Introduction

There is more evidence about the life of James Macarthur than there is for any other man of his time, his time being that troubled period which stretches from Macquarie to Denison. His memory is buried in a great maze of manuscripts, press reports, pamphlets and contemporary books. The chief source, his family papers, now in the Mitchell Library, range from the letters of his mother, written as a bride leaving England, to the estate records of his daughter, comprehending a hundred years, 30 boxes and 296 large volumes.¹

All this adds up to many lines of writing. There are almost as many spaces between the lines, providing evidence which is more elusive, but valuable in its place. What we can glean from these suggests a reason for the preservation of the papers themselves, namely the family's strong sense of history.² All the Macarths shared a secure faith in the grandeur of their own ambitions, and with it a belief that such virtue as theirs must someday receive a stamp of approval which would be binding for all time. This was to be an earthly dispensation, for no Macarthur was profoundly religious. It all followed naturally from the family axiom that - as James Macarthur put it - 'with the spread of enlightenment and intelligence ... the truth would ultimately

¹ See the list in the Catalogue of Manuscripts of Australia and the Pacific in the Mitchell Library, Sydney series A, Sydney 1967, pp. 13-16. The collection includes papers dating to 1946, but the majority date from before the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, James Macarthur's daughter, in 1911. The main period covered is 1810 to 1890.

² See, for example, William Macarthur's reference to his father, 'that revered parent ... whose wise and beneficent plans we have been but the humble instruments of endeavouring to carry into effect' (W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 5 Oct. 1841, ML A2935).
prevail'. Behind their proud and secretive manner was an ambition one day to publish all, and so to win crowns of glory from an all-knowing prosterity.

Most of the family had considerable intelligence, and a rather histrionic cast of mind. They therefore tended to believe that any warts in the final picture would only add to its dramatic effect, and its truth, so ensuring its power to last. The family letters were kept with a perfect confidence that no Macarthur had anything to hide, at least from the future.

None of the family made much effort to account for his own career and opinions, which perhaps shows how confident they were. Passing events were left to speak for themselves, so that the Macarthur papers are completely lacking in detailed autobiography. John Macarthur alone was inclined to the type of introspection which feeds on moral and social insecurity. He also wrote vividly, but never at length. William Macarthur was capable of rambling over many pages, but his mind dwelt mainly on business matters, botany, servants and dependents.

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3 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council 7 July 1853, SMH, 8 July 1853.
4 This partly explains the publication of Some Early Records of the Macarthur's of Camden, Sydney 1914, which had been first planned by James Macarthur (ibid., dedication page), and was edited by his grand-daughter, Sibella Macarthur-Onslow.
5 Compare Macarthur's early condemnation of Wentworth's excesses (mentioned below, passim) with his speech, 19 Dec. 1853, SMH, 20 December 1853, which implied that such excesses help to define great historical figures. For his interest in the theatre, see below, and particularly Chapters 1 and 2.
6 William Macarthur also seems to have been a cheerful and compulsive talker (James Macarthur to his wife, [24 June 1854], ML A4343).
James's youngest sister, was the only member of the family who really confided in her biographer: sad notes survive from her old age in England, a widow cut off from all her kin, 'alone and helpless in a strange country'.

James Macarthur was perhaps the least explicit of all. He sent daily notes to his wife when away from home, but he was a poor correspondent with all his friends. He once explained that 'I have not the gift of writing rapidly or graphically'. His style was usually smooth and competent, but it was never quite effortless. Few of the Macarthur papers, and certainly none of his letters, spring from any creative love for pen and ink. Most owe their origin to the fact that the family was closely knit but often scattered, in different hemispheres and in different parts of New South Wales.

The same character shows in Macarthur's public behaviour. As a politician he always felt obliged to perform, as if on a stage, but it was never easy for him. He liked to be popular, to carry his audience with him, but his attempts were never entirely brilliant. The light of his ideas had to struggle through a self-conscious and deliberate manner, often fortified by a real desire not to be 'conspicuous'. He always

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7 Lady Parker's notes on her bereavement, [1881-8], ML A2959.
8 See, for example, Emmeline Parker to Edw. Macarthur, 9 Sept. 1844, ibid., complaining about the 'secrecy and mystery in all his proceedings'.
9 Macarthur's letters to his wife, Emily, a very valuable source, cover most of the period between 1838 and 1865, ML A4341, A4342 and A4343.
10 James Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 25-6 July 1860, ML A2932.
disliked costume balls, common in his time, because any unusual dress
made him feel absurd. 11 He froze in front of cameras, although in the
last years of his life they were thoroughly understood in his house. 12
Even the acting involved in common politeness could leave him slightly
at a loss, though few men attempted it more often. 13 He was not a
clubbable man, and was at ease only with his family, where he felt secure
from 'all the chilling sameness and heartlessness of society in general'. 14

Macarthur tended to be lazy and awkward in his own defence. But
he knew very well that in day-to-day political life good motives must
be carefully explained to be of any use. He developed a style of oratory
which had the great advantage of being distinct and sober, though
sometimes too deliberate. In 1831, when he made his first public speech,
it was noticed that his enunciation was 'remarkably clear' and his
language 'fastidiously correct'. 15 In 1842 his style still showed some
'sappiness and diffidence' but, according to the Sydney Herald, it
seemed to contain 'the raw material of genuine eloquence'. 16

By this time Macarthur was 43, and it is not surprising that the
material remained ever after in a raw state. The last verdict, from

11 Macarthur to his wife [31 Oct. 1851], ML A4343. The only record
of his going to such a ball dates from 1835, and he dressed as a
'Greek', no doubt the most dull and dignified costume available
(Sydney Herald, 16 March 1835).
12 Emily Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 26 Oct. 1861, ML A4344. Both
his brother William and his daughter were keen photographers,
developing the film themselves.
13 Macarthur to his wife, 12 Aug. 1857, ML A4343.
14 Macarthur to his wife [1857?], ibid., pp. 495-9. See also Emily
Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 19 Feb. 1861, ML A4344: 'People
have too many friends here [in England]'.
15 Australian, 2 Dec. 1831
16 Sydney Herald, 2 March 1842.
the Empire in 1856, was simply that

Mr. Macarthur speaks with clearness, and with some pretensions to oratory. His language is uniformly good, and his manner is frequently characterised by strong feeling.17

The strong feeling - which was sincere though stylised - seems to have shown not only in his voice but also in the earnest movement of arms and body.18

Macarthur's success as a political figure depended very much on these performances. But his concern for enunciation made it important that his audience be quiet and attentive. Even the 'theatrical member for Camden'19 found such audiences rare, and he therefore went to unusual lengths to correct and publish the reports of his speeches.20

In this way he hoped to lay his arguments before a quiet and rational host, a mass of well-intentioned men sitting by their firesides away from the shouts of the mob. During the election of 1843, for example, he and his ally Roger Therry published their speeches in a pamphlet, copies of which were distributed to 'almost every cabin and barked hut' in the county of Camden.21

17 Empire, 5 May 1856.
18 Sydney Herald, 2 Mar. 1842; J. Lamb's speech in the legislative council, 1 Oct. 1850, SMH, 7 Oct. 1850, referring to Macarthur's recent 'display of eloquence and gesticulation'.
19 People's Advocate, 5 Oct. 1850.
20 See, for example, his letters to C.H. Jenkins, 7 June 1836, ML Am 43-1/3, 15, 20, 27, 28 June 1836, ML A357, which led to the publication of the Report of the Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Supporters of the Petitions to His Majesty and the House of Commons, held at the committee rooms, May 30, 1836, Sydney 1836. Similar pamphlets were compiled in 1843 (with Therry), 1850 (with Wentworth) and 1856 (with H.M. Oxley), and there were numerous other publications not in pamphlet form. See also appendix 2 and bibliography, below.
21 Australian, 13 March 1843.
Efforts like these made a certain impression. But Macarthur's reasoning was often rather idiosyncratic. From the age of 14 he educated himself, developing his ideas within an uncritical family circle, so that even when his decisions were straightforward his method of reaching them might be baffling to anyone but his closest friends. His argument against having clergymen on the Sydney University senate, for example, seemed very strange at the time. One observer even suggested that its use by a person of so decided talent as Mr. James Macarthur might be adduced as proof of the incompleteness of any other than an University education.

Few doubted Macarthur's intelligence. It is also obvious that he put a good deal of thought and research into many of his speeches. But their main effect depended on more transparent things, and especially on what one newspaper called 'the influence which his personal character secures for him'.

This seems to be the clue to Macarthur's present reputation. For the first fifty years after his death the splendour of his name was enough at least to preserve him from that 'enormous condescension of posterity' which has warped the image of many other men of his time. It is no doubt equally important that two leading

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22 See, for example, the process of George Allen's thinking (recorded in his diary, 1, 5, 11 July 1843, ML uncat. MSS 477), as affected by Macarthur's speech at Parramatta, 6 July 1843, published, very likely in corrected form, in the Australian, 10 July 1943.
23 'B.A.' to the editors, 5 Oct. 1849, SMH, 8 Oct. 1849.
24 Australian, 21 Jan. 1848.

See Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 4 Oct. 1849, ibid., 5 Oct. 1849.
historians of the period, Roger Therry and G.W. Rusden, were old friends with access to the Macarthur papers, then at Camden Park. But this tradition was superseded by a generation of writers who were not interested in unravelling his ideas, and whose line of argument was often critical of everything his family represented. These scholars also worked in ignorance of the family records, except for a number of documents relating to John Macarthur which were published in 1914. The bulk of the Macarthur papers became available only after World War II, having been given to the Mitchell Library partly in 1940 and partly in 1957.

Macarthur's reputation suffered most in the period between the wars, when some of the classic accounts of Australian history first appeared. The books of Brian Fitzpatrick and A.C.V. Melbourne were particularly influential. Fitzpatrick described Macarthur's family as agents of British commercial imperialism in Australia. In one place he made the mass of the people curse them as members of a

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26 Some Early Records of the Macarthur of Camden (op.cit.).
27 The first part of the collection was given by Major-Gen. James Macarthur-Onslow (grandson of James Macarthur) and his sister Miss Sibella Macarthur-Onslow, and the second part by his daughter, the late Lady Stanham of Camden Park. The second part is on restricted access.
28 British Imperialism and Australia 1783-1833, London 1939, p.294
reactionary class, proud men who

misused their authority delegated from government in England, and took their own advantage of the long wars, and brought government policy to shipwreck and debauched and expropriated the poor. 29

Melbourne used much the same approach in his *Early Constitutional Development in Australia*, never allowing the family an original or an unselfish idea. Macarthur there appears, literally, as the enemy of all constitutional change, except when it would make him richer or more powerful. 30

This interpretation has given way gradually under the impact of more careful and less doctrinaire scholarship, and the evidence of the family papers. The revisionary process began, in a tentative way, with the publication of M.H. Ellis's *John Macarthur* in 1955. 31 Since then Michael Roe, in his *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851*, has referred to James Macarthur in such a way as to suggest that his social attitude had 'an ethical basis' and his politics 'an intellectual edge'. 32 Macarthur's ideal, says Roe, was 'comparatively disinterested leadership' and 'a more or less benevolent oligarchy'. 33

29 The *Australian People 1788 - 1945*, Melbourne 1946, pp. 118, 145.
31 Ellis saw the first part of the papers in the Mitchell Library and some of the others at Camden Park (op. cit., pp. xiii, 533-4).
33 Ibid., pp. 45, 65.
The work of Manning Clark has put some life into this interpretation. There Macarthur appears as 'kind and gentle in his disposition with a manner which at once inspired confidence and respect'.\(^{34}\) He was, says Clark,

both blessed and cursed with the innocent man's unwillingness to believe that the imagination in the hearts of some men was evil from the start.\(^{35}\)

Yet fundamental to his character was 'his distaste for all vulgarians, all people, great and small, who threatened to dispute his and the divine sense of the natural fitness of things.'\(^{36}\)

These are fair comments, but they only touch the edges of the question. It is still normal practice to deny Macarthur and his family the benefit of the doubt in much of their work, even where proper research would show that no doubt need exist. Nor are they allowed any imagination, except in gathering wealth. Such bias can be seen even in the most authoritative modern source, the Australian Dictionary of Biography. There Macarthur appears as a man who was well meaning in a superficial way, but whose influence on national events was misguided and almost totally negative: 'his remarkable political talents' says the Dictionary, 'left nothing lasting behind them'.\(^{37}\)

\(^{34}\) C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia II, Melbourne, 1968, p.182.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., p.236.
\(^{36}\) Ibid., p.323.
\(^{37}\) ADB II, p.153. The Dictionary's account of Macarthur draws very heavily on the notes of the late V.R. de V. Voss (in the History Department, Sydney University), who saw only the first part of the Macarthur papers, when they were still largely unsorted in the Mitchell Library. See also ADB I, p. 299, and compare A.T. Atkinson, 'The Position of John Macarthur and His Family in New South Wales before 1842', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney 1971, pp.248, 249-50.
The present thesis argues that this verdict is seriously wrong, and that it depends on a distorted view of the times.

* * *

One important problem in the thesis is the definition of Macarthur's politics. This is difficult, partly because of his complex way of thinking, and partly because his political life, from 1830 to 1860, saw a great revolution in ideas, when statesmen who worked in the European tradition were constantly adapting old labels and taking up new ones. Macarthur himself did not think a great deal about party politics, as such, and only once, in 1843, is he found labelling himself in any detail. He was then accused of tory-ism. His answer, apparently a well-considered one, was that

He did not call himself a Tory, but a moderate Conservative, in fact, his principles verged upon those of a Whig.\(^{38}\)

At another time he met the same charge by pointing out that some of his ideas could even be called radical.\(^{39}\)

His father's first political connections had been mainly with the Prince of Wales's party and the Foxite whigs.\(^{40}\) But this was simply because, as a perfect beginner, he had to take whatever offered, John

\(^{38}\) Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 6 Mar. 1843, Australian 8 March 1843.

\(^{39}\) Macarthur's speech, Report of the ... General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, p.17.

\(^{40}\) His closest contacts in parliament before 1817 were with Thomas William Plummer, his commercial agent, whig M.P. for Yarmouth 1806-7, and with James Brogden, a Northumberland House (and therefore a Carlton House) member, M.P. for Launceston 1796-1832. See also Atkinson, op. cit. pp.104-5, 107-9.
Macarthur being 'from natural inclination ... of the school of Pitt.'\textsuperscript{41} John Macarthur junior, the only one of the family to be much involved with British politics, worked in that tradition during the 1820s. He was one of the young admirers of Canning and Huskisson and he played an active part in the early successes of liberal toryism.\textsuperscript{42}

James Macarthur also tended to refer to Pitt, Canning and Peel as the best models for public men.\textsuperscript{43} It is therefore puzzling, at first, that he should have described his principles as verging upon those of a whig. This question will be dealt with before describing his conservatism.

The point of the remark seems to lie in Macarthur's circumstances, which were different from those of his father and brother. During most of his political career whiggism was very popular among men of his class in the colony, but compared with the current British model it was stunted and slightly out of date. The pattern for New South Wales whigs was that established in Great Britain between Amiens and Waterloo, a very articulate period when ancient whig prejudices were being justified and enriched with new thinking. The British whigs of that time have been called 'the party of high family and of general ideas'.\textsuperscript{44} They assumed that all good government must rest on the combination of two types of aristocracy, 'that of personal merit, and that of rank and

\textsuperscript{41} James Macarthur quoted (n.d.) in Some Early Records ..., p. 471. See also Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 14 Jan. 1843, Australian, 16 Jan. 1843.

\textsuperscript{42} John Macarthur jr. to his mother, 12 Apr. - 27 May 1825, and to his father, 20 Nov. 1825, 18 July 1826, ML A2911.

\textsuperscript{43} See, for example, his speech at a public dinner, 19 July 1843, Australian, 21 July 1843; and his speech at an election meeting, 24 Mar. 1856, Empire, 27 Mar. 1856.

\textsuperscript{44} Sir Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815-1870, Oxford 1962, p.110. It was during this period, in 1802, that the Edinburgh Review, the famous whig journal, began publication.
hereditary wealth'. In order to make room for the first, avenues to power had to be broad and numerous. All final authority in the state should be vested in the house of commons where, ideally, the influence of the government, justly restrained, and that of the nobility would be combined with 'the proper representation of the people'.

The political aims of the whigs in the first years of the 19th century were straightforward. First and foremost, they bound themselves to fight against

The preponderating influence of the Crown, arising from the enormous extent of our establishments, and of the patronage consequently vested in the Sovereign.

One of the greatest enemies of whiggism gave a much less sympathetic, but broader account of this policy: 'opposition for its own sake, striving against the truth, because it happens to be commanded us; as if wisdom were less wise because it is powerful'.

According to the original ideal the strength of the party depended mainly on the energy and independence of the landed class. But after Waterloo it became clear, even to old-fashioned whigs, that they were 'no longer ... capable of making head against the Crown, without popular support.' This was obvious at the same time in New South Wales. It is suggested below that most of the great landowners of the colony, from about 1825 to 1850, thought of politics as a constant effort to

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46 Ibid., p. 278.
limit the cost and the influence of the local government. This explains the activities of Jamison and Wentworth, and the Coxes, Blaxlands and Lawsons. But they were also careful, at every stage, to get popular backing for their efforts. 50

Whiggism, suitably pinched and pruned, was ideal for New South Wales in Macarthur's time, at least until 1850. In the first place it allowed for the merging of wealth and intellect, and had a certain type of both. Secondly, while it took the lasting authority of the crown for granted, it made it a matter of duty to challenge its exercise. Thus, when Macarthur said that his principles verged on those of a whig he meant to credit himself with a local patriotism which, however strong and xenophobic, did not affect his loyalty to the queen.

But Macarthur thought of himself much more often as a conservative. Conservatism at this point was a new and nebulous doctrine, in a state of rapid evolution. Moreover, its application to New South Wales politics was not nearly as straightforward as whiggism. Therefore it would be pointless to try to list here the fragments of British conservative thought which were thrown up in the colony. For the time being it is enough to quote Barrie Dyster's account of the local conservative ideal, which was to oppose 'rule by and for a faction or party, and rule by doctrinaires untied to the community and interests they troubled'. 51

The next few pages are only meant to sketch the attitude of mind which led Macarthur to adopt such a label. In fact is is fair to think

50 See, in particular, chapter 2.
of conservatism partly as an attitude of mind, a method of approaching particular problems. It was an attitude which distrusted the idea of total improvement, of change which touched not only the circumstances but the relationships of men, and especially that which was meant to by-pass local and class differences. It was an attitude which justified privilege and the haphazard effect of sheer pragmatism. But it also allowed for individuality in a much more effective way than other political methods.

This was a period when many progressive and ideal schemes were worked out according to psychological theories with a general application to all mankind. The best known and most comprehensive were those of utilitarianism and classical economics, or laissez-faire. It was also a time when the mileage of railroads, the size of smoke-stacks and the population and wealth of a country tended to become ends in themselves. In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville complained about this vast shift in ideas, with a conservative cry from the heart:

It would seem that sovereigns now only seek to do great things with men. I wish that they would try a little more to make men great, and that they should attach less importance to the work and more to the workman.  

The Christian socialist F.D. Maurice saw the same problems, though he had different solutions:

And for that expression about 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number', I do not understand it. I have no measure for it. I cannot tell what happiness is, or how it is to be distributed among the greatest number, or how the greatest number is to be ascertained.

52 Kitson Clark, op. cit., pp. 290-4.
53 J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner (eds) and George Lawrence (trans.), Democracy in America, Fontana 1968, II p. 911.
In the 1860s Matthew Arnold, in his *Culture and Anarchy*, likewise condemned the 'worship of machinery', meaning any standard of good which was applied in spite of individuality, and which had no reference to the 'internal condition' of men.\(^{55}\)

Through his father's old patron and friend, Sir Walter Farquhar, Macarthur was linked with this reaction, and especially with its religious side.\(^{56}\) Two of Farquhar's grandsons belonged to a group, educated mostly at Eton and Christ Church, who played a key part in the reformation of Anglican thought and practice, a movement which was partly meant to counter the 'worship of machinery'. Some of this group were contemporaries and friends of W.E. Gladstone, who was a student in both places.\(^{57}\) One of the grandsons was Walter Farquhar Hook, the celebrated vicar of Leeds, who devoted great energy and sympathy to winning the slums of his parish for the church, binding his people together, and setting 'a new standard of duty for every parish priest

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56 For the original connection between the Macarthers and the Farquhars, see Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 29, 32, 38; Charity Hamilton (formerly Farquhar) to W. Macarthur, 28 Sept. 1839, ML A2936.

who came after him'. Another was Walter Kerr Hamilton, bishop of Salisbury, one of the leaders of the Oxford movement. It will be seen below that Macarthur's aims did not focus in the same way on the Anglican church. But they too were based on a belief that the welfare of a community should be rooted in its co-operative spirit, which was to be seen in religious terms, and which Macarthur at least identified with Christian charity. There was no regular intellectual contact between the Farquhar descendants and the Macarthurs. But the argument of the thesis suggests that the similarity of outlook was due to a distinct ethical attitude, an interest in close relationships which pervaded the Macarthur family and their immediate circle.

The most potent piece of 'machinery' in New South Wales politics, according to Macarthur, was 'that fashionable ... system of modern colonisation' devised by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. It was a constant source of annoyance that, as he thought, the whole future of the colony should be 'offered up upon the shrine of ... [this] heartless utilitarian theory'. His most earnest speeches were directed against the spirit of cold arrogance which he saw behind Wakefieldism. 'It was this spirit', he said, 'which actuated the conqueror in his career of bloodshed'. But the conqueror at least might risk his own life:

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59 Bishop Hamilton was a brother of Edward Hamilton, of Collaroy, N.S.W., for whom see chapter 8 below. For the lives of W.K. Hamilton and W.F. Hook, see the Dictionary of National Biography VIII and IX.
60 Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 24 April 1844, SMH, 1 May 1844.
His was a far nobler impulse than that which led men seated at home in their comfortable arm-chairs to contemplate with indifference and even with satisfaction the ruin of thousands, rather than give up one jot or title of a hypothetical theory.61

Armchairs appear here in a bad light, as a breeding spot for theory. They might also, of course, be the one place where honest motives and kind thoughts rule supreme. In fact Macarthur's moral ideas always focused on the domestic man, the man in the armchair alone with his conscience.62 He took it for granted that the vagaries of a man's conscience - especially where mutual trust was involved - were linked directly with his worth as a politician. He maintained that all laws should aim at encouraging 'perfect charity ... the spirit which would do unto others as it would they should do unto it'.63 Such charity, he said, must guide 'communities, as well as individuals', and must therefore inform and mould the inmost thoughts of politicians.64 He once cited the absence of imprisonment for debt, of game laws, settlement laws and poor laws, 'which fettered the labouring classes in England and chained them down', as evidence that 'truly Christian principles' pervaded society in New South Wales.65

61 Ibid. See also his speech in the legislative council, 10 Dec. 1840, Sydney Herald, 12 Dec. 1840; his speech at a public meeting 7 Jan. 1841, ibid., 8 Jan. 1841; R. Therry to Macarthur, [25 March 1862], ML A2930.
62 Or perhaps seated on the river bank, 'inspired by the murmurings of the limpid stream that flowed beside his homestead' (Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 16 Jan. 1854, SMH, 19 Jan 1854).
63 Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 14 Jan. 1843, Australian, 16 Jan. 1843.
64 Macarthur to the children of Camden national school, 16 Apr. 1855, SMH, 20 Apr. 1855.
65 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 7 July 1855, ibid., 8 July 1855.
This was the essence of Macarthur's conservatism, braced with an
instinctive regard for settled legal power. It was this attitude which, for
example, always guided his thinking on constitutional change in the
colony. In the early period he was mainly influenced by his mistrust
for those ex-convicts who were not obviously reformed, and the men
they mixed with. The argument once used on their behalf, that

The private morals and the public morals of the different
individuals of a state are two distinctly different things, 66

went utterly against his thinking. For him an inveterate criminal
posed the same danger to the state as an arrogant Wakefieldian.
Both approached that type which a good community must always guard
against, the heartless, self-sufficient man, who cared nothing for the
settled way of life, the opinions, the aspirations and the varied
rights of others.

PART I

Chapter 1

The Emmet's Inch 1798-1817

Sweet sensibility! thou keen delight!
Thou hasty moral! sudden sense of right!

Hannah More, 1782.

James Macarthur was born at Elizabeth Farm, his parents' home near Parramatta, on 15 December 1798. The site was a cottage of white-washed brick, four rooms sensibly arranged beneath a close-cropped shingle roof. This was his first world, gleaming inside with the scarlet jackets of the New South Wales Corps and with scattered pieces of polished wood, and stretching beyond to the fading green of summer bush and pasture. Around the house at that time were several farm buildings, an orchard, a vineyard, a vegetable garden, and paddocks newly planted with potatoes and maize. A little further away a small child might see the river, the village of Parramatta with its single long street, and the government house on Rose Hill.

He was the fourth son of John Macarthur, then a captain in the corps. His father had arrived in June 1790, with the second fleet,

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1 From Blake's 'Auguries of Innocence'.
2 For his birthday, see the parish register of St. Johns, Parramatta (T.D. Mutch copy), ML A4381, f.127, which also shows that he was baptised with his younger brother William in April 1801, when he was nearly 2½ years old.
3 Mrs. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, 23 Aug. 1794, 1 Sept. [1797, wrongly dated 1795], in Sibella Macarthur-Onslow (ed.), Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden, Sydney 1914, pp.45-6, 47.
newly married, and even more lately raised to the rank of subaltern. In a very short time John Macarthur had made a name for himself as an officer of energy and imagination. In 1792 he was sent to Parramatta on duty, and stayed there for several years, acting for part of the time as governor of the inland settlements, an autocrat and adviser for several hundred souls, mostly small farmers. By December 1798 Captain Macarthur was posted again at Sydney. But his family still lived in his house by the Parramatta River, where James was born and spent the first years of his boyhood.

The Macarthurs were a large family. There were five sons altogether, though one died in infancy. The two oldest boys, Edward and John, were at school in England during James's childhood. Both of them were to spend most of their lives abroad, Edward as an army officer and John as a member of the English bar. There were also two older sisters, Elizabeth and Mary, who both lived and died in New South Wales. William, the youngest son, who was James's closest companion all his life, was born two years after him, in December 1800. Mary, James and William were the offspring of the family's first well settled period, the perfect early years at Parramatta, when their parents were between 30 and 35. The last of the children, Emmeline, was born in 1808.

It is not clear how James's education began, but it was probably

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5 M.H. Ellis, John Macarthur, Sydney 1955, pp.54-6.
6 This child, who died in 1797 aged 11 months, while teething, was also called James, the name of John Macarthur's brother (Mrs. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, 1 Sept. [1797], Some Early Records ..., p. 51).
due to the co-operation of his father and Penelope Lucas, the
governess who arrived in 1805 to teach his sisters. When he was eight
he and William were entrusted to a tutor, Gabriel-Louis-Marie Huon,
the Chevalier de Kerilleau, a French emigré who had been a private
soldier in the New South Wales Corps. They both spent about two years
with him.\(^7\) From this time, no doubt, can be dated their good knowledge
of French and their easy and active respect for the Catholic faith.

The Macarthur children were brought up in the established church.
Their father was not devout. He was said to have used 'the deistical
arguments ... against revelation', and to have thought that 'the only
use of religion was for political purposes'.\(^8\) The source of this
information was hostile, but John Macarthur's career and letters do
tend to show him as a deist, who looked for providence not so much in
doctrinal mystery as in the creation and arrangement of the universe.
He revered nothing more than the activity of building to a plan, of
forming real communities and aligning men and things by the careful
power of intellect. His wife on the other hand had a more strictly
Anglican background, and she seems to have passed on to her children
some respect for ecclesiastical rank and ritual.\(^9\) This was especially
true of James, but even in his case the enormous influence of his
father's ideas seems more fundamental.

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\(^7\) Ellis, op. cit., p.481; information supplied by Hon. T.D. Mutch,
recorded in the ML card catalogue under G.L.M. Huon de Kerilleau;
G.L.M. Huon to his sister, 1 Jan. 1826, and other letters in the
Huon de Kerilleau papers, A3189.

\(^8\) Untitled paper with information, mainly from Rev. Henry Fulton,
about John Macarthur and Sgt. Whittle of the N.S.W. Corps,[1811?],
British war office papers 72/35.

