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Corrigenda and Addenda

Vol. 1

p.52, 11th line from bottom: Arles is not a civil parish, but a village

p.176, 1.17: Fig. 6.2 should be 6.6

p.187, n.6: author's name is Breandan Mac Cnaimshi

p.194, 1.14: Power Law should be Poor Law

p.203 et seq. the newspaper here should be the *Londonderry Sentinel*

p.206, 1.17: the village is spelt St. Johnston

**Aspects of Irish Assisted
Emigration to
New South Wales, 1848-1870**

by

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Chapter 7

“Who Will not Give his Mite in so Good, so Holy, so Blessed a Cause”: The Donegal Relief Committee of N.S.W. and Assisted Emigration from County Donegal to Sydney, 1859–1864

Before 1859 Sydney was not a popular destination with emigrants from Ireland's most north western and isolated county — Donegal. From 1851 to 1858 N.S.W. accounted for barely one percent of all emigrants from that county. [Figure 7.1] Donegal also made little impact on the figures for Irish assisted immigrants arriving in Sydney; between 1841 and 1858 just two percent, 836 of the 44,228 Irish, came from Donegal. [Figure 7.1] However in 1859 Donegal's share of the immigrants leapt to 31% and the next six years, 1859 to 1864, accounted for 60% of all N.S.W./Donegal immigrants between 1841 and 1870. [Figure 7.1] The effect on total Donegal emigration was no less dramatic. Assisted emigration to Sydney accounted for 34% of all county emigrants in 1859 and 16% of total county emigration between 1859 and 1864. [Figure 7.1]

If the gross emigration figures indicate an interesting and aberrant county pattern an examination of the Sydney shipping lists reveal an even more curious phenomenon. Donegal is divided into eight Baronies and from 1851 to 1858 only seven percent of the small number of Sydney emigrants came from the largest and most northwesterly Barony of Kilmacrenan. [Map 1] The connection with N.S.W., such as it was, centred on the eastern baronies of Tirhugh and Raphoe in parishes bordering on counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. From 1859 on this pattern was almost completely reversed. Between 1859 and 1870 Kilmacrenan accounted for 78% of the greatly increased emigration to N.S.W. Even within Kilmacrenan one large parish dominated this increase, Tullaghobegley on the barony's north west Atlantic coast, known locally as the Gweedore/Cloughaneely region. Of the 789 Donegal arrivals in 1859 80%, 628, were from Tullaghobegley, the largest number of arrivals from any Irish parish in any one year between 1848 and 1870. Subsequent Tullaghobegley arrivals pushed this figure to 888 making this the greatest population movement from any one parish in Ireland to N.S.W. between 1859 and 1870.¹

The process which brought these people to Sydney began in the village of Dunfanaghy, Donegal on 18 January 1858. On that day eight priests from parishes around Kilmacrenan's Atlantic coast instituted the Gweedore and Cloughaneely Relief

¹ Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.

Fund and called for contributions to help them “relieve the peasants of these districts who are at present undergoing the most indescribable sufferings and privations”.² They formed themselves into a committee with power to dispense whatever relief monies became available and to their resolutions attached an Appeal, which they asked all “Provincial and Metropolitan Newspapers favourable to our cause” to publish.³ The Appeal was long, emotional, full of biblical allusions and well calculated to evoke sympathy in Catholic Ireland both at home and overseas. [Document 7.1] Its gist was simple: the people of Tullaghobegley had been reduced to starvation by the local landlords in their efforts to initiate unjust and unpopular economic changes.

Traditionally, in the absence of landlord interest, local smallholders had enjoyed full grazing rights for their cattle on the extensive wild mountain pasture which extends over most of the parish.⁴ Throughout the 1850s however the landlords, determined to exact an economic return from these hitherto under-utilised parts of their estates, began stocking them with sheep as well as employing Scots and English shepherds to tend them. As unlimited rights to these grazing lands were withdrawn local resistance grew leading in 1857 to a series of protest sheep killings.⁵ To recompense the landlords a compensatory tax was levied on those parts of the parish where sheep carcasses were discovered.⁶ In addition these areas were also made responsible for meeting the cost of bringing in the extra police needed to collect the tax.⁷ According to the Appeal “the sum of £3,000” was levied on the “poorest and most miserable district on God’s earth”.⁸ The result, the priests alleged, was destitution as the people struggled to meet the tax by selling off clothes and food.⁹

Behind these developments the priests saw an almost genocidal purpose. Their isolated parishioners were Celts of the “pure old race with the pure old faith”.¹⁰ Upon these “Innocents” had descended a latter day Herod in the shape of foreign landlords, sheep, shepherds and policemen. If they were not relieved they would pass into oblivion

² *Freeman's Journal*, 29 May 1858, Gweedore and Cloughaneely Relief Fund.

³ *Ibid.*; For text of the Appeal see Document 7.1.

⁴ E. Estyn Evans, “Introduction” to facsimile reprint of 1887 edition of Lord George Hill, *Facts from Gweedore*, first published 1846, Belfast, 1971.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Evans, “Introduction”, p.15.

⁶ Brendan MacCaimhsi, “North West Donegal after the Famine”, *Donegal Annual*, Vol.9, No.2, 1970, pp.195-196.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Priest’s Appeal, Document 7.1.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

and their “once happy homes WILL become walks for Scotch and English hoggets”.¹¹ What was at stake here was not just the hunger and misery of a few peasants but the possible extinction of a race — “this fine old Celtic race is about being crushed aside to make room for Scotch and English sheep”.¹² Thus contributors to the relief fund would demonstrate not only their Christian charity but also their patriotism in helping to preserve this vestige of Catholic Gaeldom. Skilfully the priests appealed to their readers’ sensitivity to those two great historic national grievances — loss of Irish land to foreigners and the threat to the survival of the Catholic religion. These were sentiments likely to evoke a ready response among the overseas Irish, most of whom had direct experience of the Great Famine of the 1840s.

The Appeal reached Sydney in May 1858 and was at once published verbatim in the *Freeman’s Journal*, the colony’s leading Irish Catholic paper.¹³ Sydney’s Celtic Association determined to help the Donegal people by assisting them to emigrate to N.S.W. This was seen as a better way to use colonial funds rather than sending money to Ireland which would not alter the long term condition of the people and would end up in landlords’ pockets.¹⁴ In late May a deputation from the Association approached the Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, to see if the government had any objection to this idea. Cowper was friendly but refused to commit himself to anything until presented with a definite proposal.¹⁵ To move the matter along a public meeting was called “to consider measures of relief for the destitute and suffering peasantry of Donegal, Ireland”.¹⁶ On 31 May 800 people gathered in the Sydney School of Arts to hear a number of rousing and emotional speeches on the dire condition of the people of far away Tullaghobegley from well known Irish/Australians such as Archdeacon John McEncroe and MPs William Bede Dalley and Daniel Deniehy.¹⁷ Apart from general resolutions of support and sympathy for the Donegal priests and their parishioners the meeting endorsed the setting up of a General Committee to administer a Donegal Relief Fund.¹⁸ In accordance with the main resolution of the meeting this money was to be applied exclusively to the emigration from the distressed districts of Donegal to N.S.W. Such was the enthusiasm of the meeting

¹¹ *Ibid.* Bold print as in original text.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 May 1858.

¹⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 August 1858, Letter from Melbourne Donegal Relief Committee to Sydney Donegal Relief Committee, 2 July 1858.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1858, speech by Jeremiah Moore, Donegal Relief Committee, School of Arts meeting.

¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1858, Donegal Peasantry, report of School of Arts meeting.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

that £200 was contributed on the spot.¹⁹

Within a week the Committee had organised itself to collect funds in Sydney and the interior. The Catholic Vicar General, Dr. Gregory, requested local priests to co-operate with the Committee and William Davis, the Committee's secretary, wrote a special appeal to be sent to country districts and towns.²⁰ The methods employed to collect money in the Yass district were typical of the colony as a whole. Between June 26 and July 10 Davis's appeal appeared in four issues of the *Yass Courier* asking his "Fellow Colonists" to contribute generously to bring the people of Donegal to a country where they would not be subject to the "continual aggression" of landlords.²¹ Much of the appeal was based on that of the Donegal priests. Davis had no doubt that many would be moved to contribute after reading the story of the sufferings of the Gweedore/Cloughaneely peasantry — "Who will not give his mite in so good, so holy, so blessed a cause?"²² A day or two before the appearance of the appeal a meeting in the local Catholic school presided over by the richest landowner in the district, Tipperary-born Edward "Ned" Ryan of Galong, listened to a series of emotive speeches, similar to those at the Sydney meeting, from prominent local Irishmen such as Father Patrick Bermingham and magistrate George Allman.²³ These speeches were reported in full in the *Yass Courier*. A local committee was then appointed to raise subscriptions throughout the district and return them to the committee's honorary treasurer, Thomas Laidlaw. In this way through local meetings, sympathetic newspaper editors and country collectors the Sydney committee was able to rouse the sympathy and tap the charity of remote rural districts. Full contributors' lists were published in the *Yass Courier* and, once the money had been remitted to Sydney, they were published again in the *Freeman's Journal*.²⁴ The Boorowa committee asked for this to be done not for "mere show" but to acknowledge the contributions from many in the district who were neither Irish nor Catholic.²⁵

The subscription lists revealed that the Donegal emigration would be built on innumerable small contributions. At Raymond Terrace in the lower Hunter Valley Father

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1858, Donegal Relief Fund.

²¹ *Yass Courier*, 19 June, 26 June, 3 July, 10 July 1858, Donegal Relief Fund, Appeal issued by order of the General Committee.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 26 June 1858, Donegal Relief Fund, Public Meeting.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Subscription lists, 24 July, 28 August, 18 September 1858.

²⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 1 September 1858, Donegal Relief Fund, letter from Boorowa Committee, 21 August 1858.

Eugene Luckie collected £23/10/- from 156 people.²⁶ The great majority, 146, gave him 5/- or less.²⁷ The lower Hunter however was an area of fairly recent large-scale Irish immigration and a typical subscriber from the Hunter towns and rural districts rarely gave more than 5/-. Individual donations from the older more established Irish regions to the south and south west of Sydney were higher, 10/- and £1 appearing more frequently on the lists.²⁸ As was expected of them the affluent gave generously; £10 came from "Ned" Ryan of Galong and the well known south coast M.P., Daniel Egan, was the largest single contributor with ten guineas.²⁹ Catholic priests commonly gave between £2 and £5. The most unlikely donation was that of Sydney Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore Lang, an outspoken critic of Irish Catholic immigration. Lang nevertheless sent the committee £1 stating in an accompanying letter his common cause with the "oppressed" people of Donegal who, like the "Presbyterian Celtic population of the Highlands and Islands" of his native Scotland, suffered under the same "execrable system" of landlordism.³⁰ So unexpected was Lang's contribution that the committee published his letter in full and invited him on to the general committee.³¹ But perhaps the most pleasant way of helping bring out someone from Donegal was to purchase a ticket to the lecture/concert on the "Ancient Music of Ireland" given by the committee's treasurer and former N.S.W. Attorney General, John Hubert Plunkett.³² Here the sufferings of Ireland, and implicitly those of the Donegal peasants, emerged from Plunkett's exposition with musical accompaniment of topics such as "the Persecution of the Bards", "Robert Emmett", "Miss Curran" and "Carolan, the last of the Irish Bards".³³

Plunkett's lecture was a comparatively oblique method of appealing to the local Irish emigrant community's willingness to identify with the plight of their Donegal compatriots. At most meetings speakers were more direct, expounding at length on the Donegal priests' version of the situation in Donegal and how emigration to Australia would remove the people from local tyranny to freedom. Mindful of the desire for contributions from the non-Irish, speakers were sparing in their allusions to Catholicism and Irishness, choosing to emphasise instead the oppressive nature of the socio-economic

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3 July 1858, Donegal Relief Fund, fourth Subscription List, subscriptions received from Raymond Terrace.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Raymond Terrace list.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, see subscriptions received from Cooma/Maneroo, 4 August 1858.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Egan's subscription, 12 June 1858; Ryan's subscription, *Yass Courier*, 24 July 1858.

³⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1858.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 9 June 1858, Donegal Relief Fund, General Committee members.

³² *Ibid.*, 2 October 1858, Mr Plunkett's Lecture on Irish Music.

³³ *Ibid.*

order for those at the bottom of Irish society. This was an approach readily understood by other colonists. Alleged landlord behaviour in Donegal led the editor of the *Maitland Mercury* to question the limits to an individual's absolute power over his own property.³⁴ While the "steady advancement" of Great Britain showed that civilisation and respect for property rights went hand in hand, recent events, such as the Highland clearances, cast some doubt on that relationship.³⁵ Where the exercise of an absolute right in property had led to "complete bodies of tenantry" being "driven forth from their ancient homes" some legal restriction on such rights was clearly needed to prevent excess.³⁶ It was this association in the public mind with eviction which may have roused most sympathy for the Tullaghobegley peasants. A careful reading of the original priests' Appeal however shows that, while hundreds of families were described as suffering extreme want, nowhere were they portrayed as having been ejected from their homes.³⁷ Perhaps unconsciously, but effectively, this section of the Appeal was interpreted by some as a portrayal of mass eviction. Moreover this reading of the Appeal was placed before the public by Father John McEncroe, regarded by many as the colony's leading champion of the Irish and their right to social and religious justice.

McEncroe was chosen by the Celtic Association to make the opening speech at the initial Sydney meeting and thereafter he took the lead in organising the whole Donegal emigration between 1859 and 1864. It was no surprise that he spoke to a resolution which depicted the "unfortunate Donegal peasants" as simply the "latest victims" of the curse of Irish landlord oppression.³⁸ Where the Donegal priests had described 800 families as eking out a miserable existence from what they could find on the seashore McEncroe now conjured up that ultimate dread of the Irish tenant farmer — eviction:

He had read many histories of distress and misery in other lands, many of which would make the heart grow cold, but never had he read anything to equal the picture of desolation and misery which had been proved to exist in a portion of the county of Donegal, the most romantic, the most isolated of any in Ireland. (Cheers) There they found no less than 900 hundred families *were turned out of their cabins* to scramble about the rocks and ravines seeking for a shelter, without fire, without even a candle to light them, without food, almost without clothing — in fact they were entirely destitute — they had no power to help themselves — all had been sold from them!³⁹

³⁴ *Maitland Mercury*, 17 June 1858, editorial, Tenant Right.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Document 7.1.

³⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 June 1858, speech of Ven. Archdeacon McEncroe.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 July 1858. My italics.

Such was the connection established between Tullaghobegley and eviction that Father Kenny of Maitland suggested to the committee that they form themselves into a permanent society with some such title as The Evicted Tenantry Assisting Emigration Society.⁴⁰ Such a society's very existence, argued Kenny, 10,000 miles away though it was from Ireland, would exercise a restraining influence on landlords.⁴¹ It is impossible to know what sort of idea the average small Irish immigrant contributor formed of the situation in Donegal. But when their spiritual leaders spoke of eviction they could view their "mites" as destined to help evicted tenants, the ultimate victims of injustice in Ireland.

