THE OPENING OF
THE GREAT BUSH, 1869 - 1881

A Social History of the Bush Settlements
of Taranaki, Hawke's Bay and Wellington

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P R E F A C E

In undertaking this study I had the two-fold object of investigating an area of our history which appears to me to have been too long neglected, and, in presenting my results, of grappling with the problems of writing colonial social history. So far we have only had limited studies of selected aspects of the bush settlement era of North Island history. I believe we cannot properly understand this great colonising effort unless we endeavour both to view it whole and to place it in the larger context of colonial history. I have therefore taken the whole southern half of the North Island as my area of study, and have endeavoured to show how the assault on the Great Bush relates to the aftermath of the Maori Wars, the larger social history of the colony as a whole, and the agrarian history of the Old World from which so many of the bush settlers came. I had hoped originally to carry the story through at least three decades, but it became apparent that my broad canvas required some kind of narrowing, and I reluctantly decided to limit myself to the period 1869 - 1881, which seemed to have a sufficient political and economic unity to stand on its own. I have, however, done a good deal of research on through the 1880s and 1890s, and this,

I trust, has enabled me to see the significance of the 1870s with a sense of perspective.

As I see it, the particular problem of writing colonial social history is that to the general difficulty of achieving coherence and unity which faces the social historian, is added the particular difficulty of having to adequately present both the hearth land and the colonial elements of his story. He cannot simply take the hearth land background 'as read' by referring his readers to appropriate sources, for the hearth land influences reached the colony through various sifting processes which he must seek to understand and elucidate. Not only were the immigrants 'selected' in various ways, but they were also seeking, in various ways, to remake their heritage from the Old World. All this the writer of colonial social history must seek to understand, as well as the shaping influence of the new environment. How successful I have been mastering the complexities, and working my findings into a coherent narrative, I must leave the reader to judge.

I believe this study has gained from having been carried through in the context of the broad interests of a university department of education - but at the same time I must thank Professor C.L. Bailey for allowing me to interpret my 'education' brief thus widely. I consider that educational history requires a context of social history for its significance to be understood. Although educational history is only one aspect of this study, I believe I have gained more insight into our

educational history by thus studying its context than I could in the present state of our historiography have gained by a more specific approach. I have to thank my other supervisor, Dr I.A. McLaren, for his sustained interest and helpful criticism throughout the project.

I must finally express my gratitude to all who have helped with this project. The staff members of various libraries and other institutions have been unfailingly helpful. In particular I must mention the Alexander Turnbull Library, the New Zealand National Archives, The New Zealand General Assembly Library, the Hocken Library, Dunedin, the Auckland Institute and Museum, the Public Libraries of Wellington, Feilding, Wanganui and New Plymouth, the Hawera Star office, and the library of my own university.

I must also thank Mrs L. Griffiths and Mrs J.B. Pope for their care and patience with the massive task of typing the final version. The good-humoured long-suffering of my family should surely be mentioned, and the help and encouragement given in countless ways by my wife.

R. A.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives
JHR	Journal of the House of Representatives
NZG	New Zealand Gazette
NZM	<u>New Zealand Mail</u> (Wellington)
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
NZS	New Zealand Statutes
TH	<u>Taranaki Herald</u> (New Plymouth)
Y	<u>Yeoman</u> (Wanganui) (Entitled <u>Weekly Herald</u> before 30 July 1880.)

CHAPTER 1

THE GREAT BUSH

In 1869 the Great Bush dominated the southern half of the North Island. From the shores of Cook Strait and Wellington Harbour it extended northwards in an unbroken sweep, straddling the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, to rim the southern and western edges of the volcanic plateau in the centre of the island. Westward it covered the greater part of Taranaki Province, girdling Mount Egmont, to be halted only a mile or two short of Cape Egmont by the salt-laden winds of the Tasman. Eastwards it extended across the northern Wairarapa and southern Hawke's Bay, filling the long central valley with the Seventy Mile Bush, clothing the Puketoi Range, and covering the coastal hills beyond to within the sound of the Pacific's waves. Had he wished, a man could have travelled in the shade of the trees from Wellington Harbour to Kawhia Harbour, or from within the sound of the sea at Cape Egmont to within a few miles of

Cape Turnagain's jut into the eastern ocean.¹ If he had made these journeys across the length and breadth of the southern half of the North Island in 1869, he would have crossed no road worthy of the name.

It is not surprising that the colonists' maps of this region sketched in the bush line as well as the coast line, and had little to tell about the details of the bush-clad interior. The Great Bush, sweeping across the length and breadth of their provinces, effectively penned their settlements into four isolated pockets. To the south the Wellington settlement had laboriously hacked its way to a hinterland of sheep runs - the open country of the lower Wairarapa Valley and its fernclad eastern hills. The Seventy Mile Bush effectively separated this pocket from the Hawke's Bay, where the squatters had spread their flocks over the open country between the ranges and the sea. West of the ranges were the straggling Patea-Wanganui-Rangitikei-Manawatu settlements, soon to be renowned for their fat cattle as well as their sheep. The fourth pocket of

1. For the pre-European bush line see A.H. McIntock, A Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand, Wellington, 1959, Map 14. For an approximate reconstruction of the bush line c. 1875 see J.S. Duncan, The Evolution of Settlement in New Zealand: A Study in Historical Geography, Ph D Thesis, University of London, 1960, Figure 23. If an historical geographer would give us a careful reconstruction of the bush line c. 1870, just as large scale colonisation was about to begin, he would do the study of N.Z. history a real service.

settlement was along the North Taranaki coast, where the small farmers of the New Plymouth settlement maintained their precarious hold.

In the Maori Wars of the 1860s the strategic significance of the bush had again and again been forcibly impressed on the settlers. Drawing on the centuries-old traditions of the Old World, the colonists felt at home, both in peace and war, only in the open country. It was to acquire further open fern land that war had been forced on the Taranaki Maoris. Although tens of thousands of acres of North Taranaki bush had been purchased by 1860, these did not serve to assuage the settlers' land hunger. Both here and elsewhere they showed a marked reluctance to begin the task of colonising the strange new world of the New Zealand bush. The class of man known to the Americans as a backwoodsman had as yet barely begun to appear. The Maoris, on the other hand, when forced from their coastal cultivations by the land greed of the settlers, and by European superiority in the equipment and techniques of set-piece open country warfare, had turned to the bush as to a friend, and made it their domain. Here was cover to be cunningly used both in attack and retreat; here were the

birds, berries and roots to feed far-striking rapidly-moving guerilla bands; here in the forest tracks pioneered by their ancestors, were the interior lines of communication that kept the European enemy guessing, and provided an effective counter to his superiority in numbers.² So effectively did the Maoris use these advantages that late in 1868 one member of the New Zealand cabinet, in a private letter explaining the situation to a Sydney correspondent, could write:-

The rising is so extensive and so determined, that at present we have as much as we can do to hold our own, and keep the savages out of Napier and Wanganui I never saw the New Zealand horizon look so dark and dreary.³

At the last parliamentary session of the decade an important shift took place in New Zealand politics. During the 1860s the cabinets had been dominated by men representing districts remote from the threatened settlements - South Islanders, Aucklanders, Wellingtonians. A significant feature of the Fox ministry of 1869-72 was the extent to which it represented the three threatened pockets of European settlement. Westoe, the new premier's Rangitikei

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2. A useful discussion of this subject is J.K. Cunningham, 'Maori-Pakeha Conflict 1858-1885: A Background to Political Geography', New Zealand Geographer, XII (April 1956), pp. 12-31.
 3. Sir John Hall to J.R. Hill, 18 November 1868. Hall letters, Vol. 3, MS 091/H177, General Assembly Library, Wellington.

home, bordered on the Great Bush, and Fox had drilled in the cavalry corps with his neighbours, in anticipation of native attacks. Donald McLean, who took the portfolios of Native Minister and Minister for Defence, had, as Superintendent of Hawkes's Bay (1863-9) and Government Agent on the East Coast (1868-9), taken a leading part in countering the Te Kooti uprising. J.D. Ormond, McLean's successor as Superintendent, was in close consultation with the Fox ministry throughout, served as its Agent on the East Coast, and accepted cabinet office in December 1871. Featherston, who joined the ministry later in 1869, had, as Superintendent of Wellington Province, been closely involved, both in peace and in war, with the Maoris of his province's west coast, and had personally led the native allies throughout the West Coast campaign of 1865-6. William Gisborne, appointed to the Legislative Council so that he could become Fox's Colonial Secretary, resigned his seat in January 1871 in order to represent Egmont in the House. It is evident that the political leaders of the threatened communities believed that they could thresh out a better approach to the native question than that of the Stafford ministry which they displaced, and that they were prepared to accept the burdens of office to this end. With the

further strong figures of Harry Atkinson and John Bryce coming forward as others retired, these three areas were able to maintain an effective voice in the 'Continuous' ministry throughout the 1870s and 1880s, so that the policies they initiated were maintained and effectively administered.

One of the main outcomes of these policies was the rapid and successful colonisation of the lowland forests of Taranaki, Wellington and Hawke's Bay. It is the first phase of this great process of settlement which is the subject of this study. This thesis is based on the conviction that the conquest of the Great Bush represents a unified and significant story which requires to be studied in its own perspective and on its own terms. It is contended that differences of historical background and of geography give these three provinces a differing rhythm of development in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, as compared with either Auckland province or the South Island, and that some generalisations commonly made about New Zealand history over this period are misleading if applied without qualification as regards these provinces. It is considered that the story of the colonising of the Bush is best approached on a broad front covering political, economic,

social and cultural aspects together. It is also maintained that the British and European origins of the Bush settlers are a vital part of the story. Each of these contentions will be briefly discussed as this chapter proceeds.

Throughout this thesis the terms 'the Bush' and 'the Great Bush' (i.e. with capitals) will refer to the main body of bush dominating the provinces of Wellington, Taranaki and Hawke's Bay in 1869, and to the remaining areas of this bush as it was progressively cleared and broken into a number of smaller areas by bands of cleared country along the road lines. The term 'the Bush Provinces' will be used to avoid continuous awkward repetition of the names of the three provinces, Taranaki, Wellington and Hawke's Bay. The term is obviously highly appropriate to Taranaki and Wellington in this period, and while only the south of Hawke's Bay was covered by the Bush, the mastery of this area in order to break the province's isolation was a major concern of the 1870s. It might be objected that the Bush extended well into the south of the Auckland Province. However, it played a quite peripheral role in that province's affairs during the 1870s, and for the purposes of this study it is ignored. As regards Wellington, Hawke's Bay and Taranaki, the Bush and its colonisation will be our central concern, but the Bush settlements will not be artificially separated from the total

life of the region. Over the period of this study the colonisation of the Bush was a central issue, impinging on the general life of each of the Bush Provinces at a multitude of points. In consequence this study is in a large measure a history of the three provinces viewed from a particular point of focus.

The extent to which the history of the Bush Provinces forms a unity owes something to the common Wakefield origins of the original settlements. As has already been indicated, it owes even more to the great geographical fact of the Bush itself, straddling all the obvious routes of inland communication. The value of treating the three provinces together over the 1870s should become apparent in subsequent chapters, as parallel patterns of development (and some contrasts) are worked out. Something must be said, however, in support of the contention that this unity of development marks off the region from the rest of the colony. The most obvious difference is that neither the main South Island provinces, nor Auckland, had a vast inland forest as the main barrier to their development. Auckland certainly had extensive forests, but a long history of land clearance by burning on the part of the Maori population had given a great deal of open land for European settlement. The

remaining forests did not, in general, form barriers separating the various settlements. Rather, large areas of valuable timber stands, well placed near sheltered anchorages, had encouraged milling settlements since the late eighteenth century. In contrast, most of the Great Bush was inaccessible until the coming of the railways in the 1870s. Auckland Province offers various other contrasts to the Bush Provinces, as, for example, the earlier origins of its European settlements, and their unplanned, cosmopolitan nature, its much more numerous Maori population, and its kauri gum and gold. During the 1870s the 'Vogel' scheme⁴ played nothing like the crucial role in Auckland's development that it did in the Bush provinces. With almost twice their population at the 1871 census, Auckland received only a little over half as many assisted immigrants as the Bush Provinces during the 1870s.

The contrasts between the Bush Provinces and Canterbury and Otago are numerous and obvious. Perhaps most significant as regards the 1870s was the fact that the growth brought about in the South Island by the 'Vogel' boom amounted almost entirely to the adding of new members to already existing communities, whereas, in the Bush Provinces much of the

4. The common over-emphasis of Vogel's role in the origins of the scheme will be discussed in Chapter 3.

growth was represented by completely new communities colonising land carved out of the forest. In the south whatever hopes and ambitions the newcomers brought could only be realised within the economic and social terms laid down by the past. The newcomers to the Bush were much less restricted in this respect, but they had to adjust their vision to the realities of a strange and hampering physical environment. It might be argued that the Wakefield settlement of Nelson and its Marlborough offshoot belong in the same context as the Bush Provinces, and like them were dominated by a great interior forest.⁵ But by the 1870s the divergences were as striking as the similarities. Gold accounted for some of them, the absence of a native threat for others. But most important was the fact that the inland barriers amounted to more than mere forest that could be cleared. The great mountain masses of the northern South Island continue to hem settlement into isolated pockets. Nevertheless there was some colonisation of the inland bush here, beginning in the 1870s and showing interesting parallels with developments in the Bush Provinces. It was, however, of relatively minor importance, and will not be touched on in this study.

5. In his Early Victorian New Zealand (London, 1958) J.O. Miller has rightly treated them together for an earlier period.

If the history of the Bush Provinces over the last three decades of the nineteenth century is merged, unexamined, into the larger history of the whole colony, half truths and faulty generalisations inevitably result, due to the obscuring of differing rhythms of social and economic development. Thus a common generalisation depicts the 1870s as the era of the 'Vogel' boom, characterised by much mis-spending on uneconomic projects, and by the importation of immigrants beyond the capacity of the country to assimilate them, leading inevitably to depression in the 1880s, with massive unemployment and an exodus of population. This picture needs to be heavily qualified as regards the Bush Provinces. It would be difficult to point to any important public works project undertaken within their borders during the 1870s which has not been justified by the passage of time⁶. At no time, even in the worst of the depression years, did the Bush Provinces experience an exodus, in the sense of a net loss of population. Rather, a study of the statistics shows that the region both retained its own natural increase, and absorbed a portion of the exodus of population from the southern provinces, and, in the worst years, from Auckland also. The quarter century from 1871 was for the Bush Provinces a period of sustained population growth. The

6. One can, however, criticise the timing and method of some projects. A notable example is the railway across the Rimutaka Range.

1896 census shows their combined population to have multiplied by 5.4 over this period. In comparison, the South Island's population multiplied by a little under 2.3 and Auckland's by a little over 2.5 over the same quarter century. Clearly the Bush Provinces do not fit colonial trends. Over these decades colonial generalisations obscure more than they reveal as regards these provinces.

There are several reasons for approaching the history of the Bush settlements on a broad front. Only thus can some of the more basic questions be adequately tackled. Who were the bush settlers? Where did they come from? What ideals and ambitions impelled their colonising efforts? To what extent were their hopes fulfilled? In what ways were they forced to reshape their ambitions by the bush environment and other factors? That the answers are not obvious, or easily come by, has been noted by earlier writers. Professor Jobberns stated in 1956 that 'the making over of the accessible parts of the North Island forest was the outstanding achievement of our people in the making of the present grassland landscape', and observed that 'the achievements of all these struggling people make the really significant history of the North Island', but he had to confess that he knew of 'no adequate historical account

of what was involved in its doing'⁷. A year or two later S.H. Franklin wrote that 'comparatively little is known about the people who settled the bush; it was characteristically an anonymous type of settlement'⁸. In a later article Franklin makes a similar comment about the settlers of the Wairarapa's Forty Mile Bush. 'The northern Wairarapa', he writes, 'has never lost the anonymous character of its early settlement'.⁹ And an Auckland researcher makes the same point that 'little is generally known of people who have settled bush districts'.¹⁰ A notable lack of personal records left by the Bush settlers is repeatedly pointed out as a cause of the lack of knowledge.¹¹ There are indications that this lack of personal records is slowly being made good, as diaries and letters find their way into the libraries. But a comparative paucity is likely to remain, as the life of the Bush settler was not conducive to the keeping of personal records.

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7. G. Jobberns, 'Life and Landscape in New Zealand,' New Zealand: Inventory and Prospect, Wellington Branch, N.Z. Geographical Society, Wellington, 1956.
 8. S.H. Franklin, 'The Village and the Bush: The Evolution of the Village Community, Wellington Province, New Zealand,' Pacific Viewpoint, I (1960), p. 167.
 9. 'Wairarapa Region,' in An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, ed. A.H. McIntock, Wellington, 1966, III, 517.
 10. D.E. Willoughby, Population Changes in New Zealand 1867 to 1911: "The Drift North", M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1962, p. 105.
 11. e.g. W.B. Johnston, 'Pioneering the Bushland of Lowland Taranaki: A Case Study,' N.Z. Geographer, XVII (1961), p.1. G. Jobberns, op.cit., pp. 2-3.
G.C. Petersen, 'Pioneering the North Island Bush' in R.F. Watters, ed., Land and Society in New Zealand, Wellington, 1965, p. 66.

Nevertheless, it needs to be remembered that the first large-scale settlements in the Bush coincided with the creation of our national school system. There was a high level of literacy among the Bush settlers, and a paucity of personal writings is largely compensated for by a great deal of other material from their pens. By drawing on their contributions to church and agricultural publications, to the columns of local newspapers, and to the archives of various public bodies that impinged upon their lives, a quite comprehensive picture of the Bush settlers can be built up. However, the necessity of casting the net thus widely at once suggests that it will be advisable to approach their history on a broad and comprehensive front.

It will be worthwhile to consider briefly what may be meant by saying that 'little is known' of these Bush settlers, and that they are 'characteristically anonymous'. The impression doubtless arises from a comparison with the earlier settled pastoral areas, where a limited number of men with capital initiated settlement, left a considerable body of personal records, including not a little of literary value, and not infrequently founded 'local dynasties' that continued to dominate the social and political life of their districts, and record their affairs, down through the years. A comparison is also probably implicit with the English landed

families and their role in giving a sense of identity and historical continuity to English rural life. It needs to be pointed out that a concentration on these 'aristocratic' minorities in historical study may serve to mask (or, where there was class conflict, to distort) the record of the lives of the common people who made up the majority of the population. The presence of a highly visible and fluently literate dominant minority can lead easily to a falsely simple version of social history. Where one is dealing with the larger mass of the common people it is not so easy to give prominence to the personal and individual aspects of history. In this sense the history of any large group of people will tend towards the anonymous. But it will be shown that the Bush settlers were not anonymous in the sense that we may not discover a great deal about their birthplaces and origins, the patterning of their lives, the religious and social groups to which they gave their support, and the hopes and fears which brought them to the Bush and helped to shape their destinies in the new environment. Furthermore, the account will be enlivened in a measure by the use of illustrations, drawn from various sources, depicting actions, emotions and incidents in the lives of individuals, and chosen because they are at once personal and typical of the Bush settlement experience. If we work along these lines,

we should eventually reach the point where the epithets 'diverse and numerous' seem more appropriate than 'little-known and anonymous' for describing these people.

The sense of pervading anonymity which some investigators have expressed when dealing with the Bush communities has doubtless arisen in part from the failure of these settlers to maintain a consciousness of their roots in the homeland. Some of the social and psychological sources of this 'rootlessness' should become apparent as this study proceeds, but it must also be said that, as Professor Jobberns has hinted, our historians have in a large measure failed these people. In their defence it might be said that British historical studies of the agricultural labouring class, from which the Bush settlers were largely drawn, have only in more recent years provided a really adequate starting point for the task. I have been conscious throughout this study of my debt to a number of the more recent trends in British nineteenth century historiography. One is the general tendency in historical writing on the period to adopt a broad approach, weaving political, social, economic and cultural concerns into one common story, and endeavouring to achieve an understanding of 'the structure and articulation of the various parts of modern British

society as a whole'.¹² The reader of this study will note also a debt to the rising British schools of Sociology and Social History. Recent British writings on agrarian history have likewise proved invaluable. The growth of these studies since World War II, and the founding of the British Agricultural History Society, and of its journal, the Agricultural History Review, in 1952, should in the long term have far-reaching effects on the writing of New Zealand history. The Society's tradition of extending its concern to cover 'agrarian society and the mutual influence of production and society'¹³ has led to an enrichment of our understanding of the agrarian world from which so many nineteenth century New Zealand immigrants came. One of the convictions underlying this present study is that the British and European origins of the Bush settlers, and their continuing awareness of, and reaction to, Old World developments, make it necessary to treat this homeland background as an integral part of the story. The period of this study is for New Zealand, and even more markedly for the Bush settlements, one of 'colonial' rather than of 'national' history. In other words, the New Zealand mind at this period still had very deep roots in the Old World Hearthland.

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12. John Clive, 'British History, 1870-1914, Reconsidered: Recent trends in the Historiography of the Period', in E.C. Furber, ed., Changing Views on British History: Essays on Historical Writing since 1959, London, 1966 p. 264
13. P. Gunst, Review of W.E. Minchinton, ed., Essays in Agrarian History, in Agricultural History Review, XVII (1969), p. 146.

The main rationale for the broad approach adopted in this study should now be apparent, but one further reason for it remains to be presented. The impact of settlers equipped with an advanced and rapidly developing technology on the primitive environment of the New Zealand bush gave rise to a society marked by rapid change. The crudely primitive conditions of the forest frontier were rapidly ameliorated by the tools of an advanced civilisation. One month a Bush settler might be wading up to his waist in the sloughs of a bush track, the next he might be carried rapidly to the city along the newly completed railway track. The 'landmarks' of the Bush world were thus transitory, and the sense of instability and change was enhanced by the absence or distortion of the 'social landmarks' of the Old World society. Thus, for example, there was no squire, and the Anglican church which dominated the rural world of the Old Country was frequently absent, its place commonly filled by those underdogs of the homeland, the Methodists. The writer of English nineteenth century history may proceed on a narrow front with some confidence that he can take his readers' understanding of the context 'as read'. With limited studies that touch on the Bush settlements it is not only the readers who are frequently at sea. The writers also often show that they have little grasp of the context

of their narrative. A Bush settlement of the 1870s might well change more markedly in five years than an English rural community during the entire century. Despite its heavy expository demands, the broad approach to the history of the Bush settlements commends itself as being the safer way.

This study is, therefore, broad in its scope - broader even than the term Social History might be taken to cover. For example, the absence of adequate relevant treatments of intellectual, political, economic and agrarian history has necessitated bold (though, one hopes, not unduly rash) incursions into these areas, in order to achieve the total picture aimed for. The initial purpose of the study was to write a social history of the Bush settlements, with a bias towards the treatment of the development of education within a broad context. This approach is in keeping with recent trends in the writing of American and British educational history,¹⁴ and represents a shift from the older approach which 'almost exclusively, focussed its concern on the development of the school as a formal institution, divorced from society'.¹⁵ As Oscar Handlin has pointed out, 'At

14. This approach is exemplified in most of the contributions to the Anglo-American symposium, P. Nash, ed., History and Education: The Educational Uses of the Past, New York, 1970. See esp. pp. 83-114, M.B. Katz, 'Education and Social Development in the Nineteenth Century: New Directions for Enquiry'.

15. S. Dropkin, ed., Contemporary American Education, New York, 1965, P. 80. (Editorial introduction to 'Historical Backgrounds').

the point at which historians began to look at the educational process rather than at the school, they were compelled to consider a broad range of relationships to the totality of the culture'.¹⁶ Due to the paucity of existing historical treatments of developments in the Bush Provinces, the present study has been devoted largely to developing the context within which Handlin's 'broad range of relationships' might be discussed. It will be noticed that educational developments are given a more adequate treatment than a purely general history would require, but the full implications of many of the relationships touched upon remain to be explored. It is my hope that future researchers will find fruitful starting points here, and that this endeavour to get to grips with the totality of the cultural context will provide a setting for more specialised studies.

16. O. Handlin, 'Introductory Note', Harvard Educational Review, XXXI, 1961, p. 121.

CHAPTER 2

CABINET AND COUNTRY

The dreams and fortitude of thousands of humble men and women form the heart of the story of the conquest of the Great Bush. Their toil and endurance pushed roads and railways through its gloomy depths, harvested a substantial part of the timber that formed its virgin crop, and carved homes and farms from its plains, valleys and hills. But the story's starting place lies elsewhere - in the debating chambers of Parliament, the clubs, and the government offices of the country's capital, itself hacked from the borders of the Great Bush. It was here, in the cut and thrust of politics, that the young colony's leaders shouldered with a measure of reluctance and trepidation the burden of full responsibility for their own affairs, as the Imperial Government firmly disentangled itself from New Zealand Native and military concerns, and withdrew its last troops. In the sprawl of wooden buildings along the shores of Port Nicholson, with the log-encumbered bush-burn hill slopes looming above, a new combination of leadership was shaped, and a strategy of colonial development threshed out - a strategy which made the mastering of the Bush the means of solving the Native question.

It is, then, to the 1869 session of the New Zealand Parliament, opening in Wellington on 1 June, that we must first turn, with particular attention to the country members of the Bush Provinces of Taranaki, Wellington and Hawkes Bay, whose region was at the centre of the colony's concern. Since the House had adjourned in the previous October, the war bands of Titokowaru had ravaged the newly-settled Patea coastal strip, from the southern edge of Egmont's forests, almost to the gates of Wanganui, while on the East Coast, Te Kooti's shrewdly-led guerillas had spread terror by their quick massacre raids. In the sombre harvest of ravaged countrysides, defeats, atrocities and cannibalism, the colonists had reaped the consequences of ten years of misguidance in the handling of native affairs. The counter-strokes of the Government forces, often darkened by a ruthless bitterness, had by autumn established an uneasy ascendancy on both coasts. But inevitably the Stafford ministry would be called to account for the year's disasters, and Parliament would have to wrestle with the question of whether wiser leaders and better policies could be found. The challenge came from the threatened districts, William Fox of Rangitikei moving the no-confidence motion and Donald McLean of Napier seconding it. The alternative ministry offered to the House, it was made clear, would have Fox as

Premier and McLean as Native Minister. Obviously the problems and hopes of the Bush Provinces were to be to the fore in the proffered new administration. As these districts provided at once the setting for the great problem facing the House, and the springboards for the colonisation of the Bush once the problem was mastered, they and their representatives must now be examined more closely.

The Rangitikei electorate, which Fox represented, had a population of 2,511 at the 1867 census. Most of the district had been bought by the Government from the Maoris, in a series of purchases between 1849 and 1866, and the considerable area of open country, extending at its deepest to some twelve miles inland, had been quickly overrun by the white man's flocks and herds in the late 1840s and 1850s. The 1871 census shows the area (newly divided into two electorates, Rangitikei and Manawatu) running over 180,000 sheep and 24,000 cattle. These stock were thinly scattered over the wide coastal belt of sand dunes, and the strip of swamp land beyond, but more thickly spread over the flats and terraces of the Turakina and Rangitikei rivers, and the higher plateaus further inland where pasture was being won from fern and scrub. Patches and clumps of bush broke the open country, with one extensive stretch sweeping out from the main bush line at Awahuri, as far as the banks of the Rangitikei river, about three miles

inland from its mouth, but it was the main bush line that marked the eastern edge of the settled country. From there the Great Bush swept for miles over rich rolling country and river terraces, to the Tararua and Ruahine ranges to the east, and the rugged high country to the north where the forests petered out on the borders of the volcanic plateau.

The Rangitikei looked to the river town of Wanganui to the north as something of a local capital. From Wanganui a poorly maintained road extended south as far as the Rangitikei River. Horsetracks fanned out from the Rangitikei River crossings to the various homesteads further on, while traffic for Wellington took to the sea beach. Little schooners working the Rangitikei and Manawatu river mouths brought in most of the region's bulkier supplies, and took out much of its produce.¹

By the 1860s the runholders were well established, and the more prosperous had built themselves substantial homesteads similar to those of successful squatters in other parts of Australia and New Zealand. Their life may have lacked in some of the finer amenities of civilization, but it was rich in the pleasures of a vigorous out-door life, with as much hunting and shooting as one cared to indulge in. Not surprisingly, the horse population roughly equalled the

1. J.G. Wilson, Early Rangitikei, Wellington, 1914, is the main source for this description of the Rangitikei.

human, and oats were by far the largest crop in the district. For the basic needs of life, each homestead of necessity aimed at a measure of self-sufficiency, with workshops, orchard, kitchen-garden and house-cow. A few villages were developing around the foundation nucleus of an hotel or accommodation house, to supplement the amenities of the stations. They were all primitive little places, of wooden buildings, shingle-roofed, straggling along a street or about a cross-road. Lacking any arrangements for local administration, they were fetid in summer and excessively muddy in winter. The earlier established Foxton and Turakina had been supplemented in the 1860s by two private townships, Bulls, growing up around the sawmill and hotel of the enterprising James Bull, and Marton, with a small settlement of German agricultural farmers nearby to provide the grain for a flourmill. Turakina had been settled about 1849, largely by Scottish Highlanders who had arrived in Wellington on the ship Blenheim in December 1840, and, like many other Wellington pioneers, had had a long wait for their land. The village had grown very slowly owing to the surrounding countryside having been 'swallowed up'² by two big land owners. The Foxton township had been laid out by the Wellington Provincial Government in 1858, on its purchase

2. J.G. Wilson, 'Diary', entry for 28 May 1874, printed in L.J. Wild, The Life and Times of Sir James Wilson of Bulls, Wellington, 1953, p. 44.

of the Te Awahou block, along the northern banks of the Manawatu. There was already a small trading settlement on the spot, established when the settlement at Paiaka, further up the river, was abandoned after suffering heavy damage in the 29 January 1855 earthquake. The township had been boosted in the late '60s by the sale of land in the Awahou block to small farmers. By the autumn of 1870 this had brought an influx of about 500 souls to the area, providing a reservoir of labour which was encouraging several entrepreneurs to plan the setting up of flaxmills.³ Foxton township was a rather dreary little place in 1869, plagued with an illimitable wealth of sand that made a mere stiff breeze an infliction for its inhabitants. But it already showed promise of becoming the base for the first substantial assault on the West Coast bush.

The Manawatu River provided access by means of small schooners to the firmer ground beyond the sandhills and swamps, and the Manawatu Gorge had obvious potential as a major communications route. There were good reasons for deciding that the Manawatu bush should be tackled first. The land along the river, from below the present Longburn to the mouth of the Gorge, was thrown open for selection from

3. NZM, 7 April 1870, p. 3.

1867 on. The impoverished Wellington Provincial administration could do little more than survey and sell the sections, and in the absence of roads and other amenities only a handful of pioneer settlers had moved in. Although a few sections in the township of Palmerston had been bought when they came onto the market in 1867, no-one had yet settled on the site.⁴ Among those who had taken up rural sections had been Bishop Ditlev Monrad, ex-Prime Minister of Denmark, in voluntary exile following his country's humiliation by Bismarck's Prussia. Monrad had returned to Denmark early in 1869, but two of his sons continued the development of the bush farm at Karere, and other Danes had been attracted to the district by his presence there.⁵ The quality of their pioneering work helped to turn the attention of the colony's leaders to Scandinavia as a source for bush settlers.

Elsewhere in Fox's electorate there was little to show in the colonising of the bush. His neighbours up the Rangitikei River at York Farm, the two generations of Hammonds, sturdy, horse-loving Yorkshiremen, were running cattle in the bush along the Rangitikei and Kiwitea rivers, and had something of a local reputation for hard riding and bushmanship, as they combed the forests and river flats for wild cattle. A handful

4. T.L. Buick, Old Manawatu, Palmerston North, 1903, pp. 288-9 295-6.

5. G.C. Petersen, D.G. Monrad, 1965, gives a full treatment

of small farmers up the Manawatu, the roamings of the York Farm cowboys, perhaps the incursions of a sawyer or two here and there - the colonists' impact on the Rangitikei-Manawatu bush up to 1869 was, in sum, quite insignificant. Nor could much progress be expected without a considerable investment in communications and a large influx of willing labour.

Finally, to complete this sketch of the Rangitikei electorate as a potential springboard for a colonising advance into the Bush, a strong Scottish element in the district remains to be mentioned. The 1874 census showed that 13.2% of the population had been born in Scotland. This was over a quarter of the 48% born outside New Zealand.⁶ The Presbyterian church was the only one which had yet effectively occupied the region. Ministers were stationed at Foxton, Turakina and Marton, and churches had been built at Turakina, Roxton, Bonny Glen and Parawanui.⁷ The district's first Anglican and Methodist clergymen were just about to begin their work, both these denominations erecting their first Rangitikei churches at Marton in 1872. The Presbyterian work must have recruited many non-Scottish settlers, as the 1874 census shows their numbers, at 851, to be exactly equal to the Anglicans. This

6. Calculated from Census of New Zealand, 1874 Table VII

7. J.R. Elder, The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840-1940, Christchurch, 1940, p. 120; J. Dickson History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Dunedin, 1899, pp. 510-7.

strong Scottish influence was already beginning to make itself felt in the fostering of education in the district.

This, then was the electorate represented by William Fox of Westoe, explorer, administrator, colonist, social crusader, and politician. He had tussled in friendly rivalry with Stafford almost since the beginning of the New Zealand Parliament, and had gained strong support for a no-confidence amendment during the previous sessions.⁸ While his own electorate had not suffered directly in the disasters that had marked the Parliamentary recess, its settlers were on edge with rumours and fears. Some among the local Maoris were acknowledged Hauhaus, and in the dark days of the previous November wild reports that Titokawaru had broken through the colonial forces at Wanganui and was sweeping down upon the Rangitikei had sent horsemen galloping over the countryside to call in the out-settlers. The infant Upper Manawatu settlement had been evacuated, and several amateur block-houses hastily⁹ thrown up. The scare was soon over, but the sense of insecurity remained. A sore point which rankled with the settlers was the Government's failure to provide adequate arms for the four local cavalry corps, only two of which had fire-arms, and one of these only old muzzle-loaders. Fox had

8. JHR 1868, p. 145. (The voting was 37 to 30).

9. Petersen, Monrad, pp. 111-4
 Buick, Old Manawatu, pp. 282-5

raised this matter in the House a week before his no-confidence motion, speaking on behalf of 'a district surrounded by Hauhaus and Natives who had said that they would have to fight if the king ordered them', and where the settlers had 'absolutely been knocked up out of their beds in the middle of the night by emissaries of the Minister of Defence telling them that they might be attacked at any moment'.¹⁰ The blockhouses at such places as Foxton, Turakina and Marton, and the memory of wild alarms, remained to remind the Rangitikei settlers that their homes and farms could not be considered secure until the native question was solved. In his no-confidence motion Fox was at once voicing their fears, and offering hope that a surer way towards peace and progress could be found.

The Hawke's Bay Province, with a population of 5,203 in 1867, was divided into two electorates, Napier in the north, represented by Donald McLean, Superintendent of the Province since 1863, and Clive in the south, represented by J.D. Ormond, McLean's right-hand man in provincial administration. Like William Fox, both men owned extensive sheep stations in their electorates, and both were deeply conscious of the insecurity felt by their fellow settlers. The East Coast had suffered some of the most savage atrocities of the wars, and although

10. NZPD, Vol. 5, p. 100.

the province's main settlements had escaped attack, Panapa's bungled expedition to wipe out the town of Napier in October 1866, and the skill and audacity of Te Kooti's ferocious raids, following his escape from the Chathams in July 1868, had shown that no settlement in the district could be considered safe from attack while hostilities lasted. The particular nature of the Hawke's Bay settlement enhanced the sense of insecurity. Not only did the large pastoral holdings make for a scattered population, but here they stretched inland, far away from the sea, which in other districts offered a quick means of escape or reinforcement. With hills and swamps hampering easy access to the coast on their eastern boundary, and with great stretches of bush and wilderness on all their other borders, the Hawke's Bay settlers had reason to feel isolated, and to be anxious for a more vigorous approach to the development of colonial communications.

In 1869 the greater part of the province's population, and of its flocks of sheep (numbering 904,416 at the 1871 census), were spread over a rectangular stretch of country, some 12 to 15 miles across, extending about 30 miles inland between the Tukituki river on the east and the ranges on the west. A good deal of the land had been first occupied in an irregular fashion, on illegal leases from the natives, and

later bought when a change of the law permitted private dealing with the Maoris. Much of this area was hilly, while the only extensive flat, the Heretaunga Plain, was largely swamp. To the east of the Tukituki, more rugged hills cut off easy access to the coast, and to the south the Seventy Mile Bush barred the way to the Wairarapa. The first settlers had brought their flocks up from The Wairarapa by way of the eastern sea coast, and the telegraph line to Wellington now followed the same route, but the more practicable route for a permanent link to the south was inland, by way of the bush. Seeking to break the province's isolation, McLean had in 1865 reached an agreement with the Superintendent of Wellington Province for co-operation in getting a track out through to the Manawatu. This was hastily surveyed, and the bush felled, in 1865-6.¹¹ It was never, as originally intended, developed to the level of a dray road, and in fact¹² the route was later found to be quite unsuitable for this, but it was available for foot and horse travellers, and for stock, the first mob of 1,000 sheep going through to the Manawatu in April 1867.¹³ Such a bush track was liable to

11. G.W.N. Kelly, A Study of Early Colonial Communications in the Hawke's Bay During the Period 1858-1876, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1951, pp. 117-8.

12. AJHR 1871, D-1B, p. 8.

13. Hawke's Bay Herald, 13 April 1867.

deteriorate rapidly, and to be taken over by the regeneration of the bush, unless it received considerable use and attention. Without settlement in the bush, and development of the track to dray road level, it could have only a limited future. Ormond, who throughout the 1860s had been a most persistent advocate for pushing on with this bush route, had in 1864 advocated confiscation of the bush and its settlement by military settlers,¹⁴ and the need for both settlement and improvement of the route was a continuing concern with him.

The events of the 1860s had, then, committed the Hawke's Bay to a policy of development in the Seventy Mile Bush. A hearty opposition to the idea of communities of small farmers anywhere on the province, which had been evidenced by the squatters on the earlier years,¹⁵ had been rather modified as a result of the Maori threat, and when McLean became Superintendent in 1863 he was able to make a little progress with agricultural settlement carried through in conjunction with immigration. Unlike some Canterbury runholders, who did all they could to discourage any settlement near their runs,¹⁶ many Hawke's Bay squatters felt more secure with a good supply

14. L.G. Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay 1858 - 1876, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1965, p. 136.

15. Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, pp. iv, 5-6, 27-8

16. Lady Barker, Station Life in New Zealand, London, 1870, p. 111.

of white manpower handy, and in the 1860s and 1870s a number of them took the initiative in setting up townships near their stations.¹⁷ Had it not been for the Maori threat, the Hawke's Bay squatters might have been happier with the Seventy Mile Bush left for much slower development by large holders. Stations had already been established in the bush clearings,¹⁸ and beginning in the 1870s other large holdings were won by bush felling.¹⁹ The settlement of small farmers in the Seventy Mile Bush was not an inevitable development.

Such, then, was the province which McLean and Ormond represented in the House in 1869, a province whose northern boarders were garrisoned against Te Kooti, where blockhouses and stockades had been built as far south as Tikokino and Ruataniwha, and where some squatters drilled their station hands daily.²⁰ McLean did not speak, after seconding Fox's no-confidence motion, but his silent presence was a rebuke to the Ministry, and other members did not forbear to castigate them for their folly in their relations with him, which had led to their dispensing with his services as Government Agent on the East Coast. Ormond made the

17. Examples are: Tikokino (by Major G.G. Carlyon? in the 1860s), Onga Onga (by H.H. Bridge in 1872) Otane (by H.S. Tiffen in 1874) Takapau (by S. Johnston in 1876).

18. e.g. Kaitoki, Mangatoro, and Oringi. See M.E. Macgregor, Early Stations of Hawke's Bay, Wellington, 1970, pp. 89, 117, 163.

19. e.g. Sherwood, Brookwood and Woodcliffe. see G.A. Tait, ed., Farms and Stations of New Zealand, 3 vols., Auckland, 1957-1961, 'Hawke's Bay,' pp. 25, 33, 170

Government's treatment of McLean a leading element in a long and hard-hitting speech, and offered to the House 'the vigour of Mr McLean' in place of the 'bad administration, weakness, and incompetence of the present Native Minister'.²¹ It must already have been decided that Ormond would take over McLean's Superintendency to release him for cabinet office, should the Ministry be overthrown. The Hawke's Bay members were heavily committed to a change in national policy and administration.

Taranaki, the province which had suffered most from the wars of the 1860s, spoke with a divided voice in the House in June 1869. Her population, a mere 4,359 at the 1867 census,²² was divided into three electorates. J.C. Richmond, member for Grey and Bell, was Native Minister in the Stafford administration. Only a year before, he had rashly forecast that the native difficulty was at an end. He had wrestled vigorously with the crises of the succeeding months, and in the debate defended the administration in an able speech which displayed a sense of the perspective of history. He pictured New Zealand as a young state, suddenly thrust into full

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20. J.G. Wilson, et al., History of Hawke's Bay, Wellington, 1939, p. 140;
An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, ed. McLintock, III, 515a;
 Macgregor, Early Stations of Hawke's Bay, p. 71.
21. NZPD, Vol. 5, pp. 224-242.
22. Several single-member electorates elsewhere had a larger population than Taranaki Province. e.g. Raglan (7,216), Heathcote (6,631), Bruce (5,828). Figures are from 1867 census.

independence while face to face with issues which were questions of life or death to a very large part of the Colony, and he appealed to the House for unity and a sense of political responsibility.²³ His own electorate, the countryside east of New Plymouth, had been ravaged, its homesteads destroyed, its livestock decimated and scattered. It had not, however, been attacked in the latest outbreak, and under the protection of a string of blockhouses settlers were gradually returning to begin the work of reconstruction. Omata electorate, a smaller area of rural settlement to the west of the town, had also been ravaged, and in 1869 its settlers were armed and vigilant, ready to fall back on their blockhouses at Okato and Omata if the need arose. Their representative in the House was Major Charles Brown, pioneer settler, and first Superintendent of the province. The previous September he had himself moved a want of confidence amendment, based on the Ministry's conduct of native affairs,²⁴ but in June 1869 he took the line, followed by a number of members, that Fox could not expect his support unless he proposed a new policy as an alternative to that of

23. NZPD, Vol. 5, pp. 190-202.

24. JHR 1868, P. 161 (26 September).

the Stafford ministry. He had his own ideas as to what that policy should be, for he told the House that he had the previous week promised Fox his support on the condition of his adopting a certain line of policy.²⁵ The town of New Plymouth was represented by a new member, Thomas Kelly, elected to replace Harry Atkinson, who had resigned in order to visit England. Kelly also criticised Fox for his failure to state a policy, but declared that he felt the Stafford ministry had lost the confidence of the country. He spoke, he said, for a province whose people had seen their prosperity ruined twice in ten years, and who now went in fear that it would be desolated a third time.²⁶ Kelly was to represent New Plymouth for the next fifteen years, giving his support to each Premier in turn, while keeping the welfare of his own district constantly under their attention.²⁷ He must, on this occasion, have been reasonably confident that Fox would win the division.

The New Plymouth settlement differed markedly from Rangitikei and Hawke's Bay. It was essentially a coastal strip of small farms spreading out from a straggling village capital, built along an open roadstead. In the first twenty

25. NZPD, Vol. 5, p. 205.

26. NZPD, Vol. 5, pp. 298-9.

27. For a summing up of Kelly's career in the House see D.W. Hinch, General Elections in Taranaki 1879-84, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1968, pp. 48-9.

years, before the Taranaki wars, the colonists had recreated something of the old world atmosphere of the West of England counties from which they had come, and this persisted despite the upheavals of the 1860s. A correspondent of the Dunedin Evening Star described it in 1874 as a parish with 'vestry men' politicians, and wrote that 'the province seems to have been preserved as an antipodean "in-and-in" west-country breeding ground. It is a province where still life, clotted cream, wooden ploughshares, meat, and honey abound; where ties of relationship do not count for nought.'²⁸ And a surveyor appointed to the district in 1875 found that no town he had seen since leaving England reminded him so much of the old country as New Plymouth. 'A sense of quietude seemed to pervade everything' he writes. 'You might enter a shop and have to search some time for the owner . . . such a sense of security it had never been my lot to witness before.'²⁹ This catches well the slow-moving rural flavour of New Plymouth village. From the start it had been forced into a scattered pattern of settlement by absentee owners' sections. The town dwellers, finding that the little settlement made only a limited demand on their trades, turned to the land in order to make an adequate livelihood. With cattle (48

28. Reprinted in TH, 7 March 1874.

29. E.S. Brookes, Frontier Life, Taranaki, New Zealand. Auckland, 1892, p. 5.

sheep (2802), goats (44), pigs (298) and poultry (4297), roaming within the town boundaries, and with market gardens, hay paddock (11 acres in February 1870)³¹ and wheat crops (4 acres in February 1870),³² their husbandry merged imperceptibly with that of the small farmers outside the town. The Town Pound was, not unnaturally, a moderately busy place. In the year ending 30 June 1871, for example, it received 333³³ cattle and 134 sheep.

The small farms of the country districts still reflected the origins of most of the first settlers in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Hampshire. These south-west counties were notable for their combination of intensive arable farming with high numbers of both sheep and cattle. In 1850 James Caird reported the Devonshire farmer to be practising nearly every branch of agriculture. He noted that 'dairy, tillage, orchards, irrigated meadows, the breeding and feeding of stock, and the reclamation of waste land, each engage his attention.'³⁴ He

30. Bracketed figures show numbers returned at 1867 census.

. N.Z Govt. Gazette : Province of Taranaki, 1868, p.41

31. Ibid., 1870, p.22.

32. Ibid.,

33. Ibid., 1872, p.18.

34. J.Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, 2d ed., London, 1968, p.49.

found the farms to be 'of moderate, even of small size'.³⁵ In South Hampshire he found similar mixed farming. Such were the agrarian traditions which West Country farm labourers set out to recreate in Taranaki. Gradually, however, they had been forced by the damp climate and caterpillar pests to restrict their grain crops, and shift their emphasis towards pastoral farming. Even so, per head of population they were still the most agricultural of the Bush provinces,³⁷ but for export they were turning to cattle, sent to the Auckland beef market, and wool, the colony's main staple.³⁸ Orchard and market garden crops flourished for local consumption. The Taranaki News for 12 April 1873 reported that during February and March peaches had been sold at about 2s 6d a cwt., and that 'late rock and water melons, tomatoes, chillies, and cape gooseberries' were still ripening. Reasonably blest in both climate and soil, the New Plymouth settlement claimed the title of 'The Garden of New Zealand', and even those with smaller holdings were able to keep a good table, and move a little above a subsistence mode of life by bartering goods and services with the tradesmen in the township.

35. ibid., p. 51

36. ibid., pp. 90-92. For a brief summary of farming in the south-west counties about 1870 see W.F. Smith, An Historical Introduction to the Economic Geography of Great Britain, London, 1968, pp. 64-68.

37. In 1869 they grew 1032 acres of wheat, 639 acres of potatoes; Wellington Province, with over five times their population, grew only 1,335 acres of wheat, 754 acres of potatoes. Statistics of New Zealand, 1876, p. 198.

38. For a good account of the earlier evolution of the Taranaki rural economy see B.G. Quin, Bush Frontier, North Taranaki 1841-1860, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1966.

Their West Country origins had given the New Plymouth settlers not only clotted cream and thatched cottages, but also a distinctive emphasis in their religious life. Nearly one quarter of them were Methodists, the 1871 census recording 647 Wesleyan Methodists and 387 Primitive Methodists in a total population of 4,480. Cornwall had been a Wesleyan stronghold from the early days of the movement, but Taranaki's Primitive Methodists derived largely from the Bible Christians, who originated in Devon in the 1810s from the labours of William O'Bryan a gifted lay preacher and organizer whose work the Methodist Society had been too rigid to absorb. The movement spread into neighbouring Cornwall, making particular headway among agricultural labourers. Its defects included a tendency to emotional excesses and spiritual pride, and a simplicity of outlook that failed to value secular education, and later in the century acquiesced in the national movement to decry Board School education. Its virtues were courage and honesty, and an ability to develop talents of leadership among simple rural people.³⁹ In 1844, the Bible Christians in the New Plymouth settlement decided to go over to the Primitive Methodist Connexion, when the Rev Robert Ward, the pioneer Primitive Methodist minister to New Zealand, came among them.⁴⁰ The Primitive Methodist movement had arisen in the North of

39. E.W. Martin, The Shearers and the Shorn, London, 1965, pp. 76-9 gives a good summing up of the contribution of the Bible Christians to Devon rural life.

40. J.Guy and W.S.Potter, Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand, Wellington, 1893, pp. 54-5, 61.

England, also in the 1810s, the break with the Wesleyans coming as a result of the latter's disapproval of open air camp meetings, an innovation spreading from America. A feature of Primitive Methodism was its strong emphasis on lay participation in preaching and administration. Both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism were to prove remarkably adaptable to the frontier life of the New Zealand Bush settlements in the last quarter of the 19th Century.

As a springboard for the settlement of the bush, the New Plymouth settlement had both virtues and defects. The self-reliant subsistence approach to farming had developed skills invaluable to the bush settler, and the 'do-it-yourself' approach to religious and social life, encouraged by Methodism, can be accounted a frontier virtue. But clearly the province needed the stimulation of fresh blood drawn from a more diverse background, to break down its old-world rusticity, and provide the innovating drive to overcome the psychological and physical challenge which the bush represented. In no other province did the bush so dominate the landscape. Egmont's great ring plain, forming the western part of the province, was bush-clad from the mountain slopes at its hub to within a mile or two of its sea-girt rim, where forest gave way to the bracken and scrub better able to withstand the salt-drenched Tasman winds. Eastward the plain merged with an intricate tangle of hills, covered with an almost unbroken forest. In 1869 the New Plymouth settlement had nibbled here and there

into the edge of the great forest, but much of what had
 been cleared had gone back to second growth during the wars.⁴¹
 The ambitious military settlement scheme worked out by Grey
 and Domett in 1863 had involved a good deal of Taranaki forest
 land, but it had achieved little. A few of the men set to the
 clearing of bush sections when their units were disbanded in
 1866, but the majority sold their scrip and left the district.
 Thus although about 100 men were granted land at Okato in
 1866, much of it in the bush, W.H.Skinner found only about
 twenty settlers there when he helped with road surveys in the
 area in December 1872.⁴² Nevertheless, among those who had
 over the years successfully tackled the bush were several who
 were to make important contributions to the efforts of the
 following decades. Harry Atkinson's experience as a successful
 bush farmer at Hurford was to stand him in good stead as a
 statesman and administrator. When the Rev. Henry Handley Brown
 bought 2000 acres of bush land at the foot of the Pouakai
 Ranges, at the top of Carrington Road, in 1863, he set his
 son Henry on a sawmilling career which was to be an important
 strand in the colonising of inland Taranaki. These, and other
 such efforts, had all been limited to the northern edge of
 the bush, within less than 20 miles of New Plymouth. The first

41. The general state of settlement at about this time is described in W.H. Skinner, Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor, New Plymouth, 1946, pp.25-7.

42. History and Reminiscences of Okato, 1865-1965, New Plymouth, 1965, pp. 15-16.

attempt to settle South Taranaki, part of Domett's ambitious military settlement scheme, had been swept away by Titokowaru's war bands. Most of those settlers persistent enough to wish to return were awaiting more favourable times in the safety of Patea township or of Wanganui.

Wanganui was represented in the House in 1869 by H.S. Harrison. He was one of the town's earliest settlers, had taken part in the exploration of the bush of the Manawatu river and the route to the Hawke's Bay, in 1844, and had served as a militia officer during the Maori troubles. In the debate he strongly criticised the way in which the coastal settlements north of Wanganui had been abandoned to Titokowaru and expressed a firm resolve to vote against the government.⁴³ As we have already noted, Wanganui served as something of a local capital to the Rangitikei, and was, in fact, well placed to dominate coastal settlement from Foxton to Opunake. Her own immediate hinterland was unpromising hill country, but she looked to the development of the Rangitikei-Manawatu to the south, and the rich Waitotara-Patea coastal strip to the north, to provide the basis for her future prosperity. Some of her citizens had visions of their town as the capital of a new province, and a separation movement was to flourish for a few months in 1873. Throughout the 1870s she drew South Taranaki into her orbit, to the chagrin of New Plymouth. In

43. NZPD, Vol. 5, 138-9.

1869 the little township was situated on the right bank of the river, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles upstream, between two sandhills from which the Rutland and York stockades dominated the settlement. Wharves along the river frontage served a growing coastal trade. A long campaign for a bridge across the river was not to see fruition till 1871. Wanganui's citizens foresaw a great future for their town if only a firm peace could be established.

The southernⁿmost pocket of settlement, with Wellington as its base, represented the most extensive assault on the bush up to this date. Hemmed in by hills, mountains and forests, but encouraged by their magnificent harbour, the Wellington colonists had already invested considerable capital and toil in carving out a hinterland. From the forests of the Hutt Valley, and the valleys, gullies and hillslopes of localities such as Karori, Makara, Johnsonville, Porirua and Pauatahanui, bush farms had been laboriously hacked, while a second generation had grown up, at home in the bush, and well schooled in the arts of bush clearing. Visitors from elsewhere in the Bush Provinces where forest-clearing had barely begun, often failed to recognise these bush farms as portents of the region's future, and expressed distaste for the landscape and commiseration for the settlers. In the early 1860s Captain James Hewett drove with his young wife from his sheep station near Kai Iwi down the beach route to Wellington. Writing half a century later, she recalled the dreary little clearings on

the road in from Porirua, with their tree stumps, and unpainted buildings, 'more like cow-sheds than houses', and she remembered her husband remarking, "How I do pity those poor devils, grinding their life out on those wretched little farms!"⁴⁴ Ironically he was shortly to die at the hands of the Hauhaus on his more attractive property, while these bush settlers became wealthy as the Capital's suburbs spread over their farms. Captain Hewett's reaction is echoed in a description of the Hutt Valley given by the Foxton correspondent of the Wanganui Herald, after a visit early in 1874. He wrote of 'the feeling of melancholy induced by the appearance of the country' and the 'very indifferently built habitations' whose owners 'seemed to adopt to a great extent the hand to mouth principle'.⁴⁵ These settlers themselves would not have viewed their fortunes thus. They were well fed and housed compared with the English agricultural labourers from among whom they had come. Here there was independence and a future for their children. Many of the sturdy sons they were rearing would take their skills to the assault on the Rangitikei-Manawatu and Taranaki forests during the next two decades.

The City of Wellington, with the adjacent country districts that made up the Hutt and Porirua electorates, had a combined population of 12,356 at the 1867 census. It represented the only substantial reservoir of potential bush settlers within the three Bush provinces, and had already sent groups of small farmers to establish settlements further afield. In the 1850s

44. 'The Widow of A New Zealand Pioneer Settler' [E. Hewett], Looking Back, St. Albans, 1911, p.24.

attention had been centred on the Wairarapa, resulting in conflict with the large runholders. The first squatters, attracted by the large areas of open country, had moved into the Wairarapa Valley in 1844, leasing their land from the Maoris. By 1853, when the first government land purchase was made, practically all the open land was occupied. From then on the squatters used their priority of occupation, their knowledge of the country, and their strong position in the Provincial Council and administration, to consolidate their position, and prevent smallholders from gaining any extensive footholds in the area.

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The efforts of the Wellington working men and small settlers to gain a share of the land, found political expression in the Wairarapa Small Farms Association, which began negotiations with the government in 1853. This Association was the forerunner of many similar groups which in the following decades played an important part in the settlement of the Wellington and Hawke's Bay provinces. Such associations offered several advantages to the small settler. Politically, they represented organised pressure groups, able to bring the claims of the land-hungry before the public and the authorities, and to watch over their interests. The practical business of looking over the land and choosing an area for settlement could be solved effectively and economically, by an association sending trusted delegates to examine, and report back on, likely localities.

46. This topic is well treated in W.F. Greenless, Land Policy of the Wellington Provincial Government - with Particular Reference to the Wairarapa, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1954.

Once on their land association members were spared the problem of absentee landholders and undeveloped sections. The Wellington pioneers had learnt by bitter experience what a curse these could be, especially in bush land. Their presence unduly extended communications, increased the cost of most public amenities, extended the bush-burn period indefinitely into the future, with all its risks to life and property, and, in unsettled districts, provided cover for marauding bands of natives.⁴⁷ A Small Farm Association's rules made provision for a simultaneous occupation, concentrated within a manageable area. It was carried out by a group of men who already knew each other, and who had begun to discover their potential community leaders. The Wairarapa Small Farms Association bequeathed a valuable idea to the region's future.

The direct results of the Association's efforts were the two settlements of Greytown and Masterton, begun in 1854. When it was clear that these would be a reasonable success, the Provincial Council took on itself the responsibility of two further settlements, Featherston and Carterton whose settlement began in 1857. This provided a string of settlements whose inhabitants could be employed to extend the road already being developed over the rugged Rimutaka Range, onwards through the bush that spilled into the Western Wairarapa from the foothills of the Tararuas. Having provided themselves with a useful supply of seasonal labour, amenities such as sawmills and

47. Carol M. Evans, The Struggle for Land in the Hutt Valley, 1840-1875, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1965, is a study of how these lessons were learnt by the settlers in the Hutt Valley bush.

flourmills, and a good road to Wellington together with roadmen to maintain it, the squatters decided that enough had been done for the meantime. They continued their hold on the pick of the land in the valley, and the land-hungry turned their attention elsewhere, forming a Manawatu Small Farm Association in 1866, with branches in Wellington, Hutt and Wanganui. The Wellington vision of the Wairarapa road being continued as a great arterial route through the North Island was blighted by Hawke's Bay secession in 1858, largely brought about by the administration's policy of working outwards from Wellington, so that the bulk of its income was being spent near the city at the expense of the remote districts. Throughout the '60s with their Maori wars and economic depression, the great arterial road north remained halted at Masterton, just south of the Forty Mile Bush. It served a population (at 1867 census) of 2,207 in the Hutt electorate and 3,068 in the Wairarapa. The Wairarapa had 380,462 sheep and 22,335 cattle in 1871, and although the Hutt, stimulated by the nearby Wellington market, had some 600 acres under crop, the high cost of labour had encouraged the development^{of} extensive pastoral farming there, with nearly 20,000 sheep and over 5000 cattle. In origin, the Hutt and Wairarapa settlers were strongly English, and the 1874 census showed over one sixth of them to be Methodists.

The Wellington-Wairarapa area had seven seats in the House in 1869. The three city members, and the member for Porirua,

all voted with Fox on the no-confidence motion. Bunny of Wairarapa, Fitzherbert (Colonial Treasurer in Stafford's ministry) and Ludlam, the two members for Hutt, supported the ministry. Of the seven, the most influential was Dr. Featherston, Superintendent of Wellington Province since its inception. His successful diplomacy in effecting Native land purchases in his province during the 'sixties, and his leadership of the Native allies throughout the West Coast campaigns of 1865-66, had set his prestige high in the colony, and although he did not speak in the debate, his support for Fox was probably influential.

By the time the issue came to the vote on 24 June, the members for the Bush Provinces had made a strong contribution to the debate, and their weight had come down heavily against the government. The crucial question was whether the South Island members, a majority of whom had not spoken to the motion, had been convinced that the proffered new leadership would tackle the problems facing the country with more skill and economy than the old. When they divided 22 to 17 against the government, its fate was sealed. Fox's motion was carried by 40 votes to 29, and he was called upon to form a new ministry.

The team Fox put together were mainly new to cabinet rank, yet they were men with wide experience. McLean came with an unrivalled prestige in Maori affairs, and the experience of

over six successful years as Superintendent of Hawke's Bay. Vogel had established a reputation in the House for financial expertise, while at the same time winning his way to leadership of the Otago Provincial Government. Gisborne was the colony's senior public servant, able and experienced in administration, appointed promptly to the Legislative Council so that he could join the Cabinet. Bell and Featherston, though not taking portfolios, brought experience, prestige and negotiating skill to the service of the new ministry. Ormond, while not formally joining the Cabinet till the end of 1871, contributed to the ministry's counsels from the start, through his close association with McLean, and his appointment as East Coast Agent for the General Government. He had considerable experience in Maori affairs, and proven drive and ability in administration. To sum up the ministry as a whole, it was talented in administration, rich in experience of Maori affairs, and strongly representative of the Bush Provinces.

Over the next year the new team worked out their fresh approach to the country's main problems, leading up to the 'Vogel' Immigration and Public Works policy, put before the House in June 1870, and endorsed by the electorate in the general election of January 1871. Writers on this policy do not seem to have sufficiently emphasised that its genesis lay in the needs of the Bush provinces. Using limited means,

administered with energy and expertise, the new leaders got to grips with the problems of this region, in the first twelve months of the Fox ministry, and at the same time worked outwards from this more local experience to shape a policy for the colony as a whole. Their large measure of immediate success in the Bush Provinces created a new political climate which made possible a new bold approach on a colony-wide scale. The strategy of development which they evolved for the Bush Provinces was largely sound, and has well stood the test of time. This is not surprising; they were largely a 'Bush Province' cabinet. Neither is it surprising that their larger colonial scheme did not take sufficient cognisance of the political realities of the southern provinces, thereby creating problems for the future.

Most of the main principles of the new policy were stated or implied on Fox's Ministerial statement to the House on 29⁴⁸ June. He expressed dismay at the extent of the operations being mounted against the natives, and the enormous cost involved in operating thus in the depths of winter, and he implied that continuing this aggressive approach might well make a war with the King party inevitable. The new Government would reduce the colonial forces 'by a very large amount' and assume a more defensive position. The colonial forces would be as far as possible demilitarised, and given the character of a police. A further endeavour would be made

48. NZPD. Vol 5, pp. 314-6.

to retain the one remaining Imperial Regiment (the 18th) and to obtain another one, especially enlisted to meet the circumstances of the colony 'by making such terms with regard to payment and settlement in the country as might make it a specially New Zealand regiment'. The possibility of raising a loan to open up the country by roads and other such works, was also suggested.

This initial indication of policy resulted from consultations Fox had had with McLean and Vogel. The three of them had been hurriedly sworn in, before a full ministry had been formed, so that they could take steps with regard to 'telegrams of an alarming nature' which the outgoing Government could not be expected to deal with.⁴⁹ The new men clearly hoped that they would be able to quickly get relations with the Maoris onto a new footing, and create the conditions for peaceful development of the country. The possibility of their succeeding owed much to the military successes recently won by the Stafford Government's energetic measures. These measures had, however, given that Government a very hostile image with the natives - it was, as Dillon Bell later told the House, 'connected in the minds of the Natives with the prosecution of a war of conquest at all points'.⁵⁰ The Fox

49. Probably news of the mutiny of Armed Constabulary at Fort Galatea, and a report from Wai Iti, North Taranaki, of the enemy moving into the area in large numbers. See AJHR 1869, A-3, p. 71; A-3B, p. 3. The mutiny proved not to be as serious as it first seemed, and the Wai Iti report was a false alarm.

50. NZPD, Vol. 6, p. 748.

ministry was much better fitted for handling a transition to peace and reconstruction. Apart from their wide range of experience in negotiations with the Maoris, they were strongly representative of the North Island squatters, who had a vested interest in peace with the natives, McLean and Ormond, for example, would have been well aware of the Hawke's Bay settlers' dependence on Maori shearers to cope with flocks nearing a million in number. In the ensuing weeks of debate, the Ministry made clear that they were working for an increasing involvement of the Maori in the white man's economy and way of life. The Native question was to be solved, not by arms, with the dire prospect of years of debilitating guerilla warfare, but by a return to the quiet penetration of the Maori tribes by European civilisation. The difficult transition from hostility to co-operation was a major concern of the new government. It was important that restraint and proffered friendship should not be viewed by the hostile tribes as weakness. A great deal would depend upon the good sense and civilising influence of the peace-keeping forces. It was on this point that Fox and his ministry saw cause for deep concern. From this arose their determination to reshape the colonial forces.

It is clear that the collapse of the defence of the Patea district in 1869 was largely due to the demoralisation of the colonial forces involved. The matter was aired in

the 1868 session of the House,⁵¹ and the picture that emerges is of a hastily enlisted force of 'loafers, bloated with drinking' serving under officers, some of whom could not get employment elsewhere because of their reputations as drunkards, accompanied to the front by 'hangers-on in the shape of grog-sellers'. The men had been allowed to 'idle about the town' and this had resulted in 'very great evils ... from the drunkenness prevailing'. The same picture can be substantiated from other sources. A Patea settler wrote on 5 November 1868 :-

I have not the slightest dread of fighting them (the Hauhaus) but I am afraid of some of the drunken wretches about the town and have refused to do any duty along with them.⁵²

A correspondent of a Wanganui newspaper, writing from the front, reported that 'Patea appears to have been abandoned to Bacchus' and that rum and license 'have marred the effect of discipline at Patea'.⁵³ And Harry Atkinson, in a private letter, writes of 'the gross mismanagement of affairs at Patea', and that 'drunkenness and disorganisation do prevail at the front'⁵⁴ and 'the Armed Constabulary are a failure'. The Stafford

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51. See e.g. NZPD, Vol. 3, pp.446-9, from which the quotations that follow are taken. (Speakers quoted - Stafford, Travers, Fox, Rolleston).
52. John Gibson, Patea, MS. letter, quoted I.M. Bremer, The Early Development of the Patea-Waverley District, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1962, p. 50.
53. Quoted (by Fox) NZPD, Vol. 3, p. 449 (18 September 1868).
54. H.A. Atkinson to A.S. Atkinson, 23 September 1868, G.H. Scholefield, ed., The Richmond-Atkinson Papers, 2 Vols., Wellington, 1960, II, 278.

ministry's response was an 'Act to provide for the closing of Public Houses in Disturbed districts',⁵⁵ which included a clause validating firm action already taken at the front. But this did not solve all problems. An illicit still continued to supply Patea, and Colonel Lyon reported to McLean that not one man in his eighty Armed Constabulary there would lay an information against the practice.⁵⁶ Clearly a force such as this, far from being an agency of peace and civilisation, was likely to both provoke and invite Native attacks. The task of reformation and reorganisation fell to McLean, as Minister for Colonial Defence.

The Armed Constabulary had been raised under the Armed Constabulary Act of 1867, and provides the origins both of New Zealand's Police Force and its Army. On the departure of the British regiments it would provide the country's only regular defence force, with Militia and Volunteers called out to supplement it in emergencies. The model for McLean's reconstruction was the Irish Constabulary - and the picture McLean put before the House⁵⁷ was of a small well-trained, highly organised force, aimed at preventing, rather than punishing, crime and rebellion. By their intelligence and vigilance, they would prevent the selling of arms to the Natives, supply the Government with authentic information

55. NZS, 1868, pp. 23-4.

56. NZPD, Vol. 6, p. 694.

57. NZPD, Vol. 6, pp. 206, 692-5.

from all parts of the country, and assist the civil power in maintaining law and order among both races. There would be no idleness, for when not otherwise employed, they would be set to making roads and effecting other improvements. An amending act of 3 September 1869⁵⁸ gave all the necessary powers to set the new policy in motion. This put the Constabulary explicitly at the service of the civil courts when not engaged in military activities. It was to be under the command of a single commissioner, responsible to the Minister of Defence. On 3 August 1869 McLean was able to inform the House that the Government had arranged to enlist the services of^{the} Commissioner of Police of the Province of Otago, a gentleman trained in the Irish Constabulary Force. This was St John Branigan, who had already proved his worth in the Victorian and Otago gold rushes. He was appointed Commissioner of the Armed Constabulary on 8 August 1869.⁵⁹

If circumstances permitted, then, the Armed Constabulary would be rapidly redeployed to play an active part on opening up the country. But this, like much else in the new ministry's plans, depended on the attitude of the disaffected tribes. As long as this remained in doubt, the Fox ministry gave much of its attention to negotiations aimed at retaining the 18th Regiment in the country, and obtaining an additional regiment

58. NZS, 1869, pp. 201-2.

59. NZG, 1869, p. 467.

from Britain. The development most feared was intervention by the Maori King, and when news came towards the end of July that Te Kooti was visiting the Maori King, the Government was deeply concerned. Fortunately for their plans, news followed almost immediately of Te Kooti's rebuff. By the end of 1870, Te Kooti was a hunted fugitive, and the Ministry could concentrate their efforts on opening up the country. The question now to the fore was not whether Featherston and Bell, in London as Commissioners for the New Zealand Government, could obtain the troops (the original purpose of their appointment) but whether they could induce the British Government to guarantee a substantial development loan.

It is only against this background that the details of the development plans which led to the rapid opening up of the Bush, can be fully understood. Between the adjournment of Parliament on 3 September 1869 and its resumption on 14 June 1870, the ministers had been closely involved in supervising the redeployment of both Maoris and settlers in the Bush Provinces to the work of colonial development. At the same time they had threshed out a much bolder long-term policy involving the whole colony. As regards the Bush Provinces, both their immediate start with the limited resources available, and the longer term planning, had required them to begin shaping a strategy which would at once render further

60. B.J. Dalton, War and Politics in New Zealand 1855-1870, Sydney, 1967, pp. 271-7, summarises this activity.

hostilities unlikely, and give the colonists the maximum advantage if war should break out.

In simple outline, the strategy which emerged was the linking of the three exposed settlement areas of New Plymouth, Patea-Wanganui-Rangitikei, and Hawke's Bay by a great crescent-shaped communication route, reaching from New Plymouth, down through Wanganui to the Rangitikei, and then by way of the Manawatu Gorge to southern Hawke's Bay, and on to Napier. Wherever possible, settlement was to be developed along this route. In the early stages there would be a concentrated effort at settling the bush of the Manawatu and southern Hawke's Bay, so as to firmly establish a great east-west military highway, and provide a reservoir of manpower so placed as to be available to meet a native threat appearing on either coast. This strategy involved playing down the earlier Wellington Provincial plans for a great trunk road (and eventually railway) from Wellington through the Wairarapa to Hawke's Bay, with a branch through the ranges to the Manawatu to connect with Wanganui and Patea.⁶¹

The new scheme gave priority to linking the West Coast ports of Wanganui and Foxton with Napier on the east coast, at the expense of the north-south links between Wellington and its potential hinterland. A second major element of the strategy was the construction of roads converging on Taupo, from the various centres of population. These would give the colonial

61. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session XIX (1871), p. 9. (A restatement of these plans together with Featherston's fallacious assumptions that the General Government was about to proceed on this Wellington idea of priorities).

forces the advantage of interior lines of communication,
 hitherto enjoyed only by the Maoris.⁶² The strategy is not
 expounded as an explicit whole in the contemporary sources -
 no doubt due to political considerations. The plan involved,
 for example, the use of Maori labour, including recently
 disaffected natives, to fashion works aimed at establishing
 the White Man's supremacy. When the implications for Wellington
 had become clear, the Superintendent, Fitzherbert, in opening
 the 1875 session of the Provincial Council on 30 April, made
 a strong complaint at the General Government's neglect of the
 city's links with its hinterland.⁶³ The map published to
 illustrate his speech is a cleaf indication, in negative form,
 of the emphasis involved in the General Government's strategy.

The Government's scheme owed a good deal to the military-
 settlement/trunk road plans drawn up by Domett in 1863.⁶⁴ More
 remote origins might be traced to General Wade's roadmaking
 in the Scottish highlands in the previous century. The wild,
 largely Gaelic-speaking Highland tribes, isolated in their
 mountain fastnesses, invited comparison with the Maoris in
 the North Island bush, and the reputed rapid civilising effect
 of the roadmaking was a useful debating point.⁶⁵ McLean may
 have had it in mind when, in expounding his defence policy on

62. On this see Cunningham, 'Maori-Pakeha Conflict 1858-1885', pp. 19-20.

63. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session Paper A-1. Also printed in N.Z. Government Gazette, Province of Wellington, Vol. XXII, pp. 73-4.

64. AJHR 1863, A-8A.

65. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 275; TH, 29 July 1876. (Letter by Robert Trimble).

3 August 1869,⁶⁶ he pictured the advantage of having the Maoris 'working side by side with us', and thus returning to 'those habits of industry which they have for many years abandoned'. He believed the friendly tribes to be quite aware of the advantages of roads, seeing in them, among other benefits, the guarantee of protection against Hauhau aggression. The more pertinent comparison is, however, with Domett's scheme. Its failure was due largely to unfavourable circumstances,⁶⁷ but also partly to its being grandiose and unrealistic, and to the poor administration of what was attempted. It is interesting to see how the Fox cabinet quickly pared its plans down to the basic essentials, and how all, from the Premier down, involved themselves immediately in the careful supervision of its administration.

