COLONIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

PART II

Some Queensland and Other Australian Agents-General


(Read at a meeting of the Society on 24 February 1966.)

Practically the only guide received by the Colonial Agent-General in enabling him to carry out his duties in accordance with Government policy were the informal interviews and discussions he would have with the Premier, Treasurer, and other Cabinet Ministers before his departure for England. He would receive with every mail steamer voluminous correspondence detailing specific items of Colonial business, contracts, etc., which he was required to attend to. Where there was understanding and confidence between the Agent-General and his superiors in the Colonial Secretary's office this loose arrangement worked reasonably well, but problems were created and friction arose where the Agent-General's title to office was couched in vague and indefinite terms.

That unfortunate situation arose early in the history of the Agent-Generalship in Queensland. Both Henry Jordan, Queensland's first Agent-General, and his successor, John Douglas, clashed with the Colonial Secretary and Government of the day, and in each instance much controversial correspondence resulted regarding the interpretation and scope of their duties. Both men were sternly rebuked for allegedly exceeding their authority. A study of the relevant correspondence reveals a censorious, pettifogging, and unreasonable attitude by the respective Colonial Secretaries, Herbert, Mackenzie, and Palmer, and an inability to understand and appreciate the problems which faced the Agent-General in London, especially in connection with emigration.

EMIGRATION MAIN CONCERN

The early Agents-General were almost exclusively occupied with emigration. The appointment of Queensland's first London representative, Henry Jordan, was the sequel to the findings of a Select Committee on Immigration which had been appointed in 1860 by the Queensland Legislative
Assembly and had investigated various migration schemes. In presenting their report to Parliament on 22 August 1860, the Committee stated:

“The evidence generally is in favour of the appointment of a Selecting Agent in Great Britain, who, possessing a thorough knowledge of the country and its requirements, should adopt active measures for disseminating knowledge of the new Colony and the intentions of its Government by means of lectures and advertisements, and pointing out to those who would be desirable immigrants the many advantages offered by Queensland . . .”

Jordan established the Agency-General with the aid of two clerks and the shipping firm of J. Baines and Company. He had been granted a fund of £200 by the Government on leaving Queensland, and this was intended to cover the costs of salaries, advertisements, travelling expenses, printing, and circulation of Government pamphlets. These costs were largely met by the Agent-General himself, with the co-operation of Baines and Co., who placed at his disposal all their agents throughout the United Kingdom.

The arduous and particularly personal nature of an Agent-General’s duties is evident in the two reports covering the years April 1861-April 1863 which were printed and tabled in Parliament. Initially, there was the difficulty of persuading shipowners to accept land orders for payment of immigrants’ passages. Then the Relief Committees scattered throughout England had refused to outfit those willing to emigrate, so that in addition to money sent from the Colony, the Agent-General was forced to raise contributions in England so that each passenger might be equipped according to the Regulations. As the advertisement and publicity campaigns began to show results, he was deluged with letters and enquiries, which, if they were to be answered by return post, kept his two clerks working day and night. Many he had to answer personally, and these were forwarded to him if he was absent from London on a lecture tour. In 1862-63 Jordan wrote that he had lectured on Queensland in nearly all the principal cities and towns in Ireland; in Glasgow; in Wales, and in seven English counties. In all, he had given 34 lectures to packed halls in 21 different places.

His work was not lightened by complaints and accusations of deception which reached him from immigrants in Queensland who were discouraged by inefficient reception and employment arrangements. Countering these attacks and other adverse Press publicity put forward by the opponents of immigration in general, e.g., the Lancashire manufacturers or anti-Colonial theorists, occupied much of his time. In
addition, the British Government had taken exception to the use of his title as “Emigration Commissioner,” on the grounds that the title “Commissioner” could only be used in Great Britain by persons holding office immediately under the Imperial Government.

JORDAN DEFENDS HIMSELF

Jordan tendered his resignation to the Colonial Secretary (R. W. G. Herbert) on 26 January 1864, in consequence of the criticism to which he had been subjected. The Government wished to curtail and ultimately terminate the land order system, and Jordan hastened back to Queensland to defend himself and fight for the retention of the system, the most formidable opponent of which was Herbert. As the result of the findings of a Select Committee of Inquiry, Jordan was exonerated from the charges brought against him, praised for “the eminent success of his mission,” and sent back to England armed with full powers to carry out the land order system of emigration, “as originally conceived by the Legislature, subject to such alterations as experience had shown to be desirable.” Under the new legislation—the Immigration Act of 1864—land orders could not be transferred. Jordan embarked for England in September 1864 with the official title of “Agent-General for Immigration in Queensland.”

But friction speedily developed between Herbert and Jordan when the latter discovered that in addition to the emigration policy to be carried out under his supervision, the Government was determined to continue the introduction of emigrants under the control of the Imperial Emigration Commissioners. Jordan’s attitude was that this would be injurious to the working of the immigration system, and would not be in accordance with the report of the Select Committee on Immigration and the Alienation of Crown Land Act adopted during the first session of the Queensland Parliament. He wrote in these terms to Herbert, bluntly asserting that the new Immigration Act made it necessary that the whole of the immigration from Great Britain to the Colony should be under the direction of himself, as the officer at the head of the Queensland Government Emigration office in London.

Herbert, in reply, curtly advised Jordan “to be very careful to conform . . . with the wishes and requirements of Her Majesty’s Emigration Commissioners. . . .” and pointed out, with some acerbity, “the extreme impropriety of a subor-

3. 18 October 1864, Ibid.
ordinate officer dictating to the Government on matters of policy in the interpretation of Acts of Parliament.” He desired that Jordan “will, for the future, confine yourself to the discharge of the duties which have been entrusted to you.”

**STRAINED RELATIONS WITH HERBERT**

In reply, Jordan expressed regret that the first letter he had received from Herbert was “expressed in a manner which, I believe, was never before used by the Chief Secretary of any Government towards another gentleman at the head of one of the most important departments of the Public Service.” A minute of the Executive Council, dated 10 March 1965, embodying the decision of the Governor in Council on Jordan’s communication, refuted Jordan’s view that the exclusive power of selecting emigrants was placed by the Act entirely in his hands, and stated that Jordan held opinions as to his powers and duties which were wholly inconsistent with his position in the Civil Service, and contrary to the principles of Parliamentary Government. Having been appointed by the Executive to an office directly subordinate to the Department of the Colonial Secretary, he was required to carry out faithfully and promptly all instructions conveyed to him through that Department. . . . The third section of the Immigration Act . . . required him “to do all things relating to emigration in Queensland that the Governor in Council may from time to time direct in pursuance of the provisions of the Act.” . . . Upon all questions of the interpretation and execution of Acts, the Ministers were responsible to Parliament and not to any subordinate civil servant. . . .

There was no improvement in the strained relations between Jordan and the Government when R. R. MacKenzie replaced Herbert as Colonial Secretary. In the ensuing months, Jordan was bombarded with criticisms and complaints on emigration matters. These ranged from the prohibited issue of intoxicating liquor to intermediate and steerage passengers, and the inferior quality of the beef supplied for emigrant ships, to the quality of the migrants themselves. These latter were described by MacKenzie as “the worst class of people he had ever seen introduced into any of the Colonies.” Jordan protested that the “constant interference” to which he was subjected was “most perplexing,” and had been from the beginning one of the greatest obstacles in the way of his success. He blamed “as a serious and continuously operating impediment to the working of the Queensland system” the opposition of the late Colonial Secretary (R. W. G. Herbert)

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to any emigration not under the control of the Imperial authorities.

