factions under the leadership of John Redmond could repair the damage. The hard-core colonial Home Rulers brought what was left of the old organisations into line, and formed branches of the United Irish League; in Melbourne, N.M. O'Donnell, Morgan Jageurs and the ageing Michael McDonald still remained the most prominent leaders, with Joseph Winter at the Advocate providing the main channel of communication with their supporters. In Sydney M.C. O'Halloran and W.J. Ryan provided the early leadership, with assistance from the Gaelic scholar Eugene Ryan and J. Blakely of the Catholic Press staff.1 But the new League was not

---

simply a counterpart of the old Irish National League, for its activities were much more limited and its interests were concentrated much more on the preservation of the Irish cultural heritage than on fund raising and political agitation. O'Donnell certainly kept both objectives in mind, and though operating under great difficulties, managed to raise some money through an annual "Trip on the Briny", which gave hundreds of well-wishers the chance to enjoy a day's outing on the Bay and a picnic on one of the Peninsular beaches – with some speechmaking thrown in for good measure. But O'Donnell had become a devotee of the study of Gaelic, and it is not surprising that his interests tended to become those of the League. Cultural activity, even on a very limited front, was in any case far less productive of worry and disappointment than political agitation. In Sydney, the division of interests was much more marked; O'Halloran and his colleagues interested themselves in providing language courses and in arranging prizes to encourage the study of Irish history in schools.¹ But their activities received little attention from the more socially prominent personalities who regarded themselves as the natural

¹ Free tuition in Gaelic was available at Eugene Ryan's University College in the early 1900's – though the response does not seem to have been heavy.
leaders of Home Rule sentiment and preferred to participate only at the political level. Moran's attitude was probably decisive here; when R.E. O'Connor tried to act as an intermediary between the Sydney United Irish League and the Cardinal in 1902, he received a firm rebuff; the League had asked that the church authorities make the study of Irish history a regular part of the curriculum in Catholic schools, and Moran commented in reply

"I don't know the President of the United Irish League. Some of the members of the League are not very presentable, and hitherto I have kept entirely aloof from them. I dare say it is much better they would have nothing to say to our schools. Some of them are mere home government spies..."¹

On the other hand, Moran had carefully kept control of the more traditional fund raising activities within the Irish community. When the Catholic Press, with the support of the Freeman's Journal, began to agitate for a revival of Home Rule activity in Sydney in 1902—when it seemed fairly certain that the patched up unity of the Irish Parliamentary Party would survive—a public meeting was arranged at the Town Hall to establish a

new fund-raising body. M.C. O'Halloran attended the meeting in July 1902 and, while extending the good will of the United Irish League, indicated that for the present it would not become directly involved in new activity. The end result was the formation of a new Home Rule Committee with instructions to organise groups in country centres and if possible import another high-level delegation from Ireland; very little, however, eventuated from this initial flurry of activity, for the onset of drought made it impossible to even attempt to raise funds, so great was the local distress within the colony, and even by the middle of 1905 less than £1000 had been forwarded to Ireland. The fact that the Cardinal was also seeking donations for the completion of St. Mary's Cathedral further inhibited the raising of funds for Ireland, and by 1905 the Executive Committee felt that there was little point in its existence.

2. Catholic Press 21 July 1902. At the time of this meeting, Moran was absent in Europe.
4. Ibid.
But if this type of activity proved impracticable, there were other approaches which could be used. The fact that a Commonwealth Parliament now existed as the focal point of national political activity meant that those Home Rulers who placed heavy store on formal legislative pronouncements had a new and tempting arena in which to operate. The presence of William Redmond provided the initial incentive, and mid-way through 1905 the campaign got under way. The object of the exercise was a quite limited one:— the passage of a motion through both Federal houses to the effect that the Commonwealth Parliament agreed with the proposition that Ireland be given a measure of Home Rule, and that its views be placed before the British authorities. By the end of the year the desired result had been achieved by a comfortable margin in both houses; but the debate which accompanied the motions was a singularly uninteresting one, enlivened only by a well argued contribution by Deakin¹ and by occasional personal touches. Senator Frazer, for example, who spoke

---

¹ Deakin was regarded by the Home Rulers as sympathetic to their position. In the following year, Bishop O'Higgins of Ballarat wrote that if Deakin suffered a reverse in the forthcoming elections, this would be attributable to his support for Home Rule; accordingly O'Higgins had consulted with his Vicar-General as to what measures could be taken to rally electoral support for Deakin without stirring up even more dangerous sectarian feeling. Bishop O'Higgins to Henry Bournes Higgins, 12 Oct 1906, Higgins Papers, National Library of Australia, 1057/105.
against the motion in the Senate, had as a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1882 seconded James Patterson's motion censuring those members who had signed the Grattan Address; while Senator Walker of New South Wales backed his criticisms of the state of affairs in Ireland by recounting the difficulties he had experienced in obtaining rents on behalf of an estate which he had been called upon to administer as an executor. But the rest of the discussion involved an arid rehearsal of old arguments, which were themselves coming to assume an historical existence in their own right. The more interesting aspect of the whole affair is the way in which the campaign itself was mounted: Hugh Mahon took considerable pride in the way he had manoeuvred the motion into the order of business, and in time the network of organisers included Higgins, Kingston and Ronald, plus two Queensland Senators, Givens and Dawson. It is difficult to see what positive gain could come from the whole complex operation, at least as far as Ireland was concerned; undoubtedly, those who voted for the motion gained something in terms of their standing with the Irish-Australian community, and some of the less convinced may have reasoned that any backlash would be ineffective
at the Federal level. But not even those most closely involved give the impression that they believed the vote would have any real bearing on British policy, and one is left with the possibility that it was the exercise itself rather than the long term results which excited and sustained the major participants. In some ways the incident is reminiscent of the trend often noted in the case of the American Irish, for whom political activity had become a way of life with its own internal satisfactions rather than a social instrument designed to resolve larger problems.

By the end of 1905, the focus of attention had left the Federal Parliament and had transferred back to Westminster. The collapse of the Unionist ministry late in the year brought the Liberals back to power after more than a decade in opposition. The Liberal Party still retained a modified commitment to some form of settlement of the Irish Question, and the revived strength of the Irish Party meant that pressure for a settlement would be maintained. With the prospects for success now much brighter than they had been for many years, Moran entered quite vigorously into the sponsorship of Home Rule activity.

---

1. Higgins, whose connection with the Home Rule movement went back as far as the Redmond visit, received a number of letters – including one from John Gavan Duffy – congratulating him for his part in getting the motion through Parliament. *Higgins Papers*, Items 1057/114, 1057/116.
Moran had never lost interest in the cause, but he preferred to work for it in his own way; his methods were those befitting a Prince of the Church with some familiarity with the higher flights of ecclesiastical diplomacy, and hinged on winning the approval and support of those in high public office. During his visit abroad in 1902, for instance, he had - through his secretary Dr. O'Haran - engaged in quite intricate negotiations aimed at inducing Prime Minister Edmund Barton to give public support to the Home Rule concept.¹ He had also taken the opportunity at the Australasian Catholic Congress of 1904 to suggest the convening in Australia of a meeting of representative Irishmen from all the colonies within