In the defence policy speech just quoted, McLean sketched the plan, as it affected the Bush Provinces, thus:-

... in the Province of Taranaki, there is the road by which General Chute made his celebrated march, and which was to some extent improved by him during that march. It might now be still further improved, and so be made available in securing our possession of that part of the country.

66. NZPD, Vol. 6, p. 205.

67. Such as continuing native unrising, and the substantial failure of the £3,000,000 loan.

Again there is the line of road across the island from West to East, by Manawatu; and there is the road from Wairarapa to Hawke's Bay, and from Hawke's Bay to Taupo. All these are important.⁶⁸

Apart from the Wairarapa-Hawke's Bay link, which was soon to be treated as comparatively unimportant, this roughly outlines the emphasis of the region's roadmaking programme for the next few years. McLean went on to say that 'a million sterling might be well and wisely spent on such works', but the Government contented itself in 1869 with a vote of only £30,000 for 'Roads in North Island converging on Taupo.' Even so, there was some criticism from South Island members.⁶⁹

Parliament adjourned on 3 September 1869, and the ministers immediately began to arrange to get roadmaking under way over the favourable summer months. On 4 September, before leaving for New Plymouth, Thomas Kelly provided McLean with a memorandum he had requested, on roads in Taranaki to provide for defence, and the extension of settlement.⁷⁰ Continuing the common obsession with the open country, Kelly recommended the coastal road from Patea around Cape Egmont to New Plymouth as the most immediately beneficial for the advancement of settlement. He emphasised, however, the 'importance as a military work' of the

68. NZPD Vol. 6, p. 205. 'Road' is a misnomer for Chute's miserable track behind Mount Egmont. His column, with two days' food entered the forest on 17 January 1866. They emerged on 25 January, reduced to eating their horses. See James Cowan, The New Zealand Wars, 2 Vols., Wellington, 1923. Vol. II pp. 68-70.

69. NZPD, Vol. 6, pp. 743-750 (25 August 1869). The vote was not very aptly titled. McLean's explanation showed it to include the Bush Province roads he had outlined on 3 August.

70. AJHR A-17, pp. 344.

Mountain Road, east of Egmont, cutting through the forest from the Waihi redoubt (near modern Hawera) to New Plymouth. This route, which was the true key to Taranaki's future, as well as her defence, had been repeatedly recommended in the past, but provided a physical challenge at which the colony had so far baulked. In 1842-3 the New Zealand Company had used Maori labour to clear a bridle track along the route, but it proved too expensive to maintain, and was soon allowed to revert to bush.

⁷¹ In 1863 Domett had pointed out the strategic value of settlement along this line to cut the inland route by which war parties from Waikato and Taupo joined forces with the Taranaki natives. ⁷² After accompanying Chute's column on its arduous journey along the route in January 1866, Dr. Featherston impressed H.R. Richmond, Superintendent of Taranaki, with its importance. Richmond put the matter before the General Government, but without success. ⁷³ Kelly now advised a careful survey of the route, followed by the felling of the forest to a width of two chains, as a preliminary step towards the formation of a rough dray road. On the inland route, through unknown country, 'converging on Taupo', he reported more vaguely, though he had no doubt 'that it would be of vast importance as a military work.' It could, of course, at this time be only a pipe dream.

71. Quin, *Bush Frontier, North Taranaki*, p. 72.

72. AJHR 1863, A-8A, p. 3.

73. AJHR 1866, A-2A, p. 4.

McLean replied to Kelly, three days later, informing him that the Armed Constabulary would be instructed to commence the road works referred to.

It soon became evident that much of the coastal route would need to be constructed by native labour. McLean, in his capacity as Native Minister, set this in motion by letters written from Auckland, on 5 and 6 October 1869, to Percy Smith, Surveyor, and Parris, Civil Commissioner for Taranaki. Parris and Smith received full co-operation from the Maoris between Opunake and the Waingongora and by December this part of the route had been surveyed and roadwork begun. The section between Opunake and Stony River was not attempted on account of the antagonism of Te Whiti at Parihaka.⁷⁴

Meanwhile McLean had sent a circular memorandum, dated 29 October 1869, to all Armed Constabulary units, instructing them to thoroughly examine, and report on, the topographical character of the country in which they were stationed.⁷⁵ They were to give particular attention to routes leading towards Taupo, and should examine them to see in what ways they could be improved. The transition to employment of the constabulary on roadwork had to be handled with care, and was probably first undertaken in Hawke's Bay, where Ormond, now assuming responsibility, as Government Agent, for the pursuit of Te Kooti, was

74. AJHR 1870, A-17, pp. 6-11 prints the correspondence which provides the information for this paragraph.

75. AJHR 1870, p. 44.

anxious to improve the routes into the interior. In a letter of 13 September 1869, he asked McLean's permission to set the men to roadwork, and suggested that it would be politic to allow an extra shilling a day for such work. The reply, from Branigan, the newly-appointed Commissioner, dated 23 September 1869, approved both the work and the shilling.⁷⁶

To Fox fell the demanding task of initiating the reconstruction of the West Coast district, recently won back from Titokowaru. During the fighting, both Native and European settlements had been razed. In his five week's campaign of January-February 1865, General Chute had marched from Wanaganui to New Plymouth, and back around the coast to Patea, destroying seven fortified pas, twenty-one open villages, and their associated cultivations, as he went.⁷⁷ White settlement then began along the coastal strip of open country. The area south of the Waitotara, earlier bought from the natives, was mainly in the hands of large holders. North of the Waitotara, on confiscated land, were the smaller holdings granted to the 1863 military settlers. Not many of these had been taken up, and those men who had wanted to occupy their grants had suffered frustration and delay caused by defective administration compounded by native obstruction.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Fox

76. *ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

77. Cowan, *New Zealand Wars*, II, 70.

78. Bremer, *Early Development of Patea-Waverley District*, pp. 18-50, is a useful treatment of military settlement in this area.

estimated that there had been over one hundred homesteads north of Kai Iwi Stream. These, together with crops, orchards and fences, had been razed by Titokowaru's war bands in 1868.⁷⁹ The returning colonial forces wreaked a vigorous revenge. Fox reported that all native paha, cultivations and livestock along the coast, and for sixty or seventy miles up the rivers had been utterly destroyed.⁸⁰ All natives had been driven from the district; some had taken refuge with tribes friendly to the colonists, who were answerable for them, others had been sent as prisoners to Otago. The colonial forces had their headquarters at Patea, described by Major Noake on 31 July 1869 as still 'a nest of poisonous pot houses', uninhabitable for 'respectable females'.⁸¹ Garrisons at strategic points controlled the coast as far north as the Waingongoro River. The colonists' holdings lay abandoned, apart from one or two under the immediate protection of the redoubts. From this legacy of destruction, racial hatred, and administrative confusion, Fox sought to bring some order and progress when he visited the district in mid-October, 1869, and again in January 1870.

At Wanganui and Patea Fox received deputations of colonists anxious to return to their lands, but seeking

79. 'Papers Relative to the Patea district,' AJHR, 1870, A-4. These two memoranda by Fox are the main sources for this section.

80. Cowan, *New Zealand Wars*, pp. 311-3, describes the canoe expeditions that scoured the river valleys.

81. Noake to Fox, McLean Papers, quoted Bremer, op.cit., p. 51.

guarantees of security. All his measures were aimed at reassuring them, and encouraging a rapid build-up of white population in the region. To end administrative confusion, he vested undivided authority in Major Noake, the Militia commander, who was appointed Resident Magistrate, and virtually became Government agent for the area. The northern frontier was to be secured by a native contingent at Waihi redoubt, and military settlements at Hawera and Manutahi. These settlements each consisted of twenty-five ten acre sections, leased, with right of purchase, to settlers, a number of whom already had other holdings in the area. Blockhouses for each settlement were constructed in Wellington and shipped to Patea. By January Waihi, Hawera and Manutahi formed a string of strong points, within signalling distances of each other. These military settlers were encouraged to farm their land, while remaining on military pay and rations and under military discipline. These measures, and Fox's promise that rebel Natives would not be allowed to return, on submission, gave the needed reassurance, and settlers began to move onto the land.

The wreckage of the Domett military settlement scheme was a considerable embarrassment to Fox's plans. It tied up a great deal of the best land in the hands of absentee owners. Land for the Hawera and Manutahi posts had to be taken from Railway Reserve. A vote of £10,000 for loans to assist settlers driven off by Titokawaru proved of limited help,

as most of the military settlers' land titles were defective, No loan was made without the security of a reasonably valid title.⁸² To hasten settlement, the survey and sale of confiscated land was transferred from New Plymouth to Patea.

Fox also tackled the question of transport and communications.⁸³ Constabulary and Volunteers were set to roadmaking. Arrangements were made for ferries and accommodation houses. A three-year contract for a twice-weekly mail coach was entered into with Messrs. Shepherd and Cox. There is a note of exultation in a telegram from Fox informing Vogel that the first through coach was about to leave Wellington for Patea.⁸⁴

Fox next turned nearer home. In Wanganui he conferred with H.C. Field, who had just returned from exploring a route from Wanganui to Taupo, and arranged for him to begin making a packhorse track using Native labour. 'Field's Track' was to provide plenty of problems for the future, as his preliminary survey had been too cursory. Wanganui merchants had hopes of using the track to supply the runs on the south west of the volcanic plateau, and tap its wool clip, but for years the Napier merchants continued to snatch the trade from under their noses.

82. Bremer, *op.cit.*, pp. 61-2.

83. AJHR 1870, A-4, pp. 7-8. Fox to McLean, 22 January 1870, McLean Papers, typescript, Vol. 32. The original MSS, and typescript copies (incomplete) in 58 volumes are in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

84. Fox to Vogel, 3 February 1870: McLean Papers, typescript, Vol. 32.

In the Manawatu, Fox was able to examine the proposed roadworks for himself, J.T. Stewart, Provincial Government engineer, accompanying him inland beyond Palmerston. Fox considered this road 'one of the great national works of New Zealand' and he summarized its importance thus:-

Whether regarded as a means of military defence, or as an inlet for colonization and settlement into a vast tract of most valuable land, or as a route for the traffic between the two sides of the island ... the importance of this road cannot be over-estimated. ... The certainty that a large population would soon flock into it, and the benefits of connecting Manawatu, Wanganui, and Wellington with Hawke's Bay ... are results which concern not only the two Provinces directly interested, but the whole Colony ... 85

Fox found that the Provincial Government had made considerable progress with clearing a line through the bush, and forming the road, commencing at Palmerston and working towards the head of navigation on the Manawatu River, but that it was unfinished for want of funds. As a result, he reported 'this fine tract of country lies almost entirely unoccupied; while the partially finished road across to Hawke's Bay would be

This, of course, was old ground to Ormond, and he had taken what action he could, months earlier. He was aware that the first step was to complete the purchase of the Seventy Mile Bush from the Natives. On 10 September 1869, he wrote to McLean⁸⁸ reminding him that the Hawke's Bay Provincial Government had carried negotiations with the Natives almost to the point of purchase, but had been without funds to proceed. He made out the same convincing case as that drawn up later by Fox, emphasising the strategic value of the east-west road, and that 'the planting of a settlement of Europeans midway between the different districts ... could not but have beneficial effect in securing the permanent peace of the Colony.' In McLean's absence the Colonial Secretary, Gisborne, replied, granting the force of Ormond's arguments, but explaining that the General Government was also without funds for the purchase of Native Lands.⁸⁹

Ormond did not leave the matter there. On 6 October 1869 he wrote to Gisborne, enclosing a resolution of the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council. This reiterated all the points Ormond had already made, including a suggestion that the Commissioners about to proceed to England, should endeavour to arrange for an English Company to undertake the settlement of a block of the bush. Ormond must have been given authority to proceed with negotiations with the natives, for, on 7 May 1870, he wrote

88. AJHR 1870, A-18, p. 3.

89. ibid, A-18, pp. 3-4.

to McLean reporting that he had achieved substantial success, and had paid a deposit on each of three large blocks.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, the New Plymouth authorities, shouldered out of the administration of their Patea district in the south, by Fox's various arrangements there, were looking to their northern end of the proposed Mountain Road. Early in February 1870, the Taranaki Superintendent, Carrington, visited Wellington, and as a result of negotiations with Fox and Gisborne, secured £500 to make a start on the inland road.⁹¹

Thus, by the end of the summer of 1869-70 the Fox ministry could look back on some solid achievements. The Native threat had receded, roads were moving ahead in various areas, and settlers were reoccupying the lands from which they had been driven. But almost every line of development was pointing towards the need for colonisation of extensive areas of the Great Bush, for which task the Bush Provinces clearly lacked the necessary resources.

90. *ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

91. *AJHR* 1870, A-17, pp. 13-14.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNERS AND PIONEERS

On 28 June 1870 Julius Vogel presented the financial statement in which he propounded the ambitious Public Works and Immigration Scheme which has, for a number of reasons, come to be largely associated with his name. That the daring scope of the plan owed a good deal to his adventurous and ambitious mind is undoubted. Furthermore his abilities as a public speaker and propagandist, persuasive, plausible, resourceful and imaginative, played an important part in gaining wide acceptance of the plan in Parliament and the electorate. But to credit the scheme solely to Vogel is a distortion of the facts, and the picture not uncommonly given of the idea growing silently in this one man's mind, to be suddenly launched on Parliament and country¹ will not stand up to examination. We have already seen that the rapid development of the Bush Provinces, as the most effective and humane solution of the Native difficulty, was to the fore in the thinking of Fox, McLean, Ormond and Gisborne during 1869. They would have been aware of the impossibility, in the political climate of the time, of the General Government sponsoring a

1. eg., W.H. Oliver, The Story of New Zealand, London 1960, p. 118: 'In 1870 one man resolved that this should indeed be the pattern of the future: Julius Vogel, ...'; R.M. Burdon, The Life and Times of Sir Julius Vogel, Christchurch, 1948, p. 58: 'All these deliberations went on in the privacy of Vogel's mind. Until the day of their public announcement he kept his intentions secret'.

bold forward programme restricted to one part of the country. Vogel may well have been influential in proposing the details of the South Island elements of the plan. For the rest, the main initiative would seem to have come from the North Island members of cabinet, with Vogel accepting the force of their arguments.

Nor can the scheme's element of daring be put solely to Vogel's credit. The basic concept of 'demilitarising' and opting for more rapid peaceful development of the North Island, for which Fox and McLean must take prime credit, was a political gamble, which can too easily go unnoticed because it paid off. Financial boldness, also, was by no means limited to Vogel. By 3 August 1869 McLean was suggesting that a million sterling might be well and wisely spent on roadmaking in the North Island alone.² The plan was clearly a corporate work, based on concepts accepted at the formation of the Ministry, and developed in detail over the ensuing months. By 25 September 1869, Gisborne was able to inform Ormond that 'it is the wish of the Government to prepare and submit if possible to the Assembly at its next Session, a comprehensive plan of Immigration'.³ And during the 1870 Financial Statement debate, Fox was able to produce two cabinet papers dated

2. NZPD, Vol. 6, p. 205.

3. AJHR 1870, A-18, p. 4.

4. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 388.

October 1869, which had been 'discussed before the Cabinet,⁴ and arranged and agreed to at that period'. One was the general outline of the public works and immigration scheme, the other the outline of proposals on public works. This fixing of the timing of the drafting of the policy helps to emphasise that the more potent forces shaping it were the Native question, the departure of the last Imperial troops, the vulnerable position of many of the North Island settlements, and the restiveness of the South Island at the costs of defence. These were all mentioned by Vogel, nearly a quarter of a century later, when explaining the genesis of the scheme to a London audience. Having described how the Imperial Government left the colonists in the lurch, he went on to explain that:

The North Island was sparingly peopled, the Colonists of the Middle Island, by far the most wealthy and populous, were profoundly discontented with the onerous call which had been made on their resources, by expenditure which they comprehensively regarded as cast upon them to fulfil Imperial obligations contracted by the Treaty of Waitangi ... The Public Works' Policy seemed to the Government the sole alternative to a war of extermination with the natives. ... The Government argued that if they could greatly increase the population of the North Island and open up the means of communication through the Island, and at the same time give employment to the Maoris, and make their lands really valuable they would render impossible any future war on a large scale.⁵

This reminiscence supports the contemporary evidence in showing

5. Julius Vogel, *New Zealand, Its Past, Present and Future*, London, 1893. 'Paper read by the Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G. at the Imperial Institute, Dec. 4th 1893.'

that what Vogel propounded in 1870 was a scheme worked out by the whole cabinet, with the needs of the Bush Provinces in the forefront of their concern.

Having come, by October 1869, to at least a tentative agreement on a bold plan, the ministry had worked over the following months to produce such circumstances as would favour its acceptance by the House. We have already noted their success in tackling the key question of Maori-Pakeha relations, but it is necessary to draw attention to the subtlety of some of the issues involved. Clearly, neither men nor loan money could be expected to flow into districts directly threatened with renewed hostilities. But if peace were to be too easily and obviously established, the need for colonial support for settlement of the Bush Provinces would recede, and South Island willingness to vote the necessary finance would fade away. A delicate balance between potential threat and actual security would best favour a rapid forward move in North Island colonisation. For Taranaki, the problem of presenting an impression of security, to attract settlers, while extracting parliamentary votes on account of the native threat, was to continue into the '80s. Taranaki, too, provides a good example of another problem of balance - that between pushing white settlement as quickly as possible to the point where sheer weight of numbers would rule out a further native uprising, and yet not moving so rapidly as to create a friction that would

precipitate hostilities. For Taranaki a temporary solution was the tacit acceptance of the Waingongoro River as the frontier for settlement moving up from the South, and the Stoney River as the southern boundary of the New Plymouth settlement, around the coastal strip, with the extension of settlement directed to the uninhabited forest country behind Mount Egmont. This left the attractive Waimate Plains in Native hands, to become a bone of contention before the decade was out.

At the time Parliament resumed in June 1870, the balance between security and threat was favouring the Government's plans. There were signs of the beginning of acceptance of the Bush Provinces as safe and attractive areas for settlement. At the close of 1869 a visiting Wellington newspaper correspondent was describing Wanganui as experiencing a returning tide of prosperity.⁶ 'Produce is coming in from the country,' he wrote, 'vessels are loading and unloading at the wharves; the shops and public houses are all apparently doing a fair trade'. The country to the north towards Kai Iwi, so recently abandoned, was reported as 'smiling and peaceful' with neat farms, abundant pastures and contented stock. By mid-1870, the Taranaki Herald was presenting a not dissimilar picture of the Patea district.⁷ Good crops had been harvested, herds of cattle were grazing in lush pastures, and a considerable

6. Evening Herald (Wanganui), 4 January 1870. (Article reprinted from a Wellington contemporary.)

7. 'Patea Agriculturally', reprinted in Y, 23 July 1870, p. 4, and in Wellington Independent, 30 July 1870, p. 4.

amount of fencing and other improvements had been carried out. William Rolleston of Christchurch made it clear in the House on 8 July 1870 that many South Islanders were already eyeing 'this magnificent extent of country' eagerly.⁸ Also well under way by mid-1870 was the establishment of a flax industry at various points on the coast. Two mills had been set up at Opunake⁹, one was under way at Patea¹⁰, another was at work on the Whangaehu River, south of Wanganui,¹¹ and Foxton had five.¹² As these mills provided employment for Maori and Pakeha together, the entrepreneurs involved could claim that they had a civilising value,¹³ and their establishment was good evidence of local confidence in the permanence of the peace.

On the other hand, the debates on the Government's proposals show clearly that members on both sides of the House, and from all parts of the country, treated the danger of further native uprisings as a lively possibility. Gisborne, after lucidly explaining to the Legislative Council the various ways in which the proposals would contribute towards peace was able to appeal, without any sense of exaggeration to 'the alternative of peace or war in this Island still

8. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 313.

9. Wellington Independent, 3 February 1870.

10. AJHR, 1870, A-4, p. 5.

11. Y, 22 January 1870, p. 3.

12. Wellington Independent, 7 April, 1870.

13. E.g. W.K. Hulke to Donald McLean, 18 November 1869, AD56/160, National Archives, Wellington.

as it were, trembling in the balance'. This viewpoint, which the Opposition did not contest, gave the Government the necessary leverage to get agreement to expenditure in the North Island quite beyond its proportion of the population or contribution to the revenue. Of the million pounds involved in Vogel's initial proposals, £400,000 for roads in the North Island was balanced against £400,000 for railways in the south, but the remaining £200,000 was to go to the purchasing from the Natives in the North Island of a land endowment to match that already enjoyed by the South.¹⁵

It was not only within the colony that events were working in favour of the Government's plans. The earlier Domett scheme provided a lasting warning that success would be contingent on a favourable response from the London money market. In London, the New Zealand Commissioners, Featherston and Bell, had managed, by hard-headed diplomacy, to extract a guarantee for a one million pound loan from a reluctant Imperial Government.¹⁶ This agreement had been reached on 14 May 1870, and must have greatly encouraged the Ministry as it prepared to put its proposals to the House.

Profiting, then, from favourable developments both at home and abroad, the Fox Ministry carried the House with them. The South conceded the case for a rapid development of the Bush Provinces, with Stafford and Richmond from the Opposition front benches giving strong support to the

14. NZPD, Vol. 9, p. 185. (23 August 1870).

15. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 102. NZS, 1870, pp. 313-336.

16. For the negotiations, see AJHR 1870, A-1A, pp. Scholefield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II,

of a railway 'through that great tract of rich forest^{17/} country behind Mount Egmont, from Waitara to Wanganui.

Most of the southern members were prepared to at least hope that Vogel was right in his contention that 'the North Island, settled, will support a fully equal share of population, and meet a fully equal amount of the general liability.'¹⁸ Macandrew of Otago granted that the North Island was destined to support the larger population, and could even hope that it would one day recoup the South for the expenses of the wars.¹⁹ Having provided amply for the South in their proposals, the Government were able to carry measures which allowed for an immediate start on an extensive road-building programme in the Bush Provinces, with large-scale immigration and railway building to follow in due course. Over the next few months the colony, aided by Vogel's oratory, largely accepted the vision of ten years of active colonisation, in which the whole country, would be laced together by trunk roads and railways, the empty forests of the north peopled, and the natives both civilised and utterly outnumbered.

Yet though the programme had been effectively sold to the country, the difficulties to be overcome before the dream could come true in the Bush Provinces were challenge enough for any administration. In his first report as

17. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 274 (Richmond). ibid., p. 347, for Stafford's concurrence.

18. ibid., p. 102.

19. ibid., p. 350.

Immigration Officer of the General Government, A. Follett Halcombe summed up the situation in a succinct comparison²⁰ between the two islands. Canterbury and Otago, he explained, already had a carefully organized system of immigration, but in the North Island the Government had to 'commence de novo, and create the necessary machinery to carry the new policy into practical effect'. Moreover, in the South Island the whole country had been occupied rapidly and without hindrance, and was ready to absorb a constant stream of labour to assist with agricultural operations already under way. There the task was 'chiefly in aiding the different settlements to enlarge themselves', but in the North it assumed the form 'of founding a number of small new colonies on lands where Europeans have hitherto been prevented from carrying on even the first rudimentary processes of colonization'.

Finding the people for these new colonies was a problem of some weight. Certainly there were men with capital in the South Island prepared to take up good quality open country, such as the Patea Coast. But the main drive would now have to be into bush country, and this no-one seemed eager to tackle. 'It is especially noticeable',²¹ reported the Wellington Independent early in 1870, 'that the intending small farmer of late years appears to have an

20. AJHR 1872, D-16. The quotations are all from p. 7.

21. 29 March 1870. Supplement to Summary for Europe America.

entire aversion to forest land, and shrinks from the labour of clearing the bush.' The reasons are not far to seek. The bush was costly to clear, delayed production from the land, hampered communications, and harboured unfriendly natives. Most of it lay inland, with only primitive links with ports and markets. Simple social and economic facts dictated that the men to form these new bush colonies would have to be largely agricultural wage labourers, most of them recruited from the Old World. Somehow they would have to be drawn to these distant and almost unheard-of parts. Once in the bush, they would have to have means to maintain themselves until they had rendered the land productive. A fair proportion of them would have to be put somehow in possession of the means to begin farming on their own account. All this would have to be carried through despite strong attractions offered by the older settled areas, already short of labour, and about to be stimulated to more rapid development by the new policy. It was indeed a demanding task of colonisation that the Fox Government faced.

Through the latter half of 1870, as the enabling legislation went into the statute book, the Ministry began to tackle these stubborn practical problems. The requirements for success were clearly the recruiting of suitable manpower, the raising of sufficient money, and the building up of efficient teams of planners and administrators. More than one

of Cabinet toyed hopefully with the idea that British entrepreneurs might be persuaded to come forward to meet this complex of needs in simple package deals. Ormond, in 1869, had envisaged the possibility of an English Company taking over a block of land in the Seventy Mile Bush, paying the Government what it had cost to buy from the Natives, and roading and settling it with immigrants, all for the prospect of an eventual profit.²² In 1871, Vogel was to go more than one better than this in his proposed No. 1. Contract with Brogden and Son, which would have given the colony £4,000,000 worth of railways and 10,000 immigrants, in return for transferring some 3,000,000 acres of land to the contractors.²³ Something was to come of this kind of approach but it was not to provide the answer for the tough initial project of opening the main communication routes through the Bush. The British agricultural labourer was far from the ideal man for this task, and in any case, it soon became clear that he would not be too easily procured even for the already settled districts. Yet an answer had to be found, not only to provide men and roads for defence, but also to tap the timber resources of the Bush, in order to meet the growing demands of colonial development. Great quantities would be required for road and railway bridges

22. AJHR 1870, A-18, p. 3.

23. AJHR 1871, A-6, pp. 24-33.

and culverts, for railway sleepers and wharves. It was also the obvious building material for the homes, mills, shops, churches and public buildings which an expanding population would require. Yet, until well into the 1870s, Wellington and Hawke's Bay Provinces, despite their great forests, were to find their pace of development largely controlled by the amount of timber they could import. Until the spring of 1873 Foxton imported most of her timber from the Marlborough Sounds.²⁴ Wanganui depended on the Sounds, Auckland, and even Hokitika²⁵ until 1878, when the railway to Rangitikei at last tapped the bush. In 1873, when the Patea River was being bridged, and an influx of population to the district making a heavy demand on building, much of the timber was shipped in from Marlborough and Auckland.²⁶ Until Hawke's Bay's railway effectively tapped the forests towards the end of the decade,²⁷ large quantities of timber were imported, mainly from Auckland. Much timber for Wellington was hauled from as far away as the Lower Wairarapa, one traveller in 1871 meeting no less than eleven timber wagons on the tortuous road over the Rimutaka Range,²⁸ but the local supply had to be supplemented from the Sounds,²⁹ and railway sleepers were imported from as far away as Southland in 1873.³⁰ Clearly it would be a great help if

24. NZM, 8 June 1872, & 8 March 1873.

25. Y, 20 March 1875, p. 12, and 16 June 1877, Supplement.

26. Y, 26 July 1873, p. 7, & 6 December 1873, p. 3.

27. NZM, 25 October 1873, p. 7; Hawke's Bay Provincial Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1874, Council Paper (unnumbered), 'Opening Speech of ... The Superintendent', p. 2; Hawke's Bay Herald, 9 October 1876.

28. Wellington Independent, 22 November 1871.

29. NZM, 3 August 1872, p. 11.

30. NZM, 3 May 1873, p. 5.

the bush pioneers combined the gifts of the lumberman with those of the roadbuilder and farmer. In August 1870 Featherston and Bell visited Scandinavia, and returned to London convinced that they had found there the ideal pioneers for the New Zealand bush. Scandinavia, however, could not be looked to for money and administrators, so any bush colonies these settlers formed would have to be financed and organized by the New Zealand Government.

The pattern which eventually developed was that Scandinavians were brought in to open the main routes through the Manawatu and Seventy Mile Bush. Under the administration of the General Government they constructed trunk roads, and a tramway (soon converted to a railway) to take timber from Palmerston North out to the coast at Foxton. Meanwhile they steadily cleared farms for themselves, and smoothed the way for a second wave of settlers. One section of these were the immigrants brought directly from England to Rangitikei by the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, the one example in the Bush of British entrepreneurs undertaking the task of bush settlement. But the greater part of this second wave were more seasoned colonists, moving into bush sections after having gained capital and experience elsewhere, mainly in open country. By the mid-1870s a rapid and effective advance into

the lowland bush was under way. To bring this about, the older 'open country' settlements had had to be quickly developed to a point where they complemented the bush settlements, rather than competed unduly with them for labour and capital. So successful was the Government's development policy, that the peopling of the Bush became a continuous process, proceeding in good years and bad, to the end of the century and beyond. We must now turn back and examine how this colonising effort was set in motion.

The Cabinet had authorised Featherston and Bell to make enquiries concerning immigration, and to this they turned their main attention once the one million loan arrangements were in hand. As members of Fox's Cabinet, they were well aware of their colleagues' thinking on the opening of strategic roads through the Bush, and Featherston, as Superintendent of Wellington Province, had a special interest in finding the right type of settler. They must have been aware of the reputation the Swedes and Norwegians were building up as forest pioneers in the American Middle West, and Featherston would have been impressed with the little Scandinavian bush colony initiated by Monrad in the Manawatu. The decision to visit Scandinavia and North Germany was both natural and wise. It led first to the Commissioners' immediate decision to exceed their instructions and arrange for a small initial party from each country, and later to further shipments being arranged

by Featherston on his return as Agent-General in 1871.

These immigrants not only augmented the Manawatu settlement and founded the Special Settlements at Mauriceville, Norsewood, Dannevirke and Eketahuna, but they also provided experienced forest workers to form the vanguard of colonisation in other parts of the Bush. While they formed only a minority of the total immigration to the region, their special qualities and talents gave them an importance out of proportion to their numbers.

Presented by latitude and the geological processes of glaciation with a demanding environment, the Scandinavian peoples had responded by building societies noted for their frugality, hard work, and enterprise. A brief survey of their traditions and economic circumstances³¹ will show why their emigrants were so uniquely fitted for pioneering the forest frontiers of America and Australasia. In contrast to the British rural pattern of squire, farmer, and wage labourer, the typical Scandinavian country community consisted of small holders farming their own land, with the assistance of crofters who provided day labour while living on small rented holdings. Feudalism had never flourished strongly in these thinly settled northern countries. Rather, the social tradition was one of a

31. I have found the following the most useful references for this section: Michael Drake, Population and Society in Norway 1735-1865, Cambridge, 1969. A.C. O'Dell, The Scandinavian World, London, 1957. A.C. Z. Sømme, (ed.), The Geography of Norden, London, 1961.

rough equality and a democratic temperament. As in Britain, an open-field system of agriculture had been common until the eighteenth century, but unlike Britain, the enclosure movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had not been in general associated with a shift to large-scale, highly-capitalized farming. For the most part, State policy, together with geographic and economic factors, prevented the forming^{of} large estates. At the other end of the social scale, landless cotters had not been numerous until the rapid population growth of the nineteenth century.

The Scandinavian immigrants, therefore, did not come encumbered with attitudes of deference to a property elite, as many English immigrants did. They had not to unlearn the psychological outlook engendered by a ceremonial regime as they adapted to their new homelands.³² They brought, instead, the experience of societies long guided by civil servants. As one writer explains:

... if one takes a close look at the convivial parties of rural 'gentry' described in Norwegian novels as late as 1900 one finds that they were predominantly made up of the local sheriff, the county-court judge, the headmaster of the nearest grammar school and their more presentable aides, together with an occasional military or naval officer - all servants of the state ...³³

32. Martin, The Shearers and the Shorn, is an excellent case study of the ceremonial regime of an English rural community.

33. B.W. Downs, Modern Norwegian Literature 1860-1918, Cambridge 1966, p. 3.

This experience with the ways and quirks of bureaucracy must have been very useful to the Scandinavians forming the New Zealand bush colonies, for these were planned and, for some years, guided by civil servants. A.F. Halcombe, when questioned before a Parliamentary Committee in 1873, explained that 'our own countrymen' could not have been placed in the bush with the same chance of success as the Scandinavians, because 'they would not submit to guidance as these foreigners do'.³⁴ Church and school had no doubt contributed to this easy social control, for, in the Lutheran tradition, clergy and schoolteachers were all civil servants, displaying the usual characteristics of the bureaucratic mind.³⁵ The reasonableness for which Halcombe commended 'these foreigners' would also have been partly the result of education, for schooling had long been almost universal. The State was prodded and assisted by the church in the task. As the New Zealand Commissioners noted, the church applied its own sanctions by refusing confirmation to those failing to reach an acceptable standard.³⁶

A marked feature of rural life in most parts of Sweden and Norway was the interdependence of forestry and farming. In the slack winter of the agriculturalist, he commonly turned to forest work to provide him with a much needed supplementary income. Conversely small holdings were encouraged in forest

34. Appendices to the Journals of the Legislative Council, 1873. No. 12, p. 29.

35. Drake, Population and Society in Norway has much material on the bureaucratic role of the clergy, e.g. in census-taking, registering births, deaths and marriages, policing vaccination. See index, 'clergy'.

36. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 5.

areas so that a labour supply was available. Besides forest work, the winter with its long periods of enforced indoor life, was used to practice trades such as those of the carpenter, joiner, and blacksmith. In some areas the sea was an important supplementary source of employment and income. The skills of the seaman and the fisherman were widely spread in Scandinavia.

Scandinavian women also possessed skills which fitted them well for pioneer life. With the men so commonly away, as crofters spending most of the day on their landlord's farm, or as lumbermen or fishermen, absent from home for weeks or months, the women undertook almost all kinds of outdoor farm work, as need required. When indoors, they were perpetually busy, for, in a largely pre-industrial society, cottage crafts were a necessity. When Halcombe interviewed the Celoeno's shipment of Norwegians in February 1871, the women proudly informed him that every article of clothing worn by their men had been spun and woven at home.³⁷ This self-sufficiency fitted the womenfolk to meet both the economic and the psychological challenges of the pioneer bush settlements. They made only the most frugal demands on the family purse, and when their menfolk went off for long spells, roadmaking,

37. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 13.

bush-felling, or swagging in search of other employment, they took over the responsibilities of home and bush section with seasoned efficiency.

From the opening decade of the nineteenth century, a falling death rate gave rise to a growing population throughout Scandinavia. The first response was to pioneer new land at home. In Sweden the arable area trebled between 1800 and 1870;³⁸ in Norway it doubled between 1820 and 1865.³⁹ Despite these efforts, the population threatened to outrun the region's resources. Unable, through lack of natural endowments, to find an answer in rapid industrialisation, the Scandinavians turned to large scale emigration. Swedes began to emigrate to America in the 1840s, and the stream had grown to 25,000 a year by 1870.⁴⁰ From Norway, large scale emigration began in the late 1860s, the New Zealand Commissioners reporting it at about 12,000 a year in 1870.⁴¹ Denmark faced the special problems created by the Austro-Prussian annexation of Schleswig-Holstein on 1864. This left 200,000 Danes on the German side of the frontier. An overseas migration resulted, from both sides of the new border. Many men of military age left Schleswig rather than submit to the Prussian compulsory military service. Denmark, with her resources reduced, and

38. O'Dell, Scandinavian World, p. 121.

39. Drake, Population and Society in Norway, p. 73.

40. Spørre, Norden, p. 343. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 5.

41. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 5; Drake, Population and Society in Norway, p. 86.

refugees augmenting an already steadily growing population, provided her own contribution to the flow of emigrants.

It was this stream of emigration, flowing almost entirely to America, that Featherston and Bell investigated in August 1870. They were deeply impressed with its suitability to New Zealand needs, and their enthusiastic report, dated 9 September 1870, obviously impressed their colleagues also. Gisborne took the unusual step of promptly publishing it in the Gazette.⁴² It describes these emigrants as agricultural labourers and small farmers who are 'first-rate axemen and sawyers, and understand the lumber trade thoroughly'; 'excellent joiners and carpenters'; 'extremely honest, frugal and industrious, and all more or less educated'. Furthermore, they seemed to 'have great facility in acquiring the English language, and in habits, manners, and customs resemble very closely our own countrymen, especially the Scotch'. Time was to confirm these judgements. Wherever Scandinavians have emigrated to British communities they have assimilated with ease. 'We are not like the Scotch, with their Burns Clubs and Caledonian Societies, a Danish immigrant is reported as saying. 'We do not forget the land of our birth, but we realise that it is best to become whole-hearted members of the society in which we are settled.'⁴³

42. NZG, 1870, pp. 603-5 (19 November 1870). Reprinted in AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 5-6.

43. J.W. Davidson, The Scandinavians in New Zealand, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1938, p. 7.

The Commissioners saw two difficulties in the way of diverting a portion of this stream of emigration from America to New Zealand. These people could not afford the cost of the longer passage, and they were unwilling to go to a country where they had no friends, and of which they knew nothing. To meet the latter difficulty, the Commissioners arranged for firms in Oslo, Goteborg and Copenhagen to send out a small party from each country before the emigration season closed with the onset of winter, their passages to be paid by the New Zealand Government. They suggested that each party consist of about ten young married couples, with not more than two children to each couple, but young unmarried men and women might be substituted if necessary. As the object was to make New Zealand known in Scandinavia through the reports of satisfied immigrants, it was requested that they be recruited from as many different districts as possible. At Copenhagen Bishop Monrad's son, Johannes, recently returned from New Zealand, agreed to select the Danish contingent. The parties were to be sent to either London or Glasgow, from where their despatch to the colony was entrusted to John Morrison, New Zealand Government Agent in London.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, as soon as Parliament adjourned, the Ministry set about enlisting planners and administrators to get the Immigration and Public Works programme launched. The

44. See AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 9, 18-9, for his reports on carrying out this commission.

news of these parties of Scandinavians gave added urgency to the task. Gisborne took charge of the newly created Ministry of Public Works until Ormond joined the Cabinet late in the following year. From the appointments made, and the tasks the new men were immediately set to, the Government's priorities may easily be deduced. On 21 September Gisborne telegraphed John Blackett, Nelson Provincial Engineer, asking him to come to Wellington to discuss his undertaking the duties of Chief Engineer. Within hours Blackett was on the way by the next steamer, and on arrival accepted the position, which he filled until the arrival of John Carruthers from England in 1871. John Blackett (1819-93) brought a varied and useful range of experience to his new task. Before emigrating to New Plymouth in 1851, he had worked in the office of the Great Western Railway, and had been Chief Engineer to a firm of railway contractors. Following appointment as Provincial Engineer for Nelson in 1859 he had explored routes to the West Coast, Canterbury and Marlborough, planned and superintended a wide variety of public works, and as first Warden of the Nelson South-West Goldfield had created an administration under hurly-burly pioneer conditions.⁴⁵ His journal entries following his acceptance of his new position give interesting glimpses of the Administration getting down to its tasks.⁴⁶

45. F.W. Furkert Early New Zealand Engineers, Wellington, 1953, pp. 115-6.

46. John Blackett 'Journals and Letters' Vol. 3, MS 091/B628, General Assembly Library, Wellington.

During his day or two in Wellington on this appointment visit, Blackett was initiated into the Government's policies and proposals. Of Cabinet ministers he saw Gisborne, Fox, McLean and Sewell. In a welter of plans and maps he saw, among others, Dr Hector, geologist and explorer, obviously an influential advisor of the Government,⁴⁷ and Alfred Domett, Secretary of Lands, an old hand at devising ambitious schemes. Blackett returned to Nelson commissioned to engage John Rochfort as surveyor.⁴⁸ Rochfort (1832-93) had trained under the great Brunel and had had a wide experience of exploring and surveying in New Zealand. Over the next two decades he surveyed several of the country's main railway routes, including preliminary surveys for the line over the Rimutakas to Wairarapa and for the North Island Main Trunk. Also engaged over the next few weeks were K.H. Weber, Provincial Engineer of Hawke's Bay, who was commissioned to survey the route through the Seventy Mile Bush to the Manawatu Gorge, and J.T. Stewart, stationed at Foxton in the employ of the Wellington Provincial Government, who became the first District Engineer under the new Department.⁴⁹ Stewart (1827-1913) had carried out the preliminary survey of the Manawatu-Rangitikei Block in 1858,

47. He and Blackett were shortly to be treated as an unofficial Board of Advice to the Government. See Blackett, 'Journal', entry for 6 November 1870. The Government seem to have been reluctant to appoint the Board of Advice provided in the Act. See NZS 1870, p. 334; 1871, p. 319.

48. Blackett, 'Journal', entries for 23 & 27 September, 1870.

49. NZG, 1870, p. 593.

and in 1867 had found a feasible road route through the Manawatu Gorge.⁵⁰ With Fox's continuing encouragement and support,⁵¹ he was pushing on the development of the east-west route through the Gorge as fast as labour and finance allowed.

Blackett took up his post in Wellington on 5 November 1870, and the following day was in conference with Gisborne, Hector and Stewart. With schemes afoot in all parts of the country, the travels and reports of these key planners show that the Government was clearly giving priority to the east-west route from Foxton via Palmerston and the Gorge to Napier, together with the road up the West Coast via Wanganui to Patea. Hector had just returned from a visit to Patea, and Blackett's first visit away from Wellington took him first to Manawatu, Wanganui and Patea. Out of these priorities came the decision to locate the first Scandinavian immigrants in the Manawatu. It was the adoption of the idea of a tramway to tap Palmerston's totara forests that clinched the matter.

T.L. Buick⁵² reports that the local settlers had conceived the idea earlier in 1870, and put their proposals in a letter to the Provincial Secretary, Halcombe, who thereupon visited the district accompanied by Chew, a Porirua sawmiller, and J.T. Stewart, to assess the practicability of the scheme.

50. J.T. Stewart, 'Notes on the Manawatu District in the Nineteenth Century', Typescript copy of MS, MSq993.1/1902?, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

51. See e.g. McLean Papers, typescript: Vol. 32, Fox to McLean, 22 January 1870; Vol. 34, J.T. Stewart to Fox, 8 September, 1870; Vol. 35, Fox to McLean, 27 October 1870.

52. Old Manawatu, pp. 294-5.

Though impressed, he could do nothing, as the Provincial Treasury was empty. Now the General Government took up the scheme. Blackett inspected the route, and on 28 November 1870 wrote to Gisborne that he 'had not seen any road which offers such facilities for trying the experiment'. He considered that the nature of the country, and the absence, over most of the route, of material for metalling, made a wooden tram-road the only feasible means of linking Foxton and Palmerston at a moderate cost.⁵³ Gisborne now asked Robert Pharazyn, Commissioner of Crown Lands, and A.F. Halcombe, to make suggestions for carrying into effect 'the views of the Government on the subject of the Scandinavian immigrants'.⁵⁴ In keeping with the rules of the Provincial/General Government game, Pharazyn duly reported back that the Provincial Government agreed to reserve a block of surveyed land near Palmerston North to enable the General Government to locate at least sixty families there⁵⁵ (i.e. the total number of Scandinavians arranged for by the Commissioners). Halcombe and Pharazyn together drew up comprehensive suggestions for receiving and locating the Celoeno party.⁵⁶

At this point a little byplay, arising from the politics of the Provincial System must be briefly discussed. On 24

53. AJHR 1871, D-2, p. 3.

54. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 10, memo. dated 15 December 1870.

55. ibid., memo, dated 21 December 1870.

56. ibid., pp. 10-12, memo. dated 24 December 1870.

January 1871, Gisborne addressed a circular memorandum to the Superintendents of Otago, Canterbury and Nelson, giving details of these Scandinavian immigrants and asking whether they wished to have any for their provinces.⁵⁷ From this, some investigators⁵⁸ have inferred that the General Government was in doubt as to what to do with these immigrants. The dates of the various memoranda make it clear that the Fox administration had their own quite decided views on the subject before the circular was despatched. The circular was apparently an afterthought, designed to meet criticism that Wellington Province was receiving favoured treatment. The answers to it contained no attractive offers, and they were easily disposed of, as was a Taranaki request that some of the Scandinavians be sent to supply labour for the Opunake flax mills.

Halcombe's and Pharazyn's suggestions, with modifications as regards the terms for taking up land, made by Featherston on his return early in 1871,⁵⁹ were accordingly adopted. On arrival, Halcombe would superintend the temporary accommodation of the immigrants in the barracks at Te Aro. At the earliest practicable date, they would be sent on to the Manawatu by the Government steamer Luna, and located on their sections

57. AJHR 1871, D-3A, p. 7.

58. e.g. Latiffa Khan, Immigration into Wellington Province, 1853-1876, Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1968, pp. 408-9.

59. AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 12-13.

near Palmerston North. Here work would be provided for them, forming a tramway and cutting railway sleepers and telegraph posts for other parts of the Colony. This latter activity would assist them in clearing their own land. The land terms finally agreed on were twenty acres reserved for two years, with the right to purchase at any time in that period, but if they purchased within twelve months, another twenty acres was to be reserved for another two years. The price was set at £1 per acre. All arrangements for their location, Government employment, and land purchase would be handled by J.T. Stewart.

Halcombe's local experience may well lie behind various practical details in the report, such as suggestions regarding food supplies and tools, and the recommendation that in view of the Celoeno's arrival coinciding with the height of the mosquito seasons, the men be given the choice of going ahead to prepare wharves, while the women and children remained for a few weeks in Wellington. Arthur Follett Halcombe (1834-1900) had been educated at St Paul's School and Oxford University and had emigrated to the Rangitikei under the auspices of William Fox, about 1855. He was a nephew of Lady Fox, and had managed, and at one stage leased, Fox's Westoe estate. He had had administrative experience as Inspector of Schools, and as Provincial Secretary and Treasurer. During the 1870s,

he played a significant part in the colonisation of the
⁶⁰
 Bush.

The Celoeno reached Wellington on 5 February 1871, and Halcombe set about executing the Administration's plans. He found that the immigrants possessed 'more than ordinary qualifications' for their role. In addition to the qualifications already noted by the Commissioners, he found that most of the men had even had experience in cutting sleepers and laying a railway. At his suggestion each family produced a list of supplies and equipment sufficient for four or five months, and these were provided on Government credit, to be shipped with them to Foxton. Halcombe was aware that the Palmerston North settlement might well be isolated by winter mud. He reported that he used his 'local knowledge and long experience of country life' to put before these people the circumstances they would find themselves in at Palmerston North.⁶¹ They decided to take their wives and families with them, and brave the mosquitoes together.

On the 13 February, accompanied by Halcombe, the party left on the Luna for Foxton. At Foxton 'a large concourse of the townspeople and Maoris' gathered at the wharf, both to

60. Biographical details from: Obituary published in The Pauline Magazine of St Paul's School, July 1900; G.H. Scholefield, A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 2 Vols., Wellington, 1940, I, 342. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, 6 Vols., Wellington, Christchurch, 1897-1908, Vol. I, p. 1267.

61. Halcombe to Gisborne, 10 February 1871: AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 13-4.

welcome the new arrivals, and to see the largest steamer that had visited the port.⁶² After an overnight stop in Foxton, they moved inland to begin the first planned colonisation of the Great Bush. Halcombe visited them again two months later when he brought in the England's party. He found that though the weather had been most unfavourable, the Norwegians had made good progress. Most had built substantial little houses, some had felled from one to two acres of bush, and they had been putting in regular work on Government contracts. Four were dissatisfied because their land had been flooded by a creek following heavy rains in March. Halcombe removed them to more favourable sections, and left them cheerfully at work.⁶³

The England's party was made up of the Swedish and Danish immigrants, and was landed at Wellington on 21 March 1871. The Swedish contingent was small, consisting of only 7 married couples with 5 children, but the Danish party was larger than planned, consisting of 5 couples with 6 children, 35 single men and 3 single women. The disproportionate number of single men, several as young as 17 and 18, sent by the Wilken Horneman of Copenhagen, displeased the New Zealand authorities. Its causes probably lay in the Prussian occupation of Schleswig. After some delay in arranging a steamer, the party proceeded to

62. NZM, 25 February 1871, p. 2, prints a report from a Foxton correspondent. AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 16-17 has Halcombe's account.

63. AJHR 1871, D-3A, pp. 16-17.

Foxton, arriving on 8 April. Since February the road to Palmerston had deteriorated badly, and the journey in took two days. The first night they camped at Oroua Bridge. As they left next morning, the Maoris from Ngawhakarau Pa nearby met them with a gift of several tons of potatoes and pumpkins. This second day's journey was a struggle through the mud. It was a long day's toil for three good horses to haul through a lightly loaded dray, and in consequence the cost of freight had risen from £2 to £7 per ton. The need for the tramway was thus amply demonstrated to the newcomers. They were located on the same terms as the Norwegians, except that only twenty acres were reserved for each single man.

Halcombe returned to Wellington to urge Gisborne to speed up the formation of the tramway from Palmerston North to Ngawhakarau, the head of navigation on the Manawatu River, a distance of eight and a half miles. He assured Gisborne that even a mountain range would present a less obstacle than this stretch of dead level 'roadway' through the mud. Passage was difficult and dangerous even for a horseman, and draymen were about to raise their charges to £10 per ton for the Foxton-Palmerston haul, whereas costs would drop to 30s or even £1⁶⁴ per ton the moment the tramway reached Ngawhakarua. The reply

64. Halcombe to Gisborne, 22 April 1871: AJHR 1871, D-2, p. 4.

from John Knowles, Under Secretary for Public Works, assured him that Stewart had been instructed to complete the work as rapidly as possible, and also to prepare specifications and estimates for the completion of the tramway from Ngawhakarau to Foxton.⁶⁵ Probably Stewart's eagerness to push on his various works as rapidly as possible had contributed largely to the deterioration of the road. Besides the Scandinavians, and such other white labour as was available, he was making maximum use of Maori working parties. These had done most of the work between Foxton and the bush, and had also felled the bush along the roadline through the Gorge. The Scandinavians, spread along the roadline both west and east of the Palmerston North town site, were not only pressing on with the tramline, but also pushing the road eastward to the Manawatu Gorge. Road formation in the Gorge itself began in March 1871.⁶⁶ Stewart's official report for the year to 31 May 1872 shows that road formation had been carried from Palmerston North right through the Gorge, 14 miles in all, 7 of which had been gravelled. Ferries had been established at the crossings at both ends of the Gorge, and designs for both bridges were shortly to be prepared. Work on the tramway was in progress from both ends. From Palmerston North through the bush about eight

65. Knowles to Halcombe, 28 April 1871: *ibid.* John Knowles (1821-91) had first come to New Zealand in 1841, in the employ of the New Zealand Company. He went to England in 1869 as secretary to Featherston and Bell. On his return in 1871 he was appointed Under-Secretary for Public Works, from which position he retired in 1883.

66. Stewart, 'Notes on the Manawatu District' p.4. R.G. Oliver, *The Impact of Communications in the Manawatu-Kairanga*, 1874

miles had been done, and a beginning made with laying the rails, which were of heart matai on sleepers of heart totara. A new bridge was being built across the Oroua for the tramway. On the sandy country inland from Foxton about 13 miles of formation had been done. The materials and equipment for this impressive range of works would have heavily burdened the road in to Palmerston North. The tramway, until completed, only worsened the problem, for it was built along the roadway, confining all traffic to one side.

In July 1871 a correspondent of the Wellington Independent,⁶⁷ making his first visit to the district, provides a graphic description of the state of the Foxton-Palmerston road. He obtained 'what is usually termed here a good mud horse', and chose a day when he would have company 'without which no person ever travels on this road'. The first half of the journey, through the sandhill country, he describes as 'the most cheerless, dreary prospect' he had ever seen, with 'a few wretched looking and half wild sheep' managing to pick up a bare and scanty subsistence among stunted scrub, fern, flax and toi-toi, and the only habitations an occasional deserted and decaying roadman's hut. In due course they reach Oroua Bridge, and the edge of the bush, where the passable road ends. The account proceeds:

67. 28 July, 1871.

Fancy, if you can, a road ... without the slightest fall for water for miles, except into the drains on either side, which in many places had overflowed and deluged it to perhaps the depth of several feet and this cut up by bullock drays, packhorses, sledges, and horsemen till it is one floating quaking sea of moving clay, floating logs, and debris of one kind and another. Through this slimy treacherous road your poor horse slowly drags his weary way ... Sometimes all his four legs are fast in the roots and holes beneath the surface, and his belly and nose are the only purchases with which he can work himself free again. With a frantic struggle, and a plunge so violent that it takes you all your time to keep your saddle - up he flounders again, snorting and trembling, stands for a moment to regain his fast waning strength, and then urged on by spur and whip, plunges on only to struggle as before.

The writer disclaims any exaggeration in the picture he has drawn. Newspaper reports for the next month or two describe the road as impassable, with Palmerston North settlement depending on the river for supplies. These were brought up above Ngawhakarau by a small steamer, the Pioneer, and then brought on by canoe. Canoe loads were lost in upsets on the way, and when a freshet in the river halted the canoe traffic 'there was very nearly a famine.'⁶⁸

Despite these privations, new settlers were moving in, and the township site was at last being occupied.⁶⁹ The first sawmill was erected by Bartholomew and Manson during

68. Wellington Independent, 16 August & 8 September 1871. Patea was even worse off in the winter of 1871. The dray road was nigh impassable, and weeks of gales prevented ships entering. Supplies of flour, sugar, tea, tobacco, liquor etc. were exhausted. - Wellington Independent, 4 September, 1871.

69. Buick, Old Manawatu, pp. 295-6.

this trying winter, the steam engine having been somehow got up the capricious river 'after much labour and expense', and production began on 9 August. Among the mill's early tasks was the sawing of the rails for the tramway.⁷⁰ But, due to an unsatisfactory contractor, there were to be two further winters of frustration before the tramway was in full operation. Notwithstanding these various difficulties and delays, the General Government's plans for the development of the Manawatu were proving to be well conceived and effectively carried out.

The scheme was also proving very satisfactory from the viewpoint of the Scandinavian immigrants. Henry Bunny, who succeeded Halcombe as Provincial Secretary, visited Palmerston North in December 1871, and reported the Scandinavian settlement to be in a prosperous state. The settlers had made good progress in establishing their homes and farms, and several were showing initiative in other directions. One had erected a brewery, for which the necessary 'malt, hops, etc.' were available on the spot. Another had started a blacksmith's forge, while others were manufacturing their own bricks.⁷¹ Perhaps Bunny was able to help with a difficulty reported a week or two earlier. When they left the homelands the Scandinavians had been told not to bring their tools and equipment with them, as the Government would provide them with all they needed. Unfortunately, the

70. Wellington Independent, 15 & 19 July, 16 August, 1871
 71. Ibid., 9 December 1871.

authorities had overlooked the fact that these folk did their own spinning and weaving, and that spinning wheels were not readily available in the Colony. There was a demand for about fifty spinning wheels, and as the complaint does not appear to have been repeated, they must somehow have been supplied.⁷² These women soon established a reputation as outdoor workers. It was noted that they did the underscrubbing of the bush before their men did the felling. 'All the young single women could readily get married to old settlers', an 'old Otago man' from the neighbourhood told a newspaper correspondent. This gentleman employed Scandinavians, and paid them a shilling a day above other workmen.⁷³ The Government was also well satisfied, their only complaint being that the single men were attracted away by the wages offered them by settlers elsewhere, instead of developing their bush sections.⁷⁴

The second bush colony of Scandinavians was that sent to Mauriceville. Soon after his return to England as Agent-General, Featherston reached the conclusion that 'the prospects of any large emigration from England and Scotland at present under the terms offered are not encouraging'.⁷⁵ He

72. *ibid.*, 16 November 1871

73. *Y.*, 23 August 1873.

74. *AJHR* 1872, D-1, p. 4.

75. *AJHR* 1872, D-1A, p. 4.

therefore promptly revisited Scandinavia and North Germany, acting, he remarked, 'more from my knowledge of the Ministry than from any positive or definite instructions'. By 16 November 1871 he was able to report agreements entered into for 2000 Germans, 3000 Norwegians and 1000 Danes to be sent out over the next two years, and negotiations in progress for 2000 Swedes.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the emigration season was about to close, and only one shipment was embarked before winter set in. They came by the England, reaching Wellington on 9 March 1872, and were destined for the Forty Mile Bush in the North Wairarapa.

From the beginning, this party experienced misfortunes and hardships far beyond those of the Palmerston North immigrants. They had been collected and despatched to London in unpleasant wintry weather, and had not been long at sea when an epidemic of measles and small pox broke out. Complaints against the ship's surgeon led to an enquiry on arrival in New Zealand. The evidence taken throws a little light on their background. Of the 28 Norwegians landed on Wellington, 15 (4 married couples and their children, and one single man) came from Neas, a district about thirteen miles from Oslo. Christopher Ericksen, from Neas, in giving this information, remarked 'I have got friends out here

76. ibid., The figures are for 'statute adults', with children counting as $\frac{1}{2}$ adult.

who arrived last year.'⁷⁷ In this case, at least, the initial shipments had achieved the object of making New Zealand favourably known.⁷⁸

The frustration of quarantine on Somes Island was only the beginning of the delays this party were to experience. The site for their settlement had been selected six miles in from the southern edge of the bush, but the sections had not been surveyed, nor an access road begun. The immigrants had therefore to establish a temporary camp, known as 'Scandinavian Camp' on the edge of the bush, and set to work to hack their own way to the site. An advance party of men walked through to set up Scandinavian Camp in mid April, accompanied by a wagon carrying their baggage, tools and two tarpaulins for temporary shelter. They set to work erecting slab huts.⁷⁹ The rest of the party followed, the women, children and baggage crammed onto three drays, the heads of families marching behind 'most of them armed with umbrellas, a few carrying antediluvian looking shot guns'.⁸⁰ These may well have been the heavy smooth-bore muzzle-loading muskets which G.C. Petersen⁸¹ reports many of the settlers to have brought with them from Denmark. The

77. Report of Commissioners upon Matters connected with the ship "England". AJHR 1872, G-3, p. 28.

78. How general this result was it is difficult to say. There are few references in the records to the precise districts of origin of the Scandinavian immigrants.

79. AJHR 1872, D-16, p. 5.

80. NZM, 27 April 1872.

81. G.C. Petersen, Forest Homes, Wellington, 1956, p. 63. Petersen, born in Mauriceville in 1900, knew many of the original settlers as a boy. In Forest Homes he finely captures the spirit and atmosphere of Mauriceville's pioneer days.

majority of the party were Danes, and some may have carried these outdated weapons into battle against the Prussian breech-loading rifles in 1864.

Through an ineptness, partly to be excused by ignorance, the New Zealand authorities brought the bitter-nesses of their homeland's recent past right into the everyday life of the Danish settlers. As their interpreter and agent they appointed Alexander Svend Dreyer, an earlier immigrant from Schleswig. Dreyer also acted as factotum among the Scandinavians for Henry Bannister, the Masterton storekeeper with whom Halcombe arranged for supplies for the new arrivals. Complaints against Dreyer, of a varied nature, began to flow in almost immediately from the Danish immigrants. Some of these complaints concerned his attitude to the womenfolk, others his misuse of his dual role of paymaster and storekeeper. Munro, the engineer in charge of the road works, and Halcombe, both investigated and could find no ground for the accusations.⁸² The real cause of the ill-feeling is almost undoubtedly that explained, in a letter from Peter Nielson, one of the Danes, addressed (astutely perhaps?) to Fitzherbert, the province's superintendent.⁸³ Dreyer, he claimed, had borne

82. Various MSS on this topic are to be found in Im 6/8/1, 72/173, 72/518, 73/120A, 73/129, National Archives, Wellington.

83. Nielsen to Fitzherbert, 28 August 1872, in *ibid*, 73/129. (From the file No. Fitzherbert must have held the letter till the following year, before passing it to the Immigration Department. He was, however, in charge of Immigration in the brief Stafford ministry of Sept.-Oct. 1872). See also Petersen, Forest Homes, p. 35.

arms against the Danes in the pro-German Schleswig-⁸⁴ Holstein rising in 1848. His dislike of the Danes was expressed in creating ill feeling between the Norwegians and the Danes. The separation of Norway from Denmark in 1814, after a union lasting 450 years, had left a little bitterness which could doubtless be stirred awake by one who understood the Scandinavian background. It is necessary to explain this episode because it is very likely that⁸⁵ Peter Nielson is right in attributing Halcombe's bad reports on the Danes to Dreyer's prejudice and misrepresentation. Granted that the Danes lacked any experience of forest work, and therefore adapted with some difficulty to bush life, Halcombe's criticism seems almost out of character in its harshness. The subsequent careers of the Danes at Mauriceville and elsewhere are sufficient evidence that his judgement was unfair to the majority of these immigrants. Fortunately, although the New Zealand Administration stood on its dignity for a time, it accepted Dreyer's resignation in May 1873.

For nearly a year the settlers remained at Scandinavian Camp. The men were engaged in contracts clearing the road line through the bush, following in general the railway

84. On this episode of the Schleswig-Holstein problem see e.g. E.J. Passant, A Short History of Germany 1815-1945, Cambridge, 1959, pp. 25, 38-40; or more fully, J. Danstrup, A History of Denmark, Copenhagen, 1948, 97-105.
85. As in AJHR 1872, D-1, pp. 50-1.

route which Rochfort had recently marked out. Inevitably, the contracts took them further and further away from the Camp, so that after a time they were not able to return home nightly. The women made the best of their makeshift temporary homes. Their industry impressed the local British settlers.⁸⁶ They bought raw wool, washed it clean, dyed it a beautiful brown using a plant they collected from the small creeks, then carded and spun it. Almost every household had a spinning wheel. Finally the yarn was knitted into clothes and household articles. One newspaper correspondent suggested that by a visit to the camp 'Englishwomen will learn many useful lessons in the way of keeping their homes tidy'.⁸⁷ There is no hint of support for Halcombe's picture in his official reports of the Danish majority as shiftless, thriftless, and filthy in house and person.⁸⁸

At last, in March 1873, the settlers began to move onto their land at Mauriceville. It was too late in the year for them to have much success in the clearing and burning, but they did what they could, and most of them had 'very fair crops of potatoes' the following season.⁸⁹ Unlike the Manawatu settlers, their sections were not laid out along

86. NZM, 3 August 1872.

87. Y, 8 June 1872.

88. AJHR 1872, D-1 p. 51.

89. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session XXVII, Paper C-6, 'Report by Mr Alexander Munro, on the Scandinavian Settlements'.

a main road, but in a Y-shaped settlement, up a branching valley in the hills, with only four sections at the base of the Y abutting onto the main road. The failure of the Government to put in the side road giving access to their sections added to their problems. Nevertheless, by May 1874, Munro could report that each immigrant had built a comfortable house of dressed slabs with a ~~singled~~ roof, and felled about six acres of bush. At their own expense they had cut seven miles of roadline through the settlement.⁹⁰ Meanwhile another party of Danes had arrived for the settlement by the ship Halcione, reaching Wellington on 14 July 1873. Munro describes them as 'a very poor and ill-provided class of people, with very large families'.⁹¹ Sickness among them led to a period of quarantine on Some Island. They began to move to the edge of the bush in August, but a severe epidemic of sickness delayed their moving onto their land. However, by May 1874 Munro reports them free of sickness and settling down quite well.

By September 1873, with a little help from Maori and other workers, these settlers had cleared the 41 miles of road line through the bush.⁹² With the help of the Scandinavians at the second Forty Mile Bush Settlement of Eketahuna⁹³

90. ibid.

91. ibid.

92. AJHR 1874, E-3, p. 48; cf. AJHR 1872, D-6, p. 8.

93. Originally named Mellemskow.

they proceeded with road formation and bridge building, so that by the end of 1876 the route was sufficiently developed for a coach service to be started between Masterton and Palmerston North.⁹⁴ Once the road construction was completed there was no railway building or burgeoning timber industry to take up the slack, as in the Manawatu. Thus forced to concentrate on their sections, the Mauriceville settlers made rapid progress in turning them into farms. On 21 July 1876 Munro reported an average of ten acres per settler in grass. All possessed from three to ten head of cattle while some had sheep and horses. They were growing sufficient crops for their own consumption for the whole year. Each settler⁹⁵ had a good-sized, comfortable, and neatly-constructed cottage. Unfortunately, all this effort was being invested in the 'roughest poorest, most heavily bushed and isolated portion of the Forty Mile Bush.'⁹⁶ Once the initial bush-burn fertility had been dissipated, forty acres did not constitute an economic farm. In due course these hard-won farmlets were aggregated into large sheep runs, the Scandinavians drifted to other parts of the country, and today the Lutheran church with the Scandinavian names on its graveyard headstones is almost the only reminder of the original settlers.

The Eketahuna site, selected by Halcombe and Munro early

94. Y, 9 December, 1876, p. 4.

95. AJHR 1876, B-6; pp. 6-7.

96. Petersen, Forest Homes, p. 136.

in 1873,⁹⁷ was better placed and on better land than Mauriceville. The settlement was formed by a party of about 56 Scandinavians arriving on the Forfarshire on 3 March 1873. They began to move onto their sections in October 1873 and were able to fell from four to six acres of bush in the 1873-4 season,⁹⁸ which put them at once almost as far ahead as the first Mauriceville settlers. Their favourable situation, along the main road, and the fact that Eketahuna, halfway through the Forty Mile Bush, became an important stopping point, gave them additional advantages over the earlier settlement.

The most extensive Scandinavian settlements were those in the Hawke's Bay section of the Seventy Mile Bush. Although the first of these immigrants reached New Zealand six months later than the Mauriceville pioneers, the progress of the Hawke's Bay settlements was in every way more favoured and rapid than their Wairarapa counterparts. The settlers arrived at the right time of year, and proceeded almost directly to their sections by way of a road-line already cleared of bush. In terms of the allocation of finance and of professional and administrative personnel,

97. Halcombe to O'Rorke (Minister for Immigration from 24 October 1872), 26 February 1873. MS Im 6/8/1, 73/120A, National Archives, Wellington.

98. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session XXVII, Paper C-6; AJHR 1876, D-6, p. 7.

it is clear that the Hawke's Bay settlements were given priority, in line with the Fox cabinet's strategic design as already discussed. It may be asked why Ormond, who was Minister of Immigration at the time, allocated the England's party of March 1872 to the Wairarapa. The answer would seem to be that there was nothing to be gained by sending them to Hawke's Bay. They had arrived at the wrong end of the bush-clearing season, and being mostly Danes, were not ideal bush pioneers. Ormond began bush settlement in his own province with a predominantly Norwegian party, who were actually on their sections five months earlier than the unfortunate Mauriceville pioneers. The priority given to the Hawke's Bay emerges clearly when the development of the two areas is compared.

Despite the fact that the purchase of the Seventy Mile Bush from the natives was not yet finalised, in the latter part of 1870 Ormond mounted a campaign for a start with a road and railway link with the south. On 24 September he wrote to Gisborne recommending an immediate survey of a railway and road route, with priority for a line through the Gorge to the West Coast, followed later by the line to Wairarapa. He also wanted bush felling to begin as soon as the line was fixed, financed from the road money already⁹⁹ voted. He followed this up by writing to McLean on 18

99. Ormond to Gisborne, 24 September 1870: AJHR 1871, D-1, p. 37.

October urging him to 'consult with' Gisborne on the matter. He already had Weber, the provincial engineer, laying out the line for the railway from Napier to the bush. He wanted authority to spend road money on bush felling as soon as Weber had the line laid out. 'If we get no rail-road' he remarked, 'at least we shall have a road'.¹⁰⁰ No sooner had he posted his request to McLean than he received a letter from Fox, with whom he had apparently been corresponding on the subject. This occasioned another letter to McLean, informing him that Fox 'is entirely with me about the Forty Mile Bush road', and assuring McLean that he apprehended no difficulty from the natives if the survey and road works were begun.¹⁰¹ He got his way, and by 8 November was able to inform McLean that Weber had begun the survey through the bush, and that tenders had been called for cutting the line.¹⁰² By March 1871 there were 200 men at work in the Seventy Mile Bush.¹⁰³

Charles Herman Weber (1830-1886) both surveyed the route and supervised the work as engineer in charge. He was a Bavarian who had fled overseas after becoming involved in the 1848 revolution. His wanderings had taken him to the

100. McLean Papers, typescript, Vol 35.

101. Ormond to McLean, 20 October 1870: ibid.

102. ibid.

103. Ormond to McLean, 3 March 1871: ibid.

United States, South America and Australia before he settled in New Zealand, beginning his service with the Hawke's Bay Province in 1860 as District Surveyor. From his report of 1 August 1871,¹⁰⁴ and Blakett's report on road works for the year to 31 May 1872,¹⁰⁵ a clear picture emerges of the work covered before the arrival of the Scandinavians. Of the 37½ miles of road between the Ruataniwha Plains and the Gorge, 29½ were through bush. This was felled one chain wide, with a width of 33ft in the centre cleared of everything close to the ground. The work was divided into 13 contracts, two of which were taken solely by natives, while an average of 20 Maoris were employed by the European contractors. Despite an exceptionally wet summer and autumn, this work was virtually finished by August 1871. By 31 May 1872, 12 bridges and 23 culverts had been constructed and swampy portions of the road roughly corduroyed, so that it could be classed as 'in very fair order as a horse track'. In other words, enough had been done to provide reasonable access to the sites of the planned settlements, but the work of forming and finishing the road to cart traffic standard was being reserved to provide employment for the Scandinavians.

The purchase of the Seventy Mile Bush had to be finalised before settlement plans could proceed. In April 1871 Ormond wrote to McLean informing him of an unexpected snag in

104. AJHR 1871, D-1B, p. 8.

105. AJHR 1872, D-6, p. 8.

negotiations, and enlisting his assistance.¹⁰⁶ The last meeting with the natives had, he told McLean, 'to my very great disappointment utterly failed in doing anything'. The Maoris had quite agreed to sell to the Government, but they questioned the price. Ormond was very anxious to finalise the purchase before parliament met, as he wished to offer it as security for a railway through the province. He believed it would be useless to ask the Assembly for the railway without the Bush for security. With McLean's assistance, his land purchase diplomacy succeeded, and the final deed¹⁰⁷ of sale for some 250,000 acres was signed on 12 June 1871.

Ormond was well placed for the next stage of his task - the steering through both the Provincial and General Governments of the arrangements for Special Settlements of Scandinavians along the roadline. On 7 July 1871 Gisborne wrote to Featherston that special settlements were planned for the Seventy Mile Bush,¹⁰⁸ and on 30 September he sent more definite information of the Government's intentions, which were to locate Scandinavian and Western Highland immigrants in the Seventy Mile Bush and Ruataniwha Districts. Featherston was authorised to procure 300 families, 100 single men,

106. Ormond to McLean, 12 April 1871: McLean Papers, typescript Vol. 36.

107. 'Papers relating to the Purchase of the Seventy Mile Bush Block', AJHR 1871, D-7.