JORDAN RESIGNS A SECOND TIME

On 19 June 1866, Mackenzie called Jordan’s attention to the fact that the understanding on which the *Immigration Act of 1864* had been passed, and Jordan’s return to England sanctioned by the Government and the Legislature, was that he engaged, if left unrestricted in his operations, to introduce a class of immigrants superior to those furnished by the Imperial Commissioners—“men of respectability and character, and small capitalists.” The result, he said, had shown “a lamentable failure” in these conditions on Jordan’s part. “The immigrants now introduced by you, as a body, display more pauperism, less respectability, and will make as bad colonists as any ever imported in the Commissioners’ ships. . . . It is with very great regret I feel compelled to animadvert in so strong terms upon the evils of the immigration system as at present carried out, but those evils themselves are so loud-tongued, and the responsibility of the Government so heavy, that it is impossible to remain silent, or any longer to be otherwise than outspoken on the subject.”

In consequence of this letter, Jordan, on 26 July 1866, tendered his resignation to the Colonial Secretary.

More than two months earlier — on 2 May 1866 — the Executive Council had decided, in view of the serious financial position of the Colony, to curtail emigration, and to cut the expenditure on the London office to £2,000 per annum. On 18 August 1866 the Colonial Treasurer notified the Executive Council of “the impossibility of sustaining immigration even upon a restricted scale.” Jordan was made the scapegoat. The memorandum submitted to the Executive Council asserted that the near exhaustion of the funds “has indubitably been materially hastened by the action taken by Mr. Jordan to fill every ship to its utmost . . . the result being a complete inundation of the labour market in the Colony by a class of immigrants ineligible under the Act, and entirely unsuited to requirements. . . . A more judicious management would have spared the funds . . . and prevented much of the destitution now prevalent.”

The Executive Council concurred. On 19 September 1866 Jordan received from the Under Colonial Secretary (A. W. Manning) copy of a minute of the Executive Council directing that all emigration at the expense of the Colony was to cease forthwith. Jordan’s services were no longer required, and he was directed to close down the London office after the termination of the current year.
"CALAMITOUS INTERFERENCE BY HERBERT"

The lengthy letter written by Jordan to the Colonial Secretary, under date 27 August 1866—the same date on which he had received notification that free and assisted passages were to be withheld until further notice—testifies to his bitterness and frustration. The letter is much too long to be quoted in full, but in one portion of it Jordan expressed his conviction that "any essential change of our present law will be damaging, and . . . my successor . . . will find his task Herculean, and to a great extent, necessarily unsuccessful." He referred also to "the calamitous interference of the late Colonial Secretary (R. W. G. Herbert)" which had "alone prevented the entire success of the emigration under the provisions of the current Act." "Had the selection been left by him where the Act placed it—in the hands of the Agent-General—Queensland immigration would not have been ruined by the inundation of the ships by a refuse class, thus involving the whole system in discredit, and deterring the sailing of many respectable persons from fear of association with them as fellow passengers. In spite of the great damage which had before been inflicted on our once prosperous system by adverse regulations and constant alterations, had I been allowed to fulfil the functions of my office, as provided in the Act, I should by this time have fully restored the system."

Possibly this was an over-optimistic view, but there is little doubt that, on the record of his services and what he was able to achieve, Jordan was shabbily treated. The difficulties of his duties were not made easier by the paucity of the funds allowed him, and the Government was at least £1,000 in his debt.

On 20 September 1866 Jordan received notification that his resignation had been accepted. He closed down the Queensland office in London by the end of December. The last ship, the Royal Dane, sailed from London on 14 December 1866, carrying 200 passengers. The number of ships despatched under Jordan's direction since his appointment was 85, conveying 36,063 persons. Of these, 12,550 were full-paying passengers, 5,732 assisted passengers, paying £4 or £8 per head, and 13,147 were free passengers.

DOUGLAS FRUSTRATED

In at least one respect, Jordan was a true prophet. His successor found himself beset with difficulty and frustration. No further appointment as Agent-General was made until September 1869, the London office being closed down. John Douglas (1828-1904) became Queensland's second Agent-
General. Douglas, who had been elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly in 1863, had been a member of the Macalister Ministries of 1866-67, as Colonial Treasurer and Secretary for Public Works. He served in the Lilley Ministry of 1868-70 as Postmaster-General, but resigned to become Agent-General, his appointment dating from 25 September 1869. The understanding was that he was to be "Agent for the Colony" as well as "Agent-General for Emigration." It was, however, a verbal understanding only, although a notice in the Government Gazette supported his claim.

Douglas clashed with the Palmer Government which entered office in May 1870. He was subjected to sharp criticism for having allegedly failed to carry out instructions in regard to the immigration policy to be followed, and tendered his resignation on 29 December 1870. Douglas gave as his reasons for resigning that his instructions were such that he could not anticipate the possibility of giving effect to the Immigration Act of 1869 on a scale such as would justify his retention of office; that he had accepted the office of Agent-General for Emigration on the condition that he should be appointed "Agent for the Colony in England"; that the circumstances in which he found himself did not seem to justify the expediency of giving effect to the instruction that he was to deliver lectures.

Douglas's resignation was accepted on 27 February 1871 by the Colonial Secretary (A. H. Palmer). A minute dated 2 March 1871 stated that Douglas was not justified in supposing that he had been appointed "Agent for the Colony"; and he was accused of having accepted the office with "his mind made up to disobey instructions." "He seemed to think he had a right to do exactly as he pleased and in the execution of such pleasure did not hesitate to over-ride the Act he was appointed to administer (The Immigration Act of 1869)."

CHARGES AGAINST DOUGLAS

Charges against Douglas included, briefly, neglect of instructions as to the numbers of immigrants to be sent by each ship; disregard of instructions to call for tenders for their conveyance; and failure to give lectures on Queensland. Lecturing was described as "one of the most important" of Douglas's functions, and his refusal to do so was described as "inexplicable" by the Colonial Secretary.

Douglas's spirited reply is dated 8 September 1871. He had, by this time, returned to Brisbane. Answering the charge that he had considered he was entitled to do exactly as he

pleased, Douglas asserted that all Acts of Parliament, to be effective, must be administered with due regard to the spirit in which they were passed . . . . Most of their legislative enactments could be reduced to lifeless fragments or embodied with intelligent power, according to the will of the administrator. There were, he claimed, no Acts of the Queensland Parliament of any importance which were not . . . administered in excess of their legal definitions. "Unless a fair latitude of discretion is allowed to an Agent acting in England on behalf of the Government, his office must be a thankless one—unsatisfactory both to himself and his principals. . . ."

Douglas asserted that he had been appointed "Agent for the Colony" and had been so gazetted; that telegrams and official titles were addressed to him as "Agent-General for Queensland"; and that orders and instructions were forwarded to him in that capacity. He emphasised that it would derogate from the just influence which the Government of Queensland was entitled to have (with the Imperial Government) if the Agent representing that Government should be required to accept any position less influential than that which was accorded to the Agents-General for Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand. In this connection, he trusted that the position of the Agent-General for Queensland would rather be strengthened than weakened.