Even as sympathetic colonists subscribed to the fund doubts were raised as to the accuracy of the descriptions of destitution in the priest's Appeal. In a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* the day after the School of Arts meeting one Irishman, William Morris Reade, asked for all sides of the question to be presented from reports in the Irish press.⁴² Without going into detail Reade hinted that there was much that was not being placed before potential subscribers. Reade's own monthly letters from home contained no reference to such "tyranny" in Donegal.⁴³ One signing himself simply "X" quickly obliged by sending in an extract from the *Londonderry Sentinel* of 5 March containing remarks by Judge Pennefeather to the Donegal Grand Jury.⁴⁴ Pennefeather both denied the destitution and lectured the smallholders on the pointlessness of protest crimes such as sheep killing.⁴⁵ As proof of what he said the judge referred to the recent report of Poor Law Inspector Hamilton, who had been sent to Kilmacrenan by the Poor Law Commissioners in Dublin at the request of the Dunfanaghy Board of Guardians to investigate the priests' claims.⁴⁶ Virtually every paragraph of his long report was a complete refutation of the allegations in the original Appeal. With obvious delight, upon publication of "X"'s material, Reade wrote again to the *Herald* thanking "X" for showing the situation as it really was.⁴⁷ Colonial sympathy was being stirred up not for the destitute but the disaffected:

If sums of money are collected here, to bring out a body of people who may unfortunately prove to have been disaffected, instead of distressed, you may depended upon it, Sir, it will give a stimulus to sheep stealing, and "doing the

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 June 1858

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*, 6 June 1858.

44 *Ibid.*, Donegal Assizes, March 2.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*, 14 June 1858.

47 *Ibid.*

Donegal" will be the latest and generally approved dodge amongst the tenants ...⁴⁸

Down the country in mid-June the editor of the *Border Post* in Albury was also inclined to believe the reports from Donegal much exaggerated. Moreover the local tradespeople had had enough of soliciting for good causes.⁴⁹ As a collector crossed a shopkeeper's threshold he created an "evanescent hope in the breast of the latter, that a customer has at last appeared".⁵⁰ Such illusions were shattered as he was confronted by the subscription list. It was clear the *Post* had little time for Irish causes as readers were treated to London *Punch* stories of the Irish attitude to landlords which allegedly developed during the Famine:

This new phase of national character was duly chronicled in *Punch's* almanac at the time, and the entry was as follows:- "1st January — Landlord shooting begins. 31st December — Landlord shooting ends."⁵¹

The *Post's* editor soon revealed his real reason for refusing to support the Donegal fund. All through April and May and into June he had lent strong support to the Indian Relief Fund collecting for the victims of the 1858 Indian mutiny.⁵² A controversy had arisen over the allocation of this money in India and the Catholic church had withdrawn its support preferring instead to open an alternative Catholic fund.⁵³ Subscriptions to the original fund in Albury were meagre. As the controversy over the reality of Donegal distress began the *Post* disdainfully referred to those papers in Ireland supporting the Donegal priests as the "Sepoy" press.⁵⁴

Much of this was merely sniping at the need for a relief fund and never grew into an all out attack on the proposed Donegal immigration to the colony. Moreover the *Freeman's Journal* published plenty of material capable of convincing its largely Irish immigrant readership that the priests were to be trusted ahead of judges, Grand Juries, Poor Law Inspectors, police, landlords and their employees. Straight after the appearance of Judge Pennefeather's remarks in the *Herald* the *Freeman's Journal* devoted virtually the whole of its back page to the Kilmacrenan priests' retort to Poor Law Inspector Hamilton's report.⁵⁵ The evidence of each of Hamilton's witnesses was challenged and

⁴⁸ *Border Post*, 19 June 1858.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Appeal to the Colonists on behalf of the Indian Relief Fund. The Appeal first appeared on 14 April and ran in virtually every issue of the *Post* in April, May and June 1858.

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 June 1858, letter from Charles Kemp.

⁵⁴ *Border Post*, 26 June 1858, The Distress in Donegal.

⁵⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1858, Donegal Destitution — Address to the People.

declared to be patently biased against the smallholders. None of these people, they argued, was as intimately acquainted with conditions in the remote recesses of this mountainous parish as themselves, the local priests. They singled out the sworn statement of County Inspector of Police, John Anderson, for particular ridicule:

... [he] resides at Letterkenny, a distance of thirty four miles. He only visits Gweedore on a tour of inspection, and is sure not to go off the mail-car road. What does he know about the cabins up in the glens and hollows of the mountains? He knows as little about the peasantry of Gweedore as he knows about the inhabitants of New Zealand.⁵⁶

Father McFadden, and the others who had signed the original Appeal, asked for their account of Tullaghobegley to be believed ahead of men like Anderson. Certainly the Irish in N.S.W. had no difficulty in doing so. The relief committee never gave any indication that willingness to subscribe was dampened by official denials of destitution in Donegal.

In Ireland the issue did not die with the Power Law report. The priests now asked for a parliamentary commission to be sent to Donegal to investigate, confident that examination on the spot would totally vindicate them.⁵⁷ At Westminster their cause was taken up by prominent Irish MP, John Francis Maguire.⁵⁸ Prompted by Maguire the government agreed not to a commission but to a select committee which, in the words of the Irish Chief Secretary, Lord Naas, might be able to "elicit the truth".⁵⁹ As Naas saw it the whole matter had frozen into a situation of claim and counter claim by respectable parties on both sides. However, responsible clerics had launched an appeal and "charitable people in England and Ireland" were contributing to a relief fund. They deserved to know if those to whom their money was going were indeed destitute.⁶⁰

If Naas had hoped finally to clarify the situation he was to be disappointed. The select committee sat for 12 days between 8 June and 2 July 1858.⁶¹ During that time they examined 29 witnesses, half of whom argued for the existence of varying degrees of destitution in Tullaghobegley while the other half as vehemently denied it. Even the published index to the evidence indicated that the end result of the questioning of all these people was little more than a litany of assertion and counter assertion. The index

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1858, *The Destitution in Donegal*.

⁵⁸ For details of J.F. Maguire's career see, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol.12, pp.774-775.

⁵⁹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, Vol. 149, 21 Victoria 1858, speech of Lord Naas, p.1535.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Report from the Select Committee on Destitution, Gweedore and Cloughaneely, hereafter SC Destitution, *BPP*, 1857-58, Vol.13.

contained five large sections on the material condition of the Tullaghobegley people headed bedding, clothing, the general condition of the people, grazing rights and the eating of seaweed.⁶² The sub-headings of the section on bedding were typical of the nature of virtually all the evidence — “Statements as to the Wretched Condition of the Bedding in the District Generally”/“Refutation of these Statements”.⁶³ None of this evidence taking really had much bearing on the committee’s final report to parliament. [Document 7.2] All the publicity surrounding the original Appeal had forced the government into giving the priests and their supporters a hearing but the committee simply believed the landlords and other official witnesses. Moreover in the report the government had a document which lent the weight of a careful parliamentary enquiry to a complete refutation of the priests’ claims.

Many in Ireland and overseas would have paid less attention to the official report than to a draft report produced by John Francis Maguire, the one Irish nationalist MP on the committee. Maguire’s draft, which was instantly voted down by the other seven members of the committee, was four times the length of the official report.⁶⁴ All that had been alleged about the troubles of Tullaghobegley — loss of grazing rights, the inequity of the levy of indiscriminate sheep and police taxes, large rent increases, and the destitution resulting from these — were accepted by Maguire. Had it not been for the priests and their Appeal the situation of the peasants would have remained grim:

Without this seasonal assistance, it is only reasonable to believe that many who are now comfortably clad, and who enjoy the unaccustomed luxury of a clean bed, would still be covered with rags, or lying at night upon miserable lairs of straw, beneath a tattered and filthy rag.⁶⁵

With his account rejected in toto Maguire now concentrated on trying to have aspects of the final report critical of the priests modified or softened. None of his amendments was accepted. Moreover the final amendment proposed by Naas, and voted against only by Maguire, revealed what the government had probably been after all along — the official discrediting of the priests’ allegations of destitution brought about by the actions of the landlords:

In the opinion of Your Committee those statements are not borne out by the evidence before them; and Your Committee have come to the conclusion that those representations are calculated to convey to the public a false and erroneous

^{6 2} *Ibid.*, Index, pp.428, 431, 432, 443, 469.

^{6 3} *Ibid.*, Index, p.428.

^{6 4} *Ibid.*, Maguire’s draft report, pp.9-11.

^{6 5} *Ibid.*, Maguire report, p.11.

impression of the state of the people of the district.⁶⁶

These deliberations at Westminster during July 1858 had no effect on collecting for the relief fund in N.S.W. When the select committee's report reached Sydney in mid October the *Freeman's Journal* published large sections of the evidence verbatim.⁶⁷ Most space was given to the to the priests and their supporters but the landlords' case was not neglected. One page out of the six devoted to this material contained the landlords' evidence. In December the *Freeman's Journal* gave a whole page to the Donegal priests' lengthy refutation of the select committee's findings.⁶⁸ They condemned the "landlord committee" but praised Maguire who had devoted himself to "the cause of the poor in the Irish wilds with a heartiness, willingness, and even with an anxious solicitude, that excited our esteem and wonder".⁶⁹ But their main reason for going into print yet again was to counteract the possible influence of the select committee:

We were anxious to offer this explanation lest any person would be led to believe the report of the landlord committee, and be thus worked on to turn a deaf ear at any future time to similar cries of distress, and lest the report would be not only unfavourable to the distressed Celts of Gweedore but to the cause of suffering humanity in other parts of the world.⁷⁰

The case of the Donegal peasants was now in the hands of the Irish public. Would they rather believe the priests, "who thoroughly know the district", or "four or more landlords" sitting in committee in London?⁷¹ The *Freeman's Journal* had no doubt on that point; the verdict of the people of N.S.W. was already evident in the large sum collected by the relief fund.⁷² Moreover Father John Doherty, the Donegal priest seen as the leading trouble maker by the landlords, told the select committee that had it been possible he would willingly have led an emigration from Tullaghobegley rather than battle on for a parliamentary enquiry.⁷³ By the time his words appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* in December 1858 the first batch of emigrants destined for Sydney as assisted emigrants sponsored by the Donegal Relief Fund had already been selected.

Long before the fund grew to a total of £4,882 in September 1858 the committee began making arrangements to offer the option of emigration to the inhabitants of

⁶⁶ Document 7.2, Select Committee's report.

⁶⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 August, 16 October, 20 October, 23 October, 27 October 1858.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1858, The Destitution in Donegal.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 23 October 1858.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Tullaghobegley.⁷⁴ In early July, with over £600 collected and the movement clearly gaining momentum, the Colonial Secretary was again approached and a definite proposal put to bring the Donegal people out as assisted emigrants nominated by the committee under the Remittance Regulations of 1857.⁷⁵ Normally nominees' names had to be entered in the colony but, with official permission, an agent in the U.K. could select emigrants on behalf of a colonial sponsor and then fill in the requisite forms for transmission to the Emigration Commissioners in London. As their selecting agent the committee appointed Scott Durbin, a recently retrenched police magistrate and Commissioner for Crown Lands. Durbin was well acquainted with the current immigration regulations and throughout April and May 1858 he had been advertising his services as a private immigration agent in the Sydney and rural press.⁷⁶ For selecting an emigrant on behalf of a colonial employer he proposed charging £3 and £3 for incidental expenses.⁷⁷ In early July, seeing an opportunity to have his abilities recognised in the colony, Durbin approached the committee offering to waive his fees and asking only that his expenses be met.⁷⁸ The colonial government approved Durbin's agency on behalf of the committee and the Emigration Commissioners were instructed to offer him every assistance in the U.K. All that remained was for McEncroe to pay the necessary £4 per head at the Immigration Office and by September 1858 he had deposited enough to bring out 950 adults.⁷⁹ Durbin landed in England on September 15 and, after presenting his credentials from the N.S.W. government to the Emigration Commissioners, set out on September 29 for Tullaghobegley.⁸⁰ What kind of place was now about to supply Sydney with more immigrants than any other single parish in Ireland between 1848 and 1870?

The extreme poverty of this part of Ireland had long been acknowledged both officially and by private observers. The opening assertion of the local National schoolteacher's public petition to the Lord Lieutenant in 1837 had a familiar ring:

That the parishioners of this parish of west Tullaghobegley ... are in the most

⁷⁴ Papers relative to the introduction of Immigrants by Venerable Archdeacon McEncroe, Assisted Immigration, p.10, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1861-62, Vol.1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Goulburn Herald*, 3 April, 14 April, 21 April, 5 May, 12 May, 19 May 1858.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3 April 1858, Private Immigration Agency.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 July 1858.

⁷⁹ Immigration Deposit Journal, deposits by McEncroe, 8 July, 7 August, and two deposits on 9 August 1858, 4/4579, AONSW.

⁸⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 December 1858, Scott Durbin to Donegal Relief Committee, 11 October 1858.

needy, hungry and naked condition of any people that ever came within the precincts of my knowledge although I have travelled a part of nine counties of Ireland, also a part of England and Scotland, together with a part of British America. I have likewise perambulated 2,253 miles through seven of the United States, and never witnessed the tenth part of such hunger, hardships and nakedness.⁸¹

Two decades later in 1858 the parliamentary select committee, while refusing to concede that the inhabitants were destitute, nevertheless acknowledged that Tullaghobegley had always been a poor parish.⁸² Most of the population lived on small farms in the townlands of the narrow coastal strip between the mountains and the ocean. In 1857 the assessors of the general Irish land valuation — the Griffith Valuation — recorded their findings on the productive capacity of these smallholdings.⁸³ They valued 96% of Tullaghobegley at less than 5/- an acre. The valuation of individual tenancies naturally varied but in 1857 81% of the population were living in townlands with this low valuation. A further 18% lived in areas valued between 5/- to 10/- and only a few worked land at higher valuations. [Figure 7.2] This compared with the County Tipperary parish of Clonoulty, another strong centre of assisted emigration to mid 19th century Sydney, where 56% of the people had their holdings in townlands valued at 16/- or more. Only 7% of Clonoulty's population lived on land valued at 5/- and under. [Figure 7.2] On these figures there was no denying the comparative infertility of Tullaghobegley's basic natural resource.

This poorly valued land was also an indication of Tullaghobegley's wider material and social deprivation. Ninety one percent of the parish's housing stock was valued at 10/- or less per year in rates. Of these small one or two roomed cabins 856, 52% of all Tullaghobegley's houses, were assessed at 5/- or less. Most of these were in the 5/- category but there were a few undoubtedly miserable dwellings valued at two, three and 4/-. [Figure 7.3] In early December 1857, taking particular notice of the housing conditions, Dennis Holland, the editor and proprietor of the Belfast paper, *The Ulsterman*, walked along the road from Derrybeg to Bunbeg in the south west of the parish through the townlands of Ardnagappary and Magheraclogher.⁸⁴ Holland was questioned on what he saw by the parliamentary select committee:

You were about to give an example of one house as an exemplification of the

⁸¹ The Memorial of Patrick M'Kye, in Lord George Hill, *Facts from Gweedore*, London, 1887, p.16, facsimile reprint, Belfast, 1971.

⁸² Document 7.2, Select Committee's report.

⁸³ *General Valuation of Rateable Property*, [Griffith's valuation]; Tullaghobegley, Union of Dunfanaghy, County Donegal, Dublin, 1857.

⁸⁴ Evidence of Dennis Holland, SC Destitution, pp.95-96.

others.

This house which I allude to was, I remember, four or five feet below the level of the road; it was a single chamber; there was a little wall of turf made at the end of it: a kind of screen about four or five feet in length; inside that was a little mountain cow. By the fire a man was seated in very ragged clothing: he had no coat on ... the fire was made of damp turf, it smoked very much, and seemed to give out but little heat; there was a deal table, and that was all the furniture I noticed.

Was there a bed?