108. AJHR 1871, D-3, p. 19.

and such young women as chose to accompany their relations. The details of arrangements, and exact conditions of settlement, were still being negotiated between Ormond and the General Government. Ormond was obviously determined that these settlements should start off with every prospect of success. He recommended that B.E. Friberg, a Norwegian settler in Hawke's Bay, should be sent to Europe to assist with arrangements.¹¹⁰ Bror Eric Friberg had been a forest officer in Norway, and had been for three years manager of the Hawke's Bay Steam Boiling-Down Works.¹¹¹ On 28 October 1871 Gisborne was able to send Featherston the matured and detailed plans for the project. The Scandinavians were to be located in three small settlements along the road through the bush. It was desired that, if possible, two of them should be Norwegian and one Swedish. The sites would be of about 5000 acres each, all in bush. Each family would select one 20-acre section at £1 an acre. A further adjoining 20-acre section would be reserved, and might be taken up in the fourth year, if payment for the first section had been made in the first three years. The Government would provide some road work, and Featherston might promise at least a year of work, for three or four days in the week. However, the Government would be happier if he could get

109. AJHR 1872, D-1, p. 3.

110. Ormond to Gisborne, 9 October 1871. Im 6/9/1, 71/60, National Archives, Wellington.

111. Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, p. 138.

settlers without committing them by any definite guarantees regarding work. It was recommended that the immigrants arrive in Napier before the early spring, to give them ample time to fell bush for the summer burning. The Government did not want to give free passages, but they regarded the scheme 'as a matter of great importance', and if Scandinavians willing to pay one-third of the cost of passage could not be found, Featherston was to use his discretion in the matter. The Palmerston North experiment had shown that single men did not settle down, so families were to be sent instead of the 100 single men asked for earlier. Featherston was informed of the Government's arrangement to send Friberg to assist 'in promoting Scandinavian immigration to New Zealand'.¹¹²

Friberg's mission to Scandinavia was not a success. The New Zealand government had not realised that the Scandinavian countries had strict regulations for the registration of all emigration agents, and required a substantial deposit to meet any claims which emigrants might make against agents. Friberg visited Sweden, in the hope of reaching an agreement to work for a Swedish agent, but was unable to negotiate a satisfactory arrangement. However, as we have seen, Featherston had taken the initiative in October-November 1871,
 112. AJHR 1872, D-1, pp. 4-5.

and had local Scandinavian agents working for him. He found Friberg the most useful officer the New Zealand government had sent him, and would gladly have retained him, but instead he sent him back with a shipload of Norwegians sailing by the Hovding from Oslo for Napier direct on 1 June 1872. Featherston felt that Friberg's services in locating the Scandinavians in the New Zealand bush would be invaluable to the government.¹¹³

Meanwhile Ormond had joined the cabinet as Minister of Public Works, on 6 December 1871, and had almost immediately appointed Halcombe as Immigration Officer. When the Hovding with her Norwegians and Swedes, and the Ballarat with a small party of Danes accompanying a shipment of British immigrants, arrived at Napier within hours of each other on 15 September 1872, it was Halcombe who superintended the location of 84 Scandinavian families in the Seventy Mile Bush. He was assisted by Friberg, who remained as interpreter, paymaster, and general agent for the government - a much more satisfactory appointment than that made for the Mauriceville settlers. After five days in the Gore-Browne military barracks the men were moved to the Seventy Mile Bush, to prepare the way for their families. Before returning to Napier, Halcombe addressed the men, with Friberg translating. He explained the settlement terms and the arrangements for roadwork. He

¹¹³. AJHR 1872, D-1A, p. 24; D-1B, p. 11.

told them a store would be opened in each settlement, and a reasonable amount of credit allowed. He advised them to build simple houses as soon as possible.

On 2 October, the women, children and baggage left Napier by dray, arriving four days later at Te Whiti clearing, where a 70 x 13ft slab hut had been built to house them until each family could prepare a place for themselves. Te Whiti clearing was four miles into the bush and the site of Norsewood was a mile further on. Forty-seven Norwegian, 13 Swedish and 3 Danish families were soon settling in to the first primitive homes, either squatting on the village site or moving directly to their sections. Initially some of the huts were of ponga boles, placed vertically side by side. After a few days the Dannevirke party were moved to their site, in an area of totara forest, 12 miles further into the bush. Thirteen Danish, six Norwegian and two Swedish families were located here.¹¹⁴

The two settlements rapidly became established. By early December 1872 a newspaper correspondent reported the whole line of road for four miles through Norsewood lined on both sides with 'neatly constructed residences', about which gardens were rapidly shooting up, and bush was falling.¹¹⁵ At

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114. Halcombe to Minister for Immigration, 1 Oct. 1872: AJHR 1873, D-1, pp. 9-10, outlines the arrival of these immigrants, & the first stages of their location. For the last two para's I have relied largely on Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, pp. 140-141. Gordon has worked thoroughly over the relevant archival & published sources. Also useful were Davidson, The Scandinavians in N.Z., pp. 56-60 & H.P. Mortensen 'Reminiscences of the Early Pioneers in Norsewood', Misc.MS. 1290, Turnbull Lib. Wgton. p. 3-8.
115. NZM, 7 December 1872, p. 8.

Dannevirke he found similar progress, and makes mention of the profusion of cabbages and other vegetables. At the beginning of December Friberg reported 38 cottages at Norsewood, most of two rooms, but some of three; some were just temporary shelters, shared by several families,¹¹⁶ but others were intended as permanent homes. At Dannevirke, where the bush was less dense, and totara abundant, he found nearly all the settlers on their own sections, in some cases 'in very neat houses'.¹¹⁷ The government provided potatoes and cabbage seed, and wool for spinning and weaving¹¹⁸ was procured for the women.

These settlers, with others arriving on later ships, made rapid work of completing the Great South Road. By the end of their second summer it was virtually completed through to the Gorge, and a regular coach service between Napier and Foxton began about 1 May 1874.¹¹⁹ The Hawke's Bay Scandinavians had also worked south of the Gorge, assisting the Mauriceville and Eketahuna settlers with their section¹²⁰ of the road. However, as we have seen, this was not completed to coach service level till 1876. The rapid completion of the road left the settlers in some difficulty

116. Friberg to Ormond, 5 December 1872: Hawke's Bay Provincial Papers, as cited Davidson, Scandinavians in N.Z. p. 57 et seq.

117. ibid.

118. ibid., 21 November 1872 & 26 December 1872.

119. AJHR 1874, E-3, p. 47.

120. ibid.

with their payments to the government. The cutting of railway sleepers for the line being constructed south from Napier became an important source of income as the road-work declined. A correspondent of the Hawke's Bay Herald who travelled to the Manawatu Gorge and back in March 1875 reported seeing large quantities of sleepers stacked by the roadside all through the settlements of Norsewood and Dannevirke.¹²¹ Other settlers were by 1875 swagging as far away as Palmerston North, Wanganui and Masterton in search of work,¹²² while their wives and children carried on the home farm, as of old in Scandinavia.

Ormond did not find it necessary to proceed with the third 'Scandinavian Road Labourers Village' which he had planned, and so Woodville was not developed as a Special Settlement. The village site, and 134 forty-acre sections had been surveyed along with those for Norsewood and Dannevirke.¹²³ Most of the Woodville village sections, together with 4000 acres of adjacent rural land, were put up for sale at Napier in January 1875.¹²⁴ By this time the place was being boomed as the future great inland town of Hawke's Bay, and the township sections realised double the upset price. Many road and railway contractors, noting the

121. Reprinted in NZM, 20 March 1875.

122. Friberg to Ormond, 17 November 1875: Correspondence Files, Hawke's Bay Museum. (Cited by Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, p. 202).

123. AJHR 1873, E-2B, p. 9.

124. NZM, 1 January 1876, p. 15. Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, p. 217.

place's position as a road and railway junction, bought sections as a speculation. The township developed slowly. A newspaper correspondent passing through in March 1875 found that the town existed on paper only, though he heard that a hotel was¹²⁵ shortly to be begun. Rural land sold more slowly, but much of it went to genuine settlers. To speed up development, Ormond fostered the formation of the Woodville Small Farm Association, on the model pioneered by the Wairarapa Small Farms Association in the 1850s. The Association was formed on the initiative of Joseph Sowry, a¹²⁶ Waipawa builder, early in 1876. Members had to be married men, over 21, and already resident in the province. Most of the 35 who balloted for a section in the 2,500 acre block reserved for the Association near Woodville were farm labourers and others from the Waipawa area. The Association included all but about two of the members of the Waipawa Free Methodist Church, with the result that the Church there was closed for some years, while Woodville became a Free¹²⁷ Methodist Centre.

The Woodville Small Farm Association was an example of settlers who had first gained experience as labourers on

125. NZM, 20 March 1875, p. 22.

126. Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, pp. 207-8 gives a detailed treatment, based on archival and newspaper sources. Gordon has, however, misread Sowry's name as Lowry.

127. The New Zealand Methodist Magazine (Christchurch), 16 July 1888, p. 7.

properties in the open country, moving into the bush to take up land on their own account. Ormond had begun encouraging this as soon as he had the Scandinavians established in the Bush. In January 1873 he proclaimed the Makaretu Reserve of 8,000 acres, on the northern edge of the Bush between the Makaretu and Tukituki Rivers, as open for application at £1 per acre. It was hoped that settlers would form themselves into groups of about a dozen families to take up adjacent sections. There were no takers until the price was reduced to 10s an acre in June 1873. Over the next twelve months most of the block was selected by a total of 42 settlers, and in October 1874 an adjacent block of a further 8000 acres was set aside on the same terms, and by December 1876 about 100 families were reported to be settled on the two blocks. Many were Scandinavian and German immigrants investing savings earned in their first year or two in the colony.¹²⁸ By mid-1874 some 200 male Scandinavian and German settlers had been brought into Hawke's Bay,¹²⁹ and less than half of these had been placed directly on the land at Norsewood and Dannevirke.

In 1876 and 1877, four further small farm associations followed the example of the Woodville group, so that a total of over 150 families were put on nearly 13,000 acres by the

128. See Gordon, Immigration into Hawke's Bay, pp. 144-146, for detailed treatment of the settlement of these two blocks.

129. ibid. p. 193.

five associations. The second of these led to the foundation of Ormondville, and the other three were situated between Dannevirke and Woodville. By the time these had taken up their sections practically the whole of the land along the main road through the bush had been occupied. The great strategic trunk road which Fox and his colleagues had visualised was now a reality. Associated with it was the growing reservoir of manpower that gave ever-increasing security against a native uprising. Maori workmen had assisted with practically every stage of the project - perhaps the best omen of all.

Fox bowed out of office in 1873, doubtless feeling that his task was well-nigh accomplished. Early the following year he travelled on horseback via the Gorge and Napier to Rotorua, surveying some of the handiwork of his administration on the way. 'The Napier to Palmerston North road is by far the finest in the Colony', he wrote to McLean, '-practically dead level from sea to sea, and very well constructed.'¹³¹ The other Bush Province politicians who had shaped the development policy were also shortly to leave the task. Featherston died at his London post in June 1876, and McLean gave up office a month before his death in January 1877.

130. ibid., p. 208-210, for a detailed treatment.

131. Fox to McLean, 28 March 1874: McLean Papers, typescript, Vol. 41.

Ormond never took cabinet rank again after the defeat of the ministry in October 1877. But the rising star of Atkinson, and the yeoman ideals of Ballance, ensured that the interests of the Bush settlers were not forgotten in the subsequent administrations.

CHAPTER 4

HEARTH LAND TO PROMISED LAND

1871 - 1876

The Scandinavian immigrants well earned the priority of place which must be granted them in the story of the colonisation of the Bush. Not only did they join with Maori workmen to open the main communication routes, but they were also to the forefront in the pioneer bush-felling and timber-milling gangs of the ensuing decades of development. We must not, however, exaggerate their importance, for it was the British colonists who followed them, and soon outnumbered them, who provided the institutions, and shaped the main social patterns, of the bush colonies. The Scandinavians were in due course assimilated to a society which resulted from the adaptation of a British heritage to a new environment. We must turn now to a study of the British immigrants to the Bush, as a preliminary to a study, in later chapters, of their work in founding the institutions of the new settlements. It is important that we should discover from what parts of Britain they came, from what classes in society, and whether any particular sifting processes were at work in selecting them. This chapter will be concerned with a general consideration of the forces at work in British society which were

providing immigrants for New Zealand and with the operation of the recruitment campaign, under the direction of the New Zealand government and their Agent-General in London. It will also examine the effects of this flow of immigration, together with immigration from other parts of New Zealand, on the development of the Rangitikei-Manawatu, which saw the most extensive bush-colonisation of the 1870s. The story will be carried through to the end of 1876.

The immigrants most needed in New Zealand, both to develop existing settlements and to colonise new country, were agricultural labourers. Even the navvies for building the planned railways would be the better for an agricultural background, which might lead to their settling on the land that they helped to open up. Speaking to Vogel's 1870 financial statement, J.C. Richmond put the need succinctly. He criticised the Wakefield idea of introducing 'full-blown' British society into New Zealand. 'We require bone and sinew', he maintained, 'in far greater proportion than any other ingredient of civilized life'¹. He was doubtless aware that the bone and sinew would need to be skilled bone and sinew - expert in handling the plough, the scythe, the shears, the adze. The subduing of the New Zealand countryside would need rural craftsmanship of many kinds - hedging, ditching, thatching, milking, horsebreaking; the skills, too, of

¹. NZPD, Vol. 7, p. 275.

garden, orchard and aviary; and the matured gifts of the stock breeder and farm manager. Richmond recommended recruiting in the western districts of England, whence the foundation stock of his own electorate had come, as the Devonshire and Dorsetshire labourers had not 'arrived at the condition of improvement' which those in the northern counties enjoyed. But he warned of failure if the great attraction of a footing on the soil was neglected.² This warning was reiterated by Carleton, member for Bay of Islands, who expressed a hearty desire to see an immigration programme begun, but considered it the height of folly to suppose that a large number of men could be got out from the country parts of England, 'labourers well accustomed to hard and agricultural labour'. He reminded the House of the meagre results of the efforts of the excellent agents sent home in 1863 to recruit this class of immigrant.³

There were good grounds for a measure of scepticism regarding the ambitious immigration plans of the Fox cabinet. Although a period of economic distress in England over the years 1869 to 1871 had raised the average annual emigration from Britain for these years to 193,854 (compared with an average of 157,183 for the 1861-70 decade),⁴ the number of male agricultural workers leaving the British Isles

2. *ibid.*

3. NZPD, Vol. 8, p. 393.

4. W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration From the British Isles*, London, 1929, pp. 216-7 for the economic conditions, 1869-71; p. 308 for the figures used to calculate these averages.

in 1869-71 averaged only 1,600 a year.⁵ Taking this meagre figure in conjunction with the strong competition from North American and Australian agents, it is clear that the prospects facing Featherston when he arrived back in London as Agent-General in July 1871 were far from encouraging. It is not surprising that after a quick survey of Britain as a source of immigrants, he should have followed up the promise he had earlier discovered in Scandinavia and North Germany. But here too there was to be disappointment. Over the next two years only about 2,000 of the 8,000 Featherston⁶ arranged for in that period, had been sent to the colony. There was no alternative but to work the British field as expertly as possible.

Featherston's first task was to enlist the staff for an immigration organization. For the office staff based on the headquarters he had rented in Victoria Street, London, he enlisted men already connected with New Zealand. One of the earliest appointed and most useful of these was Charles Carter (1822-1896), who had returned to England after a successful career as a contractor in Wellington Province. He had played a prominent part in the affairs of the Wairarapa Small Farms Association from its inception, and his work for the Wairarapa settlers led to Carterton being

5. J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'The Incidence and Organization of Agricultural Trades Unionism in the 1870's', Agricultural History Review, XVI (1968) 138, footnote 3.

6. Appendices to the Journal of the Legislative Council, 1873, No. 12, p. 3.

named in his honour. He had a good knowledge of colonial conditions and needs, and useful earlier experience in recruiting English immigrants. John Morrison, displaced as General Government agent in London by Featherston's appointment, declined a permanent place on the staff, but assisted on a temporary basis until March 1873. Agents who had recruited immigrants for the provinces over the years also assisted. The Rev. Peter Barclay, previously a Presbyterian minister at Napier, had worked for Hawke's Bay Province from time to time, and now became an agent and lecturer for Featherston in Scotland, assisted for a few months by the Rev. David Bruce, an Auckland clergyman visiting Scotland. A.O. Ottywell, immigration agent for Canterbury, was taken on by Featherston when the General Government took over the full responsibility for immigration in 1871. Similarly, John Auld, the Otago agent, was retained, and the office he had opened in Edinburgh was continued. To Featherston's annoyance, other appointments were made from New Zealand, of colonists wishing to return to Britain - though the Norwegian Friberg earned his commendation. A useful and experienced team was thus gathered in one way and another. Meanwhile local immigration agents were appointed throughout the British Isles, to distribute advertisements and application forms, and make contact with intending emigrants on behalf of the Agent-General. There were soon

over a hundred of these, drawn from the ranks of school teachers, estate agents, lawyers, booksellers, and similar callings, to do part-time immigration work on a commission basis.⁷

In the conditions existing in the British Isles in 1871, this extensive recruitment organisation was of little avail. Scotland and Cornwall had seemed among the more promising fields, but visits by the Revs. Peter Barclay and David Bruce to the former and by Carter to the latter, met with little encouragement.⁸ Some of the reasons for this lack of success are made clear in Carter's report to Featherston on his Cornwall visit.⁹ Carter worked with an experienced local agent, advertised widely by newspaper and poster for about six weeks, and addressed meetings wherever there was sufficient interest, yet he only succeeded in getting two firm applications. In accounting for this, Carter mentioned an increased demand for unskilled labour caused by a recent great rise in the price of tin, together with a general revival of trade throughout England, and the competition provided by unceasing immigration to the United States and Canada. But the greatest difficulty was the poverty of the

7. R.M. Blackstock, The Office of Agent-General for New Zealand in the United Kingdom, Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1970, pp. 42-45, 56, gives a good treatment of the forming of this immigration organization.

8. Featherston to Gisborne, 16 November 1871: AJHR 1872, D-1A, p. 4.

9. Carter to Featherston, 1 November 1871: ibid., p. 5.

labouring class. Under the regulations to which Carter was working, a family consisting of four adults¹⁰ would have required at least £30 in cash to pay their share of the passage money, equip themselves for the journey, and travel to the port of embarkation. Yet this was an amount that 'nine out of every ten agricultural labourers in Cornwall, and other parts of England and Scotland as well, never expected to be possessed of'. This was probably too optimistic an account of the situation. A few months later, when the Messrs. Brogden recruited Cornish labourers for their railway contracts in New Zealand, Carter had the task of examining them on behalf of the New Zealand government. He reported that all they had was a scanty supply of food and raiment. They could not pay £1 for their bedding and cooking utensils for the voyage, nor provide an outfit and pay their railway fare to London. They were only able to emigrate when the Brogdens' agent agreed to pay these expenses.

The situation facing the New Zealand immigration drive may be briefly summed up. Few agricultural labourers were emigrating. The majority were too poor to pay any part of their passage money. Even providing the required outfit was beyond the means of cost. Those who did emigrate could not be expected to choose far-distant New Zealand, of which

10. Children of 12 years old and upwards counted as adults.

scarcely anyone had heard, in preference to North America, which was so much nearer and better known. Steeped in poverty, burdened with debts, dispirited and ignorant of the outside world, the British rural labouring class were apparently beyond the reach of the call from the far-distant colony in the South Pacific. Nothing but a change of revolutionary proportions in the British rural scene could start a worthwhile flow of emigration to New Zealand. It was New Zealand's good fortune, though the fact has so far almost escaped the notice of her historians, that no sooner had Featherston's immigration organisation taken shape than a great 'Revolt of the Field' stirred English rural society to its core, and within a year or two was filling a stream of immigrant ships bound for New Zealand. From a mere 1400 male rural agricultural workers emigrating from the United Kingdom in 1871, the figure rose to 2500 in 1872, 3700 in 1873 and a peak of 6900 in 1874. The meteoric rise of Joseph Arch, and the founding and phenomenal initial success of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, together with the great lock-out by the farmers in 1874, are events whose importance to New Zealand colonisation are second only to their place in English agricultural history. On a bleak evening in February 1872 Arch addressed his first meeting under a chestnut tree at Wellesbourne in Warwickshire. So rapidly did the movement spread that on Good Friday, 29

March 1872, at Leamington, an organisation embracing the whole county was founded. Fittingly, Carter, the New Zealand immigration agent, was present, although the significance of the movement for immigration was yet to become apparent. Carter reported to Featherston as follows:

In conjunction with Mr A. Brogden, I proceeded [to Leamington], and attended the great gathering of farm labourers which took place in the Town Hall of that town on the 29th March last, but the excitement about the "Union" was so great that, I regret to say, these sturdy and well behaved labourers could not be induced to attend a meeting we had called to explain to them the benefits to be derived from immigration to New Zealand. A Canadian lecturer, offering free grants of land, was equally unsuccessful. However, next day we made arrangements for a future meeting, and after all I was able to select twelve adults for the "Schiehallion".¹¹

By May a large part of rural England had been roused, and at a Congress held at Leamington, attended by representatives from twenty-six counties, the National Agricultural Labourers' Union was launched. Before we follow its fortunes and examine its impact on New Zealand immigration, and its significance for the peopling of the Bush, we will need to outline the history of the English agricultural labourer over the previous decades. This will serve to account for the 'Revolt of the Field', and at the same time sketch in the qualities and outlook which immigrants of this class

¹¹. Carter to Featherston, 22 May 1872: AJHR 1872, D-1B p. 11.

brought to New Zealand.

The movement which Arch spearheaded took the labourers' employers, and the country at large, by surprise:

It was as if the dead had come to life ... It had seemed to us impossible that there should be any stirring of the dry bones. The agricultural labourer had seemed hopeless. The serfs of the plough had lost even the aspiration to be free men.¹²

There had seemed good reason to believe that the 'serfs of the plough' were thoroughly cowed and incapable of asserting themselves, or grasping the rights of free men. As E.W.

12. For the section which follows, on English rural life & the agricultural labourer, in addition to works already cited, the following have proved particularly useful:-

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- E.L. Jones, 'The Agricultural Labour Market in England, 1793-1872', Economic History Review, 2nd Series, XVII (1964-5), 322-338.
- W.E. Minchinton, ed., Essays in Agrarian History, 2 vols., Newton Abbott, Devon, 1968, Vol. II.
- C.S. Orwin & E.H. Whetham, History of British Agriculture 1846-1914, London, 1964.
13. Arch, Life, p. XI: words quoted by the Countess of Warwick in her introduction.

Martin points out, the property elite had established a leadership 'in both the organisational and psychological senses'. The social roles of squirearchy and clergy dominated the institutions of rural England to form a powerful oligarchy, none the less potent because much of the control was exerted by means of ceremony and custom rather than by legal right. From early childhood the labouring class were schooled in an obeisance of mind towards their rulers and 'betters', which went far deeper than the outward curtesy and touching of the forelock. To break the code was to put oneself outside the ranks of the 'deserving poor', and to find one's miseries deepened by having set oneself against the grain of the established order. Nor would the rural labourers easily forget the lessons of the early 1830s. In blind reaction to the misery of hard times, the rural poor of south-east England had hit out in riots, machine-breaking and arson. The Government had shown no sympathy for the sufferings to which they were trying to draw attention. Troops were sent to quell the disorders, and Special Commissioners tried the offenders, meeting out indiscriminate and heavy sentences. Although the only life lost in the disturbances had been that of one the rioters, nineteen were executed, 480 men and boys were

14. The Shearers and the Shorn, p. 18.

transported to Australia, and hundreds were imprisoned. When in 1834 six Dorset village labourers tried to form a union as a more effective means of bettering their conditions, the Government chose to make them an example to their class, and they were transported to Australia, to find a place in history as the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs'. Though the Government soon found that it had gone too far in this case, there was every reason to believe that the agricultural labourer had learnt his lesson, and would henceforth accept his lot without murmur or protest. Isolated from the main stream of working-class life, which centred on the towns, voteless, unorganised, dispersed over the broad countryside, it is not surprising that he was largely ignored and forgotten. Meanwhile the great industry of which he was the skilled craftsman, got on with its task of feeding the growing nation. The years 1840 to 1870 were the 'Golden Age' of English agriculture. Output rose almost as fast as the population, so that it is estimated that as late as 1868 no less than 80 per cent of the United Kingdom's food was home grown.¹⁵ This was no mean achievement, for the population had grown five-fold since 1700.

Some of the main features and trends of English agriculture must be sketched, before we return to the farm labourer, and the origins of the union movement. One trend,

15. Chambers & Mingay, Agricultural Revolution, p. 208.

continuing from earlier times, was that the division of rural society into the three tiers of landlord, farmer, and landless labourer, became more marked and widespread. This was partly the result of the continued decline of the yeoman, the owner-occupier of a small holding, who formed an intermediate class; partly of the further extension of enclosures of commons and waste, which removed the labourers' claims of property in the land. Underlying both these trends was a long-term tendency towards larger farming units - the result of economic and technical influences favouring larger farms. The earlier picture of the enclosure movement as a great blow to the labouring class (as presented in the writings of J.L. and Barbara Hammond, for example) has been challenged¹⁶ in more recent times. Thus J.D. Chambers reaches the conclusion that enclosures greatly increased employment by expanding the area under cultivation and by extending the growing of labour-absorbing crops. The evils attributed to enclosures have been shown to be very often found equally in villages quite untouched by the enclosure movement. The advantage of the enclosure movement was that it facilitated investment in agriculture, and improved farming methods. Over the 'Golden Age' the landlords made a massive investment of capital in agriculture. An important development was the appearance of cheap, durable, machine-manufactured drainage tiles in the 1840s. In 1846 Parliament approved cheap

16. In 'Enclosure and Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution', Economic History Review, 2nd Series, V, 3 (1953), 322-4.

government loans for tile drainage, and by 1876 some £12,000,000 had been borrowed from the Treasury and private companies for drainage schemes throughout Britain. Clapham estimated that in the 30 years after 1846 land-owners expended some £24,000,000 on various improvements.¹⁷

In a wide diversity of English farming conditions, customs and practices, some fairly clear-cut regional distinctions stand out. Two which have considerable significance for New Zealand immigration are the east/west division into 'corn' and 'grazing' counties, and the north/south division into high and low wage regions. Both are indicated in the frontispiece map to James Caird's English Agriculture in 1850-51,¹⁸ and discussed in his text. The grazing/corn division was introduced into the official Agricultural Returns in 1868,¹⁹ though this differs somewhat from the line drawn by Caird. The 'grazing' counties of the north and west, following the Agricultural Returns division, consisted of 18 million acres, as against 14.5 million for the 'corn' counties of the south and east. The 'grazing' counties had many more holdings over five acres in size, 172,000, compared with 118,000 in the 'corn' counties.

17. J.H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, 3 vols., 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1930, Vol.II, pp. 271-2.

18. pp. 480, 512, 514, 516.

19. See Orwin & Whetham, British Agriculture 1846-1914, p. 122, for this division. In this thesis the terms 'corn' and 'grazing' counties refers to the Agricultural Returns division.

The average size of holding in the 'grazing' counties was 70 acres, as against 100 in the 'corn' counties.²⁰ The ratio of farm workers to farmers was approximately 220:100 in the 'grazing' counties compared with 600:100 in the 'corn' counties.²¹ The distinction between the two regions must not be overemphasised; there was a good deal of grain grown in the 'grazing' counties, a good deal of pasture in the 'corn' counties. The north/south division into high and low wage regions was largely a result of the industrial revolution. As the north industrialised the demand for labour tended to raise farm wages, while the decay of old crafts in the south left a surplus of labour dependent upon agriculture. From the mid-nineteenth century, a widening margin between grain and livestock prices tended to reinforce the earlier wage difference. The downward trend in grain prices meant that farmers of the south-east received lower returns, and hence tried to keep wages low. The farmers of the 'grazing' counties had more buoyant prices, and increased their profits by feeding the cheap wheat to their stock. It is not surprising to find that the agricultural labourers' unions were strongest in the 'corn' counties, and that they made practically no impact on the high-wage northern counties.²²

20. Figures from Agricultural Returns 1885, as cited by T.W. Fletcher 'The Great Depression in English Agriculture 1873-1896': Minchinton, ed., Essays in Agrarian History, II, p. 247.

21. Cited in ibid. Figures from Census of 1891.

22. There were, however other causes besides the wage differences. These will be discussed later.

The significance of these regional differences for New Zealand immigration may be illustrated by examining the origins of English immigrants to Wellington Province for the years 1872-1876. These have been worked out according to counties by Khan.²³ From this it can be calculated that of the 5,080 statute adults arriving as government immigrants in this period, 1428 $\frac{1}{2}$ came from the 'grazing' counties, 3651 $\frac{1}{2}$ from the 'corn' counties.²⁴ Although they only had 45 percent of the population of England at the 1871 census, the 'corn' counties provided 72 percent of Wellington's English immigrants for this period. The twelve northern counties which fall wholly or mainly within Caird's high-wage area provided only 155 of these 5,080 immigrants. The parallels between the distribution of these figures, and the membership figures of the agricultural unions are marked. Dunbabin, working from admittedly incomplete data, has tabulated the distribution of 111,956 members of agricultural labourers' unions in 1874.²⁵ Using these figures, we find 92,919 in the 'corn' counties, 19,037 in the 'grazing' counties, and only 14,270 in Caird's high-wage area. The union movement did not reach beyond the borders of England. Khan's figures for Wellington 1872-6, show 83

23. Khan, Immigration into Wellington Province, pp. 384-5, Table 44. All figures are for statute adults.

24. I have inflated the 'grazing' counties figure by including the whole of the Yorkshire figure (148 $\frac{1}{2}$), although the East Riding falls within the 'corn' division of the Agricultural Statistics. I have also included the Channel Islands figures (102) in the 'grazing' counties.

25. Dunbabin, 'Incidence and Organisation of Agricultural Trade Unionism in the 1870s', pp. 115-118.

government immigrants from Wales, 670½ from Scotland, 870½ from Ireland. Over three-quarters of these Wellington assisted immigrants, therefore, came from England, and those from the English 'corn' counties represented 54.47 percent of the total received from Britain. No breakdown into county of origin has yet been researched for immigrants to Taranaki and Hawke's Bay over this period. An examination of the returns of birthplaces at the 1871 and 1878 censuses suggests that it was at least as strongly English as that to Wellington,²⁶ and other evidence points to the same

predominance of 'corn' county immigrants. Our concentration

social relations with their labourers. Over the years of the 'Golden Age', the increasing affluence of the farmers, together with the long-term trend towards larger farms, led to a flowering of social pretensions. As Joseph Arch expressed it, the farmer's wives now wanted to 'play the piano, dress fine, make calls and ape the country gentry', while the farmers began to 'hunt, and shoot, and play the fine gentleman at ease'.²⁸ From the middle of the century²⁹ the farm house was often rebuilt outside the village. Meanwhile, the relations between farmers and landlords were, in general, good, and tending to become even better. In the late 1860s local chambers of agriculture began to develop, where both classes mingled and developed closer social³⁰ relations.

The farmers' hostility to the established church was becoming a thing of the past, since the transfer ~~in~~ 1836 of the liability for tithes from the occupier of land to the owner. As squire, farmer and clergy drew closer together, the labourer became increasingly isolated. Instead of bridging the gap, village religion too often served to widen it. As Miss Ashby writes, when gentility invaded the farm-houses, then was the time

. . . for a common religion to support a reasonable

28. Arch, *Life*, p. 30.

29. Dunbabin, 'The Revolt of the Field', p. 74.

30. *ibid.*

man's sense of common humanity. But instead the labourers built the 'Primitive' chapel. They must get away even from more prosperous Methodists into their own place ...³¹

Meanwhile, too many vicars followed the pattern of those at Tysoe, bringing the views and assumptions of their patrons' dinner tables to the village, and planting high hedges and beeches between themselves and their 'parishioners' whom they could no longer regard as 'neighbours'.³²

The living conditions of the agricultural labourer varied greatly from village to village, but the general picture was a depressing one. Too often the cottage was wretchedly small and badly built. In the 1850s nearly half of all cottages had only one bedroom, some had only one room. A whole family, often of three generations, had to live, cook, eat, wash and sleep in this confined space. One investigator, writing in 1872, told of measuring four old cottages standing in a row. They were 8' x 15', with two rooms.³³ Often the floors were of clay, which became sodden when it rained. The poor law had been a contributing cause to the housing problem. It had led to the growth of 'closed' parishes, that is, parishes where the proprietors acted in concert to keep down the population, and hence the the poor rates. These proprietors pulled down cottages,

31. Ashby, Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, p. 12.

32. ibid.

33. Green, English Agricultural Labourer, p. 35.

and built no new ones, drawing their labour as far as possible from outside their parish. The 'open' parish, on the other hand, too often consisted of wretchedly built small cottages run up cheaply by small farmers and others looking for a quick profit. In 1862 the poor law union rather than the individual parish became the unit for settlement purposes, removing one of the reasons for keeping a 'closed' parish. There were, however, other reasons such as the desire to keep down rural population so as to protect ³⁴ game.

The basic cause of the widespread practice of poaching was not simply disrespect for property, or a search for excitement, but poverty and the longing for a taste of meat. Significantly offences against the Game Laws were greatest in the 'corn' counties where the labourers were poorest, and were ³⁵ most frequent in the years of greatest distress. In the low wage areas labourers could not afford an adequate diet at the best of times. Meat was a luxury, generally reserved for Sundays only. If times were hard, Sunday dinner would be enriched by nothing more than a little melted butter or grease on the potatoes. The monotony of the bread diet was relieved by soaking it in broth or spreading it with dripping. Toast water was the common substitute for tea. As the majority of low-wage counties were in the 'corn' region, irregularity of income increased the hardship. In the winter

34. Orwin & Whetham, History of British Agriculture, p. 219.
 35. F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1963, p. 143.

there was much unemployment, wages were reduced, and commonly there was no payment on wet days when the men could not work. In the harvest season wages rose to their highest, together with further remuneration in kind. The pattern in these counties tended to be one of getting into debt in winter, and in summer a temptation to heavy drinking and other extravagances when a lump sum such as the harvest money was paid. Not only were 'grazing' county workers in general better paid, but their income was spread evenly over the year, leading to a better management of the home economy. Furthermore, 'living in' was associated with later marriages and smaller families, and these were further encouraged in the 'grazing' counties by the much better chance of getting onto a farm on one's own account if one could save a little capital.

In the 'corn' counties the farmers made a practice of turning off the single men first when winter came, so as to reduce the burden of poor relief. As a consequence, youths of 17 commonly wed girls of 15 and bred up large families. The children had to make a contribution to the family income at an early age. Many were put into public gangs, organised by gangmasters, who took their gangs around the countryside, contracting for certain kinds of work. Children as young as six often had to walk miles to work daily, and put in long hours, often under brutal supervision. As the children grew older they became an

economic asset to the family, and provided a measure of security against starvation if the breadwinner should be taken ill. But in the early 1870s the large family, especially of young children, was becoming a handicap. The Gangs Act of 1869 forbade the employment of children under eight in a gang, and in 1873 all employment of children under eight was forbidden. The 1870 Education Act, and more especially Lord Sandon's Act of 1876, brought the principle of compulsion into elementary education, leading to Mundella's Act of 1880 which finally enforced compulsory attendance for all children from the ages of five to ten. All this meant much hardship for families with young children, and the wide currency of Joseph Arch's ironic grace is not surprising:

O Heavenly Father bless us,
And keep us all alive;
There are ten of us to dinner
And food for only five.

If the parents turned to emigration as a way out of their difficulties, they found that large families were not popular with the colonial governments. To the good fortune of many an agricultural labourer, the New Zealand authorities, desperate for manpower, relaxed restrictions of this kind over the crucial years of the 'Revolt of the Field'.

We must now briefly survey the influences which had been at work among the agricultural labouring class to make possible their sudden and unexpected revolt. One had been a slow but continuous spread of education and literacy. Thus

in 1874 in north Hampshire it was estimated that 30 percent more of the labourers could write than in 1850 and most of the young people were now literate.³⁶ The quiet work of schools, chapels, newspaper reading rooms, and circulating libraries had brought the day when newspaper reports and printed propaganda could be a potent force in arousing the agricultural labourer. As Dunbabin has pointed out, the uprising of the 1830s produced no literature, and depended heavily on rumour for its spread, whereas the revolt of the 1870s was spread largely by the printed word, and had its own widely circulating newspapers.³⁷ The railways had also had an important influence; by cheapening and simplifying travel they had widened the horizon and raised the aspirations of the rural worker. Village Methodism was extremely important in finding and training the leaders of the revolt, and giving the labourers experience in mutual action. Joseph Arch, like many other of the unions' leaders, had gained his experience in public speaking as a Methodist lay preacher. He quotes with approval the words of Thorold Rogers; 'I do not believe that the mass of peasants could have been moved at all, had it not been for the organisation of the Primitive Methodists'.³⁸ Dunbabin reports that there seems to be some correlation between the incidence of

36. E.L. Jones, 'Agricultural Labour Market, 1793-1872', p. 335.

37. 'The "Revolt of the Field"', p. 72.

38. Arch, Life, p. 240.

unionism and that of nonconformist places of worship. Another influence in arousing the labourers was the Royal Commission of 1867, on the employment of women and children in agriculture. The Commission took a wide view of its task, and built up a comprehensive picture of rural labour conditions. Its investigations, report, and the resulting widespread public discussion, both stirred the rural workers, and showed them that they had influential friends and advocates in other ranks of society.

Even before the appointment of the Royal Commission, one such advocate, Canon Girdlestone, had attracted wide attention. In 1862 Girdlestone moved from a high-wage parish in Lancashire to the low-wage parish of Halberton in North Devon. He was shocked at the living conditions of labourers receiving only 7s to 8s a week and tried to persuade the farmers to pay better wages, first by personal remonstrances, and then by a hard-hitting sermon preached during the cattle plague of 1866 on the text, 'Behold the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle'. Their only response was anger and abuse, so he turned to other methods. By publicising the labourers' conditions, first through a letter to The Times, he obtained the means to organise a regular system of migration from Devon to the high-wage districts of the north of England. The apathy and ignorance of the labourers provided him with many problems. They

often asked whether the counties he was sending them to were 'over the water', their baggage had to be addressed for them, and their railway tickets bought. His efforts publicised one possible action which the unions were soon to take up.

The preconditions for a successful union movement were, it would appear, well developed by the late '60s. All that was now needed was a surge of emotion to trigger off the revolt. Dunbabin suggests that the driving force was a mixture of anger and hope, rather than simply a reaction of desperation.⁴⁰ The hope arose from the fact that circumstances had now turned in the labourers' favour. Although, for propaganda purposes, their leaders maintained that the prosperity of the 'Golden Age' had passed the rural workers by, research indicates that between 1851 and 1871 real wages had been rising, though by less than one percent per annum.⁴¹ E.L. Jones has made out a good case for a crucial change taking place during the 1850s, from conditions of labour glut to a 'partial, but structural, shortage of labour'.⁴² The seasonality of farm work, and the wide variation in local conditions, have tended to mask the signs

40. *Past and Present*, No. 27 (1964), p. 110-112. (Replying to criticism of his 'The "Revolt of the Field"').

41. T.W. Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture 1873-1896', Minchinton, *Essays in Agrarian History*, II, p. 242.

42. In his 'Agricultural Labour Market, 1793-1872'.

of a general improvement in conditions. But better cottages were being built, allotments were spreading, chapels were being built and branches of friendly societies were multiplying in rural areas. Behind this general improvement lies the fact that continued emigration from the rural districts (both to the cities and overseas) left a considerably reduced labour force to handle more work, so that at least at the busy seasons the balance of advantage had shifted to favour the employee. There was hope, then, which was reflected in a strong millenarian flavour in the revolt, but there was also anger. This arose mainly because, particularly in 'corn' counties, wage rates had come under strain from the mid '60s on, due to a fall in returns from arable land. There were, of course, plenty of other causes for anger and resentment, most of which are clearly expressed in Arch's autobiography. The Poaching Prevention^{Act} of 1862 was a particularly sore point, for it empowered the police to search anyone without a warrant. Arch explains one of its many outworkings as it affected two 'respectable, honest married women' in his village. Following long-established custom, after a day in the fields cleaning turnips, they put some in their aprons to take home. For this they were searched, 43 hauled before the magistrate, and fined for stealing turnips. The growing social isolation of the labourers, arising from

43. Arch, Life, p. 149.

the pretensions of clergy and farmers, gave rise to numerous petty acts of tyranny. Thus Arch gives several examples of despotic parson s' wives asserting their arbitrary power in the village school. When he was a boy a 'kind of would-be lady pope' had given orders that all girls at the school were to have 'their hair cut round like a basin'. She met more than a match in Arch's mother.⁴⁴ When his own children were at school he had a similar tussle with the parson's wife over a hair-net.⁴⁵ The rapid rise of non-conformity in the 1860s doubtless gave many openings for acts of intolerance from the established church, which still monopolised the positions of rural power.

The movement towards unionism began in the later 1860s, with a number of sporadic local efforts. The first large-scale union was established by a vicar in Herefordshire in 1871. It set its face against strike action, sponsoring a successful policy of migration to higher-paid districts, and rapidly growing to embrace some 30,000 members in six counties.⁴⁶ The National Agricultural Labourers' Union, under Arch's leadership, gauged more accurately the mood of the rural workers, and adopted from the outset the policy of making a firm but courteous approach to the farmers of a district, setting out the minimum terms on which the labourers would work. If the farmers refused to meet the demands,

44. *ibid.* p. 7.

45. *ibid.* pp. 51-2.

46. Jones, 'Agricultural Labour Market, 1793-1872', p. 336.

a strike followed. At this point the workers would be assisted to migrate to better-paid jobs elsewhere, but in the early stages of the Union Arch was rather opposed to emigration overseas. As we have seen, immigration agents looked hopefully to the Union movement from the start, but their success was limited, until both leaders and men began to have doubts about the chances of rapidly attaining their objectives in the homeland.

Joseph Arch (1826-1919) began work as a boy of nine, scaring crows for a wage of 4d a twelve-hour day. While still in his teens he won prizes in shows, to become 'the champion hedger of England'. His work of contract mowing and hedgecutting took him far afield over the Midland counties, and this, together with his lay preaching for the Methodists, both made him widely known among the rural workers, and gave him a wide knowledge of their conditions. Unlike many of his fellows, he was in no danger of losing his job because of his opinions, and having inherited a cottage, he could not be turned out of doors for following an independent line. By persistent effort, he had achieved a good deal of self-education, and this, together with the restraint and confident sense of mission which may have owed a good deal to his Methodism, won him influential supporters outside the labouring class. C.R. Carter, meeting him for the first time at the Leamington meeting of Good Friday 1872,

described him as strongly built, fluent in speech and strong in voice, a man who looked as if he had lived hard, and worked hard. Of his address that day Carter wrote, 'I though his speech the most heart-stirring and manly address I had ever heard delivered by a working-man'.⁴⁷ On this occasion Carter had two interviews with him on emigration to New Zealand. He was not favourable to it then, and when events changed his outlook on the subject, he used his influence largely on behalf of Canada, which he had visited in 1873 at the invitation of the Canadian government. Yet, writing in 1874, Carter expressed the conviction that New Zealand had received thousands of farm labourers who would never have been induced to emigrate but for his movement.

Over the next year or two the New Zealand immigration effort and the union movement are interesting both for the parallels they offer, and for the close and continuous interaction between their programmes. The two organisations were hurriedly improvised within months of each other. Both aimed to reach and persuade the rural labourer. Neither was a tidy unity. The New Zealand immigration programme was complicated by the competing interests of the various provinces,⁴⁸ and by the recruitment campaigns of the Messrs Brogden, and of the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid

47. C.R. Carter, Life and Recollections of a New Zealand Colonist, 3 vols., London, 1866, Vol III, p. 228.

48. e.g. Canterbury agents competed with Carter in Cornwall in autumn 1871. See AJHR 1872, D-1A, p. 6.

49. See AJHR 1873, D-2A, p. 16, for Brogdens' recruiting competing with Featherston's programme.

Corporation, which ran parallel to, and somewhat in competition with, the main campaign of Featherston's organisation.⁴⁹ The Union movement was similarly untidy. Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union embraced perhaps two-thirds of the unionists, but a considerable part of the movement opted for a very loose Federal Union, the two main sections of which were centred on Lincolnshire and Kent. Moreover, branches of Arch's Union itself often followed divergent policies. Thus the Oxford branch opted for overseas migration from the start, while Arch was still cold to the idea.⁵⁰

Although they met with a rather cold response, Featherston and his team continued to court the unions. On 16 October 1872, the Rev G. Smales, in reporting to Featherston on a series of lectures he had been engaged to give on New Zealand, refers to two visits he had paid to the leaders of the Union in Leamington.⁵¹ Featherston himself maintained a correspondence with the union leaders.⁵² These efforts paid off when the Unions had to reshape their strategy in the face of increasingly effective organized opposition by the farmers. On 17 April 1873 the farmers of the Essex and Suffolk Association resolved on a lock-out of union members, and proceeded to carry it through successfully. In a memorial dated 15 May 1873, signed by Arch and his committee

50. Dunbabin, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism in the 1870's', p. 134.

51. AJHR 1873, D-2D, p. 16.

52. AJHR 1874, D-3, pp. 39, 54.

and forwarded through J.S. Wright, Chairman of the Birmingham Liberal Association, the National Union put the plight of the English rural worker before the New Zealand parliament, and appealed for free passages to the colony.⁵³ The initial reply, from the under-secretary for immigration, merely put them in touch with the Agent-General, but on assuming the Immigration portfolio the following October, Vogel sent a second reply to J.S. Wright, informing him of the decision just reached by the government to give free passages to suitable emigrants. He wrote of 'the high character both for ability and for unflinching honesty of purpose which Mr Joseph Arch enjoys, the reputation for which is widely current throughout the Colony', requested the union's aid in finding immigrants, and invited Arch, or someone appointed by him, to visit New Zealand at the Colony's expense.⁵⁴

From this point on the work of the Unions and of the New Zealand immigration organisation became increasingly complementary. The union newspapers carried New Zealand immigration advertisements, which were given support by editorials and news items.⁵⁵ On 23 December 1873 C. Holloway, a senior officer of the National Union, sailed for New Zealand in

53. AJHR 1873, D-1A, p. 6.

54. AJHR 1874, D-1, p. 6.

55. For advts., see Vogel to Featherston, 25 October 1873: AJHR 1874, D-1, p. 10. Im 6/76/548, Nat. Archives, Wellington. Extracts from an editorial and a news item will be quoted below.

response to Vogel's invitation, travelling in charge of a considerable body of agricultural labourers from Oxford, Warwick and Gloucestershire. New Zealand agents, such as Carter, were given plenty of opportunities to address union meetings in the interests of immigration. Thus, on 27 January 1874, Carter addressed a large meeting of farm labourers in the village of Islip, Oxfordshire, for the express purpose of assisting the secretary of the Oxford district of the union to enlist a large body of rural labourers to emigrate with him to New Zealand. About 50 were procured at the meeting, and Carter approved over 100 more in the next few days.⁵⁶ The emigration of union leaders, accompanying parties of labourers, became a not uncommon pattern as the rural conflict deepened.⁵⁷ Besides emigrating in large numbers, the union leaders began increasingly to act as emigration agents.⁵⁸ Union funds were extensively used to assist emigration. In the 1874-5 financial year the National Union spent just on £6,000 on migration and emigration, apparently giving emigrants £1 each, and migrants 10s.⁵⁹

On 21 March 1874 the farmers of Newmarket locked out all Union men. The lock-out spread over much of eastern and southern England, until it is estimated that 10,000 labourers

56. Carter to Featherston, 5 February 1874: AJHR 1874, D-3, p. 41. See Carter Life and Recollections, III, pp. 228-9, for descriptions of later meetings.

57. See Featherston to Minister for Immigration, 23 Sept., 1874 AJHR 1875, D-2, p. 19., for further examples.

58. Dunbabin, 'Agricultural Trades Unionism in the 1870's,' pp. 137-8.

59. Green, English Agricultural Labourer, p. 45.

were thrown out of work. The Lincolnshire Labour League came to a compromise agreement with the farmers, but the National fought on till 27 July, when the executive advised the men to return to work to gather in the harvest, while at the same time reaffirming the policy on migration and emigration. The lock-out had greatly weakened the unions, but by rendering a strike policy impractical it gave an added impetus to emigration. Featherston, reading the signs of the times in April 1874, wrote:

It is infinitely easier to procure 40,000 emigrants, now that the Agricultural Unions have taken up emigration, than it was to obtain 5,000 when they were opposed to it. All the Unions are working heartily with me, being convinced that they can only hope to succeed in their present struggle by shipping off the surplus labour. The number sent away has already had a very appreciable effect in the labour market in certain districts in the County of Kent, and the employers are so alarmed that they constantly refuse to sign certificates of character for intending emigrants. The stream thus set flowing will not easily be stemmed, especially if the reports sent home by emigrants to their friends continue as favourable and encouraging as hitherto. 60

The unions' emigration policy drew inspiration from the millenarian element on the movement, and was frequently presented with a strong Biblical appeal. Thus the Labourers' Union Chronicle issued the following call:

Not a farm labourer in England but should rush from the old doomed country to such a paradise as New Zealand ... The exiled labourers will be requited for their ages of suffering as a class in the Eden of New Zealand, and

60. AJHR 1874, D-3, p. 54.

avenged for all the spoliation they have suffered from the plundering landed aristocracy, and a mean, thoughtless set of farmers by leaving them . . . , by taking themselves off as fast as ships and steamers will take them to the land of promise; - A GOOD LAND - . . . A LAND OF OIL, OLIVES AND HONEY; - A LAND WHERE IN THOU MAY'ST EAT BREAD WITHOUT SCARCENESS: THOU SHALT NOT LACK ANYTHING IN IT . . .

Away, then, farm labourers, away! New Zealand is the promised land for you; and the Moses that will lead you is ready. ⁶¹

Holloway, returning with first-hand information on New Zealand, made the same call to repeat the flight from Egypt, telling his rural listeners that he believed Joseph Arch had been raised up by Divine Providence 'to be the deliverer of the farm labourers, as Moses was to be the deliverer of the Israelites'. ⁶² The farm labourers responded in an exodus that sent from the United Kingdom nearly 26,000 male agricultural workers, with their tens of thousands of dependents, over the five years 1874-8.

Margaret Ashby has described what the exodus meant for the village of Tysoe. The cottages, which had been recovering a little from the denudedness wrought by the hard times earlier in the century, were again stripped to give the emigrants the blankets, sheets, clothes, brushes, and knives, without which they could not embark. Worse than this, the men and boys who left tended to be 'the more forceful and bright characters, the darlings of the families'. Emigration

61. 28 November 1873, p. 1. : cited Dunbabin, 'The "Revolt of the Field"', p. 79.

62. Labourers' Union Chronicle, 3 May 1875, as reprinted in AJHR 1875, D-6, p. 5.

took several of the ablest families, and the village perhaps never quite recovered from the blow.⁶³ That it was the best men who followed the union cause, and refused to bow to the farmers' retaliation, is a judgement widely supported. 'The bulk of them were picked men', Joseph Arch wrote, 'the drones of course would not go'.⁶⁴ 'The best labourers had departed', comments Professor Hasbach.⁶⁵ But England's loss was New Zealand's gain. And in New Zealand the only extensive area of land still available for settlement by able, land-hungry men was the North Island bush. Some went to it immediately, but most worked first as labourers in the open country gaining colonial experience, and saving the necessary capital, before joining the steady migration to the Great Bush, that set in from all parts of New Zealand.

The New Zealand Government, however, was anxious, particularly for defence reasons, to begin the build-up of population in the Bush as early as possible. This would entail supplementing the Scandinavian settlements by sending British immigrants into the Bush directly on their arrival.

63. Ashby, Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, p. 89.

64. Life p. 254. See also p. 219.

65. W. Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, London, 1908, p. 294. See also Chambers & Mingay, Agricultural Revolution, p. 189; Green, English Agricultural Labourer, p. 65.

In 1870-72 schemes to this end were mooted for various parts of the Bush,⁶⁶ but only in the Rangitikei-Manawatu was one of these earlier plans carried through to fruition. This area was particularly appropriate for the first such experiment. Native difficulties were unlikely to arise here. The planned strategic roads and railways would provide work for the settlers, who in turn would provide them with traffic. The existing pastoral settlements were well placed to facilitate the colonising of the bush along their borders. All that was needed was a well-devised settlement scheme backed by the necessary financial means, to match the opportunities the district offered. Once again it was Vogel's keen eye for opportunities offering on the British scene that detected a significant opening; this time not in the emergence of a new working class movement, but in a typically Victorian upper class association, combining philanthropy and commerce under aristocratic patronage.

The Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation was formed in 1867 by a group of noblemen and other influential men under the chairmanship of the Duke of Manchester, for the purpose of relieving distress in Britain by fostering emigration to the colonies. It seems to have developed no practical programme for advancing this charitable aim until Colonel William Feilding was invited to join the board in

66. AJHR 1872, D-16, p. 4, lists the main schemes up to mid-1872.

March 1870. Colonel Feilding was a younger brother of the Earl of Denbigh, one of the foundation members of the Corporation, but the invitation to join the board arose from his success in carrying through an emigration scheme on his own account. To help relieve distress arising from the closing of the naval dockyards at Deptford, Feilding had purchased a property in Queensland, and successfully emigrated 200 people to it. Clearly a man of action, Feilding was sceptical of the vague philanthropy of the Corporation, and believed its existence would prove ephemeral unless it began to undertake operations on a commercial basis. He was able to convert the board to his way of thinking, and appears to have become at once the main force in the Corporation's affairs.⁶⁷ William Feilding (1836-1895), youngest son of the seventh Earl of Denbigh, had a military career with the Coldstream Guards, rising to the rank of lieutenant-general. Between his joining the directorate of the Corporation in March 1870, and his active involvement in its affairs from mid-1871, he had served as attache at French headquarters during the Franco-Prussian war.

67. For the founding of the Corporation, and Feilding's influence on its policies, see: NZM, 27 February 1875, p. 17. (Address by Col. Feilding, preparatory to launching sale of script in New Zealand); Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers, 1890, XII, 354, 'Report from the Select Committee on Colonisation . . . ' pp. 90-94 (Minutes of evidence, examination of Lieut.-General the Hon. William Feilding).

68. AJHR 1872, D-11, p. 3. Also for subsequent correspondence on which the rest of this paragraph is based.

During Vogel's visit to London in 1871 Feilding conferred with him on the prospects of the Corporation becoming involved in emigration to New Zealand. These interviews were put on record by an exchange of notes dated 12 and 13 May 1871.⁶⁸ Feilding's note gives the information that he was about to visit the Australian colonies 'with full powers to carry out the objects of the Corporation', and would proceed to New Zealand if the New Zealand government should be interested in opening negotiations. Fox sent the government's reply, dated 29 August 1871, to the Brisbane address supplied by Feilding. The government would be glad to confer with Feilding, and hoped he would be able to visit New Zealand, preferably in October, when it was anticipated the parliamentary session would have closed. Through changes in his arrangements, this letter took some two months to reach Feilding, and he did not arrive in Wellington until 11 December 1871. The cabinet had something like a month's advice of his coming, and had obviously done a good deal of preparation, which was just as well, as his travel arrangements allowed him only a fortnight in New Zealand.

On 12 December Feilding had a long conference with the ministers, followed by a long talk with Vogel 'who is⁶⁹ virtually the ruling spirit'. A rough outline of a proposal

69. Entry for 12 December 1871 in Journal of William H.A. Feilding, as copied in 'Service Record of General the Honble. William H.A. Feilding with Journals, Letters, Extracts and Recollections'. Presented to the people of Feilding by Feilding's widow, Public Library, Feilding.

for a special settlement on a block in the Rangitikei-Manawatu bush was mapped out, and Feilding agreed to inspect the block. Police orderlies with two spare horses were at once despatched to Foxton,⁷⁰ whence Feilding followed by coach on 14 December. Halcombe, taking up his appointment as government immigration officer the following day,¹⁷¹ accompanied Feilding on the trip. They made an early start from Foxton on the 15th, travelling on horseback to five miles beyond Palmerston North, then on foot to the Gorge to inspect the road-works. Feilding thus obtained an idea of the nature of the country, and of the problems that settlement would face. He wrote:

... At one place the virgin forest was so thick, it took us 8 hours to cut our way through one mile of dense forest. The recent heavy floods had left their marks, and for 10 miles the horses were up to their girths in mud and slush along the tracks. We got back to the whare just as night was closing in, and were obliged to light a fire and sit in the smoke, to keep away the sand flies and mosquitoes, which persecuted us in myriads, biting us even through corduroy ...⁷²

The following day the party proceeded to Fox's home on the Rangitikei River, a journey which involved skirting the western edge of the block proposed for settlement. That night Feilding suffered a feverish restlessness as a result of his mosquito bites. In a delirium of fever, he ran

70. *ibid.*

71. AJHR 1872, D-16, p. 4.

72. Feilding, Journal, entry for 15 December 1871.

across the fields and threw himself into the Rangitikei River, lying there till the fever subsided. After this 'kill or cure' approach he went back to bed and fell⁷³ quietly asleep.

Feilding returned to Wellington anxious to reach a satisfactory agreement with the government, as the proposed block met the criteria he had established as a result of his Queensland experience. As he explained to the British parliamentary committee twenty years later, the fact that it was in an out of the way place, 'difficult to get to, and still more difficult to get away from when once you got the people there',⁷⁴ was an advantage. From his Queensland settlement Feilding had learnt that 'after you had done everything possible to make people comfortable, they would flit away, with a good deal of your money too'. From the proposed block the settlers would have to 'make their way back to civilisation by means of roads and railways'. Furthermore, in doing so, they would be provided with employment in the unproductive early stages of settlement. Feilding remarked that he had proceeded 'against the advice of every colonist in the place'.⁷⁵ They considered he was a fool to have chosen bush land.

On Feilding's return to Wellington an agreement was

73. ibid., entry for 17 December 1871.

74. Grt. Brit. Parl. Pap., 1890, XII, 354, p. 90.

75. ibid., p. 92.

threshed out in a race against time, occasioned both by Feilding's imminent departure, and the dispersal of the administration over Christmas. The agreement provided for the purchase by the Corporation of a roughly rectangular block of 106,000 acres (shortly afterwards named the 'Manchester Block'), stretching for some twenty miles from the Manawatu River to the Rangitikei River, with a width of about eight miles. The price was 15s. per acre for 100,000 acres, the remaining 6,000 acres being allowed for roads and reserves. The Government had the right to set apart 1000 acres of totara timber to be cut for public works, the land to be sold to the Corporation once the timber was removed. The Corporation was to execute all internal surveys, and undertook, under substantial money penalties, to introduce 2,000 immigrants into the colony, and to settle upon its land 2,000 statute adults before April 1877, with the first 100 being brought in by 1 April 1873. The Government undertook to provide free passages from England to the settlement for the Corporation's immigrants, and to employ up to 200 men on public works for four days in each week, so that each man might earn at least one pound a week, provided that no immigrant was entitled to more than one year of such employment. There were various clauses concerning details, such as the provision of two day's barrack accommodation in Wellington for newly arrived immigrants; a

right to some free use of the Foxton-Palmerston North tramway by the Corporation in the early stages of settlement; and a right for the Corporation to select ten acres of Crown land in Palmerston North.

The various arrangements were brought to completion on Sunday, Christmas Day, with Feilding spending hours in signing 2,500 bonds and coupons covering the payment of principal and interest for the block.⁷⁶ The formal signing of the agreement is dated 26 December, but the solicitors had completed drafting it by the morning of the 25th. The handling of the negotiations had apparently got caught up in one of the petty political comedies which the provincial system so readily generated. The details (and rights and wrongs) of the matter would be difficult to unravel, but Fitzherbert as Superintendent of Wellington Province, resented the way in which the affair was almost completely taken over by the Cabinet.⁷⁷ However, at the last minute he was given a look at the document before it was signed. As Bunny, the Provincial Secretary, reports it, a special messenger brought the draft of the agreement to him at about ten o'clock Christmas morning with anote from Vogel urging him to take it to Fitzherbert out at the Hutt, and 'come back at once, and lunch with him'.⁷⁸ By the time Bunny had

76. Feilding, Journal, entry for 25 December 1871.

77. NZPD, Vol. 12, p. 273 (2 August 1872).

78. ibid., p. 275.

found a horse and ridden to the Hutt, Fitzherbert was at church. After church Fitzherbert was able to have a quick look at the document, before Bunny returned, arriving in Wellington at four o'clock. In the bustle, Vogel and Fitzherbert forgot who was to write first to whom to put the consultation on record, with the result that this was not done. The whole matter was complicated by various earlier arrangements relating both to provincial finance and crown lands. Feilding may well have left New Zealand still a little confused as to how its affairs were managed. However, by appointing Halcombe as the Corporation's agent in New Zealand he ensured that it would have the advice of a colonist experienced in local affairs.

Colonel Feilding completed his tour of all the British colonies suitable for English immigration,⁷⁹ and returned to London to recommend the adoption of the New Zealand scheme.⁸⁰ The Corporation ratified the agreement on 27 March 1872 and proceeded to investigate sources of finance for the venture. The London financial world, in Feilding's words,⁸¹ 'laughed at the idea'. The directors were told that New Zealand was too far away and that they would never get 2,000 people to emigrate to New Zealand in preference to North America. Certain financial aspects of the agreement were

79. Grt. Brit. Parl. Pap., 1890, XII, 354, p. 90.

80. AJHR 1872, D-11, p. 9.

81. NZM, 27 February 1875, p. 17.

also pointed out as unsatisfactory - particularly the obligation to pay a high rate of interest on the £75,000 for the land purchase until it was paid off. It was pointed out that the New Zealand Government had 'millions of acres' of land, equally available and untenanted, for which it was unable to charge any interest to anyone. To meet these objections, the Corporation began to advertise for settlers, and having established that it could find them, it made an approach to the New Zealand Government for a reconsideration of the terms of the contract. This was done by means of a letter from Feilding to the Governor, Sir George Bowen.⁸² Possibly Feilding took this unusual course as a result of information from Halcombe on the political situation as regards the Provincial and General Governments. Feilding made it clear that the Corporation would have to abandon the scheme unless some concessions were made. To show the sincerity of the directors, he stated that they had themselves provided the funds to carry through the advertisement for suitable colonists. Probably aware of the growing concern in New Zealand over Featherston's failure to find the numbers of immigrants the colony required, he reported that the Corporation already had 600 persons on its books, and was receiving an increasing number of applications from a 'higher class of colonist'.

82. AJHR 1872, D-11A, pp. 3-4.

In New Zealand Fitzherbert had apparently established that he had the better cards in this particular political tussle.⁸³ In any case, Vogel asked him to submit his proposals as to what concessions should be granted to the Corporation, and these proposals were endorsed without amendment by the General Government. There were three concessions; an extension of the time for the introduction of the first immigrants from April to December 1873, a reduction in the interest rate on the land purchase money, and a promise by Fitzherbert to recommend to the Provincial Council the expenditure of up to £2,000 per annum for five years on district roads within the block. In forwarding these proposals to Feilding, John Hall, the Colonial Secretary, requested that any further communications on the subject be addressed to the Colonial Secretary.⁸⁴ On 7 December 1872 Feilding cabled 'Corporation accepts conditions . . . Emigrants delayed awaiting Government announcement Foxton tramway open'.⁸⁵

The repeatedly delayed tramway was finally handed over on 20 September 1873. The Corporation must earlier have received satisfactory assurances on its progress, as the first party of immigrants, numbering 31, was despatched on

83. Possibly as a result of much of the Manchester Block being covered by the earlier proclamation of the special settlement 'townships' of Sandon and Palmerston, under a provincial act.

84. AJHR 1873, D-7, pp. 4-5.

85. ibid., p. 6.

the Duke of Edinburgh on 6 September. Meanwhile Halcombe had been superintending active preparations in New Zealand. A surveyor had been employed for more than a year on preliminary work. A substantial depot had been erected in Palmerston North for the reception of immigrants.⁸⁶ Sketches by Fox of the neighbouring country had been sent to London for display in the Corporation's offices. The site for the first settlement had been decided on; the township of Feilding was to be founded on the south western edge of the block, near where the proposed railway line would cross the Oroua River. The Oroua intersected and almost equally divided the block, running north and south through what Halcombe described as 'a magnificent valley, fully five miles wide, into which the drainage from at least two-thirds of the block finds its way, and which is full of magnificent timber'. The Feilding site formed a good centre of operations for opening up the block, both by way of the Oroua valley across its width, and of the planned railway line along the seaward side of its length.

The Duke of Edinburgh reached Wellington on 28 December 1874, and the Manchester Block immigrants proceeded to the Palmerston North depot by way of Foxton and the tramway. Before we follow the fortunes of the Feilding settlement, a brief survey of the progress of the Rangitikei-Manawatu to this date is needed. The rapid build-up of population was

86. AJHR 1874, D-8, p. 7.

just about to commence, but up to the beginning of 1874 the growth had been quite slow. The 1871 census, taken just after the arrival of the Celoeno's Scandinavians, showed a total population of 3,271, and the census of 1 March 1874 returned 4,120, a growth of only 849, of which over 200 would have been provided by the first three shipments to the Manchester Block. The main developments since 1871 had been the construction of the Foxton-Palmerston North tramway, and the road on through to Hawke's Bay, the construction of the Palmerston North-Rangitikei Road, the establishment of the Small Farm Association settlement on the Sandon Block, and the freeholding of many of the pastoral runs held earlier on lease from the natives. The completion of the tramway made possible the rapid development of a timber industry at Palmerston North. At the beginning of 1874 only Manson and Co's mill, with two engines, capable of turning out 5,000 feet daily, was in operation. By the end of the year four more mills had been built in the town, and others in the surrounding district. It was already becoming obvious that a wooden tramway using horse-drawn waggons could not cope with the rapidly growing traffic. ⁸⁷ In his report to 31 May 1874, J.T. Stewart recorded that 24,200 railway sleepers had been passed and branded in the district. The Palmerston North-Rangitikei Road, of importance in providing the initial route between Palmerston North and Feilding, had been constructed in 1872-3 by the provincial

government. It provided access also for the Small Farm Association settlers on the Sandon Block, and their township of Sanson. These settlers, most of whom came from the Hutt, had been negotiating with the government for six years before they finally got onto their land in 1872. They settled mainly on open country. Most of the earlier-settled pastoral country had been put up for auction by 1874. In the majority of cases it was purchased by the existing holders, whose improvements had to be paid for by anyone successfully bidding against them. A few new settlers were brought into the district by these sales, among them Sir James Glenny Wilson, author of the useful district history, Early Rangitikei.⁸⁹

Palmerston North, at the time the first Manchester Block settlers arrived at the Corporation's depot there, was a scattered village of about 250 inhabitants, of whom about one third were Scandinavians.⁹⁰ The township, on the 600 acre Papaeoia clearing, had not a tree nor a vestige of cultivation worth mentioning, but only rank grass and toitoi, together with a thriving crop of thistles wherever the land had been cleared for roads or other purposes. Dotted here and there were small settlers' houses, with an

88. NZM, 21 November 1874, p. 1.

89. For his development of his property near Bulls, and his active part in politics and local affairs, see L.J. Wild, The Life and Times of Sir James Wilson of Bulls, Christchurch, 1953.

90. Y, 28 February 1874, p. 12. This is a useful description by a 'travelling contributor', dated 12 February 1874.

occasional pretentious looking business place. The place had no need of a 'Who's Who' for here everybody could afford 'to sacrifice some attention to his own business, in order to look after everybody else's business'.⁹¹ A stranger had no sooner to appear in the township than 'the minds of the inhabitants were severely exercised about him'.^{91a} This curiosity was matched by a certain generosity. On the arrival of the Duke of Edinburgh party, the population hastily improvised a dinner of welcome, followed by 'a most comfortable and enjoyable evening',⁹² at which Mr Halcombe presided.

The Corporation's arrangements gave these immigrants, and all subsequent parties, a smooth and carefree path as far as Palmerston North. The Corporation provided the cost of travel to the port of shipment in England, and where necessary, advanced the immigrants the money to pay for their outfits. The New Zealand Government provided free transport from England to Palmerston North. At this point the immigrants' responsibilities began. They were charged for their rations while at the depot, and paid 30s per family towards the carts which took them and their luggage to the settlement.⁹³ The first eight miles, as far as Awahuri, was over a good metalled road, but for the last

91. ibid.

91a. ibid.

92. NZM, 24 January 1874, p. 7.

93. AJHR 1874, D-8, p. 8.

four miles from Awahuri to Feilding the carts bumped over the open country of the Awahuri native reserve. Nevertheless, the conditions facing the first pioneer party were not over rigorous. On the boundary of the native reserve two permanent European settlers, James Whisker and John Hughey, had for eight years been farming a 900 acre block leased from the natives, their homestead being within a mile of the site of Feilding. They had 500 cattle, including 50 milking cows, also sheep, horses and numerous pigs. They had begun cropping, and planted an orchard. They were able to provide the immigrants with fresh meat, milk, vegetables and fruit until they were able to produce their own.⁹⁴ Most of the township site was not bush, but scrub, toitoi, fern and flax.

Influenced no doubt by his encouraging earlier experience with the versatile Scandinavians, who had rapidly established themselves under much more adverse conditions, Halcombe tried to locate the Duke of Edinburgh immigrants at once on country sections of land, and set them to construct temporary huts from whatever materials were ready to hand. He soon decided that he had made a mistake. The immigrants showed no readiness in improvising homes and frequently lost their way in the wilderness of fern and scrub. They soon became thoroughly dispirited, and their obvious utter ignorance of the character of the land meant that they were

94. Wellington Independent, 2 March 1874.

quite unready to make a wise selection of a holding. After the first few days Halcombe decided to concentrate the immigrants in the township, erect cottages for them to rent, or purchase on easy terms, and provide work so that they could support their large families while 'educating themselves to the novelties of their position'.⁹⁶ Fortunately the second party, arriving at Wellington on the Salisbury on 19 January 1874, included four sawyers. They were set to work turning out timber, and enough for twenty cottages was also carted at considerable expense from Palmerston North and Bulls. Meanwhile the Woodlark was on the way from England with the equipment for a sawmill;⁹⁷ she reached Wellington on 24 March. This is probably the mill which Halcombe reported on 31 July 1874 as having been at work for the Corporation for the last three months.⁹⁸ The cottages erected were each 20' x 10', divided into two rooms, weatherboarded, with shingled roof and brick chimney. On 31 July 1874 Halcombe could report fifty such cottages completed.⁹⁹ By paying 7s per week an immigrant could make a cottage and an acre of township land freehold in three years; or he could rent it at 3s 6d per week. While the carpenters pushed on with cottage building, the rest were put to work making roads into the bush, to render accessible

95. AJHR 1874, D-8, p. 8.

96. AJHR 1877, H-27, p. 2. This and the preceding reference, are the main sources for this section on the first months of the settlement.

97. Y, 14 March 1874, p. 11.

98. AJHR 1874, D-8, p. 9.

99. ibid.

the lands they were in due course to occupy.

The third party of immigrants, totalling 79 statute adults, reached Wellington on the Ocean Mail on 2 February 1874. Two newspaper correspondents who visited Feilding at the time this party arrived have given vivid descriptions of this stage of the settlement.¹⁰⁰ They found it to consist of a weatherboard general store run by the Corporation, a long, low barracks built of bark, capable of accommodating a dozen families, an accommodation house in course of erection for a Mr Roe of Palmerston North, and a few bark huts and tents. The Ocean Mail party were taken through a small clump of bush to 'Canvas Town' where about a score of tents had been pitched for them on the edge of the bush. The new arrivals had been much tired by their journey, but were in good spirits, and joked a good deal about the roughness of the waggon ride. There were a large number of children in the party, and 'they ran about hither and thither hiding themselves in the foliage, and eagerly attracting the attention of their fellows to each new discovery'.¹⁰¹ Their elders soon hurried to the store for provisions, which the men could take on credit by merely giving their names. Frying pans were soon hissing and kettles boiling. An Irish shoe-maker among the new arrivals lost no time in finding

100. Wellington Independent, 2 March 1874.Y, 7 March 1874,p.11.
101. Y, 7 March 1874, p. 11.

custom. The Wellington Independent correspondent met Mr Whisker riding without his boots, having handed them over for much-needed repairs. The same writer goes on to describe the scene of the following morning:

All the immigrants who arrived yesterday were set to work today at clearing roads, and there is an air of bustling industry on every hand. The sound of the axe and the crash of falling trees can be heard far in the bush. Groups of men are coming to the store for axes, saws, bill-hooks, tomahawks, and tobacco; women are passing to and fro with pots frying-pans, kettles, tea, sugar and other necessaries, and Mr Whisker stands amidst the crowd of women, distributing milk. Banter is being exchanged between him and his fair customers, but he is evidently over-matched. Passing through the bush, I came upon many piles of split timber, house-blocks, posts and rails, and other material. Children are gambolling about the banks of the creeks, or playing "hide and go seek" in the forest. To these happy youngsters the place has the charm of a paradise.

The correspondent proceeds to praise the untiring energy and organising ability of Halcombe, who was busy from daylight till dark 'issuing instructions, examining maps, deciding disputes as to boundaries, visiting and instructing working parties, and generally looking to the comfort of the immigrants and the progress of the works'. His manner of dealing with the immigrants was noted to be 'a happy mixture of firmness and kindly solicitude'.

Halcombe was to need all his administrative abilities when the picnic atmosphere passed with the onset of winter, which in 1874 was exceptionally wet in the Rangitikei district. The Corporation sent out 570 immigrants in 1874,

and they arrived faster than Halcombe could get cottages erected. The families were commonly large, and the discomforts of tent life were doubtless considerable. To add to Halcombe's difficulties, the Awahuri Maoris, annoyed at the way their land was being churned to mud by the waggons, closed the route from Awahuri to Feilding. A new route in from Marton had to be organised to supply the 600 souls settled by this time on the block. The final solution to this problem was the making and metalling of a road through the native reserve during the summer of 1875-76, entirely at the Corporation's expense. Winter and spring were the bush-felling seasons, but the immigrants did not at first take kindly to the prices they were offered for the work. During the winter of 1874 it was only by the introduction of colonial workmen that they were convinced that the prices were not only fair but liberal.