"A LEGAL FICTION"

In reply to the charge that he had refused to obey an instruction to lecture, Douglas said that these "instructions," having regard to the literal injunctions of the Act, were not instructions at all, because they appeared to have been issued without the authority of the Governor-in-Council. . . . The very foundation of the charge which the Colonial Secretary had constructed was based on a legal fiction for which there was no authority in the Act itself. . . . The Code of Instructions was defective in scope and indicated . . . a weak grasp of the whole question (of Immigration).

Palmer added a minute on Douglas's memorandum of 8 September in which he said he did not know what authority Douglas had for his assertion that he had been appointed Agent-General for Queensland. He was not aware of any Act authorising the appointment of an Agent-General for Queensland. "I am quite aware," Palmer added, with an underlying note of sarcasm, "that it has been Mr. Douglas's constant aim to make his appointment a diplomatic one, but I am not aware of his ever having had any authority whatever from the Government of Queensland to do so. With the opinions of Her Majesty's Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Govern-
ment I am not acquainted, and I do not wish to take Mr. Douglas's exposition of them as authoritative."

In consequence of a petition setting out his grievances, which Douglas presented to both Houses of Parliament, a Joint Select Committee of Inquiry was appointed on 10 July 1872. In evidence, Douglas said that his acceptance of office as Agent-General for Emigration was absolutely conditional upon his appointment to the other office of "Agent for the Colony" and he had been so described in the gazetted notice from the Colonial Secretary's Office.\(^7\)

He had been instructed to hand over certain matters, including the supply of paper and printing material ordered for the Government Printing Office, to Crown Agents, an action which had placed him in an unpleasant position and indicated a want of confidence in him as Agent.

The Joint Select Committee in its report expressed the opinion that Douglas had reason for considering that he was appointed Sole Agent for the Colony. If the Government which had appointed Douglas had not intended him to be the sole representative of the Colony in England it was to be regretted that the terms of his appointment were so vague and so calculated to mislead him. Douglas had been certainly wrong in refusing to lecture. . . . No private opinion of his own justified his setting aside that instruction, but the Committee could not discover anything that would lead to the conclusion that Douglas had an intention to disobey the general instructions which he might receive. The Committee was of the opinion that Douglas had great difficulties to contend with in carrying the Act into efficient operation, "as in consequence of great commercial losses which had been suffered in Queensland this Colony was at the time of his appointment and arrival in England in great disrepute."

DAINTREE APPOINTED

James Wheeler, secretary to the Agent-General, was Acting Agent-General, pending the arrival of the new appointee, who was Richard Daintree. Daintree (1831-1878), a notable Queensland geologist, served as Agent-General from 17 April 1872 to 21 June 1876. In 1872, Daintree had been appointed special Commissioner in charge of Queensland exhibits at the London Exhibition of that year. As a matter of interest, not only is a very fine collection of photographs of North Queensland, taken by Daintree, in the possession of the Society in

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\(^7\) The Gazette Notice read: "to be Agent-General for Emigration to Queensland, for the purposes of "The Immigration Act of 1869," and to act as Agent for the Colony in London, and for such other purposes as may from time to time be required by the Government."
our Library at Newstead House, but the Society also owns the original plate negatives. These are known as the Daintree Collection.

At this period, emigration continued to be the principal preoccupation of the Agent-General. Other duties which were his responsibility consisted of the ordering and freighting of materials required by Government departments in the Colony. As tenders were not called for publicly but were negotiated privately between the Agent-General and various selected firms, the possibilities for graft were not missed by certain subordinate members of the Agent-General's staff.

DISMISSALS FOR GRAFT

On 2 September 1875, the Executive Council had decided that a member of the Government should go to England to inquire into the working of the Agent-General's Office and circumstances which had led to the dismissal of two officers, the Secretary and the Dispatching Officer.

A supplement of the _Queenslander_, dated 19 June 1875, was devoted to an article headed "Immigration Office Scandal." The correspondence between the Government and the Agent-General with reference to the dismissal of Wheeler,
late Secretary to the Immigration Department in London, was published. The treatment of Wheeler was described as "most unfair," and "discreditable to the Ministry by whom he was dismissed." The claim was made that Wheeler had been refused an inquiry, and that he had been dismissed upon "a mere *ex parte* charge." "Suspension and inquiry before dismissal was the ordinary legally recognised and only honourable and creditable course, and that course the Government was afraid to follow."

The *Queenslander* said further that the Government had appointed to fill Wheeler’s place "a Mr. Hamilton, who, although previously unconnected with the Public Service, had been appointed by the Premier to be police magistrate at Cooktown. After a few months' experience there, he was 'pitchforked' into Wheeler's position in the teeth of protests from the head of the Department that Wheeler had done nothing to forfeit it."

The Colonial Secretary (Arthur Macalister) was chosen, and he took evidence in England. The report subsequently furnished by Macalister showed that the Secretary had been dismissed from office for taking a 5 per cent commission from a contractor for the supply of ship kits and clothing for emigrants on the amount paid to him by the Government. The Dispatching Officer had made a profit of £157 by way of royalties on patent berths supplied by a British firm to emigrant ships to Queensland. It was revealed that a contractor, who had provisioned more than three-fourths of the ships that had left England with emigrants for Queensland, had paid the Secretary gratuities amounting to £323 on the basis of 1/- per head for each emigrant.

Many other irregularities were disclosed. Daintree was unaware of any irregularities in the conduct of the Office, and on Macalister's showing had entirely misapprehended the conduct of the two dismissed officers. As the inquiry proceeded, and the facts came out, he became as much opposed to them as he had formerly been favourable to them. In previous correspondence with the Government, Daintree had been convinced that the two officers were being unjustly treated. He subsequently admitted, as a result of the investigation, that acts had been committed by the Secretary for which dismissal was by no means too heavy a punishment. "There can be little doubt," Daintree admitted, "that a system of indirect bribery to subordinates who had been connected with the Agent-General's Office almost since its commencement, had been in operation for purposes which would not be other than antagonistic to Queensland interests."

"The existence of a state of affairs which could have rendered such
things possible has been to me personally a matter of sorrow and regret . . . ."

It transpired that Daintree had written letters to the Leader of the Opposition, and Macalister took a serious view of this. He asserted that Daintree had admitted that he, whilst an officer of the Government, had carried on a correspondence with the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, urging him to proceed with resolutions, the effect of which, if carried, would have been the resignation of the Ministry. It was apparent, said Macalister, that Daintree had been made "the victim of a combination of men who secured his confidence and afterwards abused it."

Because of ill health, Daintree was obliged to resign the Agent-Generalship in 1876. He was created C.M.G. on his retirement. Daintree prepared an excellent handbook for migrants, *Queensland, Australia, Its Territory, Climate, and Products*, which appeared at the end of 1872. Some of his papers on Queensland geology appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London*. The Daintree River, a coastal stream about 67 miles in length, which enters the Pacific 15 miles south of Cape Tribulation, North Queensland, was named in his honour by George Elphinstone Dalrymple, who discovered it in 1873.

The Queensland Agency-General in London could not be described as a sinecure, and in many respects was a bed of thorns rather than of roses. Queensland's fourth Agent-General, the Hon. Arthur Macalister (1818-1883), had his troubles too, and during his term as Agent-General a situation which can only be described as Gilbertian arose as a result of the strained relations which developed between Macalister and the Secretary, Hamilton, causing utter confusion and disorganisation of the administrative routine of the office. Macalister succeeded Daintree as Agent-General and filled the post from 22 June 1876 to 18 October 1881. Macalister, who had twice been Premier in 1866, formed his third Ministry in 1874, but resigned in 1876 to become Agent-General for Queensland.