There was a quantity of some kind of rags tied in a bundle in one corner, which answered as a sort of seat or couch, and, I suppose, was a bed at night ... This was the condition of nearly every one of those cabins which I had seen on the right hand side of the road from Derrybeg to Bunbeg.⁸⁵

These two townlands were typical of those in the coastal strip. Between them they contained 623 people in 108 houses, 94 of which were valued at 10/- or less. The average value of the land was 1/9d. per acre. In the neighbouring townland of Dore there were 60 houses in 1858 39 of which, 65%, were valued at precisely 5/- each. Journalist John Browne of the *Londonderry Journal* testified to the select committee that in his opinion the inhabitants in 26 of the houses in Dore were in great poverty when he visited them in May 1858.⁸⁶ Michael McMonagle's holding was typical of those on the list of the poor of Dore which Browne supplied to the select committee: he had a cabin worth 5/- and two acres worth 7/- per acre, slightly better land than that of most smallholders in Tullaghobegley.⁸⁷ Again by comparison Clonoulty in Tipperary had a much higher standard of housing as measured by the Griffith valuers. Many of Clonoulty's low valued cabins in the one to 10/- category were probably little better in construction and comfort than those in Tullaghobegley. However more than half of Clonoulty's housing stock, 52%, was valued at over 10/- as opposed to only 9% in Tullaghobegley.⁸⁸ [Figure 7.3]

This isolated Donegal parish was also one of the most illiterate in Ireland. In 1841 just over half the Irish people aged five years and upwards could not read; by 1861 this had dropped to 39% of the population. While County Donegal followed the national downward trend, in 1861 the county had only reached the position which the country had achieved by 1841. The 1861 census showed 52% of the county still unable to read. However Donegal as a whole was fairly literate by the standards of its north west coastal region. The parishes of Clondahorky, Raymunterdoney and Tullaghobegley, extending

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Evidence of John Browne, p.38.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Appendix No.3, Paper delivered in by Mr John Browne, p.413; *Valuation of Tenements*, Gweedore, *op.cit.*, p.80.

⁸⁸ For a graphic description of the worst housing in Tullaghobegley see the evidence of Dennis Holland, *SC Destitution*, p.95.

along the northwest coastal strip of the Barony of Kilmacrenan, were 78% illiterate in 1861. [Figure 7.4.1] But in Tullaghobegley itself in 1861, nearly 30 years after the beginning of the national system of education in Ireland, 90% of those above five years of age were still incapable of reading. Indeed since 1841 illiteracy in the parish had declined by a mere 3%. [Figure 7.4.2] In 1861, even amongst those most likely to have benefited from schooling over the previous two decades, the ten to 30 year olds, only 13% could read compared to 62% in that age group in Donegal as a whole. The Irish census Commissioners felt that there was a close connection between poverty and illiteracy — the worse the standard of housing in any given area the higher the illiteracy rate of the people.⁸⁹ While there would have been other complex reasons for Tullaghobegley's extremely poor level of basic education, the parish in the 1850s was a good example of the Commissioner's argument.

Despite this poverty population figures suggest that there had been comparatively little permanent overseas emigration from Tullaghobegley before 1859. The three parishes of Donegal's north west coast, Clondahorky, Raymunterdoney and Tullaghobegley, showed a significantly slower population decline compared with both the county and the country from 1841 to 1871. Where Ireland lost over one third of its 1841 population during those 30 years County Donegal lost 26% and its north west coast only 11%. [Figure 5.1] Tullaghobegley however went totally against both the local and national trend. Between 1841 and 1851, the decade of the great national disaster of the Famine, its population loss was a mere 1%. The corresponding loss for Donegal was 14% and for Ireland 20%. Over the next ten years, as the emigration exodus continued throughout Ireland leading to a further fall of 11%, Tullaghobegley actually gained population. During the 30 years of Ireland's major mid-century population decline the number of people living in this remote parish barely altered. [Figure 5.2] What may have sustained this remarkable stability was the yearly resort to seasonal migration to supplement family income. Each year hundreds of young men and women left the parish for temporary employment on the more prosperous farms of east Donegal and Counties Tyrone and Derry. Hundreds more went to Scotland as seasonal harvesters and domestic servants. In late 1858 the Donegal Relief Committee of Sydney's agent, Scott Durbin, was heading into a poor, virtually illiterate part of Ireland where large scale overseas emigration was not well established. Moreover he was about to offer to these people the opportunity to emigrate to N.S.W. and so undertake the longest of all 19th century emigrant journeys.

In Tullaghobegley Durbin claimed there was a great desire to emigrate but not at

⁸⁹ General Report, p.33, Census of Ireland, 1841, *BPP*, 1843, Vol.24: " ...bad house accommodation and defective education seem to accompany each other".

once.⁹⁰ On October 4 he met the two priests most prominent in the original Appeal, Fathers Doherty and McFadden, who told him of this eagerness to leave the parish for good.⁹¹ However the situation in Tullaghobegley had improved somewhat over the previous months; the harvest had been good and the results of the Appeal in Britain had allowed food, money and clothing to be distributed to the really needy.⁹² The harvest was proceeding during Durbin's visit and few would be willing to leave until agricultural activity virtually ceased with the onset of winter in December.⁹³ Clearly, poor as they were, this was no longer a population seeking instant escape from extreme destitution. Doherty and McFadden agreed to obtain for Durbin a list of all those who wished to be considered for N.S.W. and he proposed to pay a second visit later in the year to select the emigrants.⁹⁴ He was assured that the cost of the required chest of sea clothing under the passage regulations would not be a deterrent to poor applicants. The priests guaranteed to provide all the necessary clothing, probably intending to pay for it from the British relief monies available to them.⁹⁵

After a certain point in late autumn the weather on the north west Atlantic seaboard of Ireland deteriorates rapidly. From then until spring the people of Tullaghobegley had little to do on their holdings and much time was spent indoors. It was in late November 1858 at the beginning of this period that Durbin returned to the area to make his final selections.⁹⁶ At the National schools in both Cloughaneely and Gweedore he was mobbed by potential candidates for emigration:

The excitement and anxiety of these poor people to press forward to have their names put down on the list, and to be approved of, was painful to witness, and I was at both places compelled to close the lists earlier than I had intended, being apprehensive that some accident might occur from the pressure of the crowd, owing to the extraordinary desire of both sexes to be nominated.⁹⁷

According to Durbin upwards of three thousand people, virtually a third of the parish, crowded round the school buildings hoping to be selected.⁹⁸ When earlier in October Fathers Doherty and McFadden drew up their preliminary lists, people had even

⁹⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 December 1858, Durbin to Relief Committee, 11 October 1858.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Freeman's Journal*, 1 December 1858, The Destitution in Donegal.

⁹³ Durbin to Relief Committee, 11 October 1858.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 February 1859, Durbin to Relief Committee, 13 December 1858.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

rowed ten miles in heavy seas across Tory Sound from Tory Island to record their interest in going to Australia.⁹⁹ Given the large number who were offering themselves Durbin was able to be fairly selective; he chose males likely to make good agricultural servants and females “accustomed to the duties of general domestic servants”.¹⁰⁰ Many women were rejected as unsuited to Sydney’s labour market as they had not been taught the “customary household duties”.¹⁰¹ Families with too many dependant children were also turned down.¹⁰²

The *Nation* newspaper in Dublin was sure that in Tullaghobegley Durbin was engaged in selecting the genuinely destitute — “the very poorest and most miserable that can be found in this mass of misery”.¹⁰³ But even as he began organising the Tullaghobegley emigration doubts were again expressed about the reality of this misery. On October 13, shortly after Durbin’s first visit to Donegal, the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s Irish correspondent, “Hibernicus”, wrote a report on the state of Ireland.¹⁰⁴ An Irishman himself, absent from home in the bush of Australia for seven years, “Hibernicus” found the country much improved; farmers had imbibed the spirit of the age and were suitably “go-ahead”, party spirit was a thing of the past, the country was now connected to the New World of America by a fast steamer service, railways were everywhere and agricultural prices were good.¹⁰⁵ The only black spot among all this progress was Donegal, a county “always excessively poor”, which had not shared in the prosperity of “more getatable counties”.¹⁰⁶ The “alleged distress” of Donegal, reported in the Sydney press, was “humbug”. “Hibernicus” presented a novel version of the problems of the Tullaghobegley tenantry. They had been living an “Isle of Skye like” existence when large sheep farmers had bought them out and, rather than use this money to emigrate, they squandered it and turned on the “intruders” sheep.¹⁰⁷ In a scathing sentence “Hibernicus” dismissed any benefit which N.S.W. might gain by emigration from such a place:

I see an emigration agent from N.S.W. — a Mr Durbin — has the culling of the

⁹⁹ *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, 26 January 1859.

¹⁰⁰ Durbin to Relief Committee, 13 December 1858.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, 13 December 1858.

¹⁰⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 1858.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

county, and I trust the men he sends you will make better shepherds out there, than experience proved them to be at home.¹⁰⁸

Similar sentiments were voiced by the *Londonderry Sentinel*, considered to be an organ of Donegal landlord opinion. Accounts of alleged Donegal distress in N.S.W. papers such as the *Goulburn Herald* were reprinted in the *Sentinel* to “amuse our readers”, who would be astonished to learn that the people were to be removed to “happy Australia”.¹⁰⁹ The *Sentinel* suggested they take Father Doherty, sometimes referred to disparagingly as “Priest Doherty”, with them. Durbin’s arrival led the *Sentinel* to hope that the “troublesome people” would indeed go and, drawing a parallel between Tullaghobegley emigration and convict transportation, wished a “prosperous” voyage to all who “Leave their country for their country’s good”.¹¹⁰

The Sydney *Freeman’s Journal* continued to counteract all these hostile statements with witnesses of its own. “Hibernicus” relied on hearsay, never venturing to Donegal to see things for himself. The Sydney committee produced John Devine, a real Donegal immigrant, to keep before the public the reality of Tullaghobegley’s distress. Devine established his credentials by saying he came from the parish of Raphoe, which was within “seven miles of the distressed districts”.¹¹¹ In reality Raphoe, a border parish in relatively prosperous east Donegal, was about 25 miles in a straight line from Tullaghobegley across extremely wild mountainous terrain. By road the distance would have been even further. Devine however produced the necessary statements for the committee; Donegal landlords were excessively oppressive, judges were on intimate terms with these landlords and easily manipulated by them, only a couple of men had yet been properly tried and convicted of sheep killing, and there was undoubted distress in west Donegal. His own parish had given much money to relieve the starving of Tullaghobegley.¹¹² Devine also added seemingly first hand confirmation to the colonial impression that evictions had occurred leading to widespread misery:

It was estimated that there were over 600 persons houseless — lying behind rocks — and that there were a thousand families without bed or bedding. The very blankets and the drinking vessels, called noggins, were taken from them.¹¹³

The people were keen to emigrate but so exasperated had the landlords become with their

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 17 September 1858, The Donegal Priests. I am grateful to Mrs May McLintock of Letterkenny, County Donegal, for finding me material from the *Londonderry Sentinel*.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 8 October 1858, The Gweedore District.

¹¹¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 August 1858.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

tenants that none of them would now be prepared to offer an outfit to anyone willing to leave for Australia.¹¹⁴ The committee thanked Devine for his candour and handed a transcript of his observations to the *Freeman's Journal* for publication. Devine had never actually been to the north west coast but talking to him undoubtedly sustained the committee in their task and the appearance of his remarks in the *Freeman's Journal* would have helped consolidate support for their cause in the Irish community.

The Tullaghobegley emigrants left Donegal in three groups between mid-January and mid-April 1859.¹¹⁵ Such had been the controversy roused by this whole emigration that the nationalist press, especially the *Nation* in Dublin, gave the event full coverage. In a lead editorial entitled "The Flight from Gweedore" the *Nation* reported the weather to have been in sympathy with the sad departure from Gweedore:

On a cold, gloomy day ... while the wind blew hard and the rain fell heavily, a mournful procession might have been seen taking its way from Gweedore, in the County Donegal. In the crowd there was the agitation of intense grief, and there was sorrow that spoke aloud. Tears mingled with the falling rain, and on the ear came the hoarse and broken sobs of men and the wilder cry of women, with that peculiar FEELING in the tone which thrills the listener ... which tells him that this is not an outward seeming of woe, but that the heart within is wounded.¹¹⁶

That day 252 people left the parish bound for the government emigration depot at Liverpool and over the coming months they were followed by another 376. However melodramatic the style of the *Nation's* report the exodus within so short a period of 7% of the parish's 1851 population was undoubtedly traumatic for the families involved. But the *Nation* sympathised less with the exiles — they were bound for a "land of Freedom" — than with those left behind under the old landlords.¹¹⁷

There were some aspects of the relief emigration in 1859 which cast doubt on the eagerness of some, in the *Nation's* words, to "bid adieu to the country of their forefathers".¹¹⁸ In their report on Durbin's activities to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney the Emigration Commissioners complained of the number of those selected who defaulted in Liverpool. The *Sapphire* sailed on 28 January with her full complement of Donegal relief emigrants but the next two ships assigned to Durbin's people, the *Lady Elma Bruce* and the *Caribou*, were short a total of 212 expected Donegal passengers.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Sapphire*, arrived 24 May 1859, IBL/NSW, 4/4980; *Lady Elma Bruce*, arrived 14 July 1859, IBL/NSW, 4/4979; *Caribou*, arrived 4 October 1859, IBL/NSW, 4/4979.

¹¹⁶ *Nation*, quoted in Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1859, The Flight from Gweedore.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, The Flight from Gweedore.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 11 July 1859, IC/NSW, 9/6219.

Consequently they were detained at the last minute while the Commissioners tried to make up this shortfall by quick recourse to ordinary remittance emigrants awaiting a passage.¹²⁰ The nominal lists for these two vessels also indicated that Durbin, despite his description of the three thousand who queued for selection in Tullaghobegley, was forced to offer passages well beyond the parish. Of the 808 Donegal relief immigrants who arrived in Sydney in 1859 147, 18%, were not from that area described in the original Appeal to be suffering extreme destitution. [Figure 7.6] The initial enthusiasm to leave showed most clearly on the *Sapphire* and the *Lady Elma Bruce*; 92% of the emigrants on those ships came from Tullaghobegley. On the *Caribou* however 39% were from other parishes in the Barony of Kilmacrenan and even from further afield in Donegal.¹²¹ Clearly the desire to emigrate in Tullaghobegley, while strong, was not quite as widespread as the local priests had claimed.

Another indication of the decline in enthusiasm to emigrate among some of Durbin's early selections was the trade in passage certificates which developed in Donegal. The Liverpool depot authorities detected 11 attempts at impersonation among those who came forward for the *Lady Elma Bruce* and the Commissioners prosecuted those considered to be the three worst offenders.¹²² None of this was ever reported in the Sydney press but the *Londonderry Sentinel*, always hostile to the Donegal priests, saw these cases as proof of the larger deception practised on the public concerning the existence of destitution in Tullaghobegley. The three prosecutions were all of family men one of whom had obtained his certificate from a local priest and the other two by purchase. The *Sentinel* was particularly incensed by the case of Edward Corr and family. Corr, a lodging housekeeper in Derry city, miles from Tullaghobegley, had bought his certificate from a girl passing through on her way back to Gweedore.¹²³ To the *Sentinel* this indicated that the certificate had already passed through a number of hands before it ended up with Corr.¹²⁴ The fines imposed on the other two men were paid by a priest at Birkenhead but Corr, to the *Sentinel's* disgust, paid his own:

The man in question [Corr] was prosecuted, convicted and fined £2, or to be imprisoned for one month. The DESTITUTE individual paid the fine out of his own pocket, without recourse to priestly assistance.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ On the *Caribou* there were even some from as far afield as Ballyshannon in south west of the county and Letterkenny in the east: *Caribou*, IBL/NSW, 4/4979.