Halcombe soon came to the conclusion that 'the very best of English immigrants are at first entirely unfit to deal with a bush country'.¹⁰² Those who fell considerably short of 'best' quality he rather discouraged from proceeding to the block, preferring to see them placed in employment elsewhere, as he could always obtain experienced colonists in their place. His reluctance to take over a party of 106½ statute adults arriving in Wellington on 22 October 1874 by the ship Douglas caused some embarrassment to the immigration authorities. H.J. Elliott, Immigration Officer

102. AJHR 1877, H-27, p. 3.

at Wellington, was concerned that Halcombe was endeavouring to dissuade his people from going up to the Manchester Block, and as the ship's surgeon had concurred with Halcombe's judgement as to their unsuitability, he was requested to name six or eight of the worst families. The surgeon provided the list, and continued:

Mr Halcombe the Agent expressed himself in terms of unqualified disapproval of these immigrants as a body, & informed me that he considered them physically unfit for colonial life. He likewise expressed his surprise that many of them should have either been selected by his Corporation or passed by the Agent-General.¹⁰³

While Halcombe's judgement of the immigrants was confirmed by Elliott, it is probable that difficulties in preparing to receive them on the block were the main cause for his reluctance. He was in Wellington when the ship arrived, but he did not visit them to see what they were like till nine days later.¹⁰⁴ When Elliott finally forwarded the party to Foxton on 21 November, Halcombe made no preparations for receiving them, thereby causing further embarrassment, and some newspaper comment.¹⁰⁵

Elliott drew the conclusion that some of the Corporation's directors in England were desirous of ridding their parishes of persons who were likely to become permanent burdens upon

103. Im 6/4/1-74/1309, National Archives, Wellington. This is the main source for this episode.

104. They were quarantined on Somes Island.

105. Y, 21 November 1874.

106 them. An examination of the details of the case would suggest that this is unlikely. Two of the directors were large landowners, (the Duke of Manchester and the Earl of Denbigh), a third owned one small farm (John Balfour).¹⁰⁷
 A check of the ship's passenger list ¹⁰⁸ shows that none of the immigrants particularly complained of came from any county where a director held land. In fact, in the whole party, only two persons came from such a county, a 20 year old single man and a 19 year old single woman, both from Armagh, where the Duke of Manchester owned some 12,000 acres. This episode does, however, raise the question of how the Corporation's immigrants were recruited.

The benevolent origins of the Corporation would suggest that there was some likelihood of it sending out a 'burden-some' class of immigrant; but Feilding's transformation of the Corporation into a 'commercially philanthropic'¹⁰⁹ institution would suggest a better class of settler. Feilding told the 1890 parliamentary committee that the Corporation appointed agents in counties selected 'on account of there being a congested population there'.¹¹⁰ When a local agent

106. Elliott to the Superintendent, 3 November 1874. Im. 6/4/1-74/1309, National Archives, Wellington.

107. The following have been thoroughly checked for all directors:- Parliamentary Papers, (Great Britain), 1874, LXXII, Return of Owners of Land, 1872-3 (England & Wales); ibid., Part III, Return of Owners of Land, 1872-3 (Scotland). Ibid., 1876, LXXX, Return . . . Land (Ireland)

108. Im. 15/141, National Archives, Wellington.

109. Grt. Brit. Parl. Pap., 1890, XII, 354, p. 90.

110. ibid., p. 94.

had a sufficient number on his books, the board sent someone to inspect them, and accept 'all that the board thought good'. Feilding implied that he himself played a large part in selection, and he told the committee that he 'specially selected those with large families or with a promise of large families',¹¹¹ so that moving away from the settlement would be almost an impossibility. A reasonably careful selection of large families from congested districts would amount to a neat balancing of commercial and philanthropic aims. Such families would have found it difficult to migrate in search of better prospects, without substantial assistance, and this the Corporation's liberal terms provided. At the time the agreement was negotiated, Vogel seemed satisfied that a good type of settler would be sent. 'No doubt he Feilding will send out first-class Emigrants', he wrote to Featherston, 'for he has thrown himself thoroughly into the undertaking.'¹¹²

Feilding told the parliamentary committee that 'the larger portion' of the emigrants were agricultural labourers from some such districts as Buckinghamshire, and the back parts of Middlesex, where they are very primitive'. An examination of a number of ships' passenger lists shows a wide

111. *ibid.*, p. 93.

112. Vogel to Featherston, 22 December 1871, Sir Julius Vogel, 'Letters and Newspaper Writings', MS. 091/V878, General Assembly Library, Wellington, Vol. I, p. 163.

spread of counties of origin, including some in Ireland, but the majority of the immigrants came from the 'corn' counties of the south and east of England, as Feilding implies. How much was this recruitment influenced by the union movement among the rural workers? Probably pretty strongly, though a movement under such aristocratic patronage as the Corporation had was not likely to openly acknowledge such help. In his report of 21 July 1874 Halcombe, in discussing the difficulties and delays in getting immigration started refers somewhat cryptically to 'the great change which has taken place in the last eighteen months in the position of the English labourer'.¹¹³ More direct evidence appears in the Immigration Department files, arising from a complaint in the Nelson Colonist that local agents were confusing the Government's immigration scheme with the Corporation's. This shows that for a short time John H. White, Draper and Outfitter, of Laceby in Lincolnshire, acted as an agent for the Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation, and that his recruitment campaign was closely linked with the local branch of the agricultural union movement, the Lincolnshire and Neighbouring Counties Amalgamated Labour League. White's first announcement of the Corporation's scheme was in a letter to the Labour League Examiner, in the first week of November 1874, and the handbill which was unfairly misquoted by the Nelson Colonist had been prepared for distribution after union meetings in the country. In answering

113. AJHR 1874, D-8, p. 7.

the criticism White also forwarded letters from a contented family who had emigrated to the Manchester Block.¹¹⁴ It would require fuller investigation, using British sources, to gauge the extent of the debt to the union movement. But it seems very likely that the early difficulties of the Corporation were not simply financial. When a flow of suitable immigrants began to come forward, the Corporation apparently financed its operations largely by means of a £15,000 mortgage from its chairman,¹¹⁵ rather than waiting for the London financial world to change its mind. Probably the union movement was quite a crucial factor in the Corporation's success. One would expect the immigrants who came forward to be to some extent self-selected. Those who were most strongly at odds with the English class system would doubtless shy clear of the Corporation. The typical immigrant to the Feilding settlement would seem to have been an impoverished farm labourer with a large family, one of the 'deserving poor', with a reasonably deferential attitude towards his social 'superiors'.

In January 1875 Feilding visited the Manchester Block to survey the progress of the settlement. After moving round among the settlers for a day or two, he called them together one evening and addressed them from the verandah of the Corporation office.¹¹⁶ He congratulated them on the progress

114. Im 6/76/548, National Archives, Wellington.

115. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Vol.I., p. 1232.

116. NZM, 6 February 1875, p. 19, has a sympathetic account; Y, 6 February 1875, p. 12 has an 'unfriendly' account.

made, and answered some of complaints he had heard. He told them that he had seen all except three of the ships leave the docks, and reminded them that he had told them they would have to rough it. He told them he had been up early that morning, but had met only one 'early bird' - a man milking his second cow, with the third standing by ready. He reminded them that the Corporation had sent out a gardener to show any who needed the instruction, how to grow vegetables. He was disappointed at the number of children who were not being sent to school. He pointed out that government immigrants were not supplied with cottages or tents on arrival, and had no credit given them to buy stores and equipment. He invited them to put any individual complaints in writing - only four did so, and these were rather applications for certain indulgences.

Speaking in Wellington a month later, at a meeting called to launch the issue of £5000 worth of scrip in the colony, Feilding told more about the Corporation's position and future plans. In England they were receiving tenfold the number of applications for passages that they deemed it prudent to send. Finance was also beginning to come forward freely, and the Corporation's first public land sale in New Zealand, in December 1874, had been very satisfactory. The Corporation had already sent out nearly half the contract number of immigrants, and now planned to withhold further shipments for eight or ten months, and concentrate on getting

the existing settlers onto their country sections. He was finding a strong enquiry from colonists for land on the Block, and had made three sales totalling 500 acres, since arriving. He was only interested in selling to bona fide working¹¹⁷ settlers. While in Wellington Feilding also had negotiations with the government, and was granted a number of concessions to the terms of the contract. The government had reason to be generous. By granting free passages to its own immigrants, it had undermined the Corporation's chief draw card. Furthermore, it was not having to meet its obligation to provide 5s a day labour for the settlers, as they were finding they¹¹⁸ could make better money on other work.

During 1875 the Feilding settlement matured rapidly. A public house was opened, reluctantly agreed to by Halcombe¹¹⁹ as the only answer to sly grogging. Various church congregations were forming. One notable Sunday in September the inhabitants had the choice of Roman Catholic mass (in the dining room of the Accommodation House), an 11a.m. Anglican Service (in the school), an evening Presbyterian service (probably also in the school) and a Brethren service¹²⁰ (in their own chapel). On the 7 October the first stage coach entered the town, inaugurating a twice weekly service

117. NZM, 27 February 1875, p. 17.

118. AJHR 1877, H-27, p. 4.

119. Y, 12 December 1874, p. 10; 8 July 1875, p. 10.

120. Y, 2 October 1875, p. 7.

between Marton and Feilding. In October also, the first doctor arrived, engaged by a recently formed Medical Aid Society.¹²¹ With railway construction proceeding between Palmerston North and Feilding, and road construction under way to open up the land, and to connect Feilding with the next planned township of Halcombe, a shortage of labour developed, and the Corporation had to advertise for 50 further men.¹²² Bushfelling was also on the increase. Soon crowds of men were swagging in, and packing out all the available accommodation. Scandinavians formed a prominent part of this itinerant work force.¹²³ On 31 December 1875 Halcombe took a census of the block. This showed a total of 1032 permanent residents, with 499 males and 429 females at Feilding, 38 males and 2 females at Halcombe, and 39 males and 25 females elsewhere. Of this total 425 were reported to be children (presumably those under 12 years). The floating population was estimated at a further 300.¹²⁴

The other centres in Rangitikei-Manawatu were booming in a similar fashion. Earlier the flow of government immigrants had been mopped up by Wellington and its nearby settlements, with a little overflow for Wanganui. From late 1874 the Rangitikei-Manawatu was beginning to receive a steady flow, which was to more than double its population by 1878. The

121. Y, 23 October 1875, p. 11.

122. NZM, 2 October 1875, p. 16.

123. Y, 23 October 1875, p. 11.

124. NZM, 15 April 1876, p. 13.

great stirring of the English countryside was having its effect on this distant colonial frontier. Besides the flow from Britain there came a sprinkling of colonials from the South Island - in 1874-6 principally from Nelson and the West Coast.¹²⁵ Over the whole district the pace of development was quickening. The railway from Palmerston North reached the Manchester Block at Bunnythorpe in April 1876,¹²⁶ and settlement at this place began with the erection of a sawmill late in the year. The line reached Feilding in October, leading to a rapid expansion of sawmilling in the neighbourhood. When the Corporation began shipping immigrants again after the pause in 1875, the main flow went to Halcombe, which was set among fine stands of timber. A sawmill set in the centre of the township began work in February 1876 for local needs.¹²⁷ but the settlement did not begin to prosper until the railway reached it in 1878 and made the export of timber possible. Much of the bush in the Manchester Block, however, was light, easily cleared tawa, and considerable areas of this were rapidly falling to the bushman's axe, to fulfil the landless labourer's dream of becoming a landed proprietor.

The transformation of the English agricultural labourer into the New Zealand yeoman farmer was a more subtle but no

125. For examples see: N.Z. Wesleyan, 2 November 1874, p. 209. NZM, 13 June 1874, p. 17. Y, 19 September 1874, p. 6; 22 April 1876, p. 9.

126. NZM, 15 April 1876.

127. Y, 12 February 1876.

less far-reaching process. In his address to the Corporation's settlers Feilding found it necessary to rebuke a certain surly independence of attitude which had developed among them. Doubtless a much improved diet, a higher income, and the prospect of a freehold home and section, were all having their effects. Mr Hobhouse, one of the members of the British parliamentary committee of 1890, showed by his questions that he had difficulty in visualising the down-trodden English agricultural labourer developing the spirit to successfully break in a bush farm. Perhaps if he had contemplated the effect on a man's morale of the one simple change of viewing the world for the first time from the back of a saddle horse, he might have begun to understand. And by August 1875, three quarters of the men of Feilding were riding to work on horses of their own.

128. Grt. Brit. Parl. Papers, 1890 Xii, 354, p. 93.

129. Y, 14 August 1875, p. 11.

THE CHURCHES, 1869-1876.

Among the many forces reshaping Victorian Britain were the revival of religion and the extension of elementary education to all the nation's children. The two were closely interwoven through the long association of education with religion, and through the great denominational problem which bedevilled every forward step in bringing schooling to the common people. Together they involved the nation in a tremendous building effort that planted thousands of new churches, chapels and schools through the length and breadth of the land. As an example of the church building effort, the Primitive Methodists, who did not start till 1810, and were never to rank as more than a minor denomination, by 1871 had 3,585 ¹connexional chapels. To illustrate the school building effort, the London School Board set up under the 1870 Education Act, had by 1875 provided 99 new schools with places for 88,193 ²children. Though the long-term trend to a secular outlook has left so many of the churches empty and mouldering, while the schools continue to burgeon from year to year, it was the church building which engaged the more deep and widespread enthusiasm of contemporary Britons.

1. G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, London, 1962, p. 172.

2. M. Sturt, The Education of the People, London, 1967, p. 339.

It is against this British background that the planting of churches and schools in the New Zealand Bush communities must be considered. Both the continued influx of new immigrants, and the continuing strength of colonial interest in developments in the homeland, made British religion and education potent formative influences on the New Zealand frontier. In this chapter we shall trace church developments in the Bush Provinces to the end of the Provincial period, noting how British traditions, and fresh impulses from the British scene, were refashioned to meet the needs of this new environment. In the next chapter we shall deal similarly with school developments.

The general religious picture in colonial New Zealand was that all the main churches had supporters in each settlement. In the larger towns each denomination soon formed congregations and built churches. In the country it was not so simple. Even in the homeland, with its much closer settlement and more developed resources, many countrymen had only one option as regards church, and the range of choice seldom went beyond two or three denominations. In the New Zealand countryside commonsense and community spirit produced a tendency to 'even out the differences' and pool resources by limiting the number of congregations. But with Scottish, Irish and English nationalism finding

expression through the 'national' church of each homeland, and with the deep division of English religious life into Anglicanism and Nonconformity, there were strong pressures for the setting up of at least four churches in the typical mixed country community. Once this divisive approach was yielded to, further multiplication of denominations met with little comment or criticism. In this matter the towns were able to work through the denominational machinery which they largely created to impose their solution on the countryside. In education Parliament, more adequately representing the country as a whole, overrode the towns' denominational approach to schooling and provided a solution more in line with common sense, and better adapted to the needs of country districts.

The New Zealand countryside, therefore, became an arena for denominational competition. In the 1870s two main factors must be considered in interpreting the relative success of the various churches in this competition - the extent to which immigration reinforced them, and the success of the denominational ethos and institutions in adapting to the new environment. The New Zealand censuses of 27 February 1871, 1 March 1874 and 3 March 1878³ provide a useful starting point for discussion, particularly as for Taranaki and Wellington the 1871-74 period saw relatively

3. The figures in the discussions which follow are drawn from, or calculated from, the 1871 Census Report, Table 15; the 1874 Census Report, pp. 58-63; and the 1878 Census Report, pp. 255-68.

little immigration into the countryside, while the 1874-78 period covers the main flood of the 'Vogel' inflow. We will concentrate our attention initially on Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians, between whom there was a genuine competition for popular support in the countryside. The smaller denominations did not commonly extend their activities into rural areas, and the Roman Catholics were a group apart, with little movement into, or out of, their fold. For the 1871-74 period, the statistics allow a comparison only at provincial level. Over this relatively static period Anglican growth kept pace with the population growth in Taranaki, and did better than population growth in Wellington Province (32.7 percent cf. 24.1 percent). Wesleyan Methodist growth paced that of the population in Wellington Province, but fell behind in Taranaki (18.4 percent cf. 22.0 percent). Primitive Methodists did poorly in both provinces, in Taranaki growing at less than half the rate of the population, and in Wellington actually declining by nearly one third. Other evidence suggests that these figures should be interpreted as showing a movement from Primitive Methodism into Wesleyan Methodism, and from Wesleyan Methodism into Anglicanism. Methodist links with the parish church were maintained in some parts of England throughout the nineteenth century,⁴ and New Zealand Methodists apparently moved

4. O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols., London, 1966-70, II, 185.

readily into evangelical Anglican congregations. The Presbyterian figures indicate a strong influx of Presbyterians from other parts of the country into the newly re-opened Patea district (225 are recorded in the Egmont electorate in 1874). Elsewhere they had increased more slowly than the population. Their movement into Patea was the beginning of the creation of a new area of Presbyterian strength in South Taranaki, similar to the earlier development in the Rangitikei. In both cases, as we shall see, it had interesting implications for education. In Hawke's Bay, large scale immigration began earlier than in the other two provinces, and the 1871-74 figures already illustrate trends appearing in the other two provinces in the 1874-78 period. We must therefore now turn to a consideration of the denominational composition of the immigrant population.

In Victorian England the established church was strongest in the home counties and the east, and had maintained its hold on the country much better than on the cities.⁵ In many big towns the 1851 religious census showed dissenters in the majority of actual attendants at worship.⁶ Methodism was strong in the south-west, and the midlands and the north, especially in the cities. It was weak in the home counties,

5. Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, I, 368.

6. *ibid.*, pp. 368-9.

except Kent.⁷ Primitive Methodism also had much of its strength in the cities, but had made considerable progress in the villages,⁸ where it ministered mainly to the farm labourers. The 'Annual Address to Societies' of the 1896 Primitive Methodist Conference noted that 'nearly 75 percent of our chapels and a large proportion of our "preaching places" are in the villages.'⁹ Primitive Methodism's main area of strength was in the northern counties, but it also extended southwards into the 'corn' region, particularly the East Riding of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, where it was unusually strong in the remote villages, and Norfolk.¹⁰ In Lincolnshire, as an exception to the more general pattern, Wesleyan Methodism also had made great progress among the farm labourers.¹¹ The third largest Methodist body, the United Methodist Free Churches, had its greatest strength in the south-west, midlands and north. It arose as a democratic protest against conservative and authoritarian features of Wesleyan Methodism, and its geographical distribution corresponded closely to that of Chartist strength.¹²

We have already seen that both agricultural unionism,

7. *ibid.*, p. 371.

8. *ibid.*, II, 181.

9. Quoted R.F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes, 1850-1900*, Leicester, 1954, p. 104.

10. Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, I, 387.

11. *ibid.*, p. 371.

12. Wearmouth, *Methodism 1850-1900*, p. 108.

and recruitment for the New Zealand Bush Provinces, were strongest in the 'corn' counties of south and east England. It will now be clear that these counties were, in general, areas of Anglican strength and Methodist weakness. Adding to this the fact that the emigration drew heavily on rural districts, we should expect the 'Vogel' immigration to have increased the proportion of Anglicans in the Bush Provinces, and lowered the proportion of Methodists. This expectation gains strength from a study of Khan's figures for assisted immigrants into Wellington Province 1872-76.¹³ We find that the six counties where Wesleyan Methodism was weakest provided nearly four times as many immigrants as the six counties where Wesleyan Methodism was strongest,¹⁴ although the total population of the former counties was only 16 percent greater than the latter at the 1871 census. When, however, we turn to the 1874 and 1878 Bush Province census figures, our expectations are by no means fulfilled, for Wesleyan Methodist growth at 82 percent was significantly better than Anglican growth at 75 percent.

Over the 1874-78 period the breakdown of religious census figures can be carried beyond the province level. For 1874 there are electoral district figures, and for 1878

13. Khan, *Immigration into Wellington Province*, pp. 384-5.

14. Wearmouth, *Methodism 1850-1900*, p. 111, lists the counties. The six weakest counties were Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Warwickshire and Hertfordshire providing Wellington with 1,925 immigrants. The six strongest counties were Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Nottinghamshire and Cornwall, providing 512 immigrants.

figures for the newly created counties - and, fortunately, several of the main boundaries coincide. Before accounting for the unexpected Methodist growth, it will be worthwhile to examine more closely the bush frontier districts. In southern Hawke's Bay Anglican growth (40 percent) was a little ahead of population growth (36 percent), but well behind Wesleyan growth (66 percent). United Methodist Free Church members had grown from 26 to 69. The Scandinavian immigration was reflected in the Lutheran figures, which had grown from 18 to 413 between 1871 and 1874, then doubled to 829 between 1874 and 1878. Presbyterian growth for 1874-78 was less than 5 percent. In the Rangitikei-Manawatu similar patterns appear. While Anglican growth (149 percent) was faster than the gross population growth (129 percent), it was not nearly as fast as Wesleyan growth (217 percent). Primitive Methodists numbers had grown from 6 to 109. Scandinavian and German immigration was reflected in the Lutheran growth of 176 percent. Presbyterian growth at 47 percent, failed to keep pace with the population. In Taranaki Anglicans had dropped back from over 52 percent of the population to under 50 percent. Wesleyan Methodist growth (88 percent) had been faster than population growth (73 percent). Presbyterians (72 percent growth) had almost kept pace with the population, but Primitive Methodists (37 percent) had grown more slowly. Lutherans had grown in numbers from 5 to 227. An examination of the 1874

electoral district, and 1878 county, figures shows an interesting divergence between North and South Taranaki. The former was becoming more strongly Methodist, the latter more strongly Presbyterian. We shall examine the reason for this in Chapter 7.

Clearly, then, the 'Vogel' immigration altered the balance in denominational growth. The predominance of English immigrants among those from Great Britain raised the Anglican proportion of the population of the three provinces from 47.0 percent to 48.3 percent, while (not unexpectedly) the Presbyterian percentage fell from 15.7 to 13.4. The really surprising feature was the rapid growth of Methodist numbers despite the strongly Anglican character of the English districts providing the majority of the immigrants, and despite the tendency already noted for New Zealand Methodists to become Anglicans. This rapid Methodist growth was particularly marked in the Bush districts, and clearly requires explanation. An examination of the evidence suggests a two-fold explanation: proportionately more rural Methodists emigrated than rural Anglicans; and rural Methodism in New Zealand developed more effectively than rural Anglicanism.

We have already noted ¹⁵ that there were links between village Methodism and rural trades unionism. Dunbabin points out that the 'Nonconformity both expressed a revolt against

15. In Chapter 4.

the established rural hierarchy and introduced ordinary men to public speaking and to organizing.¹⁶ It is not surprising that speeches at the inauguration of the National Union should have been 'punctuated with cries of "Amen", "Praise Him" and other devout utterances'.¹⁷ The nonconformist flavour of the movement was deepened by widespread opposition from Anglican clergy. A good contemporary report on this opposition is given by J. Charles Cox, a clergyman's son, and later to be a clergyman himself. Although he was a landowner, colliery proprietor, and magistrate, he backed the union cause and wrote:

Pulpit after pulpit in Warwickshire, Kent and elsewhere, is re-echoing with dire warnings of the insidious evil that lurks almost in the very name of union ... Speaking the other day in his diocesan city, at an agricultural dinner, the Bishop of Peterborough indulged in an impassioned burst of needless rhetoric against those who are expressing practical sympathy with the oppressed labourer.¹⁸

The State Clergy, true to that policy to which, as a body, they have faithfully clung during the present century - the policy of sympathy and cooperation with the wealthy and antagonism to the people - have done all in their power to thwart the movement ... Throughout the whole of Dorsetshire we can only hear of a single beneficed clergyman who has come out to stand manfully, like his Master, by the side of the poor.¹⁹

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16. 'The "Revolt of the Field"', p. 71.
 17. ibid., p. 69, citing E. Selley, Village Trades Unions in Two Centuries, London, 1919, p. 47.
 18. J.C. Cox and H.F. Cox, The Rise of the Farm Labourer, p. 3.
 19. ibid., p. 21. (Both quotations as cited Wearmouth, Methodism 1850-1900, p. 50.)

In May 1873 two rectors serving as magistrates harshly imprisoned sixteen women accused of intimidating blackleg labourers. It is not surprising that Arch took the unwise course of introducing a strongly anticlerical note into his campaign. 'Throughout the summer and autumn of 1873', writes Chadwick, 'the labourer was learning from those whom he 20 regarded as his friends, that the parson oppressed the poor'. And he suggests that 'the rapid or even sudden break' in the attendance of farm labourers at the country parish church 21 may be connected with these agricultural troubles.

Chadwick does not consider the church's loss to have been the chapel's gain, but points out that 'a lot of local 22 evidence' is still needed to clarify the matter. He does not mention, and has apparently not considered, the possibility of a differential rate of emigration. It seems quite likely that when the evidence is more/^{tho-}roughly sifted, it will show that in the short term the chapels gained from the church, while losing through immigration. Against this background, the strong Wesleyan Methodist element in immigration to the Bush Provinces makes good sense, as also does the appearance of Primitive Methodism as an effective force in the Rangitikei-Manawatu, and a more than four-fold growth of United Methodist Free Church strength in the Hawke's Bay Province. These smaller Methodist groups, particularly the Primitives, gave a good deal of sympathy and support to

20. Victorian Church, II, 156.

21. ibid., p. 223.

22. ibid., p. 157.

the union movement, while the larger Wesleyan group was only just beginning to break loose from the grip of a conservative leadership, which steered carefully clear of any involvement in Trade Union matters for fear of offending its middle-class supporters.

Our second explanation of the disproportion between the growth of Methodism and Anglicanism - the greater effectiveness of Methodism as a rural denomination - will be supported by the survey of the life and work of the various churches, to which we are about to proceed. However, a little statistical evidence can first be given. For the whole colony, the marriage statistics give some indication of the relative effectiveness of the presence of the various denominations in the community. In the following table, the marriage figures are an average for the three years 1874-76, and the adherent figures are an average of the 1874 and 1878 census returns.

	23 <u>Marriages solemnized per 1000 marriages</u>	24 <u>Adherents per 1000 of the Population</u>
Church of England	246	417
Presbyterian	309	236
Methodist	154	87
Roman Catholic	123	137

23. Calculated from Statistics of New Zealand, p. 21, 1876.

24. Calculated from Census, 1874, p. 58, 1878, p. 255.

These figures clearly indicate that the Anglican Church had failed to establish effective contact with a considerable proportion of the 'census' Anglicans. The contrast with the situation in England and Wales is striking. In 1874, for every 1,000 marriages there, 747 were solemnized by the Church of England, 48 by the Roman Catholic Church, and 106 by other Christian Denominations.²⁵ As the English census has never included a question on religious affiliation it is not possible to relate these figures to number of adherents, as for New Zealand, but the Anglican figure obviously represents a much more effective contact than in New Zealand. In New Zealand, Presbyterians and Methodists were filling the gap left by Anglican ineffectiveness. The table shows the Methodists to have been strikingly successful in this respect. Other evidence indicates that it was in the Bush Provinces that they were doing this most effectively. Wesleyan Methodist statistics of 'attenders on public worship' show this church to have been ministering to 1 in 15 of the colony's population in 1878, but in the Wellington Wesleyan Methodist District (which included Hawke's Bay) the figure was 1 in 12, and in the Taranaki and Wanganui District (which included Rangitikei-Manawatu) it was 1 in 8. Even more striking are the figures for the growth in the number of 'attenders' between 1874 and 1878. In the Canterbury, Otago and Auckland Districts 'attenders' had increased much more

25. Chadwick, Victorian Church, II, 221.

slowly than the population, but in the Taranaki and Wanganui District the increase was 119 percent (cf. population increase of 78 percent,) and in the Wellington District the increase was 99 percent (population 66 percent).²⁶ Before we trace the history of this Methodist advance, we will turn to the fortunes of the Anglican Church in the area, as this will serve to show why these districts were so open to Methodist endeavour. In surveying the work of the various denominations it will be simpler, due to the location of the various church district boundaries, to restrict our attention first to the area west of the ranges - i.e., Taranaki, Wanganui, Rangitikei and Manawatu.

Octavius Hadfield became the second bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington in 1870. He brought to the task a missionary spirit and the experience of more than 30 years' work among the Maoris with the Church Mission Society. Coming to the bishopric at the beginning of a period of rapid expansion of European settlement, he found ample scope for his missionary spirit and talents, in endeavouring to bring the ministry of the church to new communities. But throughout his episcopate his plans were constantly thwarted by a lack of money and clergymen. On taking office he found only two clergymen working among the settlers of the Wellington West Coast, the Rev. Arthur Towgood at Marton, and the Rev. C.H.S. Nicholls at Wanganui - and the latter

26. New Zealand Wesleyan, VIII, 9 (September 1878) p. 204. (Editorial, 'Methodism and the Census').

was resigning to move to the charge of the Upper Hutt. C.M.S. missionaries among the Maoris could give a little time to the settlers - but of these there were only the Rev. Richard Taylor and his son at Wanganui, and at Otaki the Rev. M. William, admitted to Priest's Orders in 1871. The diocesan treasury was impoverished, and the extension of the church's work in the country districts, and maintenance of its mission among the Maoris, depended heavily on grants from the English societies, the S.P.C.K., S.P.G., and C.M.S. Hadfield warned the 1870 synod that he had received intimation from the S.P.G. that its annual grant must not be regarded as permanent, and that he considered the continuation of C.M.S. support for the Maori work to be precarious.²⁷

Just as the needs of the Bush Province dioceses were about to grow rapidly, the English church was diverting much of its financial resources to the tremendous effort of 'filling the gaps' in the provision of elementary schools in England, in order to head off the new School Boards. The growing mission fields of Africa and the East were also making their appeal, with a glamour that New Zealand could no longer match. At this his first synod, Hadfield began the long, thankless task of preaching self-reliance and self-support to his diocese. He hammered largely at unwilling, or even rebellious, ears.

27. Wellington Independent, 24 November, 1870.

To the largely working-class Anglican immigrants the idea of a regular offertory for the support of their church was new, strange and unwelcome. The Bishop of Waiapu well described their frame of mind in addressing his 1878 synod:

The Parish Church, the clergyman, the ministrations of religion in all the varying circumstances and events of life, all have been provided for them without any effort of their own, as by some bountiful parent, with the source of whose inexhaustible wealth the child has no need to trouble itself. Such persons, on coming to the colonies, find themselves in a new element, and it is no matter of surprise that they so frequently fail to adapt themselves to it. In fact they seem often to fail to realize that they are in a new element, and expect that as a matter of course, without any effort on their part, their religious²⁸ wants are to be gratuitously supplied as at home.

A letter by a querulous Anglican country settler at Porirua, published in the Wellington Independent of 2 September 1871, exemplifies this outlook. He complains of the Church's 'unpopular modes of raising funds in small country districts', suggests that it is not making the most of 'the resources, such as landed property, which it possesses', and expresses grave doubts as to whether his church is doing its duty in his district. The new Bishop of Wellington has not been seen or heard in the place. A reply from Archdeacon Stock, printed three days later, regrets that the church has very little landed property 'to make the most of'.

Not surprisingly, Hadfield informed the 1871 synod that the Diocesan Fund, the only fund providing for either the general expenses of the diocese or the extension of its

28. Proceedings of the Third Session of the Seventh Synod of the Diocese of Waiapu, p. 15.

work, was at a low ebb. The S.P.G. had reduced its annual grant, and local subscriptions were less than half what they had been in the early 1860s. In the meantime, the responsibilities of the diocese were increasing not only through the progress of settlement but also through the extension of its bounds. Acting as Commissary for the Bishop of Auckland, Hadfield had assumed responsibility for the southern half of Taranaki, where there was as yet no clergyman. Wellington diocesan boundaries were extended to include this area in 1874. Meanwhile fifty precious pounds from the Diocesan Fund has been paid towards bring a clergyman from England to occupy the district. Anglicans expected their clergy to be at least middle class, educated, and preferably with a University degree; and this meant that recruitment had to be largely from the homeland. The Rev. H.M. Kennedy, B.A., was serving as a curate to the Rev. Edward Bowen, brother of Sir George Bowen, Governor of New Zealand, when he was invited by Hadfield's commissary in England to come out to the colony and minister to the Patea district. Many of the people of the parish in which he was working decided to emigrate with him, and he saw them distributed throughout the colony from Otago to Auckland, before proceeding to Patea in July 1874.²⁹ The Patea Anglicans had been working eagerly since 1870 with subscription lists and bazaars. They had erected a church, which Captain Wray

29. Y, 8 August 1874, p. 5; 26 September 1874, p. 3.

manned as a lay reader, and which was made available 'for the ministrations of protestant dissenting bodies for evening services',³⁰ and had then set about providing a parsonage. Kennedy began his task with enthusiasm, establishing church services and founding Sunday schools along the coast for 50 miles from Waihi to Maxwell.³¹ Then, after only nine month's service, he resigned his charge, without assigning any reason or obtaining a bene decessit, and left the diocese. In reporting this in his President's address to the 1875 diocesan synod, Archdeacon Stock referred ruefully to the 'considerable sum of money' expended on Kennedy's travelling expenses. Fortunately the Rev. A. Dasent from Waikouaiti was found to fill the vacancy, though his stay was brief.

The first Anglican minister to be stationed within the Bush on the West Coast was the Rev. Henry Bevis from Australia, sent to Palmerston North in August 1875. Again Hadfield was moving to reward local enthusiasm and initiative.³² A correspondent of the New Zealand Mail attributed the healthy state of the Palmerston North building fund to 'the unflagging and joyous industry' of the postmaster's wife, and the church building was on the way when Bevis arrived.

30. Y, 13 April, 1872, p. 7.

31. Church Gazette for the Dioceses of Auckland and Melanesia, III, 28 (October 1874), pp. 148-9.

32. 6 February, 1875, p. 6.

He initiated services at Feilding, and at Stoney Creek, towards the Gorge, as well as in Palmerston North, but he did not stay long. In July 1877 a Manawatu Anglican wrote to the press complaining of the 'lethargy and supineness' of his church which was making it 'the laughing stock of other denominations'. In a sudden outburst of zeal, churches had been erected at Palmerston North and Foxton, but at Palmerston North there was a service only once a month, conducted by the clergyman at Otaki, and at Foxton there was usually only an evening service.³³ The Palmerston charge was again filled (though only for a short time) by the arrival of the Rev. J.A. Newth, 'a Cambridge man of a quiet and unassuming disposition',³⁴ who had probably come to the colony seeking relief for the chronic asthma from which he suffered.

The problem that faced Hadfield in meeting the needs of these new districts clearly had several facets. Clergyman were scarce, and those who came were too often less than satisfactory. The motives which brought a man from middle-class English comfort to the New Zealand bush frontier might sometimes be missionary zeal, but it could well be no more than a search for health, or a desire to see the world. Even with motives of the highest quality, enthusiasm could quickly wilt in the face of privations, religious indifference, and the insecurity of an uncertain stipend. The zeal which could

33. Manawatu Times, 4 July, 1877.

34. G.W. Dent, A short History ... of All Saints, Palmerston North, London, 1920, p. 11.

be awakened in these communities when a church was to be erected seems commonly to have faded rapidly. Even the Rev. A. Towgood whose parish based on Marton drew on the squatter gentry of Rangitikei, was reported in 1877 to be having many difficulties with regard to the payment of his stipend.³⁵ If a charge fell vacant, services might, in a centre such as Palmerston North or Wanganui, be maintained by a layreader. But layreaders were an innovation of the 1860s, and although they may have been a little more acceptable in colonial society than in England, they usually saw attendances fall away rapidly.

The Anglican ministerial manpower on the West Coast at the end of 1876 can be quickly listed. In North Taranaki, which was an Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Auckland, Archdeacon Govett and the Rev. H. H. Brown had been joined in January 1875 by an assistant minister, the Rev. Philip Walsh, who had the particular responsibility of serving the growing bush settlements. Patea's minister filled the gap between New Plymouth and Wanganui. Marton, Palmerston North and Foxton had a clergyman each, and there were two European clergymen working among the Maoris who could pay some attention to the settlers. It was a thin team to man 200 miles of coast, from which the population was probing inland and spreading in scattered settlements. In addressing the 1876 diocesan synod, Hadfield again expressed his concern

35. NZM, 28 July 1877.

at the continuing lack of suitable clergymen and adequate funds to carry the ministrations of the church to the outlying districts. He expressed hopes that the Diocese of Auckland might shortly develop a theological college adequate to the growing needs of the New Zealand Church. He saw the advantage of colonial-trained clergy as lying in an awareness of the nature of the work they were about to engage in, and an understanding of the Church system they were expected to work under - qualities which many clergymen who came from England lacked. He anticipated 'very serious difficulties' for the church if an adequate training institution was not soon provided.³⁶

At the beginning of the 1870s the Bush Provinces formed parts of two unweildy Wesleyan Methodist districts. Taranaki was included in Auckland district, and Wellington and Hawke's Bay were in the Wellington district, which also covered Marlborough, Nelson and the West Coast. The situation of Wesleyan Methodism in the Bush Provinces looked no brighter than that of Anglicanism. The whole of the Wellington district had only six circuits, of which only three were in the North Island, and only one, Wanganui, in the area west of the ranges, with which we are at the moment particularly concerned. Advance was hindered by lack of finance. Of the six circuits, only Wellington and Nelson were able to

36. Report of the Second Session of the Seventh Synod of the Diocese of Wellington, p. 14. For a Presbyterian presentation of an almost identical case for a colonial-trained ministry see N.Z. Presbyterian Church News, III, 1, (January 1875), p. 3.

stand on their own feet financially and the District Home Mission Fund was strained to its limits in meeting the needs of the other four.³⁷ Despite a deficiency of over £50 in the fund, the Rev. W.S. Harper was sent as the first minister to the Rangitikei in 1871, and the call went out to the congregations to provide the means so that the Church 'might follow the pioneers of civilisation into the interior'.³⁸

The success with which Wesleyan Methodism met the challenge of the Bush frontier is not difficult to explain. Its supporters had been thoroughly schooled in self-reliance, and self-support in the homeland. Its circuit system, with its copious use of lay talent, was ideally adapted to the simple and rapidly changing needs of a pioneer area. Its members had no aversion to lay preachers, so that advance continued even when ministers were in short supply. Its ministers were drawn from the same class as the Bush settlers, accustomed to frugal living and hard conditions. By means of its local preachers and class leaders, the church was already finding a flow of recruits for a colonial-trained clergy, prepared for their work largely on the job. Changes in the organisation of New Zealand Methodism were also preparing it for advance. The church entered the 1870s subject to the control of an annual conference which always

37. Wellington Independent, 22 November 1870.

38. New Zealand Wesleyan I, 1 (January 1871) p. 11.

met in Australia. Australasian Methodism was in turn subject to the parent body in Britain. The reorganisation amounted to the setting up of an Australasian General Conference, independent of the British Conference. This met once in three years for legislative purposes, but the general administration of the churches was the responsibility of Annual Conferences, of which New Zealand formed one. The first New Zealand Annual Conference met in January 1874, and proceeded to redraw the district boundaries. The Bush Provinces made up two of the new districts, Wellington district covering all the territory east of the ranges, and Taranaki and Wanganui covering the west of the region.

The new Taranaki and Wanganui District set about its work with a vigour which matched the multiplying needs of its region. At the end of 1874 it already had two churches in its New Plymouth circuit, two in Wanganui, and three in Rangitikei. It obtained sanction from the 1875 annual conference to erect further churches at Palmerston North, Feilding, Hawera, Patea and Waverley, and a parsonage at Sanson. It reported to the 1876 conference that the Palmerston North and Patea churches and the Sanson parsonage had been built, while extensive additions and alterations had been made elsewhere, and sections secured for future building at Inglewood, Normanby and Feilding. In January 1877 it reported to conference the erection of further churches at Inglewood, Hawera, Feilding and Bulls. Besides doubling the number of

church buildings from 7 to 14 in two years, 23 other preaching places were being staffed in the district by the end of 1876. To accomplish this, the 7 ministers stationed in the district were assisted by 23 local preachers. The number of 'attenders on public worship' was estimated to be 2870.

Sixteen Sunday Schools, staffed by 108 teachers were drawing 1,058 children. It is an impressive record, demonstrating discipline, dedication, and the effectiveness of well-organised tea meetings. Even so, it is not the full story of Methodist endeavour in the district, for in 1874 the Primitive Methodists, already well established in Taranaki, moved into the Manawatu. Meeting with much encouragement they stationed two ministers in the Manawatu in 1876. By the end of 1876 they had opened churches at Foxton, Feilding and Halcombe.³⁹ They were particularly effective among the workers in the rising sawmilling industry.

In 1869 the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand had three charges on the Wellington West Coast at Wanganui, Turakina and Foxton. In Taranaki the sole parish, New Plymouth, was vacant, but a versatile layman, Benjamin Wells, editor of the Taranaki Daily News, was ably filling the pulpit. By the close of 1876 eight Presbyterian ministers were stationed in the region. As we have seen, the influx of population over these years did not add much to Pres-

39. Guy and Potter, Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand, pp. 114-8.

byterian numbers. In 1876 each Presbyterian minister in the district was responsible for only one third as many 'census' adherents as his Anglican counterpart, and he was also better paid and better housed. This more favourable position was the result of a laity more thoroughly schooled in self-reliance and self-support. The Disruption of 1843 had stirred a large section of Scottish Presbyterians to the tremendous effort of self-reliance that created the new Free Church. Presbyterians from the smaller groups in Scotland were also well schooled in self-support, as were the Presbyterians in England, Ireland and Wales. The divisions of British Presbyterianism were not maintained among the settlers in New Zealand.⁴⁰ Thus the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand had something of a representative British character, as it drew into its fold immigrants not only from Scotland but also from the strong Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and from English Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. Among the ministers who served in the Wellington West Coast parishes (from Patea to Foxton) in the period 1870-76, were men from three of the Scottish churches (Free Church, United Presbyterian, and Reformed) and from the Presbyterian Churches in England and Ireland.

The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was fortunate in having the convenor of its Church Extension Committee, the

40. There was, of course, a division of a different kind, giving a separate Presbyterian Church in Otago and Southland until 1901.

Rev. David Bruce, in Scotland for health reasons over 1870-72. He not only assisted Featherston in recruiting immigrants, but also worked assiduously through the three main Scottish churches, and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, to recruit ministers for New Zealand. Of the 17 ministers who came to New Zealand in 1871-72, at least 12 have been attributed to his visit,⁴¹ and he doubtless influenced others who followed later. One result of this influx was that the Wanganui-Rangitikei-Manawatu area was strongly manned. This probably accounts for a Wanganui man's letter to a friend in Thames in 1873 complaining that Wanganui was 'not a fit place for a frank open-hearted Englishman to live in' as it was overrun with 'miserable, shrivelled, sour Presbyterians'.⁴² Despite considerable progress in the early 1870s, the Presbyterians noted with some envy the greater success of the Methodists among the bush settlers, attributing it largely to their use of lay preachers.⁴³ As the flow of ministers dwindled in the mid 1870s, they began to look anxiously for the appearance of a colonial-born supply. One of the first was Robert McGregor, a Wairarapa businessman with a good record as a lay preacher, who offered himself to the Wellington Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, and was sent

41. Dickson, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, p. 97.

42. Y, 24 May 1873.

43. New Zealand Presbyterian Magazine, I, 3 (March 1872), p. 65.

to work as student supply in Palmerston North and
Feilding in 1875.⁴⁴ Wellington Presbytery had been discussing occupying Palmerston North as early as its meeting of 11 July 1872, when it had been decided that its ministers should visit the township and conduct services. A site for a manse and church were secured in 1873, and reported to

vacant in 1869, and was not to be filled till 1876. But even if these posts had been occupied, their districts were large enough to keep the incumbents fully occupied, without concerning themselves with the problems of the foreign-speaking new arrivals in the bush. We have already noted (Chapter 3) the group migration of the Waipawa Free Methodist Church congregation from Waipawa to Woodville in 1876. For some years all their energies were needed to establish themselves in Woodville and rebuild their church's congregation at Waipawa. The Scandinavian settlers were predominantly Lutheran, but it was not until 1878 that the first Lutheran minister, Pastor Georg Sass, came among them. In the meantime the burden of representing the Christian Church in the Seventy Mile Bush was borne by the Rev. Edward Nielson.

Edward Nielsen (1842-1894) had entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Norway in 1867.⁴⁷ In 1874 his conference gave him permission to follow his countrymen to New Zealand, though it could not offer him any financial support. He found sufficient interest among the Scandinavian settlers in the Manawatu and the Seventy Mile Bush to encourage him to stay, making his home initially in Palmerston North.⁴⁸ The 1875 Wesleyan Methodist Conference acknow-

47. Methodism entered Norway from America, being brought back by returning immigrants.

48. Y, 7 November 1874, p. 7; Advocate (Dunedin), I, 2 (August 1894); G.I. Laurenson, The Scandinavian Mission of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, 1872-1894,

[Auckland, 1955], pp. 5-6.

ledged his work, and made a grant of £50 towards it, and two years later Conference received him as a probationer for the regular ministry. His report to the 1875 Taranaki and Wanganui Annual District Meeting gives a good idea of his work. He had travelled 2,500 miles during the year, visiting Scandinavians as far apart as Napier and Wellington. He had preached at 16 places to about 600 hearers, baptised 71 children, and established a monthly newspaper, the Carrier Dove, which had 160 subscribers. He hoped that he would soon have learnt enough English to be able to⁴⁹ preach to the English settlers also.

The Roman Catholics did not consecrate a church in the new Bush settlements until October 1878. This was St. Patrick's, Palmerston North. Priests had, however, visited the settlements from time to time. Only as population built up in the Bush during the 1880s did Roman Catholicism begin to develop an effective presence throughout the region. Another group that had made an appearance here and there in the 1870s, and were to play a significant part in the social history of the Bush settlements later in the⁵⁰ century, were the Plymouth Brethren. Their history in the Bush Provinces is difficult to trace, partly because of their objection to the use of any denominational name (so that census returns are not a useful guide as to their presence

49. N.Z. Wesleyan, V, 59 (December 1875) p. 276.

50. See eg. Helen Wilson, My First Eighty Years, Hamilton, 1950, pp. 135-7.

or numbers), and partly due to their having splintered in Britain into a number of competing groups. One branch established itself early in the Feilding settlement, where, under leadership of Brother Roots, they were the first to erect a place of worship.⁵¹ Later, working on cooperative principles, this group established a sash and door factory in Feilding,⁵² and a farming settlement on a thousand acres of land near Halcombe.⁵³ A link has been alleged between this group and the 'Feistites' who appeared earlier in Foxton.⁵⁴ Under a certain Mr Feist, this group built a chapel in Foxton in 1870, and aroused a good deal of local comment by their experiments in a return to primitive Christianity. They carried their message abroad to such places at Turakina, Bulls, and Wanganui.⁵⁵ They may well have been of local origin, but are likely to have merged later with Brethrenism.

One of the pleasing features of church life in the early days of the Bush frontier was the ready cooperation between the various denominations. When the Wesleyan Church was opened in Palmerston North in October 1875, Anglican, Presbyterian and Primitive Methodist ministers shared the platform with their Wesleyan brethren, and joined them in addressing the gathering. Mr McGregor, the Presbyterian student minister, delivered an earnest speech 'in favor of

51. Y, 31 July, 1875.

52. NZM, 29 September 1877, p. 16.

53. T.A. Gibson, The Purchase & Settlement of the Manchester Block, Feilding, 1936, p. 54.

54. *ibid.*

55. NZM, 1 April 1871, 25 January 1873; Y, 13 May 1871.

union amongst the different Sects of the Christian Church.⁵⁶
 In the smaller districts the various churches arranged to hold services in the local hall or school in rotation, and not uncommonly an interdenominational hall was erected specifically for church services.⁵⁷ In 1876 the people of Hawera seem to have found nothing unusual in staging an entertainment in their blockhouse for the benefit of the building funds of both the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches.⁵⁸

The tea meeting, a fashionable institution of Victorian nonconformity, was readily adapted to the New Zealand frontier, and provided a common occasion for interdenominational fraternising. It was most widely used by the Methodists - to raise money for churches, parsonages, harmoniums and other facilities; to celebrate church and Sunday School anniversaries; and to welcome and farewell ministers in the constant coming and going of their itinerant system. Presbyterians also used it - in moderation. The common pattern was a feast from 'groaning' trestles, followed by a soiree addressed by as many of the ministers of the district as could be prevailed upon to attend. As early as Easter 1874 the Sanson Methodists were able to gather about 200 to such an occasion, graced by the presence of Sir William Fox.⁵⁹ The church building fund benefited to the extent of £21 Os 6d. Two years later the same congregation gathered 300-400 to

56. Y, 16 October 1875, p. 10.

57. See e.g. Wellington Independent, 10 August 1871 (Pahautahunui); Taranaki News, 22 March 1873 (Tataraimaka).

58. Y, 11 March 1876, p. 14.

59. N.Z. Wesleyan, IV, 40 (May 1874), p. 79.

celebrate the building's first anniversary in a similar way.⁶⁰
 An example of a Presbyterian tea meeting was one held in Hawera in January 1877 to raise funds for a church. It was reported to have been the largest meeting of the kind ever held in the township.⁶¹ From the frequency of their occurrence in the reports of local newspaper correspondents, church tea meetings would seem to have formed an important part of rural social life.

Interdenominational cooperation of another kind was evident in the revivalism which appeared from time to time. The first Moody and Sankey revival mission to Britain in 1874-5 had an almost immediate effect on the New Zealand churches. In New Plymouth the winter of 1875 saw four weeks of special services, at which Moody and Sankey's hymns were used, and about 150 converts added to the churches. The New Zealand Wesleyan⁶² reported that at a fellowship meeting held during the mission 'Episcopalians and Presbyterians spoke with the freedom of old Methodists'. A similar movement was under way at the same time in Wanganui,⁶³ sponsored by the Presbyterian and Wesleyan ministers, while in Sanson a Methodist effort was meeting with noteworthy

60. Y, 22 April 1876, p. 3.

61. Y, 20 January 1877.

62. W, 57 (October 1875), p. 227.

63. N.Z. Presbyterian Church News, III, 9 (Sept. 1875) p. 108; III, 10 (October 1875) p. 115.

64 results. The New Zealand Wesleyan 65 reported a colony-wide revival movement, but noted that circuits in the Christchurch, Wanganui and Taranaki areas had received the largest increases. Meanwhile in England Moody and Sankey hymns were in evidence at the departure of emigrants for New Zealand. 66 Not surprisingly this type of revivalism became a persistent feature of the religious life of the Bush frontier. Thus, in the spring of 1877 the Primitive Methodist and Presbyterian ministers of Feilding sponsored 67 combined revival meetings, and similar efforts were reported from many Bush settlements over the years.

64. N.Z. Wesleyan, V, 57 (October 1875) p. 227.

65. Y, 58 (November 1875), p. 249.

66. Y, 24 February 1877, p. 6.

67. Y, 24 November 1877, p. 8.

THE SCHOOLS, 1870-1877.

The school systems of the Bush Provinces entered the 1870s ill-prepared for a period of rapid population growth. The situation shown by the statistics for enrolments and average daily attendances was far from encouraging. In the early 1870s the collection of these statistics was unsatisfactory in a number of ways,¹ but they do roughly indicate the position. Until 1875 Taranaki claimed no public schools, but privately sponsored schools fulfilling certain conditions were given assistance.² Up to 1874, the 'common school' figures which Taranaki provided to the Government statistician was an inclusive one for all the province's private and assisted schools. If one generously allows this to pass as a public school figure, the Bush Provinces had only 20.4 percent of their 5 to 15 age group enrolled in public schools in the December quarter of 1870, compared with a South Island figure of 42.5 percent. Their average daily attendance figure was even more discouraging - only 10.9 percent compared with a South Island figure of 32.8 percent.³

1. There is, for example, no consistency as to inclusion or omission of 'secondary' pupils. Rolls are known to have been carelessly kept.
2. See e.g. Statistics of New Zealand, 1874, p. 222, footnote to table 'Common Schools'.
3. Calculated from Statistics of New Zealand, 1870, Table 55 and using figures from Census of New Zealand, February 1871, Table 1, for the age group. As there is no Taranaki attendance figure, it has been estimated at the same proportion of enrolments as that for Hawke's Bay (giving almost certainly an over-estimate).

Not only were the schools poorly attended, but they were also, on the average, well below the general standard in quality. Yet, by the closing quarter of 1877, just before the 1877 Education Act came into force to give a national system, the Bush Provinces had 37.3 percent of their 5 to 15 year olds on the rolls - even though numbers in the age group had more than doubled. Even more dramatic was the almost three-fold increase in average daily attendance to 28.8 percent.⁴ Clearly something like an educational revolution must have taken place in the Bush Provinces over these years. In introducing the bill for the 1877 Act, Bowen attributed greater effort and sacrifice to the North Island in achieving a 32 percent average daily attendance, than to the South in achieving 45 percent. It is clear that a national system of education could not have gone into effect in 1878 if the North had not made such remarkable progress over the preceding few years. We will better understand this great effort, and the schools it created, if we see it against its British background.

In England, until the passing of the 1870 Education Act, a 'public' elementary school was one directed by a religious society or other body of persons but not conducted for profit. Schools of the religious societies, on meeting certain conditions, received grants in aid from the state.

4. Calculated from Statistics of New Zealand, 1877, p. 229, and using figures from Census of New Zealand, March, 1878, p. 61, for the age group.

By far the largest of the religious societies was the National Society promoted by the Church of England. In the cities it competed with the British Society sponsored by the nonconformists, but it had the country practically to itself. The majority of the parents and teachers of English origin in the Bush Provinces would have been associated with National schools ^{were dissenters from rural England they were likely to have} in the homeland. If they [^]resented the Anglican monopoly of the village schools. If they were immigrants of the 1870s, influenced by Joseph Arch's union, this was even the more likely. In his autobiography Arch wrote thus of the country schools:

The majority of the schools were parsons' schools; we call them voluntary now, but parsons' they are still, and they will remain so to the end. I should like to see them swept away from off the face of the country.⁵

But whether they were grateful, indifferent, or resentful, the New Zealand immigrant's idea of what a school should be like would have been shaped by such schools. With a background of either National or British schooling, they would have found it difficult to visualise education without some religious content. Because of the schools' dependence on philanthropy they would have expected the more well-to-do parsons of their neighbourhood to take an active interest in the welfare of the local school. When the Bulls School received

5. Arch, Life, pp. 25-26.

a poor report for attendance and quality of work in 1875,⁶ the local correspondent of the Wanganui Weekly Herald made a number of suggestions based on the methods of English philanthropy. He wanted a tea-meeting followed by a magic lantern exhibition, children's dance, or other entertainment, and an annual prize-giving. He found it strange that ladies never visited the school 'as is invariably the case in the old country', and so the boys were growing up uncouth hobbledy-hoys for the want of this softening influence.

The organizers of the New Zealand provincial school systems, and the teachers, turned even more earnestly to their home background, and no doubt many of them followed new British developments closely. Major problems facing both the colony and the homeland were the recruiting and training of teachers for the growing school systems, and the supervision and guidance of the frequently rather unsatisfactory and ill-prepared teachers who had still to be used. The church societies employed organizing masters, recruited from experienced teachers, to assist the school managers in tackling these problems. These masters visited the schools to instruct the more capable teachers, and assist the managers in replacing the incapable. The societies also ran training colleges, an enterprise which the state, as a result of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth's⁷ vision, had done a

6. 22 January 1876, p. 10.

7. First Secretary of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education.

good deal to foster. Since the setting up of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in 1839, to superintend the expenditure of the parliamentary grants in aid to education, the state had become increasingly involved in measures to raise the level of teaching. Inspection of all aided schools provided the main means of exerting gentle persuasion for better methods and higher standards. The government-sponsored pupil-teacher scheme of 1846 was, for its day, a ^amajor step forward in recruitment. Pupil-teachers were chosen at the age of thirteen from the most promising pupils in an elementary school, and apprenticed to the head master for a term of five years, to be trained under the supervision of the inspectorate, receiving a stipend for their work, and the chance to compete for a Queen's Scholarship, which would entitle them to up to three years at a training college. By these and other means the standard of education in aided schools, and the number of school places offering, had been raised considerably. But so too had the education grant, with the result that an economy-conscious government set up a commission of enquiry, and in due course altered the terms of state aid by means of the Revised Code of 1862, which instituted 'payment by results'. The aim of the new system, in the words of its creator, Robert Lowe, was that: 'If it is not cheap, it shall be efficient; if it is not efficient, it shall be cheap'. Grants were now to be based on the results of annual examinations of the pupils

of the aided schools. Assistance to teacher training was reduced, and the grant to masters training pupil-teachers was eliminated. The measures served to lower the status of the teachers, who had come under criticism (mainly unjust) as being conceited, over-educated and over-ambitious. The Revised Code brought a rapid reduction in the education grant, in the number of pupil-teachers, and in the number of students in the training colleges. It led to a narrowing of the syllabus, as teachers concentrated on drilling the examinable three 'Rs', though efforts were later made to counteract this by extending 'payment by results' to other subjects.

The Revised Code had some direct and obvious effects on New Zealand schools of the time. A minor requirement, introduced in 1863, was the keeping of individual log-books, which were to be available to the inspector at the annual inspection. Widely adopted in New Zealand, this practice has provided the local historian with a useful source of information. More important was the systematic grading of the curriculum into standards, setting out the work to be covered for the annual examinations. While 'payment by results' was not adopted in New Zealand, the standard syllabus and the annual examination and grading of the pupils by the inspector were. Over-emphasis on drilling the three 'Rs' was also probably encouraged by the English example. But the fact that the

8. A. Tropp, The School Teachers, London, 1957, pp. 60-61, 78, 88.

9. Sturt, Education of the People, pp. 265-8.

system was never fully adopted in the colony, together with the better social position of the teacher in the colonial community, may have induced schoolteachers to immigrate to New Zealand. Many of the best teachers are reported to have left the elementary schools of England as a result of the Revised Code, some going to the colonies.¹⁰ In England the elementary teacher was socially isolated. He had 'moved up' from the ranks of the working class, and as a result was not on easy terms with the parents of the children he taught, but he himself was equally strongly rejected by the professional middle class to which he aspired.¹¹ On the New Zealand bush frontier, class meant very little, and the teacher could generally find yeoman farmers, clergymen and others with whom he could mix easily and profitably.

The teacher in the New Zealand Bush Provinces gained much also from the high regard for education held by the influential Scottish minority in the population. Since the early eighteenth century Scotland had had a higher literacy rate than England, though the gap had been narrowing rapidly since about 1850.¹² Stemming from their more thorough-going Protestant Reformation, the Scottish people had developed a deeper devotion to education, with a more democratic flavour, and a higher regard for the teacher. Their system of parish

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10. Tropp, The School Teachers, p. 96; Sturt, Education of the People, p. 268-9.
 11. Tropp, The School Teachers, pp. 34, 39.
 12. Estimated adult male literacy, 1855-Scotland 89%, England & Wales 70%; 1870-Scotland 90%, England & Wales 80% - L. Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', Past and Present, 42 (February 1969) p. 120.

and burgh schools leading on to a much more readily available university education for the gifted scholar, gave the common people opportunities unmatched in England. It was a two-stage system, with the common schools endeavouring to prepare pupils directly for entrance to universities. While some of the schools were poor in quality, and could barely do more than make their pupils literate, the ideal of an academic enrichment of the course at the village school remained, providing a contrast to the low aims of the English elementary school. The teachers were usually men, and most of them had been to university.¹³

The great advance in education in the Bush Provinces between 1870 and 1876 owed much to the ferment in the homeland, which preceded and followed the passing of the 1870 Education Act, covering England and Wales, and the Scottish Education Act of 1872. These acts were the result of a growing awareness that a haphazard, sectarian education system was inadequate for a modern industrialised state. The compromise solution of the 1870 Act gave the churches a final chance to 'fill the gaps' in educational provision, after which School Boards were elected wherever school places were inadequate, with power to levy a local rate and build the necessary schools. Any church-provided school receiving state aid had to accept a conscience clause allowing any parent

13. In 1827, when 906 parishes had schools, over 400 had masters who had taken a four-year university course. - J. Scotland, The History of Scottish Education, 2 Vols., London, 1969, I, 191.

to withdraw his child from religious instruction. The issue of religious instruction in Board schools was left to the Boards to decide, but if given it had to be undenominational,¹⁴ and the conscience clause applied. In Scotland a tidier solution was worked out, with the bulk of the nation's schools being handed over to elected School Boards which also had the duty of 'filling the gaps'. In New Zealand, provincial council measures had been moving in the direction of one or other of these solutions for more than a decade, though, particularly in the case of the North Island provinces, without enough determination to really grapple with the need. The British measures stimulated renewed efforts. So also did the 'Vogel' immigration drive, for it was illogical to woo British working men with the prospect of a better life, if their children would in fact be leaving the chance of schooling behind them. In New Zealand the main area of need was in the countryside, while in the towns church and private endeavour had managed to make a reasonable supply of (often inadequate) schooling available. In Britain the reverse was the case - the greater need was in the expanding industrial towns. Thus in 1866 Church schools in Warwickshire were providing for 1 in 9 of the population in the rural areas, but only 1 in 25 in Birmingham. The solutions which Britain worked out to meet the needs of her 'frontier', the

14. Joseph Arch and his union encouraged farm labourers to take full advantage of the 1870 Act. (See Arch, Life, pp. 245-8). This may well have helped school provision and attendance in the New Zealand Bush.

industrial cities, were adapted in New Zealand to the very different frontier of the country and Bush settlements. The first attempt to follow the English example was Fox's Educational Bill of 1871, which was very obviously an adaptation of the English 1870 Act and aimed to create a national system. On the failure of Fox's Bill, the Bush Provinces had to tackle the matter as one of the more urgent problems facing them. We will follow the fortunes first in Wellington, then of Hawke's Bay, and finally of Taranaki.

The situation facing the Wellington Provincial Council in 1871 was that an inadequate Education Act dating from 1855 had for some years been receiving very little support from the provincial government, and the total of 962 children on the rolls of the common schools was some 50 less than that of five years earlier.¹⁵ The Act gave the superintendent the task of proclaiming school district boundaries, after which the decision as to whether to have a school, and whether to support it by a rate, was left to the householders of the district. If a school was run, its management was entirely in the hands of a committee elected by the householders. The instruction was to be entirely secular. The superintendent was empowered to appoint an inspector of schools. Between 1864 and 1869 the schools were under regular inspection, first by A. Follett Halcombe, and then by Thomas Bowden. Under their guidance, and with the help of

15. Statistics of New Zealand, 1866, Table 62; 1875, Table 55.

grants from the provincial government, a measure of progress was made. When the Provincial Council got into financial difficulties in 1869, the inspection ceased and the grants were cut, with the result that the schools deteriorated, and some were closed. The general picture in 1871 may be summarized as one of poorly built, inadequately equipped schools staffed by poorly paid teachers, generally of limited ability. Only persons unfitted by health or other handicaps for more remunerative occupations could be expected to teach while the pay was less than a labourer's wage, and even that at the mercy of an annual meeting of householders. The 1871 balance sheet of the Bulls School, ¹⁶ probably one of the more fortunate, is instructive:

<u>Receipts:</u>	£	s.	d.
32 householders out of 52 paid their £1 rate	32	0	0
School fees	16	0	0
Tea meeting	5	12	0
Received from Provincial Government	31	5	0
	84	18	0
	[sic]		
<u>Principal disbursements:</u>			
Salary to schoolmaster	48	10	0
Salary to assistant	15	0	0
School maps	5	0	0
School prizes	3	0	0
Credit balance	10	8	0

16. Y, 12 August, 1871.

Possibly the best paid teachers in the Wellington common schools were those in the more strongly Scottish districts such as Turakina and Marton. At Turakina the salary had been £150 in 1868,¹⁷ but the reduction in the government grant may have reduced it in the following years. The 1870 annual householders' meeting of the Upper Tutaenui School District (near Marton), chaired by a Presbyterian deacon, decided to support the school by voluntary subscription,¹⁸ as this would bring in more than the rates permitted. But even if such liberality had been universal in the earlier settled districts, it could not be expected of the new bush settlements. Clearly a new approach was required if their needs were to be effectively met. This the Wellington Education Act of 1871 set out to give.

The Act made a completely new start, drawing on the experience of the Nelson Act of 1856, but also obviously influenced by the English 1870 Act. An Education Board was set up, with the province divided into ten districts, returning a member each. The local committees^{were} swept away, and full powers of control were vested in the Board. The main source of finance, apart from government grants, was a rate on property. This brought in £5,892 in 1873, £6,734 in 1876.¹⁹ Schools were to be open without fees for children of 5 to 15 years. This was changed by amending acts in 1872 and 1874,

17. C.R. Howlett, Turakina: The Centenary of a Country School, Wanganui, 1959, p. 27.

18. Y, 2 July 1870.

19. Statistics of N.Z., 1873, p. 21; 1876, p. 238.

the former imposing a capitation fee on all children of school age whether attending or not, the latter replacing the capitation fee with school fees of five shillings per quarter per child, with no family being charged for more than ²⁰ three children. Religious instruction of a non-controversial kind might be given, but only at fixed times so arranged as to be convenient for parents who wished to exercise a right of withdrawing their children. In 1873 the Board adopted a regulation for the appointment of local committees of advice on the nomination of the member of each district. ²¹ These committees had no executive powers.

The Act came into effect on 1 July 1872, and the first meeting of the Board was on 30 September 1872. The implementing of the new rating system took up much of the Board's attention in its early months, so that it was 1873 before it began to get to grips with educational advance. The paucity of school buildings was its first concern. The Board's report of 30 April 1873 states that it found only 30 schools receiving government grants-in-aid, and of these 8 were closed. It took these over, appointed masters to the vacancies and established new schools, to bring the total to 54 by the date of the report. In addition 11 others were to be opened as soon as buildings being erected were completed, or other suitable buildings found, and competent

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20. A.G. Butchers, *Young New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1929, p. 326, erroneously takes the 1874 Act as abolishing 'all rates'.
 21. D.L. Robinson *Some Aspects of Education in Wellington in the Provincial Period*, M.A. thesis, Victoria Univ. of Wellington, 1957, p. 118. (A.G. Butchers, *loc.cit.*, is in error on this point also).

masters obtained for them.²² By the end of the year 59 schools were open, and the number was raised to 70 by the end of 1876.²³ The building record was even more impressive than the figures would indicate, for schools which were little more than shacks were improved or replaced, schools meeting in hired buildings were provided with buildings of their own, and many of the existing schools were enlarged. The roll and attendance figures indicate the rapid growth of the system. The following figures are for the December quarters of the years concerned, and the roll figure is that for the highest number of pupils on the books during the quarter.²⁴

<u>Year</u>	<u>Roll</u>	<u>Average Daily Attendance</u>
1871	962	816
1872	2,967	2,357
1873	3,567	2,251
1874	3,391	2,393
1875	3,827	2,655
1876	4,423	3,323

In interpreting these figures, it must be taken into account that those for 1871-73 are much exaggerated. Until Robert Lee's appointment as inspector in 1874 there was no check on the teacher's care and honesty in recording attendances, and it was the practice to keep on the roll until the end

22. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session XXIV (1873), Paper F-13, p. 5.

23. Statistics of New Zealand, 1873, p. 206; 1876, p. 231.

24. All figures from Statistics of New Zealand for the year concerned.

of December the names of all pupils who had attended during the year. Lee instituted a monthly purging of the roll.²⁵ This accounts for the apparent fall in the roll between 1873 and 1874. Robinson's suggestion that the number of children in the schools was probably about 400 in 1871²⁶ may well be much nearer the truth than the figure in the official returns. Even as they stand, the figures indicate remarkable progress, and a heavy investment in education. Over the four years 1873-76 the Board received £24,262 from rates, over £30,000 from provincial government grants and about £4,500 from school fees.²⁷ In the preceding four years, 1869-72, government grants had totalled only £4,797²⁸ and there had, of course, been no rates.

An improvement in the quality of teaching was as urgently needed as the provision of buildings. When the Board appointed Robert Lee, headmaster of Bishop's School, Nelson, as inspector and organising master as from 1 January 1874, it ensured a thorough and enlightened campaign for higher standards and more effect methods.^{ive} Robert Lee²⁹ (1837-1922) was Lincolnshire born and bred. He was a product of the National Society - having had his elementary schooling at Grantham National School, where at the age of 13 he was

25. NZM, 15 April 1876, p. 11.

26. Education in Wellington in the Provincial Period, p. 126.

27. Statistics of N.Z., 1873, p. 207; 1874, p. 223; 1875 p. 238; 1876, p. 232. Receipts from grants & fees can only be estimated approximately, as Wellington College figures are included in the returns. They are footnoted separately for 1873 & 1876, hence a fairly reliable estimate of the deductions to be made for 1874 & 1875 can be made.

28. Calculated from N.Z. Govt. Gazette, Province of Wgton., xxiii, 105.

29. Biographical details from: R. Lee, 'Lee's log', MS [contd.]

apprenticed as a pupil-teacher only some four years after the system was inaugurated. At 17 he won a Queen's scholarship and entered St. Mark's College, Chelsea. St. Mark's, under its foundation principal Derwent Coleridge, son of the poet, was perhaps the most ambitious of the National Society Training Colleges. It combined the most intensive programme of academic studies of any of the colleges, with farming and horticultural training on a farmlet attached to the college. It specifically aimed at producing teachers who would be worthy assistants to the rural clergy. Lee could scarcely have found a more suitable training for his future work as a New Zealand inspector. He was selected for a third year of training at St. Mark's, and then appointed assistant to the master of the normal school. After two years there he went as headmaster to an Anglican elementary school in Lancashire. He remained there just long enough to see the introduction of the Revised Code, before emigrating to New Zealand, to take up the headmastership in Nelson in 1864. He had thus had considerable experience of colonial life before taking up his work for the Wellington Board. His task, as the Board saw it, was to somehow combine the office of inspector, as developed by the Committee of Council in England, with that of organizing master as developed by the National Society.³⁰ He had at once to guide and train

[29.] autobiography, General Assembly Library, Wellington; Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 371-2.

30. Minutes of Wellington Education Bd., 22 September 1873, 6 December 1873. (As cited in Robinson, Education in Wellington in the Provincial Period, p. 119.)

the teachers, and report on their work, assess, and promote them. In a large measure he succeeded in meeting the diverse requirements of his task.

Lee made his first report to the Board on 29 April 1874,³¹ describing the schools as he found them, and making realistic suggestions for the use of the Board's limited resources to secure the maximum progress. He had found a general interest in education even in the remote districts, and was impressed with the number of children who walked for miles over broken country each day to attend. He found that in many of the larger townships the school was being held in the Town Hall or some other unsuitable building, while where a school building had been put up the mistake had been made of attaching the teacher's residence to it. This residence was generally of only one or two poor rooms with the most meagre fittings. While much progress had been made in the preceding year in supplying the schools with fittings, books, and apparatus, much remained to be done. Six schools had no blackboards, and many were very badly supplied with books. Unpunctuality and irregular attendance was hampering the work of the schools.

Apart from the obvious need to press on with providing buildings and equipment, Lee's two main proposals in this first report were for a system of standards as a means of

31. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session (1874), Paper F-9.

organizing and classifying scholars, and the adoption of the half-time school as a useful temporary measure in new and growing areas. The Board allowed Lee a fairly free hand in carrying out his proposals. The standards, adapted from those developed for the Revised Code in England, were directed at clarifying the aims of teaching, and rationalising the organisation of the schools. Lee undertook the arduous task of conducting an annual standard examination in each school. The half-time policy was aimed at making the maximum use of the Board's scarce resources of money and manpower. Both proposals may be criticised as reflecting the narrow aims and desire for cheapness which marred nineteenth century English elementary education. But Lee was working with meagre resources, and limited aims were at least an improvement on the aimlessness which he found on his initial inspection. Dr. Beeby's provocative treatment of the stages in the growth of a primary school system³² would suggest that Lee acted with very good sense. Many of the teachers were ill-educated and untrained. What Lee was trying to bring about, with many of them, was a move up the scale from Beeby's 'Dame School' stage to the stage of 'Formalism'. In a report on the teaching power of the province, dated 1 August 1874, Lee classified 24 of the Board's 63 teachers as uncertificated. The majority of the

32. C.E. Beeby, The Quality of Education in Developing Countries, Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

remainder had acquired their certificates by passing an examination of the Education Board (some probably dated from Bowden's inspectorate in the 1860s). Fourteen had received training in English training colleges, although of these 9 had received only six months each. There were also 10 pupil teachers. To supply the staff for his rapidly growing system Lee organized a pupil teacher system very similar to that under which he himself had trained.