**MACALISTER BECOMES AGENT-GENERAL**

Macalister provides the solitary instance of a Queensland Premier having himself appointed Agent-General, although there were some remarkable instances in other Australian Colonies. Francis Stacker Dutton created the precedent when in 1865 he resigned as Premier and Commissioner for Public Works in South Australia to become Agent-General for that Colony in London. In 1870, Charles Cowper, of New South Wales, similarly had himself appointed Agent-General for
that Colony. Tasmania’s first Agent-General Adye (later Sir Adye) Douglas, appointed himself to that post in 1886. Douglas had become Premier and Chief Secretary in August 1884 on the defeat of the Giblin Ministry. He held office until March 1886 when he resigned to take over the Agent-Generalship, and was one of the representatives of Tasmania at the Colonial Conference held in London in 1887. In 1892

James Munro, who was Premier and Treasurer of Victoria (1890-1892), having ousted the Gillies Government on the strength of his reputation as a financier, resigned to become Agent-General. As a result of the banking crisis in Victoria he was recalled in 1893 and replaced by Gillies.

Almost as remarkable was the appointment of Graham Berry as Victorian Agent-General in 1886. Berry (later Sir Graham) was thrice Premier of Victoria (for two months in 1875, 1877, and March 1880-July 1881). In March 1883, a coalition was formed with James Service as Premier, and Berry as Chief Secretary. He resigned office in February 1886 to become Agent-General, and was created K.C.M.G. soon after his arrival. He was one of the Victorian representatives at the Colonial Conference of 1887. In 1891, having
served two terms as Agent-General, he was not reappointed, and returned to Victoria to re-enter political life.

**THE STEEL RAILS CONTROVERSY**

Macalister’s term as Agent-General is only significant for the fact that in that capacity he figured in the famous Steel Rails Controversy, which was one of the stormiest episodes in Queensland’s political history, and caused a bitter feud between McIlwraith and Griffith. This controversy arose out of an inquiry held by McIlwraith in 1880 into the workings of the Agent-General’s Office and the circumstances relating to the purchase of steel rails for the Queensland Government and the dismissal of the Secretary at the Agent-General’s Office, Thomas Hamilton, by McIlwraith. The facts relating to the Steel Rails controversy are set out in a petition to Parliament by William Hemmant.  

Tenders had been invited for 15,000 tons of steel rails for the Queensland Government. Allegations were made that no invitation to tender had been issued to two of the largest manufacturing firms in England; that the tender of the Haslam Engineering Company at £9/18/6 per ton had been accepted; that this company were not rail-makers, and the rails were
being made for the company at £6 per ton by firms who had not been invited to tender; that “others were interested in the transaction whose connection therewith it would be highly advantageous to the Colony to ascertain”; that at the time of the passage of The Loan Act of 1879 the price of steel rails was about £5 per ton; that the Government was aware at that time of the state of the iron market; that their neglect to avail themselves of the low price then ruling had already cost the Colony over £70,000; and that McIlwraith, McEachern and Co. received the contract for the carriage of the rails in “full ships” only at 38/6 per ton, when it was well known that ships carrying other cargo would have quoted a lower freight.

The charge was also made that McIlwraith, McEachern and Co. were the contractors for the conveyance of immigrants to the Colony, and that at the time the Scottish Hero sailed under contract with the Government to carry immigrants, Arthur Hunter Palmer and Thomas McIlwraith were joint owners of certain shares in the vessel. Both these persons were members of Parliament, and Hemmant submitted in his petition that the interest they had in this vessel, not to mention others belonging to the Scottish Line, constituted such a direct or indirect interest in a contract on account of the public service as to disqualify them under the Constitution from sitting and voting in Parliament.

ASHWELL’S LETTER TO McILWRAITH

Apparently the first intimation that something was seriously amiss in the Agent-General’s Office came from a letter McIlwraith received during his visit to London in 1879. By 1878, the staff at the Agent-General’s Office in London included a Secretary who handled all arrangements for tenders, an Executive Engineer whose duty it was to draw up plans and specifications and supervise the construction of goods ordered for the Colony; an Indent Clerk to make arrangements for shipping; a book-keeper, messenger, and porter, and six Emigration Officers. On 26 December 1879 William Henry Ashwell, the Executive Engineer, wrote to McIlwraith in these terms:

“. . . I very much regret having to trouble you so soon, but I am afraid you will find you are very much wanted at 32 Charing Cross to solve the problem of mixing oil with water. As soon as you can see your way I should be glad to be relieved from my office of Executive Engineer. I cannot work with Mr. Hamilton, the Secretary, and as either he or I must go I prefer that I should. . . .”

HAMILTON THE CENTRAL FIGURE

Hamilton was the central figure in the inquiry which was opened by the Premier, Thomas McIlwraith, at the Queensland Government Offices at Charing Cross, London, on 2 April 1880. Hamilton, who was a friend of Arthur Macalister, had been appointed in 1874 to replace the dismissed Wheeler. At the time of Hamilton’s appointment, Macalister was Premier of Queensland. Hamilton had enjoyed a rapid rise in political favour. Before his appointment as police magistrate at Cooktown in 1874, he had been manager of a business in Ipswich, the constituency which Macalister represented in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. After six months at Cooktown, Hamilton became Secretary to the Agent-General. Evidently the friendship waned rapidly when Macalister transferred to London as Agent-General: from the relationship of close friends, the pair became bitter enemies. Evidence taken before McIlwraith showed that a Gilbertian situation had developed in the Agent-General’s Office: the Agent-General and the Secretary refused to have any verbal communication, the clerks being used as intermediaries, although the offices occupied by the two men were only separated by a few feet of space.

OFFICE “DISORGANISED”

In a lengthy memorandum to the Cabinet on the subject of Hamilton’s dismissal, dated 29 June 1880, McIlwraith said that shortly after his arrival in London, he noticed that the Agent-General’s Office was disorganised. The Agent-General himself seemed to be overburdened with work, which McIlwraith considered should have been performed by the Secretary. “The Secretary seemed to have very little to do, and the clerks were constantly carrying their work to the Agent-General instead of to the Secretary.”

After asserting that he had given instructions to the Agent-General to call for tenders for 15,000 tons of steel rails, McIlwraith said he had consented to tenders being called for in the usual way by circular, and had impressed on Hamilton the necessity of seeing that the fullest competition should be secured by invitations being sent to all the “good firms.”

In a subsequent interview, he noticed for the first time that Hamilton did not seem to transact business personally with the Agent-General. On visiting the office again for the opening of tenders, McIlwraith saw Macalister opening the tenders. He asked Macalister “Where is Mr. Hamilton?” Macalister replied that Hamilton had not done any work in connection with tenders—or any other kind of work—for the past eigh-

teen months. McIlwraith spoke to Macalister on his relations with the Secretary, and said he considered it part of a Secretary's duty—and he was determined it should be carried out for the future—that the Secretary should be privy to the opening and accepting of all tenders for Government materials.

STRAINED RELATIONS

McIlwraith went on to say that the constrained relations between Hamilton and himself led to unpleasant results. His further experience during the succeeding month satisfied him it would be impossible to leave Hamilton as Secretary. During his tenure of office a pernicious system of letting contracts verbally had been carried on—a system which . . . had been inaugurated by Hamilton. Under this system, considerable amounts had been let to various firms with only the semblance of competition, and sometimes without competition at all. The most prominent case of this kind was one contract under which one firm had supplied emigrant ships with rugs, sheets, and bags for ships' kits, purchased by Hamilton direct, and often without reference to the Agent-General.