¹²² *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 May 1859.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Among the single women caught with false certificates one had purchased it from a snuff dealer in Derry city and the other from a shopkeeper in Letterkenny, County Donegal. The snuff dealer, the *Sentinal* claimed, was related to one of the Donegal priests.¹²⁶

The *Sentinal* also discovered that Durbin had been obliged to widen his recruiting area well beyond the allegedly destitute region of Gweedore/Cloughaneely. On the *Caribou* there were 67 people from parishes along the road between Dunfanaghy in Raymunterdoney and the county town of Letterkenny, well removed from Tullaghobegley.¹²⁷ Two men from Dunfanaghy were described as sons of a large wholesale spirit merchant and the others from this village were seen as leaving from “comfortable circumstances” not “destitute Gweedore”.¹²⁸ Admittedly the *Sentinal* was eager to unearth and publish anything which might discredit the priests. However it would have been difficult for the Sydney committee to accept that William Byrne on the *Caribou*, a carpenter from Letterkenny, was really the kind of destitute Donegal emigrant deserving of assistance from the donations of hundreds of poor colonial Irish immigrants.¹²⁹ But even this sweep back through the Barony of Kilmacrenan did not supply Durbin with enough emigrants. To fill the *Caribou* he selected from parishes ranging from Ballyshannon in the far south of the county to St Johnstown on the County Derry border in the east. Moreover the *Sentinal* claimed that even in Gweedore it was not the really poor who gained selection but men of moderate affluence such as Anthony O'Donnell of Magheraroarty. O'Donnell, who emigrated with his wife and seven children on the *Caribou*, allegedly sold the tenant right in his holding for £140.¹³⁰ The valuation entries relating to O'Donnell showed he rented a cabin rated at 10/- and eight acres of poor land worth 4/- per acre.¹³¹ It is barely credible that such a holding was so productive that an incoming tenant would have given O'Donnell a sum 200 times its annual rateable value. Rather than the *Nation's* most miserable from a “mass of misery”, the *Sentinal* accused Durbin of choosing the better off:

Was not the ostensible object of the Gweedore and Cloughaneely emigration scheme to remove to a happier land the poor creatures who were left destitute through the evictions of harsh landlords? This would have been a good scheme had there been such parties to be removed; it would also have been good had it been proposed to remove the comparatively poor, such as are to be found in every district. But what are the facts? Where are the evicted peasantry who are going to

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Caribou*, IBL/NSW.

¹²⁸ *Londonderry Sentinal*, 1 April 1859.

¹²⁹ *Caribou*, IBL/NSW.

¹³⁰ *Londonderry Sentinal*, 1 April 1859.

¹³¹ *Valuation of Tenements*, Tullaghobegley, p.57.

Australia? ... The parties who are emigrating are in comfortable circumstances. The comparatively poor remain, while those in possession of "rude plenty" ... have been selected and shipped off by the emigration agents.¹³²

These articles were the paper's last lunge at the priests and the supposed destitution of Tullaghobegley. Those who read the *Sentinal* really needed no further confirmation that the whole business had been a sham and that those who had contributed to the various relief funds had been duped.

The arrival of the Donegal immigrants in 1859 was not the end of the committee's activities. Defaulters at Liverpool and money collected after McEncroe's three large deposits to the immigration authorities in 1858 left a balance in the fund of over £1,300 in addition to about £500 with the Emigration Commissioners in London. Initially the committee was unsure how to spend the balance and in October 1860 a full committee meeting debated the idea of building a home for out of work Irish immigrant women.¹³³ McEncroe himself actually proposed and supported the idea, suggesting that it would be of great benefit to the Donegal girls.¹³⁴ Such a use of the remaining money was seen by Alderman Gorman to be a breach of a "sacred trust"; donations had been given for a specific purpose, to bring out people from Donegal, and should not be used for anything else.¹³⁵ This debate, a year after the arrival of the the *Caribou* in 1859, indicated the diminished interest in the whole scheme by the committee once the first large group of Donegal people had reached the colony. However as the meeting refused to sanction the use of the money for any other purpose Durbin was probably asked to proceed again to Donegal to see if there was any new interest in emigrating to N.S.W. No deposit was necessary with the N.S.W. Immigration Agent as the number of defaulters in 1859 had left over £500 in the hands of the Commissioners in the U.K. The result of Durbin's renewed efforts was the arrival of the *Nile* in May 1861 with a further 166 Donegal immigrants.¹³⁶ [Figure 7.6] Durbin was able to confine his selections to the Barony of Kilmacrenan and over half the immigrants were from Tullaghobegley.

After the *Nile's* arrival the committee was still left with a sizeable balance of £1,300. However within a few weeks reports began reaching Sydney of a situation in Donegal where there was no question of the destitution of many of the people involved. Between 8 April and 10 April 1861 John Corr J.P. accompanied by 200 police evicted

¹³² *Londonderry Sentinal*, 1 April 1859.

¹³³ Cutting from *The Sunbeam, Young Men's Christian Journal*, 29 October 1860, File: Donegal Relief Committee, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Nile*, arrived 4 May 1861, Agent's List, 4/4796.

244 people from their cabins on the Donegal estate of John George Adair at Derryveagh.¹³⁷ These were among the most notorious and best publicised evictions in 19th century Ireland. Adair was a successful land speculator who in the late 1850s began to acquire an estate in the mountainous areas of north west Donegal, not so much for profit but because he was “enchanted by the surpassing beauty of the scenery”.¹³⁸ The dispute between Adair and his Derryveagh tenants seemed little different from that between the Tullaghobegley smallholders and their landlords. Although Adair was not looking for a significant commercial return from Derryveagh he nevertheless began to restrict the tenants’ virtually unrestricted use of the mountain grazing by introducing his own sheep and Scots shepherds. Tenants found that their stray stock was now impounded and that sharp fines were imposed by Adair for their release. There were a number of violent incidents and in November 1860 James Murray, one of Adair’s shepherds, was murdered. Adair saw Murray’s murder as final proof that there was a tenant conspiracy against him centred on Derryveagh and, arguing that neither he nor his employees were safe surrounded by such a community, proceeded with wholesale evictions. All of this was widely reported in the newspapers and was the front page story in the Sydney *Freeman’s Journal* from mid June to mid July 1861.¹³⁹

The Derryveagh evictees were obvious candidates for assistance from the Donegal relief fund. Permission was obtained from the colonial government to apply part of the balance in the fund to bring out once again under the remittance regulations “emigrants from that part of Ireland who may be in distress”.¹⁴⁰ Durbin was asked to act as the committee’s agent and in late October 1861 he wrote to McEncroe saying he had received permission from the Emigration Commissioners to select 150 emigrants “from the people lately ejected at Glenveagh in the County of Donegal”.¹⁴¹ A brief notice in the *Freeman’s Journal* on 31 May 1862 announced the arrival of the *Abyssinian* with reputedly 146 “of the unfortunate victims of Derryveagh on board who have come out to this colony under the auspices of the Donegal relief committee”.¹⁴² This was wishful thinking on the part of

¹³⁷ For a full account of the Derryveagh evictions and their significance see William Vaughan, *Sin, Sheep and Scotsmen: John George Adair and the Derryveagh Evictions, 1861*, “The Evictions”, pp.11-14, Belfast, 1983.

¹³⁸ Vaughan, *op.cit.*, p.14.

¹³⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 June to 13 July 1861.

¹⁴⁰ William Davis, Hon Secretary, Donegal Relief Fund to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 20 June 1861, Papers relative to the introduction of Immigrants by the Venerable Archdeacon McEncroe, p.10, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1861-62, Vol.1.

¹⁴¹ Durbin to McEncroe, 22 September 1861, Select Correspondence Archdeacon McEncroe, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives.

¹⁴² *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 May 1862.

the committee. Altogether there were approximately 42 immigrants on the *Abyssinian* who were among those evicted in April 1861.¹⁴³ There were two ways of identifying these Derryveagh people — either by name or the place of origin they gave when questioned by the Immigration Board. The Board's list showed 24 people whose names and parish match the list of evicted families submitted by the constabulary to the Poor Law authorities at Letterkenny. There were also 29 passengers on the *Abyssinian* for whom only County Donegal was recorded as their place of origin and 15 of these can be associated by name with the constabulary list. A further three immigrants, who are known to have been among the evicted, said they were from Kilmacrenan. Despite their small number these Derryveagh evictees were unique; they were the only immigrants among the 1,236 brought out by the committee who can definitely be identified as having suffered eviction. Moreover they were the only Irish group of this kind, "victims" so to speak of "landlord tyranny", officially assisted to emigrate to N.S.W. from the colonial treasury between 1848 and 1870.

The final operations of the committee were in 1864. Durbin was despatched to Ireland in an effort to use all outstanding funds in selecting emigrants and his brief left suitably vague. When seeking permission for Durbin's mission from the government McEncroe did not even mention Donegal:

As considerable distress prevails in several of the Rural Districts of Ireland the Donegal Relief Committee are anxious to assist persons willing to emigrate to N.S.W. from any of these districts ...¹⁴⁴

Giving Durbin a free hand to select from whatever area of the country he found people willing to emigrate seems to have been necessary. On the last two ships carrying the committee's immigrants 31% were not even from Donegal. For the *Montrose* Durbin was able to obtain another 73 from Tullaghobegley but to fill the quota and use up the fund's money he then recruited in the Westport region of County Mayo, a district about 160 kilometres from the north Donegal coast. Mayo had few emigrant connections with Sydney but like Donegal was considered one of the poorest counties in Ireland. All 35 of the Donegal committee's last immigrants came on the *Sandringham* from Westport, County Mayo.¹⁴⁵ [Figure 7.6] Clearly the thousands of small contributions from the immigrant Irish of N.S.W. in 1858 had proved more than enough to satisfy the desire of the people of Tullaghobegley to emigrate to Sydney. On 10 August 1864 the committee used these contributions for the last time to make a payment for expenses to Durbin and

¹⁴³ *Abyssinian*, arrived 29 May 1862, Agent's list, 4/4796.

¹⁴⁴ McEncroe to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 27 May 1863, IC/NSW, 9/6238.

¹⁴⁵ *Montrose*, arrived 27 March 1864, IBL/NSW, 4/4986; *Sandringham*, arrived 26 June 1864, IBL/NSW, 4/4987.

closed their account with the Union Bank.¹⁴⁶

Superficially the cause of Donegal may seem to differ little from other charitable Irish causes for which large sums were collected at different times throughout the 19th century such as the Great Famine of 1845 to 1849 and for famine relief in County Mayo in 1879.¹⁴⁷ But to the colonial Irish the Donegal scheme was more than just a vehicle for enabling hundreds of their poor compatriots to emigrate to a land of plenty. Such emigrants could have been obtained from almost any county in Ireland. By contributing to the Donegal fund subscribers could combine a political statement with national sentiment and practical help to individuals. Politically, to donate was to identify oneself with the smallholders of Donegal against the landlords. Most Irish-Australian immigrants came from a small farm rural environment and would have been familiar with the main Irish political movement of the 1850s — the Irish Tenant League. Although by the late 1850s the League had virtually collapsed its programme of fair treatment and greater security for tenants, who depended for their livelihood on land they did not own, undoubtedly had wide support in rural Ireland. Many of the Irish in N.S.W. still had family at home on small farms not much different in size to the Donegal smallholders. Indeed when the *Maitland Mercury* questioned the absolute right of the landlords to do as they pleased with their property the editor, with an obvious “feel” for the Irish political landscape of his readers, called his piece ‘Tenant Right’.¹⁴⁸ Tullaghobegley was able to send more assisted emigrants to Sydney than any other parish in Ireland because to the Irish in N.S.W. its problems were a microcosm of the problems of Ireland.

¹⁴⁶ Cutting from *Catholic Times*, 7 March 1878, letter from William Davis, Hon Secretary, Donegal Relief Committee, File: Donegal Relief Committee, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives.

¹⁴⁷ Patrick O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Sydney, 1987, pp.204 and 221.

¹⁴⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 17 June 1858, Tenant Right.

Chapter 8

“Fair Isle of the West — Land of Affection and Endearing Family Ties” The N.S.W. Remittance Regulations and the Irish, 1848–1870

Bridget Davies, an orphan girl from the Scariff Workhouse in County Clare, arrived in Sydney on the *Thomas Arbuthnot* on 3 February 1850.¹ Bridget began her colonial career as a servant in the Boorowa district near Yass. Although she had left Ireland far behind the demands of family followed her into the interior of N.S.W. In early 1851 Bridget received news of her family from her uncle Matthew Kennedy in County Clare: her cousins had gone to America, sent for by their brother, her uncle Michael had gone to the Cape of Good Hope and her own brothers, especially the youngest, Pat were in “hopes” of joining her in Australia as soon as possible.² By implication these “hopes” rested on Bridget. A further letter from Matthew in late 1852 spoke of money being sent to her grandmother from Africa, of the success of Matthew’s sons in America and again emphasised Pat’s desire to leave Ireland:

... your brother Pat is in anxiety to go to you when he read your letter he cried as you did not send for him, if you can send for him do not delay as he will repay you according as he will earn it and if you cannot take him out send him some money untill you can send for him do not leave him where he is³

Bridget’s response to this continuing family pressure was to nominate Pat for a free passage to Sydney under the government remittance regulations of 7 January 1852.⁴ On 13 January 1853 she deposited the £4 required to bring out an agricultural labourer between 14 and 40 at the Immigration Office in Sydney.⁵ In December 1853 Patrick arrived in N.S.W. on the *Maidstone*.⁶

This willingness of the Irish to assist those left behind to leave Ireland was well known to the Emigration Commissioners. In 1849 they calculated that three quarters of the cost of the enormous trans-Atlantic movement from Ireland was being “defrayed by

¹ *Thomas Arbuthnot*, arrived 3 February 1850, IBL/NSW, 4/4919.

² Matthew Kennedy, County Clare to Bridget Davies, 17 October 1850, letters in possession of Sgt. Colin Graham, Sydney.

³ Matthew Kennedy to Bridget Davies, 7 August 1852.

⁴ Immigration Remittances, N.S.W. *Government Gazette*, 7 January 1852.

⁵ Nomination Form, Patrick Davies, 13 January 1853, IC/NSW, 9/6198.

⁶ *Maidstone*, arrived 11 November 1853.

those who had emigrated in previous years".⁷ Thousands of pre-paid passages were being sent home through private shipping houses, especially through those at the main North American emigration port of Liverpool. Given the huge sums of money involved — the Commissioners were aware of £460,000 in 1848 alone — commercial interests had responded quickly to the needs of the American Irish.⁸ "A Tipperary Man", who wrote to the *Sydney Freeman's Journal* in February 1852, felt that the "mighty flood of Emigration", caused by the remittances of the Irish Americans, was impossible in N.S.W. Sydney banks, always willing to handle \$100 for the rich, turned away the small sums the poor Irish saved to help a relative emigrate.⁹ "Tipperary Man" was not a careful reader of the *Freeman's Journal*; a fortnight before the publication of his complaint the paper had devoted virtually a whole page to the government's remittance regulations of January 1852.¹⁰

These regulations were the direct result of representations made in 1847 by Caroline Chisholm to Earl Grey, the British Colonial Secretary, on behalf of poorer immigrants in N.S.W. Grey was aware of the prodigious amounts being applied by the Irish Americans to emigration. When he heard from Mrs Chisholm that many small settlers in Australia, especially the Irish, also wished to help their friends and relations, he instructed Governor Fitzroy to devise an official system to assist them.¹¹ In a lengthy despatch Grey described the practical and moral advantages of emigration remittances: saving money for this purpose encouraged personal industry and economy, while those at home would be encouraged to emigrate by seeing how quickly their formerly penniless relatives and friends were capable of saving enough to send for them.¹² Any official remittance scheme, Grey advised, should operate in two ways. Firstly, settlers should be able to send either the full fare, or a contribution towards it, to the Commissioners. When the remainder of the fare was paid by those at home they would be provided with a passage to Sydney on a government ship. Secondly, there should be a deposit scheme whereby, for a fixed sum, emigrants could be nominated by their relations in N.S.W. and the government would pay the balance of the passage money. Such nominees would have to be eligible for a passage under the Commissioners' general regulations. These principles

⁷ General Report for 1848, 9th Annual Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, p.2, *BPP*, 1849, Vol.22.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 12 February 1852, Remittances Home.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29 January 1852, Immigration Remittances.