\(^9\) Mrs. Macarthur seems to have been brought up, more or less, in the
family of the vicar of Bridgerule, a remote Devonshire village (her
letter to E. Kingdon, Mar. 1815, ML A2908). John Macarthur had
grown up at Plymouth Dock which, as a flourishing port, was open
to every kind of new idea.
In March 1809 James and William left the colony with their father. They were not to set foot in it again for nearly nine years. This was the great crisis of John Macarthur's career. He was no longer an officer in the corps, but in January 1808 he had organised a mutiny of the soldiers against Governor Bligh, thus - in his own opinion - making himself the Cromwell of his country. He now hoped that by direct pressure at Whitehall he could bring about the various reforms he thought were necessary. But he counted too much on his influence at home. In 1811 the commanding officer of the corps, George Johnston, who had gone home with him, was court-martialled and cashiered. Macarthur's punishment was more severe. He was forbidden to return to his family under pain of being tried for conspiracy by the new governor.

Soon after their arrival in England James and William were sent as boarders to Grove Hall Academy, a school of 70 or 80 boys at Bow near London. Their headmaster was Dr. James Lindsay, a Presbyterian

11 T.W. Plummer to L. Macquarie, 4 May 1809, HRA I, VII pp.197-210. Plummer was Macarthur's agent and there are conclusive reasons (too detailed to outline here) for thinking that this letter was directly inspired by Macarthur himself.
13 John Macarthur to his wife, 14 Feb. 1810, Some Early Records ..., p.191.
minister from Aberdeen who was known in London as a supporter of Unitarianism and 'a distinguished friend of truth and liberty'.

Edward and John Macarthur junior had already spent some years with Lindsay, and John's ability had made him a favourite. The whole family treated the doctor with great respect and James himself always spoke of him afterwards 'with tenderness and veneration'. It must have been at Grove Hall that he and William acquired their thorough dislike of erastianism. As men they both believed as firmly as any dissenting clergyman that the cause of 'true religion' depended on all churches being clearly free from the power of the state.

The 'rational Christianity of the Unitarians' fitted very well into the system of ideals which John Macarthur had taught his sons. Compared with Methodism, for example, it was a cautious paternalistic faith, manifest more in charity than in fellowship. But it encouraged an intellectual awareness which was certainly humane. The ideas which Lindsay taught his boys fit this pattern, if we are to judge from the text of a sermon he preached to a congregation of children in 1818. His theme was the argument that 'he who wishes to monopolize liberty deserves to lose it':

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14 Information kindly supplied by Mr. L. Hellicar, borough librarian, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (18 Mar. 1974) and Mr. John Creasey, deputy librarian, Dr. Williams's Library, London WCl (23 Oct. 1974).
16 For W. Macarthur, see his letter to G. Cox, 17 July 1843, ML A2935. For James, see chapter 3, below.
Be it far from your desire to circumscribe what Christ has left free, on any prudential or political pretence ...

As you pass on in life, lay it down as a maxim, to quarrel with no man for his opinions honestly entertained. ¹⁸

He encouraged his listeners above all to believe in the progress of civilisation, which must ever move 'towards its destined perfection', particularly in matters of religion. They must avoid as a 'moral disease' the irrational 'veneration for names and systems' which, he said, 'keeps up distinctions [among men] that would not otherwise exist'. ¹⁹ He urged them to look forward to that full and general emancipation which will give to every sect, protestant or catholic, the equal participation of civil rights.

They must also work for the time when the 'monopoly of knowledge' would be broken down by a system of universal education. ²⁰ But violent revolution would only lead to mindless bigotry. Instead, he commended to his flock that generous 'collision of sentiments' which would refine ideas and so ensure the gradual but permanent progress of mankind. ²¹

There is no doubt that these ideas had their effect on John Macarthur's sons. Even Edward, who was the least imaginative, believed as a man that although 'great changes are taking place in society, and in the minds of men', yet they must surely result in 'ultimate benefit to the mass of the people'. ²² The effect on James Macarthur

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¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 8, 34.
²⁰ Ibid., pp. 17, 27.
²¹ Ibid., pp. 20-21, 26, 30, 33, 38.
²² Edw. Macarthur to his mother, 5 May 1834, ML A2914.
is proved by his own career - he sometimes seems to follow Lindsay's teaching to the letter - and also perhaps by his close friendship with Thomas Hobbes Scott, first archdeacon of New South Wales. In the British context, Scott was an ardent radical who had joined in agitation for parliamentary reform in the 1790s and who approved of the 1832 act only as a step in the right direction. Like Lindsay, Scott believed that

in certain ages of the world ... the human mind is destined to undergo great changes, often suddenly ... [which] all tend to our improvement both spiritual and temporal.

He thought that his own generation was such an age, and that its greatest achievement would be the spread of education, which he wanted to see made universal and compulsory: 'd-n 'em', he once wrote, 'they shd. have it willy nilly'.

With the exception of his own family, no one seems to have influenced Macarthur more than Lindsay and Scott. It is not simply coincidence that they were both clergymen, with a professional interest in the human conscience. Macarthur was convinced, like them, that the progress of mankind was due not to mass political movements (Scott was not always perfectly clear on this point), but to individual virtue and consistency of mind. It is significant that both Lindsay and Scott were much older than Macarthur, whose political ideals were always

23 T.H. Scott to W. Macarthur, 10 July 1831, ML A2955, and to G.W. Norman, 10 June 1832, Norman MSS C200. The life of Scott in ADB II does not take account of his numerous letters now among the Macarthur and Norman papers. In spite of their friendship, Macarthur thought Scott was 'defective intemper, in civil courage, and in state, a little of which latter quality is sometimes required in high dignitaries' (James Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 6-11 June 1827, ML A2931).

slightly dated. He was partly a product of the late enlightenment, the age of sensibility and the moral citizen, a time when, as the poet Keats said, 'Right and Wrong considered by each man abstractedly ... [was] the fashion'.

This was a period of great optimism. Extreme idealists looked forward to an approaching age 'when men were to be governed by the purity of their own minds, and the moderation of their own desires, without any external coercion'. As for Macarthur, he at least agreed with Adam Ferguson, a recent eminent philosopher, who thought that men derive

from instinctive feelings, a love of integrity and candour, and, from the very contagion of society itself, an esteem for what is honourable and praise-worthy.

Even when democracy seemed to shake the whole foundation of society in New South Wales Macarthur remained optimistic. All would be well, he said, if only 'the gentry ... will but be true to themselves, and conform to the altered circumstances of the age.'

Macarthur kept up a profound optimism about human affairs all his life, in spite of political disappointments. As an old man he was still able to debate with himself, for example, whether 'the warlike spirit [might be] an essential element of national greatness'; or

27 An Essay on the History of Civil Society, London 1768, p.248. This passage is marked in Macarthur's copy of the book, now at Camden Park, and it was characteristic of his own thinking.
28 James Macarthur to Sir W. Macarthur, 10-11 May, 1861, ML A2932.
whether war must soon be too dreadful to continue, the very horror of new weapons 'neutralising their mischievous powers' and making them 'engines of peace'. He was moved to this thought by seeing modern armaments at Greenwich in 1861. 29

But even 'engines of peace' must be the work of scrupulous, skilful and orderly men. Macarthur's millenium would have meant, not the end of coercive laws, but the triumph of a flawless constitution, one consistent with 'the still more perfect law of Christianity'. 30

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During their school holidays in England, James and William probably studied under the guidance of their father, as they had done on the voyage from home. 31 John Macarthur's own formal education was apparently limited to what could be learnt at an ordinary country grammar school. 32 But he seems to have taught himself a good deal of English law and ancient and modern history, and he had a fair knowledge of the more obvious English classics. According to his son James, he frequently quoted passages from Shakespeare, Hudibras, Spenser and Milton as well as from Addison. Of Walter Scott, and the finer passages of Byron, he was a great admirer. Crabbe too was a favourite author.

In history,

29 Macarthur to Sir C. Nicholson, 19 Sept. 1861, ML A2924. Macarthur added that he inclined to the former view.
30 Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 14 Jan. 1843, Australian, 16 Jan. 1843.
31 John Macarthur to his wife, 30 July 1809, Some Early Records ..., p. 181.
32 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 6-7, 481-2.
He admired the character of Coriolanus; Scipio Africanus still more. The shining characters of Ancient History, as well as of modern times, were frequently subjects of conversation with his family.\textsuperscript{33}

John Macarthur was also keenly interested in education. In New South Wales he tried his hand at different times with the children of both settlers and aborigines.\textsuperscript{34} One of his protégés, the son of a soldier in the New South Wales Corps, boasted long afterwards: 'if I have anything of the spirit of progress in me' it was derived from this 'excellent' man, 'who by many persons was not understood, by others not appreciated, but by me admired'.\textsuperscript{35}

It was probably John Macarthur who encouraged his sons in the habit of always having with them a good number of books. On a short tour of Belgium and Germany in 1828-9, James took 30 volumes in English and French, including guide books, essays, poetry, drama, and two lives of Napoleon.\textsuperscript{36} In 1849 Edward, then a lieutenant-colonel, thought young officers should make up a portable library, - 'about 50 volumes' of 'our best dramas and essays' - to keep their minds fresh during service away from home.\textsuperscript{37}

By the time he was 14 James had decided that he wanted to be a


\textsuperscript{34} W. Macarthur, 'A few memoranda respecting the aboriginal natives', [1835?], ML A2935. He also had an aristocratic Tahitian boy staying in his house for some time (J.R. Elder (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765-1838, Dunedin 1932, p.81). John Macarthur was perhaps a schoolmaster in Cornwall between 1783 and 1788 (Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Mar. 1816, ML A2908).

\textsuperscript{35} Byrnes to Edw. Macarthur, 29 Nov. 1856, ML A2917. For Byrnes's life see ADB III.

\textsuperscript{36} Macarthur's diary of a tour through Belgium and Germany, 14 Nov. 1828-2 Jan. 1829, ML A2929/B (no pagination).

\textsuperscript{37} Edw. Macarthur to G.W. Norman, 22 Apr. 1849, Norman MSS C126.
merchant, and as a first venture his father arranged for a cargo of books to be sent to Sydney and sold there for his benefit. 38 In the same year he left Grove Hall, having arrived 'at the head of the School'. 39 John Macarthur thought of sending him on to either Charterhouse or Winchester. 40 Except for Shrewsbury, these were the most humane of the greater public schools. At Charterhouse experiments were being made with boy teachers and the abolition of fagging, while at Winchester the teaching had lately become unusually gentle. 41

But at last John Macarthur decided that in 'these great establish-
ments there is much vice, and many temptations to excess'. 42 Some months passed for which there is no record of James's activities, until in April 1814 he entered the counting-house of Charles Coles, a West and East India broker, and a man 'of first consequence in that line in the City of London'. 43 There he spent about eight months, until he had acquired enough understanding of business principles 'to answer any purpose to which he may hereafter have occasion to apply that species of knowledge'. 44

When these last words were written, at the end of 1814, James Macarthur's prospects had changed. It now seems to have been taken for granted that the future of the family depended wholly on their New South Wales property, and that both he and William would be

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38 John Macarthur to his wife, 31 Aug. 1813, ML A2898.
39 John Macarthur to his wife, 18 Nov. 1812, Some Early Records ..., p. 230.
40 John Macarthur to his wife, 31 August 1813, ibid., p. 237.
42 John Macarthur to his wife, 18 Nov. 1812, Some Early Records..., p.230.
43 John Macarthur to his wife, 26 July 1814, ML A2898.
44 John Macarthur to his wife, 26 Dec. 1814, Some Early Records ..., p.249.
to help in its management. This was fortunate because it seems unlikely that James would have been very happy or successful as a merchant. For one thing, as he later realised, he lacked the type of mental agility which puts life into figures. Also he did not like risks. He certainly never regretted the change, always believing if he could that whatever is, is right. He soon became devoted to what he called 'the calm rural pursuits which habits and natural inclination both lead me to desire'.

In 1810, when James was 11, John Macarthur wrote to his wife in New South Wales giving her an account of her younger sons. 'James', he said, 'continues the same orderly, correct, well disposed boy. William is as heedless and eccentric as ever'. About the same time Edward Macarthur remarked that his own friends admired both his younger brothers,

The one for the gravity of his deportment, the other for the brilliancy of his manners. While they laugh at William's vivacity, they are struck with the steady correct demeanour of James. When William relates any story James is all attention, and if he errs he strives by giving him a nudge to set his brother right without its being perceived.

This was the beginning of a political career devoted to setting people right, quietly, modestly and with the best intentions.

45 James Macarthur's statement of the family finances, for the information of Edw. Macarthur, 25 Feb. 1858, ML A2928. In 1818 James was offered a good position, presumably a partnership, in a business house in Canton, but refused it 'under our father's advice' (ibid.; John Macarthur to W.S. Davidson, 3 Sept. 1818, Some Early Records ..., pp. 318-9).
46 James Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 6-11 June 1827, ML A2931.
47 John Macarthur to his wife, 20 July 1810, ML A2898.
48 Edw. Macarthur to his father, 19 Nov. 1809, ML A2912.
Four years later, when James was 16, it was becoming clear that he would be thick-set and unusually tall. He had now finished his term with Charles Coles. 'He grows very fast', John Macarthur reported, 'and promises to be a very fine young man'. William gave fewer signs of mental and physical weight: 'he is quick and intelligent, tho' like his Father a little prone to be idle. James on the contrary is slow and persevering.'

The difference between James and William persisted for the rest of their lives. William idolised his father and inherited all his passionate dislike of secular and religious authority. His character was of the sincere and straightforward kind which seems almost chemically pure. He had clear opinions but, unlike James, he was never a very active politician. Instead, he was to apply his imagination mainly to the running of their own affairs and to his own private interests. He thus became an expert botanist, agriculturist, and (from the 1850s) photographer. James was not only more orderly and persevering, he was also more sociable, cautious, oblique and tactful. His practical and scientific interests were less varied than William's, but he had a better sense of political duty. As a friend said in 1844, the reason James was to be preferred as a political leader was 'not that he has greater ability than his brother, but that his mind is always

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49 He grew to six feet (Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, 11 Dec. 1817, Some Early Records ..., p. 308)
50 John Macarthur to his wife, 29 Apr. 1815, ibid., p. 256.
51 See, for example, his evidence before the select committee on education (legislative council), V&P 1844, II p.179 (30 July 1844).
52 For W. Macarthur's life, see ADB V.
occupied with politics'.

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In February 1815, when William had finished school, the two boys, a friend about their own age, and their father left London for a tour of France and Switzerland. They were away until May 1816. The expedition was meant partly as an opportunity for James and William to improve their French, study 'those exercises which give ease and gracefulness to the person', and learn something of 'those sciences particularly Mineralogy, that may be useful to them in New South Wales'. But John Macarthur also wanted to see, and to show his sons, agricultural methods in a climate like that of Australia. For this reason they made a thorough examination of Swiss vineyards and spent several weeks travelling on foot through the south of France.

They stayed for about a month in Paris, where they visited libraries, museums, art collections and palaces, and spent several evenings at the theatre. James was not impressed with French acting, which - as he wrote in his journal of the tour - seemed to him particularly unsuited to tragedy, being merely 'pompous and declamatory, without nature or passion'. Nor did his stay in Paris give him a good opinion of the character of the French people. Before the Macarthurs left the city, Napoleon returned to it in triumph from Elba, and they

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54 John Macarthur to his wife, 26 Dec. 1814, Some Early Records ..., p.249.
55 Journal of a tour in France and Switzerland, Mar. 1815-Apr. 1816, ML A2929/A (no pagination).
saw him welcomed by crowds which had shouted for the Bourbons a few days before. James had no great admiration for Louis XVIII, but he did not like such fickle loyalty. 'What their countryman Voltaire has said of them,' he told his journal, 'is certainly true. "They are a mixture of the tiger and the monkey".'

The Macarthurs then spent about eight months in Switzerland, living for part of the time in a small country house, the Chateau de Chatellard, which they leased, and afterwards in rooms in the village of Vevay. Both chateau and village were near Montreux, a town on the eastern shore of Lake Geneva. John Macarthur had intended that during this time James and William should be 'under the care of some enlightened French Preceptor of established reputation'. But James's journal does not cover the period in any detail, and it gives no record of formal tuition. When Edward visited them at Vevay in September 1815, on leave from his regiment, he found that the boys were spending their mornings studying under their father's guidance, and the afternoons with neighbours their own age.

Edward, never a great scholar himself, was impressed with their progress. He informed his mother that

James, whom I was once capable of instructing, has now the ability to repay ten fold whatever he acquired from me, and William, though possessing not half the industry and application of his brother, is however far more advanced than are generally found lads of the same age. They both speak French with much fluency ... James is completely my father's factotum, being house keeper, interpreter and master of ceremonies; for it is he who receives all the Swiss who come to pay my father their respects.

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56 John Macarthur to his wife, 26 Dec. 1814, Some Early Records ..., p. 249.
57 Edw. Macarthur to his mother, 9 Dec. 1815, ML A2912.
58 Ibid.
James's duties were sometimes more exciting. In May 1815, he was sent on an errand to Geneva, and while returning was taken prisoner by a party of French soldiers. But when he told them why his father was in Switzerland they quickly let him go, declaring (so he said years later) that their emperor would not wish to impede an expedition so clearly dedicated to the greater happiness of mankind.  

Many years afterwards, in 1853, James recalled that during this tour he had 'become acquainted with' the Swiss historian and economist J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi. Sismondi was one of Mme. de Staël's circle and the first European thinker to question the classical doctrine of laissez-faire. It is not clear what the acquaintance amounted to. The great man was then living at Geneva, nearly 50 miles from where the Macarthurs were staying, and James only said that he had heard him 'illustrate in conversation the principles of government, which were his favourite study'. But from what appears below, it seems possible that Sismondi had a significant influence on Macarthur's later ideas.

Switzerland seems to have appealed to James more than France. He liked the cleanliness of the Swiss villages, and the townspeople seemed to him more self-sufficient and hard-working than the French. It is true that he admired Marseilles, with its 'regular plan' and straight streets. But his journal also shows that he liked the dramatic mountain scenery of Switzerland much better than the more monotonous French countryside and the formal style of French gardening. It is clear that he was already an earnest romantic, whose steady manner found inspiration in high drama and the profound grandeur of mountains and

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59 Macarthur's speech at a dinner, 19 July 1843, Australian, 21 July 1843.
60 Macarthur's speech, [30 Aug. 1853], in E.K. Silvester (ed.), The Speeches, in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, on the second reading of the Bill for Framing a New Constitution for the Colony, Sydney 1853, p. 141.
forests. Later, one of his favourite pastimes was to be that of

Roaming in lonely independence through almost tractless [sic] wilds, and contemplating without interruption the vast sublimity of nature [in his own country].

He had prepared for Switzerland by reading Joseph Addison's account of a tour in Switzerland and Italy, and the Confessions of Rousseau, 'that great admirer of the beauties of nature', which include a description of Vevey, Rousseau's favourite village.

The Macarthurs returned to England in March 1816. Within the next few months some preparations were made to send James home by himself to help his mother with the family concerns, a prospect which made him 'almost crazy with joy'. William was to stay with his father for the time being. But early in the new year John Macarthur was himself allowed to go, and so all three embarked together, taking with them 120 pots full of the seedlings and cuttings they had collected in England and on the continent. These were mainly grape vines and olive trees from France, but they included numbers of English trees, and such plants as liquorice, strawberries, jasmine and roses, most of which were used to begin the gardens and vineyards at Camden Park. They sailed in

61 James Macarthur's account of an excursion into Westmoreland and Argyle, N.S.W., Jan. 1821, quoted in Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Feb. 1821, Some Early Records ..., p. 372.
62 Macarthur's journal of a tour of France and Switzerland. Addison's Remarks on Several Parts of Italy &c. in the years 1701, 1702, 1703 was first published in London in 1705.
64 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 438-9.
April on board the convict ship Lord Eldon, and arrived home in September. 'Home', wrote John Macarthur with relief, 'How many dear associations does that word Home create!'  

65 John Macarthur to his wife, [30 Sept. 1817], Some Early Records ..., p.294. This is an interesting sentence, in so far as it suggests that John Macarthur was familiar with prevailing psychological and educational theory, which gave a central place to 'associations' between ideas (R. Freeman Butts, A Cultural History of Western Education, New York 1955, pp.284, 391-2; Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, II The Science of Freedom, London 1970, pp. 182-7).
The Macarthur's found New South Wales under the princely hand of Governor Macquarie. The four years after their arrival were to be the final and most eventful part of Macquarie's regime, full of battles which won him a place in colonial folklore. This was also a time of sudden expansion. At the general muster of 1817 the population on the mainland stood at 17,091. Of this 61 per cent lived in the old settlements around Sydney and Parramatta, and 25 per cent were on the Hawkesbury. The small convict camp at Newcastle and the new township of Liverpool accounted for the rest. Four years later the total had risen to 29,289. A free settlement had now sprung up at Newcastle. There was also a convict camp at Port Macquarie, and nearly 300 people were settled at Bathurst, beyond the Blue Mountains.

There was equal progress after Macquarie's departure. In 1821 6 per cent of the population lived outside the metropolitan county of Cumberland. In 1825 it was 11 per cent, and in 1828, 21 per cent.

The spread of livestock was more sudden. The muster in 1817 did not include any stock to the south or west of Cumberland, but in 1821 these areas could no longer be ignored. The count then showed

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1 Sydney Gazette, 12 Feb. 1833: '[James Macarthur] lives too secluded a life within his paternal domains to know or feel what concerns the people at large.'


3 T.M. Perry, Australia's First Frontier, Melbourne 1963, pp.42, 103.
nearly 28,000 sheep at Bathurst and 6,000 on or near the Golburn Plains. The total for the colony was nearly 120,000. For the next 15 years these two districts and the Hunter Valley were to provide the colony with three hinterlands, each offering infinite chances of wealth.

Cattle moved a little differently. In 1821 they were still gathered mainly in the county of Cumberland, near to the markets. But this was to change in the later 1820s. Thus, by 1828, not only 90 per cent of the sheep, but three-quarters of the cattle grazed outside the metropolitan county. 4

That canker in the state, its penal aspect, shows clearly in the 1821 muster figures. The convicts then numbered 11,941, not counting ticket-of-leave men, which was 40 per cent of the population. Children accounted for another 7,264. Of the rest, the adult free settlers, 65 per cent were ex-convicts and ticket-of-leave men. The others were either free immigrants or natives of the colony, there being 1,489 of the first and 1,884 of the second, and of course most of the adult native-born were the offspring of convicts and ex-convicts. The relative size of each group was much the same in 1828. 5

During the years 1817 to 1821 the form of the economy was also changing. The first bank, the Bank of New South Wales, was established in 1817, and the 1820s were to see the further diffusion of the finance system and the growth of export industries, particularly wool.

5 See appendix 1.
In 1822, on the surface [says S. J. Butlin], both private and public finance were still based on make-shifts of a primitive penal settlement, but the seeds of the rapid development of the 'twenties were already germinating.  

By 1830 there were five banks in the colony, including the New South Wales Savings Bank.

These developments were closely controlled by the governor, whose executive and legislative authority was still virtually absolute, subject only to the imperial power. For the time being, the only public political events were the meetings called from time to time to address the authorities on constitutional and tariff reform.

Similarly, at least before 1821, it was normal for new districts to be opened up in an official, well-organised way. This had been the case with Bathurst. But to the south, beyond Camden, the good land was more accessible from Sydney, and most of the first settlers there were men from established families looking for out-stations. As the pastures at Camden began to show signs of exhaustion, the Macarthurs joined in this march towards the south. Before the end of Macquarie's time both James and William made tours of inspection into the area between the Abercrombie and Wollondilly Rivers north of Goulburn, which was part of the new county of Argyle. During the administration of Governor Brisbane (1821-5) they had 6,500 acres each reserved for them.

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7 Ibid., p. 575.
9 Ferry, op. cit., pp. 100-8.
10 James Macarthur's account of an excursion into Westmoreland and Argyle, Jan. 1821, ML C124.
there, at Richlands and Taralga, of which 2,500 was to be free grant, and the rest purchased from the crown.\textsuperscript{11} By 1825 the bulk of their father's sheep had been moved there from Camden, although the grant and purchase were not finalised until some years later.\textsuperscript{12}

James and William were also given smaller grants at Camden. On their return from England the Camden estate had extended no further than the original 5,000 acres granted in 1805, plus an adjacent 2,000 acres which the Macarthurs used by a long term arrangement with the owner.\textsuperscript{13} The first addition came in 1822 when James and William were each given 1,150 adjoining acres. In the following year their father received from the government 4,368 acres in payment for a flock of rams, and 3,265 acres in exchange for several farms he had owned in different parts of Cumberland.\textsuperscript{14} It was at this period that the estate was described by a visitor as 'the first agricultural establishment in the Colony, furnished with every means and the materials for promoting tillage'.\textsuperscript{15} The last addition, in 1825, was the largest of all, namely the Cawdor grant of

\textsuperscript{11} W. Macarthur's application for permission to bid for land, 15 Dec. 1829, NSWSA 2/7918.

\textsuperscript{12} W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 4 July 1840, ML A2935; papers on land passim, Macarthur papers ML A2962.

\textsuperscript{13} This was Belmont, afterwards called Menangle, owned by W.S. Davidson, and purchased by James and W. Macarthur in 1837 (James Macarthur to W. Macarthur, 6 July 1837, ML A2931).


\textsuperscript{15} E. Marley to J. J. Therry, 23 Mar. 1823, quoted in M.H. Ellis, John Macarthur, Sydney 1955, p. 475.
10,400 acres, of which 5,000 acres was free grant, to John Macarthur, and the rest was purchase.  

When the 1828 census was taken the Macarthurs owned about 43,000 acres. This was the largest single holding in New South Wales, except for that of the Australian Agricultural Company, and only 10 other individuals or firms owned more than 15,000 acres. The family property consisted of grazing land at Camden and Argyle, Elizabeth Farm, a town allotment in Parramatta and several in Sydney, and the Pyrmont estate, 55 acres of unimproved land on Darling Harbour. Their livestock included nearly 14,000 sheep and nearly 200 cattle. The census also mentions 172 horses, part of which would have been the stud herd noticed by Peter Cunningham when he visited Camden about three years before. In his account of the estate, Cunningham referred to 'wheat equalling in quality and quantity the best in England, and maize of the most luxuriant growth'. He also noticed 'a thriving vineyard ... a patch of the various English grasses ... [and] an excellent pack of fox-hounds.'

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17 See the entries for Alex. Berry (for the firm of Berry & Wollstonecraft), H.H. Macarthur, Samuel Terry, T.P. Macqueen, Sir J. Jamison, Geo. Forbes (agent for his father the chief justice), John Dickson, W. Cox, and W.J. Browne (for the firm of Aspinall Browne), who were in that order of the nine nearest rivals of John Macarthur's family (census of 1828, individuals' returns, British home office papers 10/24, ML mfm). W.C. Wentworth should also be on the list, perhaps second or third, but he was omitted from the census.

18 See the entries for John, James and W. Macarthur, ibid.; and papers on land passim, Macarthur papers ML A2962.

19 Two Years in New South Wales, London 1827, I pp. 108, 112.
The Macarthurs' main income after 1818 was from the annual sale of their wool in London. After a long period of difficulty and doubt its reputation was thoroughly established in 1821, when one of their bales sold for 10s.8d. a pound, a price which their agents rightly called 'extraordinary'. They could now be sure of a net profit of £2,000 a year from this source, even during the depression and drought of the later 1820s, and afterwards there was a rapid improvement. In May 1832 James drew up a rough account of the family's general income and expenditure, apparently as a guide for the future management of the property. There he estimated that they could depend on £3,500 per annum from their wool, when the costs of freight, insurance and sales had been deducted. The other main sources of income mentioned in this estimate were those which had predated the success of the wool. These were the sale of livestock, which James thought should bring in £1,000 a year, hay (£800) and grain (£100). There were no tenant farmers, and therefore no rents, before the later 1830s.

Most of this money was spent on the estates. James allowed £3,300 as personal income for the family in the colony, including £750 each for himself and William, and several hundred pounds more were set aside for dependants in England. But as far as he and William were concerned the figure of £750 was a considerable over-estimate.