McIlwraith proceeded to refer in his memorandum to a letter dated 31 March sent by Hamilton to the Agent-General, who had handed it to McIlwraith. This letter, which Hamilton had marked "Private and Confidential," referred to several accounts in hand from the Haslam Engineering Company for various shipments of steel rails, also accounts from the Barrow Haematite Company for the same description of rails, agreeing in length, weight, and quantities with the Haslam accounts. There were still further accounts for the freight of these rails which were all loaded on berth ships bound for Brisbane. Hamilton said . . . he deemed it necessary to bring before McIlwraith certain facts which had been pointedly brought under his notice. The rate charged by the Haslam Company for these rails was £9/18/6 a ton, the Barrow Company's invoice was £6 a ton, and the rate charged for freight was £1/18/6, a serious advance on the previous rate. Hamilton asserted that no reference had been made to him in respect of the placing of those contracts, and he had no instructions as to payment, the whole matter having been settled by Ashwell (the Engineer) and Macalister. The difference in price, £3/18/6 per ton, amounted to £59,375 on a 15,000 tons contract. Ashwell was a member of the Haslam Company. Hamilton asked that he be relieved of any responsibility in connection with these transactions as they had not been carried out by him.10

At the inquiry, Hamilton insisted that the contract for the rails had been let without his knowledge, and the specifications were prepared without his seeing them. McLlwraith stated that every facility was given Hamilton to prove the charges he had made, but he had entirely failed to do so. "The extraordinary ideas which Hamilton seemed to hold of his duties as Secretary convinced me that it would not only be dangerous for any Agent-General to hold him as Secretary, but that it was impossible that the work of the Office could be done if he was allowed to remain." Hamilton was relieved of his duties on 12 April. Having failed to prove his charges, and having in effect withdrawn them, Hamilton, after his dismissal, commenced a correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Kimberley) in which he repeated all the charges he had made "in a much grosser form."

HAMILTON'S LETTER TO SECRETARY FOR COLONIES

Hamilton wrote to the Colonial Office, Downing Street, on 26 April 1880 a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which he complained that he had been suddenly dismissed by the Premier without notice or compensation, "and even without a reason." He asserted further that Ashwell was owner of the line of ships worked by McLlwraith, McEachern and Co., and was a brother-in-law of McLlwraith, one of the managing owners.

Earl Kimberley, on 6 May 1880, transmitted to the Queensland Government copies of two letters from Hamilton, and noted that "obviously it was impossible for him to interfere in any way."

McIlwraith requested, "for the honour of the Colony," that a full and searching inquiry should be made, and that immediate steps should be taken in this connection, both in the Colony and in England.

INQUIRY IN LONDON

At the inquiry conducted in the London office by McIlwraith, considerable evidence was taken as to the friction between Macalister and Hamilton. Macalister said that Hamilton had been systematically in the habit of sending clerks into his (Macalister's) office with papers to be approved or disapproved. The clerks had been kept running backwards and forwards day by day with instructions and messages from Macalister when Hamilton ought to have come into Macalister's room himself. Hamilton had wilfully absented himself from attendance at the opening of tenders during the preceding twelve months. To an assertion by
Hamilton that he had had no opportunity of speaking to Macalister about any objections held by him to the acceptance of the lowest tender, Macalister commented: "Hamilton's room was about a yard and a half distant from mine, and as he was in the office at the time, he could have seen me fifty times that day if he wished to communicate with me, but he did not!" (11)

McIlwraith asked Macalister what was the charge that he considered Hamilton had made. Macalister's reply was that Ashwell was charged with having taken advantage of his position as Executive Engineer in the Agent-General's Office, and, for the benefit of the directors and shareholders of the Haslam Company, desiring to defraud the Government of £60,000. The charge against Macalister was that he had accepted a tender for freight at higher rates than had been paid previously. Macalister said that Hamilton did not seem to be able to control his temper, and it was his belief that Hamilton had "got above his boots," and did not know whether he was on his head or his feet.

The first intimation Macalister had that Hamilton had not been properly posting correspondence to the Colonial Secretary for the previous two years was when he discovered that advice about the 15,000 tons of steel rails had not been reported to the Colony—five weeks after the business was completed. He had never given Hamilton any instructions, either verbally or in writing, relieving him from the duty of managing the office, and had never limited Hamilton's powers.

CONFUSION AMONG STAFF

Evidence was given by Charles T. Clay, who had charge of indents received from the Colony, that he looked to Hamilton at all times for instructions, but latterly he had not received instructions. When he had taken papers into Hamilton, Hamilton had referred him to the Agent-General. In some instances Hamilton had declined to instruct him. He would say: "You had better take that to the Agent-General!" Sometimes, when he had done so, the Agent-General had said: "Mr. Hamilton had better take them!" and the papers would have to go back to Hamilton again. This state of affairs went on for about twelve months. The effect on the office was that nobody knew what to do. The work of advices to the Colony regarding indents had been obstructed. Clay said he had wanted to co-ordinate the records in a systematic way but Hamilton had different ideas.

Upon receiving notice of his dismissal from McIlwraith,  

dated 12 April 1880, Hamilton demanded an independent inquiry. This was refused by McIlwraith on 24 April.

A Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly, by a majority report, reported against the allegations of Hemmant. Griffith, Dickson, and McLean entered a separate report, protesting that the allegations of fact had been borne out, but the real nature of the transaction was not fully disclosed.

**ROYAL COMMISSION APPOINTED**

On 17 November 1880, the Legislative Assembly decided that a Royal Commission should be appointed to take further evidence in England, and report on the allegations contained in Hemmant’s petition, in accordance with the recommendations of a Select Committee appointed on 15 July 1880 in their report to the House dated 30 October 1880.

The Commission consisted of George King, of Gowrie, and a Commissioner nominated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (the Earl of Kimberley), Frederick Weymouth Gibbs, C.B., Q.C. The result rehabilitated those persons against whom the charges had been made. The Commission found as their conclusion that the charges brought by Hamilton against the Agent-General and Ashwell, of favouring the firm of McIlwraith, McEachern and Co., were proved by the evidence to be unfounded. The Commission also found there was no preconcerted arrangement; that the Colony had not been “shamefully plundered by a ring of speculators in the London Office”; that there was no such ring of speculators; and that the charge of connivance brought against the Premier (McIlwraith) was without foundation.