¹¹ Colonial Office to Governor of N.S.W, 29 July 1847, Despatch No.196, Colonial Office/Entry Books of Correspondence, CO.202/51.

¹² *Ibid.*

were embodied in Fitzroy's first set of remittance regulations gazetted on 22 December 1848.¹³

Over the next 15 years these regulations were altered six times. Each time the main amendment concerned the sum required from a colonial nominator seeking to have the government pay the balance of the fare. [Figure 8.1] This deposit fluctuated according to what the immigration authorities thought poorer colonists could, or should, pay. Thus in August 1853 Immigration Agent Browne proposed raising contributions for the most desirable Class 1 immigrants — agricultural labourers and domestic servants aged 14 to 40 — from £4 to £7.¹⁴ In recommending this large increase Browne cited the huge rise in local wages brought about by the gold rush and increased freight charges being encountered by the Commissioners on the Australian run. These rates fell suddenly in early 1854 and Browne increased the deposit by only £1. [Figure 8.1. 1854/A] In 1856 the lower deposit rates for agricultural labourers and domestic servants were abolished. The same amount was now demanded no matter what a nominee's occupation. A further change in the 1861 regulations encouraged the nomination of single females by setting the sum required at £2 below that for single males. Finally in 1863 deposits were raised for single males to a point little short of half the fare. [Figure 8.1 1856 and 1861]

In 1857 the provision for depositing some proportion of the fare and expecting those at home to pay the rest was dropped from the regulations. Statistics indicate that the Irish preferred sponsoring relatives where the government paid the balance. The average amount deposited per Irish nominee up to and including 1857 was close to the £4 or £5 required for a remittance emigrant between 14 and 40. [Figure 8.1 and Figure 2] Only in 1849, in the case of a mere six nominees, was the average deposit greatly in excess of the sum required for nomination as a government emigrant. [Figure 8.2] These may have been emigrants for whom virtually the whole fare was paid in the colony, leaving them with a small balance to find from their own resources. However, nominators obviously preferred a system where the government paid most of the fare and where their nominees were given priority for a passage over general emigrants selected by the Commissioners in the U.K.¹⁵

¹³ Immigration Remittances, N.S.W. *Government Gazette*, Supplement, 23 December 1848.

¹⁴ N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 16 August 1853, Correspondence Relative to Immigration, pp.35-36, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1854, Vol.2.

¹⁵ Immigration Regulations, Clause 8, "... that residents in this Colony may secure a preference for such of their own relatives or friends as may be of the following descriptions and otherwise qualified under the Commissioners' general regulations for free passages, by contributing and remitting, in the manner above provided for, the undermentioned sums viz ...", N.S.W. *Government Gazette*, Supplement, 6 January 1852, p.22.

The procedures involved in nominating an emigrant were straightforward and changed little between 1848 and 1866. [Document 8.1] In Sydney up to 1856 deposits had to be made at the Treasury but from then on the Immigration Office was authorised to accept them. In country districts the Clerks of Petty Sessions handled all nominations and were paid a commission for their services. They were responsible for filling in the relevant documents and forwarding them to the Immigration Agent. If the nominees were approved in Sydney a Passage Certificate was sent to the Clerk to be handed to the depositor who was then responsible for sending it to their nominee in the U.K. [Document 8.2] To apply for the passage the prospective emigrant had to send this Passage Certificate to the Commissioners in London. There a certificate's authenticity was checked against lists of nominees and depositors forwarded every month from the colony. Final allocation to a ship was not made until the Commissioners had satisfied themselves that the stated age and occupation of the emigrant were correct through certification by a local surgeon, and a magistrate or clergymen. [Document 8.3]

In the 1860s four out of every five colonial nominees came to Sydney. Agent Wise calculated that of 21,045 sponsored under the 1861 regulations between June 1861 and November 1867 only 20%, 4,461, did not embark. Each month the Commissioners sent a list of all such cases back to Sydney with a recommendation as to whether the deposit money should be refunded to the nominator. These lists also contained brief reasons why a passage was not taken up. [Figure 8.3] Virtually 60% of those who failed to emigrate either gave no reason to the Commissioners or allowed their Passage Certificate to expire. [Figure 8.2 Cols 2/8] Certificates were valid for 12 months after the date of delivery to the colonial sponsor. From the colonial lists the Commissioners were able to tell who in the U.K. had not acted upon the offer of a passage and not communicated with them. Those who did contact the Commissioners gave many reasons for not emigrating. [Figure 8.3 Col 2] Luke and Anne Ward of Dublin declined their sister Catherine's nomination stating they were "advantageously employed at home".¹⁶ Michael Brennan of Kilkenny got as far as the ship, then refused to embark.¹⁷ The Commissioners charged the colony 15/3d. for maintaining him in the Depot and for his fare back to Ireland.¹⁸

Perhaps the most selfless reason for declining to emigrate came from Daniel Kelly of Knockroe, County Carlow. Brother Thomas in Tenterfield, N.S.W., had paid £5 for his passage and sent another £5 for Daniel to equip himself for the voyage. Daniel

¹⁶ Emigration Commissioners' list of money to be refunded to depositors, October 1859, 4/4599, AONSW.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, August 1860.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

declared that he would like to emigrate to “that good and plentiful country” but that “my mother crosses me against going”:

... I cannot say against my mother you know the gratitude a Son should be under to his Mother from the raising of your own Children. She would be obliged to go into the Workhouse if I would go from my dear Mother ... She would be destitute of friends or fellows and should be buried in the graveyard. She now obtains the age of 72 years which is the longest any person lives.¹⁹

In some instances the Commissioners themselves refused passage to a colonial nominee. Sometimes ages had been falsified on the Passage Certificate and local referees had, perhaps out of pity, failed to draw the Commissioners’ attention to this deception. Thus Elizabeth Leonard, supposedly 33 according to her nominator, managed to get as far as Dublin before the port Emigration Officer discovered her to be much older. Unable to pay the extra £8 required for her passage she was sent home to Fermanagh.²⁰ Similarly Margaret Quin of Cork, stated by Maurice Quin in the colony to be only 35, was refused embarkation on the *Sir John Moore* at Liverpool when she was found to be over 50.²¹ Mary Carmody’s husband in N.S.W. had paid the correct deposit for a nominee over 50 but she was not allowed to proceed at Liverpool being thought too old and infirm to survive the trip.²² Her fare home to County Clare was paid by the Commissioners. Michael Flanagan was dismissed from the Depot when it was discovered that he was escaping from a maintenance order at Tulla, County Clare, for an illegitimate child.²³

The Commissioners’ refusal of a passage could cause great resentment in the colony. This applied particularly to cases where the nominator failed to deposit the sum required for skilled tradesmen. At Kiama in June 1853 William King paid £4 for William Cook thinking Cook to be an agricultural labourer.²⁴ Cook was discovered by the Commissioners to be a sawyer and refused a passage. It took until late 1854 before King was able to deposit the extra £2 required for Cook’s passage. Agent Browne realised that in such cases the Commissioners were merely trying to protect the colony from fraud. However, when their concern resulted in turning down someone who had changed jobs from farm labourer to “hod carrier or porter in a warehouse” the colonial “labouring classes”, for whom the regulations had been devised, failed to appreciate such “nice

¹⁹ Daniel Kelly, Knockroe, County Carlow to his brother, Thomas Kelly, Tenterfield, N.S.W., 11 March 1862, attached to nomination form for Daniel Kelly, Bundle 63/496, IC/NSW, 9/6236.

²⁰ Emigration Commissioners’ list of money etc, January 1861.

²¹ *Ibid.*, December 1862.

²² *Ibid.*, October 1860.

²³ *Ibid.*, June 1860.

²⁴ Clerk of Petty Sessions, Kiama to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 7 September 1854, IC/NSW, 9/6205.

distinctions".²⁵ What would have alarmed colonial politicians was that they, not the Commissioners, were held responsible for being too strict.²⁶ The 1856 regulations, the first approved by colonial politicians under responsible government, required the same deposit for all members of the working classes whatever their occupation.

Of greater concern to the authorities were the instances where nominees sold their Passage Certificates. Some of these cases were discovered during pre-embarkation checks and, depending on how sure the port officials were that a deliberate attempt at fraud had occurred, the emigrant was dismissed from the depot and sometimes prosecuted. In 1859 a John Coghlan was refused a passage because the Commissioners were not convinced that it was the same John Coghlan nominated in the colony.²⁷ They actually caught Michael Griffy at the Depot trying to board the *British Empire* in July 1859 as Patrick Mullins. Griffy decamped but was tried in absentia before the Birkenhead magistrates, and fined £5, and a warrant issued for his arrest.²⁸

According to Agent Wise impersonation and trafficking in Passage Certificates was not a serious problem in the 1860s. Despite local allegations that fraud had been common Wise felt that "very few" had arrived under false names.²⁹ In 1855 one woman who evaded detection in the U.K. only to be discovered in the colony was Johanna Taafe. In Newmarket, County Cork Johanna bought Ellen Murphy's Certificate for £5 as Ellen was blind in one eye and would have been refused embarkation.³⁰ The Commissioners' clerks seem to have been lax when the Certificate reached London. The papers had clearly been altered to reflect Johanna's age and this figure differed considerably from Ellen Murphy's age on the remittance list sent to London from Sydney. Johanna was not questioned about this discrepancy and she was permitted to sail on payment of an additional £2/17/-.³¹ Close questioning by Agent Browne on her arrival caused Johanna to confess her deception. Browne was angered most by the willingness of the local Newmarket priest, Father Bichenor, to certify Johanna as Ellen Murphy even though he knew quite well that she was not.³² Browne observed drily that this was the second time that Bichenor had

²⁵ N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Report, 1855, pp.10-11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Emigration Commissioner's list of money etc., July 1859.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, November 1858.

²⁹ Evidence of N.S.W. Immigration Agent, George Wise, Select Committee on Immigration, p.6, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 1870, Vol.1.

³⁰ Statement of Johanna Taafe an Immigrant per Ship *Eliza*, 28 February 1856, IC/NSW, 9/2609.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

been detected in enabling an emigrant to obtain "a passage to the colony under false Certificates".³³

More serious, because it pointed to the possible existence of an organised system of selling certificates, was the case of Margaret Lynch. Margaret arrived from Killaloe, County Clare, on the *Racehorse* in 1866 under the name of Bridget McInerney.³⁴ Agent Wise discovered her impersonation and she confessed that she had purchased a Passage Certificate in her assumed name from the Parish Priest of the neighbouring parish of Broadford, Father Bourke.³⁵ Margaret had decided to emigrate and had gone to Bourke because "I knew he was in the habit of sending out people to Australia".³⁶ In January 1866 she paid the priest £4 and was told that when he had a Certificate for her she would be sent for. Bourke never took any personal particulars from Margaret and when his messenger told her a form was ready she asked Bourke to fill it in himself. She was sent a "sailing order" in the name of Bridget McInerney and instructed to assume that name.³⁷ This was an area of Clare to which many nominations were made in the 1860s and Bourke's name often appeared as a referee on the original nomination form. It is possible that he was organising individual emigration to the colony through a contact in Sydney. Margaret Lynch's case is, however, the only evidence of such possible systematic fraud to be found in the mid-19th century records of the Immigration Department.

One set of allied regulations, abolished in 1855 because of the illegal advantage taken of them by an Irish colonist, were the Land and Deposit Regulations. These regulations, also introduced in 1848, allowed purchasers of government land to have a sum equal to 80% of the purchase price allocated to bringing out immigrants from the U.K.³⁸ Ordinary remittance emigrants had to be nominated in the colony but land and deposit emigrants could be chosen at home by the land purchaser's agent. Those selected in this way had both to qualify for a passage under the Commissioners' general regulations and pay the normal emigrant contributions. As they were purportedly going out as labour to a specific land purchaser these nominees were probably given precedence over emigrants selected by the Commissioners. Agent Browne discovered that buyers of land were selling their rights to import immigrants to subsidise their purchase and in 1855

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Racehorse*, arrived 22 September 1865, IBL/NSW, 4/4991.

³⁵ Statement of Margaret Lynch alias Bridget McInerney an Immigrant per Ship *Racehorse*. *Racehorse* Ship's Papers, 9/6287.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Immigration Remittances, N.S.W. *Government Gazette*, 7 January 1850.

he recommended that the regulations be scrapped.³⁹ What finally convinced Browne that the scheme was being badly abused was the importation from County Fermanagh of a large group of immigrants under these regulations by George Grey of Kiama.

Two purchases of land near Kiama in 1854 entitled Grey to have 35 emigrants selected by his agent in Ireland, Rev. Charles Stack.⁴⁰ Browne's suspicions were aroused by some of these emigrants on the *Eliza* in 1855 when none of them acknowledged any personal connection with Grey or expressed any intention of going to work for him. Closer questioning revealed that they had paid £2 to £3 to Stack for being selected and had agreed to pay Grey £13 each.⁴¹ James Moffitt, aged 44, from Drumkeeran, County Fermanagh told Browne he had no intention of being a labourer for Grey.⁴² He also had a cheque for £200 with him to purchase a farm at Kiama.⁴³ As a farmer in Ireland, he had been ineligible under any of the current regulations, so when Stack began advertising in the district that he had government passages for sale Moffitt paid him £13 and agreed to pay Grey another £90.⁴⁴ For this he brought his wife and nine children to Australia far more cheaply than if they had had to emigrate on a private ship. Other families in the group admitted to a similar arrangement with Grey. Browne concluded that the regulations were allowing non-labourers to obtain a cheap passage to the colony and at the same time enabling men like Grey to finance their land purchases by privately charging emigrants for the passage.⁴⁵ No charge was brought against Grey but the Governor cancelled the land and deposit regulations.⁴⁶

Fraud was of less concern to nominators than obtaining a refund for an unused passage. One case which was settled relatively quickly gives an indication of the time involved. In June 1854 Mary Walker sent to Ireland for George Walker and Arthur Golding.⁴⁷ Golding arrived in 1855 but George Walker had married and declined to emigrate. Mary contacted the Immigration Office in October 1855 for a return of the unused £5 deposit for George Walker but in early November Agent Browne informed her

³⁹ N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 11 October 1855, Copies of letters sent to the Colonial Secretary re migration to N.S.W, 4/4619, AONSW.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Grey deposited £200 on 19 January 1854 and £420 on 8 July 1854.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ An Act to repeal the Land and Deposit Regulations, 18 December 1855, *The Public General Statutes of N.S.W.*, Sydney, 1862, pp.3014-3015.