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20 Marsh & Ebsworth to John Macarthur sr., 17 August 1821, and wool sales accounts, ML A2965.
21 Wool sales accounts, ML A2965.
22 Macarthur's memoranda for his father, marked 'A' and 'B', 8 May 1832, ML A2971; W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 20 Jan. 1858, ML A2933.
23 Macarthur's memoranda, 8 May 1832.
Many years afterwards James was to say that in fact he had hardly spent £400 altogether during the whole 10 years 1818-28. During the next three years he was abroad and so spent much more, but for the three years after his return in 1831 he thought '£100 a year would more than cover it'.

William agreed that in his own case, during 1828-34 he had spent no more than '£100 per annum or probably half that sum'. It is clear that for gentlemen their way of life was very frugal, similar perhaps to that of a very junior army officer, whose salary on joining up, at the age of 16 or 20, was then £95.16s.3d.

Neither James nor William had personal incomes distinct from that of the family. Early in 1828, just before James left on his second trip to England, their father made over half his personal estate to their joint account, but until his death in April 1834 this made no difference to them. Even then there was no radical change. By his will John Macarthur left Camden Park, with the newly completed mansion,

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26 In 1803 the statist Patrick Colquhoun estimated that Englishmen of the 'mere gentlemen' class then had, on the average, £700 a year (Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880, London 1969, p. 20). In 1812 John Macarthur thought that a gentleman could not keep up appearances in England, even in the country, with less than £600 or £800 a year (Macarthur to his wife, 16 Oct. 1812, Some Early Records ..., p. 226). The estimate of 1832 makes the Macarths' total income equal to that of an English bishop or lesser peer in 1803 (Perkin, op. cit., pp. 19-20).
27 Deed of gift of moiety of livestock, etc., 27 Mar. 1828, ML D186. By an indenture dated two days earlier (ibid.) John Macarthur allowed James an income of £500 a year from the Camden property, apparently in anticipation of his marrying in England. This remained a dead letter.
jointly to James and William, and all other estates to Edward. But a partnership was arranged between the three surviving brothers (the younger John having died in 1831), so that the whole property remained as before, a single concern. James and William were the managers, but they never tried to separate their own expenses from those of the partnership.  

James's account of 1832 is also misleading in its reference to profits from wool, which soon exceeded £3,500 per annum. The clip sent to England in the summer of 1831-2 was the last which brought less than £4,000 (except for that sold in 1836), and that of the following year realised £5,850 net.  

On the whole then, James seems to have shown typical caution in drawing up the account of 1832, and the family's financial position was much more secure than he suggests.

* * *

During these years Sydney boasted several very rich merchants, particularly among the ex-convicts. But none of their contemporaries could rival the landed capital of the Macarthur family and the prestige which went with it. What is more, in a colony so dependent on the mother country the respectable credit which John Macarthur could boast in London must have added much to his family's reputation for solid

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29 Abstract of wool sales, 1831-8, ML A2965.
30 When Samuel Terry, the richest of the ex-convict merchants, died in 1838, he left an estate worth half a million pounds (Sydney Gazette, 27 Feb. 1838).
wealth.\textsuperscript{31} This was perhaps the real basis for their supreme social position in the colony, which was secure by the 1820s and was to last through at least the next generation.\textsuperscript{32} Also the brilliant character of John Macarthur - 'King John' - made him and his family the subject of constant gossip among the other settlers.\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, the family enjoyed unusual political credit at Whitehall, particularly during 1822 - 1825. Their power there depended mainly on the younger John Macarthur, then a junior barrister, and on his friend Robert Wilmot Horton, parliamentary under-secretary in the colonial office.

John Macarthur junior first met Horton in 1822, and they soon came to an agreement whereby Macarthur was to call on Horton, 'frankly, and without reserve', to offer advice and information about the colony.\textsuperscript{34} He afterwards advised him on the reform of its constitution, its natural resources, immigration, and convict discipline. But his influence seems to have been felt most in the area of administrative

\textsuperscript{31} Their oldest such connection was with the West End banking family of Farquhar, dating from 1802, supplemented by connections within the Bank of England during the 1820s, especially through G.W. Norman (see below, chapter 4; and A.T. Atkinson, 'The Position of John Macarthur and his family in New South Wales before 1842', M.A. thesis, Sydney University 1971, pp.29, 241).

\textsuperscript{32} See, for example, G.W. Norman to James Macarthur, 26 July 1854, ML A2923.

\textsuperscript{33} W.E. Riley's journal, Oct. 1830 - Jan. 1831 ML A2012 (no pagination or exact dating); Australian, 25 May 1852.

\textsuperscript{34} John Macarthur jr. to R.W. Horton, 26 July 1823, CO 201/147, f. 37, and see also 11 Oct. 1823, Catton papers.
details and appointments. His family's position in New South Wales was affected mainly by the fact that he was able to keep them well informed about changes in government policy and personnel, and to make sure that they received all the favours they could reasonably expect in matters of land grants.

John Macarthur's advice to Horton was usually aimed at increasing the number of capitalists going to New South Wales, and at setting up some regular system of free working-class emigration. He was concerned as well with law and order in the colony, particularly among the convicts. He and his brother Edward also tried to have a colonial militia formed. The degrees of rank in such a body, Edward thought, would reinforce the natural classes of local society. He hoped too that the ill-feeling which seemed to exist between ex-convict families and others would be forgotten by their service together in the same ranks. It is important to notice that Edward Macarthur, and presumably John, saw this bitterness as different from the normal type of class distinction. This was typical of their family, including James, and it is an important clue to the Macarths' social ideals.

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35 John Macarthur jr.'s letters to Horton, 1822-7, passim, Catton papers; Macarthur to Horton, 26 July 1823, CO 201/147, f. 37; Horton's memorandum for Bathurst, 1 Dec. 1823, CO 201/146, f. 281; Macarthur to Horton, 18 July 1825, CO 201/167, f. 302; John Macarthur jr. to his father, 12 June 1825, ML A2911.

36 John Macarthur jr. to James Macarthur, 30 Apr. 1821, and to his mother, 12 Apr. - 27 May, 1825, ibid.


38 See, for example, James Macarthur to John Macarthur, jr., 6-11 June 1827, ML A2931, stressing that the only bar to the social acceptance of rich ex-convicts was their continued dishonesty.
During the 1820s James Macarthur gave most of his attention to the corporate affairs of the family. He and William seem to have lived mainly at Camden, although the 1828 census gives James's residence as Argyle. Their father, at least in the earlier years, was not completely satisfied with their work. In 1818 he told an old friend that James was as 'grave and thoughtful' as ever, but that he wanted 'a little more firmness and energy'. Neither of them, he believed, had 'sufficient hardness of character to manage the people placed under their control, and they set too little value upon money'.

None of the family had much to do with the administration in Sydney during the early 1820s. James had no personal interest in the life of the capital - he loathed 'Sydney's pollutions' - and it was not until 1824 that he began to give any thought at all to political questions. For the time being he went into town on family business alone. In 1822-4 John Macarthur was involved in several disputes with Governor Brisbane and Frederick Goulburn, the colonial secretary, and since he liked to stay at Parramatta and use deputies in such matters, James

39 In 1822, Camden was certainly 'their principal residence' (Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, 4 Sept. 1822, Some Early Records..., p.373), and the dating of correspondence throughout the decade suggests it was always their headquarters. The census was no doubt taken during shearing at Argyle, in October.

40 John Macarthur to W.S. Davidson, 3 Sept. 1818, Some Early Records ..., p. 318.

41 James Macarthur's account of an excursion into Westmoreland and Argyle, Jan. 1821, quoted in Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Feb. 1821, Some Early Records ..., p. 372.

42 Macarthur's speech at an election meeting, 11 Jan, 1843, Australian, 13 Jan. 1843.
usually looked after his interests for him.\footnote{These disputes concerned John Macarthur's appointment to the magistracy (Some Early Records ..., pp. 360-9; Bathurst to Brisbane, 26 Mar. 1823, HRA i, XI pp. 61-2; John Macarthur jr. to Horton, 12 July 1824, Catton papers); the supreme court and privy council case Campbell v. Macarthur (Macarthur papers ML A2904, passim; Bathurst to Brisbane, 20 Sept. 1824, and enclosures, HRA i, XI pp. 359-67); and the Cawdor grant (Some Early Records ..., pp. 377-88; Brisbane to Bathurst, 4 Aug. 1825, and enclosures, HRA i, XI pp. 698-717; R. Darling to Bathurst, 18 Jan. 1827, and enclosures, HRA i, XIII pp. 23-31).}

These quarrels caused some ill-feeling between the local authorities and the Macarthur family. But they did not prevent the appointment of James and William to the magistracy in November 1825.\footnote{Sydney Gazette, 17 Nov. 1825.} What is more, in the following month the elder Macarthur's long period of disgrace and semi-disgrace was ended by his being appointed to the new legislative council, a board of seven, three settlers and four officials, who were all nominated and whose debates were secret.\footnote{Ibid., 22 Dec. 1825.}

The first political dispute in which James Macarthur was involved on his own account took place in 1827, during the governorship of General Darling. The affair was connected with the main political issues of the period 1825 to 1830. Late in 1824 the first independent newspaper, the Australian, had appeared in Sydney. This meant a new level of political sophistication for the colony, and particularly for the town itself, where political news and ideas now became easily available to all classes.\footnote{Henry Dumaresq alleged that in these years soldiers and convicts were 'constantly seen reading the opposition papers' ('Reflections suggested by the address voted at the late public meeting in New South Wales and some proceedings subsequent thereto', 6 Nov. 1827, CO 201/187, f. 437).} The first proprietors and editors were
William Charles Wentworth and Robert Wardell, both young men fresh from Cambridge and the Middle Temple. Wardell was new to the colony, but Wentworth was the son of D'Arcy Wentworth, who had been principal surgeon and treasurer of the police fund under Macquarie.\textsuperscript{47} Wentworth had been educated in England, where he and John Macarthur junior had been friends until about September 1818, when they quarrelled over a money matter. Up to that point Wentworth had looked forward to marrying Elizabeth, the eldest of the three Macarthur sisters, and her father, who had some admiration for him, had 'promised to use all his influence towards the realization of those hopes'.\textsuperscript{48} But the quarrel injured Wentworth's pride and turned him against the whole Macarthur family.\textsuperscript{49} He was always a man who liked his enemies to be mean, skilful and monolithic. From this time he identified the Macarthurs with a powerful group of free settlers who, he thought, were trying to establish an oligarchy in New South Wales. He had earlier described this group as a selfish coterie of families, which aimed to 'raise an eternal barrier of separation between their offspring and the offspring of the unfortunate convict'.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} For the lives of Wardell and both Wentworths, see ADB II.
\textsuperscript{48} W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth, 10 Apr. 1817, 25 May 1818, ML A756. See also John Macarthur to his wife, 3 May 1810, \textit{Some Early Records ...}, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{49} W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth, 10 Nov. 1818, ML A756.
\textsuperscript{50} W.C. Wentworth, \textit{A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of The Colony of New South Wales and Its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen's Land}, London 1819, p. 348. This book seems to have been written before and published after the quarrel (ibid., pp.270-8; W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth, 25 May, 10 Nov. 1818, ML A756).
Such a group did exist, but there is no evidence that the Macarthur's belonged to it. The elder John Macarthur once said, privately, that he would have nothing to do with it, and he condemned its 'illiberal' attitude towards ex-convicts. But he did not believe that its members aimed at permanent divisions.

Wentworth's connection with the Australian only lasted until October 1825, and it is not clear how much he was responsible for its articles up to that time. The paper, like Wentworth, put a great deal of energy into attacking what it called 'a party, who have no other object in view than to nip the nascent liberties of their country'. It referred to John Macarthur as 'invariably linked with those who have opposed themselves to every principle that savoured of liberality'. But as long as Wardell was connected with it, until June 1828, the Australian was always less violent than the speeches which Wentworth was making at the time. In November 1825 the paper went out of its way to condemn the growth of party feeling in the colony, and particularly the plan for a 'Retaliation Club', an organisation which was to support the interests of ex-convicts. It was Wentworth who was mainly responsible

51 John Macarthur to W.S. Davidson, 3 Sept. 1818, Some Early Records ..., p. 317. Other witnesses admitted that the Macarthur's were not rigidly exclusive (Monitor, 2 June 1826, 29 Dec. 1837).
53 W.C. Wentworth to Bathurst, 15 Dec. 1826, CO 201/179, f.516. But see also 'Philo Fair Play' to the editor, 15 Oct. 1844, Australian, 18 Oct. 1844: 'Mr.Wentworth's public connection with the paper ceased after the 4th or 5th number.'
54 Australian, 16 Dec. 1824.
55 Ibid., 12 Jan. 1826.
56 Ibid., 17 Nov. 1825. There is no evidence that this 'club' ever existed.
for the new political feeling among this group.

Wentworth was also responsible for spreading among the colonists as a whole a belief that they were entitled to an elective constitution. Ever since his departure from the colony in 1816 he had made it his great aim to master 'all the excellence of the British constitution', hoping one day 'to advocate successfully the right of my country to a participation in its advantages'. He had first set out his ideas in a book undertaken early in 1818, at the suggestion of John Macarthur junior, which he had published in London the following year. On his return to New South Wales he had continued to argue, periodically, about the need for an elected legislative assembly. But it was two years before the campaign became anything more than theory, and even then it is not clear how much this development was due to Wentworth's efforts.

In March 1826, during the annual parliamentary debates on the estimates, Horton had announced to the commons that in future the whole civil government of New South Wales would be supported by the local revenue. Most of the expense had hitherto been borne by the British treasury, on the grounds that New South Wales was merely a penal settlement. Horton's announcement reached the colony at a time when the Australian and its new contemporary, the Monitor, were making a special effort to work up a positive campaign for reform. Both pointed out that the New South Wales Act of 1823, under which the present

57 W.C. Wentworth to Lord Fitzwilliam, 13 Jan. 1817, ML A756.
59 PD second series, XIV c.1409 (17 Mar. 1826).
council was formed, was due to expire in 1828. Both argued that matters were at a crisis, for unless the settlers roused themselves the present non-elective system would be continued for ever. 'We faint in our minds', the Monitor said, at the present apathy, which must reduce New South Wales to 'a poor slavish ruined colony'.

But it was apparently the news of Horton's announcement which became, in the end, the trumpet call to action. Early in November the Monitor was able to report gladly that 'some of our principal graziers' were beginning to show a willingness to move. The most prominent of these graziers were Sir John Jamison, William Lawson, William Cox, Gregory Blaxland and Archibald Bell, all of whom owned estates in the old settled areas of Cumberland. Blaxland and Lawson had already shown a certain interest in reform, but Jamison, Bell and Cox were new converts. Cox explained that he had opposed the idea of an elected assembly until he had read the recent commons debates on the estimates. Now, he said,

when so large a sum is about to be raised, the burthen of which will fall on the free inhabitants of this yet infant Colony, I am [of] opinion that such inhabitants ought to have a voice by representation, in levying the necessary imposts.

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60 Monitor, 3 Nov. 1826; Australian, 11 Nov. 1826.
61 Monitor, 10 Nov. 1826. See also Australian, 11 Nov. 1826.
63 'Names of persons who voted the address to the govr. at the meeting held at Sydney [21 Oct. 1825]', CO 201/179, f.232. This was an address of farewell to Brisbane, which stressed the need for an elected assembly. Although they supported the address Lawson took no active part in the meeting, and Blaxland suggested that the reference to an assembly be deleted (Australian, 27 Oct. 1825). For Bell and Jamison's conversion, see ibid., 31 Jan. 1827.
64 W. Cox to J. Mackaness, 25 Jan. 1827, ibid.
Sir John Jamison, who was to take a leading part in the reform campaign from this time, was apparently influenced in the same way by Horton's announcement. 65

The usual interpretation of the reform movement makes it a campaign of the underprivileged. 66 But this is clearly wrong. In January 1827, when a requisition to the sheriff was drawn up asking him to call a public meeting to discuss the question, it was signed by 24 of the richest and most influential men in the colony. 67 Five of them, all ex-convicts, were the wealthiest merchants in Sydney, and nearly all the rest were prominent landowners. 68 At this time there were seven men living in the colony who owned more than 15,000 acres individually, including Jamison and Wentworth's father. All but two were among the 24 who signed the requisition, the two exceptions being John and Hannibal Macarthur. 69

The merchants Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft, who held 30,000 acres in partnership, also abstained.

The movement for reform has also been identified with a group known as the emancipist party, which was certainly responsible for most

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65 In his later speeches Jamison generally dwelt on this aspect of the question (see, for example, his speech at a public meeting, 26 Jan. 1833, Sydney Gazette, 29 Jan. 1833).
67 Australian, 24 Jan. 1827.
68 The five merchants were Simeon Lord, Samuel Terry, William Hutchinson, and Robert and Daniel Cooper, all listed in ADB I and II.
69 The five who signed the requisition were Cox, John Dickson, Jamison, Terry and D'Arcy Wentworth. For the holdings of all except Wentworth, see census of 1828, individuals' returns, British home office papers 10/24, ML mfm.
of the anti-government feeling in Sydney during Governor Darling's time. This 'party' included Wentworth, a number of other lawyers, the editors of the Australian and the Monitor, some minor officials, and the bulk of the ex-convict merchant and trading class in the town. But in spite of the usual interpretation, most of the work of the reform movement was done by landowners and magistrates like Jamison, Blaxland and Cox, who had no close links with the emancipist party. Not only did these gentlemen dislike the bluster and licence of the Sydney group. They were also anxious that the new constitution, when it came, should not give such people - particularly ex-convicts - any real power in the state. But they apparently thought that their appeal should have a united popular backing, and for this reason they could not publicly insist on discrimination against such a large and wealthy group as the ex-convicts. The question as to who should be allowed to sit in the proposed assembly was therefore, as Jamison said, an 'excessively delicate' one. It was a point on which even Wentworth was equivocal.

The union of the reform movement with the emancipist party therefore depended on there being no detailed programme. Any thorough discussion about qualifications would have exposed these knotty points. As it was, the main point of the coalition as such, and the aim of most of the

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70 Jamison and Cox had both disliked Macquarie's conciliatory attitude towards ex-convicts (Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 139, 205).
71 Jamison's comment at a Patriotic Association meeting, 8 Dec. 1835, Sydney Herald, 10 Dec. 1835.
72 For Wentworth's position, see op. cit., p. 355, and chapter 4, below.
73 At the meeting in January 1827 Gregory Blaxland objected to the qualifications mentioned in the petitions under discussion, and suggested that the whole paragraph be left out, but after 'some explanation' he withdrew his objection (Australian, 27 Jan. 1827).
rhetoric, was to protest against the existing system of power. All indignation focused on Darling and his officials in the first place and, in the second, on 'the faction', the Macarthurs and their friends.  

The Macarthurs also wanted reform, but they were not prepared to support the idea of an elected assembly. Late in 1825 they had joined with Berry, Wollstonecraft and others in an address to the secretary of state, in which they had asked that the present council be enlarged to 'at least fifteen members, to be selected by His Majesty, from among the most respectable landholders and merchants in the colony'. These were to make up a lower house, while the chief government officials were to become not only an executive council but the upper house of a bicameral legislature. This address, which had been organised by John Macarthur, had also been signed by Cox and Bell, both of whom had gone over to the more radical campaign following Horton's announcement.

During the intervening period the Macarthurs had also moved forward, but not in the same way as Cox and Bell. Presumably they were also influenced by the news that the whole civil government was to be charged to the local revenue. John Macarthur had subsequently devised a new

74 Monitor, 20 Jan. 1827.
75 'The address of the landed proprietors, merchants, and other free inhabitants of New South Wales to the Right Honourable Lord Bathurst', Dec. 1825, CO 201/179, f. 220.
76 For John Macarthur's part in getting up this address, see Monitor, 28 Nov. 1825. A rough draft is now among the Macarthur papers, ML A2988.
elaborate scheme, whereby selected colonists were to take part not only in legislation but in the government itself. In April 1828 he suggested to Governor Darling that the four officials who now made up the executive council should be increased to five, and that they should be joined by four private settlers. All nine were also to have seats in a nominated legislature of 21 members.\textsuperscript{77} Apparently Macarthur also wanted to have the legislative council debates, which were secret, open to the public.\textsuperscript{78}

In spite of the fact that no members of the legislature were to be elected, Macarthur's plan can be seen as a faint foreshadowing of local self-government.\textsuperscript{79} It is unfortunate that no other details have survived. In particular, we do not know what tenure the non-official members of the executive were to have. Perhaps since debates were to be public, Macarthur may have envisaged that the legislature would respond in some way to feeling outside, and in doing so bring about resignations in the executive from time to time. Such a system could even be said to have some features in common with responsible government.

But this is speculation. It does not affect the important point that the Macarthur family had come to stand for a type of reform which was profoundly different from that demanded by Jamison and Wentworth.

\textsuperscript{77} Darling to W. Huskisson, 7 Apr. 1828, \textit{HRA} i, XIV pp. 120-1. Macarthur suggested that the extra official should be the principal surgeon, who was his son-in-law James Bowman. He no doubt expected that he would himself be one of the non-official members, but the scheme is too elaborate to be seen as a mere bid for power (compare Melbourne, op. cit., p. 144).

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Australian}, 13 Jan. 1827.

\textsuperscript{79} A very similar plan was tried in Lower Canada four years later, at the instigation of Lord Howick (Peter Burroughs, \textit{The Canadian Crisis and British Colonial Policy} 1828-1841, London 1972, p. 48).
Instead of asking that the settlers be given the constitutional means of bargaining with the local and imperial governments, John Macarthur suggested that they be given a taste of executive power themselves. It will be seen below that this was typical of the family's political attitude.

The requisition to the sheriff drawn up in January 1827 resulted in a great public meeting, held in Sydney on the 39th anniversary of settlement. The meeting adopted three petitions, to the king and both houses of parliament, praying for an elected assembly and trial by jury. These petitions made an implicit attack on the power of the Macarthur connection, in both Whitehall and Sydney, by referring to 'certain private families' who were striving to become 'an oppressive and rapacious oligarchy'. Nevertheless, they prayed that the members of the new assembly should all be landowners with at least 1,000 acres each. They also asked for household suffrage, so that they clearly aimed to combine an aristocratic legislature with an unusually broad electorate. 80

Over the following months discussions on the subject of reform took place in the colonial office and parliament. 81 At the same time the secretary of state received the first reports of a violent campaign

80 Australian, 27 Jan. 1827. A comparison of the three petitions, which were all identical in substance, with the editorial in the Monitor, 15 Dec. 1826, makes it seem very likely that they were drawn up by the editor of that paper, Edward Smith Hall. For Hall's radical opinions, see chapter 3, below, and ADB I.

81 PD second series, XVIII cc. 1430-1 (1 Apr. 1828), 1559, 1564-9 (18 Apr. 1828); Melbourne, op. cit., pp. 140-51.
against the rule of Governor Darling, managed mainly by Wentworth and the editors of the Australian and Monitor. This agitation caused much alarm among the wealthier settlers in New South Wales, and in 1829 115 of them joined in an address of loyalty to the governor. The 115 included not only the Macarthurs, Berry and Wollstonecraft, but also Jamison, Lawson, Cox, Bell and numbers of others who had signed the 1827 petition.

It is an open question how much this trouble affected discussions in England. At first the secretary of state had aimed to give the colony an elected assembly, but by March 1828, after receiving a full account of Darling's troubles, he changed his mind. The new act of parliament which came into effect later in the year merely enlarged the legislative council to 15 members, including the governor, all of whom were to be appointed by the crown. Gregory Blaxland, who had gone to England with the petitions, was convinced that the minister had been frightened away from more thorough reform by 'the infamous behaviour of

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82 See particularly Darling to Bathurst, 18 Apr. 1827, HRA i, XIII pp. 259-63. The reports of Darling's private secretary, Henry Dumaresq, who had left the colony for home in June 1827 were no doubt particularly influential (see his 'Reflections suggested by the address voted at the late public meeting in New South Wales and some proceedings subsequent thereto', 6. Nov. 1827, CO 201/187, ff. 432-58).

83 'The Address of the Landed Proprietors and Merchants of New South Wales to His Excellency Lieutenant General Ralph Darling, Governor in Chief, etc., etc., etc.', and a similar address from the Hunter valley, both July 1829, HRA i, XV pp. 71, 74.

84 Melbourne, op. cit., pp. 140-51. The arguments of John Macarthur jr. may have had some influence, but it is hard to agree with Melbourne's suggestion that they were 'very largely instrumental in effecting the withdrawal' of the earlier plan (ibid., p. 145).
the leaders in New South Wales ... [which had] prejudiced everyone [in England] against their cause." 85

This also seems to have been the impression in the colony, and the next attempt at reform was more circumspect. Early in 1830 a small number of gentlemen met to discuss the question at Sir John Jamison's house near Penrith. Wentworth was not among them. They agreed on the text of new petitions drawn up by Jamison himself, 86 and a public meeting followed at Sydney, when the petitions were proposed and accepted by acclamation. Wentworth co-operated in the end, but he disagreed with the loyal tone which Jamison had adopted. 87

III

The first political dispute which concerned James Macarthur individually was the case of Richard Broadbear, a servant in the Female Orphan School at Parramatta, and his wife. The leading figures in the case were William Walker, master of the school, whose name was linked with the emancipist party, and the school's official visitor, Archdeacon Scott, a close friend of the Macarthurs and therefore one of Wentworth's favourite targets.

In March 1826, Walker resigned from the school after quarrelling with the archdeacon. He took with him the two Broadbears, whom Scott thereupon had summoned for leaving their employment. They were tried

85 John Macarthur Jr. to his father, 22 July 1828, ML A2911.
86 Jamison to Sir G. Murray, 3 Apr. 1830, and enclosures, CO 201/215, ff.352, 354.
87 Australian, 10 Feb. 1830.
by a bench of seven magistrates at Parramatta, including James Macarthur, his friend Lachlan Macalister and brother-in-law James Bowman. The bench convicted both Broadbears and sent them to goal. On appeal, the sentence was annulled by the chief justice, and the Broadbears then sought damages, on the grounds of malice, from Macarthur, Macalister and Bowman. None of these normally sat on the Parramatta bench and Wentworth, who conducted the Broadbears' case, argued that they had been present on purpose to condemn his clients. This was true. The reason, according to John Macarthur, was that they had seen the Orphan School and knew of 'the scandalous state the children were left in', the Broadbears being virtually the only permanent staff. But this excuse was not suitable to a court of law, and Wentworth secured heavy compensation for his clients.

James Macarthur was indignant about the behaviour of Judge Stephen, who presided over the trial for damages, and who, he thought, had shown blatant prejudice against the magistrates. On the other hand, he seems to have recognised that he had certainly laid himself open to the charge of stacking the Parramatta bench. In a letter written

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88 Report of the proceedings in Broadbears' case, etc., HRA i, XIII p.324-61. Part of the prosecution's argument was that James Macarthur normally sat as a magistrate at Campbelltown. The colonial secretary made inquiries, but the file (26/6336) has not been found among the New South Wales State Archives (colonial secretary's register of in-letters, Sept.-Dec. 1826, NSWSA 2338; J. Harris to A.Macleay, 12 Oct. 1826, NSWAS 4/1904).
89 John Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 16 May 1827, ML A2899.
90 Macarthur's evidence before the select committee on transportation (house of commons), 1837 (518) XIX, p.278 (9 June 1837). See also T.H. Scott to Darling, 19 Mar. 1827, HRA i, XIII p.321; Darling to Lord Goderich, 10 Oct. 1827 ibid., pp.547-8.
afterwards to his brother John (who as a lawyer disapproved of what he had done\textsuperscript{91}) he referred in anguished tones to 'these imprudent but otherwise perfectly pure transactions'.\textsuperscript{92}

This was the only public affair during the 1820s in which James Macarthur seems to have acted independently of his father. But there were others in which it is possible to think of him as emerging from the shadow of his father's influence, and in some cases clashing directly with his father's ideas. The first which should be mentioned was the founding of the Sydney Public Free Grammar School in 1825, a project in which John Macarthur took a leading part. Although James appears only as a name in the early proceedings of the school, his involvement in it is the first evidence of his interest in education, and it will be seen in a later chapter that his thinking on this subject differed slightly from his father's.