¹ John Redmond had written to Dr. O'Haran in July 1902 inviting the Cardinal to attend a dinner being given by the Irish Parliamentary Party in honour of the visiting State premiers and requested that either Moran or O'Haran should induce Barton to make a suitable statement in support of Home Rule. Subsequently O'Haran received a general assurance from Barton that such a statement would be made if a suitable opportunity presented itself, and O'Haran maintained the pressure by consulting with Barton's secretary (Flannery) and the Government Whip (Austin Chapman) in the hope that they would bring their influence to bear on the Prime Minister - ("...Mr. Barton has a great respect for Flannery and Chapman who are both excellent Catholics and of true Irish sentiment." Redmond to O'Haran, 22 July 1902, and O'Haran to Redmond, 29 July 1902, Redmond Papers, 15206, Microfilm in Library of the University of New South Wales.) Redmond had also invited the Premiers to meet Michael Davitt, though the latter felt that this might be unwise ("...they are likely to have enough to answer for to London society and to jingo statesmen for dining with yourself and your colleagues, but what would be said against the unfortunate men if they could be accused of dining in company with so hopelessly disloyal a person as myself?") Redmond Papers, 15179.
the Empire to demand Home Rule - a suggestion which itself was typical of Moran's preference for the grand gesture rather than slow, solid organisation. The presence of William Redmond in Australia on a health visit during the first half of 1905 gave the Cardinal another chance to enter forcefully into the higher realms of Irish politics; in March, he announced a plan by which Australia and New Zealand would undertake to raise a fixed annual sum of £2000 for the Irish Parliamentary Party, exclusive of any special campaigns or visits from Irish delegations. Each state would be allotted an annual target, and the funds obtained would enable the Party to plan its activities on the basis of a predictable income rather than living from one financial crisis to the next. The idea met with general approval, and an influential committee

1. John Redmond accepted the suggestion as an extremely useful one, and considered the possibility of a delegation being sent from Ireland to attend such a meeting. John Redmond to William Redmond, in catalogued letter in St. Mary's Archives, Sydney.

2. Moran's announcement was the major topic of interest at the 1905 St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Sydney, which William Redmond attended as the main guest speaker. Moran envisaged the Fund as being international in scope - Ireland was to raise £10,000, the USA £5000, Canada £3000, and Australia and New Zealand £2000. Advocate, 25 Mar 1905.
was established to govern the new scheme, which Moran hoped would be based on a parochial collection throughout the country in the coming August. The membership of the committee reflected Moran's preference for involving men of substance and public reputation in work of this type, but the bulk of such organising as did take place during the remainder of 1905 devolved upon Dr. O'Haran. It was O'Haran who made most of the arrangements for the holding of public meetings during what remained of William Redmond's stay in Australia, contacting provincial bishops to seek their attendance at the major gatherings and handling some of the financial problems. Redmond's meetings were reasonably successful, though they did not approach the scale of those of 1883 or 1889; but he had seen

1. The local membership included Sir William Manning, J. Meagher MLC, Col. J. Freehill, Dr. W.C. MacCarthy, and the Rev. Dr. D. O'Haran. There were also Federal politicians from other States, one of the most notable being Hugh Mahon. The tireless Dr. N.M. O'Donnell was to represent the Victorian Irish. Freehill and Michael Meagher were appointed joint secretaries, with Sir William Manning, Rev. Dr. O'Haran and James Dalton as joint treasurers.

2. Michael Meagher assured O'Haran that his father would make a £100 donation to the cause. "If you do not hear from him, and if you want another 1 or 2 to give £100, so as to be in the papers before the meeting, I think if you ring him tomorrow...he would wire up." Michael Meagher to O'Haran, undated letter in St. Mary's Archives, Sydney.
enough to convince him that the time was ripe—despite the uncertain economic situation in Australia—for the Irish party to send out a full-scale delegation for a proper fund raising effort. Accordingly Joseph Devlin and J.T. Donovan toured Australia with considerable success in the following year, 1906, and the results made it apparent that Australia was once again a useful quarry for the Parliamentary party to mine.

But despite this success—so reminiscent of the Redmond and Dillon tours during the 1880's—the character of nationalist sentiment in New South Wales and Victoria seems to have been changing, and the atmosphere of those earlier years could no longer be simply reproduced at will. In part, the change was due to the ageing of the leadership; death and infirmity had taken their toll of those laymen who had stood with John Redmond in 1883; the Daltons and the Tooheys were no longer a major force on the New South Wales scene, and death was to remove F.B. Freehill in 1908. In Melbourne, N.M. O'Donnell remained the dominant figure, with the unobtrusive veterans Michael McDonald and Joseph Winter in support; the only other key figure remaining from the earlier

years was Morgan Jageurs. The United Irish League struggled on in Melbourne, but seems to have been in difficulties in Sydney by 1909, while the Celtic Club in Melbourne had never really recovered its original strength since the financial crashes of the nineties. The Shamrock Club with its mainly working class membership, and the Irish Pipers Club, kept up interest in the cultural side of the national movement in the pre-War years. But all of these groups were suffering — among other things — from a dearth of good

1. The other great personality of the 1880s, John W. Walshe, had by now fallen on evil days. He returned to Ireland in early 1904, apparently a jobless drifter with an addiction to alcohol. Michael Davitt arranged with John Redmond that he be given a job as organiser for the United Irish League. ("...as he has been popular in Australia, it would not be displeasing to our friends out there to know that he has been assisted in this way.") Davitt to John Redmond, 29 Jan 1904, Redmond Papers, 15179. Walshe died in Dublin, probably in late 1914. Advocate 10/4/15.

2. Southern Cross, (Adelaide), 23 Apr 1909. O'Donnell, in an address to his admirers in Adelaide, spoke gratefully of the work of the League branch there, and noted that the Sydney branch had died out.

3. In 1915, O'Donnell recorded that the Club had 500 members in the days of the land boom, and now had only 250. Moreover, unlike the Irish Association in Queensland, it did not have members who were "leaders of thought and society", its members mostly belonged to the middle and poorer classes. Catholic Advocate, (Brisbane) 6 May 1915.

leaders and especially men of the articulate and knowledgeable variety who could help to give new drive and at the same time relieve men like O'Donnell in Melbourne and MacCarthy in Sydney of loads which they had already carried for far too long. The Irish community was simply not producing such men, and as a consequence those who had come to the fore in the 1880's grew old in office and were still there when the Easter Rebellion of 1916 brought the Home Rule movement down in ruins. At the official level, Irish nationalism had become ossified, with its leadership still caught in the mental attitudes appropriate to the Parnell era; yet this was not due to the tendency of a few men to cling tenaciously to the more prestigious positions - it was simply that no alternative leadership offered itself. The level of interest in Irish affairs was such that Irish sympathisers were satisfied as long as some reasonably competent spokesman was prepared to make the right gestures on the appropriate public occasions. As a result, the views of Moran and Carr carried considerable weight, and Moran in particular had been allowed to virtually take over the control of Home Rule activity without being challenged. But clerical leadership could not provide a long term

1. In some cases, elevation to judicial office had deprived the Home Rule cause of useful leaders, H.B. Higgins and R.E. O'Connor being two cases in point.
solution, for both men were in advanced years; Moran was to die in 1911, and Carr asked for and received a co-adjutor to ease the work load in his expanding archdiocese. The problem was in fact insoluble.

To make things more difficult for the locally-born on whom the burdens now fell, there were changes and shifts both at home and abroad which were bound to affect their view of the Irish situation. Probably the most basic of all these changes was the virtual disappearance of the land question as a factor in the Irish situation. After the turn of the century, the fruits of the reform programme initiated by Arthur Balfour in the late eighties and carried on by a succession of administrators were becoming apparent. A series of Land Acts in the nineties culminating in Wyndham's Act of 1902 - all of them sponsored by a Conservative administration - carried through an orderly dispossession of the Irish landlords, and Ireland became a land of peasant proprietors.¹ These Acts, and the massive administrative effort which went into their implementation, brought about a silent but highly significant change.

in Irish rural society. Landlordism, with all its emotional connotations, was now a thing of the past. Evictions dwindled away, and with their disappearance the nationalist movement lost one of its most effective sources of propaganda; and although the Home Rule press did not give much coverage to the more effective aspects of the Land Purchase programme, the Irish overseas gradually became aware of the results of the new trend. The Protestant controversialist and Home Rule sympathiser, Dr. Rentoul, commented in his address at the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Melbourne in 1905 that

"...those who went through Ireland found that the farmers were no longer like beasts of burden under a foreign taskmaster..."  