In November 1874 Lee made a second report in the one year, as he wished to advise the Board of the effects of introducing the Standards system.³³ Its effect in creating a spirit of emulation in teachers and scholars had been greater than he had anticipated. It had also had a marked effect on the curriculum. Lee reported:

One good effect in the working of the Standards has been the complete sweeping away of all that is frivolous or useless in elementary school work - such as Book-keeping, Astronomy, the use of the Globes, much repetition of poetry, learning Grammar and Geography by heart, long sewing lessons for girls, Mensuration and Algebra taught for the sound thereof, Drawing, and Music from notes - occupying hours of instruction, Latin and Greek roots, Arithmetic worked from books only, hard spellings, sundry catechisms, and even Euclid.

Many teachers had obviously spent much of their time sharing their own varied scraps of knowledge, rather than seriously tackling the task of teaching for literacy under trying

33. N.Z. Govt. Gazette, Province of Wellington, XXI (1874), 199-203.

conditions. Some may indeed have emigrated to escape the 'cramping' effects of the English Revised Code. But another source of many elements in this curious catalogue of subjects may have been the Scottish common school tradition, with its vision of sending some pupils direct to University. Developments beginning in the Rangitikei in 1874 lead one to surmise that in this district there may have been something of a clash between the Scottish and English common school traditions.

Robert Lee made his first tour of inspection in the Rangitikei in March 1874,³⁴ riding from place to place on horseback, and being entertained in most districts by a leading settler. Among these were Sir James Wilson of Bulls, Mr Sanson of Sanson, and Archdeacon Towgood, Vicar of Marton, with whom he spent a pleasant evening.³⁵ Lee's strongly Anglican background and 'English' views on elementary education may have helped to motivate the calling of a public meeting at Bulls in May 1874, 'to consider the Education Act of the Province and its proposed amendment'.³⁶ The meeting was addressed by two Presbyterian ministers, the Revs. W. Stewart and J. Ross, and the resolutions which the meeting carried unanimously were put by a third, the Rev. J. Doull. Briefly, these asked for district education boards, with rating powers, to be set up throughout the province, better salaries for teachers, secular education, and a

34. Y, 7 March 1874, pp. 4, 6.

35. 'Lee's Log', p. 4 of 'Inspector of Schools - Manawatu & Rangitikei 1874-7'.

36. NZM, 16 May 1874.

and a provincial Teachers' Training College. Another public meeting was held in Marton in September,³⁷ at which the Rev. W. Stewart was voted to the chair, and Presbyterian church officers were prominent among the speakers.³⁸ Various local problems were aired. Half-time schools were unanimously condemned. More schools were said to be needed, and existing ones were reported badly overcrowded. A Presbyterian elder who had recently visited the Marton School reported finding the children packed together like sheep in a pen, with some even in the fireplace. The Rev. W. Stewart thought the settlers should have the right to appoint the teachers. A. Milne, Presbyterian elder, said that to get good teachers they would have to pay them well. The Rev. J. Ross raised the question of higher education, but the meeting thought they should concentrate on proper elementary schools first. The formation of an Educational Association was then put before the meeting, and a large committee appointed to draw up rules and establish such an association.

At three further public meetings before the year was out (Turakina, 26 October; Bulls, 8 November; Marton, 27 November)³⁹ the Association was formed, officers elected, and policies decided upon. The committee elected on 27

37. Y, 19 September 1874, p. 10.

38. This fact is established by checking with lists of elders, managers and deacons in: - M.W. Wilson, Turakina - The Story of a Country Parish, Christchurch, 1952 pp. 32, 38; N.C. Cameron, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Parish; Marton, Marton Junction & Tutaenui, Marton, 1962, p. 19.

39. Y, 31 October 1874, 14 November 1874, 5 December 1874.

November had the Hon. Mr. Fox as president, 5 vice-presidents (4 of whom appear to have been Presbyterian and/or Scottish) and 27 other officers (with a good proportion of Scots). A five shilling annual membership fee was adopted. The Association obviously drew its inspiration from similar movements in Scotland. The Rev. J. Ross told how a Scottish district in which he had worked had come to the fore educationally through the formation of an educational association offering prizes to be competed for. He envisaged similar competitions in the Rangitikei not only in English and Arithmetic, but also in Latin and Euclid. The Rev. J. Doull told of the wonderful success of an association in Cathness and Sutherland. The Rangitikei Association took up their suggestions and instituted a system of examinations, with good prizes for the winners, and bonuses for their teachers.

Two competitions were held by the Association in 1875
 (at Marton in March ⁴⁰ and Bulls in November ⁴¹). Thereafter ⁴² the competition became annual. The first examination, held in the Marton Town Hall, seems to have been a chaotic occasion. The committee had envisaged a few of the principal scholars from the various schools appearing, but instead they came en masse, accompanied by a large crowd of parents. The Marton correspondent of the Wanganui Herald tells of the amateur efforts of the Rev. Mr. Stewart to bring order from

40. Y, 3 April 1875, p. 2.

41. NZM, 20 November 1875; Y, 20 November 1875.

42. See Y, 11 November 1876, p. 6; 22 December 1877, p. 9.

the chaos. Fortunately Mr. Lee, the School Inspector 'appeared in the course of the day' and kindly helped 'to pull them through'.⁴³ In his 'Log' Lee dryly describes a visit to Marton on which he came across an education competition organized by 'a few Presbyterian ministers'. He entered the hall where 'their function was in full swing', to find 'all in uproar and confusion'. He was asked to help, and brought the place into something like order. No doubt his appearance was not entirely a matter of chance. Fortunately for the welfare of his Standards, the competition extended beyond the three R's only into Political Geography, Mapping, and History. The organizers appear to have learnt from this experience as no disorder is reported to at subsequent competitions.

The Scottish suspicion of Lee found more overt expression early in 1877 following an adverse report by Lee on a Scottish teacher in Wanganui. One correspondent, a little at sea as to Lee's credentials, wrote to his newspaper, 'An Oxonian cannot comprehend the Scotch system of education, nor yet can he bear the Scotch teachers'.⁴⁴ Another brings out a further source of friction: Mr Lee does not show due respect to teachers who are 'quite his equal in social position, perhaps his superior'.⁴⁵ This may well reflect a

43. p.5 of 'Inspector of Schools - Manawatu & Rangitikei 1874-7'.

44. Y, 3 March 1877, p. 2.

45. Y, 24 February 1877, p. 14.

difficulty on Lee's part in adjusting to a situation in which colonial influences, reinforced by those emanating from Scotland, were giving the New Zealand schoolteacher a markedly different status to that of his English counterpart. The inspection visit must have been a tense occasion for inspector, teacher and pupils when, as at Turakina in September 1875, 'a very considerable number of parents and others',⁴⁶ packed the room to observe proceedings. In his 'Log',⁴⁷ Lee comments on the adverse effect on the children, but the dour gaze of scores of Scottish eyes must have been unsettling for the inspector also. Despite these frictions, Lee recognized that the deep concern for education in the Rangitikei was producing good results. In his report of 27 March 1878 he compared the Wanganui District schools (which were being taken over by the new Wanganui Education Board) with the Wellington District Schools). He reported that the general standard of education was higher in the schools of the Wanganui District.⁴⁸

The 1871 Wellington Education Act had clearly brought about a new educational order. In 1876 the New Zealand Mail⁴⁹ reported that it had resulted in the thinning out of teachers of the 'old identity' type to make way for those of higher attainments and superior teaching power, while in most

46. Y, 2 October 1875, p. 10.

47. 'Inspector of Schools - Manawatu & Rangitikei 1874-7', p. 6.

48. AJHR 1888, H-1, p. 64.

49. NZM, 15 April 1876, p. 11.

districts schoolhouses and teachers' residences had appeared to replace the earlier 'huts and barns'. In the debates on the 1877 Education Bill, Fox painted the same picture.⁵⁰ Formerly the schools in the Wellington country districts 'were worked as badly as could be'. Now, he reported, they were in good working order with 'an entirely different class of masters and mistresses'. The change came just early enough to ensure that the new bush settlements should have good educational facilities right from their start. This is of considerable significance, for these settlers had, in general, neither the means nor the background to provide effectively for themselves under a laissez-faire system. As it was, the school was often the first public building in a bush district, and its affairs were woven into the community life from the start.

In Palmerston North the first school was erected in 1872, and in the absence of a hall in the settlement it was immediately in demand for public occasions. Its first use appears to have been for a Presbyterian service, conducted by the Rev. J. Paterson of St. John's Church, Wellington, on 20 October 1872. The following evening there was a tea meeting, with a lecture by Paterson on 'Colonial Life'.⁵¹ The school was gazetted as open to enrol children in a notice dated 21 March 1873.⁵² The building continued to be a social centre,

50. NZPD, Vol. 10, p. 232.

51. Y, 26 October 1872, pp. 6,8.

52. N.Z. Govt Gazette, Province of Wellington, Vol.20, p. 44.

in use for church services, a temperance lecture by William Fox,⁵³ and entertainments, such as a concert and magic lantern show in June 1874, at which school prizes for good conduct and regular attendance were distributed. Educationally the school was not a great success for the first year or two. In December 1875 the teacher was given notice and dismissed.⁵⁵ Lee's annual report on the school shows that he was dissatisfied with both teaching and discipline and had⁵⁶ found boys playing truant within fifty yards of the school.⁵⁷ A competent teacher was found as a replacement. The school had had a good average of passes in the last Standard examinations under the dismissed teacher, but Lee reported that they were nearly all made by immigrant children recently arrived from the London Board schools, where they had been well taught.

We have already noted Colonel Feilding's disappointment⁵⁸ at the lack of support given to the Feilding School. The school was opened on 2 November 1874, with only six pupils.⁵⁹ It was a week before another appeared, and the roll built up only slowly. Possibly the Scottish zeal of the neighbouring district helped in time to stir Feilding out of an English rural indifference. When school committee elections were instituted in 1876, the Presbyterian minister Rev.

53. NZM, 24 January 1874, p. 7.

54. Y, 4 July 1874, p. 11.

55. Y, 25 December 1875, p. 6.

56. NZM, 15 January 1876, p. 10.

57. AJHR 1878, H-1, p. 65.

58. Chapter, 4. Street

59. History of Manchester/School, Feilding, 1874-1964, Feilding, 1964.

R. McGregor was elected chairman at a thinly attended⁶⁰ meeting. Lee reported favourably on the conduct of the school in 1875. He had found the first headmaster, R.C. Dowling, who remained for 14 years, to be 'energetic and painstaking.'⁶¹

The third school established in the Manawatu bush was at the Scandinavian settlement of Stoney Creek, between Palmerston North and the Gorge. In May 1876 the Board⁶² agreed to pay half the cost of a school building. A newspaper correspondent who braved the muddy bush tracks to visit Stoney Creek in the winter of 1877 found a very intelligent Danish carpenter putting up the school building, and was impressed with the intense desire of the settlers 'to have their children properly educated through the medium of the English language'.⁶³ As the first teacher Lee sent Miss Nellie Stevens, with whose work at Kaiwarra, near Wellington, he had been much impressed.⁶⁴ Twenty-four children enrolled on the first day, of whom only three 'knew their letters'. To overcome the language problem Miss Stevens made much use of singing, and she used marching to teach counting. She frequently gave play breaks, so that the Scandinavians might pick up some English from the minority of British children.⁶⁵

60. Y, 4 March 1876, p. 12.

61. NZM, 15 January 1876, p. 10.

62. Y, 6 May 1876, p. 4.

63. Y, 16 June 1877, Supplement.

64. 'Lee's Log' - 'Inspector of Schools - Provincial 1874-77' pp.3-4.

65. H.W. Wood, Whakarongo School, formerly Stoney Creek School, 1877-1962, [Palmerston North] 1962.

On the other side of the mountains, in the Scandinavian settlement in the Forty Mile Bush, the authorities had been prodded to provide a school during a visit to New Zealand of W. Christopherson, in the capacity of Consul General for Sweden and Norway. In a letter to the Minister of Public Works and Immigration, dated 24 April 1873, Christopherson reported finding the settlers in the Scandinavian camp very concerned at the prospect of their children growing up in ignorance.⁶⁶ The government was able to appoint as teacher Arthur Petersen, a Norwegian from a family of Danish origin. G.C. Petersen has given a good account of his work in a shack in the camp, and for a time in another shack in Mauriceville.⁶⁷ When he left Mauriceville the settlers had to wait a year or two before school resumed in a proper school building in 1877.⁶⁸

Hawke's Bay's schools, like those of Wellington, had suffered in the hard times of the later 1860s. Her system was similar to Wellington's, with the primary responsibility for the provision and management of the schools being exercised at the local level. The local committee consisted of trustees, who held office permanently, with the result that the teacher's welfare was not at the mercy of an annual householder's meeting, as in Wellington province. An Educational Rates Act passed in 1868 levied one pound yearly on all

66. W. Christophersen to Minister for Public Works & Immigration, Im 6/8/1-72/263, National Archives, Wellington.

67. Forest Homes, pp. 29-32, 35-6.

68. ibid., pp. 84-8.

houses, warehouses and shops in the Province, the collection⁶⁹ to be by persons appointed by the Superintendent. While the rate met with prolonged and bitter opposition, it saved the system from the near-collapse that overtook Wellington. The official returns for the last quarter of 1870 show Hawke's Bay with an average daily attendance of 336, which is 3 more⁷⁰ than Wellington's, though Hawke's Bay had less than a quarter of Wellington's school-age population. Even allowing for inaccuracies in the figures, the contrast is striking. However, Hawke's Bay's school system was far from ideal. As in Wellington, many school buildings were poor, unlined sheds, many of the teachers were unsatisfactory, and there was little system about the tuition given. While there had been more regular inspection than in Wellington, in 1870 the Superintendent, Ormond, took over the task himself, as an economy measure, but seems to have been unable to find⁷¹ the time to carry it out.

Hawke's Bay shared in the widespread public discussion of education of the early 1870s, but the legislative result, 'The Hawke's Bay Education Act, 1873' is not of great importance, as it made no significant changes in the system. No Board was set up and local trustees retained effective

69. Hawke's Bay Provincial Council, Votes & Proceedings, Session 13, Act No. 6.

70. Statistics of N.Z., 1870, Table 55.

71. J.W. Parker, Education in Provincial Hawke's Bay, M.A. Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1967, pp. 56-57.

control of the schools. The revised rating system of the Act was never operated, as Ormond chose to provide for education out of provincial revenue instead. A period of progress was brought about rather by the appointment of William Colenso as inspector of schools in July 1872, followed by the provision of more generous funds for education from provincial votes, beginning in 1874. The General Government was also persuaded to assist by making grants towards the first schools in the Scandinavian settlements of Norsewood and Dannevirke in 1873.⁷² As in Wellington, therefore, the first bush settlements coincided with a forward move in education. The Seventy Mile Bush Scandinavians showed a similar zeal for their children's education to those at Stoney Creek. To find their share of the cost of the school, the Norsewood settlers worked together splitting railway sleepers.⁷³

In keeping with his concern for the success of the bush settlements, Ormond negotiated the first appointments to Norsewood and Dannevirke schools himself, and thereafter watched over their welfare. For Norsewood F.W. Thompson, an English certificated master, was appointed from Canterbury. Possibly a missionary zeal brought him to the settlement, as he conducted services as an Anglican lay-reader during his

72. Davidson, Scandinavians in New Zealand, pp. 74-5; AJHR 1873, D-13, p. 2.

73. Friberg to Ormond, 4 March 1873. H.B. 4-16/73, National Archives, Wellington. (Cited J.W. Parker).

74 stay. He took up his duties in the spring of 1873, and Colenso found him wrestling zealously with the problems of the language barrier and irregular attendance, when he inspected the school on 28 April 1874. There was a roll of 46, an average attendance of 24. Colenso described the school as a huge building, full of apertures through having been hastily built of green timber. It would have been more snug with a lower roof, less windows, and a fireplace; and a proper teacher's residence was greatly needed.⁷⁵ In his next report (1 June 1875) Colenso was able to tell of repairs to the school, improvements made to the teacher's rooms, and the erection of a chimney. Thompson had, however, resigned rather unexpectedly in April, but Colenso could report the appointment of another teacher. She was a woman who did not speak Scandinavian, a fact which Colenso counted as a virtue,⁷⁶ as she would get the children on quicker with their English. A year later he reported the school flourishing under the new teacher.⁷⁷

The teacher found to open the Dannevirke school was a Danish woman, Mrs. Ida Johnson (or Jorgensen), who had settled first at Palmerston North, and later moved with her husband to Hawke's Bay. Arriving in June 1873, the Johnsons found the school to be a humble structure of two rooms, one

74. Diocese of Waiapu, Proceedings of Synod, September 1874, p. 9.

75. H.B. Provincial Council, Votes & Proceedings, 1874, 'Report of Inspector of Schools.. for the year ending May 31, 1874', p. 10.

76. ibid., 1875, p. 9.

77. H.B. Govt. Gazette, Vol. 16, (1876), p. 92.

to teach in and the other, a small windowless box, to live⁷⁸ in. Not surprisingly they stayed only a few months, and the school remained closed until February of 1875. In the meantime the building had been improved and a chimney added, but⁷⁹ the teacher's room was still 'utterly unfit for the purpose'. Colenso's 1876 report shows another change of teacher, a roll of 21, and an average attendance of 17.

Settlers in the bush on the eastern slopes of the Ruahines were served during this period by schools at Tiko-kino and Onga Onga. The latter, opened in 1875, was described by Colenso as 'by far the most primitive and peculiar⁸⁰ of any in the Province'. In order to be centrally placed, it was set down all by itself away in the bush, without even a road or track leading to it. Its roll was 8, and it was open in the mornings only. A school such as this must have really valued the inspector's visit. Colenso endeavoured to visit each school two or three times a year, and give some⁸¹ help with teaching, as well as examining. These visits formed the only kind of teacher training provided during the Provincial period.

Taranaki entered the 1870s as the most backward province educationally. Her Education Ordinance of 1868 was quite

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- 78. Davidson, Scandinavians in New Zealand, p. 75.
 - 79. 'Report of Inspector of Schools, 1875', p. 9.
 - 80. H.B. Govt. Gazette, Vol. 16, p. 92.
 - 81. H.B. Provincial Council, Votes & Proceedings, 1873, 'Letter from Inspector of Schools'; ibid., 1875, 'Report of Inspector of Schools', pp. 3-4.

an admirable document, providing for a central Board with considerable, though not clearly defined, powers, local committees, with the power to impose an educational rate, and a School Inspector appointed by the Board. Teachers were to be appointed by the local committees, but had to possess a certificate of qualification approved by the Board. Due largely to the Maori wars, but also partly to the social attitudes of many of the settlers, most of the Ordinance's provisions were inoperative. No Inspector had been appointed under the Ordinance, though for a period in 1870-71 the Board members went out in pairs to visit the schools.⁸² In the country districts the schools operated in blockhouses, cottages, and halls erected by the local settlers. Where local committees existed, they did not operate in terms of the Ordinance, and its rating provision was never used. The Board's main activity was the continuation of a system adopted by the Provincial Government in 1866, whereby grants were made of up to approximately half the school fees of children whose parents could not afford the full charge,⁸³ provided the school they attended was approved as efficient. In effect, the Board adopted the policy of aiding any school attended by children whose parents were entitled to assistance.⁸⁴ This system, in the absence of proper supervision, drifted into a confused state. Parents for example, abused

82. K.H. Bruce, Taranaki Education in the Provincial Period, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1965, p.65.
 83. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XIV, 9, p. 43.
 84. Taranaki Education Board Minutes, 2 April 1869, para 267 (as cited, Bruce, Taranaki Education, p. 64).

it by pairing their children and sending them on alternate days, paying fees for one child, but claiming the grant for two.⁸⁵ Teachers, struggling for a living dared not remonstrate, lest they lose the children altogether. Good teachers were the exception, as one would expect. With poor teachers, poor attendances, and poor results from the children's school work, a vicious circle of apathy on the part of all concerned was created. Yet, as settlers moved back onto their land with the passing of the Maori threat, and as the prospect developed of the further extension of settlement under the impulse of the 'Vogel' programme, it became increasingly clear to the province's leaders that something must be done. If they had the apathy of the North Taranaki small farmers to discourage them, they had the restiveness of the pastoralists of the rising Patea district to prod them on. Anxious lest educational land reserves set aside in the Patea district by the 1871 General Assembly should be used by North Taranaki for its own benefit, the Patea settlers held a public meeting in February 1872 to press their claims.⁸⁶ Over the next few years they made it very clear that they set a much higher value on education than the New Plymouth settlement did. This would have been due partly to their being on the average, much more well-to-do than the northern settlers, but the large Scottish minority in the Patea district would also have been a potent factor.

85. Bruce, Taranaki Education, p. 56.

86. Bruce, Taranaki Education, p. 87.

The move for a new order in education was initiated by H.R. Richmond, in a resolution moved in the Provincial Council on 26 February 1873.⁸⁷ H.R. Richmond, a member of the gifted Richmond-Atkinson family connection, had already made a considerable contribution to Taranaki education. The 1868 Education Ordinance had been passed while he was Superintendent of the Province, and he had been the first chairman of the Education Board it created. In 1872, partly for the sake of his own son, he had begun a private school for boys in New Plymouth. His speech in support of his resolution showed that he had a good knowledge of educational development throughout the world. He estimated that more than half, possibly three-fifths, of the school-age children of Taranaki were not attending any school whatever. He maintained that the existing circumstances resulted in the occupation of teaching falling into the hands of those who had failed in other pursuits, and took to teaching as a last resort. The subsequent discussion showed that the Superintendent, F.A. Carrington, although a political opponent of Richmond, was in full support of the move. The resolution expressed the opinion that it was desirable for the Council to legislate for an education rate, but that public opinion should first be tested at public meetings called by the Superintendent. The motion was carried unanimously.

In accordance with the resolution Carrington called a

87. Taranaki News, 1 March 1873.

series of public meetings throughout April, 1873, in New Plymouth, Waitara, Lepperton, Bell Block, Tataraimaka and Omata. To test public opinion on the key issues, Carrington drew up a series of resolutions to be put to the meetings. These included proposals for a household rate, a capitation rate on single men, a capitation rate on school-age children, sectarian and non-sectarian religious instruction, and compulsory attendance.⁸⁸ The well-reported discussions at the meetings, and associated newspaper correspondence and editorials, together give a good sampling of Taranaki opinion on education, and show the community to have been sharply divided. The strongest opposition appears to have come from town residents, who were well provided with private schools, and did not wish to share the expense of a public system, and from a certain section of the rural population, led largely by lay preachers. Support for the proposals was given by both newspapers. The Taranaki Herald (26 February 1873) affirmed that '... some means have to be devised whereby the present deplorable state of affairs may in a manner be rectified'. And the Taranaki News (23 April 1873) in reviewing the arguments advanced against the proposals, averred that none of them were 'good from an enlarged and patriotic point of view'. The more enlightened members of the community seem to have been surprised by the virulence of the opposition. Carrington, who opened each meeting with an address

88. Taranaki Herald, 12 March 1873; Bruce, Taranaki Educ. pp. 71-2. Bruce attributes the resolutions to the Council but see Taranaki News, 26 Apr., 1873, letter from H.R. Richmond, affirming that they were Carrington's work.

urging that the time had come to do something adequate for education, told the Lepperton meeting, after it had rejected the proposals, that their vote caused him more grief than⁸⁹ anything that had happened since he took office.

The arguments of the rural opposition are curiously reminiscent of those met by Hannah More when she set out to take schooling to the villages of the Mendip Hills in Somerset in the late eighteenth century. There was an odd mixture of selfishness and religious prejudice, which is well illustrated by two lines of argument advanced by James Dingle, a Frankley Road farmer. The government, he affirmed, had no more right to stop a man working his children than his bullocks, and God had told Adam to go to work, not to school.⁹⁰ At the Omata meeting Charles Sutton likened the proposals to a poor rate, which would raise up a race of hereditary paupers.⁹¹ Phillip Friske, at the Tataraimaka meeting, affirmed that the government had no right to interfere with his children. His boy of twelve could drive bullocks at plough, and it would cost 2s.6d. a day to get a man to do his work. If the government would teach people to observe the Sabbath, time would be found to teach the children to read their bibles at home. Too much education made men idle. Friske received some support from the Anglican Rev. H. H. Brown, who thought⁹² it important that children should be early taught to work. John Purdie told the Lepperton meeting that the Provincial

89. Taranaki News, 19 April 1873.

90. Taranaki News, 16 April 1873; Taranaki Herald, 14 May 1873.

91. Taranaki News, 3 May 1873.

92. ibid., 26 April 1873.

Council were nearly all schoolmasters, who had concocted the scheme for the benefit of their own profession.⁹³ It has been suggested that the arguments may have been a 'smoke-screen' to cover the real reason for the opposition, the poverty of the speakers.⁹⁴ But the speakers quoted appear to have been among the more well-to-do of the small farmers, and Carrington reported the total voting at the country meetings to be in favour of ^ahousehold rate by 37 to 11. It seems more likely that the speakers were in general voicing genuine prejudices. A newspaper correspondent expressed his astonishment at finding some of the fiercest opponents of education (whining at these meetings about piety'.⁹⁵ After further consideration he wrote in again, apparently feeling that he had begun to understand them. 'Our uneducated lay preachers to a man opposed the education scheme, and some of them vehemently', he wrote. 'At first sight it seems anomolous for teachers to oppose teachers'. But he discovers that Dean Dawes of Hereford had observed a similar aversion to secular education, as though it partook in some measure of the nature of sin, among uneducated classes in England.⁹⁶ It seems more likely that the roots of this rural opposition are to be found in the psychology of these simple rural religious leaders, insecure in their lack of adequate preparation for their task. Benjamin Wells put them in a

93. ibid., 19 April 1873.

94. Bruce, Taranaki Education, p. 77.

95. Taranaki News, 30 April 1873.

96. ibid., 7 June 1873.

better light than they are placed by themselves in this debate. Writing of the earlier years of the settlement, he recorded the community's debt of gratitude to the Primitive Methodists. 'At their Sunday Schools', he wrote, 'many obtained all the book learning they ever received. When there were no newspapers, and but little literature of any kind in the Province, the Primitive Methodists distributed books in their schools and congregations.'

The opposition in the town of New Plymouth was more reprehensible, and more effective in delaying educational progress. It came largely from those who had had reasonable educational opportunities themselves, and opposed similar opportunities for others from political and economic motives. Carrington called the meeting for 4p.m. on Saturday, 12 April. Only a handful of people turned up, as Saturday afternoon was the country people's market day, and the business people of township were consequently fully engaged in their callings. Eventually an adjournment was carried. The adjourned town meeting was called for Saturday, 10 May, at 11a.m., after the round of country meetings had been completed. In opening the meeting Carrington summarised the results of the voting of at the country meetings. There had been 78 for, 13 against, the proposition of a new Education Act. Besides the support for a household rate, there had been 26 for, 14 against, a

97. B.Wells, History of Taranaki, New Plymouth, 1878, p. 132.

98. Taranaki News, 16 April 1873.

capitation rate on school-age children, but only 2 votes in⁹⁹ favour of a capitation rate on single men. He did not mention the compulsory attendance proposition but the voting at the three meetings at which it appears to have been put (Tararaimaka, Omata, Bell Block) totalled 26 votes in favour, 8 against. It must be noted that the voting figures are rather deceptive; at Lepperton the idea of a new Education Act was rejected, so the other propositions were not voted on; and at the other meetings a large number obviously abstained from voting on most issues. At the second town meeting the opposition turned up in force, determined that none of the propositions should be carried. Its main leaders appear to have been Josiah Flight, Peter Elliott, Thomas Hirst and Joseph Corney.¹⁰⁰ Flight was for many years New Plymouth's magistrate, Elliott a member of the Provincial Council and a prosperous farmer, Hirst a well-to-do retired man, a Justice of the Peace and a prominent Anglican, and Corney a carpenter, a flourishing trade in the 1870s.

The advocates of an educational advance defended their case with vigour. William Hulke maintained that the men teachers were too often broken down drunkards whom no decent family would consent to receive beside its hearth. The schools were asylums for decayed drunkards. 'You pay your bullock boys higher wages than you do your teachers', he

99. *ibid.*, 14 May 1873.

100. *ibid.*, 14, 17 May 1873.

said. 'What teaching ability do you expect for 9s. a week?' Challenged by the Rev. H. Brown on the habits of the teachers, he maintained that while there were honourable exceptions, 'at one time we certainly had three drunkards among our schoolmasters'. Mr. Gledhill supported him. He had asked a boy in the street that morning, 'Boy, what you call your master?' and received the prompt reply 'A drunkard'. He asked what results they expected from drunken dwarfs of teachers. Mr. Upjohn created 'a deafening uproar' by maintaining that some of the opposition would be unable to either read or write if they had not been sent to Nelson during the war 'and partaken there of its very great educational advantages'. The opposition closed a very noisy and unruly meeting by carrying an adjournment motion. Not surprisingly, Carrington let the matter lapse for a time. In the meantime some attempt was made to remove abuses of the existing system. It came to light that some teachers, either from misunderstanding or deliberately, had been claiming capitation for pupils who were not entitled to it. The Provincial Council therefore rescinded its 1866 resolution governing capitation payments, and the Board adopted the policy of making a straight payment of £20 per annum to teachers in country schools, ¹⁰¹ and also undertook to sue parents from whom teachers had difficulty ¹⁰² in collecting fees.

The vexed question of education was largely ignored

101. Taranaki News, 14 June 1873. Bruce, Taranaki Education.
 102. Taranaki News, 1 October 1873.

by candidates at the provincial elections in November 1873. The airing which the subject had been given does, however, seem to have helped prepare the way for change. The members of the Education Board became increasingly restive. William Hulke told the February 1874 meeting that in the absence of funds for their work, the Board were looked on with ridicule, and if the matter continued to be neglected they would be better to resign. He had just visited the Patea, where the folk would ^a guarantee £120 to a good schoolmaster, and wanted the Board to make it up to £150. The settlers in the Patea district were willing to be rated, but nothing could be done because of North Taranaki opposition to such a measure. Richmond thought pressure should be brought to bear on the Council, and pointed out that under the existing Act the Patea folk could rate themselves. ¹⁰³ The following month the Board carried unanimously a strongly worded resolution addressed to the Council. This affirmed that there were no longer any circumstances which justified or excused the delay in making effectual provision for public education, and that the existence of a Board of Education without the necessary funds only served to disguise the true situation. ¹⁰⁴ Success came to their cause when Harry Atkinson became Provincial Secretary in May 1874. During his three year visit to England, from which he returned in 1871, Atkinson cannot have failed to follow the great national debate on

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education. After a year or two devoted to getting his farming affairs back on a firm footing, he re-entered provincial politics in November 1873. His five months as provincial secretary, May to October 1874, were crucial in shaping new provincial policies.

Atkinson was asked by Carrington to head the provincial government on 15 May 1874, accepted on 16 May, and met the Council when it opened on Monday 18 May. On 20 May he introduced an Education Bill, which he had drawn up as a member of a committee of the Council before taking office, and he carried it through its third reading without alteration the following day.¹⁰⁵ He had a great fight to get through a £1400 vote in aid of education, but would not yield, and had his way.¹⁰⁶ Thus backed by adequate finance, the new Act inaugurated a new order in Taranaki education. Accepting geographical realities, it divided the province into two districts, New Plymouth and Patea, each with its own Education Board. Each Board was to divide its district into convenient sub-districts, which were to elect School Committees to provide local supervision. The main powers were vested in the boards, though committees had the right to recommend the appointment, suspension, and removal of their teachers. A household rate of one pound was imposed throughout the province. There were also to be school fees

105. H.A. Atkinson to A.S. Atkinson, 31 May 1874: Scholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 376.

106. ibid.

fixed and administered by the boards. These measures raised the public education revenues of Taranaki from £335 in 1873 to £1268 in 1874 and £3,513 in 1875. The act provided for the amalgamation of the two boards if this was mutually desired. As this was not carried out we shall follow their fortunes separately.

The New Plymouth Board of seven members was elected in June 1874, and included such leading figures as Harry Atkinson, Benjamin Wells, H.R. Richmond and Archdeacon Govett.¹⁰⁷ Its first meeting was held on 25 June, and Wells was elected chairman. It spent the rest of 1874 getting its district organised, and trying to sort out the needs of the schools. It lost some time while getting an estimate from Robert Lee of the cost of his inspecting the schools. As his charge was considered too high, Benjamin Wells agreed at the November meeting to fill the gap in the meantime. His report published in March 1875 makes sad reading.¹⁰⁸ Apart from the New Plymouth and Waitara Schools, there were ten schools in the country districts receiving government aid. One of these, Kent Road, was in abeyance, as the teacher's cottage in which it met was unavailable 'due to family matters'. Of the other nine only one possessed a blackboard. Seven were reported as having no maps. At Lepperton, Wells found nine children present, but only one reading book, a child's first English History. Okato, meeting in the

107. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXII, 10, p. 43.

108. ibid., XXIV, 4, pp. 13-18.

dilapidated blockhouse into which the rain drove in winter, got by on two reading books. At Mangorei, Miss Reeves taught in a borrowed cottage; at Oakura most of the forms the children sat on were borrowed; and Tataraimaka school met in a small borrowed building by the roadside. Mr. Moore, the Oakura teacher, lived in 'a dilapidated hovel ready to fall down'. At only three of the schools did Wells find more than ten children present. Attendances were very irregular, and some children were in the habit of arriving very late or leaving very early. The low morale was also reflected in dirty hands and faces, obscene scribbling on the walls, and rubbish and lumber littering unswept schoolrooms. Probably Wells was overpessimising the schools in reporting their educational state to be 'precisely that of the National and British schools of fifty years ago'.

The board acted vigorously to put new life into the system. The schools were provided with blackboards, reading books, crayons, compasses, bells, clocks, maps, desks, pencils, brooms and other equipment.¹⁰⁹ By August the board could report three schoolhouses built and another two under construction, one teacher's residence built and another begun, and seven schoolhouses repaired. Other schoolhouses had¹¹⁰ been painted and furnished with chimneys. Average daily

109. ibid., p. 70, 'Report of the Education Board'. (Dated 13 August 1875).

110. ibid.

attendances rose from 163 for the quarter September 1874, to 285 for the quarter to June 1875. Some of this would be due to immigration, but most to a new spirit in the schools. The teachers had been encouraged with much higher salaries, a set of 'excellent educational works for self-improvement', rules for the conduct of the schools, and various other indications that someone cared about the work they were doing.

The New Plymouth Education Board was established just early enough to be able to cope effectively with the educational needs of Taranaki's great experiment of the mid-1870s, the planting of a large settlement deep in the bush at Inglewood.¹¹¹ At its meeting of 6 April 1875 the board received a letter from an Inglewood resident asking that a school be opened there, as there were already 12 English children and 15 German and Danish children in the district. The government had intimated that it was prepared to assist in erecting the building. The board decided to call tenders for a schoolhouse and teacher's residence.¹¹² Negotiations with the provincial government resulted in an agreement for the government to erect the residence, while the board erected the school.¹¹³ The project hung fire through no tenders being received. By October, when arrangements had at last been made with a builder, the number of school age

111. To be dealt with in detail in our next chapter.

112. TH, 7 April 1875.

113. ibid., 21 April, 5 May, 1875.

children at Inglewood had risen to over 80.¹¹⁴ By November the board had decided to arrange with the builder to enlarge on the original plan.¹¹⁵ On 10 January 1876 Atkinson, Carrington and Kelly visited Inglewood, and decided that in view of delays with the school building, the government store should be made available till it was ready. Mr. Tobin, who was being transferred from Lepperton, accordingly came and opened the school.¹¹⁶ By 12 February the Herald reported that he had over 50 pupils, while another 20 were attending a private school in the settlement. An anxiety lest immigrants should send bad reports home must have been one of the reasons for the urgency in opening the Inglewood school - and indeed was probably a motivating force behind Taranaki's educational 'revolution'. For the same reason, a teacher was employed to instruct the children while they were in the New Plymouth barracks.¹¹⁷

In December 1875 Wells informed the board that he could not fulfil the duties of inspector any longer. The board was fortunate to obtain the scholarly and public-spirited William Crompton (1811-1886) as inspector early in 1876,¹¹⁸ for a salary of £50 a year. He made his first report on 5 April 1876.¹¹⁹ He was impressed with Mr. Tobin's work at

114. ibid., 9, 20 October 1875.

115. ibid., 4 December 1875.

116. TH, 8, 12 January, 5 February 1876.

117. ibid., 9 October 1875.

118. See J.L. Ewing, Origins of the Primary School Curriculum 1840-78, Wellington, 1960, p. 86, for a useful account of Crompton.

119. Taranaki News, 8 April 1876.

Inglewood, and reported that 'without any of the appliances requisite, such as bell, bookshelves, cupboard, hat-pegs, stationery etc.,' he had 'brought his motley crew of Danes, Germans, English and Irish, of both sexes, into wonderful submission to rules and regulations'. Another recently established bush school, at the older sawmill settlement of Welbourn on the upper Carrington Road, was also being very well conducted, but the house and buildings were in a wretched condition, and would be uninhabitable through the winter. Kent Road and Albert Road Schools, both back in the bush, were doing satisfactory work, though Albert Road seemed 'lost in the bush' and was hampered by very irregular attendance. At the close of 1876 Crompton reminded the board that much still remained to be done. The children at Okato School had only swamp water to drink, and the teachers of the Tataraimaka, Kent Road and Albert Road Schools had neither a desk nor a chair. All the schools required blinds. Crompton himself had sometimes found the heat and glare inside the schoolrooms unbearable.

The Patea Education Board originally consisted of five members and the results of the first election were gazetted on 1 July 1874.¹²⁰ In 1875 the Act was amended to increase the board to seven members. The board elected Captain Wray as its first chairman, and proceeded to use every political

¹²⁰. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXII, 12, p. 46.

advantage it possessed to obtain money from both the Provincial and General governments, and from educational reserves.¹²¹ As the settlers of the district were also prepared to do much to help themselves, it was able to hand over to the Wanganui Education Board in 1878 a school system equal to any in New Zealand.

The board was formed at a time when the district was growing rapidly. The sheep inspector's report for 1874¹²² showed that sheep numbers had doubled within a year, and the districts population increased from 1,613 to 2,988 between the 1874 and 1878 censuses. The board inherited a situation similar to that in North Taranaki. Patea had a school dating from the late 1860s.¹²³ On 20 April 1871, at a social evening, a building committee handed over a new iron schoolhouse, 36ft by 16ft in dimensions to the public of Patea, and a committee chaired by Mr. Hirst assumed the management.¹²⁴ This, the board's only school building when it assumed office, was described in its report of 31 December 1874¹²⁵ as 'an old and worn out building, very much dilapidated and totally unfit for the purpose'. Unless there had been a change of venue since 1871, the school must have been jerry-built. At Hawera the school met in the blockhouse, described as 'close, ill ventilated, and very objectionable

121. Bruce, Taranaki Education, pp. 86-102, outlines the board's financial negotiations.

122. Y, 21 November 1874, p. 3.

123. Bruce, Taranaki Education, pp. 86-7 reports finding no evidence of a school before 1872. But see Y, 8 Jan., 1870, p. 2, report of prize-giving on 1 Jan., 1870 with £12 to £13 subscribed by settlers, & praise for 'our worthy schoolmaster'.

124. Y, 29 April 1871.

125. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXIV, 3, pp. 9-10.

as a schoolroom'.¹²⁶ The only other school was at Waihi (Normanby), taught in a private house. By the end of 1874 the board had schools under erection at the two main settlements, Patea and Hawera, and the secretary was procuring a full supply of 'books, maps, inkstands, etc.' for the schools.¹²⁷ The board had promised a half-time teacher to serve in Manutahi (where there was a blockhouse) and Kakaramea, as soon as the Kakaramea settlers provided a suitable building.¹²⁸ These settlers had started a subscription list for the purpose at a public meeting held in the Kakaramea hotel on 1st September.¹²⁹ The chairman of the meeting, J. Paterson, and H. Williamson, who acted as secretary, were both Presbyterians.¹³⁰ R.E. McRae started the subscription list with two guineas.

In accord with its policy of paying for quality the board decided to secure the services of Robert Lee as inspector.¹³¹ In its report of 1 January 1874, the board recorded that Lee had inspected the schools twice, and examined them, and that it had adapted his system of standards. In his 'Log' Lee reports that he had to light a candle to see to fill in his schedules in the Hawera blockhouse. However the new school

126. *ibid.*

127. Y, 21 November 1874, p. 3.

128. *ibid.*

129. Y, 19 September 1874, p. 2.

130. Their names are given as signatories to the call of the Rev. J. Torry in 1877; These 75 Years, Knox Presbyterian Church, Patea, 1878-1953, Patea, 1953, p. 4.

131. Y, 3 October 1874.

132. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXV, 1.

there, set in five acres of land, was opened by the end of 1875.¹³³ By this date the new Patea school, also with five acres of land, was open and already needed enlarging to serve a growing roll. Teacher's residences had been built at Kakaramea, and at Ketemarae, near Normanby. In both places the board avoided paying rent for a schoolroom by using a room in the teacher's dwelling.¹³⁴

No further public report appears to have been issued until the board's final report to the Minister of Education, dated 26 April 1878.¹³⁵ The board could claim that its district was amply provided with schools designed in accordance with 'the more recent suggestions for school accommodation from the best authorities'. Each school had a master's residence, and ample paddocks and playgrounds had been provided. One wonders how the Board had managed to obtain £3,032 for its schools from the government in 1877, when the New Plymouth Board, serving a population nearly two and a half times as great, was granted only £3,052.¹³⁶ Robert Lee's final report to the board, dated 6 February 1878, commented on the remarkable contrast¹³⁷ between the facilities he had inspected on his first visit and his last. In 1877 he had found 219 children on the rolls, and had examined 202 of them,

133. ibid.

134. ibid.

135. AJHR 1878, H-1, pp. 35-6.

136. ibid., pp. 35, 36. Furthermore, Patea's education reserves were bringing in much more than New Plymouth's.

137. ibid., pp. 60-62.

giving a generally favourable report on their work.

Although a majority of these children would have come from homes in the townships and the farms of the open country along the coast, a growing minority would have been the children of bush settlers, and Ketemarae might be termed the first of the South Taranaki bush schools.

We must conclude this survey of the educational revolution in the Bush Provinces by briefly considering what measurable results it produced, and what their significance was for the future of the region. The results of nineteenth-century elementary education are not easy to measure, but one useful set of objective statistics is that giving the number of persons making their mark instead of signing their name, in the marriage register. Figures are available for England and Wales from 1840, for Scotland from 1855, and for New Zealand from 1873. While we do not know the precise relationship between the capacity to sign one's name, and true literacy,¹³⁸ the figures do at least give us a measure of the schools' success in imparting one skill in the area of literacy. If we call those literate who could sign their names, 80 per cent of bridegrooms in England and Wales, and 90 percent of those in Scotland, were literate in 1870.¹³⁹ For New Zealand the 1873 figure is 97 percent. This dropped to 96 percent in the following two years,¹⁴⁰ which suggests

138. See Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England', pp. 98-9, for a discussion on this point.

139. *ibid.*, p. 120.

140. Throughout this discussion, the N.Z. figures are calculated from the tables in Statistics of N.Z. for the years concerned.

that the new immigrants were (as one would expect from the British figures) less literate than the population they joined. We are concerned here, however, principally with establishing whether the statistics support a rapid improvement in schooling in the mid-1870s. The evidence should appear in the marriage statistics somewhere in the 1880s. During this decade about 30 percent of bridegrooms each year were under 25 years of age, and about 35 percent were 25 to 30 years, with the mode apparently somewhere in the mid-¹⁴¹twenties. If we presume (as a variety of evidence would suggest) that the first generation of boys to benefit substantially from the new educational order in the Bush Provinces were those of 12 years and under at the beginning of 1874, we would expect the first effects to appear as they began to marry in large numbers in the mid 1880s. The statistics show just this. From 1880 to 1885 the percentage of bridegrooms signing with a mark fluctuates near 3 percent, the average being 2.8 percent. In 1886 it drops suddenly to fluctuate at 2 per cent or less to the end of the decade, averaging 1.8 percent. From this point the effects of the 1877 Education Act become apparent, with illiteracy dropping to 1 percent by 1895. These figures, of course, cover the whole colony, but in achieving them it was the progress of the more backward provinces that was crucial.

141. One cannot be more specific, as the tables in Statistics of New Zealand are in 5 year age-groups.

Accepting, then, that this educational advance had a marked, and even a measurable, effect, what can we say of its long-term significance for the bush settlements? Dealing first in speculation, we might well consider that if nothing had been done in these more prosperous years of the mid-1870s, the Bush Provinces could scarcely have made up the leeway in the difficult years of the long depression. It would have been the Bush settlements which suffered most. Yet they had a special need for education to counter problems arising from poverty, the foreign origin of many of the settlers, and the narrowness and isolation of the bush environment. As it was, the new boards were able to cope with the situation sufficiently for the majority of bush children to at least 'learn their letters'. A rising level of literacy must have been one of the factors which enabled the first bush-reared generation to progress beyond the largely subsistence farming of their parents. Without the schools, it would have been much more difficult for them to carry through the great co-operative effort of creating an economy based on the production of quality foodstuffs for a distant market.

MOA BLOCK AND MOUNTAIN ROAD.

Taranaki was the last of the Bush Provinces to gain substantial benefits from the Public Works and Immigration scheme. A comparison of her situation with that of the other two provinces in mid-1874 will make this clear. Both Hawke's Bay and Wellington Provinces could by then look with satisfaction on the well constructed military road, firmly held by a string of new bush colonies, which tied their settled areas together and gave them a security they had not known before. But New Plymouth settlement was still isolated and vulnerable. True the coach was running on a much improved coastal route round Cape Egmont; but the road ran through disputed territory, and far from being effectively garrisoned by well placed white settlements, it was under constant threat from the intransigent Te Whiti, firmly established at Parihaka. The road behind the Mountain, which would have opened new country for settlement, and greatly reduced the strategic significance of Parihaka, had only just had its bush felling completed, and was¹ not yet serviceable even as a stock route. No pioneer settlements of forest-hardy Scandinavians had been planted along its length, and indeed, by 31 May 1874, Taranaki had received only 42 Government immigrants, compared with Hawke's Bay's

1. AJHR 1874, E-3, p. 51.

1,870 and Wellington's 4,407.² A railway had certainly been begun, in August 1873, to link New Plymouth and Waitara. Its construction was contrary to the apparent intention of existing law,³ as it had been the subject of an unfavourable report from the Engineer in Chief. Unless it was extended to open up new country it could neither pay its way nor serve to lessen the settlement's isolation. Clearly progress was lagging in Taranaki. We must first examine the reasons for this, and then see how difficulties were overcome and a strong forward move initiated.

Taranaki's superintendent from 1869 till the abolition of the provinces, was Frederic Alonzo Carrington (1807-1901) who, as chief surveyor of the Plymouth Company, had selected the site of the New Plymouth settlement and carried out the initial surveys. Although he held a seat in parliament from 1870 to 1879, he was no Ormond, able to simultaneously lead his province and hold cabinet office. Herein lay one cause of Taranaki's stagnation - for the rapid progress of both Hawke's Bay and Wellington owed much to an interlocking of provincial and colonial leadership which facilitated a vigorous grappling with their problems. Gisborne certainly held the Egmont seat while Colonial Secretary, but he resigned both the seat and the cabinet post in September 1872, without having struck any great blow for Taranaki. Until mid-1874 Carrington carried the main burden of wrestling with Taranaki's difficulties and endeavouring to enlist colonial aid in tackling them.

2. AJHR 1874, D-6.

3. Railways Act, 1870, Section 12. (NZS, 1870, p. 340).

The main obstacles to Taranaki's progress, as he saw them and put them to the colony's leaders, were the lack of available land, the baneful legacy of the mishandled military settlements of the 1860s, and the lack of a harbour at New Plymouth.

In theory, the land confiscation policy of the 1860s should have provided Taranaki with ample lands for settlement, while deterring further uprisings and defraying the costs of the war. In practice, the policy failed in all respects, and Taranaki would have been better off if it had never been adopted. No land could be taken until 'loyal' natives had been sorted from belligerents, and their claims examined and adjudicated. Furthermore, something had to be done for the rebel natives. In his 'Instructions of 1872'⁴ McLean had tried to come to terms with the realities of the situation by pressing on with confiscation and settlement south of the Waingongoro River, while tacitly abandoning the enforcement of confiscation between the Waingongoro and Stony Rivers for the meantime. Natives who had taken up arms against the whites had already been excluded from the Patea district, and the belligerent temper of the settlers made it unwise for even friendly natives to return. As a result North Taranaki received an influx of refugee natives to complicate its affairs, and this became a cause of friction between the settlers of Patea and New Plymouth. The situation

4. AJHR 1880, G-2, pp. 3-4.

of the New Plymouth settlement was clearly expressed by Carrington in 1871:-

... unless the claim of the aborigines to the confiscated land be extinguished, and the outlawed and unsettled Maoris of this West Coast be provided for by placing them on lands assigned for that particular purpose there will be but little chance of our obtaining, for years to come, the benefits which would otherwise accrue from immigration to this Province.⁵

When two years later McLean enquired whether Taranaki wished to acquire any lands for settlement under the Public Works and Immigration Act, Carrington referred him to this earlier correspondence, and reiterated that Taranaki did wish to have some land and to be able to share in the benefits of the immigration and public works policy.⁶

In the meantime Carrington did what he could to develop the province's existing landed estate, particularly by the construction of roads, to which he gave the constant attention of his professional skill. He considered the culpable failure to provide for roads to serve the military settlements to have been the main cause of their failure. He had protested when the surveys were being carried out in 1865, and he continued to protest at the enduring burden of these largely derelict and roadless settlements once he became superintendent. In opening the Provincial Council in January 1873, he explained how the failure of the government

5. Carrington to Colonial Secretary, 5 April 1871, AJHR 1871, D-3, p. 9.

6. AJHR 1873, D-8, pp. 1-2.

to heed his warning in 1865, and set aside land reserves to finance roading, had brought penury to many of the military settlers, and frustrated the settlement of the country for years. He was able to report that at last some redress was being made. As a result of his waiting on Ministers in September 1872, and pointing out with maps and documents how the mismanagement of the military settlers' land had injured Taranaki, he had won an authorization of £5000 for the main line of road between Omata and Stony River.⁷ He returned to the attack in the House on 6 August 1873, maintaining that in many cases the settlers had been unable to get even a pack-horse to their land, with the result that nineteen out of every twenty of them had left the country, while the land they had been allotted remained to a large extent unoccupied.⁸ The government was able to show that it had already done something to rectify the situation, and that more was planned. Meanwhile Carrington had been doing all he could to open up roads by means of the province's own meagre resources. In April 1873 a newspaper columnist reviewed the progress he had achieved since 1869.⁹ Extensive tracts of country to the south and east of New Plymouth which had not had a vestige of a road when he took office now had good dray roads, with bridges spanning most of the larger streams. In some cases dray roads had opened up country as far as six or eight miles from the former area of

7. Taranaki News, 18 January 1873.

8. NZPD, Vol. 14, pp. 259-260.

9. Taranaki News, 12 April 1873.

settlement. In addressing the electors in October 1873, Carrington claimed that in his four years as superintendent he had been able to make 40 miles of bush roads, and to improve others.¹⁰ The Taranaki electors were doubtless wise to choose a 'roads and bridges' man as their superintendent. The province's heavy rainfall, and the radial pattern of numerous deeply entrenched streams flowing from the mountains to the sea, had provided a long-term hindrance to the development of internal communications.¹¹ Before any major advance inland was undertaken, it was prudent to get a worthwhile grip on the land already occupied.

By the beginning of 1873 Carrington judged that Taranaki's economy was in a sufficiently buoyant state to absorb further labour even without further land being acquired,¹² and he accordingly requested 150 government immigrants. The request was forwarded to the Agent-General in mid-February 1873,¹³ but when Carrington asked the Minister for news of them in the House on 8 August, he replied that he had received no advices respecting them.¹⁴ Taranaki's leaders soon began to realise that even when a strong stream of immigration began to flow into the colony, they could not expect that their province would automatically get its share.

10. Taranaki News, 22 October 1873, Supplement.

11. See Quin, Bush Frontier, North Taranaki, p. 30, on this.

12. AJHR 1873, D-1, p. 47.

13. ibid.,

14. NZPD Vol. 14, p. 334.

For one thing, neither the Agent-General, nor anyone else, could dictate which province an immigrant should go to. Immigrants made their own choice, based on what they had heard about New Zealand, or the presence of friends and relatives there. The advantage went to the larger and better-known provinces, especially those which had been working to recruit immigrants over the years. It was Taranaki's misfortune that where she was known it was largely on account of the Maori threat. Even if immigrants did opt for Taranaki there was still the risk that they would be waylaid before they got there. In the negotiations for the initial contract for bringing out 'Vogel' immigrants, the New Zealand Shipping Company had refused to provide ships to call at New Plymouth's open roadstead. But if immigrants were landed elsewhere, they were liable to be tempted by the offers made there, and would fail to proceed to Taranaki. As Atkinson pointed out in a question to the minister, what Taranaki wanted was direct ships, as the best guarantee against losing its immigrants.¹⁵ In instructions dated 19 November 1873, Featherston was reminded that the contract with the New Zealand Shipping Company had only a short time to run, and asked to arrange as speedily as possible for immigrant ships to call at New Plymouth.¹⁶

15. NZPD, Vol. 14, p. 597, (22 August 1873).

16. Vogel to Featherston, 19 November 1873, AJHR 1875, D-1, p. 13.

Carrington began to feel that Taranaki could not expect to draw immigrants unless she proceeded to construct her harbour, and he accordingly sounded out Vogel in January 1874 as to the possibility of such a work being undertaken as a colonial public work. Vogel could only offer the proceeds of the sale of provincial land, whose purchase from the natives was being negotiated under the Immigration and Public Works Loan Acts.¹⁷

During 1874 the tide began to turn in Taranaki's favour. In opening the provincial council on 16 March, Carrington was able to release the good news that the Moa Block of some 48,470 acres of forest land had been acquired by the general government and was about to be handed over to the province. He had a promise from Vogel that the general government would advance the money needed to survey the land and get it on the market. The Moa Block lay inland of the New Plymouth settlement, along the route of the Mountain Road. Carrington told the council that it was 'of vital importance that this land, the Moa Block and onwards through the forest to Hawera, should be occupied without delay'. He alluded to its strategic position, and declared that it was fallacious to think that a mere line of road would effect their strategic purposes.¹⁸ Yet though he could see that Taranaki's day of opportunity had come, Carrington, now in

17. AJHR 1875, D-5, p. 11.

18. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXII, 4, p. 13.

his late sixties, seemed unable to shoulder the responsibility of shaping and initiating the bold development policies which the situation called for. Finally, in mid-May, he approached Harry Atkinson, whom he had defeated at the polls for the superintendency only the previous October, and asked him to take over the responsibility of provincial administration. Carrington was yet to perform a great service to his province by his dogged persistency in campaigning for the New Plymouth Harbour, but it was Harry Atkinson, in the prime of his powers, who steered Taranaki from her doldrums in the mid-70s.

Since his return from England in mid 1872, Atkinson had been steadily making his way back into provincial and colonial politics. His political career is well treated in Judith Bassett's judicious study,¹⁹ but she barely touches on his role in provincial politics, and gives insufficient weight to the effect of his concern for Taranaki on his involvement in colonial politics. Yet there is a strong parallel between Ormond's joining the Fox cabinet out of concern for the interests of Hawke's Bay, and Atkinson's joining Vogel to further Taranaki's welfare; and Atkinson may well have been influenced by the striking success of Ormond's activities in 1871-2. In September 1872 Atkinson stood against Moorhouse in the bye-election for the Egmont

19. Judith Bassett, Sir Harry Atkinson, M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1966.

seat. While insisting that he stood as an independent, Atkinson advertised that he was 'strongly in favour of a sound system of Public Works and Immigration'.²⁰ On 3 October he was returned with a comfortable majority. No sooner had he taken his seat than Thomas Kelly, member for New Plymouth, who was on the Vogel party's cabinet-making committee, sounded him out regarding a seat in the Waterhouse ministry, which was just being formed. He was probably offered the ministry of Public Works, which Ormond wished to vacate at the end of the session. Atkinson declined, having no confidence in Waterhouse.²¹ He made sure, however, that the house was well aware of Taranaki's needs. On 17 October he moved a motion calling on the Native Minister to take steps immediately after the close of the session 'for the settlement of the Native difficulty on the West Coast, with the view of constructing at the earliest possible period, the Wanganui and Waitara Railway, and the introduction of immigrants into the district'.²² McLean told the house that this was indeed the government's intention, and the motion was agreed to.

In the arena of colonial politics Atkinson had, then, clearly established that he was concerned for a vigorous attack on the colonisation of the bush country behind Mount Egmont. At the provincial level he was not satisfied that Carrington was capable of prosecuting such a policy with the

20. TH, 14 September 1872.

21. H.A. Atkinson to A.S. Atkinson, 11 October 1872, Scholefield (ed.), *Richmond-Atkinson Papers*, II, 329.

22. NZPD, Vol. 13, pp. 770-1.

necessary vigour, and accordingly he stood against him for the superintendency in October 1873. Addressing the New Plymouth electors, he dealt with two 'social points' with which he considered the provincial administration should get to grips.²³ One was the unsatisfactory state of education, the other the division of the province into two distinct parts. He spoke of the great probability of Patea growing in antagonism to the New Plymouth settlement. We have already seen that there were causes of friction in the two areas' differing outlooks on the native question and education. This friction was intensified by a lack of communication between the two districts. The Patea settlers tended to look to Wanganui as their capital, and the Wanganui Weekly Herald was the most widely circulated newspaper in the early 1870s. Yet the Taranaki provincial authorities persisted in restricting the advertising of public matters, including the local concerns of the Patea district, to the Taranaki papers, which very few of the settlers ever saw.²⁴ In the winter of 1872 a separation movement led to a petition being forwarded to parliament, asking that the district between the Waitotara and Waingongoro Rivers be taken from the Taranaki and Wellington Provinces and administered as a county by the general government.²⁵ Parliament took no action,²⁶ but it was obviously a matter with which the member for Egmont should be concerned. Atkinson told the New Plymouth electors that he saw

23. Taranaki News, 15 October 1873.

24. Y, 2 August 1873, p. 4.

25. AJHR 1872, I-1. For the separation movement see Y, 27 April (p.5), 11 May (p.7), 25 May (p.7), 29 June (pp.2,7).

26. AJHR 1872, H-12, pp. 3-4.

the solution as lying in the formation of a chain of settlements along the Mountain Road, which would shortly be handed over to the province. Once the province obtained its landed estate, he proposed that a loan should be obtained to survey it and put in main roads before it was put on the market. Then some of it should be sold to intending settlers in England, some on deferred payment to steady industrious men in the colony, and the rest 'left to the ordinary course of settlement'. Some funds should be reserved so that the settlers could be employed on the district roads during the first two or three years of settlement.²⁷ Obviously Atkinson had worked out in detail a sound scheme for provincial development. Though he failed to win the superintendency, he was returned for the provincial council, where he soon found that he 'had to do all the work as leading the opposition'.²⁸ Carrington's appointment of Atkinson as provincial secretary, 'head of the Government and leader in Council',²⁹ was a logical handing over of provincial administration to the one man who had a clear policy, and the energy, ability and public support necessary for getting it under way.

Atkinson was approached by Carrington to lead the provincial government on Friday 15 May 1874. Overnight he drew up the conditions on which he would accept, and was appointed at midday

27. Taranaki News, 15 October 1873.

28. Scholefield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 376-7.

29. ibid., p. 376.

Saturday. The Council was called for 10a.m. Monday 18 May, and could not be put off as the two Patea members were on the road up. Despite taking office at such short notice, Atkinson began at once to introduce measures designed to open a new day in the province's development. Some of his friends thought that Carrington should have been allowed to break down, as he would now get the credit for Atkinson's work. 'I hate such nonsense as this', Atkinson wrote to his brother. 'There is most important work to be done which I should never have forgiven myself for not doing when I got the chance because some one else might get the credit'.³⁰ Before the week was out the 'Education Ordinance 1874' was in the provincial statute book, to inaugurate a new era in Taranaki education. The new provincial secretary had introduced and carried his 'budget', with generous estimates for education, and for opening up new country. He was able to advise the council that the general government had handed over 110,000 acres of new land to the province. He had not been in office long enough to have worked out all the details for developing this land, but his estimates included a proposed loan of £10,000 from the general government to open up a main line of road through the new blocks. The proposal which he sketched was that this road should be made a chain wide by felling and burning the timber, and sowing in grass. The district roads should be largely left to provide employment for the settlers. Two townships were proposed on the new blocks,

30. ibid.

one inland from New Plymouth, and the other in South Taranaki, inland from Hawera. The sites for these townships should be felled and sown down in grass.³¹ The successful development of this new country, would, of course, depend on the province being able to attract a reasonable flow of immigrants. To bring this about a motion that 'an Immigration Agent be at once appointed to proceed to England' was moved on 23 May by John Andrews, and seconded by Atkinson, who informed the council that a sum had been placed on the estimates for the purpose. Some members suggested delaying until after the promised visit of Mr Holloway, the delegate of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, but the motion was carried. After discussion it was decided that the appointment of the agent should be made as soon as possible.

fortunes. One settler, in a letter to the editor of the Taranaki News,³³ summed up well the qualities the agent should possess. He should be 'thoroughly conversant with the present state and future prospects of the province' and should be 'endowed with intellectual and physical abilities of no mean order, so as to be able to refute the arguments of the jealous squire or parson'. It was no good sending merely a refined gentleman, as he would be petted by the squire, who would be glad to pack off his troublesome and worthless tenants. Only a practical farmer could effectively answer all the questions that would be asked about the land, the climate, and yield of various crops, the best outfit to bring out, and so on. Furthermore, since a man anxious to emigrate was often held back by a wife with numerous objections that she could not explain to a man, it was desirable that the agent be accompanied by a wife prepared to assist him in the work. William Mumford Burton³⁴ (1830-93), whose appointment was announced early in June, met these requirements almost exactly. Burton had had 22 years in Taranaki, farming at Omata for much of this time. He was a good public speaker, and had served for some years as a member of the provincial council.³⁵ He was 'a good Templar and a dissenter',³⁶ and so would be at one with the leaders of the English rural working class. He was to be accompanied by his wife. Although they had no family of their own, the Burtons had adopted and brought up a family of seven orphans.³⁷ Late in June 1874 they

33. 27 May 1874.

34. Taranaki News, 10 June 1874.

35. Scholerfield (ed.) Dictionary of N.Z. Biography, I, 123; TH, 27 June 1874.

36. Hirst Family, 'Letters', Typescript copy of MS, MS 929.2/HIR, Alexander Turnbull Lib. Wgton., Vol 7, p. 5, Grace Hirst to her

were farewelled from New Plymouth at a public soiree, and
 a private party of community leaders.³⁸ The soiree was
 organised by the lodges of Good Templars, and Atkinson spoke
 on behalf of the superintendent, who was unable to be present.
 In his address Atkinson said that the Taranaki settlers had
 been so cramped in the place and for such a length of time,
 that they were gaining a reputation for indolence in the other
 provinces. If they ever expected to be spoken of as other than
 a small fishing village they would have to introduce immigrants.³⁹
 Thus assured of the province's deep interest in their work,
 the Burtons set off on their mission.

Inevitably it would be some time before the efforts of
 Taranaki's own immigration agent bore fruit. Atkinson, anxious
 that the advance into the newly acquired bush blocks should
 begin in the coming summer, pressed Taranaki's claim for some
 of the shipments already on the water. On 9 June 1874 a
 telegram over Carrington's signature was despatched to Vogel -
 'When may we expect immigrants? Public works at standstill.
 Must have immigrants!'.⁴⁰ Vogel replied, offering 100 immigrants

36. sisters, 27 June 1874.

[Contd.]

37. ibid.

38. ibid.

39. TH, 27 June, 1874.

40. AJHR 1875, D-5A, p. 15.

out of the Waikato, which was daily expected in Wellington. Carrington promptly answered accepting them and informing Vogel that 'we will send our agent to be present when they arrive'.⁴¹ Apparently it was Carrington himself, in Wellington for the parliamentary session, who met the Waikato when she made port on 11 July 1874.⁴² He was able to persuade 119 of the immigrants to settle in Taranaki, and they reached New Plymouth by the coastal steamer Luna on 15 July. They were accommodated in the immigration barracks, and by Friday 18 July the townsfolk had a soiree organised to welcome the first party of any importance to come to the province under the 'Vogel' scheme. There was the usual plenitude of food and speeches. With Carrington and Atkinson absent attending the parliamentary session, the main duty of welcoming the newcomers fell to the deputy-superintendent, Arthur Standish. From his address it can be inferred that the English agricultural labourers' unions were responsible for at least some of the immigrants. He suggested that 'in the old country, some of them might have been mixed up with political societies, trade unions &c,'⁴³ but assured them that they had come to a country where the poor man's vote went as far as the rich man's. 'Here', he told them, 'there was no such thing as a landlord to visit them or send a note stating that they must vote for his friend, and intimating what

41. ibid.

42. TH, 22 July 1874, p. 3.

43. ibid.

would follow if they did not do so'. The Taranaki Herald of 3 February 1875 published a letter received by W.K.Hulke, the New Plymouth Immigration Agent, from Alfred Simmons, secretary of the Kentish Agricultural and General Labourers' Union, thanking the residents of Taranaki for the kind reception accorded to the Kentish men on their arrival. The only immigrants this could refer to were the Waikato party. Although they arrived in the depth of winter, when agricultural work was almost at a standstill, most of these immigrants quickly found work with the local settlers. The remainder were employed by the government on bush roads.

The provincial executive had boldly decided to plant the first new settlement deep in the bush, its location being decided by the junction of the road out from New Plymouth via Mangorei, with the Mountain Road. In order to follow the lie of the country, and avoid a multitude of river crossings, the Mountain Road had been brought out of the bush near Lepperton, towards Waitara. Over the years, however, settlements had been pressing through the bush from New Plymouth, and the difficult mountain streams, treacherous when floods poured down their narrow beds, were gradually being spanned. Deepest in the bush was the little settlement of Egmont Village, a ten-acre military settlement township, where a blockhouse had been built in 1866. In the exceptionally wet winter of 1874, the surveyors marked out

the roadline on from Egmont Village to its junction with the recently-felled Mountain Road,⁴⁴ and set up camp where the new settlement of Inglewood was to be established. The site was roughly at the apex of an equilateral triangle with sides 12 miles long, the New Plymouth-Waitara road forming the base, the as yet unformed Mountain Road roughly following the line of one side, and the road creeping inland from New Plymouth via Egmont Village roughly following the third side.

A party of the Waikato immigrants were sent to begin clearing the site of the future township.⁴⁵ E.S. Brookes, who had just come from Auckland to join the Taranaki survey staff, was taken out to the Moa Block with these immigrants, and described the journey in his reminiscences some twenty years later.⁴⁶ The party went out through Bell Block, past homesteads still in ruins from the Maori Wars, until they reached the beginning of the Mountain Road, near Sentry Hill. As Mountain Road was impassable for drays, they unloaded their stores and baggage here. They made swags of as much as they could carry, and left the rest at the home of a military settler, a little way into the bush along Mountain Road. The immigrants made hard work of travelling through the felled bush which represented the road. The party spent the night in a solitary hut belonging to the most

44. Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor, p. 32.

45. W.H. Skinner, 'Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor', MS, Hocken Library, Dunedin, p. 59.

46. Frontier Life, Taranaki, New Zealand, pp. 9-10.

advanced settler inland, 'jammed up like figs in a box'. Next morning they faced the problem of crossing the Waiongona River, which was too deep to ford. They did so by 'Jacob's Ladder', a tree leaning in almost perpendicular position across the river onto a cliff on the other side. Notches had been cut in this tree to form steps, and the heavily-laden immigrants made the climb of some 25 feet with great difficulty. They reached the site of Inglewood late in the afternoon, and spent a bitterly cold night in the tent of Mr Cheal and his survey party, who had come up some days before. Next morning they set to work erecting two large whares in which to live while felling the township site, and making the road out to Sentry Hill passable for drays.

In mid-August 1874 C. Holloway, delegate of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, visited Taranaki. On market day, Saturday afternoon, 15 August, he was visited in his hotel by 20 to 30 settlers and found it 'amusing as well as instructive' to hear from them the struggles and difficulties they had surmounted, to place themselves eventually in comfortable circumstances.⁴⁷ As an example, he recorded in his journal the case of a man named Elliot, who had arrived in the colony one pound in debt, and now not only owned a good farm, but had also placed two or three sons on good farms.⁴⁸

47. C. Holloway, 'Journal of a visit to New Zealand, 1873-1875' typescript, MS 1 919.31/1873-75, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington 2 vols, II, 27.

48. ibid.

Holloway visited all districts of the settlement, including the newly acquired Moa Block. On the site of Inglewood he was able to interview the Waikato immigrants. He was pleased to find that they had been given constant employment since their arrival at 5/- per day 'wet or dry'. The authorities were about to put them on contract work stone breaking and bush felling at generous rates.⁴⁹ Holloway left Taranaki much impressed with its climate, soil, and future prospects.⁵⁰

During his short term of five months as Provincial Secretary of Taranaki, Atkinson succeeded in inaugurating a policy of development and settlement which continued over the following years. An advance of £20,000 was arranged with the general government 'for works in connection with the location of settlers, &c., within the province!'⁵¹ Atkinson did not wait till the vote was through parliament to get this work started. Addressing his parliamentary constituents late in September 1874 he explained that the provincial government had possessed sufficient funds to commence the work and it had been pressed on as rapidly as the labour supply would allow. The forwarding of further parties of immigrants to Taranaki must also have owed something to Atkinson's vigorous administration. On 6 September 1874 a

49. ibid., p. 36.

50. ibid., p. 44.

51. AJHR 1875, D-5, p. 1, for arrangements re appropriations and repayment.

party of 69 European immigrants from the Reichstag reached New Plymouth from Wellington. There were 2 families of Swedes, 7 of Danes and 12 of Germans, and the Taranaki News noted with approval that all the women could milk. On 4 December 1874, 235 immigrants brought out by the Howrah arrived from Wellington.⁵² Coming at a busy time of year,⁵³ they were all quickly engaged, chiefly by country settlers.⁵⁴ The Taranaki Herald of 19 September 1874 credited Atkinson with initiatives which had 'already had the effect of causing the Agent-General to despatch a vessel direct to New Plymouth'. This probably refers to the Howrah, although she did not call at New Plymouth. But the Avalanche which sailed on 22 October was to land immigrants direct at New Plymouth.

On 7 September 1874 Atkinson joined Vogel's cabinet as Secretary for Crown Lands and (from 10 September) Minister of Immigration. The trend of the ministerialists towards accepting the desirability of abolishing the provinces had helped Atkinson to align with them,⁵⁵ the departure of Fox and Waterhouse from the cabinet had made it possible for him to join, and the possibilities of serving Taranaki through the portfolios he was offered doubtless made the proposition attractive. Having accepted office, Atkinson returned to Taranaki and took active measures to ensure that 'the opening up of the country and peopling of it' should proceed unimpeded.⁵⁶ Probably his bush settler's experience is behind the

52. 7 September 1874.

53. TH, 5 December 1874.

54. ibid., 9, 16 December 1874.

55. See Bassett, Sir Harry Atkinson, p. 25.

56. TH, 19 September 1874.

arrangement for the planting of 12 acres of potatoes in an old native clearing near Inglewood, as an aid to the establishment of the immigrants settling there.⁵⁷ He then set off on horseback for the capital, addressing meetings⁵⁸ of his constituents at Hawera and Patea on the way. In his new position he was able to do much to further Taranaki's interests. He encouraged Carrington to push on with loan expenditure to facilitate settlement, including 'the building cottages throughout the province for the immigrants expected to arrive.'⁵⁹ He used his influence to get Taranaki's immigration agent transferred to the Agent-General's staff,⁶⁰ thus saving the province the expense of his salary. When at home in Taranaki he obviously made his advice and⁶¹ encouragement freely available to the provincial government.