The project began with the Rev. Dr. Laurence Halloran, an accomplished classicist who had been transported in 1819 for forgery.\textsuperscript{93} In the spring of 1825 Halloran sent copies of a prospectus to several gentlemen whom he hoped would become trustees of his school at a fee of £50, which would give each the perpetual right of nominating a free scholar. John Macarthur, his sons James and William, and his nephew Hannibal, were among the first to subscribe, and they were also responsible for paying Halloran's debts, which amounted to £400.\textsuperscript{94} By the end of October there

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{91}{John Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 16 May 1827, ML A2899: 'You are no doubt right as to the point of law, but I think quite differently from you respecting Bowman and James going to the Parramatta bench ... they knew that the two leading magistrates [who normally sat there] were completely under Walker's influence.'}
\footnote{92}{James Macarthur to John Macarthur, jr., 17 May 1827, ML A2931.}
\footnote{93}{Halloran's notice, 24 Sept. 1825, \textit{Australian}, 29 Sept. 1825.}
\footnote{94}{Ibid. The debt was 1,600 Spanish dollars, which was raised by John Macarthur 'principally among his own family and friends' ('Verax' [John Macarthur?] to the editor, partly quoted in \textit{Australian}, 1 Apr. 1826).}
\end{footnotes}
were 28 other trustees, including the two supreme court judges, several officials, Gregory Blaxland and William Lawson, and such well-known ex-convicts as Terry, Lord, Hutchinson, Daniel Cooper and Mary Reibey.  

The school was to be strictly non-denominational, and was supported by both J.J. Therry, the Catholic chaplain, and George Allen, a leading Methodist lawyer, who became secretary to the board of trustees. The trustees first met on 28 October, when they named a committee under John Macarthur to draw up regulations. The committee decided that there should be 'no exclusion on the ground of religious tenets' and, apparently, no religious instruction apart from 'a suitable form of prayer' read twice a day. Boys were to be admitted at eight years of age to a study of English, arithmetic, and geography, and those who seemed suitable 'from their station in life, or ... promising abilities' were to take up classical studies as well.

In spite of a keen beginning, within a year the Macarthus had given up the school, John Macarthur having quarrelled with the managing committee over their refusal to pay Halloran's salary in advance. It later became Sydney College, and was thus a predecessor to Sydney University. There is nothing to show how much interest John Macarthur's sons ever took in the original institution, but the episode at least shows that their contacts could be fairly diverse, and more so than historians have believed.

95 Australian, 20 Oct. 1825.
96 Halloran's notice, 24 Sept. 1825, Australian, 29 Sept. 1825; ibid., 3 Nov. 1825.
97 Ibid.
98 Minutes of a meeting of trustees, 19 Nov. 1825, ibid., 8 Dec. 1825.
99 Sydney Gazette, 22 Apr. 1826.
100 H.E. Barff, A Short Historical Account of the University of Sydney, Sydney 1902, pp. 1-3.
The role which did most to make James Macarthur an independent public figure was his membership of the colonial committee of the Australian Agricultural Company. He took up this post late in 1824, when he was nearly 26. The company was a joint stock venture based in London, and funded by British and colonial capital. Its main aim was the breeding of livestock in the colony, particularly sheep. Convict labour was to be used, but the directors also intended that British and other European working class families of good character would be sent out. These, the directors thought, would diversify and increase the company's interests, and raise the moral character of the whole colony. Swiss and French labourers would, they hoped, be set to work in the cultivation of olive groves and vineyards. Ideally, with secure returns from wool and official help, the company would be able to introduce new industries and agricultural methods into the colony. Thus it would strengthen the local economy while it enriched its shareholders.\(^\text{101}\)

The company's real founder seems to have been the younger John Macarthur, and the first board of directors included several of his friends.\(^\text{102}\) As John himself saw it, the main aim of the company was to advance that great plan which was founded by my father - to make the growth and export of merino wool so large and important as to attract the public attention.

Eventually, he hoped, a grateful nation would acknowledge my father's services, and confer upon him some mark of public distinction'.\(^\text{103}\) John therefore arranged that his father should be the real manager of

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101 Plan for establishing a company, and list of resolutions, n.d., Co 280/2, ff.1-11' directors of the A.A. Co. to committee of management, 5 July 1824, ML A4315.


103 John Macarthur jr. to James Macarthur, 11 June 1825, ML A2911.
the company's affairs in Australia. But there was also to be a
committee to do the formal and detailed work, made up of 'the younger
branches of his own domestic circle and one or two confidential
friends.' 104

James Macarthur was the leading member of this committee, in spite of
being the youngest. His cousin Hannibal Macarthur and brother-in-law
James Bowman, principal surgeon of the colony, acted with him. An
agent, Robert Dawson, was also appointed and given responsibility for
the day-to-day management of the company's estates, the appointment
of servants, and the buying and selling of stock. 105

The project was a very big one. The directors offered for sale
shares to the value of one million pounds. They were also promised a
grant of a million acres on the outskirts of the settled districts.
But the company soon ran into difficulties because of Dawson's
negligence which, among other things, led to clashes between himself
and the local committee, and finally to his dismissal. 106 The details
are not important for Macarthur's political career, but it will be
useful to describe his attitude towards the company and his idea of
its effect on his family's position in the colony.

Macarthur had serious reservations about the whole concern, and
although he never expressed them publicly, he made them quite clear
in private. He explained to his brother John that he disliked the

104 John Macarthur jr. to his mother, 12 Apr., 27 May 1825, ibid.
105 Directors of the A.A. Co. to committee of management, 5 July 1824,
ML A4315. Two other members of the committee, Archdeacon Scott
and Capt. Phillip King, Hannibal Macarthur's brother-in-law,
were appointed but did not act.
company because it was ultimately a monopoly with its own 'interested views' in the purchase and sale of livestock. These must be opposed to the interests of private settlers, including in some ways the Macarthurs themselves, who could now look for serious rivalry in the supply of good rams to other colonial flocks. 107

But he also objected to the fact that the family were made the agents of such a monopoly. Partly on this account he told his brother that 'I would not have taken the duty of a committeeman on any consideration had I known to what it would lead,' 108 He wrote at the beginning of a period of economic trouble for the whole colony. When prices had been high, in the months before the depression, other sheep owners had been unable to compete with the Macarthurs in selling to the company. Now those who wanted to do so could not compete with the company in buying Macarthur stock. Either way there was bitterness about such a close interlocking leviathan. For his part, Macarthur went to some trouble at the sales of his father's sheep to see that they were not all taken by Dawson. 109 Having complained to John, in May 1827, of the damage the company was doing to their reputation in the colony, he pointed out that they must offer ewes for sale again in the coming spring. 'I am convinced Mr. D. will inquire for them', he said in despair, 'What are the committee to do?'. 110

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108 Ibid. Much later William Macarthur said of James that only 'the duties he felt he owed to his father and brother induced him, against his own wishes and hopes of success, to undertake the management in the colony' (W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 4 July 1840, ML A2935).
109 Dawson to the directors of the A.A. Co., 9 May 1827, ML A4318.
Macarthur's efforts seem to have done something for his own popularity, and his work for the company brought him before the public as his father's political heir. The *Sydney Gazette* remarked in 1828 that he was already 'much more esteemed' than his father. His manner and his ideals were both different from those of John Macarthur, and their relationship became rather strained during the time they were involved with the company. This involvement ended in 1829. Three years later John Macarthur went mad, building a melodrama about himself in which James was the arch-traitor.

James was perhaps not the most intelligent of the four Macarthur brothers, but he had the strongest character. He shared his mother's cool certainty rather than his father's brilliance. In his boyhood his father had described him as 'slow and persevering', 'grave and thoughtful', and as a man he read widely, thought deeply, and spoke carefully. He was prepared to be ruthless on questions which he was convinced were important, and his reasons for acting at such times (if they are clear at all) usually seem both elaborate and logical, given certain characteristic premises. But he did not like to show his hand. Instead he was polite, and often in a way which made his listeners think he agreed with them, following their arguments with a genuine but uncommitted curiosity. He always attended less to the argument than to the drama, the point-counter-point, and the subtle exposing of personality in conversation. In the words of one disillusioned settler,

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111 *Sydney Gazette*, 18 Feb. 1828.
he was 'as deep as the sea and as double faced'.

Misunderstandings of this kind were not common with his father, whose emotions were so extroverted and intense that he could 'admit of no gradation between friendship and enmity'. This means that it is hard to find a balanced contemporary account of John Macarthur. In 1808 the Rev. Henry Fulton wrote of his 'lust for power; his impatience of restraint, [and his] active and intriguing spirit'. Equally accurate but more sympathetic, George Watson Taylor, a minor English dramatist and Macarthur's friend, admitted his quick temper, but vouched for him as 'a man of honor and integrity, with feelings of ardent gratitude'.

John Macarthur himself was a fair judge of his own character, a subject which he found interesting. There were several characteristics which he saw in his son John as a boy, and which he thought were inherited from himself. John's manner, he said, was 'exceedingly prepossessing', but he was 'a little too proud for one who has but little money', and he already showed an indescribable fierceness of independence and an obstinacy to pursue what he has once determined on, which neither reason nor dread, future consequences are likely to operate on him to relax.

All this made the elder Macarthur very different from James. John Macarthur was 'a man of acute sensibility' who tended to a thorough

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113 W. Leslie to P. Davidson, 15 Dec. 1839, Leslie papers.
114 Unattributed quotation, Ellis, op. cit., p. 8.
115 Fulton to Lord Castlereagh, 20 July 1808, CO 201/48, f.289.
116 Watson Taylor to R. Wilmot Horton, 2 Aug. 1822, Catton papers.
117 John Macarthur to his wife, 11 Dec. 1809, 18 Nov. 1812, Some Early Records ..., pp. 188, 228.
self-dramatisation in which, as James said, he 'formed himself almost too much upon the old Roman model'. 118 He thought mainly about his standing with individuals. James, a 'calm and dispassionate' man, 119 was more concerned with abstract principles and an idealised public opinion, things in which his father could see no real substance. 120 James and William, as one newspaper said, were 'men of better education with less aristocratical feeling' than their father. 121 But elsewhere it was suggested that as a political leader and legislator James was 'too much swayed by books, and too little by his own sound common sense'. 122

James Macarthur spent less emotion than his father on personal relationships, and his personality lacked that brilliance which depends on constant awareness of, and frequent insight into self. He was perhaps as prone to self-dramatisation as his father, but he also paid more attention to the formalities of social and political life. 123 Although he wanted very much to make a noble drama of Australian politics, unlike his father he found it easy enough to insulate his

120 See, for example, James Macarthur's note, 20 Oct. 1826, added to John Macarthur to his son John, 16 Oct. 1826, ML A2899: 'Publick opinion here it is true is not of very great importance, but yet it has its weight'.
121 Monitor, 22 Dec. 1832.
122 Australian, 2 Sept. 1841. See also 'Cumberland' to the editors, 15 Apr. 1843, SMH, 17 Apr. 1843: 'let him for heaven's sake look to the common sense of the thing, and not look into Cato de Re Rustica before he makes up his mind; let him rely upon himself and the support of his constituents, regardless of the frowns or badgering of the great or big sounding words, or droits, or Lord Bacon.'
123 See his account of his first session in the legislative council, in 1840: 'I am complimented upon having introduced somewhat more of a parliamentary tone into our debates' (Macarthur to G.W. Norman, 5 Sept. 1840, Norman MSS C182).
private involvements from the duties he incurred as a public man.

He thought of his family as a corporate part of the community, which, like any other, had a certain credit to maintain. He once argued that 'it is better we should suffer in a pecuniary point of view than save money at the expense of reputation, and of friends'. 124 It was this attitude which led him into the most direct conflict with his father, and particularly over their relationship with the Australian Agricultural Company. In 1826 it was decided that James should go to England, partly to explain to the directors the state of the company's interests. John Macarthur told the younger John that he would be 'instructed ... to make a contract with the company for the sale of all our surplus ewes annually'. 125 But when James sailed early in 1828 he seems to have been given no such instructions. It is certainly hard to believe that he could have agreed to take them. At about the same time John junior received another letter from his father telling him to be careful in taking James's advice, as 'on many points he may be misinformed'. 126

James Macarthur was beginning to make up his own political mind at a crucial time for the colony, when a self-conscious patriotism was beginning to flourish under the nurturing hand of Wentworth and the Sydney press. This was not a simple coincidence because it was at this time that the first generation of native-born settlers, including

124 James Macarthur to his father, 24 June 1829, ML A2931.
125 John Macarthur to his son John, 12 Sept. 1826, ML A2899.
126 John Macarthur to his son John, 1 June 1827, ibid.
both Wentworth and Macarthur himself, reached maturity. A letter to his brother John in 1827 shows that like his contemporaries Macarthur had a distinct feeling for the identity of his country, and was planning his life to take account of it:

> This is my native land. I have ever cherished a fond attachment for it. I have hoped to be of some benefit in my day ... by attending as in my power to the duties of the station in which it has pleased an all wise providence to place me.  

In middle age he alleged in stronger terms that

> From his earliest youth ... he had been taught to look to the good of this Colony as the great object of his life.

It had thus become an end which would justify any personal sacrifice. He would put his hand in fire, he said, if he thought 'that it would permanently promote the real interests of the Colony'.

Strong romantic patriotism seems to have been common among those of John Macarthur's children who spent their lives in New South Wales. There is, for example, an ardent letter written to a friend in England by Elizabeth, the eldest of his daughters, describing the aborigines:

> They are ... very intelligent and not obtrusive. They have great vivacity and a peculiar turn for mimickry ... their carriage is very graceful, and perhaps they possess more native politeness than is found amongst any people.

And she ends rather bluntly, 'Pray pardon the partiality of a native for native subjects'.

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127 James Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 17 May 1827, ML A2899.
128 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 14 July 1840, Sydney Herald, 17 July 1840. The impact of this speech must have been heightened by the fact that it was winter and Macarthur was referring to the fire in the council chamber.
129 Elizabeth Macarthur to E. Kingdon, 8 Mar. 1817, Some Early Records ..., pp. 311-2.
James Macarthur's opinion of the aborigines was more equivocal, because his interest in great moral questions forced him to work out in detail how the white conquest of the land might be justified. He admitted that a personal injustice had been done to the old inhabitants, and he particularly disliked the policy by which the aborigines were subject to British law. This was an 'intolerable tyranny', he said, which put each man between Scylla and Charybdis, for the savages had laws, also, as binding and as stringent on him as our laws were on us, and equally incomprehensible to us as our laws were to him.

But he thought that the evil of settlement was cancelled by the moral superiority of Europe, which must give absolute rights. Therefore the only question for the settler was 'the most merciful course to pursue'.

Macarthur would not have described the aborigines in such admiring terms as his sister. Nor did he share his brother William's curiosity about people with little property or learning. But all three liked to think of Australia as a universe of unrefined honesty.

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130 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 23 Aug. 1842, SMH, 24 August 1842.
131 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 19 Aug. 1842, ibid., 20 Aug. 1842.
133 Ibid.
134 See, for example, his speeches in the legislative council, 19, 23 Aug. 1842, ibid., 20, 24 Aug. 1842.
135 W. Macarthur, 'A few memoranda respecting the aboriginal natives', [1835?], ML A2935; and see W. Macarthur's scrapbooks, ML PX A4358. In 1914 Werriberrie, an aboriginal born near Camden about 1840, remembered James and William, the first on horseback among his stock, and the second 'walking through our camp and speaking in a friendly way to the older men', a revealing contrast (William Russell, 'Werriberrie', My Recollections, Camden 1914, pp.16, 20).
and beauty. Thus Macarthur's patriotism was nativist and romantic rather than political. There was a great deal about the imported white community, particularly the 'dwarfish dowdyish' souls of Sydney, which he liked to contrast with people and things absolutely 'Australian'. Unlike William he did not feel much affection for simplicity as such and, unlike Elizabeth, he took no special delight in aboriginal manners. He was mainly concerned with the form and formality of white men's affairs, and so with the native-born settlers - the 'sons of the soil' - and with the poetic appeal of the rural life and landscape.

He had great confidence in the native-born. He believed that generally even the children of the convicts were 'fully equal to the same [social] class' in England, and 'more sober'. There is some evidence that this was true, at least up to the mid-1830s. Macarthur's feeling for the Australian countryside shows in many of his letters. For example, during a visit to England as an old man, he once wrote that nothing man-made in a new country could match the venerable charm of an ancient English country house. But, he added, 'in a state of nature one often realises it, especially under the deep shade and varying aspect of the rich vegetation of Illawarra'.

Here we can contrast Macarthur's patriotism with that of men like Wentworth, which depended much more on articulate political feeling, especially in the towns. It is now possible to see why Macarthur

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136 Macarthur's account of an excursion into Westmoreland and Argyle, Jan. 1821, quoted in Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Feb. 1821, Some Early Records ..., p. 372; Macarthur to his wife, [17 Sept. 1850], ML A4342.

137 Macarthur's evidence before the select committee on transportation, 1837, loc. cit., p. 175 (19 May 1837).


139 Macarthur to Sir C. Nicholson, 19 Sept. 1861, ML A2924.
was able to think of himself as a thorough patriot without being committed to any local popular movement. His public spirit was easy to reconcile with an authoritarian, or at least a paternal form of government. Taken together, his opinions did not contradict Dr. Lindsay's precept, 'he who wishes to monopolise liberty deserves to lose it', because he did not think of liberty in purely political terms. He was more concerned with immunity of person, property rights, and religious beliefs,\textsuperscript{140} and with that 'Moral Freedom', as Rousseau called it, that full awareness of social duty 'which alone makes a man his own master'.\textsuperscript{141}

He thought of his own political activity not as an expression of liberty, but as a type of duty suited to his class. The epitome of freedom for him meant travelling 'in lonely independence' through the bush, cut off from 'the recollection of those unpleasant circumstances, which within the influence of Sydney's pollutions continually occur to harrass [sic] the mind'.\textsuperscript{142} This was a patrician and romantic point of view, very appropriate to a landed aristocrat in an age of sensibility.

It was natural for him to think of human beings mainly in terms of the group, the community, or the nation to which they belonged for the time being. Thus he denied that men have absolute rights whatever

\textsuperscript{140} See his speech at a public meeting, 16 Feb. 1842, Australian, 17 Feb. 1842: 'I am proud to be an Australian - And, why? Because I claim my share of those privileges of thought, and action, and voice, which have attached themselves to the very name of Englishmen.'


\textsuperscript{142} Macarthur's account of an excursion into Westmoreland and Argyle, Jan. 1821, quoted in Mrs. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Feb. 1821, \textit{Some Early Records ...}, p. 372.
their circumstances, a 'hollow and unsound' theory which, for example, must give the Maoris and aborigines an equal right to vote in this country with the settlers; or perhaps a better one, since they more than any other were 'the sons of the soil'. The various rights which citizens might possess must be defined by local law, according to 'the high and holy principles of constitutional freedom'. But it followed that they might be extended equally to anyone who played a distinct part in the community. In spite of his pride, Macarthur was more aware than Wentworth of a broad humanity, including classes which could not then be thought of as political, such as the aborigines and - more relevant to this thesis - the transported convicts. Such awareness is consistent with a belief in the various privileges of rank in society. Elizabeth Macarthur liked the aborigines not only because they seemed intelligent, but also because they were 'not obtrusive'. James Macarthur's attitude to convicts and ex-convicts shows a keen dislike of immorality, as he understood it, combined with a patient awareness of what men might become if treated properly by their betters.

In the later 1820s Macarthur could not see how his own form of patriotism could ever be reconciled with the new political movements in the colony. He resented most of all the violent anti-government feeling in Sydney. In June 1827 he told John in England that

Already ... the baneful spirit of radicalism [has] gone forth. I grieve to say amongst our young countrymen, and it is to be apprehended that it may have become too deeply implanted to be easily removed.

143 Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 26 Feb. 1842, Australian, 1 Mar. 1842.
144 Ibid.
At this stage his understanding of contemporary radicalism was shallow. It aimed, he thought, at 'perfect equality' and 'perfect liberty', abstract ideas which were irrelevant to the happiness of men. Its object was 'to confound all received principles of right and wrong and raise convicted infamy to the same level as unblemished reputation'. He sensed even then 'the weakening of those bonds whether of actual restraint or of opinion which had hitherto knit the society together':

Our radicals would break down morals in order to establish liberty. God defend us from such liberty. 145

Several months later came the first sign that these social problems were to be joined by economic ones. At a time when they were paying record sums for livestock the settlers heard of a financial crisis at home, which meant a decline in wool prices and a tightening of English credit. The sudden shortage of cash coincided with the failure of much of the harvest between 1827 and 1829, due to drought. 146 The Macarthurs were not immediately hit, but eventually they found themselves doing 'everything in our power to reduce expenses, that we may not be involved in the general ruin'. 147

The feeling of financial gloom was not lightened by the style of Darling's administration. As time passed the governor became more and more disliked, although only Wentworth's party abused him openly. Chief Justice Forbes, for example, was annoyed with 'the pervading spirit of

145 James Macarthur to John Macarthur jr., 6-11 June 1827, ML A2931.
146 Butlin, op. cit., pp. 192, 208-9.
public orders, [and] the parade of authority', while William Macarthur, who was always sensitive about overbearing power, complained of 'the unwieldy system ... [Darling had] introduced into the different departments of his govt.', which had in fact made him 'a weak and most ineffective ruler'. At this stage of its development the colony should have been enjoying great leaps forward in its political and economic affairs, but instead the settlers were contentious, confused and pessimistic.

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In April 1828 Macarthur left the colony for another visit to England, and he was away until February 1831. He had several reasons for going. In the first place he wanted to explain to the directors of the Australian Agricultural Company the state of their affairs in the colony, and to arrange that the local management should be taken out of the hands of his family. This was successfully done. He was also commissioned by the directors of the newly formed Bank of Australia, headed by his father, to open an account for them in London, so that new settlers coming out might more easily transfer their capital to the colony. In 1829 such a connection was arranged with Herries, Farquhar and Co. of Piccadilly, whose directors included several old family friends of the Macarthurs.

Some of the business of the trip was more private. Macarthur studied in detail the working of the British wool market, and he watched

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148 Forbes to R. Wilmot Horton, 23 Mar. 1827, CO 201/188, f. 68; W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 5 June 1832, ML A2935.
149 James Macarthur to his father, 24 June 1829, ML A2931.
150 Particularly Sir Thomas Farquhar and W.S. Davidson. James Macarthur to his father, 16 Oct. 1828, 12 Mar. 1829, ibid. This was the personal bank of the Macarthur family.
the sale of their own wool. He also paid regular visits to the
house of commons during the debates on Catholic emancipation, 'this
eternal measure of justice', as he called it. In the winter of
1828-29 he spent about two months in Belgium and Germany. There he
saw the battlefield of Waterloo, visited the poet Goethe at Weimar,
and inquired into the breeding of Saxon merinos, and the terms on
which woolsorters and shepherds were employed in the German states.
He was mainly interested in systems which encouraged employees by
giving them part of the profits. In Saxony he found a woolsorter
who was prepared to take over the sorting of the Macarthur's own wool,
an enormous job which had hitherto been done by William.

In July 1830 Macarthur left England again with his brother John,
and was in Paris during the coup which put Louis Philippe on the French
throne. Their father in the antipodes muttered at John's going to
such a place at 'this agitated time', and he was 'more at a loss why
James should accompany him'. On his return to London, and before

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151 James Macarthur to W. Macarthur, 10 Nov. 1828, 7 Nov. 1829,
1 Apr. 1830, Some Early Records ..., pp. 422-40.
152 Macarthur's speech at a public dinner, 19 July 1843, Australian,
21 July 1843.
153 Macarthur's journal of a tour through Belgium and Germany,
14 Nov. 1828 - 2 Jan. 1829, ML A2929/B (no pagination).
154 W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 4 July 1840, ML A2935. The contract
with the new sorter promised him bonuses in his salary according to
the price at which wool was sold (articles of agreement between
155 Mrs. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 27 Dec. 1830, Some Early Records ..., pp. 464, 465. It is not clear that John and James went to Paris
especially to see the revolution, after it had started. John was
seriously ill and went on to Switzerland to recover, so that James
may simply have been going with him part of the way. There is
no evidence for exact dating.
leaving for home, Macarthur also gave evidence before a royal commission appointed to inquire into colonial revenue.\textsuperscript{156} There is no record of his reaction either to the French revolution or the inquiry.

One last purpose of Macarthur's visit to Europe was to find a wife. This seems to have been his father's idea. No doubt John Macarthur hoped for an English union which would affirm for ever his own achievements, for did not his two eldest sons dine daily with peers? James was more cool, more sure of himself, and less ambitious. Soon after his arrival he wrote home to report that among other difficulties, 'all John's acquaintance are in circles far too high to suit a society so peculiar as ours'. Also he felt that

\begin{quote}
in the present uncertain state of the colony and the fluctuating position of our affairs ... it would be the height of imprudence in me to entail fresh incumbrances.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

So he returned alone.

\textsuperscript{156} James Macarthur, 'Heads for an article on past life', Feb. 1865, ML A2928. The commission was appointed on 21 June and reported on 8 Dec. 1830. Since Macarthur left for home in September, he probably gave evidence about August. The evidence was not printed and inquiries by Dr. Susan Eade in the Public Record Office have established that the MS record has not survived.

\textsuperscript{157} James Macarthur to his father, 7-8 Apr. 1829, ML A2931.
When James Macarthur returned from Europe in February 1831, he was far more optimistic and clear-sighted about the colony's future than he had been in the late 1820s. He had now formed a friendly acquaintance with numerous important Londoners interested in New South Wales, and he had learned something of the way in which colonial matters were dealt with in Downing Street. The attention of officials and businessmen no doubt flattered him, so that the trip probably increased his self-confidence. But most of all he now realised that the social evils rife in the colony were slight compared with those of Europe.\(^1\) He always thought 'the basis of our laws ... to consist in Christian charity'.\(^2\) It was only partly homesickness which now made Australia seem a Canaan of order and charity, compared with the antique bitterness of England and the chaos of France. His family, he thought, were lucky to live in a country where divisions were not ingrained, and where good work might still do so much. 'True happiness after all', he told his mother, 'consists in useful and honorable employment with occasional recreation. All this we have within ourselves at home to a much greater extent than persons in England.'\(^3\)

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1. James Macarthur to his father, 11 July 1829, ML A2931.
3. James Macarthur to his mother, 7 Apr. 1829, ML A2931. Note how Macarthur made a point of reversing the usual contemporary meaning of 'at home' (the emphasis is his).
From now on he was to rely on the native resources of the colony, and to believe that its difficulties 'are only to be cured by patient efforts upon the spot'.

He was determined, he said, to look 'more to the advantages around us and less to the evils', and to depend far less on private links with British politicians, 'who have too many troubles of their own ... to think of the complaints of poor Australians'.

At the same time he found that the economic position of his family was improving. By the time he left for home the London wool market had begun to revive and it was clear that, even compared with British capitalists, they were now 'most fortunately circumstanced'.

This new independence matched Macarthur's brand of nativist patriotism. But it had other causes. It has been mentioned that his family's power in New South Wales was partly a result of the younger John Macarthur's influence in London, particularly his friendship with Wilmot Horton. This influence had suffered with the appointment in 1825 of a second under-secretary in the colonial office, Robert Hay, who looked after the eastern colonies, Horton keeping only British North America and the West Indies. In January 1828 Horton left the office altogether. John still had some links with government, until November 1830, when the Duke of Wellington was succeeded by Earl Grey, the first whig premier since 1807.

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4 James Macarthur to his father, 11 July 1829, ibid.
5 James Macarthur to his father, 24 June 1829, ibid.
8 John's particular patron, Lord Lyndhurst, was lord chancellor during the premierships of Canning, Goderich and Wellington, April 1827 to November 1830.
By then the Macarthurs, including John, had also given up their close connection with the Australian Agricultural Company, and so with the important London businessmen who controlled it.9

Finally, in April 1831, after James had returned home, the younger John Macarthur died, leaving only his brother Edward as the family's representative in London.10 Edward was now a major in the army and secretary to the lord chamberlain. He was not completely useless as the family agent, but he was much less willing and able than John had been, his ambitions being social rather than political.11

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The first great political issue to arise after James Macarthur's return was well suited to test his new enthusiasm. It concerned the local regulations for the disposal of crown land. Originally the only way in which a settler could acquire land from the crown had been by free grant, the size of each grant depending on the amount of money he had to spend on its cultivation and improvement. He was afterwards expected to pay a small annual sum to the government as quit rent, but was rarely forced to do so.12 From 1825 grants were also made by sale to approved buyers. The normal price was 5s. an acre, the grantee paying 10 per cent deposit and the balance over two or three years, together with quit rent.

9 James Macarthur to his father, 24 June 1829, ML A2931; James Macarthur to the directors of the A.A.Co., 27 June 1829, ML A4317.