Eight years later, Fr. O'Gorman of Maitland reported after a trip home to Ireland that the changes were very evident

"The improvement all round is marvellous. The county councils have created a new Ireland. The people are no longer in fear of the landlord and his agent, who are now nearly as extinct as the wolf. The farmer is now not afraid to wear a decent coat lest his rent would be raised...Neat, slated cottages have replaced the mud hovels of landlord days."  

In a sense, Ireland had in fact become "a land of flowers and fragrance" to those who had last seen her in the toils of landlordism, and it was quite frequently argued that

2. Catholic Press, 3 April 1913.
all that was needed to cap this new-found prosperity was the benign supervision of an Irish parliament.¹

It was not only the transfer of ownership of the land to the peasants which led some observers to believe that a new era of prosperity had already commenced. The work of the Congested Districts Board of 1891 in consolidating small holdings in the western counties, the introduction of light railways in remote areas under the 1899 Act, the introduction of better farming techniques, the overhaul of local government machinery — all were intended to help remedy the grievances which fuelled nationalist agitation, and all combined to bring about significant changes in Ireland's social and economic structure. The net effect of these changes was to separate the Land question from that of Repeal, leaving the latter without its main driving force: James Finton Lalor's image of the Land question acting as the locomotive for the carriage of Repeal was in many ways an accurate one.

For the Irish abroad, and especially those in Australia, changes of this type were in themselves quite heartening. But they did mean that it would

¹. Ibid., 13 Mar 1913.
be difficult to base a nationalist campaign around the twin evils of famine and landlordism, as visiting Irish politicians had so often done in the past. The claim to Home Rule must now be centred either on the conventional arguments used to justify national self-determination, or on the general welfare of the imperial system of which Ireland was a discontented segment. The traditional grievances concerning landlord tyranny and general misgovernment no longer had quite the same force — except perhaps in the field of taxation — and the rising generation of Irish-Australians had to define their attitudes towards the Irish question in terms rather different from those of their fathers. Some of that generation were in fact beginning to question the relevance of some of the more traditional postures; as one of them argued,

"Were we in Ireland, we should oppose the Imperialistic spirit because it is the influence which has held Ireland down. But here, where we have every freedom and full self-government, the Imperial idea is not as repugnant to us as it would be in Ireland. It is necessary for us to help on the destiny of the British Empire. Why then, should we be asked to take an exotic view of affairs because the old home of our race is denied the justice which we trust will shortly be done to it?" 1

1. Freeman's Journal, 1 Apr 1895.
In the normal course of events it could be expected that this type of approach would appear amongst a new generation of the locally-born; Ireland's problems did not evoke humanitarian impulses of the type so common in the 1880's, and pragmatism replaced anger in the minds of young men who had never seen an eviction. But this drift away from the orthodox position had been accentuated by the impact of the Boer War on the Irish communities in the colonies; for the first time, something akin to a major internal debate - as distinct from a factional conflict - brought doubts and uncertainties to a group which traditionally had maintained a reasonably united front when threatened by external forces of any kind. For once, it had been impossible to have the orthodox position defined early in a crisis and held to for the duration; inevitably, the result was the emergence of a definite cleavage within the Irish component in both colonies.

The conflict in South Africa presented colonists of Irish descent with peculiar difficulties when it became necessary for them to take up some sort of public stance on the question. For one thing, a situation in which the massive power of the British Empire was being directed towards the coercing of a relatively small group of farmers seemed very similar
to the experience of Ireland herself over the past two centuries; and the surprising success of the Boers as fighters evoked the admiration of a group which had long experience of struggling against desperate odds. Yet the Boers were Protestants, and were thought to have been rather harsh in their treatment of Irish settlers in South Africa. Was their position a legitimate one, or were they in fact the culprits? Were they the victims of the arrogance and greed of Joseph Chamberlain and his clique, or were they an indirect threat to the liberties of free men everywhere?

None of these questions could be answered from the information which percolated down from London, and as very few colonists had any first-hand knowledge of the situation in Africa, there appeared to be no satisfactory basis on which a decision could be taken. And yet, the pressure to take up a stand were rapidly increasing; the steps taken to send contingents to South Africa meant that enlistment would provide a key to the attitude of the Irish sector of the population. Those critics who had argued that disloyalty to the Empire was inherent in the Irish race were quick to use South Africa as the touchstone by which Irish disclaimers could be tested, and the whole issue rapidly became entangled in the rising sectarian conflict. The result was a division of opinion amongst the Irish in Australia;
some followed the pro-Boer line expounded by Michael Davitt and sections of the Liberal movement in England, arguing that justice was on the side of the Boers, that England had incorrectly chosen to use her great power to crush a minority in the interests of a few unscrupulous intriguers, and that it was the duty of loyal citizens to point out the immorality of her action. The opposite view, which gave whole-hearted support to the British government, did not attract much open support among the Irish, but quite a number seem to have subscribed to a modified version based on the special position of the Irish in colonial society. According to this view, whatever the rights or wrongs of the basic issues of the war, Australians must determine where their own safety lay, and clearly they had nothing to gain from a defeat of their protector, Britain. Besides,

"The Boers are better able to take care of themselves than Ireland is. Why not let them fight their own battles?"¹

The same theme was frequently taken up: the Irish in Australia were too few and too weak to influence Imperial policy; both the Irish and their Church owed their security in Australia to British law and British

¹. Freeman's Journal, 3 Mar 1900.
protection: better that such protection come from Britain than any other power – and so on. As one letter-writer argued,

"Our lot is cast with the British Empire, and we had better recognize that fact..." ¹

There were others who laid stress on the likely impact of the War, both in Ireland and Australia, predicting that the vital role played by Irish regiments in South Africa would pave the way for recognition of the Irish claim to legislative independence. A great deal of significance was placed on Queen Victoria's gesture in allowing Irish regiments to display the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day 1900, – a concession which seemed to indicate that the official attitude towards Ireland had turned a complete circle since the days when men were hanged for "the wearin' of the green" ². Many of the Australian Irish placed great store on this incident, and attributed to it the unusual warmth and friendliness of their fellow citizens on St. Patrick's Day; there was some speculation as to whether the suspicions concerning the loyalty of those of Irish descent were now a thing of the past, and had now been replaced by a recognition that the Irish were "a heroic and necessary

¹. Freeman's Journal, 17 Mar 1900.
². "...those sweet words of Her Majesty in recognition of the bravery of Irish soldiers...would link together in union and harmony the sea-divided Gael in many lands." Moran, quoted in Freeman's Journal 24 Mar 1900.
part of the Empire".¹ For a time it seemed that the hatchet had been effectively buried - the government of New South Wales even went so far as to declare St. Patrick's Day a public holiday. But within two years the atmosphere had reverted to normal: The Conyngham divorce case brought sectarian feeling to a new pitch² and by 1903 even Moran, with all his anxiety to cultivate the support of the influential, was so angry with the State government's refusal to again recognise the 17th of March as a public holiday that he deleted the toast to the Administration from the banquet proceedings.³ But the degree of interest which had been exhibited between 1900 and 1903 in the possibility of broad community

---

¹. Freeman's Journal, 24 March 1900.
². Conyngham, a former test cricketer, began divorce proceedings against his wife in 1900 on the grounds of her alleged adultery with Moran's private secretary and closest associate, Dr. O'Haran. The fact that the offences were supposed to have occurred within the precincts of St. Mary's Cathedral added flavour to what rapidly became a bitter sectarian squabble; the fight was carried on by both sides in unsavoury fashion, and the eventual verdict in favour of O'Haran came too late to prevent the controversy reaching a poisonous level. For a detailed account of the ramifications of the case, see Cyril Pearl's Wild Men of Sydney, (London, 1958). A more recent comment is P.J. O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, (Melbourne, 1968), p. 181-182. An account of the part played by the Rev. Dill Macky can be found in the Dill Macky Papers, Mss 1385/15r, Mitchell Library, Sydney.
³. A gesture which was deplored by R.E. O'Connor, by this stage the leading supporter of Home Rule in Sydney, and subsequently a High Court Judge. Moran was also criticised to his face for attempting to take political revenge on the government. Eventually a compromise was reached: the State Parliament was toasted, but not the government. Freeman's Journal, 14 Mar 1903.
acceptance of the Irish segment indicates the sensitivity of the whole question, and there can be little doubt that many men and women of Irish descent — especially in the middle of the social range — were inclined to gear their attitudes to what was acceptable to the community generally.