⁴⁷ Office Copy, Passage Certificate, Arthur Golding, 6 June 1854, IC/NSW, 9/6217.

that no refund was possible till he had heard from London.⁴⁸ Mary wrote again in mid-February 1856 and this time offered her depositor's copy of the Passage Certificate as proof of George Walker's failure to emigrate.⁴⁹ Although Browne had still not heard from the Commissioners he accepted Mary's word that the Certificate was not going to be used and authorised the refund. She received her £5 in March 1856.⁵⁰

Mary Walker's case had been handled efficiently; Michael O'Leary took over four years to have his money returned. Michael was illiterate and relied on the Clerk of Petty Sessions at Brisbane Water to write to Sydney on his behalf. In July, 1855 Michael informed Agent Browne that as long ago as April 1851 he had deposited £8 in the Treasury for the passage of his son William from Tipperary. Since then, Michael stated;

I have received no communication on the subject and have been looking out from year to year in expectation of the the arrival of my son, but in vain.⁵¹

He further alleged that the Commissioners had been written to by William but that no reply was received from them and no passage provided.⁵² At the Sydney Immigration Office no record could be found of any report by the Commissioners on the O'Leary passage. Even now Browne was only willing to write to London at O'Leary's request and no refund was offered.⁵³ The Commissioners' reply, received in the colony in May 1856, stated that William O'Leary had twice been offered a passage but had not availed himself of either offer.⁵⁴ In the first instance he had lacked the money for an outfit and the second time he had defaulted from the ship. On this second occasion William's name had been included in the ship's manifest indicating to the Commissioners that he had apparently sailed for Sydney. This error was not detected on the arrival of the ship and the deposit entry for William O'Leary was marked as if the passage had indeed been taken up. Five years after he had tried to bring his son to the colony Michael O'Leary received his refund.⁵⁵

Depositors and nominees could also on occasion suffer from the inefficiency of

⁴⁸ Annotation of N.S.W. Immigration Agent on letter from Mary Walker, 31 October 1855, IC/NSW, 9/6217.

⁴⁹ Depositor's copy, Passage Certificate, Arthur Golding, 6 June 1854, IC/NSW, 9/6217.

⁵⁰ Annotation of N.S.W. Immigration Agent on letter from Mary Walker, 15 February 1856, IC/NSW, 9/6217.

⁵¹ Michael O'Leary, Brisbane Water, to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 19 July 1855, IC/NSW, 9/6209.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, annotation of N.S.W. Immigration Agent.

⁵⁴ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 19 February 1856, IC/NSW, 9/6209.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, annotation of N.S.W. Immigration Agent.

officials and the slow workings of the system. In December 1854 Patrick Walsh paid for the passage of his brother and family from Galway.⁵⁶ Upon the Passage Certificate being sent from Sydney the local Clerk of Petty Sessions promised Patrick that he would send it on to Ireland.⁵⁷ It was never sent but, on the strength of Patrick's assurance that he had paid the deposit, his brother left his job in the daily expectation of being called to a ship by the Commissioners.⁵⁸ While the Commissioners knew of the family's nomination they could not do anything until the Passage Certificate arrived. Eventually a duplicate Certificate was sent but not before the family spent a winter in Ireland with the head of the family unemployed. Even more distressing was the Toner case. Toner had used his local priest, Dean Grant, to make a deposit for him in Bathurst. Dean Grant died and when Toner's nominees did not avail of the passage the Immigration Department would only refund the deposit to the legal representative of Grant's estate.⁵⁹ Toner meantime had fallen seriously ill and was in great need of the money. An extensive round of letter writing now began between the late Dean's legal representative in Maitland, the Immigration Agent in Sydney, the Clerk of Petty Sessions in Bathurst and the only one who was trying to help Toner, the local Catholic schoolmaster, Michael McGirr. McGirr wrote Agent Wise a series of letters between June and September 1864 pointing out Toner's poverty and begging for the speedy return of the deposit:

I know you [Wise] are charitably disposed and by expediting the refund of the money you will really perform an act of charity as the poor man is now closely confined to his bed from a painful and dangerous disease.⁶⁰

The money was eventually refunded but not, according to McGirr, before Toner had suffered significant hardship.

Depositors also encountered difficulties with the Commissioners' rule on family size. Under the 1851 general regulations a passage was refused to families with more than three children under ten or two under seven. Long experience, the Commissioners argued, showed that ships with large numbers of young children suffered high rates of sickness and mortality.⁶¹ No extra passage money could compensate for the risks

⁵⁶ N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 6 December 1855, Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 4/3300, AONSW.

⁵⁷ Patrick Walsh, West Maitland to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 23 September 1855, Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 4/3300, AONSW.

⁵⁸ Martin Walsh, Galway City to Patrick Walsh, 4 June 1855, with Patrick Walsh to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 23 September 1855.

⁵⁹ N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Clerk of Petty Sessions, Bathurst, 21 June 1864, IC/NSW, 9/6239.

⁶⁰ Michael McGirr, Bathurst to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 17 June 1864, IC/NSW, 9/6239.

⁶¹ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 3 February 1855, Emigration Commissioners to Emigration Agents and others, CO.386/128.

involved in accepting such families. Sometimes depositors were unaware of the actual number of children in a family. When he nominated his son Edward and family from County Derry in 1854 John Gwynn appeared to have been out of touch with Edward for some time. He sponsored Edward, his wife aged 28 but "name unknown", three children under 14 and one child under two.⁶² The Commissioners found that the children were actually all under eight and refused the family a passage.⁶³ John Gwynn must have protested against this decision as the Governor's permission was given to have the family brought out and, under protest, the Commissioners complied.⁶⁴ Similarly in 1854 when John McGrath nominated his brother and family from Tipperary he listed only three children under ten in the family. There were actually four such children and the Commissioners turned the family down. Like Gwynn, John McGrath fought this decision and obtained the Governor's permission to have the whole family given a passage despite the Commissioners' objections.⁶⁵

Other families must have faced the same problem as Agent Browne drew their situation to the Colonial Secretary's attention in his 1855 report. Colonial depositors could not take into account births at home in the interim between sending off the Passage Certificate and the Commissioners being approached for a passage in the U.K.⁶⁶ The N.S.W. authorities did not ask the Commissioners to alter their policy on families but inserted into the 1856 remittance regulations a clause making depositors liable for payment for any additional children in an emigrant family not listed on the original nomination form.⁶⁷ The 1856 regulations also specified that no family containing more than three children under ten was eligible for nomination.⁶⁸ This requirement was dropped from the 1861 regulations which governed all assisted arrivals in the 1860s. Thus in July 1861 Francis McGrath was able to nominate the Hillarys with five children under ten from County Donegal.⁶⁹ The Commissioners made no objection to the Hillarys and similar families in the 1860s. Infant mortality had steadily declined on their Australian

⁶² Nomination of John Gwynn, 5 December 1853, Immigration Deposits Journal, hereafter IDJ/NSW, 4/4576, AONSW.

⁶³ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 11 May 1855, Emigration Commissioners to Emigration Agents and others, CO.386/128.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 3 February 1855, Emigration Commissioners to Emigration Agents and others, CO.386/128.

⁶⁶ N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Report, 1855, pp.10-11.

⁶⁷ Immigration Remittances, Appendix, Clause 10, N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Report, 1856-57.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.19, Qualifications of Emigrants, Clause 4.

⁶⁹ Nomination of Francis McGrath, 29 July 1861, IDJ/NSW, 4/4582.

ships and they were probably more confident that young children would reach Sydney safely.⁷⁰

The Commissioners were more prepared to waive their rule against allowing those under 18 to travel without their parents. Applications for this category of emigrant were frequent enough for a special form to be devised informing depositors of the result of their petition to the Governor for a “relaxation” of the regulations. Permission was rarely refused and the whole procedure showed that, in special circumstances, the government was willing to allow the scheme to be used for purposes beyond its primary aim of importing labour more cheaply than under the Commissioners’ general regulations. Usually these applications involved the recently orphaned siblings in Ireland of previous emigrants. A typical case was that of Ann Lewes who had come to the colony as Ann Gunning from Eyrecourt, County Galway. Ann’s 25 year old sister, Esther, was about to emigrate and unless their younger sister, Mary Ann, aged 12, was allowed to accompany her Mary Ann would “be left without a female relative in Ireland”.⁷¹ Occasionally permission was given for the emigration of a child with no relatives capable of accompanying them. Mary Doyle was allowed to apply for her orphan sister aged 13 from County Wicklow and Agent Browne recommended that she be given a passage.⁷² In these cases the Commissioners tried to find someone to act as protector on the journey for a small payment. These were also situations where no objection was raised to nominating an inmate of a workhouse despite the general colonial dislike of emigrants from such institutions. Thus Timothy Cusack was given permission to nominate his brother’s orphan children from the Ballinasloe workhouse in 1853.⁷³

Whatever the problems involved the colonial authorities saw the remittance scheme as a valuable method of supporting the immigration fund. A colonial deposit covered roughly a third of total passage costs and the whole scheme was a move away from reliance on local revenue towards a “self-supporting” immigration.⁷⁴ The greatest incentive in this direction came in 1852 when the required deposit for labourers and domestics was cut by 50% from £8 to £4. Wages rose dramatically during the gold rushes and the colonial Irish would have been better able to afford the amount required to

⁷⁰ For infant mortality on the Commissioner’s ships from 1855 to 1868 see Chapter 3, Figure 16.

⁷¹ Copy letter, Anne Lewes to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 2 December 1854, with N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 16 January 1855, Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, 4/3261, AONSW.

⁷² N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 18 December 1854, Copies of letters sent to the Colonial Secretary, 4/4617, AONSW.

⁷³ Nomination form, Timothy Cusack, 8 May 1853, IC/NSW, 9/6200.

⁷⁴ N.S.W. Immigration Agent’s Report, 1855, p.6.

bring out their friends and relatives. [Figure 8.1. 1852] In 1853 18% of all Irish arrivals were remittance immigrants, a figure which rose to 91% by the end of the decade. By contrast it took to 1859 before English remittance arrivals made up over 50% of the English intake. [Figure 8.4] Consequently, by the mid-1850s the N.S.W Irish community was contributing proportionately far more towards the N.S.W. immigration fund than any other group in the colony. Between 1853 and 1859 14% of the total sum spent by N.S.W. on Irish immigrants came from the pockets of local depositors. The English figure was 4%. In other words, the N.S.W. Irish had contributed a subsidy of £2/1/- towards the importation of each Irish immigrant, whether selected in Ireland or nominated, compared to 11/- for the English.

In the mid-1850s the Irish were usually nominated when there was no other way of bringing them to Sydney. At the height of the gold rush single men found it almost impossible to be selected by the Commissioners who were trying to counter the enormous male imbalance in the unassisted emigration by choosing only single females. Thus Catherine McGrath nominated her three brothers from Tipperary in 1854 but left her sister to the Commissioners' selection process.⁷⁵ In fact nomination seems to have been the only way to ensure a passage for a single male between 1853 and 1855. Of the 22 single males who arrived in Sydney from the Tipperary parish of Clonoulty during that period only one had been selected through application to London. [Figure 8.5] This was John Moloney, a grocer's assistant, who was probably selected because he contributed £8 towards his fare and was accompanying his four sisters.⁷⁶ On the other hand only five of the 45 Clonoulty single females were colonial nominees and four of these were children going to join their parents. At this time there was little point in sponsoring a single female when she was virtually assured of selection and had to pay only £1 towards her fare.⁷⁷

The general percentage of arrivals under the two main schemes in the 1850s shows that after 1855 the remittance regulations became increasingly popular with the Irish. Indeed between 1848 and 1870 59% of all the Irish assisted immigrants were nominated in N.S.W. But after 1856 there was little choice except this form of emigration if they wished to reach the colony at all. Colonial complaints about the quality of Irish immigrants in 1854 and 1855 led the Commissioners increasingly to leave the Irish to the

⁷⁵ *Kate*, arrived 4 December 1855, IBL/NSW, 4/4951.

⁷⁶ *Ellenborough*, arrived 12 October 1853, IBL/NSW, 4/4931.

⁷⁷ The payment for a single female under the Commissioners' general regulations in 1853 was £1. Comparative Table showing the Regulations to be observed in the Selection of Immigrants for Free Passages to New South Wales, Immigration, Return to an Address of Mr O'Shannassy, *Votes and Proceedings*, Legislative Council, Victoria, 1852. This £1 contribution remained the same under the Assisted Immigrant Act. See note 72, Chapter 1.

self selecting process of colonial nomination while they continued recruiting large numbers of general emigrants on the mainland.⁷⁸ In 1857 62% of Irish arrivals were colonial nominees compared to 6% of the English and by 1859 only 9% of the Irish were being selected by the Commissioners. [Figure 8.4] From 1861 the only assisted passages on offer were those requiring a deposit in the colony. In reality therefore Irish dependence on the assisted passage became, after 1856, Irish dependence on having friends or relatives in N.S.W. prepared to sponsor them. How did they use the regulations?

Perhaps the most unexpected use of the scheme was by the Irish in Ireland. Both Agent Browne in the 1850s and Agent Wise in the 1860s were aware that not all deposits came from money saved for this purpose by local residents. Browne claimed that deposit money was sent to friends in the colony by those in the U.K who would not have received a passage from the Commissioners.⁷⁹ During the 1860s Wise was unable to give figures for overseas as opposed to local deposits but felt that "a good deal" of money had come from "Home".⁸⁰ Nomination under the regulations was only possible in the colony, and Wise had become aware that many deposits were being made by "agents" in the colony on behalf of people in Ireland.⁸¹

A typical example of this kind of remittance in reverse, as it were, involved the deposit made for Sarah Logan of County Fermanagh by Nixon Fife in February 1862. Nixon Fife arrived in Sydney from County Fermanagh in 1859.⁸² In early 1862 he received a letter from his father, William, enclosing £3 as the deposit money for Sarah Logan, a neighbour of the Fifes' in Fermanagh. William had not been keen to help Sarah but emigration to Australia was all the rage among the inhabitants of north Fermanagh in 1861:

This is over and above all the other trouble I am Giving you, But in Decency I could not avoid it, I put her off two or three times of Sending money to you to pay her passage, as the news of the letters of Australia runs through the Country like wilefire when she heard by Thomas Farmers Sons of Mullaghmor that there was a passage for £3 for Girls and £5 for Boys, she came to me ... I thought you had enough to Do, attending to your own Business without this I send you a Cheque for £3 if you can Get her a passage to Sydney for it, she says it is in Sydney she intends to stop⁸³

⁷⁸ Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Secretary, 16 February 1858, Colonial Office/N.S.W. Original Correspondence, CO.201/505.

⁷⁹ N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Report, 1858, p.6.

⁸⁰ Evidence of N.S.W. Immigration Agent, George Wise, Select Committee on Immigration., p.4, 1870, *op.cit*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Caribou*, arrived 4 October 1859, IBL/NSW, 4/4979.

⁸³ William Fife, Drumcullion, County Fermanagh, to Nixon Fife, 11 November 1861, Fife letters,

The news that the Australian letters were spreading like “wilefire” round the parishes of north Fermanagh was presumably of the recent remittance regulations of June 1861. [Figure 8.1. 1861] The enthusiasm which greeted these regulations is not hard to understand; assisted immigration had been suspended for one year from mid-1860 and civil war had broken out in the United States. Many with no previous association with N.S.W. would now have begun to consider the possibilities of that colony. But going to Sydney required a colonial sponsor which accounts for Sarah Logan’s pestering of William Fife. Once he had sent the money, William did not wish to be bothered by Sarah and instructed Nixon to address all further correspondence on the matter to her.⁸⁴ Despite her enthusiasm for Sydney Sarah Logan did not take up her passage to the colony.