10 John was only 36, and was said to have died of 'an effusion of water on the brain' ('Memoir of John Macarthur, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, London', Sydney Herald, 3 Oct. 1831).

11 Edw. Macarthur to James Macarthur, 6 July 1831, ML A2913, and 5 Mar. 1832, ML A2914.

12 Until 1823 quit rent was levied at the rate of 2s. per 100 acres. When Macarthur wrote the rate was 5% of the value of the land (i.e. 25s. per 100 acres of land valued at 5s. an acre).
There was widespread discontent about these rules, which increased as Darling's methods of managing sales became more and more involved. Among others, the Macarthurs disliked his 'unwieldy system', and while in England James had suggested to Horace Twiss, the parliamentary under-secretary in the colonial office, that it ought be reformed. The way in which Macarthur explained his own ideas to Twiss was characteristic. He seems to have inherited from his father a belief that social problems could only be effectively met with simple honesty and common sense. He later grew used to explaining himself more carefully, but in this case, in spite of the difficulty of the subject, he stated his argument in a bland few words. He said that he was concerned only with general principles, and that details should be left to the local legislature.

He had two objections to the land regulations. First he disliked the cumbersome procedure by which land was allocated. He thought that 'a general average value' should be put on waste land, which was in fact official policy. He also suggested that the new land board should be abolished and its responsibilities handed back to the colonial secretary. This proposal was dismissed out of hand.

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14 W. Macarthur to Edw. Macarthur, 5 June 1832, ML A2935.
15 James Macarthur, 'Suggestions relative to the appropriation of crown lands in Australia', (enclosed with Macarthur to Twiss, 10 Jan. 1829), CO 201/297 ff. 210-3. The paper is about 1100 words long.
16 The price of land had been fixed at 5s. an acre in 1825, but it had generally been sold at a lower price as a concession to settlers during the depression of the late 1820s.
17 Marginal notes on Macarthur's 'Suggestions relative to the appropriation of crown lands in Australia'.

Macarthur's other objection was more fundamental. It rested on two assumptions. He first argued that the unsettled parts of the colony had a merely 'prospective' value, to be realised only by the introduction of labour and capital.\(^{18}\) He also believed that there was in the mother country 'a redundant capital and population, which are at this moment causes of uneasiness to Great Britain'. The generous granting of land in Australia would open up a field for the employment of these resources, and because the profits were still only potential, the land should be treated 'as a fund to encourage the emigration of respectable families ... a bounty upon emigration'. That is, it should be given freely for reasons of policy, and also on principle, because it had no value for the time being.

Two points should be made about this argument. The idea of regular government assisted emigration was a new and controversial one. One of its chief exponents was Wilmot Horton, so that Macarthur was probably familiar with the debate. Horton was mainly concerned with sending emigrants to Canada, and in this case government aid consisted of a loan to the English parish authorities who had people to send out.\(^{19}\) Here the government was playing a part more or less consistent with the one given to it by the prevailing school of classical economists.\(^{20}\) It was merely supporting a useful public institution which could never repay

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\(^{18}\) This was not strictly true of grazing land, where values could only increase appreciably by the expansion of settlement. The main value of pastoral estates lay in their feed, water and accessibility to markets, which owners could do little to improve. In fact good pasture could be steadily destroyed by sheep over a number of years.


\(^{20}\) Some of the classical economists were less enthusiastic than others (Donald Vinch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, London 1965, pp. 51-72).
private enterprise, one of the three duties ascribed to it by Adam Smith.21

Macarthur made very different assumptions about the proper role of government. He was led to do so partly because he was thinking of emigrants who would be able to pay their own way from England, so that the help they needed would not be financial and immediate. It was characteristic of him to believe that the rich and the poor might equally hope for state aid in the pursuit of their particular ends. But the important point is that while the classical economists simply allowed the government a practical control over unused resources (as in this case, colonial lands), Macarthur seems to have thought of the state as a vast corporate entity owning these resources, and able to draw on them as 'a fund'. This was a new idea, and it was closely connected with his later political attitude.

The reference to 'a fund' jarred with the current orthodoxy, but Macarthur's other statement that 'redundant capital and population ... are ... causes of uneasiness to Great Britain', was a direct contradiction of prevailing theory. Both Ricardo and McCulloch, the most respected authorities of the day, maintained that while there may sometimes be too many people for a nation's needs, there could never be too much capital. It was fundamental to their thinking that, since the desire to consume was unlimited, there would always be ways in which capital might be used to meet demands within the present system.22

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Later in the year (1829) Edward Gibbon Wakefield was to challenge this idea in his Letter from Sydney, but when Macarthur wrote the only authority to have questioned it at length was Sismondi, whom he had met in Geneva.23 Sismondi's classic work Nouveaux Principes d'Economie, had appeared in 1819, and it was perhaps the source for this part of Macarthur's argument.24 No English translation had yet been made, so that Sismondi's ideas were not well known in England, and they would certainly not have been taken for granted, as Macarthur seems to have assumed in his paper.

The idea of the superabundance of capital was one of the main points on which Sismondi differed from the classical school. He was the first to write of trading cycles as proof that over-production was possible. More fundamentally, he questioned the advantages of an economic system whose whole motive force was competition and self-interest, and whose object was sheer wealth.

L'accumulation des richesses dans l'Etat n'est point, d'une maniere abstraite, le but du gouvernement, mais bien la participation de tous les citoyens aux jouissances de la vie physique, que la richesse represente.25

Thus he also took a different view of the role of the government in the economy. He maintained that the state had a right to intervene to see that the national resources were used and distributed so as to benefit

23 However Malthus had made a brief attack in 1824, in a review article headed 'Political Economy', Quarterly Review XXX, p. 297-34; Winch, op. cit., pp. 77-81; Peter Burroughs, Britain and Australia 1831-1855, Oxford 1967, pp. 16-17.
24 Sismondi's work was published in Paris. There is no copy of it among Macarthur's extant library at Camden Park.
all its subjects. In 1836 he wrote that 'Property is a concession of
the law, it is under the protection of the law, and it should be
subjected to the law'. Property was not simply the expression and
reward of private enterprise. It was also to be seen as the function
of resources dispensed by the state. In this way Sismondi's attitude
to the state seems similar to that taken by Macarthur when he wrote of
colonial crown land as 'a fund', having a 'prospective' value. It will
be seen that there was a more profound resemblance in that Macarthur
also believed in the absolute moral force of man-made law, especially
where the law was based, as Macarthur thought, on 'the original compact
of society'. At this period of his life, at least, he never argued
from natural and indefeasible rights, proprietary or civil.

Later Macarthur was to show less confidence in the good intentions
of the state, and more in private enterprise. In 1852 he was to refer
to himself as a late convert to the doctrine of free trade. But he
still refused to see the ideal political or economic system as a mass
of contending atoms. Even at that stage he commended free trade in
qualified terms, as

free intercourse in all things, as far as was consistent with
the general interest of the community at large.28

26 Quoted ibid., p. 115. Compare Rousseau: 'the State, by reason
of the Social Contract which, within it, is the basis of all
Rights, is the master of all its members' goods' ('The Social

27 Macarthur's speech, [30 Aug. 1853], in E.K. Silvester (ed.), The
Speeches, in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, on the
second reading of the Bill for Framing a New Constitution for
the Colony, Sydney 1853, p. 139.

28 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 22 July 1852, SMH,
23 July 1852.
Events had taught him - as they had taught many others, including Sir Robert Peel - that protective tariffs must always be useless and unjust. Whatever they aimed to do, they must in fact 'bolster up particular interests to the immediate injury of the interests of all others, and to the ultimate ruin of their own'.

Macarthur's early attitude to the duty of the state perhaps derived from his reading of Sismondi. No doubt he was also influenced by his tendency to think of human groups in abstract terms. Thus he considered the state, not as an aggregate of personal interests, but as a corporate entity with its own obligations to fulfil and its own credit to uphold. But perhaps even more vital was his experience of the all-embracing power of officialdom in New South Wales, where both land and labour were in the crown's immediate gift.

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Macarthur's ideas on the disposal of land were not well received at the colonial office. It was thought that to give up revenue from crown lands would be unfair to 'the public', and Twiss was also confident that emigration to the colony did not depend on the level of quit rent. Macarthur's more important idea of exporting both labour and capital to Australia did in fact become part of government policy, but only after it had been explained more convincingly by Wakefield.

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29 Macarthur's speech in the legislative council, 21 July 1852, ibid., 22 July 1852.
30 Marginal notes on Macarthur's 'Suggestions relative to the appropriation of crown lands in Australia'.
What is more, while Macarthur had wanted to see British capital spent on the improvement of estates in the colony, Wakefield and the government decided that it should be used instead for their purchase from the crown. The secretary of state, Lord Goderich, was not apprehensive that this policy might limit the emigration of men with money, because his main concern was with England's redundant population. He believed that it was 'unemployed British labourers' who should be thinking of a new home in the colony, and (unlike Macarthur) he had no doubt that they would find masters there who would be able to pay them well. 31

But Goderich agreed with Macarthur that the current system needed reform. In the early part of 1831 he announced that entirely new principles would henceforth guide the disposal of waste lands in the colony. The exact relationship between this change and Wakefield's recently published ideas is debateable. But there is no doubt that while old precedents pointed in a general way to the final solution, that solution was expressed in distinct Wakefieldian terms. 32

Wakefield and the colonial office agreed on three points: first the need for land to be sold at a fairly high price and the end altogether of the free grant system; second, the need for close rural settlement modelled on the agricultural communities of the mother country; and third, the need to limit the facility with which immigrant labourers might make themselves landowners, so that the colony would

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31 Lord Goderich to Darling, 9, 23 Jan. 1831, HRA i, XVI pp. 20,34-8.
always have an adequate work force. The government tended to ignore another integral part of Wakefield's scheme, namely that labourers should not be prevented altogether from buying land and making themselves independent. Wakefield had proposed what he called 'the sufficient price', a fixed price applying to all crown land, which was to be low enough to give every immigrant a fair prospect of buying, and high enough to ensure that some served as labourers first. Instead of a fixed price, the secretary of state laid down a high minimum price (5s. an acre) and ordered the governor to see that all crown land was henceforth sold at public auction.\footnote{Goderich to Darling, 9 Jan. 1831, \textit{HRA} i, XVI p.22.}

The secretary explained that a high price was 'absolutely essential for the purpose of checking the dispersion of Settlers'.\footnote{Goderich to Darling, 14 Feb. 1831, \textit{HRA} i, XVI pp.82-3.} He realised that it would make it hard for pastoralists to buy enough land for grazing, but he did not think of this as a real problem. Such people, he suggested, might be allowed to lease unsold land on a year-to-year basis.\footnote{Ibid. p. 83.} He was clearly less concerned with the grazing industry than with the raising of revenue and the growth of the small farming communities envisaged by Wakefield. Efficient production and orderly, civilised settlement must both depend, he thought, on the more intense cultivation of land around Sydney.\footnote{Goderich to Darling, 9 Jan. 1831, \textit{HRA} i, XVI p.21.}
The imperial government had a clear picture of the type of colony it wanted to see in New South Wales. But it thought that the ideal was to be realised by giving up some of the powers which it had exercised through the governor, namely the exact supervision of settlement, the choice of settlers and the allocation of land. It declined to play the role which, according to Macarthur, it now had a vital duty to play. A minimum price having been fixed upon, everything was to be left to a mechanism driven by (but also modifying) private enterprise. Underlying the whole scheme was the laissez-faire conviction that somehow the effect of sheer accumulated liberty must be the one desired. Even the minimum price was mainly a result of the competitive interest of the state itself. Like the advocates of the rights of man, the authorities in Whitehall seem to have thought that the foundations of an ideal society must be, not obedience and self-sacrifice, but unimpeded rational self-interest.

Lord Goderich afterwards became Earl of Ripon, and the new rules for land sales were called the Ripon regulations. They were outlined in Goderich's despatch to Darling dated 14 February 1831, and published in the Sydney newspapers in early August. The new procedure required that every settler wanting to take up crown land should find an unappropriated site suitable to him and make an official application for it. It would then be advertised for sale and, after three months, put up for auction at the new reserve price. The successful buyer was then to pay into the treasury a deposit of 10 per cent and the balance within a month. 38

38 Goderich to Darling, 14 Feb. 1831, HRA i, XVI pp.80-3; Sydney Gazette, 2 Aug. 1831.
In the same despatch Goderich drew the governor's attention to the fact that many settlers were long overdue in their payment of quit rent, and also that some had not yet paid for land which had been reserved for them several years before under the old regulations. These payments, he said, should be enforced as early as possible, because it was unfair that old land-owners should be treated more leniently than new ones. The result was a government notice dated 22 August, announcing that all arrears of quit rent to the previous 31 July were to be paid up immediately. It was also ordered that purchases from the crown were to be completed by 1 October, on pain of forfeiting all or part of the areas reserved.

The Ripon regulations and the notice of 22 August met with a mixed reception in New South Wales. The four Sydney newspapers took up different positions, but neither the Australian nor the Gazette treated the subject in any depth, and it was left to the others to provide detailed matter for debate. These were the Sydney Herald, which had begun publication in April, and Edward Smith Hall's Monitor. The land question was the first on which the editors of the Herald took a clear line. Their opinions are important because the paper already enjoyed a numerous readership, including Macarthur. Part of the reason for the Herald's sudden success was no doubt its cheapness. This led to rumours that it was subsidised by the Macarthur family, and that James was responsible

39 HRA i, XVI p. 83.
40 Sydney Gazette, 23 Aug. 1831. This order was later reissued with the date 25 August (ibid., 27 August 1831), and that date was sometimes used to refer to it. The earlier one is used here.
41 Macarthur to the editor, 27 Mar. 1832, Monitor, 4 Apr. 1832.
for its articles on the land question. There is no evidence that either story was true, and the style of the articles makes the second one unlikely. 42

The *Herald*'s analysis of the Ripon regulations was based on the assumption that they were inspired by Wakefield. Having read *A Letter from Sydney*, the leader-writer was convinced that local money was to be used to bring out and maintain in the colony

paupers from English work-houses ... whilst all young Colonists under twenty-one, and hundreds of native born above that age, and multitudes of industrious freemen, are pining in poverty and obscurity, without the means of subsistence.

He pointed out that the colonial waste land was worthless in its native state. Therefore the settler should pay for it over a period, as it became productive. He would then be left with capital for improvements, and meanwhile the money taken from him might be used by the local legislature for public works. But instead, the *Herald* complained, the imperial authorities would 'cramp and cripple our energies' from a 'total ignorance of the present state of the Colony and its resources', and a dependence on 'the theories of a speculative politician, who has never been beyond the four seas of Britain'. 43

The other side of the debate was represented by Hall of the *Monitor*. Hall was an intelligent radical, an admirer of William Cobbett, who wanted to see a class of small farmers forming the moral and economic backbone of the colony. 44 He therefore liked the policy of

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43 *Sydney Herald*, 19 Sept. 1831.

44 *Monitor*, 1 Sept. 1826, et seq.
limiting the size of estates, but he disagreed as to how this should be done. He pointed out that Macquarie had given small farms to ex-convicts and their sons, and to the sons of immigrants, who thus became 'the chief wheat growers of the Colony'; and that Brisbane had established 'a substantial class of yeomanry' on free grants in the Hunter valley, and at Bathurst. These farmers, he said, were a 'much more useful class than the graziers who, by concentrating on livestock, had raised the price of everything else.

Hall agreed that free grants should now be abolished. But he wanted to see all unused land reserved for new settlers and for the sons of colonists who had never received grants. These might be allowed to buy small blocks on easy terms. 45 After he had published this proposal, in his paper on 16 November, Hall received from Macarthur, through Wentworth, a pamphlet put out by the Colonization Society of London. This made it clear that the government had no intention of selling land on easy terms to anyone. 46 He therefore suggested that new immigrants be allowed to lease as much as 1280 acres at a nominal rent, the acreage depending on the capital they could spend on improvements. Others wanting land, such as native-born youths and men 'of small capital, but of industrious habits', should be encouraged to buy their farms, but it is not clear how this was to be done. Such a system, Hall said, would lead to more intensive cultivation, better supplies of

45 Hall's proposed petition to the king, Monitor, 16 Nov. 1831.
46 Wentworth's speech at a public meeting, 18 Jan. 1832, Sydney Gazette, 21 Jan. 1832; Monitor, 21 Jan. 1832. The affair of this pamphlet (for which there is no more evidence) suggests that colonial politics was more friendly than often appears from the tone of speeches and editorials, and from the statements of historians.
'grain, fruit, and other articles of domestic and general use', and most important, 'the concentration of our society'.

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The Macarthur's were disappointed by the Ripon regulations, which seemed to do away with every last virtue of the old system. But they were also worried by the notice of 22 August, which seriously affected James and William as the purchasers of 4000 acres each in Argyle. They had received this land in 1825 in the normal way: at the price of 5s. an acre, on paying 10 per cent deposit and agreeing to pay the balance within three years. In April 1828 they and 24 other landowners in the same position had written to the governor to say that, because of the drought and depression, they would not be able to complete their purchases in the proper time. Darling then agreed that they might pay the sums due in three equal half-yearly instalments. But in the following October new regulations were issued bringing their case into line with a recent change in the method of selling crown land. Having already paid a deposit of 6d. an acre they were now to pay 1s.2d. more, which would make up a third of the total cost. The balance was to be paid off at a rate of 5 per cent (or 2d.) per annum, from the date on which the original purchase money had fallen due. This order gives some idea of the complexity of Darling's land regulations, and it did not apply to all purchases.

48 Landholders to Darling [Apr. 1828], HRA i, XIV pp. 207-8.
When the order of 1828 was issued James Macarthur was on his way to England. But William had agreed to comply on behalf of them both, having arranged with the colonial secretary that their 1s.2d. an acre should be considered paid because they were already in the government's credit.\(^51\) On 22 August 1831 James and William apparently still owed the government £1133.6s.8d., which they would have expected to pay off within the next 17 years. Now they were told to send in this money within five weeks. James immediately set about writing a petition to the governor, on behalf of them both, asking for exemption.\(^52\)

Macarthur described the difficulties which his family and 'the whole agricultural interest of the colony' had met with during the years 1826-30. He drew the governor's special attention to something which was not new, but which had only lately become a threat to the established system of landownership. This was the growing number of small cattle owners squatting on crown land, particularly in the south country, where most of the older and richer settlers had their outstations.\(^53\) They were, he said 'in many cases ... persons of the worst character', who ran stock on the large areas still left between the freehold estates. He accused them of stealing cattle from landowners, and he complained that there is scarcely a respectable paying establishment in the colony which during the last four years has not been subjected to heavy losses by the hovering upon its outskirts of these systematic depredators.


\(^{52}\) James & W. Macarthur to Darling, n.d. (a draft written at the end of August 1831, because it refers to the government notice of '22d. inst.'), ML A2924, pp.8-21.

\(^{53}\) According to the 1828 census 18.5% of the cattle in the south, and 11.3% of the sheep, belonged to non-landowners. This contrasts with 1.9% and 2.7% in the west and (apparently) none in the Hunter valley. (T.M. Perry, Australia's First Frontier, Melbourne 1963, pp.137, 141, 145.) No doubt many squatters were not counted in the census.
Macarthur also maintained that because the squatter did not pay for his land and stock, and had 'none of the decencies of life to keep up', he was able to undersell 'the respectable and bona fide settler' in the Sydney meat market. He argued that it was unjust to make the law-abiding landowner pay such large sums as the new orders required, when the squatter paid nothing at all and was ruining everyone else.

Macarthur thought that their own estates in Argyle had suffered more than most from squatters. He also presented their case as a peculiar one because of the state of the government road which crossed their land at Camden. This was part of the main road leading into the south country which had been surveyed in 1824. John Macarthur had then put up fencing along the route marked out, with the understanding that the government would repay him most of the cost. But the government had no sooner built a bridge giving access to the Camden property than the work was suspended. Since then settlers and stock going into the south country had made their way as they liked through Camden Park, ignoring the fences. Macarthur argued that not only had his family not been reimbursed for the fencing, but their pasture and stock had suffered very much by the government's failure to finish the road.

This petition never reached its destination, and only the draft has survived among Macarthur's papers. Two events - at first sight contradictory ones - seem to have intervened before it could be finished

54 This is confirmed by the account of the Great South Road in The New South Wales Calender and General Post Office Directory 1832, Sydney 1832, pp. 89-90.

55 It was presumably the debt for the fencing which was to have been cancelled, or partly cancelled, by the agreement of 1828, but apparently this arrangement had been disallowed (James and W. Macarthur to collector of internal revenue, 20 Aug. 1831, NSWSA 4/30).
and sent off. In the first place the Macarthur family joined a wider campaign of protest. In the second place they decided to fall in with the order of 22 August and complete the purchase of their Argyle estates.

The general campaign seems to have begun during the week ending 3 September, when a number of landowners met at Parramatta to discuss both the Ripon regulations and the order of 22 August. The press reports of the main meeting clearly show how much the Macarthur family were disliked by many of the people of Sydney. According to the Monitor, there were present 'about forty graziers and farmers, chiefly the friends of the families of the Messrs. McArthur', who agreed on a petition which had been 'got up ... amongst the very family of the McArthurs; a circumstance enough in itself to excite alarm'. The Australian declared that

Macarthur family were at the head of it. A Macarthur took the chair. A Macarthur penned and set to rote the various resolutions. The meeting was to all intents and purposes a meeting of Macarthurites.

It was therefore, the Australian said, 'a meeting where the prejudices, and the influence, and the interests of a certain knot of persons predominated', for

whenever we see these gentry ... making themselves busy, no matter about what, or when, or where, we naturally, we irresistibly suspect that all is not right.

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56 Sydney Gazette, 3 Sept. 1831: 'very numerous meetings have been held this week at Parramatta, attended by gentlemen of the first respectability from various parts of the country'.

57 Monitor, 24 Sept. 1831.

58 Australian, 9 Sept. 1831.
In fact the meeting was chaired by Sir John Jamison. But the discussion centred on a petition to the governor for which the Macarthurs were no doubt partly responsible. Although the wording is not exactly the same as in the address James had drafted, the tone is similar and the same detailed points are made, particularly about the squatters. The petition concentrated on the notice of 22 August, and the Ripon regulations were mentioned only incidentally. The meeting also set up a managing committee which the Macarthurs may well have controlled, because its members were once described by Jamison as being resident at Parramatta, the family headquarters. Perhaps Jamison was a figure-head chairman, who owed his position partly to his title.

However, the mere fact that he was chairman does show that this was not simply an effort of 'Macarthurites'. According to the Monitor not only James and Hannibal Macarthur, but also John Blaxland, William Lawson, and several members of the Cox family signed the petition. There were two original copies of this document, one of which was sent into the country for signatures, but both - and therefore the full list of names - have been lost.

This appeal had some success. Within three days of receiving it the governor and executive council decided to extend the deadline for

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59 Petition of 'emigrant settlers and agriculturalists and graziers in the colony of New South Wales' to Darling, n.d. [sent 8 Sept. 1831], CO 201/220, f. 463.
60 Jamison to Darling, 15 Sept. 1831, ibid., f. 477.
61 Monitor, 24 Sept. 1831.
payment of purchase money to the end of June 1832, and a notice to this effect was published on 16 September. But James and William Macarthur had already decided to complete the purchase of their Argyle land. They were given credit for £420.11s. on account of the fencing at Camden, and the title deeds were issued on 19 October.

The decision to purchase was made about the beginning of September, during the week when the first discussions were held at Parramatta. Within the next fortnight John Macarthur arranged to sell two wharves in Darling Harbour, and three cottages and eight vacant lots adjacent to his Pyrmont estate. For these he received a total of £2,235, but they went on very easy terms, easier in fact than those which the government had lately rescinded for the sale of crown land. The Australian was convinced that there was a trick somewhere. But it seems very likely that all these transactions were linked. They were apparently meant not only to ease the family's financial position, but also to establish their bona fides as disinterested and patriotic managers of the land campaign. This makes it seem likely that they should be attributed to James - who, as his father said, set too little value upon money - rather than to John Macarthur himself.

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63 A. Macleay to W. Macpherson, 18, 19 Oct. 1831, NSWSA 4/17; Sydney Gazette, 12 Jan. 1832.
64 James & W. Macarthur to collector of internal revenue, 5 Sept. 1831, NSWSA 4/30.
66 Australian, 28 Oct. 1831.
The campaign now moved into a higher gear. From this point it should be seen as an attempt to comprehend and formalise the whole of local opinion, to distil and condense it into a detailed, long-term proposal which the government might adopt as its own. For two reasons this effort can be seen as something unprecedented in the constitutional history of the settlement. First, it sought more than just the granting of straightforward, well-known privileges. Second, it depended on the merging of various shades of opinion, and it was meant to bring in all shades. In other words it was intended to present local ideas with sufficient weight and unanimity, and in sufficient detail, to make them local policy. It therefore represented an early step towards government of the people by the people, or at least by their indigenous leaders. As such it should be seen as following from John Macarthur's constitutional scheme of 1828, mentioned above, in chapter 2. It also represented a notion of corporate self-government which will appear below as something peculiar to James Macarthur's whole career.

In the first days of October an advertisement appeared in the Sydney papers stating that a conference of all those interested in the land question would be held at Parramatta on 6th. The main object was to decide whether a public meeting should be called to petition the king for the amendment of the new regulations, 'with a view to promote the interests of the Colony, and to encourage Emigration'.

According to Macarthur, this development was the result of his meeting

67 Sydney Gazette, 1 Oct. 1831.
accidentally ... in the streets of Sydney, his learned friend and countryman (Mr. Wentworth), ... to whom he communicated his opinions as to the recent regulations respecting the sale of lands.

He had found, he said, that Wentworth agreed with him, so they had gathered together 'several other influential individuals' willing to act with them. 68 Apparently Wentworth had not been invited to the earlier discussions. In other words this was a unique attempt to link the most exclusive politicians in the colony with the man who held the masses in the palm of his hand.

The advertisement carried nine signatures, including those of Jamison and Wentworth. Macarthur's does not appear, no doubt because his family was then in formal mourning for his brother John, the news of whose death had arrived the week before the advertisement was drawn up. 69 At about the same time the legislative council presented a farewell address to Governor Darling (who was to leave the colony on 22 October) in which the elder Macarthur was not included, no doubt for the same reason. 70

The meeting on 6 October, like the earlier one, was chaired by Jamison. The resolutions adopted suggest that in spite of the terms of the advertisement, the speakers dwelt on the effect which the new government policy might have on their own pockets. In other words,

68 Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 28 Nov. 1831, ibid., 1 Dec. 1831.
they seem to have ignored general issues, such as the future of immigration. There is nothing to show whether the Macarthur's took part in the discussion. A committee was appointed to draw up a petition to the king, which was to be discussed at a later public meeting. Its members were John, James and Hannibal Macarthur, together with Jamison, Wentworth, Wardell and fifteen other proprietors of land.  

The committee met several times within the next month. Two sub-committees were appointed, 'one in the town, [and] the other in the country', each of which drew up draft petitions. A full meeting on 5 November decided on a final text and agreed to call a public meeting to 'consider and approve' it on 28 November. The committee, according to the Sydney Gazette, took 'every pains' to circulate copies of the proposed petition in the meantime, and it was published in the press several times from 16 November. This careful procedure was something new. Macarthur was later to refer to it as a model way of making sure that an address was both carefully phrased and widely supported. Even Hall of the Monitor had been invited to take part in the discussions. He kept aloof, he said, because 'he differed from

71 Australian, 14 Oct. 1831.
73 Sydney Gazette, 10 Nov. 1831.
74 Monitor, 16 Nov. 1831; Sydney Gazette, 17, 26 Nov. 1831; Australian, 18 Nov. 1831.
75 Macarthur's speech at a public meeting, 26 Jan. 1833, Sydney Gazette, 29 Jan. 1833.
the Committee on elementary principles', and as a result the new petition lacked the unanimity which Macarthur had hoped for.

The petition, as finally drafted, linked the general question of land and immigration with the private difficulties of landowners. The petitioners first complained that the extension of time lately given for the payment of purchase money was too short. The economic troubles of the last few years were mentioned, and the petitioners prayed that the government would go back to 'the liberal terms upon which grants of land were originally given in this Colony'. It was argued that the disposal of land should be seen 'as an encouragement to emigration, and not ... as a source of direct or immediate revenue', a phrase taken almost verbatim from Macarthur's letter to the colonial office in 1829.