It was noticeable that for once neither the hierarchy nor the Catholic press gave clear guidance on the South African question. Moran steered away from direct comment on the issues, and concentrated rather on the degree to which Australia should become directly involved. ¹ Archbishop Carr took an even more circumspect line in his pastoral for 1900, in which he stressed that if young men decided to enlist after examining the issues and placing trust in their political leaders, they should be free from criticism; so also should be the case with ordinary citizens who had taken up a position either for or against the war. ² The various weeklies tended to take a whole series of positions, and published news items and correspondence from both points of view. There was a tendency to be critical of British pretensions, and to denigrate Joseph Chamberlain. But the fact that both Irish and Australian units were involved on the British side meant that comment on the conduct of the war was

¹ In an interview for the Advocate, Moran indicated that Australian volunteers should stay at home and defend their own country. Advocate, 6 Jan 1900.
² Advocate, 3 Mar 1900.
severely circumscribed. The gallantry of the Irish regiments had to be highlighted as well as the courage and tenacity of the Boers, while any adverse comment on the Australian contribution would offend a segment of local subscribers. Occasionally there would be a more vigorous reaction to the war and its implications; W.A. Bowditch, who was prominent in the newly launched Melbourne Catholic weekly, the Tribune, was prone to castigate the disloyal views of some Irish expatriates, attributing their position to "an unholy alliance between Irish vindictiveness and the false conscience of Nonconformity."

In the main, however, the rank and file were left to make up their own minds and some at least were sufficiently attracted by the British view to enlist for service with the Australian contingent. The whole question of the war seriously disturbed the Irish community for several years, and the eventual peace was welcomed not only for its own sake, but also because it meant an end to internal dissension. Then the whole question seems to have been put aside and only rarely was later reference made to those years of controversy; yet it was clear that the unity of the Irish group had been damaged, and that the old question of Irish loyalty to the Empire had once again become a public issue.

1. Tribune, 10 Feb 1900.
But there were other problems which did not disappear from the scene as readily as the South African war had done. By far the most serious of these problems, and one which was gravely and consistently under-estimated by the leading Irish in Australia, was the question of Ulster. Those who had been trained in the nationalist thinking of Parnell era were not well equipped to appreciate the significance of developments in Ulster during the long period of Conservative rule that ended in 1905; their frame of reference did not include any acceptance of the possibility that anti-Home Rule feeling in Ulster could ever reach a strength sufficient to destroy a settlement painfully hammered out at Westminster. It had always been acknowledged that Ulster presented a special problem and that both religious and economic differences would cause tension. But there were precedents for co-operation between North and South in pursuit of common objectives, and the Nationalists had been able to penetrate and capture Ulster constituencies in the eighties. Besides, it was scarcely conceivable that tiny Ulster would ever be able to seriously bring pressure to bear on an Imperial Cabinet, or threaten secession if a Home Rule measure were actually enforced.

In part, the failure to appreciate the growing strength of Unionism in both Ulster and Britain was due to the decline in the proportion of Irish settlers with
recent and first-hand knowledge of the situation in the homeland; second-hand appraisals coming via the Irish press and the speeches of Irish parliamentarians were no real substitute for personal knowledge and contact. Besides, the Nationalist leaders in Ireland were themselves deceived as to the potential strength of resistance in Ulster, and continued to press their rather optimistic viewpoint on their colonial allies, especially after the advent of the Liberal ministry of 1906. So for years the more influential nationalists in Australia held to the belief that the ballot box and the division lobbies were the critical elements; once victory had been achieved in the Commons, and once the obstructionist House of Lords had been tamed, Home Rule would be an accomplished fact. The whole series of crises after 1906, in which Asquith and his Liberal colleagues confronted the Lords in a major constitutional struggle, were regarded by Australian Home Rulers as the awesome but necessary prelude to a final settlement of the Irish question along lines laid down in the House of Commons.\(^1\) When compared to this great clash

---

1. "Tapley", in commenting on anti-Home Rule demonstrations in England in 1912, claimed that these would have no real effect on the English electorate, for "The Irish Party has killed the obstructionists of the House of Lords, and the British people ought, in return, to stand fast to Home Rule". *Advocate*, 6 Jan 1912.
of powerful and ancient institutions, the activities of Sir Edward Carson and his fellow Unionists seemed rather ridiculous and doomed to failure.

And yet the question of Ulster did force itself into the Australian picture by an indirect route. Although those who gave general adherance to the Home Rule cause had no real doubt that Redmond and his colleagues would succeed in redeeming Ireland as a complete unit, they did become aware that the dispute over the status of Ulster had helped to raise the temperature of sectarian controversy in the local context. The rising power of Orangeism in Ulster, the bloc transfer of the Ulster Presbyterians from their traditional support of nationalist causes, and the subsequent link up with Conservative forces in England — all had tended to heighten the identification of Home Rule with Romanism. When the return of the Liberals to office in 1906 meant that a Home Rule measure might well reach the statute book, the Unionist forces were bound to close ranks and make an all-out assault on the nationalist position; the Home Rulers, in turn, were bound to react fiercely against what they regarded as a fanatical attempt — and a hopeless one — to cheat them of a hard-earned constitutional and political issues, but it did retain its religious overtones and thus added a further element to an already overheated situation. Vituperation designed for use in Belfast and Dublin lost none of its effectiveness.
when called into service for a different battlefield
twelve thousand miles to the south; the education issue,
competition for political office or simply for job
opportunities and fear of social domination fuelled the
sectarian issue in Australia, and new organisations such
as the Australian Protestant Defence Association and the
Catholic Federation gave formal structure to the competing
forces.¹

As events at Westminster moved towards what was
expected to be their climax in 1911 and 1912, the colonial
Irish were given one last opportunity to contribute heavily
to the Home Rule cause. According to John Redmond, the
finances of the Parliamentary Party were such that a
formidable injection of funds from abroad was necessary;
the cost of fighting the last two General Elections had
amounted to £25,000, and additional funds would be needed
to sustain activity over the next few years when the fate
of Home Rule would be in the balance. Accordingly, a new

¹ The career of Rev. Dill Macky is a case in point;
according to his daughter's account, Macky had been
brought up in Derry and had been a member of the
Prentice Boys club. He later joined the Loyal Orange
Institution in Sydney, and after becoming increasingly
alarmed at the rising power of the Catholics under
Moran's leadership, formed the Australian Protestant
Defence Association as a way of drawing in those who
would not join the Orange organisation, but wanted to
contain Romanism. Macky was given six months leave by
Scots Church in Sydney to allow him to form branches;
he apparently found that the risks involved in such
work were enough to warrant the carrying of a revolver
for his own protection. *Dill Macky Papers*, Mss 1385/1/
Sr, Mitchell Library, Sydney.
delegation consisting of John Redmond's son William, Richard Hazleton and J.T. Donovan was sent to New Zealand in 1911, and it was hoped that if the situation in Australia proved satisfactory, they would extend the tour across the Tasman. But John Redmond was careful to assure Moran that there would be no tour of New South Wales unless the Cardinal gave his sanction; there was already a local effort to raise funds for the Cathedral building appeal, and Moran was known to be reluctant to allow other groups to compete for the money available.