**NO SYSTEMATIC ORGANISATION**

Macalister forwarded on 4 June 1880 to the Colonial Secretary a report written by Charles T. Clay on the clerical workings of the Office, which McIlwraith had asked for on the eve of his departure from London for the Colony on 7 May 1880. Clay’s letter, dated 14 May 1880, asserted that the Agent-General’s Office had never been organised on a disciplined and systematic basis. There had never been any grading of clerks. They had all been on an equality, so that during the temporary absence of the Secretary the Office had always been left without any acting head. His first act was to allot each clerk his particular duty and give them to understand that they were to apply themselves assiduously during office hours to their respective works. The records had never been properly kept. Letters received had been registered, but were never referenced off, or the correspondence referring to any particular subject attached, so that the whole matter
could be turned up when required. The clerk who registered correspondence had no idea that it was his duty to take charge of the documents and duly reference them off. Documents had been put away, some in various pigeonholes, some upstairs in a lumber room, and others on top of cupboards. In fact, the incoming correspondence had been kept in such an unsystematic manner that invariably it had been a source of difficulty and loss of time to turn up letters, especially of a few months' earlier date. Books and papers were to be seen lying about all over the place in disorder, and where dust and dirt accumulated.12

ARCHER AND GARRICK

Macalister resigned from the Agent-Generalship in 1881. His successor was Thomas Archer (1823-1905), the pioneer Queensland pastoralist and explorer, who, with his brothers, took up Gracemere Station in 1855 and played an important part in exploring and opening up Central Queensland. Archer retired from the post in May 1884. His successor was Sir James F. Garrick (1836-1907). Garrick, who had practised as a solicitor in Brisbane before he entered Parliament in 1867 as member for East Moreton, visited England in 1870 to study law at the Middle Temple, and in 1873 he was called to the English Bar. A year later, Garrick returned to Brisbane, was appointed Crown Prosecutor, and held that office until 1877, in which year he returned to politics. In the Douglas Ministry, he held the portfolios of Secretary for Lands (February 1878) and Attorney-General (December 1878). After a term in Opposition—from January 1879 to November 1883—he joined the first Griffith Ministry as Colonial Treasurer (November-December 1883), Postmaster-General (November 1883-June 1884), and Minister without portfolio (June 1884-June 1888).

Griffith had a high opinion of Garrick as a brilliant lawyer, a man of courtly bearing and diplomatic skill, and he was Griffith's choice in 1885 as Agent-General; but when Boyd D. Morehead became Premier in November 1888, Garrick was recalled from London.13

13. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on 8 September 1898 the Minister for Lands (J. F. D. Foxton), in reply to Labour charges that Sir Horace Tozer, who had been appointed Agent-General on 1 March 1898, was a 'political' appointment, said that there had been only one occasion—and then it had been an innovation—when the appointment of an Agent-General had been a political appointment. That was when Sir James Garrick was so appointed by Sir Samuel Griffith. When Sir James Garrick was appointed Agent-General, he was also appointed a member of the Executive Council, and it was thoroughly understood that he would retire with the Government of which he was a member. When W. H. Groom, M.L.A. (Drayton and Toowoomba), interjected that Sir Samuel Griffith had said it should be always a political appointment, Foxton said . . . he had heard Sir Samuel afterwards express his doubts as to the advisableness of following that course. . . . The innovation had had strong criticism
Archer was appointed Agent-General for the second time, resigning in December 1890, when Garrick was appointed Agent-General for the second time by the McLwraith-Griffith Coalition. Garrick resigned in 1895. He represented Queensland at the Intercolonial Conference of 1883 and the Colonial Conference of 1887. His memory is perpetuated in Queensland by the James Francis Garrick Chair of Law in the University of Queensland, founded in 1921 under the will of his daughter, Katherine C. Garrick.

In 1885, Garrick attended the Postal Union Conference at Lisbon with representatives of all the major world powers. He reported that he had negotiated for reduced rates on telegraphic messages between Europe and Australia, and he had given constant attention to matters such as annexations in the Southern and Western Pacific, the French Recidiviste Bill, and the Federal Council Bill,14 French activity in the New Hebrides and the deportation of French convicts to the Pacific15 as well as the New Guinea question.16

**GERMAN CRITICISM OF QUEENSLAND**

In 1885, Garrick was busy combating highly exaggerated criticisms of Queensland, which were being published in German newspapers. The German Imperial Government, at this time, was strongly opposed to allowing any emigration by Germans to work on the sugar plantations of Queensland. This was largely due to disparaging letters sent from the Colony by German migrants about conditions here, which received wide publicity in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* and

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14. A Colonial Convention which met in Sydney on 28 Nov. 1883 recommended the creation of a Federal Council for Australasia. This eventually formed the basis for the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901.

15. The Colonial Convention of 1883, which advocated the annexation of all Eastern New Guinea and negotiation with France to obtain control of the New Hebrides, had strongly protested against the establishment of further colonies of convicts near Australian shores in the New Hebrides or New Guinea. This had been contemplated by France. Something like 270 convicts had escaped from New Caledonia to Australia between 1874 and 1883.

16. On 16 April 1883, his predecessor, Archer, had interviewed Lord Derby on the New Guinea question. A cablegram from Premier McLwraith had instructed him to urge on the attention of the Imperial Government the expediency of annexing to the Colony the portion of New Guinea which was not claimed by Holland. Twelve days earlier, on 4 April, Henry Majoribanks Chester, Resident Magistrate at Thursday Island, had arrived at Port Moresby and next day formally annexed New Guinea. Archer reported he had strongly urged on Lord Derby the necessity for taking steps to prevent the occupation of New Guinea by a foreign power, and for extending the benefits of law and order for the mixed population settling round the coasts of the island. Queensland's action was strongly supported by the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, and Derby told Archer that the British Cabinet "would doubtless wish to arrange the matter in accordance with the wishes of the Colonies." Nevertheless, on 2 July 1883, Derby disallowed the annexation.
other newspapers. In addition to military reasons for discouraging German migration, there was the desire by the German Government to reserve their people for their own Colonies. Advertisements had also appeared in various German newspapers warning persons against migrating to Queensland, asserting that migrants under fixed labour contracts were “doomed into a state . . . very much like slavery”; that the labour as well as the climate were “altogether unsuited” for Europeans—“even the Chinese . . . were unable to stand the heavy field work”; that German emigrants were sought to replace the coolie trade “suppressed by the English Government”: “we consider . . . emigration for the sugar plantations in the North . . . about as good as emigration to Kameroon. The climate in both places is unfit for Europeans and quickly disposes of them . . .”

Writing to the Colonial Secretary on 9 October 1885, Garrick, referring to these articles and advertisements, said:

“You will perceive that they are clearly written with the intention of deterring Germans from emigrating to Queensland, and in order to effect this object untrue and exaggerated statements are inserted in them.”

GARRICK'S REFUTATION

Garrick drafted letters refuting these statements, which he despatched to the newspapers concerned. The letter which he wrote to the editor of the Hamburger Nachrichten, dated London, 29 September 1885, was typical. Categorically denying the allegations, Garrick asserted, inter alia:

“. . . . The statement that German emigrants were, after their arrival in Queensland ‘doomed to a life of slavery’ would amuse those acquainted with the Colony. As a class, none are more prosperous and contented than the Germans in Queensland. They are under the same laws as the English; many of them hold important Government appointments. In the Queensland House of Assembly, of 55 members, there are certainly four, if not five, Germans, while in the Upper House, the Consul in Queensland for the German Empire has sat for many years. There is in the Colony, a German newspaper the editor and proprietor

17. North-eastern New Guinea had been declared a German protectorate in 1884 when not a single white man lived there. In the same year Bismarck declared that the settlements founded on the south-west coast of Africa by the trader Luderitz of Bremen were under the protection of the German Empire. Subsequently the whole of the coast district from the frontier of Cape Colony to that of Portuguese Angola, with the exception of the British settlement of Walfisch Bay, was, with the consent of Great Britain, made a German protectorate. In the summer of 1884 Dr. Nachtigal concluded treaties with the local chieftains in the Cameroons and Togoland, and in the autumn of the same year similar treaties were made by Dr. Karl Peters in the hinterland of Zanzibar; these districts, as well as the north-eastern part of New Guinea and the neighbouring islands, were also declared German protectorates.
of which is a German. He is also a member of the Queensland Parliament, and both in the House and in his paper, criticises the measures of the Government with the greatest freedom. . . . In the census of 1881, of a total population in Queensland of 213,000, there were 12,000 Germans . . . The most complete answer to the allegations about slavery is found in the fact that since 1881, the German emigrants settled in Queensland have sent for their relatives and friends at the rate of nearly 1,000 a year. . . ."