The petitioners suggested that His Majesty's ministers had been led astray by 'mistaken, though, we presume, well-meaning theorists'. New South Wales was a country whose future depended partly on the products of the sea, and partly on the limitless grasslands, 'available for pastoral purposes in their natural state'. The petitioners implied that in a country which was not naturally agricultural, the best means of colonisation could only be worked out by graziers. They argued that immigration and the useful occupation of the land would follow from giving free grants to new arrivals, to young men born in the colony, and

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77 Macarthur's speech, ibid.
78 *Sydney Gazette*, 26 Nov. 1831.
to 'other deserving inhabitants', who might then build up their holdings by purchase. The original area might be anything up to 2560 acres each, depending on 'the settler's rank in life', 'the number of his family and servants', or some such criteria.

The petitioners thought that the grants should carry a low quit rent. They recommended 2s. for every 100 acres, as Macarthur had done in his letter of 1829. Land sold by the crown should be publicly auctioned, with a low reserve price, and credit should be allowed at 5 per cent interest. The petitioners assumed that the money saved under these easy terms would be spent on the estate. They also suggested that each purchaser should use the interest due on his debt to pay for the passage of British labourers to the colony, and that he should be given the option of spending the capital in the same way. It was explained at the public meeting that the settler might use an agent in England to find people for him and to arrange their departure, and that he would employ them himself when they arrived. In other words, the petitioners hoped that even in buying land, it would be possible for the settler to use all the purchase money to his own advantage.

This plan differed from those of Hall and the government in two important ways. One was its concentration on grazing rather than on agriculture. This was justified by the idea that the country was naturally pastoral. The petitioners wanted to see the process of land

79 Wardell's speech at a public meeting, 28 Nov. 1831, ibid., 3 Dec. 1831.
settlement directly under the control of local authorities, including
the larger landowners, who were mostly graziers and whom they saw as
the centres of civilised order in their own districts. This leads to
the second difference, namely the greater responsibility which the
petitioners would have given to the colonial government in the selection
of settlers and the allocation of estates. They obviously believed that
the local administration, the improvement of the land, and the management
of the convicts, were already in good hands. They were afraid that
the present authoritarian regime, with its clear-cut policies, was to
be replaced by a system of aimless and irresponsible free enterprise,
where everything would be left to chance.

The petitioners drew a dismal picture of what the future might be
if the new regulations were continued. The sale of land and the
immigration of landowners would drop off considerably. Those whom they
called 'the more respectable class of Colonists' would no longer be
able to add to their pastures with ease and security. Many, they thought,
would even given up those grazing concerns

which, under their direction, have been found particularly
applicable to the employment and reformation of the convicts,
besides being productive of general benefit.

Areas which might have been taken up by such settlers would then be
used by mere squatters, who 'must soon degenerate into a state verging
on barbarism'. And so, concluded the petitioners, the land reforms
'would inevitably give rise to the very evils they were intended to
prevent'.

Events were to dispel the petitioners' fears about immigration. But
the last part of their forecast turned out to be very accurate. No doubt
the government would have been unable to cope with the coming wool boom
and the rush for new pasture under any system of land disposal. Certainly
the petitioners did not foresee that many from 'the most respectable
classes' would become squatters themselves when their livestock began
to overflow their freehold estates. But whether or not these events
were inevitable, it is also true that squatters of all sorts soon became
the colony's most important primary producers, that they were very hard
to control, and that some at least 'verged on barbarism'.

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The Monitor and the Australian always took it for granted that in
so far as the protest against the land reforms was self-interested
it must be inspired by the Macarths and their friends, who wanted to
amass vast estates at a minimum cost. On 28 October the Australian
called for a public meeting as soon as possible to prevent the Macarths
from taking over the campaign. But several days later, when a meeting
seemed imminent, the editor decided that the family 'no doubt will find

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80 In 1837 Macarthur recognised that the abolition of free grants
had been overdue, and that 5s. was a fair minimum price, but he
warned that any increase would force settlers to become squatters
(his evidence before the select committee on transportation (house
of commons), 1837 (518) XIX, p. 172 (19 May 1837)). In 1842, when
the minimum price had been increased to £1, he proclaimed the
inevitable result, 'squatting was fast superseding settling' (his
speech in the legislative council, 23 Aug. 1842, SMH, 24 Sept. 1842).
81 Australian, 28 Oct. 1831.
it very convenient if possible to get the sanction of a public meeting' to their petition. The petition itself, when it appeared, was treated in the same way. The Australian agreed with the argument used against the Ripon regulations. But, wrote the editor, from the parts dealing with the arrears of purchase money 'we decidedly and wholly dissent'. He assumed that these were the work of John Macarthur:

Oh, John Macarthur! John Macarthur, oh!! ... We never conceived you to be the astute calculator which this handiwork of yours bespeaks you.83

The meeting on 28 November, at the Red Cow Inn, Parramatta, was, as the Gazette pointed out, the first of its kind in the colony.84 It was also the first public gathering at which James Macarthur was a leading figure, and he took a lot of trouble to make a good impression. According to the Australian, he had 'evidently rehearsed his part at least seven times over'. But the reporter conceded that his 'enunciation appeared to us remarkably clear, and his language fastidiously correct'. What is more, he 'displayed the education of a gentleman, and a rather winning courtliness by no means characteristic of his family'.85 The Gazette, which was always more friendly, commented on his 'very neat and appropriate speech'.86

Except for Dr. William Bland, none of the old, well known members of the committee spoke at the meeting. Instead it was Macarthur who gave the opening address and who proposed that the petition

82 Ibid., 4 Nov. 1831.
83 Ibid., 18 Nov. 1831.
84 Sydney Gazette, 1 Dec. 1831.
85 Australian, 2 Dec. 1831.
86 Sydney Gazette, 1 Dec. 1831.
be adopted. This suggests that, in spite of being by far the youngest committeeman, he had been a guiding force in the work of the previous two months. As he implied very strongly, he came forward as one of a new generation, absolutely committed to the colony and as free as possible from the feelings engendered by old feuds. He began his speech by making it clear that this was not 'a party meeting'. None of his family, he said, had any selfish interest in the subject because they had settled all their debts to the government. His only object, he explained, was 'the good of his native land'. He was therefore glad to be associated with the patriot Wentworth, 'his learned friend and countryman'.

He then explained that the petition recommended sale of crown land by auction because that would prevent any suspicion of favouritism. He also announced that he had just received news from London that a royal commission had been set up to enquire into emigration to the colonies. He finally expressed the hope that this was the beginning of 'a fresh era in the annals of the colony', and that 'a spirit of unanimity is beginning to pervade our community'.

He was seconded by Wardell, who also pointed out that he had no selfish interest in the success of the petition. The fact that he was able to say so was no doubt the reason Wardell was chosen as seconder.

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87 Ibid.; Australian, 2 Dec. 1831. The two reports of the speech vary slightly, as usual.

88 In fact this was not a commission of enquiry, but a board appointed on 24 June 1831 to answer the questions and smooth the way for private emigrants to the colonies (Madgwick, op. cit., pp. 93, 99). The press reports of Macarthur's speech may be inaccurate.
rather than Wentworth, who was not in the same position. Wardell also explained how the petitioners hoped to encourage the import of both labour and capital:

The petition was not to get rid of the sales, but to put the emigrant on that footing on which he had a right to be put, instead of obliging him to spend the entire of his means in obtaining land ... The principle of the petition was, that the Crown should sell land, in order to ensure a sum of money, to be appropriated by each purchaser in bringing out free labourers, in proportion to the quantity of land he purchased ... it would be ... an employment of English capital for the benefit of this country.

Wardell did not explain the advantage of having immigration organised by the settlers themselves, except to say that a government system would cost more. The omission is not surprising, because there was no reason for thinking that the government was planning aided emigration to New South Wales. Six weeks earlier the Rev. J.D. Lang had arrived with 59 skilled labourers, 'the most important importation the colony ever received', whose passages had been financed by a government loan. But this was the result of one man's initiative and, as Macarthur pointed out later, it really showed that settlers could find good labourers by themselves.

During the 1830s both Lang and the Macarthurs clarified their ideas on privately organised immigration. According to Macarthur they agreed on the main principles to be followed. Both aimed to remove what

89 Sydney Gazette, 15 Oct. 1831.
90 James Macarthur to Lang, 29 June 1833, CO 201/235, f. 480. See also John Macarthur sr. to Lang, 17 Nov. 1831, ML A2900.
he called 'the plague spot ... from the face of our society', namely
the evil influence of the convicts, and both thought that this could be
done by carefully managed immigration. Lang wanted to bring in small
communities en bloc from the British Isles, each with their own craftsmen
and minister of religion. These were to be settled on small farms away
from the existing towns, each group being more or less self-sufficient,
so that 'the moral restraints of their natural vicinage might continue
in vigorous operation in their new settlement'. Small farming
clustered around Sydney, that seat of evil, must be 'not so much a
concentration of population as a concentration of vice and villainy'.

Lang also hoped that such people might become tenant farmers on
large estates. This was the plan followed by the Macarthurs at Camden
in the later 1830s, with Edward acting as recruiting agent in England.
According to William they considered it a matter 'of the highest
importance' that colonists should choose and bring out their own
immigrants wherever possible, and he added that the people should be
kept together 'in sufficient numbers to form the nucleus of a rural
community'. Edward stated as a guiding principle that everyone going
out should know exactly what his prospects were. Also, he thought,

91 Macarthur to Lang, 29 June 1833, CO 201/235, f. 480.
92 J.D. Lang, Emigration: considered chiefly in reference to the
practicability and expediency of importing and of settling throughout
the territory of New South Wales, a numerous ... agricultural
population, Sydney 1833, p. 16.
93 Lang to R. Wilmot Horton, 18 Apr. 1831, Catton papers.
94 Lang, op. cit., p. 14; Edw. Macarthur to his father, 13 June 1832,
ML A2914.
95 Macarthur's evidence before the select committee on emigration
(legislative council 1835), V&Q 1824-37, II pp. 319-20.
96 Edw. Macarthur to Lt. Col. Greaves (military secretary to Lord
Stanley), 14 June 1844, papers of 14th Earl of Derby, box 135/5.
the process must be gradual, 'a pair here and another there, issuing it is true like mere drops, from the mass of the population, but forming collectively a considerable body'. 97

It was this piecemeal aspect of privately organised immigration which was its worst fault. E.S. Hall pointed out after Wardell's speech on 28 November that the scheme which he and Macarthur had proposed would relieve Britain of a mere quarter of a pauper for every thousand acres sold here. He argued that no petition would be well received at home if it did not try to balance the needs of the mother country with those of the colony. He also remarked that large estates sold on easy terms would be snapped up by absenteeees, which would mean the disinheriance of their own people. He thought that the petitioners' plan would be rejected in England because it would hinder working class emigration, and that it should be rejected here because it would bring in too much British capital. Finally, he read a petition of his own. 98

Neither of the petitions was adopted by the meeting. Instead William Bland moved that they break up until another day, mainly because the meeting had been too badly attended to give it any authority. He suggested that they meet again at Sydney sometime after the arrival of General Bourke, the new governor, who was due any day. Macarthur agreed that too few people had come, and Bland's motion was passed. Some argument

98 Sydney Gazette, 3 Dec. 1831.
followed about whether the next meeting should be held at Sydney or Parramatta, Sydney being pressed by those who wanted to see public opinion more directly involved. Macarthur preferred Parramatta, no doubt because he thought that public opinion at Sydney was not the careful and deliberate kind they wanted. This attitude carried the day and the vote went to Parramatta.

Governor Bourke arrived in the harbour four days later, and soon afterwards the committee arranged for the meeting to be reconvened, on 18 January. But on 9 January a new government notice was issued extending the deadline for the payment of purchase money to the end of March 1834. There were a number of committee members who now saw no point in going on, and this strengthened suspicions that the committee was inspired only by self-interest.

The proceedings on 18 January were rather confused. It was Wentworth who made the opening speech and who moved, on behalf of the committee, that the meeting be adjourned sine die. The notice of 9 January had dealt with the question of arrears and, he said, 'it is impossible not to admit that this was the most pressing object adverted to at the last meeting'. Therefore, he argued, the petition ought to be given up. The meeting was not much impressed with this argument. The numbers were even smaller than last time, but more people had come from Sydney, and there was a strong lobby for Hall's point of view. Wentworth's speech was answered by several angry radicals, who pointed out that it contradicted the address he had helped to draw up.

100 Ibid., 10 Jan. 1832.
101 Ibid., 17 Jan. 1832.
102 Ibid., 21 Jan. 1832.
Macarthur rose to support Wentworth's motion. He began by answering a personal remark made by the opposition. In his speech in November, he explained, he had only excused his own family from self-interest. He had not been qualified to excuse the whole committee. He added that although Wentworth had given the impression that the whole matter was to be forgotten, this was not the intention of the committee. But, he said, the petition would clearly have to be altered. There were a number of other speeches. A proposal from the radicals, that they adjourn for four weeks only, was then put to the meeting, 'the Messrs. Macarthur cheering most audibly' when it was declared lost. Finally, as a compromise, it was decided that they should meet again in six months time.

But this was the end of the campaign against the Ripon regulations. Next day Governor Bourke announced, in opening the annual session of council, that for the time being the proceeds from the crown land sales would be entrusted to the council, and he hoped that 'a considerable proportion' would be used to bring in labourers. According to Macarthur, speaking some time later, this statement ended all dissatisfaction with the land reforms.

But the governor's speech did not contain any long-term assurances, and he certainly did not answer the main objections which had been

103 [Australian, 20 Jan. 1832.]
104 [Sydney Gazette, 21 Jan. 1832.]
105 [Macarthur's evidence before the select committee on transportation, 1837, loc. cit., p.172 (19 May 1837).]
made to the Ripon regulations. In fact the real reason for the end of the affair was a less worthy one. Macarthur was no doubt referring to his own motives when he explained that the public meetings had been called because of a belief that the regulations would discourage wealthy immigrants.

It was not so much a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the colonists settled there, because they could obtain no more land beyond what they had already obtained by grant; if they purchased land under the old regulation, they must have given 5s. [as he had done in Argyle].

This passage seems to contain the real explanation as to why the campaign was dropped. Events at the last meeting show that many of Macarthur's colleagues, particularly Wentworth, were more concerned with the question of arrears of purchase money than they were with the Ripon regulations, which they knew could not affect them seriously. In fact, as many must have foreseen, it was the old settlers who were to benefit most from sales by public auction.

In other words the notice of 9 January, which put off the deadline for the payment of purchase money, ended the whole concern of the settlers in debt. Since many of these were important men, it therefore disabled a campaign which was supposed to have much broader aims. So much for Macarthur's naive idealism. This was not the last of his patriotic

106 Ibid.

107 This was because their knowledge of the land and their local connections allowed them to turn each auction to the best advantage (K. Buckley, 'E.G. Wakefield and the Alienation of Crown Land in N.S.W. to 1847', Economic Record 33, 1957, pp.65-6; Peter Burroughs, Britain and Australia 1831-1855, Oxford 1967, pp. 229 - 30).
schemes which was to come to grief on that irreducible rock, William Charles Wentworth.

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Between 1832 and 1836 a total of 3882 assisted immigrants arrived in New South Wales, under a scheme managed by the colonial office and financed from the land fund. They were mostly women taken from workhouses and charitable institutions, where they had been poorly trained for the work of removing 'the plague spot ... from the face of our society'. There were many complaints about the quality of the immigrants, and in October 1835 Governor Bourke suggested reforms which would give the colonists more control over the way their money was spent. These provided for a 'government system', where agents appointed by the local government were to look after the selection and passage of immigrants, and a 'bounty system', where settlers would be reimbursed for bringing out their own labourers. This plan was approved by the colonial office, and an agent-general was appointed by the secretary of state to supervise the working of the government system at home.

108 Madgwick, op. cit., p. 223.
109 Ibid., pp. 103-10. The quotation comes from James Macarthur to Lang, 29 June 1833, CO 201/235, f.480.
These reforms partly made up for the faults which Macarthur had seen in the Ripon regulations. Not only was the money from crown land sales to be spent on immigration, but the landowners themselves were to be given the chance of bringing in the people they wanted. The Macarthurs were among the first to use the bounty system. In 1836 Edward arranged for 16 families of agricultural labourers to settle at Camden. They came under an agreement that they were to be employees for five years, and were then to have a small flock of sheep on credit and the lease of a farm.\textsuperscript{111} The aim was to 'form the nucleus of rural communities sufficiently numerous to repel the influence of bad example from without'.\textsuperscript{112} Edward also sent out several families from the Rhine valley, mainly vine-dressers, who had no doubt made the same sort of agreement.\textsuperscript{113} By July 1839 he could boast that he arranged the embarkation of 238 people, which was about 10 per cent of the total so far sent out under the bounty system.\textsuperscript{114}

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In retrospect, it is clear that James Macarthur played a central part in the campaign against the Ripon regulations, and that he had suddenly taken the lead from older and more experienced politicians. This was not so clear at the time. He was busy in private, but his


\textsuperscript{112} Edw. Macarthur to Sir G. Grey, 27 Nov. 1836, CO 201/258, f. 201.


\textsuperscript{114} Edw. Macarthur to H. Labouchere, 15 July 1839, CO 201/293, f. 85. The total number of bounty immigrants which had arrived so far was 742, in 1837, plus 1622, in 1838 (Lord Stanley to Sir G. Gipps, 14 Oct. 1841, HRA i, XXI p. 545).
public speeches were brief and unemotional and he made no attempt to offer himself as a popular leader. There was therefore no idea abroad that an important political career had begun. For several years he was to remain, in the words of the Gazette, 'a gentleman of whom we know nothing, save that his extremely mild and courteous bearing on these occasions is worthy of imitation'.

But to the historian, the events of 1831-2 show Macarthur laying down for himself a clear line of duty, as a native patriot. According to Hall, many of the native-born were 'high-minded even to arrogancy'. Macarthur was the same, and he now aimed to give the colony a system of authority which would open new fields for high-mindedness, extend the limits of constitutional action, and channel the selfish forces of free enterprise. In the first place he wanted to make public opinion a formal, comprehensive and cogent force. In the second he hoped to see his own ideals stirring the community spirit of those whom Hall called, with perhaps a little exaggeration, 'the proudest people in the world'.

115 Sydney Gazette, 2 Feb. 1833.
116 Hall to Sir G. Murray, 17 Nov. 1828, HRA i, XIV p. 580.
117 Ibid.
Chapter 4
Church and Constitution 1833-1836

The whig administration which came to power in England in November 1830 was responsible not only for the Ripon regulations, but also for the appointment of Major-General Richard Bourke as governor of New South Wales. Bourke was a liberal whig deeply interested in his party's reforming principles. He was also an Irishman who had given much thought to the way administrative changes, particularly the union of 1801, might be made to ensure a system of equal justice in a segmented community. Soon after his arrival in December 1831 he decided that New South Wales provided a vast field for reform.

Everything here wants opening out ... The settlers have not quite lost sight of the institutions of their mother country; but ... a longer continuance of estrangement from their use will ... render these people fit subjects for a Turkish government.

He was too wise to make any hasty changes, but by the second half of 1833 he had a clear idea of what must be done.

He then drew up two crucial despatches to the secretary of state. The first was dated 30 September, and it dealt with the state of religion and education in the colony. The second, written three months later,

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1 Hazel King, Richard Bourke, Melbourne 1971, pp. 131-2. Bourke was knighted in 1835 and promoted lieutenant-general in 1837.
2 Ibid., pp. 53-5, and passim.
3 Bourke to Lord Monteagle, 23 Mar. 1832, ML A1736.
4 Bourke to E.G. Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, HRA i, XVII pp. 224-33.
contained Bourke's plan for a new constitution in which the present nominated legislature might be replaced by a partly elected one. The despatches, their implications and their results, will be described below in the order in which they were written.

* * *

Bourke set out his ideas on church and education reform at some length. There were, he said, four main religious groups in the colony: Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians and Protestant dissenters, the last being relatively small. Most of the people were Anglicans, but one-fifth were Catholic, and the Presbyterians made up an influential though even smaller section of the population. He pointed out that these groups were provided for in a way which took no account of their relative numbers, the Church of England having been particularly favoured in the past, as the official church. While the Anglicans now had 20 clerics and 9 good churches, the Catholics had only three priests and one church half-finished. The governor's figures showed that the Presbyterians were relatively well supplied with buildings and clergy, but had nevertheless received only 4 per cent of the total government aid to religion that year. The Catholics had received 11 per cent, about

6 According to census taken in 1833, there were 43,095 Protestants and 17,283 Catholics in a population of 60,794 (the remainder being Jews and 'Pagans'), so that Bourke underestimated the proportion of Catholics. The census made no subdivision of Protestants. See James Macarthur, New South Wales: Its Present State and Future Prospects, London 1837, appendices p. 60.
half of what their numbers entitled them to. The dissenters had never been given anything, except for some small grants of land.⁷

Such a state of affairs could only be justified if the Church of England was to be the sole established church and, as the governor pointed out, 'the inclination of these Colonists, which keeps pace with the Spirit of the Age, is decidedly adverse to such an Institution'. Bourke's impression of public opinion always played a vital part in his policy-making, although the impression was sometimes formed to fit the policy, rather than vice versa. In this case his impression depended on a petition to the governor and council 'lately prepared at a Public meeting and very numerous signed', which, he said, had prayed 'for a reduction of ... Expenditure' on the Anglican church.⁸

The petition in question was one which Wentworth and Hall had put to a public meeting several months before. The meeting was in fact almost wholly concerned with the amount of money spent on official salaries and pensions, and was part of Wentworth's campaign against a system of patronage which, he said, was carried on by officials with the connivance of the home government. However the amount of aid to the Anglican church had certainly been mentioned by both main speakers. In their petition they had condemned the sum spent on religion generally as too great, and had also suggested that it be distributed to take

⁸ Ibid., pp. 226-7.
account of the numbers in each communion. After the meeting the petition had been left at the Bank of New South Wales for signatures, but nothing more seems to have been heard of it. It was very characteristic of Bourke that he should see this rather confused effort as clear proof that the people were as liberal and as whiggish as himself.

The governor's proposals for reform were slightly different from those of the petitioners. He suggested that wherever a local congregation should raise £300 or more towards building a church and a clergyman's house, they should become eligible for a government subsidy equal to the total free contributions. Also, any clergyman having a congregation of 100 adults or more should be entitled to a salary from the state. After much delay, this scheme was approved by the secretary of state, and the result was two acts of council, the church act, passed in July 1836, and the Church of England temporalities act, passed in the following year.

These acts passed with no clear sign of dissent, in council or outside. But they were reforms of fundamental importance, so that it is necessary to know Macarthur's attitude towards them. He and his brothers had been brought up in an atmosphere of perfect religious toleration. In the 1820s the younger John Macarthur had worked for

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9 Sydney Herald, 15 July 1833.
10 Lord Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835, HRA i, XVIII pp. 201-3.
Catholic emancipation in the United Kingdom.  

It was William's opinion that sectarian differences were merely 'one of the means which Divine Providence has adopted to stimulate men's minds upon the subject of religion'.  

James himself not only agreed with the 'equitable principle' of the church acts, by which each sect was put on the same footing with regard to state endowments; he also liked the idea of a system 'which thus combines the voluntary and energetic exertions of individuals with the steady and permanent support of the Government'.  

The acts exemplified for him an ideal scheme where the ruler, by proving himself impartial and reliable (like William's Divine Providence), might bring into play the public spirit and ambition of each subject.

It is interesting to compare this attitude with that of the governor himself. Bourke had given some thought to the relationship between personal and institutional religion. Like the Macarthurs he had also had some contact with Unitarianism. But the Macarthurs' experience had been limited to their childhood, when Unitarian ideas had

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11 John Macarthur jr. to his mother, 12 Apr. - 18 May 1825, and to his father, 20 Nov. 1825, ML A2911.

12 W. Macarthur's evidence before the subcommittee of the general committee of Protestants (1836), ML A2980. p. 126. This idea was also expressed by James, during a legislative council debate, 4 Oct. 1849, on the second reading of the Sydney University bill, SMH, 5 Oct. 1849. See also James Lindsay, A Sermon on the Advances in Knowledge, Freedom, and Morals, from the Reformation to the Present Times, London 1818, pp. 33-4, which suggests that Lindsay was the origin of the idea.

13 [Macarthur], op. cit., pp. 246, 248. He afterwards said that he had seen the 1836 bill 'in threads and fragments, in pieces of paper, in memoranda, which he had approved before it was put into the form of a bill' (his speech at an election meeting, 18 Feb. 1843, SMH, 20 Feb. 1843). This suggests that he had been consulted by the governor, as he apparently was on education reform (see below).
been presented to them as a means of justifying their position as Anglicans, setting it on a broader basis and pointing the way towards toleration. Bourke, on the other hand, appears to have studied Unitarianism — or at least the catechism of Joseph Priestley — during a period of religious doubt, when it seemed to him to provide a complete alternative to the more limited and sectarian ideas he had grown up with. At that stage he almost regretted that he had 'frequented the [Anglican] church at all'. His brand of tolerance was perhaps unduly earnest as a result. The Macarthurs thought of tolerance as a lively mutual respect, and as a means of strengthening the diversity of spiritual life, a diversity which was a good thing in itself. Bourke, on the other hand thought of it as a means of softening that diversity, and thus counter- ing the evils of sectarianism.

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This perhaps explains the alarm with which some settlers viewed the governor's ideas on educational reform: a man who thinks of religious diversity as an evil cannot be expected to care much about the vital teaching which sets each group apart. Bourke's model for reform was the Irish national system, which had been introduced into his own country in 1831. This system had two aims. First, it was meant to give

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14 D.G. Hallyburton to Bourke, 5 Nov. 1820, Bourke papers, National Library of Ireland MSS 8477. Compare Dr. Lindsay's account of 'a much better union than that of faith - the unity of spirit in the bond of peace - the unity of love and of good works', (op. cit., p.35).
some education to all classes, and secondly it was designed to bring together children of different religious backgrounds, while ensuring that each was instructed only in the faith of his parents. The Irish government allowed aid to those local communities which would agree to run their schools in accordance with certain strict rules. The most important was that children should be divided into groups one a week, and once only, to receive religious instruction from clergymen of their own faith. At other times they were to have biblical extracts read to them without comment. As it turned out the system soon failed in its second aim, because although it led to the building of many new schools in Ireland, and the reform of many old ones, nearly all became distinctly Catholic or Protestant within a few years.\textsuperscript{15}

But the faults of the system had not yet appeared in Ireland. Moreover, Bourke thought that it would be ideal for the colony because it would enable people in remote areas to share their schools.\textsuperscript{16} 'I am certain', he wrote in 1833, 'that the Colonists would be well pleased to find their funds liberally pledged to the support of Schools of this description'. In fact he had reason to think that the idea was already 'favourably regarded by the Colonists in general, though it is not improbable that it would be opposed by all the Clergy'. He added that he had spoken with the head of the Anglican clergy, Archdeacon Broughton, who was against any scheme which did not confirm the special position of his church.\textsuperscript{17} Eventually the governor was to find that the opinion of the


\textsuperscript{16} Hazel King, op. cit., p.229.

\textsuperscript{17} Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, \textit{HRA i}, XVII pp.231, 232.
archdeacon, and a better understanding of the Irish system, were enough to turn many of 'the Colonists in general' against the whole idea.

But at first public opinion was sympathetic, if we can judge from the tone of a debate stirred up by the press about a year after Bourke's despatch was written. Both the Australian and the Monitor published the rules of the Irish system, and the Australian argued that such a scheme was needed in the colony, one where 'general education' was free from 'the swaddling bands of politico-religious orthodoxy'.¹⁸ At the same time the Herald proposed a single comprehensive structure in which there would be no 'dominant party', whether of 'class or sect', and which might be managed by local committees acting under government supervision. Contributions from the local people should be supplemented by state aid, given on 'a generous, liberal and impartial' basis.¹⁹ Letters were published to the same effect, but no-one put forward a useful plan.