By early August the delegation had reached Sydney, and had been given a welcoming dinner at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Moran's death in late 1911 removed a major source of support for the Home Rule cause, but his successor, Archbishop Kelly, adhered to the Moran line without contributing much of the aura which had traditionally surrounded the Cardinal's public activities. After spending some time in Brisbane, the delegates travelled south to Victoria and South Australia and began to collect funds on a large scale. By mid-January, Dr. O'Donnell was able to report to his namesake, the Bishop of Raphoe, that the delegates were averaging £100 per meeting, and that scores of further meetings had been organised. To underline

2. Ibid.
the point he enclosed a draft for £3000 already collected, accompanied by a rather rhetorical letter in Gaelic

"...to show the whole world that we are Gaels, not merely in our political opinions, but also from the skin inwards — that is to say, in mind and heart..."¹

By the time the delegates returned to Sydney to be available for the traditionally profitable St. Patrick's Day rally, it was clear that the tour would be an enormous financial success and comparable in its results with the Dillon tour of 1889. This, together with the apparent successes of the Home Rule cause at Westminster, gave the celebrations in Sydney a striking air of confidence. As in Moran’s day, there was no street procession of the type favoured in Melbourne; but the display at the Showground was more spectacular than ever, with hundreds of school children bringing their marching display to a climax by forming the letters "A nation once again", and twenty thousand spectators joining in the singing of "God Save Ireland". Archbishop Kelly was so confident that Ireland was on the verge of receiving self-government that he suggested that attention should now be given to building up Ireland’s economy and her political institutions so that she could face the new situation with confidence. The credit for this happy state of affairs he gave to the Irish

¹ Advocate, 13 Jan 1912
Parliamentary Party, whose members had

"done more for Ireland on the banks of
the Thames than Patrick Sarsfield did
on the banks of the Shannon..."\(^1\)

This note of confidence and expectation was taken up in
the formal oratory which traditionally had full play on
St. Patrick's Day. The State Minister for Lands,
J.L. Trefle, expanded on the intrinsic qualities of Irish
civilisation, qualities which under Home Rule would have
full freedom to expand and multiply

The great factor in the power of the
Irish people was their predilection
for doing things for the human race
rather than hoarding up money they
would never be able to use...\(^2\)

The same note of universality was struck by the Catholic
Press in its editorial comment on the significance of the
day: the Irish race had a civilising mission in the world,
for they along were "true to traditions and virtues which
materialism is destroying in other races"\(^3\); by a curious
inversion, Ireland's chronic poverty could be seen as a
symbol of her commitment to the higher values of human
civilisation.

By the end of the year it seemed that appraisals
of this type would be soon put to the test. At long last

---

2. Ibid.
a Home Rule measure passed the House of Commons, and under the new constitutional arrangements would become law in two years over the veto of the House of Lords. Redmond and O'Donnell exchanged jubilant cables, and O'Donnell's supporters made plans to pay him the ultimate compliment by nominating him as Victorian delegate to the opening of the new Irish Parliament at College Green. By the time the Home Rule measure passed, the three delegates were back in Ireland with a staggering sum of £30,000 collected from New Zealand and Australia, money that would go a long way to keeping the Irish Party functioning over the final two years.¹ Once again Irish-Australians were justified in feeling that at a critical point in the campaign for autonomy they had made a substantial contribution to the Parliamentary Party's fighting fund, despite the fact that only the nucleus of Nationalist organisation still existed in the Commonwealth. All that remained was to wait for the day when Ireland came into her rightful inheritance.

Subsequent events provided a rude shock; the news that Unionist forces were in fact prepared, as a matter of conscience, to resist a law which had been approved by due constitutional process, and the realisation

¹. Herald, 18 Jan 1813.
that the British government might well make concessions when confronted with a possible civil war, challenged the basic assumptions of those who had been committed to Home Rule for over thirty years. Inevitably the reaction was a bitter one, and can best be observed in the tone of a mass meeting held in Melbourne in May 1914; one advertisement for the meeting asked Irish and Irish-Australians "born in this free, self-governing Commonwealth", to attend in their own interests:

"The same gang that hate Ireland and the old race at home, for sectarian reasons, hate you equally, and would carry this hatred effectively into the ordinary business of life if they ever achieved supremacy here. Home Rule for Ireland will mean another spoke in their coffin. Come, democrats of all creeds and colours, and all sexes. The Irish question has aroused in its train questions reaching far beyond self government. The greatest is 'shall the House of Lords and the Plutocracy have a renewal from the Bonar Law Party of those unholy privileges which Mr. Asquith clipped and abridged 2 years ago, or shall the hungry, ill-paid, ill-fed masses at last have a chance of becoming unfettered and emancipated throughout the United Kingdom?'"

In addition to this curiously angled appeal, another advertisement claimed that the meeting would "...stifle the shrill yells of the Wowsers and Orangemen...", and that only "...Ulster Orangemen and our own shoneens" would fail to attend. Both these approaches seem to have been effective:

2. Advocate, 18 May 1914.
25,000 attended the meeting, and O'Donnell found it necessary to arrange three sets of speakers to address different sections of the vast gathering.

The outbreak of the European war a few months later took some of the pressure off the situation in Ulster and siphoned the element of violence towards France, where it appeared to have rapidly dissolved. Home Rule was to remain on the statute book, but was not to be implemented until the end of the war; in what form it would be implemented, no one could foretell. Characteristically, John Redmond made his gesture of Irish troops for the cause of Empire, and his brother William was to die in France – possibly the oldest company commander serving at the time. Characteristically too, the old guard of the Home Rule movement in Victoria and New South Wales fell into line behind the Redmond approach, and there was little sign of the uncertainty which had surrounded the earlier South African episode. Joseph Winter's cable to John Redmond included the wish "May the Irish Brigade formed in Home Rule year meet the enemy at Fontenoy". O'Donnell, speaking at the Shamrock Club, referred to the need to deal with the

1. Among the Federal politicians who spoke were Andrew Fisher and W.M. Hughes. Argus, 5 May 1914. Advocate, 9 May 1914.
2. Advocate, 26 Sept 1914. On St. Patrick's Day, 1915, the children of the East Gresford district in New South Wales marched to the picnic grounds for the customary sports meeting, "waving flags, singing 'Hail, glorious St. Patrick', and "It's a long way to Tipperary", cheering for 'Home Rule and the brave Belgians'". Freeman's Journal, 1 Apr 1915.
"Prussian gorilla of militarism", and spoke of possible dealings between Sir Edward Carson and the Kaiser.¹

His counterpart in Sydney, Dr. MacCarthy, wrote to the Sydney Morning Herald to explain that the suggestion made by the Irish Labour leader James Larkin that the Irish take up arms against England would attract no support except in the United States, where some inter-marriage between Irish and German had taken place.²

Even the Melbourne Argus noted that the local nationalists were trying to strengthen Redmond's hand against the Sinn Fein element, who were causing him annoyance.³ Probably the most interesting indication of the attitude of the younger generation of Irish-Australians to the conflict can be seen in the pattern of enlistment; almost without exception, members of the leading Home Rule families enlisted early, and many of them never returned.⁴ With the rest of the community, the young Irish-Australian element paid dearly for its loyalty to King and Country.

---

1. Advocate, 7 Nov 1914.
2. S.M.H. 22 Dec 1914.
3. Argus, 8 Jan 1915.
4. Amongst those who enlisted were sons of Dr. MacCarthy, Dr. N.M. O'Donnell, Morgan Jageurs, Thomas Fogarty and Samuel Winter. John Davitt Jageurs was killed at Gallipoli. Michael Davitt had been his godfather, and his name appears on the war memorial near College Church, Parkville - a memorial which itself bears the imprint of Jageurs and Son, and stands only a few hundred yards from the site of the family business.
Yet this reaction to an Empire crisis fits in logically with the whole ethos of the Home Rule movement over the previous thirty-four years. Led in the main by men of substance, it had accepted and adhered to basic values concerning the rule of law and the respect due to constitutional processes. Whatever anti-British sentiment and racial antipathy flowed through the lower reaches of the Irish community was carefully damned and controlled by a forceful middle class, with occasional guidance and encouragement from the small professional elite and — probably the most effective of all — the hierarchy. Despite the vigour of sectarian debate and the obvious prejudice which existed in Australia, the Irish were probably more conscious than most of the fact that they enjoyed extensive political liberty and equality of living in a free society were by no means empty rhetoric — many of them had known repression at first hand, and they passed on their view of their adopted society to their sons. In their estimate, physical force was an anachronism, understandable but irrelevant in the modern context.