There were probably many individual cases, like that of Sarah Logan, where the emigrant had no personal connection with their colonial sponsor. On a much larger scale, the nominations of James Madden in the 1860s have the appearance of an organised system which involved large amounts of deposit money being sent from Ireland. Madden arrived in Sydney from the parish of O’Briensbridge, County Clare, in 1851. Between September 1862 and May 1865 he sponsored 91 emigrants in his own name mainly from the parish of Broadford in east Clare. [Figure 8.6] Although some of these people had relatives in Australia none of them stated any relationship to Madden on arrival. These nominations were done on 15 different dates from 1862 to 1865 and twice, on the same day — 18 May 1864 and 18 September 1864 — as Madden, two other men, Charles Fox and James Mahoney, deposited large sums of money for emigrants from Broadford. Overall these three men accounted for the importation of 132 Clare immigrants costing £578 in deposits. The spread-out nature of the nomination dates and the numbers being sponsored suggests that someone in Ireland was co-ordinating this emigration and despatching the deposit money to Sydney. This Clare/N.S.W. emigration broker could have been the same man who had sold Margaret Lynch her Passage Certificate in 1866 — the Parish Priest of Broadford, Father John Bourke, the man in the “habit of sending out people to Australia”. Madden, Fox and Mahoney gave Bourke as the local referee for all their nominees and, as the middleman in the whole business, they probably sent the Passage Certificates to him.

Others in Ireland lacking connections in N.S.W entrusted their nomination to emigrants on their way to Sydney. Sarah Griffiths arrived in July 1859 carrying £4 with which to nominate William Reilly from County Cavan.⁸⁵ Travelling on the same ship as

Fife family, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 17 March 1859, Emigration

Sarah was Thomas Hennessey Corcoran from Clonoulty, County Tipperary, who went at once to join relatives in Boorowa.⁸⁶ In early November 1859, just four months after his arrival, Thomas nominated ten single emigrants from his home parish of Clonoulty at a cost of £40.⁸⁷ So soon after his arrival did he make this large deposit that it is likely that he carried the money with him on the journey to Australia. Thomas had been the schoolmaster at the Clonoulty National School situated just beside the local Catholic church in Clonoulty village.⁸⁸ As a National schoolteacher he would have been well known to most people in the parish and was someone to whom these young, prospective emigrants could entrust their money.

However, helping close friends and relatives to follow them to N.S.W. was the main way in which the colonial Irish used the remittance scheme. An emigration sustained by the remittances and encouragement of previous emigrants is generally described as chain migration. Bruce Elliott has analysed this phenomenon over the period 1818 to the early 1850s among Protestants from parishes in north Tipperary emigrating to lower Canada.⁸⁹ Linking marriage and land records on the Canadian side to records in Tipperary he concluded that this movement was a “classic example of chain migration based upon kinship”.⁹⁰ From the emigrants of 1818 news filtered back steadily to other members of the family, and through them to the north Tipperary protestant community, of the prospects and advantages of the new land. For these people once the decision to leave Ireland was made the choice of destination and region of settlement followed the pathway established by their friends and relations.⁹¹ How common was this type of emigration among Irish assisted emigrants to N.S.W.? The Sydney shipping and nomination records contain hundreds of examples of chain migration and the process is clearly visible in the movement to N.S.W. between 1862 and 1878 of the Hinchy family and numbers of their friends and relatives.

Michael Hinchy arrived in Sydney in 1862 from the parish of Clareabbey and Killone not far from Ennis.⁹² He came to Australia with five others all nominated from

Commissioners to Emigration Agents and others, CO.386/130.

⁸⁶ *Queen of England*, arrived 8 July 1859, IBL/NSW, 4/4795.

⁸⁷ Nominations made by Thomas H. Corcoran, 5 November 1859, IDJ/NSW, 4/4580.

⁸⁸ 23rd Report of the Commissioners of National Education, Ireland, Appendix 5, p.220, *BPP*, 1857–58, Vol.20. Thomas H. Corcoran of the Clonoulty National School (Male) was awarded £1 as a premium for good order in his school.

⁸⁹ Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, Belfast, 1988.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.114.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Abyssinian*, arrived 29 May 1862, Agent's List, 4/4796.

the townland of Killerk in Killone by Patrick O’Gorman of Kiama.⁹³ The only emigrants among these nominees with a clear relationship to their sponsor were his widowed mother, Ann, and her son, Michael. All these people undoubtedly knew each other in Killone and the Commissioners probably allocated them to the same ship when they perceived that O’Gorman had sponsored them as a group.⁹⁴

Although not related to his sponsor the connection was close enough for Michael Hinchy to accompany Widow Gorman, son Michael and Stephen Hare to Pat Gorman’s farm at Yellow Rock near Kiama.⁹⁵ Michael spent his early years in the colony at Yellow Rock where he may have been employed by Gorman as a dairy hand.⁹⁶ He might have worked for Gorman as payment for his deposit and nomination. Many remittance emigrants may have arrived in N.S.W. under an agreement to repay the sponsor without whose help they would not have been able to emigrate. In the case of Patrick Davies, outlined above, Patrick was willing to repay his sister the deposit money from his earnings. More certain is that within seven weeks of his arrival Michael Hinchy began a series of nominations which brought 31 people from County Clare to Sydney between 1863 and 1878. [Figure 8.7] Two things united these emigrants: a relationship with their sponsor ranging from close kinship to simple friendship and previous residence in the adjacent parishes of Clareabbey, Killone and Clondagad. Hinchy’s nominees in 1864 and 1865, whose address he gave as Ennis, were undoubtedly also from Clareabbey and Killone as the same referee was provided for each of them — the parish priest of Clarecastle. Clarecastle Catholic parish incorporated the two civil parishes of Killone and Clareabbey. [Figure 8.7]

The most obvious pattern within this chain begun by Michael Hinchy was the gradual emigration between 1862 and 1878 of the whole Hinchy family to N.S.W. In November 1862 he nominated his two younger sisters, Bridget and Nora. Further nominations by Michael followed for brother Patrick in May 1864 and his youngest brother David in 1877. Apart from Catherine and John, who appeared to have died in Ireland, all the children of Dennis and Mary Hinchy (nee O’Keefe) came to N.S.W. [Figure 8.8] For two of them, Mary and Dennis, there is no record of arrival as assisted immigrants but Mary was in Sydney when Pat arrived in 1867 and Dennis’s death

⁹³ Nomination of Patrick O’Gorman, 22 August 1861, IDJ/NSW,???

⁹⁴ *Abyssinian*, arrived 29 May 1862, Agent’s list, 4/4796.

⁹⁵ Dispersal list, *Abyssinian*, Ship’s Papers, 9/6281, AONSW.

⁹⁶ “Michael was reported as being a butter maker by trade”; June Tomlinson, “The Hinchy Family History”, unpublished typescript, sent to R. Reid by June Tomlinson, Darwin, NT.

certificate places him in the colony from approximately 1876.⁹⁷ Finally Michael also sponsored his elderly parents in 1877. Seeking to avoid the highest passage payments he falsified their ages at nomination as 49 and 48. On arrival Dennis said he was 64 and Mary 61. [Figure 8.8]

Bringing elderly emigrants such as Dennis and Mary Hinchy to Australia was not a primary objective of the remittance scheme. Nobody of that age would have obtained a passage through application to the Commissioners in the 1850s or from the N.S.W. Agent General in the 1870s. But just as economic criteria were not applied to nominations involving orphaned brothers and sisters neither were they applied to aged relatives, and the government saw the small subsidy provided towards their emigration as reasonable. In 1851 the Commissioners drew the Colonial Secretary's attention to the economic uselessness of emigrants over 50 but felt these nominations should not be discouraged:

In the case of persons above 50 the Colony will sometimes under this rule have to pay £1 or £2 for a person wholly useless as a labourer but this slight encouragement may we think be fairly given to those who are sufficiently mindful of an old relative to pay £12 for his passage to the Colony.⁹⁸

On at least two occasions Michael Hinchy appears to have deliberately deceived the immigration authorities as to the real intent of his nominations. The Sydney shipping lists record two separate arrivals for his sisters, Bridget and Nora and his brother Patrick. A Bridget and a Nora Hinchy came in 1863 and 1865 and each time they provided identical family details to the Immigration Board.⁹⁹ A Patrick Hinchy appeared on a ship's list in 1865 and 1867 and again both Patricks supplied similar family details.¹⁰⁰ The only evidence to indicate that Michael had intended fraud comes from his choice of venue at which to fill in the relevant forms. His first nomination of Bridget and Nora in 1862 was done by the Kiama Clerk of Petty Sessions. This was the closest courthouse to Yellow Rock. His next nomination of them in November 1863 was done after the arrival of the first Nora and Bridget in August 1863. This took place at Wollongong Courthouse and involved a much longer journey but by going to Wollongong Michael would have avoided any awkward questions from the Clerk at Kiama.¹⁰¹ [Figure 8.7. Bridget/Nora

⁹⁷ Death Certificate, Dennis Hinchy, Lismore, N.S.W., 9 January 1902, June Tomlinson.

⁹⁸ Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 6 June 1851, Emigration Commissioners/Entry Books of Correspondence, CO.386/69.

⁹⁹ *Spitfire*, arrived 23 August 1863, IBL/NSW, 4/4985; *Wallasea*, arrived 27 September 1865, IBL/NSW, 4/9990.

¹⁰⁰ *Hornet*, arrived 25 January 1865, IBL/NSW, 4/4989; *Burlington*, arrived 16 February 1867, IBL/NSW, 4/4992.

¹⁰¹ Nominations of Michael Hinchy, 26 November 1862, Bench of Magistrates, Kiama, record of immigration deposits, 1857-1886, 4/5574, AONSW. Nominations of Michael Hinchy, 20

Hinchy. 1862 63/64.]

What explains Michael's behaviour? The Hinchys were a poor family; in November 1864 Michael returned the Passage Certificates he had sent to Ireland for Bridget and Nora in November 1863 because they had been unable to "provide costs for their outfit".¹⁰² Perhaps the first Passage Certificates were sent home to be sold slightly above their actual deposit price to help finance the emigration of the real Bridget and Nora in 1865. Evidence that it was the real Nora and Bridget who arrived in 1865 comes from Bridget Hinchy's death certificate in 1868. Michael Hinchy registered Bridget's death and his statement that his sister had been in the colony for only three years supports an 1865 arrival.¹⁰³ Similarly the first Passage Certificate for Patrick Hinchy could have been sold to someone who impersonated him on arrival. In making the first of these family nominations Michael would have needed to deceive the authorities as he had no way of knowing who might purchase the certificates in Ireland. It is difficult to think of an innocent explanation for these multiple nominations. Had Michael been sending for friends or relatives presumably he would have nominated them under their correct names in the first place.

Moving out from the immediate family circle Michael sponsored his cousins, the Roughans and the Fawls. The first Roughan to arrive was Anne in 1864 and she was followed to Sydney by brother Thomas in 1865 and sister Mary in 1877. Although all three were nominated by Michael Hinchy only Anne declared him to be a cousin. Another cousin, Bridget Fawl, arrived in 1865. The O'Keefe family sponsored by Michael, who came in 1864, did not give him as a relative but they may have been cousins as Michael's mother was an O'Keefe.¹⁰⁴ All of his other nominations expressed no closer connection to Michael than that of "friend". For them he had simply acted as the means to bring them to Sydney. [Figure 8.7]

The second stage in the emigration of Bruce Elliott's Tipperary Protestants involved them in following relatives not just to Canada but to the the same areas of settlement within Canada. Many of those related to Michael Hinchy behaved in this way once in the colony. By 1867 Michael had left Kiama for the Clarence River district on the north coast where, from 1862, land had been for sale under the Free Selection Act. In 1867 in Sydney he married one of his nominees, his cousin Anne Roughan, who had been

November 1863, IDJ/NSW, 4/4585, AONSW.

¹⁰² Michael Hinchy to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 24 November 1864, IC/NSW, 9/6240.

¹⁰³ Death Certificate, Bridget Hinchy, South Arm, Clarence River, 29 April 1868, June Tomlinson.

¹⁰⁴ Baptismal entries, family of Dennis Hinchy and Mary O'Keefe, 1837-1861, Killerk, Parish of Clareabbey, Clare Heritage Centre, Corofin, County Clare.

working since her arrival as a servant in Darling Point.¹⁰⁵ On his wedding certificate Michael described himself as a “farmer” from the Clarence River and the couple set up home there.¹⁰⁶

Michael Hinchy was not the first Clarecastle man into the Shark Creek area of the Clarence. He may have been lured there by Patrick McMahon who paid his own way to the colony in 1862 and made straight for the north coast. In 1863 the same ship which brought Michael Hinchy’s first group of nominees to Sydney also brought Pat McMahon’s wife Catherine, two year old child and sister-in-law, Sarah Mulville.¹⁰⁷ According to Catherine, Pat was living at Clarence River.¹⁰⁸ From that point on a number of Hinchys and their friends and relatives began turning up in the Shark Creek area. In 1876 at the Clarence Patrick Hinchy married Norah Mulville, another of Michael’s nominees and Catherine McMahon’s sister.¹⁰⁹ Like brother Michael, Patrick had selected land and was officially described as a “dairy farmer”.¹¹⁰ Pat Mulville, brought out by Michael in 1865, may also have settled at the Clarence as the family name is closely associated with the small farming families of the district.¹¹¹ When Michael’s parents came in 1878 they settled with him at Shark Creek and both of them died there.¹¹² Brother Dennis also made his way to the north coast although there is no evidence that he settled at Shark Creek. His death was recorded at Lismore Hospital, not far from the Clarence, in 1902.¹¹³ The three remaining Hinchys — Honora, Mary and David — all settled in Sydney and spent the whole of their lives in N.S.W. in that city.¹¹⁴ [Figure 8.8]

At Shark Creek the Hinchys were surrounded by other Irish families, some of whom were from County Clare. But in general the Shark Creek Irish community was

¹⁰⁵ “He [Michael] was a resident of the Clarence River area when he married Anne Roughan on 25 July 1867 at Woollahra, N.S.W.”, June Tomlinson, “Hinchy Family”; James Moloney, *Shark Creek Tales*, no place of publication, no date, ISBN No.0 95934883 2 8, p.4.

¹⁰⁶ June Tomlinson, “Hinchy Family”.

¹⁰⁷ Moloney, *op.cit.*, p.44.

¹⁰⁸ *Spitfire*, arrived 24 August 1863, IBL/NSW, 4/4985.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Marriage certificate, Patrick Hinchy and Honora Mulville, South Arm, Clarence River, 27 August 1876, June Tomlinson.

¹¹¹ June Tomlinson, “Hinchy Family”.

¹¹² Moloney, *op.cit.*, p.26.

¹¹³ *La Hogue*, arrived 21 October 1878, IBL/NSW, 4/5007; Death certificate, Mary Hinchy, Shark Creek, 23 November 1879; Death certificate, Dennis Hinchy Senior, Cross Creek, Clarence River, 19 March 1892, June Tomlinson.