As with the first part of his despatch to the home government, Bourke's comments on education were not answered until November 1835.²⁰ Meanwhile the archdeacon visited Europe, and was able to find out how the Irish system really worked. He returned in June 1836, newly consecrated bishop of Australia, and more determined than ever to oppose the implementation of Bourke's plan.²¹

¹⁸ Australian, 24 Oct., 21 Nov. 1834; 'Publius' to the editor, Monitor, 3 Dec. 1834.
¹⁹ Sydney Herald, 30 Oct., 6, 13 Nov. 1834.
²⁰ Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835, HRA i, XVIII pp. 205-7.
Broughton had two arguments against the Irish system. In the first place he objected to the fact that religious instruction was to be so distinct from the main part of the school curriculum. Secondly, he found that the biblical extracts used in the national schools were chosen by consultation among the church authorities. This was anathema to him: for if Protestant children heard only those parts of the bible which Catholic priests allowed them, they must eventually come to believe that they were forbidden to read the whole book as they liked. They would thus lose 'the salutary dread and abhorrence of such a principle which ought to be uppermost in every Protestant mind'.\(^\text{22}\) In other words the bishop feared the ending of sectarian divisions, which he thought must lead to Protestantism being invaded by Catholic principles. This seemed particularly likely in that the Irish system had been first devised for a population which was mainly Catholic.

James Macarthur had originally liked the idea of the Irish system, or he had given Governor Bourke that impression.\(^\text{23}\) But by 1836 he seems to have changed his mind. He thus gave up, for the time being, the principles of the Sydney Public Free Grammar School, which he had helped to found in 1825, and which like the Irish schools would have combined religious groups for the purposes of general education. He now argued, like Broughton, that 'religious instruction and general education should proceed with equal and connected steps', and that

\(^{22}\) Broughton to Glenelg, 22 May 1835, CO 201/250, f. 149.

\(^{23}\) Bourke to R. Bourke jr., 28 July 1836, ML A1733.
Protestants in New South Wales had a right to expect that their children would imbibe Protestant habits of mind from their teachers. He thought that the state should support two denominational school systems, Catholic and Protestant, endowed according to their numbers.  

Macarthur's argument in support of this idea was confused. It seems to have been based not on any ideas about the superiority of Protestant morality, but on an estimation of what the Protestants in the colony wanted. Much later he was to write that the state had a duty in such matters to see that 'the opinions and even the prejudices of all men ... [were] treated with deference'. In the 1830s he seems to have been caught between a desire to soften prejudice, and a belief that the state must accommodate it.

In the early 1840s the books, and something very close to the principles of the Irish system were in use at the elementary school at Camden Park. This was no doubt due mainly to William, who took care of such matters on the estate. Speaking in 1844, William explained that originally the system had not been 'generally well understood'. Certainly, he said, 'I did not understand it.' He now thought that 'it would be very desirable to introduce it here'. He also pointed out that the poor of the colony had never objected to it, and they would have been most affected. James Macarthur's thinking moved in much the same way.

26 W. Macarthur's evidence before a select committee on education (legislative council), V&Q 1844, II pp.177-80 (30 July 1844).
and from this time both brothers gave the system their whole-hearted support. 27

But such was the state of opinion in 1836 that the plan was defeated. The campaign against it was led by Broughton and Richard Jones, a leading Sydney merchant and member of council. Jones was a keen Anglican, who believed that moral training depended mainly on the inculcation of strict religious doctrine. It is hard to see him as a bigot, 28 but he certainly became one of Bourke's most uncompromising opponents. In 1834 he pledged himself, privately, to do everything he could 'to oppose and expose' Bourke's government, which he considered 'prejudicial in the highest degree to the moral welfare of this community'. 29

Broughton arrived back from England on 2 June 1836, and on the same day Bourke informed the legislative council that the government meant to establish a school system on the Irish model. 30 But before the council could vote the money required for the scheme, the bishop and others had organised public opinion so effectively against it that the governor was forced to compromise. On 3 August two petitions were presented to the council, both praying that the plan be rejected. The

27 See chapter 8, below. Much later, in 1856, Macarthur explained that 'he had for some years past been a strong advocate for the National system, although when he was a younger man he was somewhat opposed to it, but never violently. From 1838 and 1839, when he made himself conversant with the working of the system in England [sic], he had been a supporter of it' (his speech at an election meeting, 24 Mar. 1856, Empire, 27 Mar. 1856).

28 His part in the 1843 election campaign, when he co-operated with Maurice O'Connell and Roger Therry, suggests that he thought the state should comprehend all denominations equally (see chapter 6, below; SMH, 14 June 1843).

29 Jones to Donaldson & Lambert, 14 Feb. 134, ML A727-2

30 Sydney Herald, 6 June 1836.
first was almost certainly drawn up by Macarthur. It stated that the colony urgently needed a comprehensive system of education, but one which would not 'clash with the religious opinions and feelings, or even prejudices, of the majority', as the Irish system seemed to do. This petition carried 'about eighty' signatures, headed by those of Macarthur and Jones. The second petition had been drawn up by a 'General Committee of Protestants', chaired by the bishop, and it carried about 1,300 signatures.

Nevertheless the council, by a majority of eight to four, voted £3,000 towards the establishment of the Irish system. Bourke made arrangements to import the necessary books and teachers but because of the state of public opinion, or the articulate part of it, only one school was attempted for the time being, at Wollongong. Even this remained empty, and in the end the government simply provided for denominational schools.

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During the months when he was first making up his mind about his religious and educational policy, Governor Bourke had also been defining

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31 A rough draft of the petition survives in Macarthur's handwriting, minuted to show that it was received (by Jones?) on 26 July and seen on the same day by J.D. Lang, Alexander Macleay and James Bowman (ML A357, pp. 29-32).
32 Macarthur, op. cit., p. 226, and appendices 49 and 50; petition to the legislative council praying for the establishment of a general system of education, 27 July 1836, ML A111.
33 Sydney Herald, 18 July 1836.
his views about constitutional reform, and the future of the nominated legislative council. These he outlined in a letter to the secretary of state dated Christmas Day, 1833.  

He first pointed out that the community was 'more or less divided' into two political parties, which he called 'emigrants' and 'emancipists', and that nearly all the 14 members of the council belonged to the first group. He described the others, the emancipists, as 'the liberal party', explaining that they supported the present whig authorities in England in 'all those measures of public improvement, which they are happily accomplishing'.  

He did not mention the ideas of the other party, but in his private letters, he called them 'ultra tories' who had an 'aversion to all liberal measures', and who 'consider themselves a privileged class'.  

In his despatch he stressed 'the evil of legislating for the whole community by means of a Council composed of one Party', but he seems to have been equally concerned with the fact that such a body must be opposed to himself and (as he believed) to 'the sentiments of the public'. He thought that government would be more effective 'if some portion of popular sentiment were infused into the Council'. He therefore suggested that the membership be increased to 24, of whom two-thirds should be elected by the people and the others nominated by the crown. The electors should be those colonists already qualified to serve as jurors or, in other words, those with land worth £30 a year or a personal estate of £300.

35 HRA i, XVII pp. 302-7.
36 Ibid., p. 303.
37 Bourke to Lord Monteagle, 11 Aug. 1833, 12 Mar. 1834, ML A1736.
The right of election to the council, the governor said, should be limited to free immigrants and the native-born. He thought that this would be acceptable to 'the better thinking part of the Emancipists, few of whom stand in that relative position to the Electors as to be likely to be returned even if eligible'.

It was seen in an earlier chapter that the need for an elected council had been a matter of public debate since the return of Wentworth in 1824 and the setting up of a free press. Discussion had been meagre until 1827, when there was some brief excitement because of new charges being transferred to the local revenue, and because the term of the first council was due to expire in 1828. Most settlers anticipated reform and on this occasion the chief justice, Francis Forbes, and Colonel Henry Dumaresq, Darling's brother-in-law and private secretary, both offered advice to the authorities in London. Together their opinions give a fairly balanced view of the main points involved.

Both argued from the premise that New South Wales was still a penal settlement, where the great majority even of the free settlers had criminal records, and they both agreed that this made strong centralised government necessary. But here they parted company. Like Bourke, Forbes believed that 'governments are founded on opinion'. 'New South Wales', he said, 'can only be governed in New South Wales'. He therefore argued that good administration must depend on a well defined cabinet system linked with an elected legislature in which a range of public opinion would be

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represented. He did not say how the link was to be maintained, although it was an old problem in colonial systems.

Dumaresq's approach was more practical, and he also took account of that vital part of the population, the unfreed convicts, who could not be represented in an elective system. He pointed out that free institutions were impossible in countries 'in which there are conditions of people whose rights are unequal and dissimilar', since one class must have an interest in keeping the others under its control. Nor was it likely, he said, that an elected legislature would strengthen the executive when most of the people, because of their convict origins, must 'consider the government only in the odious light of task master and oppressor'.

It was a complex question. As the administrator of a prison settlement the governor needed clear and irresistible powers. As the ruler of a free community he had to work in harness with public opinion, which was best expressed through an elected legislature. If the free and the bond had lived in different parts of the territory he might have carried on in a dual capacity. But the assignment of convict labour meant that most of the prisoners were under the direct control of the free settlers. Therefore, in many of his administrative and legislative acts the governor's two roles were combined. Moreover, as Bourke

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39 Forbes to R. Wilmot Horton, 6 Feb., 6, 23 Mar. 1827, CO 201/188, ff. 26, 45, 70.
40 Dumaresq, 'Reflections suggested by the address voted at the late public meeting in New South Wales and some proceedings subsequent thereto', 6 Nov. 1827, CO 201/187, f. 432.
himself realised, many convict employers naturally took up 'the feelings and prejudices of slave holders', and in other ways showed a purely selfish interest in the penal system. Strangely, Bourke seems to have had no idea that an elective constitution might have given such people an ascendancy in the state, like that achieved by the squatters under his successor.

In his account of the two political parties in the colony, Bourke explained that in spite of its name the emancipist party, the party of reform, included 'a great number of Emigrants, and generally those who advocate liberal principles'. This was a curious distortion of facts. It shows Bourke's tendency to think of all political issues in party terms, and as a black and white dichotomy derived from his own ideals: since the reform party was clearly in the formal liberal tradition, he did not question its motives. As Hazel King has said,

> at times his enthusiasm, and the certitude that his own principles were right ... tended to outrun his discretion as an administrator.  

They seem to have done the same, at times, with his political judgement.

In fact there was by now an important new element within the reform movement which it is hard to see as advocating liberal principles, and which would certainly not have strengthened the governor's hand had it been represented in council. This should have been clear at the beginning of the year, 1833, when a public meeting was called to petition the king.

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41 Bourke, unattached minute, 1837, ML A1734.
42 ADB I, p. 133.
and house of commons once again for a legislative assembly. Such meetings were convened by the sheriff after public requisition. In this case the requisition paper carried an unusually long list of 68 signatures. The names of Jamison, Wentworth, Wardell, Bland, Lord, Cox and Blaxland appear as usual. But there were also a very large number of settlers from the Hunter valley now among the signatories. These made up nearly 40 per cent of the total. 43

The Hunter valley was a remote district which could only be reached from Sydney by sea. It had been settled during the 1820s, mainly by rich immigrants who had been attracted by the country's new prosperity and who had taken up large grants for grazing. Many of them seem to have been retired army and navy officers of middling rank, who had no previous connection with the colony and its political troubles. From the beginning the district lacked a numerous free working class, and the settlers relied heavily on their assigned servants, who were unusually hard to control as a result. Unfortunately, not many of the masters, including those who manned the country benches, were suited to their peculiar powers. 44

The upper class of settlers along the Hunter were commonly described as 'gentlemen', but with a few exceptions they belonged to a social type quite different from the few leading families in the colony. Most were a type of shabby gentry, pretentious and poorly educated, who might

43 Of the 68, between 26 and 29 were from the Hunter valley (Australian, 11 Jan. 1833). They have been identified mainly by comparing the list with petitions coming exclusively from the Hunter, and with The New South Wales Gazette and General Post Office Directory 1832, Sydney 1832.

have been matched in such places as the West Indies. Mary Bowman, the only one of the Macarthurs to have much to do with the Hunter, felt 'a sort of intuitive distaste' for the people there. They were, she said, a 'vulgar, boasting, flattering' set, whose friendship was not worth cultivating. Bourke himself scornfully described them as 'the exquisites of N.S.Wales'.

The political importance of the Hunter valley during Bourke's time was heightened by the fact that the governor was a liberal whig determined to oppose class privilege. He therefore presented a striking contrast with his predecessor, who had harboured a thorough contempt for 'radicals and their allies, the Liberals'. The leading settlers of the Hunter valley, on the other hand, were 'well-to-do immigrants who had come out under Tory patronage' and who had flourished under Darling. Discontent in the Hunter during the 1830s was therefore a matter of party polemics because of the change at Government House.

The labour question in the Hunter was well calculated to bring this issue to a crisis, and also to test the ambiguous nature of the governor's office. During 1833 a large number of the settlers there got up an address to His Excellency which, because of the furtive way it was handed around for signatures, was known as the hole-and-corner petition. The paper carried 126 signatures, including nearly all the names which

45 Quoted in Mrs. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, 7 May 1848, ML A2907.
46 Bourke to Monteagle, 27 Sept. 1834, ML A1736.
47 Darling to Sir G. Murray, 8 Nov. 1828, HRA i, XIV p. 445.
48 Hazel King, op. cit., p. 162.
had appeared on the requisition to the sheriff earlier in the year.49 The petitioners' only request was for the repeal of Bourke's act, 3 Wm.IV no. 3. This act, which had been passed unanimously by council, had amended one of Darling's by limiting the power of benches over refractory convicts in cases where one or two magistrates sat alone. According to the petitioners, this had had an immediate effect on their servants, so that 'the authority of the master is nominal, and the power of the Magistrates derided'.50 Evidence from the Goulburn and Bathurst districts suggests that this was unique to the Hunter.51

It is fairly clear why the Hunter valley settlers were so interested in constitutional reform. It was now the only way in which their own ideas and interests could be brought to bear on legislation. In 1834 the Monitor, which supported both the reform movement and the campaign for stricter penal laws, pointed out that 'the prison population' would become orderly and respectful again only when the colony had an assembly

where falsehoods will at once be exposed and detected, and where truth and consistency alone, will meet with efficient support, and speedy success.52

49 Eight, or possibly nine Hunter names (the identity of one is uncertain) appear on the requisition and not on the address.
50 Sydney Gazette, 24 Aug. 1833.
51 Letters to L. Macalister from the landowners of Goulburn, 1 Jan. 1834, and Bathurst, 11 Oct. 1834, Sydney Gazette, 6 Nov. 1834.
52 Monitor, 19 Apr. 1834. There was a close and rather puzzling friendship between Hall of the Monitor and the disreputable James Mudie, for whom see below (ibid., 30 Nov. 1836).
This was also the opinion of the Sydney Herald at that time. Thus, for a short period, what Bourke would have called ultra-toryism was harnessed to the cause of constitutional reform.

Of the Hunter valley settlers themselves only one, James Mudie, has left a record of his motives for wanting an assembly. Mudie was prominent in the hole-and-corner agitation, and he at length became one of Bourke's most active and violent enemies. He was certainly, in Mary Bowman's terminology, a 'vulgar, boasting, flattering' individual. Mudie was among the supporters of reform in 1833, but like many of the Hunter valley reformers he afterwards split the emancipist party proper, for reasons which appear below.

In 1837 Mudie published a book called The Felony of New South Wales. His main aim, he said, was to reveal the 'ludicrous and affected philanthropy' of Bourke's convict policy. He also argued for changes in the constitution, though he was by now opposed to the idea of a representative assembly. It is clear that his main objection to the existing system was Bourke's control over legislation. The council was, he said, 'a mere tool of the governor ... and the chief justice [Forbes]'. The respectable settlers like himself, he explained, were now willing to forego 'the prospect of personal distinction' which an elected legislature would have given them. But they still demanded a

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53 Sydney Herald, 31 Jan. 1833, 5 May 1836.
55 Australian, 11 Jan. 1833.
56 Published in London.
57 Mudie, op. cit., p. vii.
58 Ibid., pp. 236, 238.
council which would be 'as independent as possible of the governor', and representative of 'the property and public opinion of the free untainted colonists', who might exercise a salutary control over law making. He presumably meant that they would also control the penal system.

No doubt the Hunter valley settlers would never have been able to dominate an elected assembly in Bourke's time. But they would not have been alone in their struggle against the governor's 'ludicrous and affected philanthropy'. Even Jamison and Wentworth, Bourke's political friends, were not inclined to work with him in ensuring that convict servants met with justice and humanity. Wentworth's ideas on penal legislation were remarkable. For instance, according to an act of council passed in Darling's time, runaway convicts were to have their period of freedom added to their term, so that in effect they were to be punished not for escaping, but failing to give themselves up, an obvious injustice. But Wentworth thought that the penalty should be double the time of absence. He also advocated a system whereby all the convicts on any estate where a crime was committed were to have their terms extended according to the seriousness of the crime, unless they gave up the culprit. Any account of local 'liberalism' must take account of such ideas.

The Macarthurs, on the other hand, were humane and intelligent employers. John and Hannibal, for example, had both voted in council

59 Ibid., pp.241, 243.
60 For Jamison, see Jamison to Bourke, 24 Apr. 1832, ML A1738; Jamison's evidence before the select committee on police (legislative council 1835), V&P 1824-37, II pp.336-7.
61 Wentworth's evidence before the select committee on police and gaols (legislative council), V&P 1839, II p.89.
against the law which Wentworth later wanted to make even more stringent. It was conceded on all sides that the family's record was 'exemplary for kindness and liberality to servants and dependents'. At Camden the ideal was to make each prisoner cheerful and useful by seeing that he was 'as comfortable as possible ... [and] where a man behaves well, to make him forget, if possible, that he is a convict'. None of the family made any effort to support the Hunter valley agitation.

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The public meeting which followed the requisition mentioned above, in January 1833, was the second great gathering at which Macarthur spoke. According to the Herald there were now 'not two men in the Colony who do not perceive the advantages that might be derived from a House of Assembly'. This was probably a fair statement, but there were still doubts as to whether all the main institutions of the Westminster system should be brought in straight away, as in the North American colonies. Macarthur shared these doubts. Before the meeting he drew up a number of resolutions which he thought everyone might agree on, and which might serve as a foundation for moderate debate. He first showed

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62 Minutes of a council meeting, 12 May 1830, V&P 1824-37, I p. 83.
63 Monitor, 22 Dec. 1832. See also Australian, 25 May 1832; 'Moyengully' to the editors, 24 July 1843, SMH, 26 July 1843.
64 Macarthur's evidence before the select committee on transportation (house of commons), 1837 (518) XIX, pp. 163-4 (19 May 1837).
65 Sydney Herald, 31 Jan. 1833.
them to Wentworth and Jamison, but they already had their own programme worked out. Rather naively, Macarthur decided to go ahead trusting to the effect of his own obvious good faith.

The meeting opened with an address by Jamison, who told the crowd that a house of assembly would give them control over the raising and spending of their own revenue. He was about to move the adoption of a petition to the king, when he was interrupted by Macarthur, who objected to this procedure. The meeting had been called, Macarthur said, 'to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning', and not to adopt any petition forthwith. Also, no-one knew what was in this petition, because it had not been published before the meeting.

Macarthur suggested a procedure like that followed with the Ripon regulations. He realised, he said, that the present constitution was unsatisfactory and must be changed. He thought that a committee should be formed to go over the question in detail and to decide what must be done, since it was clearly impossible for all points of view to be fully dealt with by the present meeting. This had been the purpose of his resolutions. One had also stated that the present council

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66 Macarthur showed his resolutions to all the members of the committee responsible for the meeting, and only E.S. Hall approved of them (Macarthur's speech, Report of the Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Supporters of the Petitions to His Majesty and the House of Commons, held at the Committee Rooms, May 30, 1836, Sydney 1836, p. 13; the only copies of this report are one among the Macarthur papers, ML uncat. MSS 326, and one in the National Library, wrongly catalogued under 'Australian Patriotic Association').

67 Sydney Gazette, 29 Jan. 1833.
must be reformed on 'a more popular basis', which implied some sort of elective system. But Macarthur made no attempt to read out his prepared paper, or to battle with the rising tide of shufflings and mutterings. In his speech he only said that he would 'admit the abstract right of the people to that liberty which they claimed'. But, he added, it was 'a question of expediency, as to whether the colony was ripe for its full exercise'.

He sat down among a barrage of hisses and cries of 'Question!' and was immediately overruled. After some discussion the petition to the king was read out and adopted. It was a very short paper, merely drawing attention to the growth of population and revenue, and 'the improving condition of our agriculture and trade' as evidence that the colony was ready for an elected assembly of at least 50 members.

The rest of the meeting was dominated by Wentworth. His long speech was a tour de force, the waves of energy being met with constant laughter, loud cheers, and shouts of 'Hear, hear', 'Go on, go on'. He spoke mainly of the obsession which officials had with 'fingering our money', and on the general level of government expenditure. At the end, although 'much fatigued', he read a petition to the house of commons.

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69 *Sydney Gazette*, 29 Jan. 1833.
70 Some thought that he gave up too easily (ibid., 12 Feb. 1833).
which the meeting also adopted. This was a lengthy document, and it
stressed the wealth of the colony, the number of settlers who might
be competent legislators, and the absence of that party feeling which had
been used in London as an excuse for putting off reform.

There were then a number of short speeches, including one from
Macarthur, who objected to the tone of Wentworth’s address, and particularly
to some sarcastic remarks about himself. He would submit to being
overruled, he said,

but as a native of the colony – as one glorying in the name of
an Australian – it was painful to him to be taunted as an enemy
to liberty.

This raised some cheers, but he was disappointed and mortally offended
at his treatment. 71 He never tried to speak at such a meeting again.

Besides adopting the two petitions, the meeting decided to organise
subscriptions to cover the cost of presenting the second one to the
house of commons, and a committee was named to supervise this business
and the collection of signatures. The petition to the king, which was
to have been sent through the governor, seems to have gone astray and
was never heard of again. That to the house of commons circulated
for 15 months, but by the time it left the colony it was 17 yards long
and carried 6,025 signatures. 72 It was sent to the care of Henry Lytton
Bulwer, a radical M.P., for presentation to the lower house. As soon as

71 See his reference to it during his speech, Report ... of the General
72 Australian, 24 Mar. 1834.
it reached him Bulwer wrote to Jamison suggesting how the petitioners might organise themselves in future so as to make their demands more effective.  

On the arrival of Bulwer's letter Jamison arranged another public meeting to discuss its contents. This meeting, held on 29 May 1835, was attended by at least 100 people. Most were of course from Sydney but, in the words of the Australian, the gravity of the subject 'drew from their seats in the interior, a number of gentlemen', including, apparently, about half a dozen Hunter valley settlers.

This was one of the most important public meetings of the period, because it led to the founding of the Australian Patriotic Association and the appointment of Bulwer as the association's London agent. The official aim of the body was to ensure 'that an authentic exposition of the real state of our Colonial affairs may be from time to time exhibited before the British House of Commons', but it was inevitably seen mainly as a pressure group for constitutional change. The meeting led to the setting up of a provisional committee, which was to give way to a permanent one as soon as subscriptions totalled £1,500, a target reached by the end of August. Nineteen rural committees were also named, the members being magistrates and 'other influential gentlemen' who, it was hoped, would agree to collect subscriptions in their areas.

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73 Ibid., 24 Mar. 1835.
74 Ibid., 2, 9 June 1835. Subscriptions were taken during the meeting from 102 people.
75 Ibid., 16 June 1835.
The minimum annual subscription was fixed at £1, which seems to have kept out anyone below the rank of middling farmer or wealthy shopkeeper. 76 Formal membership, which carried the right to vote at general meetings, was limited to those subscribers who would agree to pay the same sum annually for four years. There were 416 subscribers in the first year, and between 150 and 200 seem to have signed the membership bond. 77 But the rules were loosely applied. A total of 688 votes were counted during the poll for a secretary in September, and 322 were cast for his successor in the following year. 78 This is a good illustration of the way the association worked. It was formed by the rich for the rich, but its founders were not prepared to endanger their popularity by enforcing the rules.

This weakness was not immediately obvious, and at first the association included some of the proudest men in the colony. The original subscribers included many magistrates, two members of council, (Jones and Blaxland), some of Sydney's most important and respectable merchants (A.B. Spark, Thomas Gore, William Dawes and John Lamb), and several landowners not previously linked with the reform movement, such as James Terence Murray and John Macarthur's friend, William Riley, who gave £50. 79 None of the Macarthurs themselves joined.

76 List of Subscribers to the Australian Patriotic Association, Sydney 1835.
77 The managers of the association were very secretive about the numbers of their bound membership, but on 29 Jan. 1838 the Monitor revealed that there had been 'above 150'. This implies pretty clearly that there were also less than 200.
78 Australian, 4 Sept. 1835; Sydney Herald, 18 Apr. 1836.
79 List of Subscribers to the Australian Patriotic Association.
It was pointed out above that Bourke's political attitude was an explicit reaction to that of Darling, his predecessor. The change of policy was a rude shock to many who had prospered under the earlier system, and who now found themselves overruled, dismissed from power, and otherwise injured by the governor. At first it was only a question of penal reform, affecting mainly the Hunter valley settlers. But in time other people, in increasing numbers, took up the cause of constitutional change, for this was now the only way in which they could regain some of their political influence. The subscriptions made by Jones and many others to the Patriotic Association should probably be seen in this light. Spark and Lamb were both close allies of James Mudie, and so was John Bingle, who had taken a leading part in the reform movement since 1833. 80 Bingle and Jones both gave £10 to the association, which shows a considerable commitment.

Thus it appears that the association was at first an uneasy alliance between those, like Wentworth and Jamison, who saw Bourke as an ally in their old campaign against colonial 'toryism', and those who mistrusted his liberalism and who wanted to make sure that the authorities in London understood 'the real state of our Colonial affairs'. The great aim of the first was of course an elected assembly, and now the second also saw an assembly as the only way left for them to restore the colony to a healthy condition. This coalition was to last for as long as there was silence about the qualifications for voters and members, but there were some earlier signs of tension.

80 Dowd & Fink, op. cit., part II pp. 95, 99.
The first test of unity was in September, when a secretary was elected for the directing committee. Jones had his own candidate, Charles Jenkins, lately a clerk in the colonial secretary's office, and although he (Jones) had not signed the membership bond the nomination was allowed.\(^81\) Jenkins came a poor fourth among seven contenders, the winner being John Stephen, whose family had old links with the emancipist party.\(^82\) The secretaryship was a vital position, so that the election had some significance. Jenkins's defeat made it clear to Jones and others like him that they could never compete with the political machine Wentworth had established at Sydney.\(^83\) By November there were a number who, in spite of being signed up as members for four years, were determined not to throw good money after bad.\(^84\)

During December the directing committee entrusted Wentworth with the drawing up of two bills, which were to be alternative models for a statute giving the colony an elective legislature. This was the first time since 1827 that the details of constitutional reform had been broached in public, but now they could hardly be avoided. The act of parliament which had established the present council was due to expire in 1837, and the Patriotic Association was politically bound to make suggestions as to how it should be replaced. The first of Wentworth's

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\(^81\) *Australian*, 10 May 1836; *Monitor*, 12 Aug. 1836.

\(^82\) Jenkins received 7% of the votes while Stephen received 51%, that is, 45 and 351 respectively out of a total of 688 (*Australian*, 1 Sept. 1835).

\(^83\) *Monitor*, 29 Jan. 1838: 'There was a strong contest for the election of a secretary, and the minority, on that occasion, have since hesitated to pay their subscriptions'.

\(^84\) *Australian*, 1 Dec. 1835.
bills described a single house of 50 members, 40 of whom were to be elected and the rest chosen by the executive. The second provided for a bicameral system with a nominated upper house of 15 (the size of the existing council) and an elected assembly of not less than 50.  

There were long discussions about the qualifications of members, the main issue being the admission of ex-convicts. Jamison wanted 'that excessively delicate question' left to the British parliament, while Wentworth thought it should be referred to the present council, an idea at which Jamison, and no doubt many others, 'felt surprised'. Jamison eventually carried the day. The relevant clauses were left blank in the draft bills, and Bulwer was asked to see that they were 'filled up in accordance with the British Reform Bill, without any disqualification unknown to the constitution'. Ex-convicts were not barred from the reformed house of commons, but the Canada Act of 1791, which had set up assemblies in the Canadas, had withheld the right to vote and be elected from anyone 'who shall have been attainted for Treason or Felony'. This was ambiguous, but it could have been taken to mean ex-convicts as well as prisoners under sentence. Generally the Canada Act seems to have been the model for Wentworth's bills.