Garrick also denied that Queensland was unhealthy for Europeans.

The new pride in Imperial unity shared by the Mother Country and the Colonies caused a succession of Colonial and Imperial exhibitions, one of the earliest of which was the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. The Agent-General organised and supervised the staging of Queensland's exhibits, and ensured that the British Press should be well informed of the Colony's advantages as a field for trade, emigration, and investment.

By 1895 Queensland's preoccupation with Defence had made necessary the appointment of a full-time military adviser to the Agent-General's staff. The Agent-General (Garrick) supervised all matters relating to the stores required by the Queensland Defence Forces. By this time the most important diplomatic work had lessened, although there were still many medical and scientific congresses, commercial and agricultural conferences and exhibitions. Correspondence on commercial and trade matters, however, had increased, bringing questions about tariffs, products, and Colonial manufactures. The Agent-General asked that the Department of Agriculture should supply him with information about exports and firms which would satisfy commercial interests in England. He was already supplying this Department with information about the latest appliances and methods in agriculture. Trading concerns were also expanding with the importation by England of Queensland's frozen beef, poultry, honey, timber, and rubber from New Guinea. The Agent-General finalised shipping arrangements for these and other products. Such matters increasingly comprised the major part of the Agent-General's activities, especially when Federation removed the burden of defence from the individual States and made more clear the status of the Australian Colonies abroad.
APPENDICES

AN AUSTRALIAN OASIS IN LONDON

In the eighties, Leadenhall Street was, to the Australian visitor to the wilderness of London, an oasis in the heart of the great metropolis. This fact is made apparent in an article which appeared in the contemporary Press.* The correspondent said that on stepping across from Cornhill, the very threshold was redolent of Queensland traditions. The first place of importance in Leadenhall Street was that of the “gigantic” caterers for Queensland, Messrs. Bright Bros, and Co. At their London agency, conducted by T. M. Mackay and Co., there was the office of the Black Ball Line. Different posters were displayed outside the door. The great advantages to be obtained by the intending emigrant to Queensland were all duly catalogued for the perusal of his family “and his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts,” the fattest living on board, 40 acres when he arrived, a cordial welcome to the labouring man, and a home for the pilgrim, tempest-tossed by adverse circumstances.

“But nous avons changé tout cela. An immigrant is found more desirable when he comes with a pound or two.”

At the greenhide market, the Australian squatter might, had he so willed, have seen his shipment tossed and turned by the hide brokers. Near the corner of Leadenhall Street were Money, Wigram, and Sons, with their agents McLeod, Allport and Morgan, and their fleet of vessels to Melbourne. Opposite, in the days when bubble companies helped to produce a Black Friday in 1866, was the office of the Sea and River Insurance Company. Upstairs was the office of Houlder Bros, and Co., one of the largest shipping firms connected with Australia in the late 19th century. Their red flag with the white cross on it was to be seen at nearly every Southern port of Australia.

On the same side were R. and F. Green and Co., a firm which had a great history in earlier days when East Indiamen carried guns and Anglo-Indians were millionaires. The firm of Wigram and Green challenged the world for comfort in the passage to and from the then El Dorado of travellers. In early freights to Australia, a great deal of money was made. But those days had gone, and the Orient liners, with their wall-like sides, looked down with contempt on the wooden fleets that brought earlier immigrants across the seas.

Opposite stood that monument of British quest and perseverance, the old East India House, in 1882 a hive of offices called East India Avenue.† In the eighties, East India Avenue could have been more appropriately called Australia Avenue, “for (the correspondent pointed out), if you wanted to jostle against old Queenslanders, you could save cab-hire, and remain here in lieu of the starched neck-tie met at the Colonial Institute.” At the outfitters, the immigrant could provide himself with what he liked, from an oilskin to a punkah.

*Queenslander, 25 March 1882.

† After the Indian Mutiny, the East India Company was forced, in spite of a strenuous resistance, to cede its powers to the British Crown in 1858, under an act for the better government of India. The first East India House, erected in 1726, was demolished in 1862; and Haileybury, the East India College since 1806, was closed in 1858, to be four years later converted into a public school. Properly speaking, the Company were only merchants: sending out bullion, lead, quicksilver, woollens, hardware, and other goods to India; and bringing to England calicoes, silk, diamonds, tea, porcelain, pepper, drugs, saltpetre, etc., from India. Not merely with India, but with China and other lands of the East, the trade was monopolised by the Company; and hence arose their great trade in China tea, porcelain, and silk.
Further down Leadenhall Street were the headquarters of a firm well-known to Australians—George Thomson and Co.—owners of one of the finest fleets of vessels sailing out of the Port of London. The Patriarch, Kosciusco, etc., flying a red and blue flag, with the white star in the centre, were well known in all Australian ports. In Billeter Square was the East and West India Tug Company's house, in whose docks by the river lay so many Australian clippers. Near by was the firm of Devitt and Moore, who had long dealt in passages to Australia.

From 1864 onwards, Devitt and Moore developed into one of the chief shipping firms in the Australian trade as long as sailing ships could cope with it. Many of the finest ships that entered Port Jackson were under their house flags: among them, the Sobraon (2,131 tons) in 1867, followed in the 1870's by the Hesperus (1,859 tons), Rodney (1,447 tons), Macquarie (1,975 tons), Harbinger (1,585 tons), and Illawarra (1,963 tons), and in 1884 by the Derwent (1,970 tons).

The two Blackwall firms, R. and H. Green and Money Wigram and Sons, mentioned above, were attracted to the Australian shipping trade by the discovery of gold here in 1851. The Greens built especially for the Australian ports the Anglesey (965 tons) and the Roxburgh Castle (1,049 tons), both in 1852. During the following six years, they added the Agamemnon (1,431 tons), Walmer Castle (1,065 tons), Alnwick Castle (1,087 tons), Windsor Castle (1,074 tons), Clarence (1,104 tons), and Lady Melville (966 tons). In 1860, the Malabar (1,219 tons) and the Renown (1,293 tons) were built; and during the following eight years the Highflyer (1,012 tons), Shannon (1,292 tons), Superb (1,451 tons), and Carlisle Castle (1,458 tons) were added. Money Wigram and Sons made Melbourne their terminal port, placing on the run between 1853 and 1870 the Kent, Sussex, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, True Briton, Essex and Hampshire—all built, except the Hampshire, at Blackwall, and averaging 1,000 tons.

**THE BLACK BALL LINERS**

The gold rush attracted also Liverpool ships which were devoted specially to emigrant traffic. James Baines, who founded the Black Ball Line of Australian packets, dispatched the first ship under this flag, named Marco Polo, on 4 July 1852, with 934 immigrants. She reached Melbourne in 78 days, and was followed by the Lightning (2,084 tons), a "super-clipper."

This vessel was scuttled and sunk when it took fire at Geelong in 1869; the hulk was blown up in 1870. No fewer than 70 ships of the Black Ball Line brought cargo and passengers to the Colonies. Among them were the James Baines, Donald Mackay, Sovereign of the Seas, Schomberg, Champion of the Seas, Empress of the Sea, and Commodore Perry.