¹¹⁴ Death certificate, Dennis Hinchy Junior, Lismore, 9 January 1902, June Tomlinson.

drawn from a wide range of counties scattered throughout Ireland with no one county or sub-region disproportionately represented among the settlers. The Shark Creek Pioneer Memorial, unveiled in 1923 and recording the names of those families who had settled at the Creek in the 1860s, included a mixture of immigrants from Clare, Tipperary, Galway, Tyrone, Leitrim, Wicklow, Dublin, Cavan and Limerick.¹¹⁵

A region of the colony which more closely resembled Elliott's chain migration pattern was the Kiama district in the southern Illawarra. At Kiama, as among the Tipperary Protestants heading for Canada, dozens of interrelated families from the same region of Ireland settled next to each other and over a 50 year period encouraged other members of the family to come out to them as assisted emigrants. By 1861 Kiama was a very Irish place. Just over a quarter of its population were Irish born compared to 15.6% for N.S.W.¹¹⁶ Among the 45% of the colony's population born in the U.K the Irish formed 35%; for Kiama the corresponding figures were 49% U.K born of whom 53% were Irish.¹¹⁷ Between 1857 and 1867 the Irish dominated local immigration from the U.K.; during those years 86% of the 836 nominations at the Kiama courthouse were made to Ireland. [Figure 8.9] Of these Irish nominations 72% involved sending for emigrants from counties in Ulster and 66% of all Kiama Irish nominees lived in the adjacent counties of Fermanagh, Tyrone and Donegal. Even more remarkable was that 40% of all the Irish sent for from Kiama were from one county, Fermanagh. [Figure 8.9] This Ulster concentration was of long standing in the region and persisted to the end of assisted immigration in the 1880s.¹¹⁸ Typical of the extended emigration pattern of these Ulster/Kiama emigrants was the movement to Kiama of the children and grandchildren of John and Elizabeth Sproule (nee Wallace) of the parish of Dromore, County Tyrone. [Figure 8.10]

The Sproules were preceded to Australia by their uncle, James Wallace, who paid his own way out about 1837.¹¹⁹ James's mother was an Osborne and this family, prominent among the large farmers of Dromore, already had extensive connections with the Illawarra district.¹²⁰ Alick Osborne, a naval surgeon who made many voyages to Sydney in the 1820s and 1830s in charge of convicts, recruited one of the first shiploads

¹¹⁵ June Tomlinson, "Hinchy Family".

¹¹⁶ Information on the Shark Creek Irish settlers from James Moloney, Society of Australian Genealogists, Sydney.

¹¹⁷ 1861, *Census of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1862, p.14.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.338.

¹¹⁹ Bench of Magistrates, Kiama, record of immigration deposits, 1857-1886, 4/5574, AONSW.

¹²⁰ Kerrie Alexander, *Pioneer Origins: A Family History*, Kiama, no date, p.54.

of government assisted emigrants in the region round his home parish of Dromore in 1836 and 1837.¹²¹ This may have been the catalyst for young James Wallace not just to emigrate but to make for the Illawarra where the Osborne brothers were already substantial landowners. By 1840 James himself was established on 148 acres in the Jamberoo valley behind Kiama.¹²²

Although James Wallace paid his own passage, all his sister's children and grandchildren who subsequently came to N.S.W did so as assisted emigrants. Among them the only one not to be nominated by a relative under the remittance regulations was John Sproule who arrived as a bounty immigrant in 1841. [Figure 8.10] Nineteen years later in 1862 John nominated a number of his nieces and nephews all of whom emigrated and settled round Kiama. One of these emigrants, John Gorrall brought out two of his sisters within a year of his arrival. The first of John Sproule's sisters to arrive was Jane Alexander sponsored by John in 1863. [Figure 8.10] Four of her children — Francis, Annie, Eliza Jane and John — had already been brought out by their uncle. Jane Alexander was accompanied by her husband James and seven more of their children. Finally in 1882, 41 years after his own arrival in the colony, John Sproule sent for his oldest brother Hugh, wife Mary and their two sons.

The attraction of Kiama as an emigrant destination for these Ulster people was a mixture of land and family. In the early 1840s numbers of bounty emigrants from Tyrone and Fermanagh had gone to the Illawarra, almost as soon as they landed in Sydney drawn by the opportunities for employment created by the more affluent Ulster families like the Osbornes. By 1840 Henry Osborne from Dromore, County Tyrone, had built up substantial landholdings in the southern Illawarra and he was in the habit of employing recently arrived Ulster immigrants.¹²³ In 1843 a large group of Ulster bounty immigrants, brought together by George Grey from Magheraculmoney, County Fermanagh, was able to escape from wage labour and establish themselves as tenant farmers near Kiama.

The group, mainly from parishes in north Fermanagh and all of them related to or

¹²¹ Henry Lee, "Henry Osborne", K. Johnston and R. Reid (eds), *The Irish Australians*, Sydney and Belfast, 1984, pp.24-25.

¹²² For Alick Osborne's career as a naval surgeon see Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships*, Sydney, 1983. Osborne described his voyage to Australia on the *Adam Lodge* in 1836 with government emigrants selected by him in his evidence to the Select Committee on British Immigration, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1837, pp.61-64. Osborne styled himself "His Majesty's Emigration Agent for Australia, Omagh".

¹²³ For a description of the three Osborne brothers at this time see diary of Lady Franklin, wife of Governor Franklin of Van Dieman's Land, May 1839, Monday May 13, quoted in K Henderson and T. Henderson, *Early Illawarra: People, Houses, Life*, Canberra, 1983, p.123; Kerrie Alexander, *op.cit.*, p.54.

acquainted with Grey, settled on the Kiama estate of James Robb.¹²⁴ Robb allocated each of them a portion of land on what was known as the clearing lease system. Under this agreement the land and all its produce were given rent free for an agreed number of years provided it was cleared and made suitable for farming.¹²⁵ This gave many of these Ulstermen a start and by the mid-1850s some were able to begin purchasing land of their own while others continued to lease the land they had cleared.¹²⁶ These Fermanagh settlers began using the remittance scheme to send for a wide range of friends and relatives both to help them on their own farms and to give these new arrivals the opportunity to branch out for themselves on the land. [Figure 8.11] George Grey, as we have already seen, was able to fraudulently manipulate the provisions of the land and deposit regulations to bring out emigrants from his home parish intending to settle down at once as farmers not to hire out as labourers. According to Anthony Sheffield, who in 1859 ran a Kiama labour agency, few of these Kiama nominees came with any intention of labouring or taking service in the homes of the middle classes:

... at present the demand for female servants is Very Considerable and it is quite impossible to answer all the applications, the principal reason is, that this District being so fertile and Dairy produce paying so well that numbers of young men have of themselves been induced to take clearing leases and have taken to themselves Wives of those, formerly servants and doing remarkably well, and it therefore leaves this place completely in want of Labour.¹²⁷

The success with which the Irish used the remittance regulations to surround themselves with kith and kin was to a large extent the undoing of the whole system. In the late 1850s Agent Browne praised the Irish for their willingness to use the regulations seeing in this “a feature of their character deserving of the highest commendation”.¹²⁸ Unlike the English, they wished not only to reunite themselves with relatives left at home but also to offer them “the means of participating in the advantages of their own altered state”.¹²⁹ Such commendation from Browne was not characteristic of his general attitude to the Irish. This praise appeared in his composite report for 1856–57 when Irish remittance and general immigrants were outnumbered two to one by English and Scots selected by the Commissioners. But the alarm was soon raised in the 1860s as the pattern

¹²⁴ Frank McCaffrey, *The McCaffrey Family History*, p.1, pamphlet reprint of series of articles which appeared in the *Kiama Reporter*, no date but written early this century, in possession of R. Reid, Canberra.

¹²⁵ Ross Wilson, *Index to the Family Trees*, p.28 “Settlement at Kiama”, no place of publication, no date, sent by R. Wilson to R. Reid in 1984.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Anthony Sheffield to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 11 April 1859, IC/NSW, 9/6218.

¹²⁹ N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Report, 1856/57, p.5.

of arrivals under a system relying totally on remittances became clear.

In 1864, when the Immigration Agent's reports for 1860 to 1862 were tabled in the Legislative Assembly, the *Sydney Morning Herald* quickly pointed out that five government immigrants out of every seven were now Irish.¹³⁰ The family loyalty demonstrated by this immigration was commendable but, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* suggested, this preponderance of one race could "upset the otherwise useful blending of all the races of the United Kingdom".¹³¹ In the Legislative Assembly that old opponent of Irish immigration, Reverend John Dunmore Lang, was more direct — under the current immigration system a wrong was being done to England and Scotland.¹³² Backed by Lang, and encouraged by a growing opinion among the working classes that assisted immigrants drove down local wage levels, the government in 1864 took the opportunity provided by declining revenue to suspend temporarily the immigration vote.¹³³ In 1867 economic recession led to the final cancellation of the regulations.¹³⁴ They were not revived until the middle of the 1870s.

Whatever role anti-Irish feeling may have played in the demise of the regulations there is evidence that the scheme had been gradually losing its appeal after 1863. Nominations reached a peak of 5,394 in 1863 then gradually fell away to a mere 867 in 1867.¹³⁵ After the temporary failure to allocate funds in 1864 £40,000 was voted in 1865 and 1866.¹³⁶ £11,000 of this sum remained unspent at the cancellation of the regulations in December 1867.¹³⁷ Agent Wise concluded that by 1867 most of those who wished to come out to join their friends and relations had done so.¹³⁸ Just as likely an explanation was resistance in Ireland and the colony to the significant increases in deposits demanded by the May 1863 regulations. At £7 for a single male the deposit now represented nearly half the contract price charged by the shipping companies to bring him to Sydney.¹³⁹

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1864, Editorial.

¹³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 March 1864, Editorial.

¹³³ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 March 1864, Editorial.

¹³⁴ *The Empire*, 7 March 1864, Editorial.

¹³⁵ Evidence of N.S.W. Immigration Agent, George Wise, Select Committee on Immigration, p.2, 1870, *op.cit.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹³⁷ Immigration vote, 1865, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 1865, Vol.2, p.61; Immigration vote, 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 1866, Vol.2, p.57.

¹³⁸ Evidence of George Wise, Select Committee on Immigration, p.7, 1870, *op.cit.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁴¹ The contract price per statute adult charged by the shippers to the Emigration Commissioners in the

When the deposit was added to other costs such as the compulsory clothing for the voyage and fares within the U.K then a Sydney passage must have begun to look a lot less attractive than one to New York. If the nominations of James Madden are taken as a rough guide to the interest in emigrating to N.S.W. in Broadford, County Clare, this interest fell away sharply after 1863. [Figure 8.6] In 1865, with the end of the American Civil War, the demand for Madden's services as a nominator declined still further.

The effects of the remittance system on the overall pattern of Irish immigration to N.S.W. between 1848 and 1870 are fairly clear. First, by allowing nomination in the colony, and then complaining of the numbers of Irish being sent by the Commissioners, N.S.W. placed the selection of its Irish immigrants in the hands of the local Irish community from about the middle of the 1850s. This accounts for the 26% of the Irish who arrived under the remittance scheme in that decade compared with 7% of the English. Second, nomination simply reinforced the regional character of the movement to Sydney which emerged in the bounty emigration of the early 1840s and continued into the 1880s. The persistence of this regional emigration pattern was virtually assured once the Commissioners stopped actively recruiting in Ireland in 1856. Third, the regulations encouraged the movement of complex groupings of interrelated kin and friends, emigrating sometimes over a long period of time, from specific parishes to specific destinations in N.S.W. The emigrants from west Ulster to Kiama were typical of this type of "chain migration" but there were undoubtedly similar movements from other areas yet to be fully uncovered in the data. Finally, despite its problems, the scheme provided the colonial Irish with a safe and well organised mechanism for allowing them to exercise what many saw as their obligation to family and friends. When the regulations of August 1857 were published they were warmly welcomed by the *Freeman's Journal* whose editor had no doubt that, as the choice of future emigrants was now to be left largely to colonial residents, a large portion would be from the "fair Isle of the West — the land of affection and endearing family ties".

1860s varied from £14/14/6d. in 1861-62-63 to £12/15/6d. in 1865; N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Reports, 1860-69.

CONCLUSION

Assisted emigration was central to the development of an Irish population in mid-19th century New South Wales; without it the journey to Australia would simply not have been an emigration option for the Irish. Moreover the physical problems confronting the trans-oceanic Irish emigrant of the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s were largely solved for the Australian assisted emigrants by the Emigration Commissioners. The evidence of the journey to and arrival in Sydney shows that, compared to the North Atlantic passage, the experiences of these Irish emigrants were indeed less harsh and less beset by the need to be constantly on their guard against the perils of a strange environment.

The extent, however, to which this relatively well managed transition from homeland to colony helped produce an Irish/Australian community less prone to the hostile anti-British attitudes of the Irish/Americans is more difficult to measure. Certainly when in 1858 the N.S.W. Donegal Relief Committee asked the colonists to open their purses to assist the emigration of the wretched of Tullaghobegley, they carefully aimed their criticism not at the British government but at a system of landlordism which they knew would find little support among either the Irish or most British settlers in New South Wales. In general the long voyage to the colony, while it would at times have made the Irish Catholics aware of those religious and racial elements which divided them from the majority of British emigrants, was soon felt to have been a common experience, something shared by all those who had braved the ocean together as government emigrants. In 1878 *The Sydney Mail* knew its audience when it published an illustrated article on the arrival of the government immigrant ship, *Samuel Plimsoll*. The writer began by acknowledging that he was merely describing "phases incident to Australian colonization which very many of our readers must in their time have experienced".¹

Socially government emigration brought to New South Wales people from the middle and lower segments of mid-century Irish rural society. More precisely, if the central Tipperary emigrants from Clonoulty were fairly typical of the whole then the majority of the Irish were from the lower rather than the middle rank — the fifth and sixth gradations in the scale — rather than the "petit bourgeois". However, some emigrants from a strong farming background were also to be found on government ships. There is nothing to indicate that the emigrants from the Protestant parishes of Tyrone and Fermanagh, or the Catholic parishes of east Clare and the Shannon lowlands of north

¹ *The Sydney Mail*, 10 August 1878, p.209.

Limerick, came from economic circumstances vastly different to the Clonoulty people. From these core regions of the Sydney emigration came a steady stream of families and individuals representing the main socioeconomic groups in the Irish countryside — the landless labourers, cottier farmers, small farmers and, occasionally, the big farmers. But among the emigrants, especially up to 1850, there were numbers of extremely poor, often destitute individuals and families; these were the orphan girls, the wives and children of emancipated convicts, and those brought from Tullaghobegley, County Donegal between 1859 and 1864.

Apart from economic considerations what attracted many of the assisted Irish to Sydney was the existence in New South Wales of numerous friends and relatives who had preceded them to the colony. The Irish immigrant community of the 1850s and 1860s was built on the patterns established in the first great wave of assisted immigration of the late 1830s and early 1840s. Thousands of case histories of so called “chain migration”, such as those of families like the Hincheyes from Clare or the Sproules and Alexanders from Tyrone, could be compiled from the Sydney immigration records. This family emigration explains the continuing concentration of the Australian emigration in parts of Munster and south west Ulster from 1848, and particularly after 1855 when nomination in the colony became essential for an assisted passage. Why these areas predominated from the very beginning of the government schemes in the late 1830s will require further investigation.

Given its substantial free emigration connections with New South Wales Clonoulty in County Tipperary merits the title of an “Australian” parish. But what the people of Clonoulty today have chosen to commemorate of their historic link with Australia is a story of exile and defiance of British rule in Tipperary — the levelling of the Ballagh dispensary in 1815 by a band of local men angered that it had been commandeered as a barracks from which to police the surrounding district. For this action “Ned” Ryan, the future “King of Galong Castle” at Boorowa, New South Wales, and 12 of his companions, all transported in 1817, have had their names inscribed on a large, stone memorial in Ballagh village. It was an event full of those romantic and nationalistic ingredients with which many Irish, and many Australians of Irish descent, find it easy to identify. The hundreds who later followed them to Sydney as assisted emigrants have left no trace of their departure although this gradual haemorrhaging of Clonoulty’s population had far deeper implications for the life of the parish and parts of New South Wales than that dramatic incident in 1815. While it was the convicts who first established an Irish presence in New South Wales, it was the assisted emigrants who ensured that the Irish would play a key role in the development of a free colonial society in the second half of the 19th century.

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