The 1875 session of the Taranaki Provincial Council began on 12 January. In his opening speech Carrington reported that the first block of 8000 acres of the recently acquired bush land was ready to be put up for sale. The Inglewood township sections would be offered for sale as soon as the bush clearing could be burnt. Under the Waste Lands Act 1874 one third of the block was to be open for selection on deferred payments, and a Waste Lands Board had been set up to administer affairs. Carrington reported that most of

57. TH, 9 December 1874.

58. *ibid.*

59. Atkinson to Carrington, 15 October 1874, AJHR 1875, D-5, p. 1.

60. *ibid.*, p. 2; IM 1/77/221, National Archives, Wellington.

61. See e.g. TH, 12 January, 5 February, 1876.

the immigrants introduced had been taken up by private employers, and accordingly much of the authorised public works had not been proceeded with due to the dearth of labour. Thomas Kelly, who had replaced Atkinson on the executive council, reviewed progress when introducing his financial statement on 15 January. One hundred and fifty acres had been felled on the site of the new township, and huts were in the course of erection for the accommodation of new settlers. Grass had been sown on the roads. A carrying service had been established to aid the settlers. Every legitimate means would be used to encourage the location of settlers on the new block.

The provincial council had some difficulty in fixing on a name for the new township. For a time it was rumoured that it was to be called Egmont⁶² - in which case little Egmont Village, lost in the bush, would have had to look around for another name. From mid-December 1874 to mid-January 1875 the name of Milton was adopted and freely used in the press and by members of the provincial government. However, there was already a Milton in Otago, so the council had second thoughts. Finally the appropriate name of Inglewood was adopted. To symbolise the importance of the settlement in opening a new era in Taranaki's development, when the council adjourned on 22 January 1875 a majority of its members

62. TH, 9 December 1874, p. 3.

rode out to the new township for a 'christening party'. There they partook of a luncheon which they had brought with them, after which Thomas Kelly, deputising for the superintendent, who was attending to even more important business in New Plymouth, made an appropriate speech, and upon called/Arthur Standish, as secretary of the Waste Lands Board, to perform the ceremony. Standish dashed a bottle of sparkling champagne on the rugged trunk of a lordly pine, and the township was named.⁶³ In subsequent years the anniversary of this day was observed as a holiday in the New Plymouth settlement - another indication of the feeling that the new bush settlement inaugurated a new era in the settlement's history after years of disappointment and frustration.

When the party was over, the majority rode back to town, but the two provincial council members from the Patea district, H.S. Peacock and Felix McGuire, set off to tramp the Mountain Road. The Taranaki Herald of 6 February carried an account of the journey sent in by McGuire. After the christening the two were able to cover a mile or two before the close of day, and reached the survey camp of Mr Bird, where they were given a generous welcome. They must have underestimated the difficulty of the journey, for they set off again at 6a.m. next day without taking any food. They crossed a great number of streams, and came across clearings here and there

63. TH, 27 January 1875.

in the bush where peach, apple and other fruit trees were thriving, though their crops were as yet unripe. They reached the Patea River, at the site of the future township of Stratford, decidedly hungry, and were fortunate enough to find some potatoes at an old encampment. Pressing on, they reached the settlement of Ketemarae late in the day, and went to the hotel for a good feed. They were enthusiastic in their praise of the land they had traversed.

The important business which prevented the superintendent from attending the christening of Inglewood was the arrival that morning of the first immigrant ship to visit New Plymouth for nearly twenty years. This was the Avalanche, which landed nearly 250 immigrants, most of them English agricultural labourers.⁶⁴ A local correspondent writing for the New Zealand Mail⁶⁵ some four months later described the visit of the Avalanche as creating a sensation. The beach was lined with sightseers from early morn until evening. Many of the native-born had not seen a vessel of the Avalanche's size before, and though it was a windy day there was a constant stream of visitors from the shore to the vessel. The province was encouraged by the captain's favourable report on the roadstead. The new arrivals quickly found employment, most of them with settlers. A few⁶⁶ went out to the Moa Block, but it was evident that a

64. TH, 23 January 1875.

65. 3 July, 1875, p. 18.

66. TH, 27, 30 January 1875.

succession of further shipments would be needed if the labour hunger of the older settled districts was to be sufficiently assuaged to leave a surplus available for the rapid development of the Moa Block. Much depended on the success of the mission undertaken by William Burton, to whom we must now turn.

On arrival in London, Burton came to the conclusion that a great deal of spadework would have to be done to make Taranaki known and start a flow of emigration to the province. Earlier lecturing agents from New Zealand had largely either passed over the province as insignificant, or even made disparaging comments, and English local agents, who received so much per head, found it paid better to get emigrants for the well-known provinces.⁶⁷ In consultation with Dr Featherston, Burton decided that his best plan would be to settle in a suitable district where there was a good local agent, and work the area until both he, his wife, and Taranaki, were well known there. He decided on North Lincolnshire, where the local agent of the village of Laceby, four miles inland from Grimsby, had impressed Featherston. This was John H. White,⁶⁸ a local draper and outfitter, a young man of about 30, with a gift for public speaking, which he used as a Wesleyan lay preacher.⁶⁹ He eventually emigrated to New Zealand himself in 1893, and joined the Wesleyan ministry some time afterwards.⁷⁰

67. TH, 2 June 1875. The public interest in Burton's mission led to a good deal of his correspondence being published by the local press.

68. Enclosure with Featherston to Min. for Immig. 23 Feb. 1876, Im 6/4/1-76/548, Nat. Archives, Wellington.

69. H.R. Wright, John B. White & the Coast Mission, Auck. 1960, p. 6.

70. ibid.

He had worked with a Canterbury agent, Duncan, who toured North Lincolnshire in mid 1874, and had accompanied a party of farm labourers and their families to London in September 1874, where they joined a ship for Canterbury. Lincolnshire had some 33,000 male agricultural labourers, and membership of agricultural labourers' unions reached about 12,600 in 1874-5, the majority belonging to the Lincolnshire and Neighbouring Counties Amalgamated Labour League, the strongest of the constituent unions of the Federal Union.⁷¹ Lincolnshire was also one of the most strongly Methodist counties. Laceby, which Burton made his headquarters is shown by a gazetter of the early 1890s to have had, besides its parish church, two Primitive Methodist chapels, a Wesleyan chapel, and a temperance hall, for its 986 inhabitants.⁷²

The mature settler from New Zealand, and the younger English emigration agent, seem to have established a firm friendship, and, with valuable assistance from Mrs Burton, formed an excellent working team. Nevertheless it was some three months before they began to see any real fruit for their work. Those most willing to emigrate had already gone during the disturbances of the preceding two years, and wages had been raised by the farmers, frightened by the exodus. The winter was an unseasonable time both for meetings and for

71. Dunabin, 'Agricultural Trades Unionism in the 1870's', pp. 115, 151.

72. J.H.F. Brabner, Comprehensive Gazetter of England & Wales, 6 Vols, London, n.d., III, 306. (The foreword to Vol I states that population figures are from the 1891 census.)

emigration. But the greatest difficulties stemmed from rural ignorance and poverty, and from the active opposition of the rural ruling classes. Against these obstacles Burton and White campaigned with something of a religious fervour. In nineteen cases out of twenty, Burton reported, chapels and schoolhouses of all denominations were closed against them.⁷³ Sometimes they could get a large room in a public house, though farmers might prevent even this, but where they had asked for a temperance hall, they had never been refused. Often they had no option but the open air, even in freezing winter weather. Having been forced into the open air on one occasion, they asked a wheelwright to move a cart from his shed to give shelter for the speaker and women among the listeners. He dared not grant their request for⁷⁴ fear of the consequences. Similarly labourers often did not dare to attend lest they offend the farmers, squires and parson. But even if they did attend, and began to show an interest in emigration, there were hard battles to be fought before they were finally committed to the venture. Writing from Laceby on 9 March 1875, Burton described the problems in persuading these folk:

Scarcely ever out of the sound of their own church bells, they can hardly realise the existence of any larger place than the village they were born in, even in England;

73. TH, 2 June 1875.

74. ibid.

and very much more difficult is it to make them believe in the existence of another land as large as England. Their perceptive and comprehensive powers are dormant, or move so slowly that it takes line upon line to renew the impression made, and confirm the faith just beginning to be exercised; and when at last, with half-uplifted eyes, they venture to tell the farmer, squire or clergyman that they have made up their minds to go to New Zealand, it takes very little from those whom all their life they have been accustomed to regard as the repositories of learning and truth, to induce them to abandon the idea.⁷⁵

Burton was able to report that he had selected his first party to sail early in April by the Collingwood. Although they would arrive in winter, he was sure they would be taken up, as they were 'real good agricultural labourers'. They might at first have a little of the heaviness of the English peasant, 'having lived in an atmosphere of subserviency, hardly daring to call their names their own, in some cases'.

The Burtons continued to cultivate others who had shown interest, though they reported that it was 'a hand-to-hand fight whether we shall persuade them to go, or the squirearchy intimidate them into stopping where they are'. Meanwhile they worked hard to smooth the path of the first party on whose good reports they were counting for the future. There were many difficulties. The local clergyman at Laceby was refusing to sign certificates of character, and his wife had refused a poor woman who went to ask for some old cast off clothes to help her get enough to go with, and warned her not to believe the agents, or that they had ever been to New

75. ibid.

Zealand. Getting the necessary complement of clothes for the long voyage to New Zealand was a great difficulty for many. Writing nearly a month later Burton reported that he and his wife were 'head over ears in work gathering, guiding, directing, providing for, and getting off' the Collingwood party. Mrs Burton had just gone up to London to provide vans to convey the emigrants from the railway terminus to the depot, and to arrange messes on board ship, so that friends and relatives would be together.⁷⁶ They were a small party of only 92, but they were given a lively send-off at the station when they left London. This was largely due to the close association of the Lincolnshire Labour League with the emigration work - a fact on which Burton's published correspondence is almost silent, but which becomes abundantly clear in a news item on the departure of the Collingwood party reprinted in the Taranaki Herald,⁷⁷ from an English paper. The emigrants are reported as going out under the auspices of the League, accompanied by a delegate of the League. William Banks, general secretary of the League, was at the station to see them off, and was probably responsible for the bands on the men's hats with the words 'New Zealand' in red letters. The item reports rumours of another lock-out 'on account of the wholesale emigration carried on by the League'.

76. ibid.

77. 7 July 1875. See also Y, 12 June 1875, p. 1, for an English report of excitement in Lincolnshire due to meetings held by N.Z. emigration agents sponsored by the Labour League.

The Collingwood was a fine, roomy, well-ventilated ship, carrying less than her full complement of immigrants; the captain was kind and considerate, and the passengers were under the care of a skilful and painstaking surgeon.⁷⁸ She made a good passage, yet there were 20 deaths, 13 of them among the Taranaki party,⁷⁹ caused mainly by scarlatina. Four more deaths occurred during quarantine on Somes Island. Nearly all the Lincolnshire families lost two or three members. According to the immigration commissioners, the surgeon had discovered that one of the Lincolnshire families had had scarlatina in their home shortly before leaving. The Lincolnshire immigrants were all berthed together in the darkest and worst ventilated part of the ship, and complaints had been made concerning their dirty habits, which is not surprising considering the poverty of their background and the epidemic of sickness. On their release from quarantine, the Taranaki party were sent north on the coastal steamer Taupo. She had to bypass New Plymouth and go on to the Manukau, where endeavours were made to prejudice the immigrants against Taranaki and persuade them to stay at Auckland. When the Taupo finally anchored at New Plymouth on 5 August, the Lincolnshire party of 92 had dwindled to 41.⁸⁰ It was a

78. 'Commissioners' Report on Ship "Collingwood"; AJHR 1876,

D-3, p. 8.

79. TH, 17 July 1875.

80. TH, 7 August 1875.

disappointing result for all the Burtons' hard work. The Taranaki folk did their best to compensate the newcomers for their trials. They subscribed generously to a welcome tea, at which addresses were given by the Rev. William Kirk, a veteran Wesleyan Maori Missionary, and a Lincolnshire man, and by a Mr Tapp, one of the Waikato immigrants who told how well he and his shipmates had done in their first twelve months.⁸¹ The Wellington Evening Post scolded Taranaki for petting and coddling its immigrants,⁸² but the policy doubtless helped the Burtons in their recruitment work in due course. One Collingwood couple after a month in Taranaki, wrote an enthusiastic letter home which was later used in an emigration publication.⁸³

The Burtons and John White continued their campaign in association with the Labour League, with increasing success and continuing opposition. Mrs Burton's contribution was invaluable as the womenfolk were usually the hardest to convince, and were generally unable to come to the emigration lectures. Fathers and brothers appealed to her to assist them in persuading wives and daughters, and it was reported that 'many of the best families who have come out would never have done so but for Mrs Burton's influence'.⁸⁴ After a year of campaigning, Burton concluded that among the legion of

81. TH, 24, 28 July, 11 August 1875.

82. TH, 18 August 1875.

83. J.H. White & W.M. Burton, Emigration to N.Z., London, 1876.

84. TH, 28 September 1875.

hindrances to emigration, feminine^{un}/willingness to venture
was the most powerful.⁸⁵ The rural hierarchy also continued
its opposition, both overt and concealed. Some of its
workings can be seen in an account of an evening meeting
in the secluded village of South Ferriby on the bank of the
Humber, written by John White.⁸⁶ He and Burton reached the
place after a 20 mile rail journey and 4 miles on foot. The
meeting had been advertised by the Labour League, and as
no room could be hired, it was of necessity held out of doors,
on the green bank of a retired highway leading from the
village. A chair was brought for the chairman, but the start
of the meeting was delayed for half an hour, as no resident
dared to occupy it. At last there arrived a brave spirit,
locally well-known, for whom the villagers had been waiting,
and he was immediately voted to the chair. The audience,
now numbering about 150, was addressed first by White, then
by Burton. Partway through Burton's address he was roughly
interrupted by a drunken farmer who appeared armed with a
thistle spud, and ordered him to 'move off this ground at
once'. As the audience were squatting on a bank on the side
of the roadway, and the chairman and speakers were on the
other, they were causing no obstruction, so, after exchanging
words with the farmer, Burton resumed his address. The
intruder thereupon laid hands on Burton, and dragged him off

85. TH, 15 December 1875.

86. TH, 11 September 1875.

towards the village. Burton insisted that he be taken to the lock-up, and the man, having got as far as the centre of the village, lost his nerve and plunged into the public house. As a result of the disturbance the crowd had doubled, so Burton seized the opportunity and proceeded to address them. The clergyman of the parish then came forward to speak, and confirmed all that Burton had said, as his only son was in New Zealand. White concluded the meeting by pointing to the rude interruption as an additional inducement to emigrate to a land where the rights of public assembly and freedom of speech were treated with more respect. The sequel to this affair was that the farmer was induced to apologise and pay Burton £2 10s to avoid being taken to court for assault. The money was used to help some needy families emigrate to New Zealand.⁸⁷

The recruitment campaign met with steady opposition from the local press. By the end of 1875 Burton reported that most of the leading provincial papers of the region had 'had a fling' at the New Zealand agents.⁸⁸ One line of attack was to point out the inconsistencies between the accounts Burton and White gave of the land, life and climate of Taranaki, and the accounts sent home by the immigrants who had earlier gone to Canterbury.⁸⁹ In October 1876 Burton was able to turn to advantage an attack by a correspondent

87. TH, 19 February 1876.

88. TH, 15 December 1875.

89. ibid.

writing to Reynold's weekly newspaper to disparage Taranaki. He backed up his personal testimony by quoting from letters he had received from the immigrants he had selected. One man reported making 8s, 10s and even 13s a day at contract work. He and another Lincolnshire immigrant had just bought themselves a quarter of fine beef at 3d a pound. A single young man, after eight months' residence, wrote:-

I am very well pleased I came to New Zealand; I have bought a horse and a cow since I have been here. I have £40 a year and all found - washing and mending, and everything - and my horse runs free of charge on my master's field.⁹⁰

Although they were conscious of the limitations of the printed word among a class which, as a rule, did not read, the agents made judicious use of literature. In 1875 Burton reported distributing 2000 handbills at the Lincolnshire Agricultural Exhibition, and again at the Yorkshire Exhibition, at Driffield, he stood on one side of the road and Mrs Burton on the other, handing bills to all who passed, and taking no time off to see the show.⁹¹ One is reminded of the methods and zeal of contemporary religious evangelism, and indeed such motivation is explicitly expressed in one of John White's letters. He discusses his and Burton's motives, and asserts that they would not stir in the matter if they were not convinced that they were working 'for the good of man, and (I add it reverently) for the glory of God'. In

90. TH, 16 December 1876, reprinting from Reynold's News-paper, 1 October 1876.

91. TH, 13 October 1875.

part the religious emphasis arose from their having to fight on ground stipulated by their opponents. It is clear from Burton and White's joint publication of 1876, Emigration to New Zealand, that a variety of biblical 'arguments' were being used against them. The emigrant was likened to the prodigal son (p.6.), he was evading his Christian duty to his parents (p. 15), and he was failing to obey the injunction to 'be content with such things as ye have'. Drawing on the same authority, the writers were able to build a strong case for emigration. It was a man's christian duty to provide for his family and his own old age, and how could he do this on England's meagre wages (pp. 12, 15). In the new country he would at last be able to give adequately 'to the Lord his portion' (p. 11). It was hinted that the opportunities of the new land were the provision of divine providence (p. 13) making possible an escape from a society that was working on unchristian lines (p. 69).

The zeal and persistence of the campaign bore its fruits. On 3 September 1875 the ship Halcione landed 91 immigrants at New Plymouth, 59 of them from Lincolnshire. Forced to weigh anchor by changing weather, she proceeded to Wellington, from where a further 187 immigrants (138 of them from Lincolnshire) were sent to Taranaki. On 26 September the Chile landed 129 immigrants at New Plymouth, 107 coming from Lincolnshire. In March 1876 the Hurunui reached Wellington

with a shipload for Taranaki, and although some were inveigled to settle in Wellington, 146 came on, including 75 from Lincolnshire. Many of Burton's recruits were not sent to Taranaki, and as he was not, strictly speaking, a provincial agent once he had joined Featherston's staff, there could be no complaint about this. He reported, for example, having 250 emigrants for the Dover Castle⁹² which sailed for Auckland on 27 May 1875. When the New Zealand immigration drive was ordered to slacken, Burton was able to give some time to other tasks. During 1877 he procured partridges, thrushes, blackbirds and goldfinches for the Taranaki Acclimatisation Society.⁹³ Some of these birds travelled with the Burtons when they took passage back to New Zealand in October 1877. Their arrival back in New Plymouth on 6 February 1878 went almost unnoticed amid the excitement of the launching of a campaign by a prominent visiting evangelist and the erection of triumphal arches to woo the new premier, Sir George Grey, due to arrive on the 8th.

Besides the shipments from Britain, the New Plymouth settle~~ment~~ment received several smaller parties of German and Scandinavian immigrants.⁹⁴ A number of immigrants were also

92. TH, 23 June 1875.

93. TH, 18 March 1878.

94. Besides the Reichstag's 69 already mentioned, 70-80 Germans per Lamershagen arrived in July 1875, a further 19 per Shakespeare in February 1876, and another 52 per Fritz Reuter in August 1876. See TH, 17 July 1875, 5 February 1876, 16 August 1876.

sent to Patea, where immigration barracks were opened in 1875. Taranaki received 813 assisted immigrants in the year ending 30 June 1875, and 859 in the following year, making⁹⁵ these two years by far her best under the 'Vogel' scheme.⁹⁶ We must now return to the Moa Block to see what extension of settlement was made possible by this influx.

The arrival of three shipments of immigrants, totalling over 550 souls, between September 1874 and January 1875, enabled the provincial government to build up its working parties on the new block. The newcomers were quite inexperienced at bush work, and they no doubt tried the patience of their supervisors during their first weeks. Following an accident in which a man was killed by a tree being blown down by the wind and falling on a tent, G.F. Robinson, Inspector of Works, Moa District, reported to Carrington, and explained his difficulties. The overseers had to maintain almost ceaseless supervision until the immigrants became experienced. The men were set to work in pairs, each pair if possible far enough away from the others to avoid danger from falling trees. Despite constant warning and careful supervision, the men would persist in cutting the trees in a dangerous manner:

Instead of cutting in their dip straight across the tree, and backing it up in a similar manner, in which case a tree can only fall one of two ways, they will

95. AJHR 1875, D-4, p. 4; 1876, D-5, p. 3.

96. Of Taranaki's 1922 'Vogel' immigrants for the period 1871-78, all but 250 arrived in these two years.

chop all round the tree until there is nothing left but a piece in the centre shaped like a peg top, and then it is impossible to tell, until the tree is actually falling, which way it will go.⁹⁷

Experience and instruction no doubt in time turned many of these men into skilled bushmen, but the Taranaki authorities must have longed for a ship-load of Norwegian foresters. In May 1875 Atkinson is reported to have promised Carrington that as soon as Scandinavian immigrants arrived in Wellington, Taranaki would be supplied with as many as she asked for.⁹⁸ Unfortunately for Taranaki her request had come too late.

The first sale of Moa Block land was held on 20 February 1875, although the government had not been able to get the felled bush burnt by this date.⁹⁹ There was a good demand, and by 24 February 1000 acres had been taken on deferred payment and 716 acres for cash.¹⁰⁰ It was, of course, too late to begin felling for the current year's bush burns. The important tasks facing the authorities were the erection of cottages and the opening of road lines, so that settlers could move in in force to fell bush during the coming winter and spring. Inglewood also had to be stocked and equipped to face the virtual isolation which winter would bring. Over the summer and autumn of 1875 cottages were erected, road lines extended, and good stocks of supplies hauled in - all in the face of a crippling shortage of labour. Speaking at

97. TH, 27 February 1875.

98. TH, 26 May 1875.

99. NZM, 31 July 1875.

100. TH, 24 February 1875.

the Agricultural Society's ploughing match dinner late in May, Kelly, the Provincial Secretary, told how the shortage of surveyors and bushmen was hampering the opening up of the block. The government sent men out to the work, but they had soon found employment amongst farmers back in the older settled districts, and so had rapidly dwindled away.¹⁰¹

Over the winter of 1875 the prospects of rapid advance in the Moa Block improved. While farm work was slack more labour became available for bush felling. Good news from Burton in Lincolnshire gave the assurance of an influx of immigrants in the coming spring. The arrival in New Plymouth on 29 May of Colonel Trimble, 'a gentleman of means and character and Home influence',¹⁰² to explore the prospects of settling in Taranaki, did much to raise the province's spirits. When he decided to stay and take up bush land in the Moa Block, the jubilation of Taranaki caused some amusement elsewhere.¹⁰³

The news that the general government had granted permission for him to take up 2000 acres of Moa Block waste lands was announced in the provincial council on 17 June 1875, and received with applause. Robert Trimble (1824-99) was born and educated in Belfast. In his twenties he spent some years in the United States. Returning to Britain he settled eventually in Liverpool, where he represented a New York trading firm. He was active in the leadership of the local

101. TH, 29 May 1875.

102. NZM, 3 July 1875, p. 18. 'Our Taranaki Letter'.

103. ibid.

branch of the Liberal Party, and became a strong advocate of free trade, secular education and the abolition of the state church. He was also prominent in the volunteer movement, raising and commanding the 15th Lancashire Brigade. During the American Civil War he was a strong supporter of the North, and served as Honorary Secretary to the Liverpool Freedman's Aid Society. In Liverpool he had been regarded as one of the city's 'most useful magistrates', and the city presented him with an illuminated address when he left for New Zealand.¹⁰⁴ Taranaki might well rejoice in her new acquisition. Trimble was to play an invaluable part in the economic, social and political life of the Inglewood district over the next two decades. Among settlers reared in the gentry-dominated communities of the old country, and groping their way towards a new rural order based on democratic processes and economic co-operation, he aptly filled a transitional role. In a measure he was looked to as the local squire,¹⁰⁵ yet because of his strong democratic liberal principles he worked steadily for the maturing of democratic institutions. He was to represent the district in parliament from 1879 to 1887, and serve on a variety of local bodies. His

104. Scholefield (ed.) Dictionary of N.Z. Biography, II, 396. Hinch, General Elections in Taranaki 1879-84, pp. 58-9.

105. See e.g. C.W. Richmond to Emily E. Richmond, 29 Jan., 1878. Scholefield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 443.- Reference to Trimble as 'the great man at Inglewood'. TH, 26 Jan. 1876. Editorial reference to Trimble as Inglewood's 'representative and head'. NZPD, Vol 40 p. 122 (25 August 1881). Trimble's reference to himself as the accepted unofficial local arbitrator in fencing disputes.

choice of Taranaki may have been influenced by William Burton, who was in communication with him just before he¹⁰⁶ left England.

Trimble's son, Alfred, has given us an interesting description of Inglewood as he first saw it at the end of¹⁰⁷ March 1875. The Junction Road from New Plymouth via Egmont Village was not opened till a month later, when the bridges were finished, so traffic was still dependent on the Mountain Road. The township site 'was just an ordinary bush clearing; black and ugly; with a muddy track cutting it from North to South'. The frame of Langley Bros.' Inglewood Hotel was being erected. Early in the year the Waste Lands Board had given permission for 10,000 feet of timber for this building to be cut from the township site, in return for a¹⁰⁸ small payment. Apart from cottages, the only complete building when the Trimbles arrived was the Government store,¹⁰⁹ an iron structure of about 15 feet by 10 feet. Colonel Trimble's special settlement block of 2000 acres was being surveyed by October 1875, inland from Inglewood along the¹¹⁰ Mountain Road towards Tariki, and the survey was completed¹¹¹ by March 1876. In the meantime Trimble had bought a small area of the land already on the market, and begun operations. On 26 June he began running an advertisement for bush felling tenders in the Taranaki Herald.

106. TH, 3 April 1875.

107. A. Trimble, 'A few notes on the Early History of Inglewood' Typescript MS. Papers, 164/6, Alex. Turnbull Lib. Wgton.

108. TH, 7 Apr. 1875. (Decision of meetings of the board from 5 January 1875, to date).

109. A. Trimble, *op.cit.*

110. TH, 13 October 1875.

111. TH, 22 March 1876.

Trimble's first land purchase was part of 4000 acres of Moa Block land put up for sale towards the end of June. All the deferred payment land was taken up, there being over 50¹¹² applicants for 28 sections, but cash land went more slowly. In mid-October Thomas Kelly told the House of Representatives¹¹³ how the settlement was working out. Of the two-thirds of the land which was offered for cash sale, about half was being taken up within a month of being put on the market. The cash buyers were largely employing the deferred payment buyers. About half the land was being sold to immigrants and the other half to old settlers. The Taranaki correspond-¹¹⁴ent of the New Zealand Mail reported that a number of Wellington working class men were among the purchasers. He also reported that the first batch of German immigrants to take land on the block were highly spoken of, and had made considerable progress in getting land ready for settlement. These would be the Reishstag's immigrants, who moved out to the Moa Block early in February 1875, and erected log huts¹¹⁵ for themselves. The arrival of the first three shipments of Burton's immigrants, and the Lamershagen's Germans, in the slack season of winter and early spring 1875, caused a rapid growth of Inglewood's population and labour supply. The settlement's population doubled from 300 to 600 between the

112. TH, 30 June 1875; NZM, 31 July 1875, p. 17.

113. NZPD, Vol. 19, pp. 470-1, (15 October 1875).

114. 31 July 1875, p. 17.

115. TH, 13 February 1875.

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end of June and mid-October. By this time the roads had deteriorated badly, and goods could only be taken in by pack horse.¹¹⁷ However, this did not deter the government from taking advantage of the improved labour supply to prepare for settlement even further inland. Twenty men were sent to clear the 100 acre site of the village of Waipuku, 8 miles inland of Inglewood along the Mountain Road.¹¹⁸ Twenty-seven families of recently arrived immigrants had been given squatting leases at Inglewood.

On 24 January 1876 Inglewood's first anniversary was celebrated with sports held on its main street, the only available clear open space. The visitors who crowded the township could not but be impressed with what had been accomplished since the axe had been laid to the forest trees 18 months previously. True thousands of loads of firewood encumbered the ground, 'so that no fuel will be required by the inhabitants in the coming years'.¹¹⁹ But cottages were standing all over the site, many with good vegetable gardens, and the enterprising Germans had taught their cows to eat Scotch thistle, of which there was a bumper crop. There were several shops, one of which boasted large plate-glass windows, as well as Mr Langley's two-storeyed hotel, and the Government store, which had a reading room with a good supply of English and colonial newspapers.¹²⁰ In a new building,

116. TH, 23 June, 20 October, 1875.

117. TH, 16 October 1875.

118. TH, 20 October 1875.

119. TH, 22 Jan., 1876. (Description by F.U. Gledhill).

120. TH, 26 January 1876.

intended for a bake house, Colonel Trimble chaired a dinner for over 40 provincial dignitaries, followed by the usual round of speeches. In his address Carrington estimated that there were now 700 to 800 people settled on the block.

There had been progress too on the Mountain Road. Towards the end of January 1876 two mobs of sheep set out from the Patea district for Waitara via the Mountain Road one numbering 750, the other 600.¹²¹ The drovers, Messrs Bayly and Hawken, took a tedious eight days on the journey. They had trouble with the Maoris shortly after setting out, and had to pay a toll before they were allowed to pass. The worst part of the road was between the future site of Stratford and Inglewood, due mainly to Scotch thistle and brushwood, fully six feet high, also some difficult fords. On reaching Inglewood they found they were 105 sheep short, but they scouted back and found 85 of these. Although these two drovers were critical of the road, others who followed praised it as preferable to the long route round the coast. Towards the end of March an Inglewood newspaper correspondent reported that the Mountain Road was becoming the great high road both for travellers and for stock. Mobs both of cattle and sheep were coming through, and the drovers were pleased with the shortness of the route and the abundance of feed everywhere.¹²² It was important that the stock get through in good condition,

121. TH, 9 February 1876.

122. TH, 22 March 1876. See also issue of 25 March 1876 for a detailed description by a drover who has used the route several times.

as they were to be shipped from Waitara to the Auckland meat market.

No doubt the Moa Block settlers looked with some envy on these products of the lush Patea pastures, and longed for the day when similar beasts would begin to move to market from their bush clearings. Hundreds of acres had been felled by the small army of bushmen, and as summer passed they waited anxiously for good burning weather. They met with disappointment. The late summer and autumn of 1876 passed without a spell of dry weather, and the bush burns were, in general, failures.¹²³ An Inglewood correspondent¹²⁴ of the Taranaki Herald encouraged newcomers to go ahead with grass sowing, even where the fire had failed to take. He assured them that if they used plenty of good seed, and stocked the land well with cattle, by the end of the fourth year 'no one would be able to tell whether your burn was a good one or a bad one'. They would, he warned, have more trouble with second growth, more work in getting rid of the timber, and more expense for grass seed, but this should not discourage them from pressing on with sowing down their pastures. This same correspondent reported in encouraging terms on the progress and prospects of the immigrants who had arrived in the province a year to 18 months earlier.¹²⁵ Most of the Avalanche immigrants had arrived with scarcely a shilling in their pockets, yet a year later many of them had land, cows and horses of their own. If they had stayed

^{123.} TH, 26 February, 11 & 25 March 1876.

^{124.} 25 March 1876.

^{125.} TH, 11 March 1876.

in England, he asked, what prospect would the majority have had to look forward to in their old age, but the workhouse? He reported a conversation he had heard between a Waikato immigrant and his messmates. 'What shall we have mates - 1 lb of butter or 3 lbs of beef?' (Butter was 1s per lb and beef 4d). 'Oh, let's have the beef', was the reply, 'it's little enough of it we got at home.'

The population of the district was still heavily concentrated on Inglewood, with settlers, parties of bush fellers, and surveyors, going out to bush camps to work, and returning to the township for rest and recreation. With most of the women and children still in the township, it probably reached something of a peak of population during 1876, then declined as families began to move out to their first rough homesteads after the winter. Weekends in Inglewood must have been lively over this period, as the bush parties came in to collect their earnings and make up for the privations of camp life. One Sunday morning in May 1876 is vividly described in the Taranaki Herald.¹²⁶ A boar had been caught in the bush, brought into the centre of the town, and tied by the leg to a stump, for the benefit of 'lovers of the good old English sport of boar baiting'. While the devout gathered in the two Methodist chapels, some 20 or 30 men and boys, and a small army of dogs, gathered around the boar.

126. 31 May 1876.

From the chapels arose prayers and hymns, from the boar baiting company shouts, curses, yelps and barks. The newspaper's correspondent expressed his disapproval of this medley of sounds, and took his stand on the side of the devout.

Other glimpses of Inglewood at this~~same~~ period are given in a letter by Robert Trimble, dated 2 June 1876, and published in the Liverpool Daily Post.¹²⁷ Trimble was concerned at the number of useless persons who turned up to see him from England, with letters of introduction and a quite false idea of colonial life, so he endeavoured to get across something of the reality of the pioneering experience. He described a working day of mid-May 1876, just as it had occurred, remarking that there was nothing exceptional about it except that a stranger called:-

Up at seven; lighted fire, cooked breakfast; washed up the tea-things; out with spade, shovel, axe, and mattock, to level the road into my little enclosure at Inglewood. I was dressed simply; namely, trousers, boots, and shirt; the trousers in rags, torn by stumps, and worn thin by long service. With perspiration streaming from every pore, I worked till one o'clock. I then went into the village, and got two pounds of mutton chops, and a pound of butter. On my return I cooked a couple of chops and fried some potatoes; just as I was finishing there was a knock at the door. On opening it, I saw a well dressed person; "Does Colonel Trimble live here?" "Yes." "Can I see him?" "Yes" A pause. "Is he in?" "Oh yes." A long pause. "Are you he?" "Yes." "Ah, I thought he was quite a different person".

The stranger then handed over a letter of introduction, and was invited to share the chops. At this point Trimble's oldest son arrived, hungry and tired, and covered with mud,

127. Typescript copy, Hocken Library, Dunedin. Scrapbook - F & J 11/132, Vol II.

having walked from New Plymouth, followed shortly by the second son, equally muddy. Dinner over, Trimble and one of his sons set to work, levelling, and taking out stumps, while the other son worked at building a small out-house. They worked till dark, while the visitor looked on 'in an amazed sort of way'. They then had tea, washed up, read a little, and went to bed 'tired, but not dissatisfied'. The picture Trimble presented to his 'young cotton-broking friends', was of a life of hard work and monotony, whose satisfaction came from a sense of achievement in overcoming obstacles, and winning new land for civilization.

As almost every letter of enquiry he received had a query about the amusements of Taranaki, Trimble proceeded to give an equally down-to-earth account of these. New Plymouth had recently had a visit by Barlow's Circus', consisting of 'Mr Barlow, a clown, a little boy, three dogs, a monkey, and a wheezy barrel organ' - but it was seldom that the place had anything so pretentious as this. In Inglewood they had only had 'Entertainments' consisting of singing and recitations. Having presided at the first such gathering of the current season, Trimble was able to describe the occasion. The place was lit by about a dozen candles, held in place by drops of grease, and the proceeds of the concert were to go to the purchase of lamps. Rising to open proceedings, he had not even said 'Ladies and Gentlemen' when the two candles

stuck to the little table from which he presided fell over, to the great amusement of the meeting, 'for you see very little amuses us in this wild region'. The programme stated that there would be instrumental music in the interval. This was provided by the township's only instrument, a banjo, owned by a sawyer. This worthy invited the audience to join in the chorus of the ditty he played - but to his great mortification the screws of his banjo kept loosening, and he never reached the chorus.

As the winter of 1876 drew on, meetings with a more serious purpose were called together. On Saturday evening, 8 July, Colonel Trimble chaired a gathering in the school-room.¹²⁸ The first part of the proceedings consisted of an address by William Carter, late of Withern, Lincolnshire, an immigrant by the Chile, which reviewed the experience of the Lincolnshire immigrants, and defended William Burton against accusations that he had misrepresented conditions in the province. A resolution expressing the satisfaction of the Lincolnshire immigrants with Burton's account of the place was moved by Carter, seconded by Mr King, 'late of Great Grimsby', and carried with only one dissident. It seems very probable that Carter had been an official of the Lincolnshire Labour League, as he reported having spent much

128. TH, 26 July 1876.

time in Burton's company, and claimed to have attended all¹²⁹ Burton's meetings held in his district. With Carter's motion thus disposed of, the meeting proceeded to discuss a matter introduced by Trimble. This was a memorial which householders were asked to sign, requesting that a corporation be set up to deal with the township's affairs. The streets were reported to be in 'a dreadfully muddy condition', and the meeting expressed a strong determination to see the place improved. The district had to wait some time before its request was met. The Moa Road Board was appointed in 1878, but it was nearly ten years before a Town District was created.

It was Trimble also who took the lead in a matter of even greater urgency. When the first land in the Moa Block had been put up for sale in February 1875, the advertisements had stated that the railway to Inglewood would be completed in about 18 months. When this period elapsed in July 1876, the railway was nowhere near the township, and the work was proceeding at an extremely slow pace, yet the implied promise continued to be published in government advertisements of Moa Block land. With the increased population of the district, the roads were being cut into quagmires as the winter of 1876 deepened. Once again, goods could be got¹³⁰ into Inglewood only by pack-horse, and the cost of carriage

129. It seems likely that agricultural labourers' union officials who emigrated to New Zealand may have played an important part in the colony's social and political life. This is one of several points on which English sources would repay study.

130. TH, 30 September 1876.

rose to £7 per ton.¹³¹ The flow of stock over the Mountain Road from the Patea district came to a halt.¹³² It was obvious that the district could not prosper under these conditions. Trimble therefore began a campaign to put the needs of the district before the public and the government. In a letter dated 28 July 1876 he pressed for a steady opening up of the country along the Mountain Road, by means of a policy of reasonably cheap land, and the development of roads. He restated the case for the strategic value of population along this route:

This increase of population would bring absolute security to one of the most dubious districts of the Colony. This is a point that for prudential reasons one cannot adequately enlarge upon; but I venture to affirm that there is no one who has in the least studied the history of military art, that will not be struck at a glance at the map with the enormous strategic advantage of a thickly-inhabited line of settlements extending from Inglewood to Hawera.¹³³

Trimble followed this letter up with another dated 31 July,¹³⁴ in which he explained that it was impossible for the settlers on the Moa Block to prosper without adequate communications, and reviewed the disappointing performance of the government in making roads and advancing the railway. On 5 August Trimble chaired a 'large and enthusiastic' meeting in the Inglewood school-house, at which resolutions were passed

131. NZPD, Vol. 23, p. 677.

132. TH, 30 September 1876.

133. TH, 29 July 1876.

134. TH, 2 August 1876.

urging the government to press on with the railway, and to get the road 'made good in every respect' to Hawera.

Public meetings at New Plymouth and Waitara took up the cause. At New Plymouth the meeting was convened by the superintendent and chaired by Archdeacon Govett. Inglewood was represented among the speakers by Colonel Trimble and William Carter. W. Courtney, a New Plymouth stock and land agent, told the meeting that the province had lost many good settlers through the state of the roads. Some miner friends of his had come from the West Coast to settle - one with £1,500 and another with £3,500 - but had left in disgust on seeing the access to the land.¹³⁵ At the Waitara meeting concern was expressed that no more cattle could be brought through the Mountain Road till the summer, with the result that stock shipments through the river port had fallen away. Captain McGillivray of the s.s. Go-Ahead said that he preferred shipping the stock from Waitara, rather than from Wanganui, as he did not have Cape Egmont to contend with, and the stock were landed in better condition.¹³⁶ With Thomas Kelly raising the question of the Sentry Hill to Inglewood railway in the House,¹³⁷ and with Atkinson watching the province's concerns from the premiership, which he assumed on 1 September 1876, the Moa Block were well served. Early in December Thomas Kelly was able to inform his New Plymouth

135. TH, 30 September 1876.

136. ibid.

137. NZPD, Vol. 23, p. 677.

138. TH, 6 December 1876.

electors that he had Atkinson's assurance that the line to Inglewood would be opened by 1 July 1877. To make this possible, arrangements had to be made with the contractors to complete their work some months ahead of time.¹³⁸ It was well for Inglewood that she had a friend in high places, for by the spring of 1876 her men were beginning to complain of scarcity of work and her shopkeepers lament about doubtful debts and long credit.¹³⁹

Atkinson's proposal of May 1874 for two new townships in the bush, one inland from New Plymouth, the other from Hawera, had been narrowed to the one new township of Inglewood, still rather uncertain in its prospects. At the end of 1876 there were still no plans for an assault on the bush from the south, and the second village site surveyed and¹⁴⁰ cleared inland from Inglewood at Waipuku remained unoccupied. The Mountain Road had proved to be no more than a summer stock route, and there were no immediate plans to upgrade it. The Taranaki bush was not proving easy to subdue. Yet there were signs that augured well for a renewal of the assault with increased vigour. In the Patea district the open country had filled up, and, with the Waimate Plains still closed to settlement, pressure was beginning to build up for the development of bush land. Inland from Hawera there was¹⁴¹ the growing sawmill settlement of Normanby, developing on

139. TH, 28 October 1876.

140. TH, 12 January 1878.

141. Y, 8 January 1876, p. 9; 11 March 1876, p. 2., have accounts of its progress.

a site surveyed as a military township settlement in 1866. The sawmill hands were saving from their wages with the view to becoming landholders.¹⁴² Inland from Kakaramea, between Hawera and Patea, the government had put a block of bush land up for sale in October 1876, and had found eager takers.¹⁴³ Further south near Waverley, settlers pushing inland to the bush country beyond the Kohi Gorge were well enough established to begin memorialising for a school. They had 25 children of school age, and plenty more coming on.¹⁴⁴ These Patea developments represented two forms of economic pressure for development along the Mountain Road - the pressure of the growing number of established settlers for an improved outlet to the Auckland market, and the pressure of land-hungry working men for bush sections. The railway nearing Inglewood from the north held promise of yet another economic pressure - the possibilities of a flourishing sawmill industry. Yet the rate of progress still remained heavily dependent on general government finance. And this meant that the activities of the dissident Te Whiti at Parihaka were an important element in the equation of provincial progress.

142. In 1877 they formed a Small Farm Association. This will be dealt with in chapter 8 below.

143. For an interesting contemporary account of the development of this block see Robert Petch Papers, 1876-1882, MS/Papers/252, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

144. Y, 12 February 1876, p. 3.

CHAPTER 8

POLITICS AND SOCIAL CLASS, 1877-1880.

The political leaders of the Bush Provinces played a leading part in shaping the colonial policies of the early 1870s and, as we have seen, were thereby able to see that the interests of their own region were well served. In the later 1870s the Bush Provinces lost their favoured position in colonial councils, and their progress was therefore much more at the mercy of policies shaped to serve interests in other parts of the country. The favoured treatment the Bush Provinces had earlier received was now even held against them by some Auckland and South Island politicians, conveniently forgetting the reasons for the priority in scoring points for their own areas. Thus Auckland politicians began to taunt Taranaki as the colony's 'little Benjamin'¹ on account of the favoured treatment it had received, and one of them in maintaining in the House that his province's share of public expenditure could not compare with that of the other three North Island provinces, claimed that Hawke's Bay and Taranaki had managed to get 'several lion's shares' by always managing to have one² of their representatives in power to see to their interests. In the late 1870s not only did the problems of the Bush Provinces cease to figure as one of the central concerns of

1. NZPD, Vol. 25, p. 613.

2. ibid.

colonial politics, but colonial affairs in general lost any clear sense of direction. Many old issues had been disposed of with the passing of the Maori threat and the abolition of the provinces, but such new issues as were being raised seemed to be bringing confusion rather than clarity into party alignments and public affairs. Yet, now that the colonial parliament no longer shared its authority with the provinces, colonial politics were more crucial than ever in shaping the fortunes of Bush settlement, and we therefore cannot afford to ignore them.

In brief outline, the period 1877-1880 saw a two-year break in the 'continuous ministry', from October 1877 to October 1879, when the Grey ministry was in power. Before it fell in 1877, the 'continuous ministry' had been led by Atkinson, who had taken over the premiership to free Vogel to become Agent-General in London. Atkinson's ministry had done much good work in tackling the legislative changes made necessary by the abolition of the provinces. Grey had entered parliamentary politics to defend the provincial system, but on succeeding to the premiership in 1877, he accepted the fact of abolition and endeavoured to construct a consistent policy based on radicalism and reform. To this end he toured the country, drawing large crowds to hear his eloquent advocacy of manhood suffrage and the breaking up of large estates. Finally his ministry fell to an attack led

by Fox, and following a dissolution the 'continuous ministry' was able to re-establish itself under Hall's leadership. Until the late 1950s William Pember Reeves's interpretation of this period of New Zealand history³ stood virtually unchallenged. Reeves saw the period 1870-1890 as dominated by a conservative oligarchy, under the control of wealthy-runholders, with ministries drawn from a small group of men, reshuffled from time to time under differing leaders, but forming essentially a 'continuous ministry'. Their supremacy was broken only twice in this twenty years by the 'liberal' ministries of Grey (1877-9) and Stout (1884-7), but they finally went down before the great 'liberal' triumph of 1890. This interpretation has come under attack since the late 1950s and we are now aware that, despite a measure of truth, it has serious inadequacies. The alternative approaches offered explore new facets of what was obviously a complex political situation. Individually the various studies each explore a limited front, but together they indicate many of the elements which must be considered for any adequate new synthesis of the political history of the period. To turn to a full-scale examination of these colonial issues would represent a digression as far as this present study is concerned. Nevertheless, the colonial context of Bush Province development must be briefly sketched in, and this

3. As developed in his The Long White Cloud, London, 1898.

will necessarily involve a certain definition of position on some of the matters under debate, and the adoption of something of an interim 'working synthesis'.

The first important attack on Reeves's interpretation was made by E. Bohan⁴ in 1958. By a close study of the candidates for the Canterbury seats in the 1879 election, and of the election campaign, Bohan set out to refute what he termed the 'Liberal Myth'. His claim is that the terms 'liberal', 'conservative', and 'oligarch' were adopted by Grey's party to create the appearance of a division of parties on 'liberal principles' when no such division in fact existed. A.M. Evans, writing in 1959, and basing his discussion mainly on the 1881 general election carried the discussion further. He found the dominant feature of this period to be localism, to which personal and provincial influences were subordinated, and pointed to the issue of whether development should proceed rapidly or more steadily and cautiously as the only one which divided the House effectively into parties. However, most members were independent of party, and the decision as to which party formed the government was dependent on their ability to gain^{the} support of these independent members. W.R. Armstrong accepted this party division based on 'rapid' versus 'cautious'

4. E. Bohan, The General Election of 1879 in Canterbury, M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1958.

5. A.M. Evans, A Study of Canterbury Politics in the early 1880s with Special Reference to the General Election of 1881, M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1959.

development for his The Politics of Development, and examined the period of 1870 to 1890 in the light of it. Studies by G.F. Thompson,⁷ and D.W. Hinch⁸ develop and apply these interpretations further. Meanwhile D.A. Hamer has thrown much light on the two 'liberal' intermissions in the 'continuous ministry's' reign by showing how deeply key members of these cabinets were personally involved in the speculative land affairs of the New Zealand Agricultural Company and the Waimea Plains Railway Company, and how colonial politics were thereby subordinated to private interests.⁹

While readily granting that these various studies all throw a measure of light on the period, it is here suggested that a further important source of much of the confusion evident in the political creeds and positions of the 1870s and 1880s was the persistence of class feeling and associated political thought which had been shaped by the British background and was, at the most, only partially relevant to the realities of the New Zealand scene. New Zealand's population almost doubled in the 1870s, with a corresponding growth in the electorate. Many of the new voters owed their presence to the class conflict of rural England. The growing

6. W.R. Armstrong, The Politics of Development: A Study of the Structure of Politics from 1870 to 1890, M.A. thesis, Vict., University of Wellington, 1960.
7. G.F. Thompson, The Politics of Retrenchment: The Origins and some Aspects of the Politics of the Hall Ministry, 1879-82, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1967.
8. D.W. Hinch, General Elections in Taranaki 1879-84, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1968.
9. D.A. Hamer, 'The Agricultural Company & New Zealand Politics, 1877-86' Historical Studies: Australia & New Zealand, x, 38 (May 1962), pp. 141-164.

colonial-born population was itself unsettled by a period of rapid change, and by the political and social ideas reaching it from the homeland. Many New Zealand politicians of the period give the impression of having been frustrated by an inability to get the 'feel' of their electorates. For all its crude over-simplification, Reeves' 'class' interpretations of the period's politics may be nearer to the heart of the matter than some of his critics allow. An examination of election platforms and speeches will not necessarily give us all the answers, for politicians may well have been evading issues on which both they and the electorate were confused.

The obvious (though not necessarily correct) inference which a politician of the mid and late 1870s might have been expected to draw from the influx of immigrants as a result of the English 'Revolt of the Field' was that his electorate had ^{much} become/more radical and liberal. Grey, with his deep feeling for the Irish peasantry, could scarcely have failed to be aware of the forces behind the English rural emigration of the 1870s, and this may well have been a factor in his decision to stump the country in the cause of the advance of democracy. The enthusiastic crowds flocking to hear him were an object lesson for any politician who had failed to read the signs of the times for himself. It is clear that

many politicians were embarrassed by Grey's raising of class issues, but it is not surprising that they should have responded by vying with one another in fervent (though often vague) claims to liberalism. That many were less than sincere is clear from Hamer's researches into the motivation of members of Grey's own cabinet. But all were aware that class and democracy were live current issues, and that they had to be taken into account, whatever one's political objectives. Both for an understanding of contemporary politics, and as a general background to the social development of the Bush settlements, a closer look at class distinction in New Zealand of the 1870s and early 1880s is necessary. This will have the further advantage of enabling us to introduce important aspects of the political thought of Rolleston, Atkinson and Ballance, each of whom played a part in shaping policies which vitally affected the progress of the Bush settlements.

In examining class consciousness in colonial New Zealand, it will be wise to emphasise first the forces which were working against it. This will enable us to keep the subject in perspective, and also to understand the contradictory nature of contemporary comments on the subject. It is clear that in various ways colonial life worked to 'even out' the differences on which class distinction depends. Thus working-class immigrants quickly lost their downtrodden and

subservient attitudes as they tasted the freer social atmosphere of the colony, and experienced its enlarged economic opportunities. In a parliamentary speech in 1873, William Fitzherbert warned against too fastidious an approach to the selection of immigrants, stating that in his experience some of the country's very best settlers had on arrival seemed the most unlikely persons to succeed. He remarked that:

Many persons, in coming to a new country from an old country where they could barely live - coming to a country where they could get an abundance of the most nutritious food, and holding a position not of servitude but absolute freedom, as they were their own masters - such circumstances produced in them such an entire change, both physically and morally, that, so far from being the most unlikely persons to succeed, they became some of the most successful settlers.¹⁰

In this physical, moral and social 'evening up', many continental immigrants had much less leeway to make up than their British equivalents, on whom they must often have had an uplifting effect. When a correspondent of the Hawke's Bay Herald, travelling in company with Henry Hill, Hawke's Bay's school inspector, arrived one evening in 1879 at Kopua on the northern edge of the Seventy Mile Bush, they were waited¹¹ on at the inn by a lively German servant girl. She was bright-faced, rosy-cheeked, brimming over with laughter, and neat in person and dress. The correspondent explains that

¹⁰. NZPD, Vol. 15, p. 1500.

¹¹. Hawke's Bay Herald, 7 October, 1879.

she was 'fresh from the wilds and woods, and had not yet been inoculated with English manners and customs'. He seems to have been both surprised and charmed that after attending to the wants of her two distinguished guests, she should have drawn a chair up to the cheerful log fire, and joined in their conversation. This delightful lack of class consciousness was not unlike the attitude of many old colonials of British working class origin. A writer in the Taranaki Herald (6 January 1875) comments on the puzzlement of a newly arrived working class couple. They found it strange to receive such kindness from everybody 'as if we had been known to them all their lives'. They 'couldn't help feeling at home', though they 'couldn't understand it'. The writer explains that the secret was that the really well-dressed people who greeted them so warmly and made them so welcome were but their equals in station, well-to-do self-made people, who had commenced life as impoverished labourers. He informs such newcomers that, unlike 'the dear old village you have left' there were few in the new country who would expect them to pay homage by touching their hats, but warns them not fall into the error of celebrating their newfound freedom by strutting round like raucous peacocks in gayer garments than the old country would permit them.

Life in Taranaki in the 1870s made it comparatively easy to look upon New Zealand as the land of the common man.

Colonel Trimble, speaking in the House on 1 October 1879, repudiated Grey's idea that a new aristocracy was establishing itself in the colony. He pointed out that English aristocracy was an institution with roots in history, founded upon the right of conquest. But New Zealand society had come into existence on a new basis, in an enlightened age, and had been established from the common people in the Home Country. Atkinson expressed a similar point of view. He disliked the use of the term 'landowners' in New Zealand, if it was intended in the sense in which the term was understood in old countries. 'The body of us are small farmers', he maintained, and suggested the terms 'agriculturalist' and 'yeoman farmer' as being appropriate for the majority of New Zealand landholders. As a successful working settler, Atkinson was an acceptable leader in his own province, and he also had a wide appeal to yeoman farmers elsewhere in the colony. As a propertied man, with some concern for the interests of property, he was also acceptable to the large landholders. Though they could not accept his increasingly advanced liberal views, arising from his deep concern for the working class and rural smallholders, this did not unduly worry them so long as there was no danger of his 'socialism'

12. NZPD, Vol. 32, p. 70.

13. NZPD, Vol. 29, p. 28.

14. ibid., p. 179.

finding expression in practical politics. His experience of the relatively classless society of the New Plymouth settlement, and his wide political acceptability in the colony at large, not surprisingly led Atkinson to discount the element of class feeling in New Zealand life.

However, not all parts of New Zealand were as egalitarian in their social and economic life as Taranaki. Nevertheless, even where the range was wider, there were strong equalising forces at work, levelling down the upper ranks, as well as evening up the lower. Not a few men of higher class background had emigrated to New Zealand to escape the class barriers of the old country, and in the hope of playing their part in building a new and better social order. William Downie Stewart has recorded the story of the conduct of G.S. Sale and some other young Englishmen, on their arrival at Lyttelton in 1860. As a gesture of their rejection of the conventions of the old society, they built a huge bonfire, piled on it their top hats and tail coats, and danced in a ring round the blazing fire.¹⁵ Such an outright repudiation of class conventions was, of course, exceptional, but colonial life had its own way of undermining conventional patterns. Willy-nilly, the colony's primitive conditions and shortage of labour forced the newcomer to tackle tasks

15. G.W. Richmond to H.A. Atkinson, 27 Dec., 1877, Scholefield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 440, throws an interesting light on Atkinson's mediating position. J. Bassett, 'Sir Harry Atkinson and the Conservative Faction in N.Z. Politics, 1879-1890', N.Z. Jnl. of History, II, 2 (October 1968), pp. 130-147, is a valuable fuller treatment of this topic.

16. W.D. Stewart, William Rolleston, Christchurch, 1940, p. 10.

he would have considered beneath him in the old country. By the colonial standard of values, this entailed no loss of caste. Similarly, lowly origins created no barrier to a man's rising in the social scale. It was economic success rather than birth that placed one in the social scale.¹⁷ In frontier conditions, where fortunes were quickly changing, only an egalitarian attitude made much sense. Robert Petch, a young Yorkshireman arriving in the vigorously developing Patea district early in 1876, tried to get across the flavour of the region's life to his small-town lawyer father back home:

no poor people everybody squires with estates,¹⁸
and everybody Bills and Bobs, Jacks and Joes.

If, among the 'squires' of Patea, even the landless new chum was made to feel himself one of the squires, among the yeomen of North Taranaki, even the 'squire' made himself one with the yeomen. Robert Trimble, the 'great man' of Inglewood, in denouncing the demagogic flattering of the mob by the leaders of Greyite 'liberalism' maintained that such flattering and cajoling of the workingman amounted to treating him as an infant.

17. On this see James Buller, New Zealand: Past and Present, London, 1880, pp. 92-4.

18. Robert Petch to his father, 3 March 1876, 'Robert Petch Papers', MS Papers 252/1, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

There ought to be more respect for the workingman than this. Why, what am I? If I am seen at home, I am in rags, and work as hard as any of them.¹⁹

Squire, yeoman or labourer, were they not all reduced to a common level by their common endeavour in the mud of the Taranaki bush clearings?

A similar picture of camaraderie obliterating class barriers comes to us from the Rangitikei. George Fort, an Englishman who arrived in New Zealand in 1877, at the age of 17, and spent some time in the late 1870s in the Rangitikei farming community, has given a sensitive account of the social life in the district, in his memoirs:-

... a considerable number of sons of English landed proprietors, some with wives and some without, had purchased land there. In this pastoral community amidst its landowners, its professional men, store-keepers and unskilled labourers, the sense of good-fellowship was far stronger than that of class distinction. One and all were singularly free from any form of snobbishness, always ready in a glad spirit to help one another, and rejoicing in open hearted hospitality ... The doyen and recognised social head of the neighbourhood was a retired cavalry officer, who some twenty years previously, had purchased a station about fifteen miles from the township, where he had built for himself and his family a large bungalow type of house, encircled on three sides by a wide verandah ... Kindly, tolerant and human in outlook he was in every respect a great gentleman with a great gentleman's sensitiveness to the essential value of good manners ...

To this centre of hospitality, and home influence, each week-end, guests from every part of the district would receive an open-hearted welcome, once a guest, no further invitation was necessary. One would ride in,

¹⁹. NZPD, Vol. 32, p. 78. (1 October 1879).

unsaddle one's horse, go straight to the barrack rooms, wash, and present oneself to one's hostess.²⁰

It would be easy, by emphasising the levelling influence of colonial life, and amassing quotations such as those used in the last few paragraphs, to suggest that class consciousness was of trivial importance in the New Zealand social and political life of the 1870s and 1880s. But there was another side to the picture, which can be glimpsed even in George Fort's idyllic picture. Of the hospitable station owner's home he writes:-

It was not, however, everyone who could be at ease in this atmosphere of unaffected gaiety and natural good manners. To such a one nothing would be said or done directly to hurt his feelings, but he would soon realise he was a misfit, and he could not ride the pace, and would retire.²¹

Evidently, for all Fort's enthusiasm about Rangitikei good fellowship, this rural society had quite a clearly marked inner circle. The class lines of rural England had been somewhat blurred, but by no means obliterated. It was in Canterbury that this English class structure found its fullest expression in New Zealand.²² Though the Wakefield system itself had largely failed in transplanting the English squirearchy, the success of pastoralism operating quite outside the system's plan created a class of moneyed men who

20. G.S. Fort, Chance or Design? A Pioneer Looks Back, London, 1942, pp. 17-18. The hospitable station owner was probably Major J.W. Marshall of Tutu Totara.

21. ibid., p. 18.

22. On this see Duncan, The Evolution of Settlement in New Zealand, p. 119.

inevitably followed to a considerable extent the social patterns of the homeland squires. In furthering their class interests, these men were not inhibited, as were the pastoralists of the North Island, by any dependence on the yeoman farmer to open communication lines and provide manpower to counter the Maori threat. Hall was typical of this class in his habit of thinking in terms of 'the mob' on the one hand, and those like himself 'who had something to lose', on the other.²³

Fortunately for the Bush Provinces, not all of the Canterbury upper class followed Hall's line of thought too closely. William Rolleston, who held the important portfolio of lands in the Hall cabinet, was among those who had consciously repudiated the class privileges of England. As Canterbury's last superintendent (1868-1876) he had done what he could to get small settlers onto the land. This had rendered him unpopular with the squatters, and their willingness to accept the abolition of the provinces arose partly from their awareness that few outside their class could afford to enter colonial politics, or could spare time to attend parliament in Wellington. Parliament sat during the winter months, when there was little work on the pastoral runs.²⁴ When the 'Vogel' immigration scheme accelerated the flow of labourers into Canterbury while the land remained locked up by the squatters, Rolleston correctly sensed that

23. On this see Bassett, Sir Harry Atkinson, p. 158.

24. On this see Stewart, William Rolleston, p. 106.

social tension must inevitably result. As Minister of Lands under Hall he did his best to redress the balance.

The conflict of interests between pastoralists and small farmers was also evident in the Bush Provinces. We have already seen ²⁶ some of its earlier manifestations in Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay. These continued into the 1870s and beyond, ²⁷ centering round such issues as roading ²⁸ and land legislation. How far simple conflict of interest was complicated and deepened by genuine class consciousness is a subject worthy of further research. A perusal of newspaper files on the 1880s would suggest that the answer will be found more clearly in local than in national politics, and that the issues were joined most deeply over the question of the use of 'influence' in local body elections, and in the administrative decisions of Education, Land and Road Boards, County Councils and School Committees. For the present purpose we will restrict our treatment to a few episodes of local affairs which are recorded in class conscious terms in the files of John Ballance's Weekly Herald.

John Ballance was born in Northern Ireland, descending from seventeenth century Puritan immigrant stock. His father Samuel Ballance, was a tenant farmer, and is reported to ²⁹ have been a Primitive Methodist of deep religious convictions.

25. Stewart, William Rolleston, pp. 117-9, 135.

26. pp. 33, 47-9, above.

27. See e.g. NZM, 15 November 1873, (Letter signed 'XYZ').

28. See e.g. Hawke's Bay Herald, 31 January 1873. (Letter signed '20 years a Colonist and No Land'.)

29. J.L. Dighton, The Life and Work of John Ballance, M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1929, p. 1.

John rejected his father's religion and his Orangeman political views and became an advocate of Freethought and Irish Home Rule. His political education owed something to his contact with the Radicalism of Birmingham, where he worked for a time as a young man. His Irish small farmer family background had, however, a lifelong influence on his political thinking. Like Grey he was deeply moved by the sufferings of the Irish peasantry, and in New Zealand he worked unswervingly to oppose the growth of a landed gentry of the Irish and English type. His political views changed markedly in detail over the years, but they have a continuing consistency in that they were always aimed at the encouragement of a yeoman class of farmer. The Wanganui Herald, of which Ballance was a co-founder in 1867, looked consistently to the interests of the small farmers, and the renaming of the weekly edition as the Yeoman in July 1880 gave pointed expression to this policy.

On Fox's resignation of the Rangitikei seat in March 1875, to visit England, Ballance contested and won the bye-election. Although the political views he voiced in his campaign were surprisingly moderate, it is clear that the landed proprietors of the district were by no means pleased with his unexpected success. When nine months later the seat was again contested in the January 1876 general election, the squatters apparently used all their influence in an endeavour to defeat a candidate who was unacceptable to their class, and at least some

of the humbler voters viewed the contest in terms of class conflict. With Fox still overseas, the large landowners put forward James Bull of Bulls as their candidate. He had had no previous experience of politics, and was a poor platform speaker, but as a large employer of labour in his saw-mill, store, hotel and contracting business, he could be expected to poll well in his own township. Supporters of Ballance claimed that Bull was allowing himself to be used as a catspaw, and that he was merely being put forward to keep the seat warm until Fox's return.³⁰ The class conflict element of the election is well expressed in a letter from a Bulls elector:

... The Lord of the Manor [i.e. Fox], as soon as he heard of the result of the last election [i.e. the April 1875 bye-election], sent out the most imperative instructions to leave no stone unturned to reverse the state of affairs, and with that object in view his shadow here is making all possible stir. As his first assistant he has one who has benefitted not a little by the crumbs that have fallen from the table of his former master, and who now fills the position of Inspector of Works to the local Highway Board ... I ... think it is altogether without precedent to see an officer of a local body, whose time should be entirely at the disposal of his employers, engaged in conducting an electioneering canvass ... And here again it occurs to me - What right has our R.M., as a member of the Civil Service, to put his name to the requisition?³¹

30. Y, 11 December 1875, p. 11; 1 January 1876, p. 2.

31. Y, 11 December 1875, p. 14. Similar sentiments are expressed in a letter signed 'A Rangitikei Elector', in Y, 18 December 1875, p. 12.

The allegations of this letter were supported by an editorial in the Yeoman of 8 January 1876, which maintained that 'the [Road] Board are quite conscious that the Assessor, Road Inspector and Paymaster, was publicly trying to prevail upon people to pledge themselves to the Board candidate'. There was evidently an endeavour to present Bull as a small farmers' and working man's candidate, for the editorial further claims that 'the requisition was nearly composed of road contractors and Mr. Fox's tenants, and the inference of pressure was at once correctly drawn'.

The 'Fox clique' were accused of having gone even further than persuasion. W.C. Watkin, a day labourer for the Road Board wrote to the Yeoman claiming that he had lost his job because of his political opinions. He had been approached by a Mr. Thomas McKenzie who claimed that he had 'the whole of the Electoral of this part of the district in his pocket', and asked his opinion of Bull's candidature. In reply Watkins pointed out that he was disfranchised, but from his limited knowledge of Mr. Bull he fancied that he was unfitted for the position. McKenzie then told him that it would not do for a man in his position to speak of a member of the Board in that manner, and two days later the Board's Inspector dismissed him, explaining that 'personally he had nothing too say against me, but from others he had found that I was much too fast with my opinions'. At the next meeting of the Board, the Inspector explained that he had found Watkins

loafing on the job,³³ an allegation which Watkins denied,³⁴ and there the matter rested. Ballance won the election easily, polling handsomely among the small farmers and working men of Marton and Turakina, though Bull had a small majority in his home township.

These incidents illustrate the fact that many Rangitikei electors were still thinking in terms of the class structure of the Old Country. To a working man Fox was 'the Lord of the Manor' expecting tame obedience from his underlings. Employers of labour expected that their servants would defer to their wishes in political matters, even if they were only employers by virtue of their membership of a public body. Considering the strength of the class system of the hearth-land it is not surprising that we should find these attitudes persisting. Nevertheless, they were largely irrelevant in this new setting. Whatever the tactics of some of his supporters, Fox strongly approved of the secrecy of the ballot (introduced in 1869), and had no liking for the electoral tactics of the English squire tradition. When a voter wrote to the Yeoman in 1879 (6 September) saying that some of his friends were convinced that the ballot box was in fact not really secret, the editor began his refutation of these suspicions by quoting Fox on the subject. Further, W.C. Watkins could be dismissed for his independent political

33. Rangitikei Advocate, 10 January 1876, NZM, 15 January 1876, p. 17.

34. Y, 15 January 1876, p. 10.

views, but he had no need to be subservient in his reaction. He forthrightly published his version of the incident, describing the officer who dismissed him as 'morally the quintessence of a toady', and in view of the state of the colonial labour market could blithely write that 'he really ^{nothing} [cared] about the Board or their employment'.

Nevertheless, it would be quite incorrect^{to}/infer that because the direct transplantation of English class attitudes introduced irrelevancy into colonial affairs, there was therefore no class issue in rural New Zealand. Ballance (along with Rolleston, Grey, and others) was dealing with real issues when he raised the question of whether the land should be developed in large holdings, with the majority of the rural population employed as landless labourers, or whether the rural majority should not rather consist of yeoman farmers. The large holding had proved its economic superiority in Britain, and the triumph of the small holder was no foregone conclusion in the New Zealand of the 1870s and 1880s. It came about largely because the Great Bush had preserved an extensive area of fertile lowland from the earlier onrush of the pastoralists. It owed much to a timely influx of skilled farm labour, with the personal ambitions and co-operative attitudes that were together essential for success. In his lifelong fostering of small farm settlements, and his consistent advocacy of the yeoman ideal, Ballance

played as large a part as any man in bringing about its triumph. By the editorial policy of his newspaper, by his involvement with working class affairs, and later through his administration of the portfolio of lands (1884-7) and his leadership of the Liberal government (1891-3) he had a large part in reshaping class traditions to bring them into line with colonial realities. His support for the Small Farm Association movement provides a link between all these activities.

We have already noted the earlier work of Small Farm Associations in the Wairarapa, at Sandon in the Manawatu, and in Hawke's Bay. They were a very natural political expression of the land-hunger of the working classes. We have seen that these earlier projects had the blessing of squatter-dominated provincial administrations because they served in one way or another to advance the squatters' interests. In the later 1870s and the 1880s, with their much-augmented ranks of the land-hungry, and the increasing political and economic insecurity of the squatters, a large element of class conflict entered the affairs of the associations. Ballance had seen the associations as a class institution during his first years in New Zealand. He had encouraged the work of the Wanganui branch of the Manawatu Small Farm Association in the late 1860s,³⁵ and would like to have seen the Rangitikei-Manawatu Block peopled by further associations similar to

35. See e.g. Y, 16 October 1869, p. 1.

that which founded Sanson, rather than allowed to pass into the hands of large holders. He pointed out the defence advantages of such a policy, as providing 'the best way of possessing the country'.³⁶ With the coming of the 'Vogel' scheme, and the active opening up and settling of bushland under the sponsorship of the general government, the need for small farm associations was temporarily in abeyance. By the mid 1870s, however, the demand for small farms again began to exceed the supply, and the associations reappeared. Fitzherbert, speaking from his experience as superintendent of Wellington, told the house on 15 October 1875, that he had had applications from people to form small farm settlements, and that he could have formed three or four settlements of the size of the Sandon settlement or greater on the country between Waikanae and Manawatu.³⁷ When, the following year, Ormond began fostering small farm associations to complete the occupation of the land along the road line through the Seventy Mile Bush, Ballance immediately publicised the fact in the Herald,³⁸ and recommended that others take up the scheme. He suggested that any two or three persons who were interested could call a meeting to initiate an association. As a result of the Hawke's Bay example and the Herald's advocacy, a number of associations were formed throughout the Bush Provinces over the ensuing months.

36. Y, 20 September 1867, p. 2.

37. NZPD, Vol. 19, p. 472. (Most of this land was still in Maori hands).

38. Y, 13 May 1876.

The history of the Wanganui Small Farm Association of 1876 is typical of this group of associations. The Weekly Herald of 3 June 1876 reported the preliminary moves. There had been considerable interest, and a good number of men with some colonial experience and the necessary capital were offering. John Ballance and 'a gentleman possessing the confidence of the prospective members' were conferring on the matter, and proposed to approach the government through Bryce, the member for Wanganui, for a suitable block of land. Three weeks later a meeting, attended by about 20 members considered the answer received from Bryce.³⁹ He was prepared to assist, but warned that delay was inevitable in view of the next parliamentary session being concerned with a complete change in the management of waste lands. He also considered that they would have to accept bush land. The meeting decided to communicate with the Crown Lands Department and with Captain Wray, the Government agent at Patea to ascertain what land was available between the Waitotara and Waingongoro rivers. Two members were appointed to inspect any land which they should be informed was available. They were soon able to proceed with their task, as Bryce wrote to say that a block of land was open for selection near Kakaramea. The delegates reported on their inspection to a meeting of the association on 21 July 1876.⁴⁰ They had found the land covered with dense bush, but 'pretty flat'. The meeting

39. Y, 24 June 1876, p. 6.

40. Y, 22 July 1876.

decided to make application for the block. The authorities,⁴¹ however, decided to auction the Kakaramea land for cash. Possibly some of the Wanganui Association's members followed up their interest in the block and the knowledge they had gained from their delegates, and bought sections at the sale. Most, however, would have been looking for deferred payment terms. By December the government had made clear that it was not prepared to meet requests from small farm associations, but that all would have to compete in open competition for deferred payment land as it was put on the market.⁴² Ballance published an editorial castigating the government for taking a retrograde step in land settlement. He pointed out the advantages of a group of men who knew each other setting out together on a settlement enterprise, and maintained that one advantage of the system was that it prevented speculators creeping in. He drew the comparison between the government's disregard for associations of working men and its encouragement of special settlements sponsored by capitalists. Not surprisingly, the next report on the Wanganui association tells us that it had decided to disband. The Herald expressed the opinion that if the association would but exercise patience and perserverance⁴³ it might yet obtain its objective. Ballance was not prepared

41. N.Z. Gazette, 1876, p. 647. (14 September 1876). (The notice of sale is dated 26 August 1876).

42. Y, 9 December 1876, p. 3. The Letter to Kiwitea Small Farm Association, conveying the decision of the Premier (Atkinson).

43. Y, 3 February 1877.

to let the matter rest, and aired it further in addressing his Rangitikei constituents. This led the Manawatu Times⁴⁴ to suggest that the government's discouragement of the associations was due to their being merely the 'fortuitous concourse of atoms'. It advised them to transform themselves into bodies corporate with legal existence and thus render 'the "cooperation" of which Mr. Ballance speaks a real cooperation'. It may have been to test the worth of this suggestion that the Wanganui Equitable Building Society, assisted by Ballance, began negotiations with the Wellington Waste Lands Board for land for a special settlement later in 1877.⁴⁵ Apparently the project was not proceeded with, as there are no further reports of it.