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The side-stepping of the ex-convict issue was in character with the

86 Ibid., 4 Dec. 1835; Sydney Herald, 10, 17 Dec. 1835.
loose way in which the association's voting rules were applied. It apparently led to more defections. According to Macarthur, it was this, 'and other proceedings of the persons who took a leading part in that body, and who made it entirely subservient to their own views', which 'opened the eyes' of many supporters. Mudie wrote in his book that 'the reputable colonists' gave up the association when they found that it was being used for

the purpose of party politics, even at the expence of admitting emancipated felons to an absolute equality with the free settlers, as the basis on which the leaders of the colonial liberal faction were to found their popularity. In other words they - 'the reputable colonists' - decided that by supporting the association they were asking that legislative authority be much too dispersed, and were undermining rather than enhancing their own prospects of power. The Herald, which believed that ex-convicts should be barred both from voting and from being elected, also gave up its support for the association at this time.

Richard Jones was among those who now became disillusioned with the association. Early in the new year, 1836, he began to organise an alternative campaign better suited to his political ambitions. His reactionary movement was first noticed by the Australian on 22 March, when readers were warned that it was opposed to the aims of the Patriotic Association. Within a week the Herald published the text of two new petitions, to the king and to the house of commons, which it said 'have

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88 Macarthur, op. cit., pp. 266-7.
89 Mudie, op. cit., p. 266. See also the diary of George Allen, 18 Sept. 1835, 15, 21, 28 Apr. 1836, ML uncat. MSS 477; and 'Civis' to the editors, Sydney Herald, 11 Feb. 1836.
90 Sydney Herald, 11 Feb. 1836.
been handed to us'. But neither paper said who was behind these latest complications.

The authors of the new petitions seem to have been more concerned with giving information than with making demands. But they did complain that the present council was too small to be a vehicle for public opinion, and they also said that it was too much dominated by the executive, and by the chief justice, Forbes, who should not hold office as both legislator and judge. They asked for an official enquiry to find how far the constitution might be altered 'to render it efficient for all present purposes and a step towards the attainment of a Representative Legislature.' Such an enquiry might also decide on the future of the colony as a penal settlement.

But in case the imperial government should decide to bring in an elective system, the petitioners asked that the qualification of voters and representatives should depend on moral standing as well as on property. They justified this unusual idea by arguing that New South Wales was a peculiar community, where public morality was so debased that 'the possession of property affords but slight proof of good character'.

For the same reason the petitioners asked for changes in the present jury system. The qualification for jury service depended, as in England, on property alone. This meant that ex-convicts who had undergone their full term of punishment without dispensation (called expirees) had an

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91 Ibid., 28 Mar. 1836. The petitions are also included as appendices 1 and 2 in Macarthur, op. cit.
equal chance of being chosen with those who had been pardoned for good
conduct, and even with 'Magistrates and Colonists of the highest
respectability'. In such a community, they said, this must give juries
a very doubtful and inefficient character. They pointed out that the
present system was the result of an act of council in 1833, which had
been passed 'in opposition to the votes and conscientious opinions of
the most experienced members', and, they said, had since proven a failure. Richard Jones had taken the lead against Bourke in the attempt to have
that act defeated, so that this argument is clear evidence that the
petitions were being used by the governor's enemies as a method of
appealing over his head.

The editor of the Herald commended 'these most important petitions'
to every settler with eyes to see that the so-called patriots were trying
to continue the present political system upon which the Colony is
governed'. Both petitions were published twice in that paper within
the next 10 days, and since none of the other papers followed suit they
became known as the Herald petitions. They were later left for
signatures at the Sydney banks, and copies were sent into the country. Arrangements were also made to take in subscriptions, which were to
pay for the campaign here and in England. The total received was

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92 This phrase is typical of the vague style of the petitions. It appar-
ently referred to officials, such as Alexander Macleay, who had been
obliged to vote for the bill against their 'conscientious opinions'.
There is similar ambiguity in the complaint that 'persons, who have
undergone punishment for their crimes, and of bad repute' were
admitted as jurors, but the meaning is made clear later on.
93 A.T. Atkinson, 'The Position of John Macarthur and His Family in
New South Wales before 1842', M.A. thesis, Sydney University 1971,
94 Sydney Herald, 28 Mar. 1836.
95 Ibid., 7 Apr. 1836.
1836, C. Sturt to R. Jones, 28 June 1836, all ML A357; Sydney
Herald, 11 Apr. 1836.
£1, 066, but there is no evidence to show exactly where the money came from. 97

These events brought a quick response from the other side. On 29 March a notice was drawn up announcing a public meeting to decide on retaliatory action. This notice carried the names of Jamison, Wentworth and 26 others. 98 The meeting, held on 12 April, adopted a counter-petition to the house of commons arguing that their opponents wanted to perpetuate all the worst faults of the constitution. The legislative power of the governor and chief justice, far from being a grievance, was at present the only safeguard against 'a factious oligarchy' which already had too much power in council. The lurid account of vice and dishonesty in the Herald petition was described as the work of 'a small illiberal party, who have long displayed their unbending hostility to the best interests of the Colony'. 99

The first name publicly connected with the Herald petitions was that of Richard Jones. On 21 April he put an advertisement in the Herald stating that the supporters of the petitions would meet at noon that day. The short notice given and the fact that no meeting place was named shows that the campaign was already well organised, and that the leaders were anxious that their meeting should not include any unco-operative elements. The advertisement also proves that Jones was playing a central part in the campaign, while the proceedings of the meeting

97 Ibid., 25 July 1836.
98 Australian, 5 Apr. 1836. Probably not all 26 were personal signatures. Six were those of men involved in the Herald campaign, and two of these, Riley and Blomfield, are misspelt.
show that his protegé, Charles Jenkins, had so far acted as honorary secretary. According to the governor, the petitions had been 'got up at the House of Mr. Jones', but a remark made at a later meeting by James Macarthur shows that Macarthur himself and others had helped in the drafting.

The meeting decided that Jenkins should now have a salary of £300 per annum. It also appointed a management committee with a membership of 11. Three of the committee - Jones, Robert Campbell and Hannibal Macarthur - were members of the legislative council and had been highly critical of both the jury law and the governor's plans for education reform. Three more were landowners, namely James Macarthur, Robert Scott of Glendon in the Hunter valley, and Macarthur's friend George Macleay, whose father, the colonial secretary, was also opposed to the governor. The remaining five were merchants, namely Thomas Barker, John Lamb and A.B. Spark (all former allies of Mudie), and Thomas Shadforth and Robert Campbell tertius, son of Campbell of Bligh Street.

The committee thus consisted of a total of seven merchants, together with the two Macarthurs, Scott and Macleay. In fact it might be thought of as a coalition, between the Macarthurs and a group of conservative

100 Ibid.
101 Bourke to Glenelg, 13 Apr. 1836, HRA,i, XVII p. 392; Macarthur's speech, Report ... of the General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, p. 15.
102 Sydney Herald, 25 Apr. 1836.
103 Macarthur, op. cit., appendix 54; Bourke to Stanley, 2 Oct. 1833, HRA i, XVII p.236; Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 356-8; Australian, 26 July 1836.
104 Dowd & Fink, op. cit., part II, pp. 95, 99.
105 All 11 committeeemen are listed in the ADB I and II, except for Campbell tertius (1811-87). After Macarthur's departure for England he was replaced on the committee by his brother William (diary of A.B. Spark, 30 Aug. 1836, ML A4869).
businessmen headed by Jones and Campbell senior. It is probably hard
to exaggerate the effect of commercial groupings on politics at this
time. Jamison and Wentworth were no doubt the best known members of
the Patriotic Association, but it is clear that the movement for
constitutional change often depended to a great extent on the money and
local influence of the ex-convict merchant princes such as Daniel Cooper,
Lord, Lyons, Hutchinson and Terry. These were the men who were
called by their friends 'the Sydney liberales'. But their enemies
described them as 'the landlords of Sydney ... who grind down the citizens
with hard labour to meet their exhorbitant demands of rent'. The
political aims of this set, this mushroom aristocracy, their trading
links, and the extent of their credit network, have never been properly
worked out.

Robert Campbell's rivalry with the ex-convict merchants went back
beyond the rum rebellion of 1808, and that of Jones's firm (which was
less extreme) can be dated to Macquarie's time. Since then the

106 In the first year the Waterloo Co. (Cooper, Holt & Roberts) subscribed
altogether £15 to the association, Lyons £50, Lord and his sons £10,
Hutchinson and his stepsons (the Robertses) £27.7s., and Terry and
his family (including Hughes and J. Hosking) £50 (List of Subscribers
to the Australian Patriotic Association). For the earlier activities
of Cooper and Terry, see Monitor, 20 Jan. 1827. Two of the 3
collectors for the association, Lyons and L. Iredale, were ex-convicts
with well established trading and family connections in Sydney (ADB
II, pp. 142, 549).

107 Monitor, 20 Jan. 1827.

108 Sydney Herald, 2 July 1842.

109 D.R. Hainsworth, 'The New South Wales Shipping Interest 1800-1821:
A Study in Colonial Entrepreneurship', Australian Economic History
Review VIII, 1968, pp. 22-6; Macquarie to Bathurst, 1 Mar. 1819,
and enclosures, HRA i, X pp. 18-23.
division in the commercial life of Sydney had been made manifest in the
creation of two powerful banks, the Bank of New South Wales and the
Bank of Australia. In 1836 the first was a type of coalition, including
on its board both Wentworth and Jones (who was president), but the Bank
of Australia was free of any connections with the emancipist party.\textsuperscript{110}

Nearly the whole board of the Bank of New South Wales subscribed to
the Patriotic Association, although several directors, led by Jones,
later went over to the \textit{Herald} campaign. Some of the Australia directors
supported the association at first, but in the end their board was
solidly behind the \textit{Herald} petitions.\textsuperscript{111}

The relationship between the \textit{Herald} campaign and the Patriotic
Association can be best seen by comparing the full lists of those who
joined one or the other.\textsuperscript{112} Altogether 427 people signed the \textit{Herald}
petitions, slightly more than the total subscribing to the Patriotic
Association, and of these about 53 had defected from that body (the
identity of some names is uncertain). Most of the defectors had been

\textsuperscript{110} S.J. Butlin, \textit{Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851},

\textsuperscript{111} The Bank of New South Wales board (total membership 12) included 11
subscribers to the association plus Lithgow, the auditor-general,
who was no doubt sympathetic (ADB II, p. 120), and of these 5 later
went over to the \textit{Herald}. The Australia board totalled 11, 10 of
whom became petitioners, including 6 who had subscribed to the
association. For list of directors, see \textit{The New South Wales Calender

\textsuperscript{112} See List of Subscribers to the Australian Patriotic Association, and
[Macarthur], op. cit., appendix 2. Background information has been
taken mainly from directories, the 1828 census records, and the ML
card catalogue. The impressions given here are derived from a body
of detail which will be the subject of a published article, but which
is at present contained in lists and tables.
large subscribers to the association: a fifth of those who had given £5 or more to the association now went over to the Herald.

Leaving out those who are today mere names, we have to examine 354 people who kept to the association, and 424 who had signed the Herald petitions. Unfortunately the two lists are based on different methods of selection, because the subscribers to the association had to pay a heavy fee. Also the geographical distribution of names no doubt depended on the way collectors happened to move about the country. But it must be significant that 70.6 per cent of subscribers to the association lived in Sydney, compared with only 34.2 per cent of those who signed the Herald petitions. The only country area in which the association did relatively well was Penrith, where Sir John Jamison, the senior magistrate, no doubt brought his influence to bear.

It is clear that the two movements appealed to different groups among the middle classes of the colony. The association was supported by a mass of Sydney people, shoemakers, soapmakers, ironmongers, cabinet-makers, butchers, wine and spirit merchants, brewers and publicans. The last three types were particularly numerous among the Sydney subscribers. Many of these, no doubt, could be called professional politicians, intelligent energetic men, close to the heart of affairs, rich enough to pay the heavy subscription fee, and acute enough to understand that such commitments kept the wheels of business running smoothly.

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113 There were 36 publicans among the subscribers (all but 5 in Sydney), and only 3 (all in or near Parramatta) among the petitioners (lists of licensed publicans, 1834-5, 1835-6, NSWSA 4/65, 4/66).
The bulk of the Herald petitioners, on the other hand, were country townspeople and farmers, who were unlikely to have any connection with Sydney trading networks, but who were no doubt prepared to tread more or less in the footsteps of their wealthy neighbours.

Linked with this difference is the fact that there were many more ex-convicts in the association: 58 have been identified, mainly urban retailers and artizans, compared with only three among the petitioners. Those three were a Sydney baker and two farmers at Seven Hills. But this difference did not make the Patriotic Association a society of ex-convicts: by far the largest number in both movements had arrived in the colony as free men. 114

Much has been written about the political troubles of this time, but there is a great deal of research still to be done. No historian of the 'thirties has so far made any detailed attempt to quantify the current social and economic forces, and the work would make a thesis in its own right. For the time being, then, nothing definite can be said about why different sections of the middle class took opposite sides in 1835-6, and the present argument depends on a mere impression of the form of society. The only explicit difference in purpose between the two movements lay in the fact that the Patriotic Association aimed at quicker reform and a wider franchise. But it is an open question whether

114 A total of 98 free adult immigrants have been identified among subscribers to the association (128 counting defectors), and 190 among the Herald petitioners.
such details really mattered to its supporters. It may well be that what appealed more was the political style of each movement. The politics of the Patriotic Association, in its final form, were clearly those of confrontation: the leaders aimed to raise public opinion against the political establishment. The Herald petitioners on the other hand, put their faith in the politics of co-operation. They asked for an official inquiry, and they seemed to look forward to an evolving debate. Each side depended, perhaps, on a different social and commercial attitude, the Herald petitioners being more inclined to mutual trust, corporate action and gradual profit. This was certainly Macarthur's attitude.

Four middle-class men who signed the Herald petitions, and who may be taken as typical, are Isaac and William Mobbs and John and James Pye, who all lived near Parramatta, one of the strongholds of the Herald campaign. The father of the Mobbses had been transported in 1797. They and their mother had followed him three years later and the family had settled at the Field of Mars. In 1822 Mobbs senior had been commended for his industry by Commissioner Bigge. By the 1830s he and his sons had accumulated about 1,500 acres, where they grew 'the best oranges, apples, &c. in the colony'. The Pyes, by contrast, were native-born, as were their wives. Their father had arrived free in 1791, and had settled on a farm at Seven Hills. John was now landlord of the Lamb

115 Only 3.2% of the subscribers to the Patriotic Association lived at Parramatta, compared with 13% of the petitioners.
116 Report of the commissioner of inquiry into the state of the colony of New South Wales, 1822 (448) XX, p. 142.
117 The New South Wales Calender and General Post Office Directory 1832, p. 79.
and Lark, a village inn at Baulkham Hills, beside owning a small number of cattle. James was an orchardist, who made a moderate fortune with his fruit trees and later sat as a conservative in the first parliament.  

The great debate met with a confused response in the Hunter valley. Very few settlers were persuaded to give money to the association, and a good number supported the Herald campaign: one-fifth of all the signatures to the Herald petitions are followed by Hunter valley addresses. However, the Australian was pleasantly surprised to notice during the canvass for the association's counter-petition, that 'no where has a better feeling manifested itself [towards the association] than in the Hunter districts, the strong hold of Toryism', where 'several hundred signatures' had been received. Apparently only a few of the settlers - mainly the politicians of the district - had managed to keep up with 'the reputable colonists' in their recent break with the reform movement.

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It had originally been thought that Charles Jenkins would be

118 For James Pye's life, see ADB V.
120 Between 83 and 90 of the 427 signatories had Hunter valley addresses. Some addresses are too brief for certainty.
121 Australian, 10 May 1836.
122 Nearly half the Herald petitioners from the Hunter valley (45 of them) had been involved in the hole-and-corner agitation of 1833, and others (such as John Bingle, E.C. Close, W. Dumaresq, A.C. Innes and H.C. Sempill) were closely connected with Sydney politics.
delegated to take the **Herald** petitions to England. But soon after the meeting on 21 April Macarthur agreed to take them himself, as he was already planning to go 'on his own private affairs'. These affairs included discussions with his brother Edward about the family property, and the raising of a large loan for the improvement of Camden and the other estates. The Macarthur family interests seem to have been in a very healthy condition: recent sales suggested that they could now look forward to £5,000 a year from the wool alone. It is true that their fleeces were beginning to be matched for quality by other local flocks. Also, from now on the overall value of each clip began to fall, and after 1839 it was to be many years before their finances were once again on an even keel. In fact they never again came up to such a pitch of prosperity. But for the time being the family was very wealthy, and full of hope about their own and the colony's future.

A second general meeting of the supporters of the **Herald** petitions was held on 30 May, when the committee reported on progress. Twenty-five people were present. The committee recommended among other things that

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123 Macarthur to Jones, 26 Apr. 1836, ML A357; **Sydney Herald**, 2 June 1836.
125 Abstract of Macarthur wool sales, 1831-8, ML A2965.
127 **Sydney Herald**, 2 June 1836.
an office be set up in Sydney, 'a Registry for Emigrants in search
of situations on their arrival in the Colony, as well as for the information
of Colonists requiring their services'. The office was to receive
information through regular contact with branch committees in the
country, and was to be managed by Charles Jenkins.\footnote{Committee of management's report, Report ... of the General Meeting
... May 30, 1836, pp. 7-8. Macarthur was at least partly responsible
for the formation of the branch committees (Macarthur to Jenkins,
20 June 1836, ML A357). The registry was in operation by July
(Sydney Herald, 25 July 1836), and it seems to have lasted until
August 1837 when the petition committee was apparently wound up
(notice to creditors, Sydney Gazette, 25 July 1837; regular notices
to immigrants, which end ibid., 3 Aug. 1837).}{128}

The last part of the meeting was given up to Macarthur. Since he
was to take the petitions to England, he said, he felt bound to explain
how he would act when he got there. He had already made it clear that
he wanted no remuneration of any kind; he was not to be considered

as the Agent of the Petitioners, but merely as one of them ... acting in co-operation with the gentlemen whose aid had been
solicited in London.\footnote{Committee of management's report, Report ... of the General Meeting
... May 30, 1836, p.7.}{129}

He would therefore act solely on his own judgement and according to
principles which he would now explain. The remarkable speech which
followed led the editor of the \textit{Australian} to describe him as the Tories'
leading light, 'the Eagle of his tribe'; an equivocal compliment, no
doubt, when the same article called the Botany Bay tory 'the lowest of
all reasoning animals'.\footnote{Australian, 9 August 1836.}{130}
Macarthur first made it as clear as possible that in spite of charges from the other side, the petitions had not been got up by a small faction out of 'hostility to the present Government'. This must have surprised some of the audience. Where they complained about crime and disorder, Macarthur said, they were referring to 'the system, or rather want of system that has prevailed [in the management of convicts] from the first foundation of the colony'. He also clarified a part of the petition to the king, where His Majesty was asked that in future magistrates should be appointed and dismissed only with 'the approval of the Executive Council, in all cases'. This was an obvious reference to an affair at the beginning of the year, when Bourke had dismissed several magistrates with tory reputations. But Macarthur argued that Bourke had made better appointments to the magistracy than any governor before him, including Darling. The petitioners, he said, only asked that the governor should make a habit of consulting with his council in such matters.

Macarthur took care to add that if anyone should differ with him on any point, they should put their opinions in writing. He apparently meant that these would go with him to England. But the offer was not taken up.

131 Macarthur's speech, Report ... of the General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, pp. 11-13, 15. Macarthur took great care with the printing of this report, which includes the corrected text of his speech (Macarthur to Jenkins, 7 June 1836, ML Am 43-1/3, and 15, 20, 27, 28 June 1836, ML A357).


133 Macarthur's speech, Report ... of the General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, pp. 20-1.

134 Ibid., p. 20.
The most important part of Macarthur's speech dealt with constitutional reform, and the colony's fitness for 'free institutions'. He had given this subject, he said, 'the most earnest consideration'.

His argument shows that he had studied the works of several revolutionary constitution-makers, including Benjamin Franklin and the younger Mirabeau. He quoted as well from Francis Bacon (one of his favourite authors), the radical Horne Tooke, and the British moral philosophers Adam Ferguson and William Paley, both men of the late enlightenment.

He had decided, he said, that caution was necessary; not an uncharacteristic conclusion. In particular he thought that as a rule it would be wrong to admit ex-convicts to full participation in the duties and functions of citizenship ... [because] they ought not as a class to be entrusted with power to control the actions of others, or to influence the regulation and government of society.

The words 'as a class' are important. What Macarthur seems to have feared most was the power of the ex-convicts acting as a body, which he thought must lead to short-sighted and corrupt standards in the legislature and courts. He argued that 'in order to enjoy free Institutions to their full extent the majority of a community should be moral and well-conducted'; among a vicious people liberty must only increase the

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135 Ibid., p.16.
136 See G.M. Young, 'Portrait of an Age', in G.M. Young (ed.), Early Victorian England 1830-1865, London 1934, II p.419: 'The admiration of Bacon, almost amounting to a rediscovery, is very characteristic of the period.'
137 Macarthur's speech, Report ... of the General Meeting ... May 30, 1836, p.16.
138 Compare his notes on the draft constitution bill, April 1838, ML D185, ff.59-61 (see chapter 5, below).
opportunities for vice. But unless special precautions were taken, the
ex-convicts must at present dominate an elective system. Therefore,
he said, the rulers of the colony must somehow keep up, by artificial
means, 'a line of demarcation, between right and wrong', between reformed
and unreformed men, and between the worth and unworthy rich. In
other words, if ex-convicts were to be admitted to political power, it
must be as exceptions. He did not say at present how numerous the
exceptions might be.

The idea of the citizen as a moral being, Macarthur's favourite
idea, was characteristic of several French authors whose work he knew
well. Rousseau had written of the civil community as 'a moral and
collective body', and had argued that by the social contract every
member 'owes a duty to each of his neighbours, and, as a Citizen, to
the sovereign people as a whole'; for through citizenship he acquires
liberty from self, that 'Moral Freedom, which alone makes a man his own
master'. The greatest achievement of Sismondi, another political theorist
whose work Macarthur is known to have admired, was his attack on the doctrine
that self-interest was the motive of every national economy.

139 Ibid., pp.16, 19.
140 See also Macarthur, op. cit., pp.57-8, 108-20; his evidence before the
select committee on transportation, 1837, loc.cit., pp.165
(19 May 1837), 212, 224-5 (26 May 1837), 273-4 (9 June 1837).
Macarthur's journal of a tour in France and Switzerland, Mar. 1815-
Apr. 1816, ML A2929 (no pagination).
142 Mao-Lan Tuan, Simonde de Sismondi as an Economist, New York, 1927
pp.57-61; Macarthur's speech, [20 August 1853], in E.K. Silvester
(ed.), The Speeches, in the Legislative Council of New South Wales,
on the second reading of the Bill for Framing a New Constitution for
the Colony, Sydney 1853, p.141.
Tocqueville, whose *De la Démocratie en Amérique* was published in 1835, took the same general approach, though he wrote mainly from a descriptive point of view. It is not clear whether Macarthur had seen de Tocqueville's book at this stage, but it was later to be a fruitful source of ideas.

In his speech Macarthur did not dazzle his audience with foreign authorities. He referred only to a statement by the Comte de Mirabeau - 'the brightest genius ... of the French Revolution' - to the effect that 'liberty itself was not so important as the dissemination of sound principles of religion and morality'. From the same period he also quoted Horne Tooke's opinion that 'extreme selfishness' and 'extreme criminality' were proper grounds for 'exclusion from a share in the Government'. Finally, by quoting from Adam Ferguson, he tried to show that the performance of civic duty depended on the understanding that personal and community welfare must be the same thing. He could not believe that this understanding was common in New South Wales, and he spoke of the high incidence of crime as adequate proof.  

This part of Macarthur's argument was linked with the idea in the petitions that wealth should not be the sole test of capacity under the new order, and that a 'just moral feeling ... is the only secure foundation of free Institutions'. A man was not to be given power simply in

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proportion to the financial stake he had in the country. Property was of course to be necessary, but not sufficient.

In contrast Wentworth thought of worldly success as the sole index of political capacity, because 'in this country ignorance and poverty went together'.

The motive force in public life for him was to be, not moral feeling, but rational self-interest. His ally Bland explained, in a written answer to Macarthur's speech, that the Patriotic Association drew its ideas from the theory of the American constitution, which, he said, depended not on fixed moral standards but on a system of 'political checks'. These checks made it worthwhile for the politicians of Washington 'to act well'.

It seems, therefore, that the old campaign for reform in the colony was meant to establish an automaton, providing for individual effort in much the same way as the Ripon regulations were meant to govern the settlers' struggle for land. The key to the new system was to be found in the qualification for voting. Those in authority were simply to decide on a figure, a certain sum of money, with no reference to individuals and with the confidence that a system founded on such impartiality, and

144 Wentworth's speech at a public meeting, *Australian*, 2 June 1835. This remark was made in connection with qualifications for the committee of the Patriotic Association.

145 Monitor, 8 June 1836. See also Wentworth's speech in the legislative council, 30 Sept. 1850, the debate on transportation, *SMH*, 7 Oct. 1850: 'He would say, first let them take the means to become a nation, and let them purify themselves afterwards. Let them first achieve their nationality, and then it would be time enough to think of modelling their social state.'
such liberty, must work well. The members of the executive and
debate were likewise to be driven by their own ambition, and
limited by nothing but the ambition of others.

This is the type of machinery which Matthew Arnold, writing later
in the century, condemned as the function of a false ideal, 'the
specially British form of Quietism, or a devout, but excessive reliance
on an over-ruling Providence'. 146 Arnold would have fought it with sheer
high-mindedness:

an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters
increased sweetness, increased light, increased life,
increased sympathy.147

So would Macarthur. He differed from Wentworth, and from the normal
successful politician, in that he never had any long-term political
programme. Nor did he have any absolute faith in simple liberty and
simple justice. His priorities always referred to passing circumstances,
and he saw honest motives as the only sure good.148 This in itself
seems to have led to an excessive reliance on providence: 'Let us do
what, in our conscience, we believe to be right,' Macarthur would say,
'and the result cannot fail to be satisfactory'.149

146 Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, London 1960, p.124 (Arnold's
italics).
147 Ibid., p.64.
148 Compare the ideas of Macarthur's contemporary, the Christian socialist
F.D. Maurice, who 'believed that the reform of society ... must come
through the purification of the motives which guide society, a
purification reflected in the co-operative ideal' (G. Kitson Clark,
149 His speech in the legislative council, [30 Aug. 1853], in Silvester,
op. cit., p.146.
The various threads of this great issue colour Macarthur's whole career. The affair of the Ripon regulations has already shown that he was keen to make New South Wales a nation of patriots. Like George III at his accession he wanted to promote 'unity and good harmony' among the people, and, more immediately, he wanted to make politicians agree. He aimed at Dr. Lindsay's peaceful 'collision of sentiments'; at debate informed with charity, energy and eventual truth.

This was to be achieved by assuming that every man was, first and foremost, a moral being, who might have such a settled view of life that peace of mind - 'contentment' as Macarthur called it - would be his main aim. 150 At this stage Macarthur's understanding of local politics was shallow, his ideas were slightly wild, and his patriotic efforts had all been abortive. His careful manoeuvring in 1831 had led to nothing, and his attempt in 1833 to join forces with Wentworth and Jamison was a conspicuous failure. But his political attitude was not unique in the colony. As he grew older he was to receive growing support from a mass of settlers who led uniform and worthy lives, and who could see no reason why their leaders should not be as peaceful and pragmatic as themselves. These were the men of 'good sense', whom Macarthur always thought of as his real constituency. 151

150 Macarthur to his mother, 7 Apr. 1829, and to his father, 24 June 1829, ML A2931; his speech at a public meeting, 24 Apr. 1844, SMH, 1 May 1844; Macarthur to G.W. Norman, 6 Mar. 1852, Norman MSS C182.

151 See, for example, his speech at the declaration of the poll for Cumberland, 6 July 1843, Australian, 10 July 1843.
Macarthur's ideas were to receive their first detailed expression in England. He spent June and July collecting figures on different matters, with the help of Charles Jenkins. He was to use these in his discussions with the great men of Downing Street. 152 On 21 July the petition committee voted him £500 to cover expenses and on 28th he sailed from Port Jackson on board the *Abel Gower*. 153

152 Macarthur to Jenkins, 20, 28 June 1836, ML A357.