Given this basic orientation, it is not surprising that the events in Dublin in Easter 1916 came as a grave shock; that recourse should have been had to physical force at this juncture, when Home Rule had virtually been achieved, seemed the height of madness,
and the Irish-Australian press reacted quickly. The Melbourne *Tribune* headlined its first editorial after the event "The Sinn Fein riots: a deplorable affair".¹ The *Freeman's Journal* quoted the remarks of Bishop Phelan of Sale, who detected in the rising an attempt by German-Americans to subvert Irish loyalty: the activities of the rebels - the dregs of Irish society - should not be allowed to detract from the great achievements of the Irish regiments in France.² Archbishop Kelly, Moran's successor, deplored the rising, blaming it on the latitude given to the malcontents in Ulster over the past three years, and he specifically criticised the Sinn Fein movement.³ The central Executives of the Australasian Holy Catholic Guild and the Irish National Foresters in Sydney sent a joint cable to Redmond, stating their disapproval of the rising and their continued support for the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁴ The same theme was taken up in other states: Archbishop Duhig in Brisbane described Casement as an arch-traitor, and Archbishop

¹ *Tribune*, 4 May 1916.
² *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1916. Bishop Phelan, who had been in Ireland in 1914, and during a visit to his hometown in Kilkenny had warned the local Volunteers to remain loyal to the authority of the Church and the Party. *Weekly Freeman*, (Ireland), 22 June 1914. Cutting in O'Donnell Papers, Scrapbook No.2, p.197.
³ *Catholic Press*, 4 May 1916.
⁴ Ibid.
Clune of Perth referred to the "insane work" of the rebels.¹

Within a week, however, the tone began to change; the reports of John Dillon's speech in the House of Commons debate showed that there might be a different side to the picture, and as if in anticipation of a change of heart the Catholic Press devoted a full page to "other insurrections".² Then as news filtered through the censorship that General Maxwell had begun to exact retribution, the pendulum began to gather momentum. Appalled by the trial and execution of fourteen of the rebels, and the gaoling of many more, Irish-Australian opinion swung rapidly away from the British government, and memories of centuries of repression blotted out the stock of good-will so carefully nurtured over the past thirty years. In its place came the belief that there was one law for Sir Edward Carson and his Ulster supporters and another for men like Connolly and Pearse.³ When it became clear that in addition to the shootings being carried out in Dublin, the British government was also beginning to tinker with the Home

1. Freeman's Journal, 4 May 1916. So little was known of the antecedents of the revolt that the Freeman's Journal gave an historical account of the rise of Sinn Fein under the heading "Who are the Sinn Feiners?". It described the revolt as "hare-brained".
Rule Act itself, bitterness and sorrow turned to anger; even the revered John Redmond, now fighting for survival, came under question. Had he been weak in the conduct of negotiations with the British? The Freeman's Journal warned Redmond and his colleagues

"We like to think that the Nationalists who fought their parliamentary fight so manfully will not crawl today, and that in the end they will not be cozened out of the prize they won."¹

But the prize was not to be theirs; within a month the Freeman's Journal had reported that even the Nationalists at Westminster realised that they had been duped by Asquith and Lloyd George, and that the Home Rule cause had in fact been betrayed. For John Redmond, the fruits of thirty years of labour crumbled within weeks and when he died in 1918 the Home Rule cause was in a hopeless shambles. For those who had loyaly supported him in Australia for so many years, the events of Easter 1916 were equally disastrous; despite the plea of Archbishop Kelly for continued support for the constitutional approach there was a rapid unheaval amongst nationalists in Australia. In Melbourne, the United Irish League had managed to block the attempts of some youthful "irreconcilables" to hold an anti-Redmond meeting immediately after news of the Easter rising had reached the country, and had also managed to temper the reactions

¹. Freeman's Journal, 8 June 1916.
of the daily press. But it could not withstand the pressures which had built up in June and July, and Morgan Jageurs - who had now succeeded the ailing O'Donnell - struggled to hold it together for as long as possible. But he was under attack from

"...a section of Irishmen whose names are not to be found on the membership rolls of Irish associations, and seldom, if ever, on the subscription lists of any Irish political movement with which Dr. O'Donnell has been the leader. Yet these malcontents have the audacity to expect him to stand up and calmly witness the destruction of his life's work in this city. The same intolerant factionist spirit is also responsible for similar work in the old country..."2

Jageurs had very little chance of salvaging the situation; all shades of nationalist opinion by now accepted that Ireland had been cruelly deceived, that England's word was not in fact her bond, and that the support Ireland had given to the war was misconceived.3 By August, funds were being collected for the relief of distress caused by the rebellion, and effective authority over the nationalist movements in Australia had passed into the hands of Dr. Daniel Mannix, Co-adjutor Archbishop of Melbourne.4

---

2. Ibid.
4. Jageurs later claimed that the support for Sinn Fein in Melbourne was coming from "a few irresponsible youths not long resident in Australia, of little knowledge of the political history of their own country and considerably less of that of the land of their adoption". Tribune, 12 Oct 1916.
It would be hard to imagine any figure better equipped to take over than Mannix. He had reached Australia in March 1913, when local confidence concerning the prospects of achieving Home Rule were at their height. Press accounts of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations of that year had ransacked the store of Irish imagery to capture the mood of a race which was about to enter the promised land: the dawn was breaking on the hills of Ireland: Ireland was a nation once again — and so, till the mood itself waned. The oration at the Sydney celebrations that year was given by the Hon. J. Trefle, Minister for Lands and Agriculture, and itself indicated the extent to which a quaint and rather mystic view of Ireland had been substituted by the locally-born for the more historical and usually more hard-headed rhetoric of the original settlers.

"Saint Patrick saw, in a vision, Ireland connected with the heavens by a great light, symbolical of the learning and piety of her saints and scholars. Then he saw a period of darkness, when the light seemed to vanish away with but a few shafts gleaming among the mountains; and finally, nothing but the embers were left smouldering, and in response to his ardent supplications, he saw the flame burst forth again more brilliant than ever. And may we not reasonably take it that the third period of St. Patrick's vision is about to dawn upon Ireland? She is at length to receive Home Rule."

The same speaker went on to claim that

"the misunderstandings of the past are rapidly passing away, and...the genius of the Irish race is not only being recognised as of great value in the development and maintenance of the British Empire, but that the optimistic, generous, quick-witted spirit of Irishmen is absolutely necessary to maintain that progressive stability upon which the Empire can hope to continue its existence." ¹

Mannix had done nothing to destroy that mood, but did he encourage it. His earlier statements were most notable for their references to the education question, an emphasis which was only to be expected, given that he came with a reputation as a specialist in the problems of high education. But he avoided the flights of optimism which characterised so many comments on Ireland's immediate future and when he did speak, his remarks were usually practical and concerned with present reality rather than with an idealised future. He had one marked advantage over his fellow bishops, with the exception of Bishop Sheil who had travelled out on the same ship: he had recent first hand knowledge of the Irish scene, and probably a more realistic grasp of the potentialities of the Ulster situation. Moreover, he at least had had the opportunity of watching the growth of the Sinn Fein movement at close quarters, and may have had some grasp of the pressures which had produced that development. Always a shrewd observer of a political situation and a

¹. Ibid.
pungent commentator, he seems to have been the best equipped of the Australian hierarchy to have realised that the fate of Ireland was much more difficult to predict than most Home Rulers believed. When news of the Easter rebellion reached Australia, Mannix reacted rather differently to his fellow bishops, and while they in the main condemned the foolishness of the rebels, Mannix asked where the blame should in fact be placed—solely on the rebels, or also on the Carsonites and the dilatory British government?