Over 1876-7 other Small Farm Associations operated in Bulls, Normanby, Masterton, and the Hutt. The Bulls association was formed in July 1876 at an enthusiastic meeting in the Town Hall. Fifty members enrolled on the spot, each paying one pound towards preliminary expenses. The following morning as many more were desirous of enrolling, but they had to be refused. It was reported that 'a sterling class of men'⁴⁶ was involved. The association decided to apply for land in the bush beyond the Manchester Block at Kiwitea. At first it received encouragement from the government, but the opposition of the Legislative Council to the deferred payment

44. 27 January 1877.

45. Y, 17 November 1877.

46. Y, 15 July 1876.

clauses of the Land Bill then before parliament led to a change of front. It would still have been possible to proceed under the Wellington Special Settlements Act, 1871, if the Wellington Waste Lands Board were in ^{or}agreement. Whether the main opposition was in the Waste Lands Board/in the cabinet is not apparent, but the project was turned down.⁴⁷ As with the Wanganui association, it is probable that the work of the Bulls association may have aided some of its members in getting sections on the block that it was interested in, when it was put on the open market. However, the opinion of the Wanganui Herald was that the activities of the association had served to impress outsiders 'with the idea that it was a rare morsel', with the result that many of the Bulls men lost out to speculators at the sale.⁴⁸

The 'Hutt Small Farm Association No. 2' was formed about the beginning of 1876, drawing its inspiration from the success of the Sanson settlement.⁴⁹ Their negotiations with the government followed the same pattern as the Bulls association.⁵⁰ The Masterton association was formed in mid-1876⁵¹ and put proposals to the Waste Lands Board, which the Board turned down.⁵² Their endeavours to move the Board included the presentation of a petition signed by 300 intending settlers. The land they wanted to settle was in The Forty Mile Bush.⁵³

47. Y, 2 December 1876, p. 11; 9 December 1876.

48. Y, 24 February 1877, p. 12.

49. Evans, Struggle for Land in the Hutt Valley, p. 88.

50. Y, 9 December 1876, p. 4.

51. Y, 10 June, 1876, p. 4.

52. NZM, 14 July 1877.

53. Y, 3 March 1877, p. 16.

The Ketemarae Small Farm Association formed at Normanby late in 1877 had a brief but colourful and disputatious history. It was probably partly inspired by the privately-sponsored special settlement scheme which founded Midhurst, and drew some of its vigour from the high hopes aroused in working men by Grey's succession to the premiership.⁵⁴ The association sent far delegates to New Plymouth to negotiate with the Waste Lands Board for a block of 20,000 acres of bush land. It also sent delegates to inspect the available blocks of land along the Mountain Road. Its lively meetings, with a record of factions and disputed rulings and elections, suggest that it had a large membership. It also had a considerable opinion of its own importance. A meeting on 29 November 1877 decided to telegraph Sir George Grey requesting the free services of a surveyor to accompany the association's delegates on their inspection of the blocks. When the news was received early in December of private capitalists putting further schemes to the Taranaki Waste Lands Board, a telegram was hurried off to Ballance, protesting against land sharks being allowed to come between the government and legitimate buyers, and suggesting a re-organization of the Taranaki Waste Lands Board. Probably the existing North Taranaki - South Taranaki rift added to the warmth of the indignation. With the passing of the 1877 Land Act, providing for the sale of land on deferred payment, the

54. The account which follows is based on reports in Y, 8, 15 & 22 December 1877, and Patea Mail, 19 January 1878.

Taranaki Waste Lands Board decided to proceed without the assistance of either the 'land-sharks' or the Small Farm Association.

Despite Grey's oratory on land for the people, his administration had a poor record as regards settling small-holders - which is not surprising considering the ulterior motives of a section of his cabinet. During its two years in power, the portfolio of lands was shuffled round to four different ministers (Macandrew, Stout, Gisborne and J.W. Thomson), but never into the hands of Ballance, the yeoman's champion. In fact, his membership of the ministry must have inhibited Ballance from furthering his settlement ideas, and it was the squatter Ormond who pressed Stout in August 1878 with a question as to whether the government proposed to amend the Land Act to enable associations to take up blocks on the deferred payment system. Ormond spoke warmly in support of the system, but Stout, who had held the portfolio for three weeks, was not aware of any demand for such settlements. Ormond had to explain to him that applications had been made, but under the law they had to be made to the Waste Lands Boards.⁵⁵ In August 1879, shortly after Ballance had resigned from Grey's government, a meeting was held in Wanganui to form a new Small Farm Association.⁵⁶ Ballance was present, and informed the meeting that the law, as it stood, did not allow for the setting apart of land for such

55. NZPD, Vol. 28, p. 263-4.

56. Y, 9 August 1879, p. 12.

settlements. He advised the association not to incur further expenses unless the law was altered.

With the fall of Grey's government, and the appearance of Rolleston as Minister of Lands in the Hall cabinet, the Small Farm Association movement took on new life. On 13 October 1879 an association was formed in Wellington, under the auspices of the Working Men's Club. The passing of the 'Land Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1879' with its provisions for the setting apart of land for special settlements and village settlements⁵⁷ gave further cause for encouragement. A crowded meeting in Christchurch decided to send two delegates to Wellington to confer with the Wellington association with a view to amalgamating with them, and together approaching the Minister.⁵⁸ The Christchurch roll was said to be about 500 heads of families, representing about 3,000 souls. A grandiose plan was suggested whereby the unemployed from Auckland to Dunedin would be formed into a limited liability company which would demand that Taranaki's Waimate Plains be handed over to them for settlement. This grand design seems to have been stillborn, but it appears that two Cooperative Land Associations were operating in Christchurch in the winter of 1880. One sent two delegates to inspect the Taranaki bush land of the Ngairi Block, which was about to be put on the market, and as a result of their favourable report sent for 60 forms of application for land. The second

57. NZS, 1879, pp. 67-73.

58. Y, 20 December 1879, p. 9.

association sent for 30 application forms.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the Wanganui and Wellington associations continued a vigorous life, until eventually their enthusiasm was dampened by continued rebuffs from the administration. When a deputation from the Wanganui association waited on their local member, Bryce, in January 1880, they could claim a membership of about 80, and were wanting a block of from 11,000 to 15,000 acres.⁶⁰ Later in the year Ballance outlined the association's history in the House. It was the story of five delaying or discouraging letters that they had received from the Land Office, the last of which had explained to them that the special settlement clauses of the Act could only be complied with by English capitalists.⁶¹ The Wellington association sent a deputation, accompanied by the local members of parliament, Levin and Hutchison,⁶² to wait on the minister on 3 April 1880. The association claimed 150-200 members, and was looking for a block of about 30,000 acres. Rolleston gave them the same reply as was sent to the Wanganui association - the special settlement clauses were intended to facilitate the introduction of foreign capital, and their members should endeavour to obtain the land they wanted under the deferred payment clauses.⁶³ The minister's

59. NZM, 22 May 1880.

60. Y, 24 January 1880, p. 12.

61. NZPD, Vol. 35, p. 290.

62. Hutchison, Mayor of Wellington, and a former mayor of Wanganui, had shown his interest in the movement by attending a meeting of the Wanganui Association. See Y, 10 Jan., 1880, p. 9. Levin was treasurer to the Wellington Assoc., See NZPD, Vol. 35, p. 288.

63. Y, 10 Apr. 1880, p. 12; NZM, 10 Apr., 1880, p. 23; NZPD, Vol. 35, pp. 285, 287-8.

interpretation of the intention of the special settlement clauses was vigorously challenged by Ballance and Seddon in the House.⁶⁴ Seddon went on to attack the Waste Lands Boards, which he maintained consisted of 'men who were largely interested in keeping the land in large blocks, and in stopping settlement'. He described them as forming 'a sort of "Continuous family" something like a "continuous ministry" - on the death or resignation of a member, another of the same clique was nominated by the government.

Clearly both land laws and their administration were engaging the deep concern of many New Zealand working men. The fact that the small farm associations of the latter

endeavours of these associations must not be written off as entirely fruitless. They must surely be given some of the credit for Ballance's whole-hearted, and largely successful, use of the small farm association as a Bush settlement technique when he became Minister of Lands in the 1884-87 Stout-Vogel ministry.

A more useful class interpretation of the 1870-1890 period than that of Reeves' simple conflict between a conservative squatter-dominated oligarchy and a nascent 'liberal' party committed to democratic reforms, is one which views the politics of the period in terms of an untidy conflict between two competing conceptions of the ideal rural community for the new country. One conception, which we might label the 'gentry ideal', envisaged a landed gentry established throughout the colony, able to lead in local and national politics and to set the tone of colonial society by virtue of the means and free time provided by the ownership of large estates. Yeoman farmers and labourers would provide the lower ranks, but must not be allowed undue economic and political power. A land policy that put new blocks onto the market as a mixture of cash land (largely for the 'gentry'), deferred payment land (for the 'yeomen'), and perhaps a village settlement (i.e., allotments for labourers) made good sense in terms of the gentry ideal. The other conception, which might be called the 'yeomen ideal', envisaged a rough economic, social and political equality, with the yeoman farmer as the key figure.

The way must be open for farm labourers to acquire land and so become yeomen; the big landholder must be kept in his place, or, in the more extreme view, eliminated by a process of 'bursting up' the big estates. Small Farm Associations, in which men of limited means set out together on the adventure of breaking in new country, represented the best approach to land settlement in terms of the yeomen ideal.

The conflict between these two ideals was untidy for a number of reasons. As we have seen, the British background tended to intrude, with its irrelevant attitudes arising from the landed proprietor/tenant farmer/farm labourer pattern, which neither of these colonial outlooks proposed to repeat. Localism, the Maori threat, and the need to open communications through bush country, could all enlist squatter support for the rapid development of yeoman-type settlement. But the yeoman was also seen by some as a threat - as augmenting the 'mob' with its irreverent, thoughtless, democratic approach to politics, as forming a political pressure group which might become strong enough to induce parliament to cancel payments due on deferred payments⁶⁵, and as an economic class likely to force a redrafting of the rules at local as well as colonial level to the disadvantage of squatters already fighting a desperate battle against falling wool prices and the rabbit plague. Others did not share

65. Y, 5 March 1881, has an editorial (probably by Ballance) giving this as the cause of a growing alarm among 'Conservatives'.

these fears, being confident of the ability of their class to win the deference of those below them, and so continue to hold the reins of power. As in Britain, this latter group sensed the strong vein of conservatism among the common people,⁶⁶ and so viewed the advance of democracy without alarm. For their part, labourers and smallholders usually welcomed the coming of a well-to-do settler to take up land in their district, because of the likelihood that he would provide employment. However, they resented the speculators who tied up land while waiting for the unearned increment. Another source of 'untidiness' in the conflict between the ideals was the way in which personal outlooks shifted with changing fortunes. Under colonial conditions, the flourishing yeoman was encouraged to move into the gentry class. The career of John Bryce is an illustration of this. First nominated for parliament by John Ballance, and looked upon as a 'brave and loyal advocate and defender of the masses',⁶⁷ he began to prosper and extend his land holdings. Soon he was looking^{more} towards the squatters for his friends, while, with Ballance remaining true to the yeoman ideal, the friendship between them grew cool. By January 1881 an article in the Yeoman⁶⁸ (almost certainly penned by Ballance) could label him as 'a cockatoo squatter playing the autocrat'. This

66. A suggestive study on this aspect although it belongs to a different context, is R. McKenzie & A. Silver, Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England, London, 1968.

67. Y, 18 October 1879, reprinting from the Wellington Chronicle.

68. 1 January 1881, p. 3.

tendency of successful yeomen to throw in their lot with the gentry robbed the smallholders of their most able spokesmen, delayed the emergence of political parties based clearly on class interests, and frustrated the hopes and plans of men like Ballance. The continued advancement of the yeoman ideal owed much to the support it received from the merchants and the working class of the towns, both of whom came to see that they had an economic interest in closer settlement.⁶⁹ Finally, it must be noted that direct conflict between the two ideals was muted by the presence of those who advocated and worked for a balance of classes, in which none would be able to dominate. Thus an editorial in the New Zealand Mail of 28 February 1880 sees 'a bona fide yeoman class' as the 'best safety-valve' for the colony's political and social machinery. This is because:

On the one hand they form a barrier against encroachments on the rights of the people by large landed proprietors and the moneyed class; while on the other they will join the more wealthy in resisting the Radical-Communitic tendencies of the age, and so become the balancing power of the state.

Our survey of the fortunes of the small farm associations has demonstrated that although the yeoman ideal was firmly established among the working class, both the Grey and Hall cabinets adopted policies in line with the gentry ideal.

69. A similar combination of selector and storekeeper against the squatter is noted in Queensland's Darling Downs, over the same period, in D.B. Waterson, Squatter, Selector, and Storekeeper, Sydney, 1968, See esp. pp. 21-3, 66-94.

Rolleston, it would seem, was a champion of the smallholder, and went as far as his colleagues would allow him in advancing yeoman-type settlement.⁷⁰ However, the general approach of both governments to the economic problems facing the colony was to encourage the settler with capital. This appears in both land settlement and immigration policies. Deferred payment and village settlement policies went only part way towards meeting the land hunger of the working man with limited resources. In a colony where an egalitarian spirit was abroad, and old habits of deference to the gentry as the inevitable political leaders were wilting, the stage was being set for a new political order. The yeoman class was steadily increasing in numbers, while the landless were expressing a growing discontent with policies that failed to adequately meet their needs. Strong political support was clearly developing for any party which could give convincing expression to the yeoman ideal.

70. J.D.N. McDonald, 'New Zealand Land Legislation', Historical Studies Australia & New Zealand, V, 19 (November 1952), p. 207; Stewart, William Rolleston, pp. 140-151.

CHAPTER 9

THE YEOMAN IDEAL AND THE BUSH

1877 - 1880

Having sketched the political and social class developments of the years 1877 to 1880, we are now in a position to examine the progress of Bush settlement under the terms thus laid down. Before we turn to the details of the various settlement districts we will briefly survey the sources from which new population flowed into the Bush. As the greater part of it originated within the colony, our treatment of immigration can be much more cursory than for the earlier period.

With the colony's demand for labour largely met, and with indications appearing of harder economic times ahead, the Grey government aimed its immigration effort particularly at British tenant farmers with capital. To this end use was made of travelling lecturers, most of whom were experienced New Zealand settlers. Among them were Arthur Clayden, now an experienced reporter on the New Zealand scene after several years' residence in the colony, and the Rev. John Berry, a New Zealand Methodist minister, who lectured in many parts of England and Scotland, but appears to have concentrated on Lincolnshire, where he delivered about 50 lectures and apparently worked at least in part in association with William Burton's comrade-in-arms,

John White. However, his campaign was aimed at a different social class to that of Burton, and the meetings were largely held in public buildings, chapels and schools, and chaired by local clergy and leading farmers.¹ A flood of cheap grain from the prairies, coinciding with a disastrous series of wet harvesting seasons and widespread epidemics among livestock in Britain, was making the tenant farmer consider whether his capital might not bring a better return elsewhere. The Rev. J. Berry sailed for New Zealand, in October 1879, accompanied by Messrs. S. Grant, and J.S. Foster, two Lincolnshire farmers who, in response to a requisition signed by five or six hundred farmers, acted as delegates to tour New Zealand and report back on its prospects for tenant farmer immigration.² In announcing their arrival the Yeoman of 3 January 1880 described their class as that most wanted in the colony - 'that middle yeomanry class which, though greatly diminished in wealth and power, still remains the glory and back bone of rural Britain.' While the delegates were on their way to New Zealand, the New Zealand Shipping Company was already making arrangements with John White for a first party of Lincolnshire tenant farmers to emigrate in December

1. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 9 January 1880, p. 7.

2. ibid.; S. Grant and J.S. Foster, New Zealand, a Report on its Agricultural Conditions and Prospects, London, 1880.

1879.³ The advantages which men of this class saw in emigration to New Zealand were well expressed by one of their number who wrote in Mayfair to explain his decision.⁴

In England I have farmed the land of another man, under his direction, liable to losses from the ravages of his game, insulted by his attempted control as to the vote which I gave and the church which I attended, and, worst of all, subject to his legal right to confiscate the value of my improvements. In New Zealand I shall cultivate my own land, be at liberty to keep down wild animals at my pleasure, and as free to assert my political manhood, and to follow my religious bent, as any landlord in England, and the owner of an increment which, by the investment of capital and labour, I may add to the value of my farm.

Most of these tenant farmer immigrants would have had the capital to take over developed land in the colony, and it is unlikely that many of them were involved directly in the advance of settlement in the Bush Provinces. However, when the first land on Taranaki's Waimate Plains was put on the market late in 1880, the largest area (750 acres) was purchased by a Mr. Sutherland, recently arrived from England.⁵

The largest influx of farm labourer immigrants in this period occurred in 1879, as a result of encouragement from New Zealand once again coinciding with a lock-out in England. With a rising demand for labour in New Zealand in 1878, the Grey government decided to cancel some of its economy measures, and thereby make its contribution towards

3. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 16 January, 1880, Supplement p.1.

4. Reprinted in Y, 17 January 1880, p.7.

5. Y, 25 December 1880, p. 5.

relieving rural distress in Britain.⁶ Meanwhile a dispute had developed between the Kentish farmers and their labourers. The Kentish hop and fruit growers decided to take advantage of an abundance of labour to reduce wages.⁷ Their men considered themselves to be skilled workers and were not prepared to forego their wage margin above the ordinary farm labourer. The Kent Agricultural and General Labourers' Union, under the leadership of Alfred Simmons, gave the men its support. The farmers replied by locking out any men affiliated to the union. With a membership of some 15,000 the union was able to pay 11s. a week to each of the locked-out men. The farmers determined to evict Union members from their cottages, and the union determined to send them to New Zealand. Vogel, as Agent-General, despatched Messrs. Holloway and Berry to work with the union in enlisting immigrants.⁸ The immigrants were reported as being 'the best men, the best instructed, the most muscular, in every sense the most valid men ... powerful men, great, square-shouldered fellows' and they took with them several cases of hop sets of the best varieties known in Kent. The largest party, accompanied by Alfred Simmons, travelled by a huge special train to Plymouth, where they

6. E.C. Martin, New Zealand Immigration 1870-1890, M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1948, p. 49.

7. This account is based largely on an article by a special correspondent of the London Daily News, reprinted in NZM, 19 April 1879, p. 11.

8. AJHR 1879, Session I, D-2, p. 22.

boarded the Stad Haarlem, a Dutch East India Co. steamship specially chartered by the New Zealand Shipping Company. On arrival in New Zealand this party was distributed throughout the colony, with the largest number going to Canterbury, on account of their having friends already settled there. One who found work on a farm near Wanganui was reported to be amazed with the colonial servant's fare. When he was assured by a fellow servant that the style of living of his first week was the common standard in the colony, he replied, 'Why man, I have had more meat since I have been here this week that I should have had in old Kent in twelve months.'⁹ However, by the time the Stad Haarlem arrived depression had returned to New Zealand. Many of her immigrants had difficulty in finding work, and the government began to introduce restrictions on immigration.

This influx of Kentish hop workers helps to explain the appearance of hop gardens in various districts of the Bush Provinces during the 1880s. Gardens are reported at Awahuri, Ashhurst and Feilding in the Rantigikei-Manawatu,¹⁰ at Waitotara and Wanganui,¹¹ at Normanby and Okaiawa in South Taranaki,¹² and elsewhere. At least some of the crop was exported to Britain.¹³ By 1882 New Zealand developments are

9. Y, 3 May 1879, p. 11.

10. Y, 13 April & 18 May 1883, & November 1884, 27 February 1885. Rangitikei Advocate, 20 February 1879. At Awahuri the industry was so extensive that the school committee requested a 3 weeks' holiday for the picking.

11. Y, 7 September 1883, p. 4.

12. Y, 25 May, 7 September & 21 December 1883.

13. Y, 6 March 1885.

reported as beginning to alarm hopgrowers at Home, and the Brewer's Guardian was anticipating the colony becoming a formidable competitor to Kent, Sussex and Worcester.¹⁴ There were apparently some excellent crops in the North Island bush clearings during the 1880s, but with the continued felling of the bush, the westerly winds began to play havoc with the gardens, and the industry declined.

This hop-growing episode in Bush Province agricultural history owed something also to an influx of settlers from the Nelson Province, where hop-gardens were well established.¹⁵ Rather than tackle their own province's unattractive hinterland, many Nelson settlers moved elsewhere in search of new land. The censuses of March 1878 and April 1881 show the province's population growth to have been only 947 for the three years. But population growth by excess of births over deaths for the three years 1878-1880 totalled 1847, and approximately 400 government immigrants were received over these years. Well over 1000 Nelsonians must therefore have left the province, and there is evidence to suggest that a large number of them moved to the Bush provinces. In December 1876 Jane Atkinson reported a general move amongst Nelson people, 'some going home, others to the Nth. Island'.¹⁶ Nelson working men crossed the Straits to take^{jobs} on the Bush

14. Hawera Star, 16 August 1882.

15. See e.g. Y, 13 October 1882, p. 3; 18 May 1883, pp. 4-5.

16. Jane Atkinson to Emily Richmond, 10 December 1876: Scholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 429.

Province public works,¹⁷ and Nelson settlers are reported from time to time taking up land.¹⁸ Methodist circuit reports for 1874 show Rangitikei gaining by removals from Nelson.¹⁹

The Bush Provinces received an even larger influx from Westland as a result of the working out of the gold fields. In the three years between the 1878 and 1881 censuses Westland's population dropped by nearly 2,000, although the excess of births over deaths for the period was over 1,000, and there were about 240 assisted immigrants. There is ample evidence that a large proportion of those who left migrated to the Bush Provinces. As early as 1874 successful West Coast miners were purchasing at land sales in South Taranaki,²⁰ and in the same year others, presumably unsuccessful ones,²¹ were taking work on the Wanganui-Manawatu Railway construction. When in 1879 a large number of men were set to work on the Stratford-Hawera railway as a counter to the challenge of Parihaka, they were reported to be 'generally of the digger class from the West Coast of the Middle Island'.²² The Wellington Immigration Officer, in surveying the province's labour market in July 1879, reported that he had been informed 'that a great many from the West Coast of the Middle Island'

17. L.R. Bryant, 'Some Recollections of My Life, 1923'. Typescript copy of MS, qMS/1923/P, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, pp.13, 17. NZM, 13 June 1874.

18. e.g. Y, 12 & 19 April, 1873; Alton School: 75th Anniversary 1881-1956, n.p., 1956, p.10.

19. New Zealand Wesleyan IV, 46 (November 1874) pp. 209, 210.

20. NZM, 14 March 1874, p. 1.

21. NZM, 13 June 1874, p.17.

22. NZM, 6 September 1879, p. 22.

had found their way across to Wanganui, and that in consequence²³ there was little demand for labour there. The steady export of livestock from Wanganui to the West Coast ports provided a regular shipping service between the two regions. When the first Waimate Plains land was sold in December 1880, the second largest buyer was a Mr. Glenn from the West Coast.²⁴

Not unexpectedly, the West Coast diggers brought their gold fever with them. Many came with the encouraging theory that the line of auriferous country represented by the West Coast goldfields must extend through the ranges of²⁵ the North Island to join the Coromandel field. Parties of prospectors scoured the rivers and ranges of the Bush²⁶ Provinces from all points of the compass. There were various²⁷ reported finds, but none of them represented a paying gold-field. In 1881 a promising reef in the ranges²⁸ near Palmerston North led to the formation of three mining companies there. The only real profit gained from all this endeavour was a much improved common knowledge of the lie of the land in the bush-clad interior.

We have already seen the expression of the Canterbury interest in North Island bush land in the formation of two Co-operative Land Associations in Christchurch in 1880.

23. See Rangitikei Advocate, 22 February 1879 for a party of West Coast diggers emigrating to Feilding.

24. Y, 25 December 1880.

25. NZM, 17 July, 1880, p.21.

26. See e.g. NZM, 1 April 1876, p. 17; 14th October 1876, p. 16; 16 October 1880, p. 15; 12 March 1881, p. 17; Y, 31 July 1880, p. 10; 19 February 1881, p.12; 10 September 1881, p.6.

27. See e.g. Y, 30 October 1880, p. 4, 20 November 1880, p. 7; 26 March 1881, p. 1; 10 September 1881, p. 6.

28. Y, 23 July 1881, p. 2.

There is evidence that this led to firm applications for Taranaki bush land. Of 199 applications received by the Taranaki Waste Lands Board for bush sections put on sale in June, 1880, 32 were from Canterbury.²⁹ A trickle of immigration to the Bush settlements was beginning, which was to grow to a steady stream by the mid 1880s. During the 1870s there appears to have been little immigration to the Bush from Otago, which is not surprising in view of that province's good record in putting the smallholder on the land. However, the available land was being rapidly taken up, and the 1880s were to see the landhungry of Otago joining the flow of immigration to the Bush.

It now remains to review the progress of settlement in the Bush from 1877 to 1880. Over this period Taranaki was by far the fastest growing provincial district in the colony, her 57 per cent population increase between the 1878 and 1881 censuses being more than three times the national average.³⁰ This was achieved despite several discouraging years as regards land sales. The passing of the provincial government left some frustrating gaps in the administration of the practical details of land settlement. For example, neither the Waste Lands Boards, which now directed the survey and sale of crown lands, nor the county councils and road boards which took over local administration, especially of roads, had the

29. Y, 12 June 1880, p. 15.

30. Census of N.Z., 1901, p. 5. (Taranaki 57.01 percent; New Zealand 18.22 percent.)

means to provide road access into new blocks of bush land, and the colonial government was slow to assume this responsibility. Atkinson was aware of the need, and his Secretary for Crown Lands, Reid, endeavoured to meet it with his 1877 Settlement Works Advances Bill. The bill was withdrawn following an adverse report from the Waste Lands Committee.³¹ Without adequate roading, Taranaki bush land was not worth the price at which it was being offered. As a result, very little new land was taken up in 1877.³²

However, the country already occupied was filling up, there was a good demand for labour, and the immigrants of the mid 1870s were well enough satisfied with their prospects to begin using the nominated system of immigration to induce their friends to join them.³³ The completion of the railway to Inglewood in August 1877 put new heart in the Moa Block settlers.³⁴ It brought the necessaries of life to them at nearly the same rates as in New Plymouth, whereas previously as much as £6 a ton had had to be added for conveyance from the coast.³⁵ They had still, of course, to get their supplies to their sections, and most of these were back on the side roads. Speculators held much of the land fronting the main road and the railway, and were doing little to develop it.³⁶

The advance into the Taranaki bush continued to be slow

31. NZPD, Vol. 25, p. 603.

32. AJHR 1877, D-6, p. 3.

33. *ibid.*

34. NZM, 1 September 1877, p. 17.

35. AJHR 1878, D-9, p. 2.

36. TH, 12 January, 1878.

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throughout 1878. The coming into force of the 1877 Land Act hindered rather than helped settlement in Taranaki.³⁷

Suburban land, which was defined as land in the vicinity of any town or village, could not be sold below a minimum price of £3 per acre. This made the extension of settlement into the Taranaki bush almost impossible, as the only practicable way of going about it was to begin with a village site in a bush clearing and use this as a base from which to attack the surrounding forest. But this meant that the first farms in new bush settlements must be sold for at least £3 per acre - an impossible condition.³⁸ Two new settlements were begun along the Mountain Road during 1878, one under the terms of the Act, the other as a special settlement with more reasonable terms of purchase. A comparison of the early fortunes of the government settlement of Stratford and the private special settlement of Midhist is instructive.

The Midhirst Special Settlement was sponsored by Albert Cracroft Fookes. Fookes had been a storekeeper and land speculator³⁹ at Waverley, and had a distinguished record in the Maori Wars. He moved to New Plymouth towards the end of 1876, going into business as a land and insurance agent, and was elected mayor of the town late in 1878.⁴⁰ During 1877 he negotiated his special settlement scheme with the Taranaki Waste Lands Board and the government.⁴¹ He explained

37. McDonald, 'New Zealand Land Legislation,' gives a useful general survey of the land laws.

38. AJHR 1878, C-1, p.3.

39. See Y, 1 July 1876.

40. Hinch, General Elections in Taranaki 1879-84, pp. 43-4, outlines Fookes's career.

41. AJHR 1878, D-4, prints the correspondence with the

his reasons for undertaking the project thus:

Upon my arrival in New Plymouth I was surprised to hear what little progress was being made in settling the bush lands, and on ascertaining the cause - want of means for road-making - I set to work to devise a plan for getting over the difficulty.⁴²

The essential features of this plan are clearly summarised in his own words:

... I am allowed on certain conditions to purchase 5,000 acres stretching five and a half miles into the bush from the Mountain Road, at £1 per acre; 1,000 acres of said block may (owing to it fronting onto Mountain Road) have been saleable at about 30s. per acre, the other 4,000 acres quite unsaleable for want of a road. One of the conditions is that I spend £2000 (equal to 8s. per acre over the whole block) in making a road the full depth of the block by means of which the Board can at once get at another 10,000 acres or thereabouts, which they can dispose of as they please.⁴³

Fookes freely admitted that he was engaging in speculation, but asked who would blame him for serving himself at the same time as he served his country. His agreement allowed him to do what the House had not allowed the Atkinson government to do - add the cost of essential road access to the price of the sections.

The government surveyed and subdivided the block, under the terms of the agreement, and Fookes put it on the market on a deferred payment system at £1.10s. an acre. Speculators might buy if they wished, but Fookes was required to have one male for every 200 acres settled on the block

41 (contd.) government and the agreement reached.

42. TH, 19 November 1877.

43. ibid.

within two years. The land was eagerly sought after. Within a few weeks of being advertised all of the 46 country sections had been applied for, with 24 applicants in Wanganui alone.⁴⁴ A quarter of the township was put on sale in Wanganui in December. Quarter-acre town sections sold for from £5 to £13.10s. and suburban blocks of from 5 to 14 acres brought £2 to £4.10s. an acre.⁴⁵ Fookes' speculation was clearly getting under way along profitable lines. On 26 July 1878 the successful applicants for the rural sections met at an hotel in Hawera to draw lots and select their sections, the survey having just been completed.⁴⁶ The settlers had already braved the winter mud of the Mountain Road to inspect the block and now, under Fookes' superintendence they drew their lots and made their choice. Many of them availed themselves of the privilege, provided for in the prospectus, of selecting in the same order one town section for cash, at upset price, the eastern half of the township having been reserved from sale for this purpose. Several settlers set out immediately after the drawing to begin the attack on the bush upon their sections. The town site had already been cleared and sown down with grass to provide feed for the settlers' horses. The railway reached the township in 1879, and Fookes had no difficulty in making a success of his venture.

44. Y, 24 November 1877, p.13.

45. Y, 22 December 1877, p. 15.

46. Y, 3 August 1878, p. 3.

The Stratford settlement was planned and administered by the Taranaki Waste Lands Board, working within the terms of the 1877 Land Act. As the Board had no funds to clear the site, it applied to the government, which authorised the calling of tenders for clearing about 300 acres, an action which was questioned in the House by a Canterbury member.⁴⁷ The bush was felled over the winter, and in December 1877 the Board decided on the town's name,⁴⁸ and issued a preliminary advertisement, pointing out the importance of the site as the planned junction of the Wellington, Auckland and New Plymouth railways, and notifying that the sale was expected to take place about April 1878.⁴⁹ They were being too optimistic. Wet weather delayed the burning of the fallen bush, which in turn delayed the survey of town sections.⁵⁰ In April the Chief Surveyor reported further delays owing to doubt as to the site of the railway line and station.⁵¹ This was followed by an argument with the government over the grassing of the site. The initial application for funds for this very desirable project was turned down, and urgent representations had to be made, pointing out the realities of Taranaki bush settlement, before the government agreed to reverse its decision.⁵²

47. NZPD, Vol.25, pp. 53-4. (28 August 1877).

48. TH, 4 December 1877.

49. Y, 15 December 1877, p. 12.

50. TH, 19 February, 1878.

51. TH, 16 April, 1878.

52. TH, 15 May, 1878.

The Taranaki Herald⁵³ compared the new regime unfavourably with the old provincial government, which had even planted potatoes to aid the settlers. Finally, 455 town sections were offered at a sale in New Plymouth on 31 August 1878. Only 40 were sold, most at or near the upset prices, to 19⁵⁴ buyers, all of whom are said to have been local Taranaki people.⁵⁵ There was a little spirited competition for sections near the planned railway station site, and presumably most of the buying was speculative. There was little incentive to buy from any other motive when the surrounding bush was priced at £3 an acre by the Land Act, and it is not surprising that the Waste Land Board did not bother to include any suburban land in the sale.

In October 1879, the Land Board put up for sale 141 suburban and rural sections, described as 'adjoining the Township of Stratford, and extending along the Mountain Road and railway to about six miles south of the Patea River.'⁵⁶ Although 70 of the sections were on Deferred Payment terms, only 25 were taken up by 17 buyers, and most of these were⁵⁷ nearer to the future site of Eltham than to Stratford. The coming of the railway quickened the pace of development from then on. On October 1879 the contractors began running a carriage between Inglewood and Stratford, and on 16 December⁵⁸ 1879 the line was officially opened.

53. 17 May 1878.

54. N.Z.Gazette, 1878, p. 1053; TH, 31 August 1878.

55. TH, 2 September 1878.

56. N.Z.Gazette, 1879, p. 1291.

57. TH, 21 October 1879.

58. TH, 20 October & 17 December 1879.

Late in 1879 the Taranaki and Wanganui District Meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was held in New Plymouth. The ministers from the south travelled the Mountain Road to join the train at the Stratford terminus, and one of their number has left us an interesting description of their short visit to Stratford-on-Patea.

This town contains about two thousand sections, ten or more of which are sold, and two or three of which are built upon. But who hath despised the day of little things? The quick ear catches the sound of many an axe at work in the dense forest that almost hides the sky, and, since "little strokes fell great oaks," who knows what shall be hereafter? We had time to count the logs in Romeo-street, and to measure the diameter of some of the stumps in Juliet-square, before our make-shift train arrived... One isolated whare... was labelled "watchmaker," and the stock-in-trade appeared to consist of three axes, two spades, an auger, and a clock... 59

During 1879 the pace of settlement in Taranaki began to quicken. There was interest throughout the colony in the fertile lands of the Waimate Plains. Though the Grey government's attempt to survey the plains failed as a result of Te Whiti's campaign of passive obstruction, it led to more rapid development of the available bush land. The government hastened the rate of development as a counter to Te Whiti. The building of the Hawera-Stratford railway proceeded at a great pace, and extra funds were voted for 'roads and bridges in unsettled districts'.⁶⁰ The policy was obviously aimed both at strengthening the white

59. New Zealand Wesleyan, X, 2 (January 1880), p.17. Internal evidence shows the writer to have been the Rev.P.W. Fairclough.

60. NZPD, Vol.34, p.930.

population, and at more effectively outflanking the Maori⁶¹ opposition. The passing of Rolleston's amendments to the Land Act in December 1879 made possible a rapid settling of the bush blocks being opened up by the road and railway work. The amended act reduced the minimum price for deferred-payment land to £1 an acre. As a result more land was disposed of on deferred payment terms in Taranaki during the year ending 30 June 1880 than in any other land district⁶² except Otago. In October 1880 the first sale of Waimate Plains land was held in Hawera. Three hundred persons attended, and the purchasers came from as far away as⁶³ Auckland and Southland. Further sales followed, and the occupation of the open country, which began late in 1880, was rapidly accomplished. This led to a new phase in the attack on the Taranaki bush. An advance was begun on a broad new front, extending from Normanby to Opunake, while simultaneously the pace of development along the Mountain Road was quickened.

The population of the Rangitikei-Manawatu maintained a steady growth over the years 1877 to 1880, increasing by 35 percent to 12,711. Settlement did not experience the marked slowing up, followed by a renewed forward surge, that had occurred in Taranaki. This was partly because the Manchester Block continued its steady progress under the administration of the Corporation, unaffected by government land policy.

61. On this see Sir W. Fox to H.A. Atkinson, 19 November 1879, Schfield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 469.

62. AJHR 1880, 1-2, p.6.

63. NZM, 6 November 1880, p. 8.

The opening of the Wanganui-Foxton railway in May 1878 with a resulting rapid advance by the sawmilling industry, also served to counter the dampening effect of the 1877 Land Act. The older settled farm land around Palmerston North was beginning to lose some of its primitive roughness. In June 1878 a traveller passing through Karere, where Bishop Monrad had toiled, found it hard to believe that the extensive area of pasture land had been dense forest only a decade before.⁶⁴ Each March saw Palmerston North encircled with great columns of smoke,⁶⁵ but a good deal of it now was associated with the process of logging-up, preparatory to ploughing. The steady clearing of the bush along both sides of the bush roads was opening up new vistas from the township. In the winter of 1877 a Palmerston North newspaper correspondent mentioned the glimpses of snowclad peaks made possible by these great gaps torn in the forest.⁶⁶ The town continued to have a reputation for fierce mosquitoes and hard drinking.⁶⁷ Local pride was developing and finding various avenues of expression. There was a contest for supremacy with the rival town of Feilding.⁶⁸ There was considerably annoyance when the outsider appointed to enumerate Palmerston North in the 1878 census sent in inaccurate returns.⁶⁹ Feilding, due to the Corporation's stern⁷⁰

64. Y, 22 June 1878.

65. Manawatu Times, 14 March 1877.

66. NZM, 28 July 1877, p.10.

67. NZM, 2 February 1878, p. 17; Y, 25 December 1880, p. 7.

68. NZM, 29 September 1877, p. 19.

69. NZM, 13 July 1878, p.18.

70. NZM, 20 April, 4 May, 13 July, 1878. The return showed only 267 houses, which was said to be about 70 short, with a

discouragement of 'intemperance', was a more sedate town. One visitor found the appearance of the township 'altogether unique'.

Hundreds of little cottages, all of uniform size, of the salt-box pattern, are strewn over a wide area... Towering here and there above these huts are stores, hotels, and one or two private houses.⁷¹

The development of the Manchester Block went ahead on carefully planned lines. The second township, Halcombe, after some initial difficulties while awaiting the completion of the railway, went ahead steadily, to become a centre for both farming and sawmilling industries. Surveying and roadmaking were vigorously pushed ahead, to complete the development of the block. By March 1879 there were 40 miles of metalled roads, 17 miles formed and bridged ready for metalling, and 24 miles cleared of bush and ready for formation.⁷² On 26 March 1879 the Corporation held a major land sale, of over 10,000 acres. This included suburban and rural land, in sections ranging from 5 to 500 acres, and the sections of two new towns, Ashhurst, at the mouth of the Pohangina River, and Cheltenham in the Oroua Valley, on the eastern boundary of the block. Land could be purchased either for cash or on deferred payments.⁷³ About 200 attended the sale, and all the rural and suburban land was sold to buyers said to be from all parts of the colony.

corresponding under return of population (at only 876).

71. Y, 16 June 1877, p.15.

72. Y, 8 March 1879, p. 12.

73. ibid., p. 15. (Corporation's advt.)

The rural land averaged £4.8s. an acre, but there was little demand for the township lands. The majority of these new settlers must have been mature colonists, probably many of them native-born. With the Corporation's own immigrants now becoming seasoned colonists, an experienced and balanced farming community was developing, to provide a stable agricultural industry as sawmilling inevitably declined.

Outside the Manchester Block, the two main areas of advance in bush settlement were up the Rangitikei Valley into the Hunterville district, and into the Kiwitea, beyond the north-eastern boundary of the Manchester Block, between the Oroua and Rangitikei Rivers. Settlement up the Rangitikei was encouraged by the purchase of the Paraekaretu Block of 46,975^{acres} from the Maoris in 1872.⁷⁴ A. Follett Halcombe⁷⁵ reported enthusiastically on the area in the same year, and land in the block was put on sale by the provincial government in October 1874.⁷⁶ In January 1876 the provincial government was reported to be making 'prodigious efforts' to open the area, and a bridle track was being cut to provide access to the site of the planned township of Hunterville.⁷⁷ The general government did not follow up these vigorous beginnings. The township of Hunterville was not put on the market until October 1885,⁷⁸ when rapid development of the

74. N.Z. Govt. Gazette, Province of Wellington, XIX, 10, p. 54.

75. AJHR 1872, D-16, pp. 7-8.

76. Wellington Provincial Council, Journal of Proceedings, Session 28 (1875), Appendix A, p. 15.

77. Y, 8 January 1876, p. 9.

78. N.Z. Gazette, 1885, p. 1046.

region began as a result of the commencement of the main trunk railway. However, some progress had been made in the preceding decade. In the autumn of 1879 a large quantity of grass seed was reported being sent up to the Paraekaretu⁷⁹ to sow down bush burns, and the first wool was packed down⁸⁰ to Marton in December 1880.

Land in the Kiwitea Block was first offered for sale in 1875, for cash, at an upset price of £1 an acre. There were⁸¹ only two or three purchasers. When it was re-offered early⁸² in 1877, on deferred payments, it was eagerly sought after, most of the purchasers being Wanganui and Rantikei men,⁸¹ described as an 'admirable class of settlers, true yeomen'.⁸³ Though they were severely hampered by a complete lack of roads, either to the block or to their sections, these settlers lost no time in setting about complying with the terms of purchase, which included the felling of one tenth of the bush the first year, and having a house on the section⁸⁴ by the end of two years. Clearing had begun on almost all⁸⁵ sections by the end of March 1877, and by spring the newcomers, together with the handful of earlier cash purchasers,⁸⁶ had felled upwards of 5,000 acres of bush in the season. Some of the credit for the achievement must be given to the butchers and storekeepers of Feilding, who somehow got

79. Rangitikei Advocate, 1 April 1879.

80. Y, 25 December 1880, p.6.

81. Y, 24 February 1877.

82. ibid.

83. Y, 16 June 1877, Supplement.

84. NZM, 13 October 1877, p. 10.

85. Y, 31 March 1877, p. 6.

86. Manawatu Times, 3 November 1877.

supplies to the Kiwitea settlers throughout the winter. Every day in the week packhorses left on the dangerous, muddy journey to the bush sections. It took a day to get to the Kiwitea, and another day to return.⁸⁷ Towards the end of 1877 some enterprising purchasers of Kiwitea bush sections, put their land on the market as the 'towns' of Beaconsfield⁸⁸ and Kiwitea, situated within seven miles of each other. Although over 300 sections were sold in Kiwitea township alone, neither town proved to have the 'great prospects' that their sponsors advertised. The district's real need was not for towns but roads. The winter of 1878 saw the track to the settlement 'in a frightful state', with mud up to the horses' girths for about three miles.⁸⁹ Nevertheless the ranger was able to report that at the end of two years the majority of the deferred payment selectors had met⁹⁰ their requirements as regards improvements.

The settlements in Hawke's Bay's portion of the Seventy Mile Bush grew more slowly than those in Taranaki and the Rangitikei-Manawatu, over the years 1877 to 1880. Waipawa County, which embraced all the Bush settlements, had a population growth of only 24 per cent between the 1878 and 1881 censuses. Except at the height of the busy season the supply of labour, seems to have at least equalled

87. NZM, 13 October 1877, p. 10.

88. Y, 8 December 1877, p. 10; J.F. Mayo, From One Generation to Another: The Story of the Church in The Kiwitea since the Early Eighties, (Kiwitea, 1956), p. 2.

89. NZM, 7 September 1878, p. 19.

90. NZM, 22 March 1879, p. 16.

the demand over these years, while in the winter and spring of 1880 there was widespread unemployment. There were several reasons why these settlements fared less well in the later 1870s than those west of the ranges. The latter had a flourishing timber industry as a result of their railways tapping the forests at an early stage of construction. Hawke's Bay's railway had to cover 60 miles before it reached the forest, and just as it was nearing the better stands of timber, construction was slackened with the coming of depression. This, together with the longer, and therefore more costly, haul to the port, led to a much slower development of sawmilling. The slackening of railway works was itself a cause of some distress among the bush settlers,⁹² who needed this employment now that the main roading programme had been completed. Unlike Taranaki, Hawke's Bay had no Maori threat to spur the government on with road and railway construction. In some ways, Hawke's Bay's bush settlers suffered as a result of the province's early start in opening up the bush. Thus, while the 1877 Land Act provided that one third of the payments for deferred payment land were to be handed over to the local bodies for roadworks in the districts concerned, there was no such provision in the Hawke's Bay Act under which Ormond had settled considerable areas, particularly in the Makaretu district. Ormond requested the government to extend this provision to the earlier deferred payment settlers, but was

91. AJHR 1877, D-6, p. 2; 1878, D-9, p. 2; 1879, Session II, D-4, p. 1.

92. NZM, 7 December 1878.

93 refused. While Makaretu languished for lack of roads, and the employment roadmaking provided, later settlements in Taranaki flourished by comparison - for the roading 'thirds' were supplemented by votes for 'roads in unsettled districts'. In January 1880 some Makaretu settlers tried to get to grips with their problem by calling a meeting to discuss forming a road board. The meeting was hampered by lack of trust between men of different nationalities, and the decision 94 reached was to endeavour to get five or six boards formed. Apparently nothing came of this, but later in the year the settlers were reported to be forming working gangs and 95 carrying out works which the Council had refused to undertake. The large proportion of Scandinavians among the Hawke's Bay bush settlers apparently helped to aggravate the distress of these years. In the earlier stages of settlement, when public works and bush clearing were proceeding apace, the labour of the Scandinavians was much in demand. But with the slackening of the thrust of settlement, work had to be sought from the more well established settlers, who were mainly British. The Scandinavians' ignorance of English language and customs put them at a disadvantage in competition with British labourers. The British workman was also more likely than the Scandinavian to have had previous experience with a skill such as shearing. In the summer of

93. NZPD, Vol. 28, p. 263 (15 August 1878). (The Kiwitea settlers were similarly handicapped).

94. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 23 January 1880, p. 12.

95. ibid., 2 July 1880, p. 13.

1881 a newspaper reporter described a Scandinavian family at Mauriceville tackling the clipping of a sheep. The good wife was apparently the real head of the house, for she wielded the shears. The husband held the sheep's head, while the younger members of the family maintained a firm grip on the animal's legs.⁹⁶ In addition to the lack of saleable skills thus illustrated, when hard times came, the Scandinavians were not so well equipped as the British with knowledge of how to put their case before the Government or the public.⁹⁷ The destitution in the Seventy Mile Bush was not, however, restricted to Scandinavians.

In August 1880 Ormond spoke in the House of the sufferings of the unemployed bush settlers. He quoted from a letter which he had received from a thoroughly reliable working man. This reported that there were families that had not had a bite of bread for days, and whose children were crying from hunger.⁹⁸ Ormond pointed out that when the railway tapped the valuable totara timber stands at Tahoraiti these people would have the means of earning a livelihood, and urged that some employment be found in the meantime. Ormond and Captain Russell had waited on the Minister of Public Works a day or two earlier, to urge that this section of railway be proceeded with.⁹⁹ On 8 November 1880 a meeting

96. Y, 17 December 1881, reprinting from a Wairarapa paper.

97. A letter signed 'Sympathizer', published in the Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 12 November 1880, explains these difficulties of the Scandinavians very clearly.

98. NZPD, Vol. 37, p. 404.

99. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 20 August 1880, p. 6.

of the unemployed was held in the Norsewood schoolroom. One man said he had not had a day's work for seven months. Another had done only 13 days' work in the previous eight months. One man with a wife and four children said that in the two years since he arrived in the colony he had only earned about £20. The Rev. Mr. Sass, the Lutheran pastor, told of the destitution he observed as he moved among his people. It was decided to petition the Minister of Public Works, and make a report of the meeting available to the local press.¹⁰⁰ Towards the end of the month Ormond was informed by the government of its intention to provide work for the Scandinavian settlements.¹⁰¹

One must be careful, however, not to give an unbalanced picture of these settlements. A special correspondent of the Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier¹⁰² who visited Norsewood in the autumn of 1880 described it as a prosperous settlement, with 1,600 acres in grass or under crop, 400 milking cows, 600 head of young cattle, 150 horses, and about 50 miles of good fencing, nearly all wire. He described the settlers as 'fine, strong, pleasant, hard-working men and women' and reported 'large families of happy, healthy children'. The settlements formed by small farm associations in 1876 and 1877 were also making good progress. The report of the Hawke's Bay Commissioner of Crown Lands for the year ending 30 June 1879

100. ibid., 12 November 1880.

101. ibid., 26 November 1880.

102. 2 April 1880, p.14.

tells of the inspection of the Woodville and Ormondville Special Settlements. At Woodville most of the members had made great progress in clearing and cultivating their land, and had erected good houses, while at Ormondville some members, having met all requirements, had availed themselves of a rule allowing them to make the full payment of purchase money before it was due.¹⁰³ A newspaper correspondent visiting the Heretaunga Special Settlement in September 1880 wrote an¹⁰⁴ equally encouraging report on its progress. The forward move in land settlement initiated by Rolleston helped to bring better times to the Seventy Mile Bush. Roads were put in to open up new blocks, and when these were put on sale, many of the sections were available on deferred payment terms. During 1880 settlements were established in this way at¹⁰⁵ Kumeroa and Ngamoko.

In the Wairarapa's Forty Mile Bush, Mauriceville and Eketahuna remained among the most isolated of the Bush settlements. No railway had yet penetrated the area, although the Wairarapa line reached Masterton in October 1880. Of the two settlements Eketahuna was proving the more favoured by circumstances. Not only was it enlivened by becoming the half-way stopping place for travellers through the bush, but it had also by 1880 a road constructed to the east to link it with Alfredton. Some 6,658 acres of the Mangaone Block thus

103. AJHR 1879, Session II, C-5, p. 11.

104. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 24 September 1880, p. 8.

105. AJHR 1880, C-2, p. 6.

opened up were offered for sale in April 1880, half for cash, half on deferred payments. Less than one third of it was sold to 24 selectors. The Forty Mile Bush thus continued as something of a backwater in the flow of development. In the early 1870s this had been due to its being of secondary importance in the government's strategic communications design. In the ensuing years it was due to the West Coast route establishing its clear superiority as the main northerly route from Wellington. Even Hawke's Bay travellers were showing a marked inclination to go through the Gorge to Palmerston North and thence by the coast to Wellington. By 1880 it was becoming clear that the priority granted to the Wairarapa railway route could not be sustained against the convincing case for a West Coast line linking Wellington and the Manawatu.

CHAPTER 10

BUSH, FARM AND HOME, 1869-1881

With some understanding of the origins of the Bush settlers, and of the strategic, political, social and economic forces that shaped the direction and rate of settlement, we can turn to discuss how the newcomers set about mastering the forest and fashioning from it the farms and homes of their hopes and dreams. Before we study in detail the methods used in this task we must examine both the Bush and the kind of small farm the settlers planned, as these were the two main factors determining development in the early years of settlement. It would not be difficult to adopt a mistaken view of each of these factors. Thus, remembering the notable lack of indigenous mammals and edible fruits, one might easily adopt too harsh a view of the resources of the untamed Bush in the 1870s. Evidence will be presented to show that in fact the forest wilderness made a considerable contribution to the larders of many of the settlers. From later developments one might also draw mistaken inferences as to the type of farming the settlers planned. For example, one may be surprised to learn that dairying was neglected in the early years of bush settlement in South Taranaki, and that as late as 1883 the storekeepers of such towns as Normanby, Hawera and Patea had to import a large proportion of their butter.¹

1. Y, 25 May 1883, p. 4.

We have already noted an earlier widespread reluctance to tackle bush land, and have seen that this was weakening in the mid 1870s. By the end of the decade, not only had the prejudice against bush land largely disappeared, but it was even held to be a better proposition than open country for the man of limited means.² For one thing (apart from the brief aberration occasioned by the 1877 Land Act) it was much cheaper - being perhaps a quarter to a half the price of open country of a similar quality. Again, one needed only an axe, a bill-hook and some grass seed in order to raise one's initial crop. The forest itself provided the raw materials for the home and much of its furnishings, and for farm buildings and fences. The open country settler, in comparison, needed much more capital to develop his section. He had to procure draught animals and equipment to plough and harrow his land. The materials for his home, sheds and fences had also usually to be purchased. Furthermore, while the bush farmer was encumbered with an excess of available firewood, the open country farmer often had to purchase his household fuel. A settler who moved from South Canterbury to South Taranaki in the early 1880s recalled that in the former region he had to pay £4 a cord for black pine firewood, which had had to be carted 40 to 50 miles. In Taranaki he found the bush settlers only too glad to have it carted off

2. See e.g. Taranaki Budget, 21 December 1878, 'A Few Words to Intending Settlers' (Reprinted in Vogel, New Zealand, Its Past, Present and Future, pp. 30-33.)

³
 their sections. Another advantage which bush districts offered the struggling settler was a more continuous demand for labour. As E.J. Wakefield pointed out in a parliamentary speech, in Canterbury there was a great demand for farm labour during the shearing and harvesting seasons but there was a long slack period over the winter.⁴ Addressing his constituents in 1874, Harry Atkinson pointed out Taranaki's peculiar advantage in having a demand for bush felling labour through the winter. He could see plenty of winter work in the province for years to come.⁵ Nevertheless, the first years on a bush section made a considerable financial demand on the settler. It took several years to clear enough land to provide more than a token income. There were the payments to be made on the land, and there were some expenses in developing and stocking it. Moreover, the settler had somehow to feed and clothe himself, and his dependents if he had any. Did the bush make any further contribution besides building materials, firewood, and wages from the clearing operation of more fortunate neighbours? I believe that for many settlers it made a considerable contribution to food supplies, as a result of the widespread presence of indigenous and introduced game, feral animals, and wild fruit trees.

There is considerable evidence of the widespread presence of this potential food supply in the Bush - surveyor's'

3. Hawera Star, 27 October 1886.

4. NZPD, Vol. 15, p. 1511.

5. TH, 30 September 1874.

reports dealing with the unoccupied country, travellers' accounts of the settled areas, acclimatisation society reports on their achievements, complaints by settlers of wild life ravaging their crops, and news items on the exploits of shooting parties. The evidence that the ordinary bush settler commonly drew on this gratuitous source of food is largely incidental, but this is not surprising. The laws covering the hunting of wild birds and animals were fairly complex, and constantly changing. Between 1861 and 1875 there were no less than ten acts of parliament dealing with the protection of birds and animals.⁶ In addition, there were provincial ordinances, such as Taranaki's Wild Cattle Ordinance of 1867.⁷ The interpretation of these acts and ordinances required a knowledge of proclamations and advertisements by provincial superintendents and by acclimatisation societies. It seems likely that most Bush settlers had only a vague idea of the legal position, but proceeded to quietly stock their larders with such wild life as was available, in not a few cases using skills learnt on poaching expeditions in the Old Country.⁸ This unobtrusive process of self-help comes to light in an incidental way through reports of shooting accidents, complaints against sabbath desecration, and protests by acclimatisation society

6. New Zealand Country Journal, II, 4 (July 1878), p. 231 prints a list of these acts.

7. Taranaki Provincial Council, Minutes, Session 15, Paper 36, Typescript copy, General Assembly Library, Wellington.

8. For a discussion of poaching skills among the settlers, the 'smuggling' of poaching gear into the colony, and a description of Bob Dorkes, the Okato poacher, see W.K. Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back Again, Auckland, 1945, pp.142-4.

supporters. It is sufficiently important to merit a survey of the evidence from the various Bush districts.

The North Taranaki bush of the 1870s appears to have been well stocked with wild cattle, and native and introduced game. W.K. Howitt, who spent his boyhood at Okato in the 1870s, reports that native game was plentiful, and also that the settler's gun was often used to shoot a wild pig, heifer or steer.⁹ He mentions bacon made from the wild pigs.¹⁰ The introduction of the pig to New Zealand dates back to the 18th century, and by the 1870s they were to be found in almost all districts of the North Island. Three gold prospectors who in 1876 made a long journey through inland Taranaki and 'headed all the rivers' were reported to have lived for most of the time on wild pigs and fern root.¹¹ The wild cattle probably dated from the early years of the New Plymouth settlement. It was common for cattle to be driven overland from Wellington to New Plymouth in the 1840s,¹² and some would have been lost at various points on the route.¹³ In the winter of 1854 the Richmonds ran cattle 'on the back bush land',¹⁴ and no doubt other settlers were doing the same at this period, providing another source for feral stock. The Maori Wars of the 1860s provided ample further occasions

9. W.K. Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back, Auckland, 1945, pp. 13, 98, 187.

10. ibid., p. 159.

11. NZM, 1 April 1876, p. 17.

12. Quin, Bush Frontier, North Taranaki, p. 62.

13. Y, 12 March 1870, reports the loss of 17 cattle from a mob of 250 being driven from Wanganui to Waitara. Some were drowned, others apparently lost.

14. C.W. Richmond to T. Richmond, 8 August 1854. Scholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, I, 154.

for cattle to escape into the bush. In an account of farming in Taranaki published in the New Zealand Country Journal,¹⁵ Thomas Kelly explained that, unlike horses, which get entangled and starve to death, horned cattle can make their way through the bush, working themselves free from any entanglement. It is not surprising, therefore, to find reports of large mobs of wild cattle in various parts of Taranaki in the 1870s. Thus in 1873 a party exploring the headwaters of the Waitara River came across a herd of about 200 wild cattle,¹⁶ apparently the result of Maori cattle being driven up river during the war, and in 1877 a party out looking for some missing cattle near Urenui found them amongst a herd of wild cattle in a clearing in the middle of the bush.¹⁷ For the North Taranaki settler who did not wish to tackle this 'big game' there was an abundance of edible birds. The 1873 Waitara exploration party just mentioned shot for themselves an ample supply of pigeons. When flooded rivers in the Moa Block isolated road and survey parties in April 1876, there was no worry about their starving because of the plentiful supply of pigeons.¹⁸ Pheasants were also becoming numerous in the 1870s. In 1872, after receiving reports that pheasants were being shot, the superintendent issued a warning that they were protected by law, with heavy penalties for infringements.¹⁹ In 1874 a six week s' shooting season for cock

15. I, 4 (October 1877).

16. Taranaki News, 21 June 1873.

17. TH, 14 July 1877.

18. TH, 29 April 1876.

19. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XX, 8, p. 31.

pheasants was gazetted. By this date Taranaki farmers were complaining loudly that pheasants were ravaging their seed corn.²¹ In 1875 the shooting season was increased to three months.²² Pheasants are reported to have been observed in Inglewood when the initial clearing was being made, and by 1877 they were a nuisance, eating oats as fast as the settlers could sow them.²³ A.H. Gibson, who as a youth went to work for Harry Atkinson at Hurworth, about 1880, reports that there was no lack of game on the farm. Pheasants were plentiful, as also were pigeons and kakas. In the streams there were eels and 'small native mountain trout, now almost extinct'.²⁴

South Taranaki would seem to have been even more liberally endowed with game than North Taranaki. A correspondent writing from Waihi redoubt in March 1872 recommended the district to sportsmen on account of the abundance 'of game, winged and quadruped, from pigeons and ducks to pigs and bulls'.²⁵ A newspaper reporter describing the Waimate Plains in September 1878 mentions the large number of small native clearings in the bush bordering the open country. Of the area around Te Ngutu-o-te-manu he writes: 'Wild cattle inhabit the surrounding bush in hundreds - I had almost said thousands - and at night they come into the clearing to graze on the cocksfoot grass'.²⁶ When this country was occupied,

20. ibid., XXII, 10, p. 42.

21. NZM, 28 November 1874.

22. Taranaki Govt. Gazette, XXIV, p. 21.

23. TH, 22 October 1877.

24. A.H. Gibson, 'Autobiography', Typescript, MS q 920, [1931] P, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

25. Y, 16 March 1872, p. 4.

26. Y, 28 September 1878, p. 6.

from late 1880 onwards, it was found to be swarming with wild pigs and cattle. It was necessary to wage a vigorous war on the pigs before serious farming could begin. By January 1881 it was reported that the 'innumerable herds of wild and semi-wild pigs' on the Plains were 'being killed and caught in great quantities'. The Langley brothers, who had earlier set up the first hotel in Inglewood, were now putting up a store at Manaia, and had purchased from the natives the right to all unmarked pigs on certain portions of the Plains. They had engaged Maoris to catch them at 1s²⁷ and 2s each, and they were being carted off the Plains alive²⁸ at the rate of two waggon loads, each of about 20 pigs, daily. Not only were the pigs a danger to crops and pastures, but²⁹ they were also reported to be damaging road formation. By April 1881 it was reported that a 'tremendous quantity' of pigs had been slaughtered by settlers and sportsmen, without³⁰ any apparent effect on their numbers. One settler claimed a toll of 303 killed in a fortnight's hunting, while his³¹ neighbour had killed even more over a longer period. In May 1881, one party of Hawera men accounted for over 100 pigs in one day's hunting on the Plains.³² Accounts of damage caused by the pigs, and of successful hunting expeditions against them, could be multiplied. For months the Plains

27. Y, 15 January 1881, p. 3.

28. *ibid.*, p.7.

29. *Hawera Star*, 6 & 9 April 1881.

30. *ibid.*, 15 April 1881.

31. *ibid.*, 20 April 1881.

32. *NZM*, 14 May 1881, p. 15.

echoed with 'the shouts of pig-hunters, the barking of their dogs, and the squealing of the pigs'.³³ Of the wild cattle, it was the bulls that needed to be eliminated because of their habit of attacking settlers. In April 1881 a party of three settlers and a Maori accounted for 47 wild bulls in a week's hunting.³⁴

The open country of the Waimate Plains was quickly settled and fenced, with the result that the wild pigs and cattle were rapidly eradicated. The neighbouring bush was much more slowly occupied, and the waste land beyond the edge of settlement provided meat for the settlers' larders for several decades. W.H. Skinner, who was surveying in this bush land for several years from 1881 onwards, reports that 'mobs of wild cattle in good condition were plentiful and provided us with ample fresh meat'.³⁵ Harry Atkinson's son Alfred served his cadetship with Skinner at this time, and Skinner describes him as 'a fine shot and keen hunter of the wild cattle and pigs roaming the bush and scrub' who ensured that the camp larder was never short of beef or pork.³⁶ The hunting of these animals by settlers found its way occasionally into the records as a result of accidents, or particularly exciting adventures.³⁷ Pigeon shooting in this district is witnessed to by a complaint about 'sabbath desecration'.³⁸

33. Y, 15 January 1881, p. 7.

34. Hawera Star, 13 April 1881.

35. Skinner, Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor, p. 50.

36. ibid., p. 55. See also Scholefield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 526.

37. See e.g. Hawera Star, 14 November 1881, Supplement; ibid., 29 June 1883.

38. Patea Mail, 16 January 1878.

Ebenezer Maxwell, in writing of his service with the Armed Constabulary at Opunake from 1881 till about 1885, makes frequent reference to the abundance of wild pigs, cattle, horses and pigeons in both the bush and open country of South Taranaki.³⁹ His recollections will serve to introduce the subject of wild fruit trees as a further source of food from the bush. He writes of 'groves of luscious peaches and cherries in the bays along the margins' of the bush. He reports filling many a flour bag with this fruit without getting off his horse.⁴⁰ Peaches were the most widespread of the wild fruit trees, and are reported from almost all the Bush districts. According to one account, they were introduced to North Taranaki in 1829 by a Maori who travelled to Sydney and back on a ship trading with the Moturoa whaling station.⁴¹ From the grove thus established in a clearing inland from New Plymouth came the stones to establish further groves up and down the coast. In April 1873 peaches were 2s 6d a hundredweight in New Plymouth.⁴² W.K. Howitt reports peach plantations at Okato in the 1870s.⁴³ In 1872 the bush near Waihi redoubt, inland from Hawera, was reported to abound with 'fruit trees of all descriptions',⁴⁴ and particular mention was made of the peach blossom in the spring.⁴⁵

39. Ebenezer Maxwell, Recollections and Reflections of an old New Zealander, Dunedin, 1935, esp. pp. 102-9.

40. ibid., p. 108.

41. A.M. Hale, Pioneer Nurserymen of New Zealand, Wellington, 1955, p. 106.

42. Taranaki News, 12 April 1873.

43. A Pioneer Looks Back, pp. 26, 201.

44. Y, 16 March 1872, p. 4.

45. Y, 5 October 1872, p. 7.

A Hawera correspondent writing in 1878 on the jam-making season, complained that whereas a few years ago, 'a person could go out and fill his cart at almost any peach grove he chose to', now both Maoris and white settlers were asserting their ownership of the various groves, and would rather let them rot than allow them to be taken without payment. The Mountain Road also had its fruit trees - 'peach, apple and other fruits' growing here and there in clearings. On the Patea coast peaches were reported in 1876 to be 'grown all over', while further south on the Waitotara River a large peach grove figures in an incident in the campaign against Titokowaru in February 1869. The great days of the peach groves had passed by the early 1880s. Diseases began to spoil the crops and kill the trees in North Taranaki in the late 1870s, and spread throughout the Bush provinces over the next few years.

In the 1870s the coast from Hawera to Wanganui was well provided with wild pigs and cattle, pheasants, and, towards the end of the decade, quail. When Robert Petch took up a

46. Patea Mail, 6 February 1878.

47. TH, 6 February 1875.

48. Robert Petch to his father, 10 July 1876, 'Petch Papers'.

49. Cowan, New Zealand Wars, II, 293.

50. C.W. Richmond to Emily E. Richmond, 29 January 1878, Scholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers II p. 443.

51. Y, 25 May 1883, p. 4. N.Z. Farmer, VII, I (1883), p. 53.

52. Y, 5 September 1874, p. 3; 'Petch papers', letters dated 3 March 1876.

53. NZM, 15 March 1879, p. 8.

54. Y, 21 February 1874, 15 May 1875, 23 June 1877.

55. Y, 15 May 1875, 23 June 1877.

bush section inland from Kakaramea in 1876, he found on it a great many wild pigs and cattle and a few pheasants.⁵⁶ Around Wanganui itself native duck and pigeons were plentiful,⁵⁷ and both quail and pheasants were well established by 1870.⁵⁸ On the inland hills and valleys there was an abundance of pigeons and wild cattle and pigs.⁵⁹ The native settlements up the Wanganui River were famed for their prolific fruit trees - apples, pears, peaches, quinces, plums, walnuts, raspberries and other fruit.⁶⁰ By 1885 Wanganui settlers were looking back with regret on the days when their pigs were fed for weeks on windfall peaches.⁶¹ However, the disease had not penetrated further inland, and good crops were still reported.⁶²

Few Bush districts of the 1870s and early 1880s could compete with the Rangitikei-Manawatu in variety of wild game. Wild pigs, cattle, quail, pheasants, partridges, native pigeons, rabbits and hares are all reported in large numbers.⁶³ Peach groves are also reported in various parts of the region.⁶⁴ For the sake of brevity our account will be restricted to reports on wild cattle in the Paraekaretu Block,

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56. 'Petch Papers', letters dated 10 November 1876, 14 July, 1877.
 57. See e.g. Y, 6 May 1871, 7 April 1882.
 58. Y, 15 January 1870, p. 3. See also Y, 24 January 1874, p. 11.
 59. See e.g. Y, 29 August 1874, p. 4; 10 March 1882, p. 4; 19th January 1883, p. 11.
 60. Y, 16 January 1885, p. 12.
 61. Y, 29 May 1885, p. 4.
 62. Y 19 January 1883, p. 11, 16 January 1885, p. 12.
 63. See e.g. Y, 13 November 1875 (cattle); 13 April 1872 (quail); 21 February 1874 (pheasants and partridges); 5 June 1881 (hares and pheasants); Wellington Independent, 2 July 1870 (pigs); NZM, 20 April 1878 (pigeons and ducks); 22 March 1879 (rabbits).
 64. e.g. NZM, 5 April 1873 (for 'a long distance' along the Manawatu River); Y, February 1876 (Halcombe); G.S. Fort, Chance or Design?, pp. 20-1 (a cattle run, '20 miles up

the country around Hunterville, between the Rangitikei and Turakina Rivers. When A. Follett Halcombe reconnoitred the block, accompanied by two local settlers, in June 1872, he reported that:

It is a perfect paradise for the explorer or the pioneer settler. Stray cattle from the Rangitikei district have for the last twenty years been breeding undisturbed, and now roam everywhere in large mobs. The food supply we carried consisted of biscuits, with pepper and salt. The rifle or gun supplied us daily at evenfall with fresh meat without going 100 yards out of our way to obtain it. ⁶⁵

A newspaper correspondent sent to report on the block early in 1874 confirmed the presence of wild cattle 'in considerable numbers'. ⁶⁶ In December 1874 there is a newspaper report of a mishap to four Turakina men on a cattle hunting expedition to the Paraekaretu Block. They were returning down the Turakina River on their raft when it capsized and they lost all their provisions. ⁶⁷ One wonders whether such expeditions from the older settled districts were a regular happening. This one would doubtless have gone unrecorded apart from the mishap. It seems unlikely that the men would travel so far for meat, and one infers that they were after hides. By a provincial act of 1865, a licence from the superintendent was required to shoot wild cattle, but none of the 27 persons receiving such licences between 1870 and 1876 resided in Turakina. One was, however, issued to James

country' from Marton.)

65. AJHR 1872, D-16, p. 7.

66. Y, 21 February 1874, p. 9.

67. Y, 16 December 1876, p. 5.

W. Wilkinson, a Paraekaretu settler, on 13 March 1875.

In 1880 two Wanganui men are reported to have visited the Paraekaretu bush, shot 27 head of wild cattle, skinned them, and left the carcasses behind in the forest. The 'struggling settlers' resented this poaching, as the wild cattle provided them with an excellent source of meat supply.⁶⁹ Obviously if the wild cattle of this then isolated district could attract such outside interest, they must have made a considerable contribution to the local economy. It would not be difficult to show that wild cattle were similarly valued in other districts.⁷⁰

Game was plentiful also east of the ranges, particularly in the Wairarapa district. Hundreds of wild cattle and pigs were shot yearly on the open hill country in the early 1870s.⁷¹ Runholders could get men to hunt wild cattle for their hides, but a bounty had to be paid to get pigs destroyed.⁷² When bush settlers began to move into the Forty Mile Bush there was plenty of wild life awaiting them. Considerable numbers of

68. N.Z. Govt. Gazette, Province of Wellington, XXII, p. 39.

69. Y, 28 August 1880, reprinting from Rangitikei Advocate.

70. e.g. Kiwitea. See Y, 27 November 1880. (The killing of wild cattle 'a daily occurrence'.)

71. NZM, 19 July 1873, p. 3; 4 October 1873, p. 5. G.L. Meredith, Adventuring in Maoriland in the Seventies, Sydney, 1935, pp. 27, 33-4, 64, 66, 92-3, 97, 99.

72. NZM, 20 July 1872. (Contract for 500 at 4½d per head, 6d per head thereafter - quickly reduced to 4½d again on account of the number being shot.)

wild cattle and horses were reported in 1871.⁷³ Geese, turkey, and 'even peacocks' were reported in the southern outskirts of the bush in 1876,⁷⁴ and a traveller making the coach journey from Masterton to Woodville in April 1877 reported that a brace of pheasants crossed in front of them every now and again.⁷⁵ An overseas visitor who went shooting in the Forty Mile Bush in 1884 found the native pigeons more memorable. He was amazed at the 'ludicrous way' in which these big birds would sit and look calmly about while some poor shot of a rustic fired at them again and again.⁷⁶

From this quick survey of a sample of the evidence it is clear that the forest must have yielded an abundance of food to many a settler. Besides the birds and animals already mentioned there were others of lesser significance such as weka and kaka,⁷⁷ and the tuis which were hung up in bundles for sale in shops.⁷⁸ Eels are not infrequently mentioned as a source of food, and by 1880 deer were beginning to be of some consequence in a few districts.⁷⁹ On the weight of the evidence it seems likely that wild cattle and native pigeons were the two wild creatures of most significance in the economy of the Bush settlements. The cattle usually had to be sought some distance into the bush from the settlements,

73. NZM, 25 February 1871, p. 11.

74. NZM, 7 October 1876.

75. NZM, 27 April 1878, p. 6.

76. E.W. Payton, Round about New Zealand, London, 1888, pp. 238, 316.

77. ibid., p. 316.