The Black Ball liners began trading in the sixties from London to Brisbane under contract with the Queensland Government. Among them were the Queen of the Colonies, the Royal Dane, the Flying Cloud, Storm King, and Young Australia. With their slim, symmetrical lines, their tapering spars, and storeyed yards of billowing canvas, they were the most beautiful things ever made by Man. The Black Ball liners, because of their draught, could not get into the mouth of the river, and their cargoes were transhipped to the Harris sailing ketches.

The Indus, Royal Dane, and other Black Ball liners anchored in the Bay. No vessel drawing over 16ft. could come up the river in the seventies, even at high water springs. The crews of the Black Ball
liners were paid off on arrival at Moreton Bay and fresh crews were engaged to take the ships home. As the time taken to load a cargo was usually from four to six months, all of which work was done by lighters and stevedores, it would have been bad business for the owners to keep their crews idling all that time.

The shipping line of Devitt and Moore, previously mentioned, only sent comparatively small vessels to Australian ports. Among their ships that came to Brisbane were the Corinth, Clodian, and Decapolis. They shipped their crews for the round trip and used them to unload and re-load cargoes where necessary. The cargoes from Brisbane in those early days were mostly wool, hides, and tallow. The ships usually went to Newcastle in stone ballast, which was taken from the quarry at River Terrace. The barque King Harold brought out a full cargo of Portland cement for the first iron bridge over the Brisbane River which was washed away during the '93 flood. After discharging, the barque left in ballast for Newcastle. She met contrary winds and took six weeks instead of three days to reach Newcastle. About 1872, the Black Ball liner Young Australia, a 700-ton ship, entered the Bay from London with immigrants and cargo, to the J. and G. Harris Agency. It took her five months to unload and re-load by lighter, the outward cargo being mostly wool and hides. When she was ready for departure, the Young Australia was towed by a tug to Cape Moreton. After dropping the pilot, Captain Cooper tried to tack away from land, and when going about, the vessel missed stays and drifted on to the rocks at the Cape, becoming a total wreck. J. and G. Harris sent down a salvage gang, and a considerable quantity of cargo and ship's fittings were saved. There were several saloon passengers aboard, but all were saved.

DEFINITION OF AN AGENT-GENERAL

Sir Archibald Michie (1813-1899) was appointed Agent-General for Victoria in London in 1873, and held the position for six years. On his return to Melbourne, he practised as a barrister and also acted as correspondent for The Times, London. Writing the Reminiscences of an Agent-General, he told of some of his experiences as Colonial representative, both in respect of his own duties and as to the light in which he was regarded by those who knew nothing of Australia, except from hearsay. He pointed out that an Agent-General was not, as he seemed, a very intelligible creature. "He is not exactly a diplomatist, and he is not a mere business agent, and yet he is a little of both. He is not as it seemed was supposed, a general agent open to do business in tallow and wool or in tin and copper. But not infrequently it seems he is supposed to have dealings in those commodities, and then it becomes his duty to point out to customers that he is not authorised to trade in that way. He is an Agent-General, not a general agent, and he does nothing on commission, except what he is commissioned to do by his Government. He holds a general retainer for the benefit of those on behalf of whom he acts. He acts under specific instructions, with the assistance of a board of advice, and from a needle to an anchor, from Martini-Henry rifles to steel rails, or the newest ordnance, he has to obtain, on the best terms he can, whatever is required by his principals.

"There had, however, been some confusion among the official hierarchy as to the exact position of this functionary, and Canada had lately made a claim that her representative in London should be recognised as Resident Minister, and not only as Agent-General. But the distinction was not accepted by Downing Street, and a compromise
was effected by styling the gentleman who, for the time being, represented the Dominion Government as the High Commissioner of Canada."

THE FEDERAL QUESTION

In this connection, the *Queenslander* (4 Dec. 1880) commented that it was scarcely probable that the Agents-General for the several Australian Colonies would emerge into High Commissioners, though it was not improbable, and was even desirable, that a High Commissioner should be appointed whenever a united Government was established in Australia, on the model of that which existed in Canada. Until that time came, it might be presumed that the Agents-General will be content to jog on subject to the misinterpretation of this office. The *Queenslander* went on to say that if the office, as depicted by Sir Archibald, was not without humorous touches, there were serious aspects as well. The "Reminiscences" dealt with some of these great questions which were discussed from a somewhat abstract point of view, as at the festive symposiums of the Colonial Institute and other kindred associations. "A confederated empire" may be talked over by a few dozen gentlemen who meet together in friendly conference, drawn to one another by no closer bond than that of having spent some years in one or the other of the widely scattered colonies. This great idea, says Michie, has a fascination for many minds and they can with difficulty be brought to admit that there are no very serious, much less insurmountable difficulties, in bringing into existence a United Empire. He was not a Separationist, but he did not suppose that for many years any colony, or any number of colonies, would be ripe for setting up as an independent State. And yet it seemed to him scarcely probable that the Australian colonies could be anything but autonomous when they had become as old, and possibly as advanced, as the United States now were. Would it have been possible that 50 million Americans should in any circumstances have submitted to be governed from Westminster? Was it likely that 50 million Australians would be? Conversely, where there was unity of government among people speaking the same language and living under the same system of law, it should follow a continuity of territory. These were arguments he proposed in justification of an Australian policy of Federation. However visionary the ideal of an Imperial Federation might be, Michie found scarcely any public man with whom he became acquainted in England, who did not agree with him, not only as to the feasibility, but also the desirability of bringing about, as speedily as possible, of a federation on a smaller scale—a federation of the Australian Colonies—on the model of the union already accomplished and known as the Dominion of Canada. Commenting on these views, the *Queenslander* said: "It is after this manner that our Australian statesmen speak when moved by the reasonableness of their own arguments. And yet, reasonable as all this is, it does not breed conviction. Is it that we have no man amongst us masculine enough in their capacity to grasp a great subject, and work it out? Or is it that the hour has not yet struck?"

It would certainly seem so; the hour for Federation did not strike, after many years "of argument about it and about," until 1 January 1901, following the Referendum of 1899, when the proposal was carried by a majority of 236,602. From 1857 to 1860, the story of the Federal movement in Australia is a record of select committees and resolutions only. Gavan Duffy obtained committees of the Victorian Assembly in December 1857 and January 1860, but the great stumbling block was New South Wales. William Forster, who became Premier of that Colony in 1859, was no more enthusiastic than his
predecessors in office. Even if New South Wales had supported the movement and a conference had been held, it is extremely unlikely that any practical result would have followed. Quick and Garran (Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth, 1901) summarises the position as follows: "In no Colony was there any general enthusiasm, or even interest, in the subject; though in all there were a few far-sighted statesmen who recognised the essential unity of Australia. Even in Victoria, whose statesmen showed the most eagerness for union, there was nothing approaching a real federal movement. Local politics, and the development of local institutions, engrossed the attention of the people; and probably no colony would have been prepared to accept the compromises and the partial sacrifices of local independence which a federal union would have involved. The best justification of the inaction of the Imperial Government is the want of interest shown by the Colonies themselves."

Although he was a cultured and brilliant man, Michie's political achievement was not significant. He was Attorney-General in the Haines Ministry (1857) and later Minister for Justice (1863-66) and Attorney-General (1870-71). He interested himself in Federation and education. He was one of the barristers who successfully defended the leaders of the diggers after the Eureka Rebellion.