When the initial shock had passed, and the horror evoked by the executions had begun to chill the loyalties of Irish-Australians, Mannix's question was taken up and became a major theme in subsequent discussions of the Easter rising. Quickly those who sympathised with Ireland's plight turned to Mannix as the leader who could best give expression to the anger and frustration which bedevilled them; for years the hope of insulation against attacks on the loyalty and civic worth on anyone of Irish descent; the achievement of Home Rule would have wiped out the bitter memories of the O'Farrell incident of 1868, and of the mass of ridicule which had been directed
against the Irish minority for decades. Now it seemed that Ireland had been cheated of her triumph in the very hour of victory, and largely by the forces of Protestant Unionism at that. Accordingly, Mannix became the leader who could be relied on to hit back and hit effectively, marshalling his facts and delivering his views in characteristically blunt and forceful speech, from which the traditional platitudes had been excised. As the descendants of the Celtic Irish transferred their allegiance to the new leader, Mannix himself provided the epitaph for the old Home Rule movement: speaking at a meeting in aid of the Irish Relief Fund in Melbourne in September 1916, he paid tribute to Redmond and his colleagues. They had won "a victory according to all the rules of constitutional warfare", and deserved better than to be betrayed by the British; but those who died in

---

1. "...the battle is won. The "ignorant Paddy" that was the insult of my youth, will never more be heard...England's great crime against Ireland, after all, was not the massacres - it was the enforced ignorance that attempted to degrade the soul of the race. As a boy, many a time I cried when the big men on the gold diggings where I was reared used shamefacedly to ask me to read their letters for them...the Dream of Martyrs is realised - our land is a nation...we must cast out the enforced ignorance that degraded the Irish race. We must plant a school in every village." Dr. T. McInerney, Warden of the University of Melbourne, address to the Celtic Club, Advocate, 26 Apr 1913.
the rising were also worthy of tribute. Finally,

"It is thirty years almost to the day since Gladstone, the greatest Englishman of his century, asked the House to pass Home Rule (Applause). He used on that occasion these memorable words 'Ireland stands at the bar of your House, expectant, hopefully, almost suppliant. She asks for a blessed oblivion of the past, and that blessed oblivion is of greater interest to England than to Ireland.' Those were noble words, and they deserve to be remembered. But a generation has passed away, and Gladstone has gone to his reward, and Ireland still stands at the bar. She is still hopeful, expectant; I do not say suppliant. (Applause)"

* * * * * *

There is a sense in which the trauma of 1916 had its roots in the last decades of the nineteenth century. By 1890, Home Rule had been elevated to the status of a national dogma by the colonial Irish, and it became the point from which most of the mannerisms of the group radiated. This is not to suggest that the Home Rule movement replaced Catholicism as the central and unifying conceptual pattern for the Irish and their immediate descendants; but it did provide the basic set of secular attitudes to which the Irish grafted on the conclusions drawn from their purely colonial experience. These attitudes, which centred around the belief that the Irish race was both entitled to a place in the imperial sun and capable of maintaining

1. Tribune, 21 Sept 1916
it once achieved, did not always come full-blown to the surface; often it required some special stimulus to bring them to a head in all but the most avid supporters of the cause, and there were long periods when negative pressures forced the current to flow much more deeply. But whatever the intensity of the response to Home Rule, it had remained the one issue which provided the content for most examples of formal Irish rhetoric and for a great deal of informal comment. So effectively did this congeries of attitudes and ideas penetrate the Irish community that many of them remained as a form of residual coating on the Irish-Australian consciousness long after the specific nationalist impulse had become irrelevant. In time, the third or fourth generation of the colonial born would find that on the relatively few broad issues which had separated their grandparents, they and their Anglo-Saxon counterparts had reached common ground: In their approach to such questions as social reform, national identity, and the functioning of political institutions, there is very little that can be said to separate both groups; both recognize that whatever points of tension did exist have now been blunted by the over-riding pressures of the pursuit of moderate affluence.

This process of narrowing the gap between the two most important ethnoc groups in early Australian development owes much to special character of the claims
made by the Home Rule movement, but it was made easier by the slow restructuring of the Irish community in the colonies. Well back in the eighties observers had noted the gradual disappearance of the Irish-born element, and had speculated hopefully that this would not mean a decline of a sense of Irish nationality amongst the rising generation. The extent to which the young participated in the St. Patrick's Day festivities was carefully noted each year, and ranked in importance with the degree of sobriety exhibited. The increasing concern with the encouragement of a knowledge of Irish history and the Celtic languages in part reflects the growth of the Gaelic revival in the homeland, but it could also be seen as an attempt to insure against a decline in national sentiment. The rather ambivalent attitude of some of the more prominent Home Rulers towards the growth of the Australian Natives Association likewise reflects this basic concern with the erosion of a sense of Irish identity.

That there were grounds for concern is evident from the statistics relating to Irish migration. As indicated above, the rate of migration from Ireland to the Australian colonies fell off markedly in the 1890's and declined to a tiny trickle after the turn of the century, and the effects of this trend show up clearly in the Census returns for the Commonwealth.
comparison with the English, Welsh and Scotch, the Irish-born were an ageing group, and of that group only half were males.¹ This meant that the growing Irish-Australian community was not being leavened by migrants who had some first hand knowledge of Irish conditions, and as a result became increasingly dependent on the press for its information. News from Ireland naturally tended to pass through a Home Rule filter, for papers such as the Advocate and the Freeman's Journal were still under the control of men who equated Home Rule with Ireland's total national aspiration. The absence of any clear understanding of the Sinn Fein movement and the need for rapid re-education on Irish affairs after the Easter Rebellion in 1916 indicate how effectively the orthodox position had been presented over the previous ten years.

The absence of new migrants to compensate for the generation now rapidly disappearing from the colonial scene was probably the most important element in a changing situation, but there were others of a more specifically local type. The earlier generation of Irish settlers had arrived at a time when it was still possible to join in the process of settlement of the more fertile agricultural lands. But towards the end of the century

¹ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, vol.I Ch.XI: 1921, Ch.XI.
this process was slackening off; the more attractive lands were already occupied, and only subdivision or large-scale capital backing could entry for a prospective settler. Even in the 1890's, new settlement could only spread into areas such as the Mallee country in North-Western Victoria or the difficult country beyond Orbost in the extreme east. The same general observation could be made for New South Wales, and it could be argued that in a situation in which new settlement was confined to areas where considerations of climate, soil type, or distance made farming extremely hazardous, the Irish would have been at a disadvantage. For them, the frontier had closed, and unless land had been obtained in the earlier expansionist phase, the first or second generation Irish had to look elsewhere for a hope of advancement, and they had to do so in a period of considerable economic contraction.

But it was not only the agricultural frontier that was being closed off; in the last decades of the nineteenth century, railway construction and mining had provided employment for unskilled workers outside the urban areas, and this could be supplemented by seasonal farm work. But by the turn of the century, these sources of income were drying up; the basic railway grid had been completed in both colonies, and maintenance work inevitably required a much smaller labour force; mining
was also moving into a period of decline, and the migration to the Western Australian fields in the nineties reflects in part the deteriorating prospects in the eastern mining centres. The unskilled Irish were therefore caught in a pincer movement; at a time when entry into the farming sector required both capital backing and some technical expertise, they were finding it difficult to find the type of unskilled employment which in the past had often acted as a half-way house on the way to a more permanent niche in the farming community. The only alternative was to move back to the urban areas, and especially the capital cities, and compete for the fluctuating job opportunities there. Inevitably, in the more competitive urban atmosphere, questions of race, religion and educational level tended to come to the fore, and it may be at this stage that the long standing identification of Catholics with the Labour Party had its origin.

In any case, it was understandable that local rather than Irish concerns came to dominate the thinking of the bulk of Irish-Australians, now a generation or two removed from direct knowledge of Irish conditions. This is not to suggest that signs of Irish affiliation were disregarded or spurned - rather, a new generation reared in a colonial environment was beginning to react a little differently to the problems arising from Ireland's
claim to nationhood. Much of the political content was bound to be jettisoned as time went on, but a curiously outdated cultural overlay would remain as long as individual tastes were still formed largely by the family circle and the Catholic School, and as long as Irish-born nuns, priests and brothers formed a significant proportion of the teaching force. Eventually the Second World War and the advent of the mass media put an end to the last vestiges of this lingering cultural tradition; few have mourned its passing, for it was in the main an artificial creation, divorced from the more substantial values of Irish traditional culture and shallow in the extreme. By the nineteen sixties there remained only one permanent reminder of the authentic Irish presence in Australia — the small groups of Celtic crosses which stand in practically every cemetery across the land.
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Note on Sources

There are no previous accounts of the Home Rule movement in the Australian context. The only major studies of the Irish influence in Australian history are of limited value to the modern reader: J.F. Hogan's *The Irish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1888, does not throw very much light on the nationalist aspirations of the Irish colonists, and P.S. Cleary's *Australia's debt to her Irish Nationbuilders*, Sydney, 1933, tended to concentrate on the evidence of Irish involvement in the affairs of their adopted country rather than on their interest in the homeland. As a result, the story of the Home Rule movement in Victoria and New South Wales must be pieced together largely from the Catholic weeklies, which are the only source of detailed information. The Melbourne *Advocate* is the most useful single source because its owner, Joseph Winter, was a key figure in the movement and used his paper as a platform for the nationalist viewpoint. The *Freeman's Journal* in Sydney had less direct connection with the Home Rule movement, but gave constant coverage of local developments. In later years, these two papers were to be joined by the *Catholic Press* in Sydney and the *Tribune* in Melbourne; but by this stage the movement had passed its peak of development. The metropolitan press tended to give only spasmodic treatment
of local manifestations of Irish nationalist activity: only when a visiting Irish delegation aroused controversy or when the Irish question came to a head at Westminster did the secular press regard Irish topics as newsworthy in their own right.

While it is to be expected that Irish settlers as a group left relatively little in the way of documentary source material, it is likely that those most closely linked with the Home Rule organisations did accumulate collections of papers which would have thrown light on the movement had they survived. Very little of this type of material has as yet come to light, although the few remnants of Joseph Winter's papers which still exist are enough to show that the original holding would have been extensive and extremely interesting in its range. Some useful material has come to light in the papers of major political figures such as Hugh Mahon and Henry Bournes Higgins, for whom Home Rule was one among many interests and not a dominant concern. The most hopeful sign for the student of this field is the way in which the archives of the Archdioceses of Sydney and Melbourne are being organised and made available for research purposes.
I. Manuscript sources

Carr Papers, Catholic Archdiocesan Historical Commission, Melbourne.

Dill Macky Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney.


Hugh Mahon Papers, National Library of Australia. Contain material relevant to the very early stages of the Home Rule movement in Australia, and to the first decade of the twentieth century.

Kevin Izod O'Doherty Papers, Microfilm, National Library of Australia. Most of this material is too early to be of use; but there are some O'Doherty letters in the Winter Papers listed below which are very relevant to the movement in the 1880's.

John Redmond Papers, Microfilm, University of New South Wales Library.

Joseph Winter Papers, in the possession of the writer. Contain some letters from John and William Redmond, and some from Kevin Izod O'Doherty. Also include some material bearing on the finances of the Home Rule organisations in the 1880's.

Moran Papers, St. Mary's Cathedral Archives, Sydney. N.M. O'Donnell Papers, in possession of Niall Brannan, Gladysdale, Vic.

II. Parliamentary and Official Papers

Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol. I, Ch. XI.

Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, Vol. I, Ch. XI.
Census of New South Wales, 1881, 1891.

Census of Victoria, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901.

Emigration Statistics of Ireland, 1876-1916. Published in the form of annual reports by the Registrar-General for Ireland and found in the House of Commons Accounts and Papers, 1876-1916. These statistics were presented in the same format for the entire period under consideration and they included valuable tables giving the destinations of the emigrants by counties and provinces, and their occupational backgrounds.

Return of the number of emigrants sent out by the Government Emigration Board to the Australian colonies, 1840-1862, House of Commons Accounts and Papers, vol. XXXVIII, 1863, p.19.

Returns for the years 1860, 1862 and the First Six Months of 1863, showing the Number of Emigrants who left the United Kingdom for the United States, British North Africa, the several colonies of Australasia, South Africa, and other places respectively...House of Commons Accounts and Papers, Vol. XXXVIII, 1863.

III. Newspapers and periodicals

A. Newspapers:

Advocate, Melbourne.

Age, Melbourne.

Argus, Melbourne.

Australasian, Melbourne.


Catholic Press, Sydney.

Daily Telegraph, Sydney.

Freeman's Journal, Sydney.

Irish-Australian, Sydney.

Sydney Morning Herald.

Tribune, Melbourne.
B. Periodicals.

Austral Light, Melbourne.
Melbourne Review.
Melbourne Punch

IV. Contemporary Works.

Anon, Mr. Dillon's Mission, Brisbane, 188—.
Anstey, F., Monopoly and Democracy: the land question in Victoria, Melbourne, 1906.
Bonwick, J., Who are the Irish?, London, 1880.
Davitt, M. The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland, New York, 1904.
Dillon, J. Home Rule: speeches delivered by the Irish Delegates...at Auckland, 6th November, 1889, Auckland, 1889.
Ellard, W. The Irish Chimney Corner Stories, Sydney, 1896.
Esmonde, T.G. Round the World with the Irish Delegates, Dublin, 1892.
Haverty, M. The History of Ireland, Sydney, 1883.
Hogan, J.F. The Irish in Australia, Melbourne, 1888.
" " A Christmas Collection, Melbourne, 1886.

Irish-Australian Almanac and Directory, Melbourne, 1876-1887.

Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, The Irish Question for Australian Readers: a history and a Plea, Dublin, 1886.

McGuffin, R. The Rise and Progress of Orangeism in N.S.W. vindicated, Sydney, 1872.


Neild, J.C. The Irish Home Rule Bill: an address given in the Protestant Hall, Sydney, 22nd May, 1893, Sydney, 1893.


Redmond, W. A Shooting Trip in the Australian Bush, Dublin, 1898.
Through the New Commonwealth, Dublin, 1906.


J. White, ed., Report of the proceedings of the Irish-Australian Convention, together with the speeches at the Banquet, Melbourne, 1883.

V. Later Works


Cleary, P.S. Australia's debt to her Irish nation-builders, Sydney, 1933.


Crittenden, H.W. Rogue's Paradise, Sydney, nd.


Forde, J.L. The story of the Bar of Victoria, Melbourne, nd.


Kiddle, Margaret "The British Background to Australian Settlement", typescript in Mitchell and Australian National University Libraries, 1954.


" " "The Fall of Parnell, 1890-1891, London 1960.


Mansergh, N.  
Ireland in the Age of Reformation and Revolution, London, 1940.

Moody, T.W.  

Niehaus, Earle F.  

Norman, E.R.  

O'Farrell, P.J.  
The Catholic Church in Australia, Melbourne, 1968.

O'Brien, Conor Cruise  
Parnell and his party, Oxford, 1957.

Palmer, N.D.  
The Irish Land League Crisis, New Haven, 1940.

Pomfret, John E.  

Potter, G.W.  
To the Golden Door: the story of the Irish in Ireland and America, Boston, 1960.

Shannon, W.V.  

Schrier, A.  
Ireland and the American Immigration, Minneapolis, 1958.

Stewart, W.A.  
Early History of the Loyal Orange Institution of NSW, Sydney, 1926.

Thornley, D.  

Wittke, C.  
The Irish in America, Baton Rouge, 1956.