78. NZPD, Vol. 13, p. 204.

79. See e.g. Y, 7 August 1880, p. 8; 26 February 1881, p. 13.

and required some skill in hunting and shooting. The pigeons seem to have persisted for years even around the larger settlements, and could be procured by the most amateur hunter. Pigeon shooting is mentioned as a common form of 'sabbath desecration' in the early days of Halcombe,⁸⁰ pigeons were still being destroyed by the hundred about Palmerston North in 1878,⁸¹ and after forty years of settlement, they were still plentiful in the bush of Lower Hutt in 1881.⁸² Many a meat-hungry working class immigrant who came to the Bush in this period must have felt that he had reached his 'promised land'.

We must now turn to consider the kind of farm economy that the typical bush settler of the 1870s had in mind when he took up his section. We have seen that he came most commonly from the English agricultural labouring class - a class which was deeply conscious of having gone down in the world, of having lost its stake in the land, and of being placed in a position of dependence that undermined its self-respect. In the homeland two main strategies were adopted in the struggle for betterment - the raising of wages by orthodox trade union methods, and the endeavour to regain a stake in the land, in the form of allotments and smallholdings,

80. Guy & Potter, Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand, p. 117.

81. NZM, 16 May 1878, p. 17.

82. NZM, 9 April 1881, p. 15.

by means of a variety of measures and tactics. C.W. Stubbs,⁸³ a Buckinghamshire clergyman who divided his 22 acre glebe into half-acre allotments for his labouring parishioners in 1873, was led in due course to the conclusion that nothing 'fires the imagination of the rural labourer more than does ⁸⁴ [the opportunity for] the occupation and Cultivation of land'. It was this land hunger which provided the incentive for immigration. As Jerningham Wakefield remarked in 1874, the chief thought with which the immigrants started from home was that 'they would be able to obtain a bit of land in the colony, upon which they could found a home for themselves and their families'.⁸⁵ The aims and dreams of the English 'land for the labourer' movement of the 1870s and 1880s therefore throw much light on the hopes and plans which the settlers brought with them to the Bush. In part these dreams were shaped by a popular tradition of the 'good old days' of Merrie England, a tradition which was correct at least in attributing a much more prominent place to the yeoman in the England of the past. It was the time-honoured yeoman role which the land-hungry aspired to fill, and its main features are well summed up in a nineteenth century writer's impression of the yeoman of the fifteenth century:

83. For the allotments and smallholdings movement see: Orwin & Whetham, History of British Agriculture, pp. 330-5; Ashby, Joseph Ashby, Chap. 10; Green, English Agricultural Labourer, pp. 79-84; J. Collings, Land Reform: Occupying Ownership; Peasant Propriety and Rural Education, London, 1906. (Jesse Collings was the leading public advocate of the movement).

84. C.W. Stubbs, The Land and the Labourers, London, 1884, p. 29.

85. NZPD, Vol. 15, p. 1511.

The necessities of life were cheap and plentiful, the habits of life were simple; all the members of a yeoman's family were labourers on the farm; the women milked the cows, span the wool, and made up the garments; almost every article consumed was of home manufacture. 86

The essential features of this picture are independence, self-sufficient plenitude, and close links between daily work and family life, features which the yeoman ideal shared with the Old Testament Promised Land, so familiar to many of these landless labourers. Even the possession of a small allotment could bring back something of these qualities to the life of the English rural workman. Canon Tuckwell, who braved his Bishop's opposition and cut his glebe farm into allotments, found that after two years:

Already throughout the village I found corn bags ranged along the walls, potatoes under the beds, hams hanging from the ceilings wrapped in old Reynolds' weekly newspapers; the housewives for the first time in their lives facing winter unemployment without alarm. 87

A small holding would, of course, give even more security and independence, and yeomen with freehold farms persisted in England throughout the nineteenth century in sufficient numbers to keep the benefits of the ideal constantly before the country labourer.⁸⁸ But the surviving English yeomen commonly found themselves in an isolated social position 'occupying a rank appreciably above that of ordinary tenant-farmers, yet far below that of country gentlemen in the

86. G.C. Brodrick, English Land and English Landlords, London, 1881, p.20. For a useful recent discussion of the yeoman in pre-industrial England see Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost, London, 1965, esp. pp. 43-4, 61.

87. W. Tuckwell, Reminiscences of a Radical Paxon, quoted Green, English Agricultural Labourer, p. 80.

88. Small owner-cultivators held about 20 per cent of farm acreage in 1800, about 12 per cent in 1900, Mingay, 'The Agricultural Revolution in English History',

in the commission of the ⁸⁹pace' and as a result were 'in a position where they would find hardly any neighbours to associate with them upon terms of equality'⁹⁰. Furthermore, any English rural labourer who tried to better himself by acquiring land, even after the way had been cleared for him by the various allotment and smallholdings Acts of the 1880s and 1890s, found himself up against strong opposition from ⁹¹the farmers and landowners. How much more attractive was the promise of the New Zealand Bush. There the prospective yeoman could look forward to living in a community of his equals. Even if he arrived in the colony penniless, he could expect soon to be able to afford a quarter-acre allotment, which was what the typical 'urban' section in a Bush township amounted to. The surrounding wastes would supply many of the benefits of the common lands of Old England. From there, the road to a small farm was wide open to the man of good health, frugal habits, and industry.

Many of the Bush settlers, of course, came from the older settled districts of the colony. Whatever district they came from, they would be familiar with small farmers who had arrived as penniless labourers, and had worked their way to a life of independence and simple plenty. Many of the migrants to the Bush were the sons of such smallholders, and

88.(contd.) Minchinton, ed., Essays in Agrarian History, II, 17.

89. Brodrick, English Land and English Landlords, p. 361.

90. ibid.

91. J.C. Unwin, The Land Hunger: Life Under Monopoly, London, 1913, p. 212.

a good number of them would have grown up in settlements such as Nelson, New Plymouth and Wellington, which were essentially yeoman communities. It was the life and farm economy of such settlers that both colonial and British migrants sought to reproduce in the Bush. One such yeoman, Thomas Harrison of Omata, has left us a simple diary which gives a useful picture of the life of a successful smallholder.

Thomas Harrison (1822-1893) immigrated to New Plymouth in 1841. In 1865 he went with his family, including several sturdy sons, to establish a farm on the edge of the bush at Omata. From his diary covering the years 1864 to 1874, extracts from the entries for 1870 will suffice for our purposes:

January 92

11 Thos and Edwin at Oddfellows Picnic

17 Cutting Coxfoot Grass ...

28 digging out Cellar in the morning wet after dinner cutting wheat.

March

1 splitting firewood Bennet took a load to town

10 Sinking well deeper no water in it for us. Primrose calved yesterday or this morning in the Bush.

17 Myself went to town with 2½ cwt potatoes for Mrs Ford, 1¼ cwt for H. Ford and 224 lbs Grasseed for Mr Kingdom.

22 Myself went to town with 500 lbs Onions for Mrs Ford.

28 Myself and Bennet working out our Rates

April

25 a wet Day. Bennet gone to look for the steers. Myself making a board to salt Bacon on and a scaffold to hang up the pigs.

- April
28 ploughing out potatoes
- May
28 Bennet went to town with wheat to grind
- June
18 Myself & Bennet to town took 600 cwt [sic] Carrots to Mr Yates & sold to Mr Hephreys £5 3s 4d worth of bacon Sold Mr H. Ford 37½ lbs of Hams worth £1 8s 3½d.
- 25 Delivered ... 400 cwt [sic] [potatoes] to Dr Rawson as payment of Ballance of A/c owing to him.
- July
5 ... Delivered 6½ bushels maze to Mr Hulke in payment for 3 bus 45lbs wheat.
- 7 ... planting Poplars and blackberry bushes.
- October
21 All hands went to look for the cow, Snowdrop found her with a calf on clearing.
- 27 ... sowed peas and beans & cucumber planted cabbage.
- December
8 Myself making cheese vats, the others hoeing corn. 93

From these entries there emerges the picture of a busy, versatile household, not too different from that of the medieval yeoman. Bush, field, pasture, garden and orchard together provide most of the household's needs. The varied crafts of the agriculturist, butcher, dairyman, bacon-curer, well-sinker and carpenter are all in evidence. The farm economy is not, like that of the later dairying era, tied to a 'factory' beyond its bounds. A yearly trip to the millers, as of old in Merrie England, is almost the limit of the farm's

dependence on outside help in the processing of its produce. Money is not too important - rates are worked off, and the doctor is paid in kind. Other entries tell of bartering of produce, and exchange of labour with neighbours. A close-knit family life and the steady improvement of home and farm provide much of life's enjoyment. The following year (1871) 22 apple trees, 8 peach trees and some gooseberries are added to the orchard, a dairy is built, and one wet day is spent making a 'chair for Kate'. Business trips to town, and an occasional picnic provide the main diversions from the farming round. The contemporary English rural labourer's dreams of a Promised Land can have asked for little more than this for their fulfilment.

Thomas Harrison was favoured by the close proximity of his farm to the market of the town of New Plymouth. Could a bush section farther back in the country provide a similarly satisfying life? A small farmer, on a bush section from which he could sell little 'for want of conveyance' wrote to the New Zealand Mail in 1872 to explain that it could.⁹⁴ His letter is so full of interesting detail, and expresses so aptly the yeoman's simple delight in the occupation and cultivation of land, that it must be quoted at length. His purpose is to answer the question which he has been repeatedly asked by persons ignorant of the resources available to small farmers - 'How do small farmers live?' He explains that his answer is based 'truthfully' on past experience both of

94. 20 April 1872, p. 7.

himself and others, and then proceeds:

A careful man manages to save £30; with £25 of it he purchases fifty acres of land, generally bush. He goes upon it with determination, and falls about ten acres. He then finds other employment, road work, shearing, &c. At the proper time he burns off his fallen bush, chips in wheat and orts [sic], and plants potatoes. He then builds a slab house, plastered inside with clay, and build's a clay chimney. He barks the roof or shingles it, whichever may be most convenient. It is warm in winter and cool in summer. He puts a good fence round his clearing, and fences off a small paddock, and lays it down with artificial grasses. The hay he threshes for seed, which serves to feed his stock afterwards. He makes his garden and soon grows plenty of good vegetables of various sorts. From his neighbours he gets a few apple stocks and gooseberry cuttings. He puts in peach stones, grafts his apple stock, and puts in a few good plumbs [sic] and cherry trees. In a few years he has a good orchard. Most men get a swarm of bees. When the land is all cleared except a few acres reserve bush, he always grows sufficient crops for his own consumption, and sometimes a little to spare. He generally gets a sow pig, and pigs, but they are generally fenced in. He keeps a horse and a few cows, with about seventy or eighty sheep. He drinks little but milk and water, except a glass with a friend once or twice a year when from home. If he does not smoke, which a number do not, his contribution to the revenue is very trifling. He keeps fowls, ducks and turkeys, and a good housewife makes a little peach or gooseberry wine, in case a friend drops in on a visit. She also makes jams and preserves of different kinds. He generally has plenty of honey. We collect mushrooms and make catsup, occasionally shoot a few pigeons, and from the river or creek catch a few eels. We salt and dry some, and find them equal to Yarmouth bloaters, if properly cured. We have always plenty of eggs, apples, and peaches, which we cut and dry as they do in America. As a rule we sell little, except butter, wool, or a young steer or heifer, for want of conveyance. Harvest work, shearing and fencing, puts us in sufficient funds for all we require, as our dress is not expensive. I think we enjoy all the luxuries this world requires. In short days we devote the evenings to reading. We make a practice of retiring to bed about 9 o'clock, and get up at sun rise ... Thus we live in comfort and independence.

It seems likely that this letter came from one of the

small farm settlements of the Wairarapa. Again we have a very mixed farm economy, supplying most of the family's needs, and a versatile household. The contribution of the housewife is more clearly brought out here than in the Harrison diary. Her manifold skills give the pleasures of a varied fare, and provide against the winter by a number of preserving

finally obtain a section which he had only cursorily inspected, or had even bought blind. In any case, judging the quality of bush land was a skill that came only with experience. For many, the choosing of a section was little more than guesswork, to be compounded with other imponderables such as the probable demand for wage labour in the district in the crucial early years, and the prospects as regards roading access to the section. To add to all this, the bush settler was gambling on his own continued good health, and even, in many cases, on the weather, which could decide his success or failure if the scales were finely balanced.

Once the die was cast, and by one means or another a bush section had been acquired, the task of clearing the bush had to be tackled. The main outlines of the method used throughout the Bush districts are clear. First the under-scrubbing was done, that is, the cutting of all the undergrowth and creepers with slash hooks and light axes. If this was properly done, it formed the tinder for the burn; if badly done, the small growth and creepers would flourish in the fallen timber, and so resist rather than help the bush burn. Next the standing bush was felled and left to dry. Underscrubbing and felling were done during winter and spring, and had to be completed in time to allow the last timber felled to dry before the burn. Then, on a suitable day in late summer or early autumn, the felled bush was burnt, and when the fire had passed, cocksfoot and clover seed were

Broadcast sown amongst the stumps and logs. During the following years, by the processes of 'stumping' and 'logging up', the remaining debris was steadily cleared from the land. Within this general outline there was considerable variation in timing and details of method, partly arising from differences in the character of the bush, climate and rainfall, and partly from differing ideas about the work among the settlers. As one South Taranaki bush farmer expressed it 'they each work according to their own ideas, doing their work as they think best without a set rule for performing any set duty'.⁹⁶

On the importance of thorough work in underscrubbing, all accounts seem in agreement. On the question of felling all the heavy timber, there were differences in opinion. Thomas Kelly, writing in North Taranaki in 1877 and doubtless influenced by the experiences of the settlers tackling the heavy timber of the Moa Block, maintained that it was false economy to leave any large trees standing.⁹⁷ Writing in 1889, the Hawera correspondent of The New Zealand Farmer maintained⁹⁸ that it was better to let the large trees stand for a few years, as this allowed them to become dry so that they would burn easily, whereas if felled they became waterlogged and

96. The New Zealand Farmer, VII, 7, p.196, VII, 8, p. 250 (1886), 'Bush Farming', by 'Rob Roy'. (Prize essay in competition on this subject sponsored by the Normanby Horticultural Society.) This essay, and Thomas Kelly's 'Bush Burn Farming in Taranaki', N.Z. Country Journal, I, 4, pp. 242-5, (1877), are the two most useful accounts I have found on bush clearing methods of the 1870s and 1880s. Kelly's article has been reprinted in Lincoln College Rural Education Bulletin, V (1950).

97. N.Z. Country Journal, I, 4, p. 244.

98. IX, 2, p. 49.

were difficult to dispose of. On the other hand, another South Taranaki expert, 'Rob Roy', winner of the Normanby Horticultural Society's essay competition on 'Bush Farming' in 1886, maintained that rimu, matai and white pine trees should be felled at the original felling, but recommended leaving the rata trees, as the advantage gained did not warrant the outlay involved in cutting through their very hard wood.⁹⁹ Much of the South Taranaki bush differed markedly from the Moa Block and other heavily timbered areas of North Taranaki. A large portion of it was made up of 'scrubby growth, or large shrubs or trees too small to be of any value for conversion'¹⁰⁰ into timber. Over large areas the predominant tree was whitey-wood, which had soft, easily-cleared and quickly-decaying timber.¹⁰¹ Care had to be taken, however, to cut the felled trees completely clear of the stump, as it was able to keep green when held by only a few splinters, and the stumps had to be cut low enough to allow the cattle to keep in check the new growth which they quickly put out.¹⁰² The strong tendency of the whitey-wood, and other scrubby trees, to put out second growth in the heavy Taranaki rainfall, meant that felling had to be delayed until well into the winter in South Taranaki. July was about the time to make a start.¹⁰³ On the drier Kiwitea Block we have noted felling beginning in March.¹⁰⁴ Wherever he was felling,

99. N.Z. Farmer, VII, 8, p. 250

100. AJHR 1886, C-3A, p. 5.

101. N.Z. Farmer, IX, 2, p. 49.

102. Rob Roy (pseud.), 'Bush Farming'.

103. F, 1 June 1883, p. 4.

104. Chapter 9.

the skilled bushman felled the trees so that they lay fairly evenly over the land. If the trees were felled into heaps, thistles tended to cover the bare patches between, and their succulent green growth hampered the spread of the fire. Furthermore, if the trees were in heaps, it was impossible to lop the branches properly.¹⁰⁵ The good bushman lopped off all the larger branches, so that they lay closer to the ground, and ensured a better burn.

The art of bush felling could be picked up in a week or two's work with an experienced bushman.¹⁰⁶ Townsman were said to adapt to the swing of the axe sooner than the man used to hard agricultural labour.¹⁰⁷ Mere striplings could make a useful contribution, though, of course, a strong man got through more work. The technique which had to be learnt was to judge the side on which the tree would most easily fall, and put a first deep notch from this side and well in towards the centre of the trunk, then put a similar notch on the opposite side, but a little higher up, thus forming a slip which prevented the tree from sliding back over the stump and causing an accident in the act of falling.¹⁰⁸ Where the trunk was large, or badly twisted, near the base, it was the practice to attack it higher up, and bushmen became adept at constructing stages out of pieces of wood and punga, to get the necessary height. The 'jigger-board', fixing into a

105. 'Rob Roy' (pseud.), 'Bush Farming'.

106. T. Kelly, 'Bush Burn Farming'.

107. ibid.

108. ibid.

notch in the trunk, was apparently an innovation of the
¹⁰⁹
 later 1880s.

In preparation for the burn, the bush settler provided himself with a torch fashioned out of splinters from the resinous heart of a decayed white pine ¹¹⁰ or rimu. ¹¹¹ When to burn was a question which occasioned debate, and, at times, hard feelings. February was the most favoured month, but some Februaries proved exceptionally wet. When a favourable spell occurred in January, a settler was tempted to make use of it, rather than wait till later. But January was the month of the grass-seed harvest, and one's neighbour might well have a crop which an early fire would endanger. Also, one's burn might spread into one's neighbour's felled bush, and feelings could run high if one occasioned a poor January burn when a hot dry February followed. It was the general opinion that at least a month should intervene between felling and burning to allow the latest felled bush time to dry out. Once the decision was made, or forced upon one, it was important to get a good even face of fire, as the more intense the holocaust the better the burn. The carefully prepared torch was used to spread a strong face of fire across the section. One chose a day with a steady breeze blowing in the right direction, and waited till the dew had lifted. A good burn was a dramatic occasion, to be remembered for a life time. Helen Wilson's description of the initial burn on

109. N.Z. Farmer, VII, 5, p. 151.

110. 'Rob Roy' (pseud.) 'Bush Farming'.

111. T. Kelly, 'Bush Burn Farming'.

the Levin Block will serve as a typical example:

Sometimes, leaving unburnt patches behind, the flames leap half a chain ahead and scampering madly up the trunk of a standing tree, seize on its foliage with vicious crackling and spluttering. When some succulent growth is exploded by the heat a shriek so human pierces the air that one's heart stands still until it fades into the reassuring hiss of escaping sap. Nevertheless, we look about us apprehensively and move further back. The sun, hanging apparently just above the treetops, is reduced to the size of a blood-red shilling and sheds, not light, but a murky glow so unreal that it helps us in the grandeur of the holocaust almost to forget the myriad living creatures who are perishing in terror and agony. At night the world is bright, immense, exciting. Every standing tree is a pillar, holding aloft dozens of flickering lamps which keep falling to the ground in a shower of sparks. There are thousands of these torch-bearers, for every contract that is let exempts a certain number of trees, and ratas are almost always left standing. If rain keeps off the fire continues its work of useful destruction for days, even weeks. The billowy white ash remains hot and shifty with here and there a hole where the fire has burnt a dry root. Then the weather breaks and the countryside changes in a night to a black battlefield. It is seen then that very little timber has been burnt, not one sizeable tree has fallen. The trunks encumber the earth and the larger branches writhe and twist in an impenetrable tangle. 112.

Some settlers considered that too intense a fire was injurious to the soil, but the majority aimed for as heavy a fire as possible, so as to speed the clearing of the wood from the land.

The next step was to sow the ashes of the burn with grass seed mixed with a little clover. Cocksfoot was the principal grass used, because its size and vigorous growth enabled it to compete successfully with bush regrowth, but other grasses were commonly included in the mixture. The seed was sown broadcast, the sower usually carrying it in a flourbag slung around his neck, leaving both his hands free, to assist in clambering over logs, or through the rubbish of a poor burn. Some settlers however, preferred baskets or
¹¹³ buckets. It was important to sow under the logs, close around the stumps, and right through the rubbish of a poor burn, so as to leave no easy foothold for the ubiquitous scotch thistle or for second growth. Furthermore, if cattle were to be run on the clearing, they would do a great deal to break up the timber as they pushed in to get at the grass
¹¹⁴ growing in the less accessible places. There was generally good feed for cattle by early the following spring. To prepare the way for the cattle, tracks would be cut through the timber, to ensure that they could get to all parts of the

113. N.Z. Farmer, VII, 5, p. 151.

114. TH, 25 March 1876, p. 2.

clearing. However, it was not generally economic to go to much trouble in logging up for the first year or two. The natural process of decay and the movement of stock would do much of the work, if the settler had the patience to let them have the time. Much, of course, depended on the settler's general circumstances. If his means were small, and he did not wish to be restricted by the need to supervise stock on his section, he might confine himself to raising grass seed for the first few years. If, on the other hand, he wished to set up a home for a family on the section as early as possible, he would want to log up part of the clearing as quickly as he could, for garden, orchard and cropping. Fencing plans, too, depended largely on these varying circumstances, though the activities of one's neighbours also had to be taken into account. If the settler had taken his land on deferred payment he was, of course, bound by express stipulations regarding occupation, cultivation and improvements. The Land Board's Ranger would report periodically as to his fulfilment of the conditions, and failure to meet them rendered the section liable to forfeiture.

Having outlined the technique of bush clearing we must

now retrace our steps, and centre our attention on the human element in the story. We have seen how, in the early 1870s, Scandinavian families were planted almost directly on bush sections, in order to hasten the establishment of strategic road lines. This bold placing of women and children, along with the men, directly into the untamed bush, succeeded because of exceptional circumstances. The Scandinavians were already skilled foresters, and their wives and even children also commonly possessed pioneer skills. Because the settlements were on the newly established main road lines, the settlers' homes could be used as bases both for clearing their sections, and for work on the communication lines. We have seen that Halcombe's attempt to follow a similar policy with English settlers on the Manchester Block had to be abandoned. Direct settlement by a family on an undeveloped bush section can be looked upon as the exception rather than the rule, in the history of the settlement of the Bush. More commonly the men went in first, established a clearing, and prepared the way for their families to follow later. Wives and children might remain back in the older settled areas over this stage, but, as we have seen, it was a common practice to establish a bush town or village as a base for settling new blocks, and many families were brought to live in these while their menfolk tackled the first stages of farm development. Many of the

pioneer bush settlers were, of course, bachelors, but few of these stayed on to become successful farmers if they were not able to get a wife to come and join them within a year or two.

The first stage in the development of a newly acquired bush section was the setting up of a bush felling camp. Such a camp is well described in one of a series of 'Sketches of Bush Life' ¹¹⁶ printed by the Taranaki Herald during 1878. The camp site was chosen near a good running stream 'without which ... but little comfort or cleanliness could be hoped for'. Such a stream might also provide eels and duck to add variety to the meals. On the chosen site a whare was erected with walls of pongas, and roof well thatched ¹¹⁷ with the long waving leaves of the kiekie. The internal arrangements were simple in the extreme. The fire burnt on the floor, with billies, frying pan and camp oven kept nearby. Supplies of tea, sugar, coffee and foodstuffs, and the smaller items of kitchen equipment were hung from the roof or stuck between the sapling rafters and the thatch. The bunks were constructed with feet towards the fire. Of the many different types of bushman's bed, the one recommended as the most comfortable and driest was made by laying several small saplings side by side, with ends raised on cross pieces a few inches from the ground, and strewing this platform with fronds of 'piupiu', a peculiarly dry fern. With a few

116. TH, 17 June 1878.

117. Ereycinetia banksii.

good blankets, this was recommended as a really comfortable bed. A whare thus equipped needed one further accessory for comfortable living - a cat, without which life in some parts of the bush was 'a continual battle with the ubiquitous rat'. Other descriptions of bushmen's camps vary considerably as regards details. Harry Atkinson, writing in an earlier period, describes his hut as made of poles and thatched with the leaves of the nikau palm.¹¹⁸ Annie Butler, an English visitor to New Zealand in 1880, describes a bushman's hut she came across while walking in the bush near Palmerston North:

It was built of tree-fern stems piled one above another, and was roofed with bulrush. An opening represented the door, and through this one could see a delightful bed - a great heap of dry ferns covered with a colourful blanket - more elastic and restful, one would imagine, than any spring mattress could be. 119

The bushman's uninhibited comments on Miss Butler's enthusiasm for his 'sylvan life' and 'Arcadian home' might have made colourful reading. Not all bush fellers were able to find an attractive camp site near a pleasant stream. In February 1881 two mates, Lewis Bryant and George Stephenson, bought bush sections in the low-lying Kairanga Block near Palmerston North. They had built up the necessary capital over the previous few years working on railway and road construction. About March 1881 they went out to the block to begin felling, and Bryant's 'Recollections' give some idea of the kind of privations that were associated with bush-felling:

118.Scholefield (ed.) Richmond Atkinson Papers, I, 157.
(November 1854).

119.A. R. Butler, Glimpses of Maori Land, London, 1886, p. 137.

We felled about twelve acres for George, and then moved to fall some for me, but by this time the weather had broken and things were rather miserable, we had to camp on the roadline, and the ground was wet, and the bush was wet, no sun and no wind in the narrow road line, and we could not get anything dry, and as a finish George got a touch of rheumatic fever, and it was as much as he could manage to walk to where the horses were grazing on the Rangitikei line about three miles away (this was the nearest grass). 120

They decided to go back to roading contracts, and had further bush felled by contract bushmen. The clearings were burnt on 1 April 1882, and Bryant went down to begin living on his section the following season. The worst trial of the first few years was the mosquitoes, which were 'awful' from September to March.

Lewis Bryant continued to develop his Kairanga section for ten years before he found a wife to join him. Many men had wives and families already when they took their sections, and as soon as they had made some progress with clearing, they turned to the erection of a more substantial home so that their families could join them. Some built slab houses from timber they had split for themselves, others were able to produce a more finished job by getting help to pit-saw the timber, and still others were fortunate enough to procure sawmill timber. With wife and family on the section, living costs were reduced and the rate of development speeded up. A man could thus generally afford to spend an increasing amount of time each season on his own land, and

less time working away for wages. The Taranaki Herald's 'Sketches of Bush Life' of 1878 include a useful treatment¹²¹ of this stage, entitled 'The Struggling Farmer'. The farm was now steadily becoming more mixed, as kitchen garden, orchard, crops, and varied livestock were added to the original grass-seed crop or cattle. This meant fencing to keep livestock apart from agriculture and horticulture. At first this was primitive and makeshift - log or dog-leg fences - but gradually the tider post and rail, paling, or post and wire were introduced, the rate depending on the amount of labour which could be spared, and the funds¹²² available to purchase wire. The increasingly complex farm economy, combined with the continued bush felling, logging up and stumping, provided a full and busy life. The Herald's 'Struggling Farmer' had so many different jobs crowding one on another, that it was often hard to decide which to begin first:

Crops have to be got in, and before that can be done the ground has to be cleared of stumps and roots for the plough. In the midst of this some wretched bullock breaks down a piece of fence, this needs immediate attention, otherwise more time is lost in fetching the strayed cows, than would put it right three times over. Then the grass-seed piece has to be secured from wandering, hungry cattle, and no sooner is that begun than some new hindrance crops up.

For the Herald's 'Struggling Farmer' the great event of the year was the grass seed harvest. Every hand on the farm

121. TH, 2 August 1878.

122. On this see R.P. Hargreaves, 'Farm Fences in Pioneer New Zealand', N. Z. Geographer, XXI, 2, pp. 144-155.

had to give of his utmost over this period. Extra hands were hired if possible, or came in return payment for labour provided on their properties. Work went on as long as the light lasted, and milking was not done till night set in. If the weather was unsettled, everyone was tense, for the outcome of the harvest at the least decided the amount of spending money for the coming year, and it might even decide whether the payment due on the land could be met. In 1877 Thomas Kelly estimated the gross proceeds from an acre of good land at about £10.¹²³ The grower could expect nearly the whole proceeds so long as his annual crop did not exceed the ten acres that could be handled by the typical family. A drop in the price of grass-seed was a blow to the bush settlers. Owing doubtless to the slowing of the advance of settlement, there was a heavy fall in the price by 1880. In Hawke's Bay a Makaretu settler complained that while they had had to pay^{up} to 15 pence a pound for cocksfoot seed to sow their clearings only three or four years before, now that they had substantial crops to sell the price had dropped to about 4d or 5d a pound. They complained that the big run-holders had moved into grass seed production and so helped to overstock the market.¹²⁴ In Taranaki it was reported that a number of single young farmers who had been counting on the grass seed harvest to enable them to marry and set up a home, had had to abandon these plans.¹²⁵ By the end of the winter of

123. N.Z. Country Journal, 14, p. 245.

124. H.B. Weekly Courier, 23 January 1880, p. 12.

125. NZM, 20 March 1880, p. 25, quoting from Taranaki Herald.

126
 1880 the New Zealand Mail reported much depression in some of the newly-settled bush districts, due directly to the low price of grass seed. Fortunately for the bush settlers, the grass seed price rose sharply the following season. The opening of the Waimate Plains, and the speeding up of settlement elsewhere under Rolleston's administration, had created a heavy demand. In April 1881 the price of grass seed in Taranaki was reported to have nearly doubled since the beginning of the year.¹²⁷ There were 85 marriages in Taranaki¹²⁸ in 1880, 103 in 1881, which suggests that the price of grass seed may indeed have had an influence on the matrimonial market.

An orchard and kitchen garden were among the earliest improvements on the typical bush section. W.K. Howitt recalled that in his boyhood days at Okato in the 1870s,¹²⁹ 'our vegetable garden was one of our chief concerns'. When a bush township was established as a first step in developing a bush district, the town sections soon had flourishing gardens and orchards. A visitor to Inglewood in January 1876 remarked on the many good gardens 'well supplied with vegetables'.¹³⁰ By 1877 the township acres at Feilding were under full cultivation. Flower gardens 'that Wellington could not rival' flourished beside the road, while adjacent were fruit and vegetable patches, and the rest of each

126. 28 August 1880.

127. NZM, 30 April 1881, p. 15, quoting from Hawera Star.

128. Statistics of N.Z., 1880, p. 23; 1881, p. 23.

129. A Pioneer Looks Back, p. 200.

130. TH, 22 January 1876.

section carried a crop of wheat, oats or maize. Meanwhile, on both the Moa and Manchester Blocks, a second garden and orchard was doubtless being developed on each settler's rural section. During 1878 the Taranaki Herald carried a series of articles on 'The Bush Farm', written by an experienced hand for the guidance of new arrivals. The first, published on 22 August, gave advice on fruit growing. The writer remarked that large numbers of young fruit trees were daily being purchased for planting. He advised that the most favorable site for an orchard was the sloping side of a small gully, having a slant to the north, and with a piece of bush left to give shelter along the south and east. He suggested growing vegetables between the rows for a year or two, and recommended the keeping of pigs, which could be fed on maize, to provide manure for the trees. The place of garden and orchard in bush farming is illustrated by the plans of Malcolm Newrick, a young Yorkshireman who left Darlington for New Zealand in December 1876. By November 1878 he owned a 100 acre section in the Seventy Mile Bush, apparently largely financed from his earnings in the older settled districts. With some paid help, he already had an area in grass, a further area felled for burning and sowing, and a slab cottage erected. After the shearing and harvesting season of 1878-9 his plans were to return to his section:

to still further improve the land. I will have to split posts and rails to fence; also, sow seed, plant fruit trees, and make a garden. 132

131. Wellington Independent, quoted Gibson, Manchester Block, p. 55.

132. H.B.Herald, 4 July 1879, p. 3.

The importance of the home orchard is evidence^d by the number of nurserymen who established themselves in the early stages of the Bush settlements. W. Rowe took up a bush section¹³³ at Normanby about 1879, and by the beginning of 1880 was¹³⁴ in business as a nurseryman. By 1883 he had about 5 acres under plants, and was doing a large trade along the whole coast in fruit trees.¹³⁵ By 1880 nurserymen were in business at Marton (C.F. Hanneke), Bulls (W. Hunt) and Sanson¹³⁶ (Drafter), all of which were adjacent to bush settlements. At Feilding there were two nurserymen (W. Rossiter and E. Worsfold),¹³⁷ while at nearby Awahuri Joseph Weightman had in May 1879 established a small nursery which was to grow¹³⁸ steadily into a flourishing business. In Palmerston North Wilhelm Just, from Germany, bought a bush section about 1875, and cleared it to grow small fruits, vegetables and cut flowers. Over the years he gradually changed over to nursery¹³⁹ business, in response to the continued growing local demand. The well established nurseries of New Plymouth, Wanganui and Wellington must also have had a share of the business of the bush districts. The activities of these various tradesmen would have been supplemented by a good deal of neighbourly generosity in the form of plants and cuttings.

133. Y, 1 June 1883, p. 5.

134. Wellington Almanac and Directory, 1880, p. 269.

135. Y, 25 May 1883, p. 5.

136. Wellington Almanac and Directory, 1880, pp. 286, 289, 290.

137. ibid., pp. 293, 294.

138. Hale, Pioneer Nurserymen of New Zealand, p. 174.

139. ibid., p. 171.

The dream of a self-sufficient mixed farm with which the settlers went to the bush included, of course, grain crops to provide bread, 'the staff of life'. We have seen that many of the settlers came from the English 'Corn' counties and therefore possessed an ample fund of experience in grain farming. But grain crops required the land to be ploughed, and as this was not possible until the clearings had been logged and stumped, such crops did not appear for some years. W.B. Johnston has made a close study of the farm diaries of a 100 acre property near Huirangi in North Taranaki.¹⁴⁰ The land was in bush when it was taken up in 1874, and the study covers the first 25 years of the farm. A little ploughing was done in the early years of settlement, but even in the eighth year it was of small importance in comparison with other activities. However, by 1889 it had become a prominent seasonal activity. The first grain crop (apart from grass seed) was oats, planted in 1876. Wheat and barley were added in later years. In the 1890s cropping began to give way to grassland farming. This history is probably typical of the bush farms taken up in the 1870s. The grain cropping envisaged had barely got under way when the possibilities of the dairying and frozen meat industries began to be seen, leading to a shift to a very different concept of farming. However, only a few visionaries had made this shift in their thinking by 1881. Reaping and binding

140. W.B. Johnston, 'Pioneering the Bushland of Lowland Taranaki'; A Case study', N.Z. Geographer, XVII, I, pp. 1-16.

machines and threshing machines increased in numbers yearly from the late 1870s on, in the open country of the Rangitikei¹⁴¹ and the Patea. The men who came down from the bush to assist with the harvest doubtless looked forward to the day when the machines would roll over their own properties. By 1877 the bush clearings around Palmerston North were sufficiently improved to encourage the sawmilling firm of Richter and Nannestead to decide to venture into flourmilling. They began advertising their intentions in the Manawatu Times on 7 April 1877, so that the settlers could plan to plant crops the following season. The mill began operations¹⁴² in May 1878. It is difficult to get any clear picture of the extent of grain cropping in the Bush. Available statistics do not make it possible to separate Bush crops from open country crops. Incidental references, such as reports of pheasants eating oats as they were being sown on the Moa¹⁴³ Block in 1877 and good harvesting weather for wheat and rye¹⁴⁴ crops on the bush clearings of Makaretu in 1880 show that at least limited crops were grown over a wide area. Maize appears to have been a popular crop in the Okato district in¹⁴⁵ the 1870s. Ground into meal in a hand mill, it was used to make porridge and wholemeal scones. Of the non-grain crops,¹⁴⁶ potatoes were probably the most widely grown. We

141. See e.g. Y, 8 May 1875, p. 13; 13 January 1877, pp. 4,6; 31 January 1880, p. 3.

142. Y, 18 May 1878, p. 15. A small handmill had been in use at Karere since the early 1870s. See Buick, Old Manawatu, pp. 291-2.

143. TH, 22 October 1877.

144. H.B. Weekly Courier, 13 February 1880, p. 7.

145. Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back, pp. 30-1.

146. See e.g. Johnston, 'Pioneering the Bushland' pp.6, 8, 14.

have already noted the attempt to establish hops as a cash
 147
 crop in various districts.

Of livestock the typical bush farm possessed quite a variety within a year or two of its establishment. We have already noted that beef cattle production provided the main alternative to grass seed in the first year or two of newly felled bush land. Pigs, poultry, and a house cow were added quickly as soon as a home was set up. In 1876 J. Broomhall, a country squire and a magistrate of Penge, Surrey, travelled through New Zealand. At Woodville he met Stephen Hutchins, formerly a gardener at Penge, who had applied to him three years previously for a character reference, in order to emigrate to New Zealand. Broomhall records that Hutchins:

pointed with pride to his twenty acres of land with the cottage on it his own freehold, and to chickens and ducks in abundance, and, if he have not now, he will soon have pigs, cows, and a good farmyard. 148

Sheep were not commonly kept in the early years of a bush section, as the logs, branches and scrub tore the wool from their necks and bellies, and the rest of the fleece became matted and discoloured with charcoal.

From the details so far given it is evident that an enterprising bush settler with a healthy and co-operative family, could enjoy a large measure of simple plenty within a year or two of occupying his section. Once he had provided himself with the basic farm equipment, and freeholded his land, his life could go on relatively unaffected by the

147. Chapter 9.

148. J. Broomhall, Fragments from the Journal of J. Broomhall, Esq., J.P., ..., London, 1877, p. 29.

economic ups and downs of the colony. Nevertheless, many had great difficulty in achieving this desired security. The Bush settlers of the early and mid 1870s for the most part appear to have succeeded with relative ease, having bought their land at a reasonable price, and enjoyed high wages and good prices for their produce in the boom years. The settlers of the later 1870s generally paid much higher for land which was often less accessible. With the low wages and prices of the depression years, most of them had a much harder struggle to achieve success. Perhaps the one notable advantage which they enjoyed over the earlier settlers was the widespread development of the timber industry. From the late 1870s onwards a considerable number of settlers were able to sell standing timber on their sections to the mills, and obtain work as millhands. Even so, only a minority shared in these advantages. The urgent need for cash led to the widespread development of the curious fungus industry.

The value of the Jew's-ear fungus (Auricularia polytricha) was recognised by Chew Chong, a Chinese who came to New Zealand in 1866, after 11 years mining and storekeeping on the Victorian goldfields. While travelling through the Bush Provinces in the late 1860s buying up old metal for export to China, Chew Chong recognised the similarity of this fungus which he found growing on the logs in the bush clearings, to a Chinese plant prized as a delicacy, and used also as a medicine. In 1870 he opened a store in New Plymouth

149. Herbert Roth, 'Chong, Chew (c. 1830-1920)', in Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 340-1.

and began to offer 2d a pound for the fungus.¹⁴⁹ His first
suppliers were mainly Maoris,¹⁵⁰ but European settlers soon
joined them. Chew Chong apparently travelled the whole West
Coast from New Plymouth to Wellington in search of supplies.
In the autumn of 1871 there was reported to be some excitement
in Wellington over the 'new industry', and 'an exodus ...
of the halt^[sic] inhabitants of the city to look for fungi, to
sell to that enterprising Chinese gentleman, Mr Tonks, at 6s
a sack'.¹⁵¹ A confusion over the name of the enterprising
Chinese gentleman, and the purpose for which the fungus was
used, persisted for some time. The Wanganui Weekly Herald,
which printed this news item, informed its readers that the
Chinese used the fungus 'for making into long sticks for
burning slowly in their Joss Houses before their gods'.¹⁵²
'Mr Tonks' was expected shortly to visit Wanganui. The
Wellington Independent¹⁵³ reported a visit by 'Mr Chong' the
following spring. He had paid out between £60 and £70 for
fungus the previous Saturday, and further large quantities
were expected to be brought into town for him during the week.
In September 1872 the Wanganui Herald¹⁵⁴ reported a good
harvest of fungus in the Turakina district. Up to a hundred-
weight could be gathered in a day, and 13s would be paid for
this quantity in Wanganui.

By 1872 the new export was arousing interest in official
circles, and the customs officer at New Plymouth was applied

150. AJHR 1873, H-39, 'Correspondence Relative to Exportation
of Fungus to China'.

151. Y, 8 April 1871.

152. ibid.

153. 4 October 1871.

154. Y, 14 September 1872, p. 4.

to for information. He reported that the demand arose with 'a Chinese dealer, Mr. Chow Cheng', but that other merchants had then made enquiries of their correspondents in Sydney and elsewhere, and finding that the fungus was in demand in any quantity in China, had entered the trade in competition with 'Mr Chow Cheng'. The price paid to gatherers was 2d and 2½d a pound, and most of it was shipped to Chinese traders in Dunedin for export to China.¹⁵⁵ In March 1873, at the suggestion of the Secretary of Customs, who considered it possible that the local Chinese merchants might be buying the fungus at less than its true value, William Fox wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, for information. The reply stated that the Hong Kong Chinese community prized the fungus as a medicine, and used it as a food on fast days.¹⁵⁶ The ordinary price in Hong Kong was about 10½d a pound. The fungus first appeared as a separate item in New Zealand export statistics in 1872, when 1,154 cwt., valued at £1,927,¹⁵⁷ was exported. Between 1872 and 1882 more than 1,700 tons, valued at over £78,000, were exported from New Zealand. It became known as 'Taranaki Wool', though, as we have seen, it was also collected in Wellington Province, and in 1880 the Napier Daily Telegraph was advising the Seventy Mile Bush settlers to collect the abundant supplies growing in that district.¹⁵⁸

A Kai Iwi resident who revisited Taranaki about the

155. AJHR 1873, H-39, p. 1.

156. *ibid.*

157. Statistics of N.Z., 1872, Part II, Table 12.

158. Y, 24 January 1880, p. 9.

beginning of 1881, after over 20 years' absence, has left
¹⁵⁹
 us an interesting account of the fungus industry. Besides
 the logs of the bush clearings, the fungus was found growing
 in old sawpits and on wet soil in the bush gullies. Each
 year the same areas produced a fresh crop. Fungus pickers
 went out collecting with bags, and brought their haul home
 to be dried. In fine weather it was spread out to dry in
 the sun, on hurdles, bags, or even on the ground. Sun-dried
 fungus commanded the best price, but, especially in winter,
 other methods had to be resorted to. Some settlers made
 frames from supplejacks to put over the fire in their large
 bush fire places, and spent the long evenings watching and
 turning it. Others spread out the fungus on sheets of iron
¹⁶⁰
 over an outside fire. The price of fungus varied from
 time to time, but in January 1881 a good sample brought ¹⁶¹4d a
 pound. A family at the back of Bell Block were reported to
 be earning £2 a week by the children's work alone, and a man
 in the same area was earning £1 a week by going out after
 working hours. In February of 1881 a Patea correspondent
 reported that fungus had become a source of ready cash for
¹⁶²
 the bush settlers of that district. One great advantage
 of the industry was that it enabled the settler's children

159. Y, 29 January 1881, p. 7.

160. These details on drying are from W.L. Kennedy, 'A Few Early Recollections', MS 920/1857-1900, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Kennedy was associated with saw-milling in Taranaki in the 1880s and 1890s.

161. Y, 29 January 1881, p. 7.

162. NZM, 26 February 1881, p. 16.

to make a valuable contribution to the family's^{cash}/income, while engaging in an activity which they generally enjoyed, and which entailed no great physical exertion. It compares more than favourably with the later 'child slavery' in the cowsheds.

In our opening chapter we noted the comparative paucity of personal records left by the Bush settlers. The present chapter has shown that it is possible, by drawing on a variety of sources, to build up a fairly comprehensive picture of their way of life. It has also been possible to illustrate the various points made by quoting episodes of personal experience from a variety of sources. It would, however, be of value to examine a more comprehensive record of personal experience, covering the acquiring of a bush section and the first stages of developing it, as this would draw together the various features of bush life and show how they interacted in the experiences of one individual. The Petch Papers, to which several references have already been made, provide such a record. In some respects as we shall see, Petch was not a typical Bush settler, but his letters appear to be the only reasonably comprehensive personal record from the 1870s at present available to us.¹⁶³ The Petch papers consist of 41 items of outward correspondence from Robert Petch to his family in Yorkshire, from the time of his arrival

163. There are several valuable reminiscences by Bush settlers, but the more comprehensive of these refer to the later 1880s or 1890s. e.g. H.E. Combs, Growing Up in the Forty Mile Bush, Hamilton, 1951; Helen Wilson, My First Eighty Years, Hamilton, 1950.

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in New Zealand in January 1876 to December 1882.

After landing at Nelson, Petch went almost immediately to Patea, where he spent some ten months working for R.E. McRae who had a large run in the open country along the coast, in order to gain experience before taking up land of his own. By February he had decided that he would have to take bush land, and had made the acquaintance of the government surveyor working in the Otoia-Opaku Block inland from Kakaramea, which was to be put on the market later in the year. He was planning to accept the surveyor's invitation to spend a few days in his tent with him in order to get to know the country. Over the next few months he had much valuable experience, including a chance to learn the art of bush clearing in an area of bush owned by McRae, working with stock, harvesting and cooking for a gang of men, and also 'going about mad after the duck, pigs, wild cattle &c'. At the land sale in Patea on 26 October 1876 he purchased a section of 217 acres of bush in the Otoia-Opaku Block at £1 9s an acre, and four adjacent quarter-acre sections in Kakaramea Township for £33 15s., costing him £328 8s in all, after deducting a £20 government grant (as a settler who had paid his own fare from England). McRae had advanced him the 25 per cent deposit required, and his father was forwarding him

164. The account which follows is built up through fairly complex cross-reference among the letters, and therefore no attempt is made to footnote.

which would enable him to settle the payment within the required 3 months, and begin developing the land.

Petch described his section as well watered bush land with some splendid white and red pines, and reported that there were a great many wild pigs and cattle on it, which he hoped to hunt to cut expenses. Besides clearing the land to begin farming, his initial plans included pit-sawing a number of the trees and using the timber to put cottages on his Kakaramea sections which he would then let. He was fortunate in acquiring the services of an experienced bushman who had been working in the bush not far from his section for some years. This man had been on the gold diggings and could tell 'some rare yarns'. Petch arranged with the bushman for 10 weeks of work at £1 10s a week plus board and keep. He was able to get another less experienced bush man at £1 5s a week for the month of December. The three lived together in a tent on the section with Petch doing the cooking as well as assisting with the felling when he had time. He estimated the week's living expenses at 16s (10s for 30lb of beef, 4s for 8 loaves of bread, 2s for tea, sugar etc). He could save on this by killing a wild pig now and then, and planned to get a shotgun 'for there are lots of birds eatable'. He had by now made the acquaintance of his neighbour on the next bush section, a Scottish bachelor of about 40 named Struthers. He reported with amusement on the successful pursuit of a hive of wild bees by Struthers.

Petch was able to get a clearing of only 6 or 7 acres felled during the first season owing to very wet weather, in which the men could not work. He burnt it at the end of February 1877, did some logging up, and grassed it. Meanwhile he considered various plans for occupying the winter months, including accepting an invitation to join another settler in a trip down the coast buying cattle for fattening in the Patea district, and going ahead with building the cottages in Kakaramea. He applied to his father successfully for £200 to finance whatever venture he should finally decide on. By the time the money came, Kakaramea had enough cottages, and he had found ways of occupying himself on his bush section. He continued to live in his tent, sleeping on a bed contrived from two sacks supported by two poles resting on forked sticks driven into the ground. Towards the end of April 1877 he began preparing slabs to build a hut about 20 feet by 10. He first cross-cut a large rimu tree into 7 feet lengths, then used wedges to split slabs about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and 2 inches thick. By mid July he had finished a 'first rate rough strong hut'. Meanwhile the grass was coming away well on the clearing; but the wild pigs were 'getting bad' in rooting it up. He shot them and ran them off with his sheep dog, but they would come back at night and 'destroy [the] property wholesale'. He wanted a bulldog with a bitch sent out from England, so that he could catch the pigs and make a profit out of selling them, as well as breed pups for

sale. He commented on the abundance of wild honey in the bush and the appearance of a few pheasants in the clearing.

By March 1877 the Scotsman Struthers had come to live with Petch. Struthers had no water on his section, so he began sinking a well, with some help from Petch. Struthers was wanting the two of them to go into keeping about 10 or 12 cows the following year, with the idea of making butter and cheese for sale, but Petch disliked the idea, as he himself could not milk, and he thought it would take Struthers all day to milk 10 cows. Struthers had been a tenant farmer in Cleveland so had some experience of farming. Petch appears to have been thinking in terms of a mixed farm. By the end of 1877 he had a horse and foal, some cocks and hens, had planted some apple trees, had bought a few cattle, which he had not yet brought in to his clearing, and had planted his Kakaramea acre in potatoes.

In August 1877 Petch sold 100 acres, representing the rougher part of his land, at £2 an acre. He had made an agreement with a bush felling gang to have 50 acres of his remaining land felled at £1 15s an acre. McRae, who was now running a boiling down works, was selling legs of mutton at 1s each, and had 12 legs a week packed up on horse back for Petch, Struthers and their bushmen. The men were getting their other supplies from a storekeeper named Foreman, the arrangement being elaborately safeguarded by agreements with Foreman that the bills would be paid by Petch out of the

men's wages, and agreements between Petch and the men that they consented to the arrangement, and that their bills were not to exceed their wages. Storekeepers were reluctant to grant credit to itinerant workers, but settlers who underwrote their workers could also get caught. Petch reported that Struthers was 'in a great state' because his contract bush fellers had run up bills in excess of their wages, and then left him without completing their contract. Petch was also having trouble as his men, after felling 14 acres by mid September 1877, were discontented with the money they were making, and refused to do more. The difference must have been patched up, as the felling was still going on in December, when one of the gang, a young man of 23 years, died suddenly, apparently as a result of working after indulging too freely in pork.

While the felling was proceeding, Petch was working on a road contract from the local road board. He made nothing on the contract, having taken it too low. A large rata tree fell across the road during this work and had to be burnt away, being too large to move. While this was being done the fire spread to Struther's clearing, causing a good deal of damage. Apparently these were not Petch's only misfortunes. There is an 8 months gap in the letters after one dated 4 December 1877, and then on 12 August 1878 Petch writes to his father thanking him for sending £100 to meet two bills of £50 each, but breaking the news that he is now even further into debt, owing about £250. The Patea Mail of

28 August 1878 reports the sale of Petch's remaining 117 acres at £3 10s an acre. Thus, after less than two years, ended Petch's first attempt at bush farming. The reasons for this downfall are not evident from the available letters, but it is clear that Petch had never really come to grips with the realities of bush farming. He probably developed expensive habits during his early months among the 'squires' of the Patea open country.¹⁶⁵ His remaining a bachelor would be another relevant factor. Without a capable woman, few men could make an economic success of a small bush farm. There was also the problem of loneliness. By 1881 Struthers had decided to sell his farm and go 'into more company' in Christchurch where his brother was an ironmonger on a large scale. But though this farming episode of Petch's cannot be taken as typical of the Bush settlers' experience, his procedures in developing his clearing did follow the usual pattern.¹⁶⁶

The yeoman ideal was a simple vision of honest labour on one's own land leading to independence and economic self-sufficiency, in a way of life given richness and meaning by the close bonds between work, home and family. To what

165. It seems likely, from the round figures of the two bills mentioned, and an early reference to McRae's losing a good deal of money with racing, that Petch's downfall was caused by racing bets.

166. Following Petch's letter of 12 August 1878 there are 8 further letters in the collection, dated from 20 December 1880 to 23 December 1882. These show Petch working on another bush section, a little further inland, which was held in his father's name. In the last letter he is again heavily in debt. There is a newspaper report of 1883 of his bagging 40 to 50 brace of pheasant during the shooting season. See Y, 14 December 1883, p. 5.

extent was this vision fulfilled in the Bush settlements? It is possible to draw from contemporary sources to give very diverse answers. In a parliamentary speech in 1880, Sir William Fox could say:

The honorable gentleman (Sir George Grey) tells all these men that all happiness is to be found in the possession of a little bush-farm! Why to the generality of men it is downright misery. It is not the greatest happiness a man can have. It is often the greatest approach to barbarism that a man can find in this colony, or in any new country. 167

Goaded by Grey's florid oratory on the land question, Fox was doubtless exaggerating the dark side of the picture. Nevertheless, the fact that there was much ugliness and misery on the Bush farms must not be glossed over. Many who undertook the work lacked the personal qualities and farming skills that were necessary for success. To change the stubborn wilderness into a smoothly functioning mixed farm required good judgement, self-discipline and diverse skills. When these were lacking, the result was commonly slovenly farming, much suffering for the livestock, filthy farmyards, and a pervasive ugliness in the whole way of life. The close bonds of family life could be harsh bonds when key members of the household were lacking in essential qualities of character. The difficulties and dangers of bush and countryside took their toll. Medical help was often cruelly distant. Injury and death from falling trees or slipping axe were common enough. Bush fires and flooded stream were recurrent dangers.

167. NZPD, Vol 35, p. 538 (25 June 1880).

There are harrowing stories of men, women and children lost in the bush, often as a result of going in search of wandering stock. Even the well-ordered Bush family, possessing all the qualities necessary to success, too often took bitter blows from accident and chance. Yet the overall impression one gains is that most Bush settlers felt that they had bettered themselves by making the venture, and that most onlookers regarded their lives as reasonably satisfying.

After a visit to a small farm at Upper Tutaenui, in the Rangitikei Valley in January 1881, a roving correspondent
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of the Wanganui Herald came to the following conclusion:

Perhaps the happiest man in the world is the master of an unassuming little New Zealand farm, large enough to provide all the requirements of life with work, but none of the ostentation of the next step up in life, with a comfortable house and nice quiet clean sitting rooms, the kitchen as in farm houses of old, being the principal living room in the house, the mistress doing all her house work, including the milking and dairying, and the master with his boys doing all the work of the farm, with a day now and then in the orchard and garden, always surrounded by his pets amongst the live stock, always too busy to be dull, but always quiet and free from the cares of the world, his grand festivals being the haymaking, the fruit gathering, the sheep shearing, and the harvest, add a visit paid once in a fortnight or three weeks to the nearest little town, being the only variations in his placid life.

The picture is probably too placid, even for the life of a well-developed farm. The writer, J.J. Palmer, was a wanderer, who made reporting tours for various local newspapers (usually

published as 'Chats with the Farmers')¹⁶⁹. He leaves out of the picture the stresses of local politics, conducted by men drawn largely from a class lacking experience in public affairs. The respite from toil afforded by the Victorian sabbath commonly provided the Bush settler with time to read the weekly newspaper, usually printed on Friday to reach him by the weekend.¹⁷⁰ The newspaper brought to the home the issues and conflicts of a rapidly developing countryside. The mails too, brought letters, newspapers and magazines from the Old World,¹⁷¹ that aroused homesickness and the tensions of continuing emotional involvement in British affairs. Nor was the religious life of the Bush settlements unduly placid. Yet a warm, comparatively slow-moving family life was probably what most settlers aimed for, and many achieved. Its quality is well described by W.K. Howitt:

The home life was in itself very beautiful, because it was the centre of everything. It probably reached its highest point of development on the borders of civilization in those outback humble dwellings where a family of twelve was as common as the fives and threes of today. There were no undue hours of toil for the children long ago in the country, and they always got a full night's rest. The days of intensive cow milking had not arrived. 172.

169. Y, 21 April 1882, p.2.

170. Most widely circulated was Ballance's Yeoman. By July 1881 a combined weekly circulation of 8,000 was claimed for the Wanganui Herald and Yeoman. In 1882 the Yeoman's price was dropped from 6d to 3d. Its circulation trebled in less than 3 months, and it was said to be 'penetrating' into every nook and corner from Manawatu to Taranaki', with a steadily increasing circulation in Hawke's Bay also. See Y, 9 July 1881, p. 6; 15 September 1882, p. 9. Other weeklies were published in Wellington, Napier and New Plymouth.

171. See e.g. Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back, p. 39.

172. A Pioneer Looks Back, p. 34.

CHAPTER 11

TIMBER, 1869 - 1881.

One of the major developments of the 1870s in the Bush Provinces was the rise of a large sawmilling industry. Inevitably we have already made numerous passing references to the part the industry played in the colonisation of the Bush. Not only was timber the main building material used in the rapid expansion of communications, towns, and farms, but from the hands of the cooper, wheelwright, shingle-splitter and cabinet-maker it supplied a remarkable variety of the requirements of commerce and daily life. We have already noted¹ that a shortage of timber was one of the main limiting factors in the pace of development of the Bush Provinces in the early and mid 1870s. We must now turn to give a more detailed account of the rise of sawmilling. This will not be a particularly easy task. S.H. Franklin has noted that the available information on the industry is inadequate, and has pointed to the reasons for this - its

1. Above, p. 83.

transitory sort of economy, associated with few permanent settlements forms and a markedly male population, conditions which were not conducive to the collection and preservation of records.² Nevertheless his conclusion that it is possible to obtain a statistical and locational picture only for the declining stage of the industry is probably unduly pessimistic. A concentrated examination of a particular district, using a variety of approaches, would be likely to result in a fairly accurate locational picture, and useful approximate statistics. Besides the limited official statistics on the industry, available sources of information include railway statistics (e.g. receipts from private sidings, available from 1880 onwards), export figures from port records, estimates of requirements of local building activities (using e.g. census returns on housing), local news reports, advertisements, and fieldwork in industrial archeology. In the absence of detailed local studies based on such materials, our present treatment will amount to a preliminary survey, which will be sufficient to establish the main economic and social implications of the industry for the general history of the region.

In 1871 there were 16 sawmills and sash and door factories in the Bush Provinces, in 1881 there were 57.³

2. Franklin, 'The Village and the Bush', p. 165.

3. The data used in this paragraph is drawn from Census of N.Z. 1871, Table 31; Census of N.Z. 1881, p. 302; Statistics of N.Z. 1881, p. 168. Sawmills and sash and door factories were grouped together in the census returns.

The most remarkable growth was in the Wellington Province - from 11 to 43. In 1871 the two main timber provinces were Auckland, with 25 mills and factories, and Otago with 23. By 1881, despite rapid development of the industry in both these provinces, Wellington could fairly claim comparison with them. Her 43 mills and factories equalled Auckland's in number, and in 1880 had turned out 29,114,105 feet of sawn timber, only 370,000 less than had Otago's 47 mills and factories (though considerably less than Auckland's 48,631,206 feet). In Wellington Province, the main development had been in the Rangitikei-Manawatu. In 1871 this district appears to have had only two small mills, but by May 1881 its sawmillers claimed it had about 20 mills supporting at least 1600 workmen.⁴ This great expansion had taken place in two main phases, one in 1874, based on the opening of the Foxton-Palmerston North tramway, and the second in 1878-9, with the completion of the railway link with Wanganui. The first expansion, in 1874, provided the output to cope with the demands of a very rapid population growth in the district (129 percent in 4 years), and a large export of totara timber and sleepers for public works in various parts of the colony. The second period of expansion saw the Rangitikei-Manawatu take over the supply of the timber needs of Wanganui and the Patea Coast, and turned Wanganui from a timber-importing to a timber-exporting port. The year 1881

4. Y, 7 May 1881, p. 11.

saw the beginning of timber exports through Wanganui to Australia. In this chapter we will study these Rangitikei-Manawatu developments first, and then survey the progress of the industry in the other Bush districts.

A very useful report on the timber resources of New Zealand was prepared in 1876-7 by Captain Campbell Walker, the first Conservator of Forests under the New Zealand Forests Act of 1874.⁵ He came to New Zealand from the position of Deputy Conservator of Forests, Madras, and in the course of the year he spent in the colony, he travelled throughout the country, examining the forests and consulting people who could give him information on their resources. The particular value of his report for the present study lies in the fact that it was made just as the major assault on the lowland forests of the Bush Provinces was about to begin. By the time of the next significant report, that by Thomas Kirk,⁶ published in 1886, a great part of this lowland forest, including most of that in the readily accessible districts of the Rangitikei-Manawatu, had been swept away. In the Rangitikei-Manawatu Campbell Walker found extensive reserves of rimu, probably the most largely used timber in the colony at that time, and also of totara, highly prized as combining durability with lightness and ease of working, and in strong demand for railway sleepers and bridge-building in the 1870s.

5. AJHR 1877, C-3.

6. AJHR 1886, C-3A.

The rimu was more frequent on the higher land, where it commonly occurred in association with tawa. The totara was of frequent occurrence, either more or less scattered in mixed forest, or forming groves of considerable extent in the more open valleys, but it did not occur in nearly such large quantities as rimu. A considerable area of the Rangitikei-Manawatu was occupied by white pine of large dimensions. It occurred particularly on the lowlying and swampy ground. This meant that it was in many places the most accessible timber, occurring in ample quantities closer to the rivers and the coast than the other varieties. However it was poorly regarded as a timber and the timbermillers tended to bypass it in the mid and late 1870s. Two highly-regarded timbers, matai and miro were of frequent occurrence with the totara in the valleys. In the Rangitikei Valley titoki was common. Though not sought for its timber, it was much valued by the settlers for tool handles. Other trees, such as the ngaio and hinau, though not of significance to the sawmillers, were found by the settlers to be suitable for fencing. Clearly there were varied and valuable resources awaiting the enterprising sawmiller in this district.

Before we turn to a more detailed survey of the rise of the Rangitikei-Manawatu timber industry, it will be worthwhile to consider briefly some of the more general features of this period of its development. With the rapid growth in demand, both locally and throughout the colony, big rewards obviously

awaited the successful entrepreneur. Equally obvious were the difficulties to be overcome. In the face of strong competition for both capital and labour the task to be tackled was the introduction of heavy steam boilers and bulky machinery into a frontier district whose communication lines were in an early stage of development, and the building^{up}/of efficient teams of sawmill workers. While most of the men would need to possess only such physical skills as those of the bush feller and teamster, there would have to be foremen, capable of directing the work, and engineers to set up and operate the machinery. Once the timber began to flow from the mill, enterprise and imagination might also be required to handle its sale and distribution under rude frontier conditions. The statistics already quoted show that this complex task was successfully and rapidly accomplished. Clearly the entrepreneurs who undertook it must have been venturesome and versatile men. Who were they, and what particular factors contributed to their success? It seems likely that the collapse of the flaxmilling industry in 1873, and the steady influx of successful and unsuccessful gold diggers into the Rangitikei-Manawatu during the founding days of the timber industry, may both have been of some significance.

We have already referred to the beginnings, in 1870, of a rapid development of the flax industry along the whole coast from Foxton to Opunake, and noted 9 mills at work in this area by 1870.⁷ The returns of the March 1871 census show⁸

7. Above, p. 77.

8. Table 29.

14 mills at work in the Wellington Province, and the majority of these would have been along the west coast. The price of the fibre remained high until 1873, and the industry continued to expand. In November 1872 the Wanganui Weekly Herald published descriptions of the Okehu mill near Maxwell, employing 19 hands, with 4 others cutting flax, and the Ototoku mill a mile or two further north, employing 18 hands, with a further 4 cutting flax.⁹ These mills took their names from the streams that provided the power for their machines, and each had a village nearby to house its workers. In January 1873 Messrs Rees and Richardson's mill¹⁰ near Bulls was reported to be employing over 50 men and boys, and the following month the Wairoa flax mills at Waverley were inviting tenders for the cutting of four tons of green flax a day,¹¹ a quantity which it would have required about 25 mill hands to process. Also in February 1873 James Wilson came across 'some people making a dam with a water race to drive a flax mill'¹² on the Mangaone stream, not far from the future site of Feilding. Contemporary directories give evidence that further mills were erected over these years, near Bulls¹³ (2 further mills), Marton and Turakina.¹⁴¹⁵ There may well have been other mills. There is some evidence that the continued prosperity of the industry was leading some

9. Y, 23 November 1872, p.6.

10.Y, 4 January 1873, p. 3.

11.Y, 4 February 1873.

12. Wild, Sir James Wilson, p. 20.

13.Wellington Almanac and Directory 1871, p. 213.

14.ibid., p. 215.

15.ibid., 1872, p. 223.

flaxmillers to turn their attention to steam engines. With the collapse of the industry in 1873, following a sharp drop in price, organising skills, manpower, and a certain amount of equipment, were made available for other enterprises. It would be surprising if none of these found their way into the not dissimilar enterprise of sawmilling, which was just beginning a rapid expansion.

As early as 1871 there is a report of a steam engine in a Wairarapa flax works being taken to power a saw mill.¹⁶ In July 1874 Messrs Brogden were reported to have brought two steam engines from a burnt-out flaxmill at Foxton to power a sawmill they were erecting on the Oroua.¹⁷ Other engines which powered early Rangitikei-Manawatu sawmills may well have seen service in flaxmills, or been on their way to the district when the flax industry collapsed. Of a switch by entrepreneurs from flax to sawmilling, one likely case can be pointed to. The Wellington Almanac and Directory for 1871 and 1872 lists C.N. Rowe as a flax miller at Lower Rangitikei. In September 1877, Messrs Rowe and Son's sawmill at the Lower Rangitikei settlement of Carnarvon was reported to have been burnt down.¹⁸ Again a detailed study in depth of the origins of the Rangitikei-Manawatu timber industry might well uncover other examples,¹⁹ and also turn up examples of

16. NZM, 25 February 1871, p. 12.

17. Y, 11 July 1874, p. 10; 25 July 1874, p. 5.

18. NZM, 22 September 1877, p. 19.

19. An example can be quoted from the lower Manawatu, following the collapse of the flax boom of the early 1890s. See W.J. Cox, Diaries, MS/1888-1925/P, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, entries for early months of 1892, for Cox's boss, Jones, shifting from flaxmilling to sawmilling.

foremen, engineers and workmen bequeathed to sawmilling by the declining flax industry.

A detailed study in depth would also be required to establish the extent of the Rangitikei-Manawatu's debt to the goldfields. All that can be attempted here is to point to its likelihood, and quote one or two suggestive examples. The qualities of venturesomeness, industry, enterprise and ingenuity which were typical of the gold diggers were the qualities most needed in this pioneer timber industry. We have already noted the movement of population from West Coast goldfields to the Bush Provinces in the 1870s.²⁰ Apart from their personal qualities, a proportion of these men must have had a little experience in sawmilling during their gold-digging days. Captain Campbell Walker remarked that:

A digging "rush" like that at Kumara has scarcely set in before there is one, and now, if I mistake not, two saw-mills on the spot providing for the requirements of the new town, which, if it depended on hand-sawing, would require months or years instead of as now days and weeks to assume quite a habitable and comfortable appearance.²¹

Many a miner down on his luck must have taken a spell of employment in these mills, in order to finance his next digging venture.²² Even more would have had a little rough bushfelling experience, while clearing their claims, erecting whares, and constructing sluice-boxes and fluming. Walter Bailey, who with his brothers entered the Rangitikei timber

20. Chapter 9.

21. AJHR 1877, C-3, p. 41.

22. For the early development of the West Coast sawmilling industry, see P.H. May, The West Coast Gold Rushes, Christchurch, 1962, pp. 480-1.

industry in 1878, was a Tasmanian who had been sent to London to complete his education. On his return to Australia he followed the gold rushes in Victoria and New South Wales for three years. He crossed to New Zealand about 1870 and turned his attention to sawmilling. He had had a year's experience of the industry at Pahautanui, and 7 years on Banks Peninsula, when he came to the Rangitikei.²³ A.H. Wylde, who established a timber and produce business in Palmerston North in 1876, and went into partnership to form the sawmilling firm of Freeman and Wylde about the beginning of 1878, had had a long experience on the goldfields. English-born, he emigrated to New Zealand in 1865, spending his first eight years in the colony on the West Coast goldfields, and sharing with a mate the distinction of being the last persons robbed by the bushrangers Sullivan and Levy without being killed. Between leaving the goldfields and entering business in Palmerston North he worked as a sub-contractor on the Hutt-Wairarapa railway construction.²⁴ Peter Bartholomew, who in partnership with Peter Manson set up Palmerston North's first sawmill, had crossed from Australia in 1867, attracted by news from the West Coast goldfields. Due to unpropitious weather he was landed at Nelson, and as a result changed his plans, and crossed to Wellington to enter the timber trade. A Scotsman, he had emigrated to Australia in 1862, and may well have been

23. Cyclopaedia of N.Z., I, 1220.

24. ibid., I, 1196.

25

on the goldfields there. That the goldfields made a significant contribution to the Rangitikei-Manawatu sawmilling workforce as well as its management seems extremely likely. For example, the party of West Coast diggers who emigrated to Feilding early in 1879, in search of employment,²⁶ which they all speedily found, must surely have gone mainly into the timber industry, which was booming at the time. It was too late in the season for bushfelling, and there was no notable road or railway construction in progress in the district.

Three main considerations appear to have motivated the pioneers of the Rangitikei-Manawatu timber industry. In several cases the main purpose of the establishment of a mill was to assist a land settlement scheme. The Emigrant and Colonist's Aid Corporation imported sawmill machinery early in 1874, and on 31 July 1874 Halcombe reported that one sawmill had been at work for three months, and that a second²⁷ would be completed in a week or two. These were probably small portable mills, as there are no reports of difficulties in getting them onto the site at Feilding. They did not succeed in fully meeting the settlement's needs during 1874. The Corporation's second township, Halcombe, was established with a large sawmill in its centre, and the first timber was²⁸ turned out in February 1876. The Corporation's involvement

25. *ibid.*, I, 1113.

26. *Rangitikei Advocate*, 22 February 1879.

27. *AJHR* 1874, D-8, p. 9.

28. *Y*, 12 February 1876, p. 13. See *NZM*, 8 July 1876, p. 9, for the Corporation ownership of the mill.

in the timber industry was merely an interim measure to fill the gap until other sawmillers considered it worthwhile to move into the district. A.F. Halcombe did all he could to encourage them to set up on the Manchester Block. The Halcombe mill was sold to W.H. Lash in May 1878. In 1874 a group of Otago investors entered into agreement with the government to take over a block of lowlying land along the west bank of the lower reaches of the Oroua River. Much of the land was swamp, some of it was in forest. Under the agreement the purchasers, who operated as Douglas and Company, were required to carry out stipulated drainage works, and to form a special settlement of 70 families on a block of 7000 acres within their purchase. They appear to have erected a sawmill in connection with their project, as the first return of private sidings (for the year ending 31 December 1880) shows a siding at Oroua Bridge, on the Foxton-Palmerston North line, in the name of Douglas & Co. The next return shows the siding in the hands of Freeman and Wylds, and also gives the information that the original grant of the siding was made on 23 January 1878. That this siding served a sawmill is suggested by the value of the outward traffic in the latter return (£405 12s 6d for the year), and by a newspaper report

29. See NZM, 6 February 1875, p. 19, for statement by Col. Feilding that the Corporation had been disappointed in its attempts to attract another mill to the settlement. Also Y, 18 April 1874, for an incorrect report that Bartholomew and Manson of Palmerston North were about to commence milling at Feilding.

30. NZM, 25 May 1878, p. 18.

31. Wilson, Early Rangitikei pp. 205-6; NZM, 30 March 1878, p. 18.

32. AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 90.

33. AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 95.

of a sawmill near the line at Oroua Bridge in June 1878.³⁴

A second consideration that led to the establishing of sawmills in the region was the needs of contractors. With a colony-wide shortage of timber occasioned by demands created by the public works and immigration scheme, it is not surprising that contractors should have taken the initiative to ensure supplies for their jobs. The most notable example is provided by the firm of Brogden and Sons. To obtain totara timber and sleepers for their railway contracts in various parts of the country, Brogdens established two mills at Palmerston North. The first, described by a newspaper correspondent as 'a large sawmill', was apparently at work³⁵ by July 1874. The second was at Hokowhitu, and came into operation early in 1875, under lease to a Mr E.M. Symons, from³⁶ Otago. The site of Brogden's first mill must have been at Te Matai, to the east of Palmerston North, as a report early in 1876 tells of their mill located at Te Matai ceasing³⁷ operations on account of the high tariffs on the line to Foxton. As already mentioned, Brogdens apparently also established a³⁸ mill on the Oroua, using engines procured from a flaxmill. A second example of a contracting firm entering the timber industry is provided by McChesney and Baird, carpenters, of

34. Y, 22 June 1878, p.2.

35. Y, 11 July 1874, p.10.

36. Y, 21 November 1874, p. 10; 19 November 1874, p. 2; NZM, 27 February 1875, p. 18.

37. NZM, 18 March 1876, p. 18.

38. This venture's subsequent history is one of a number of points requiring further investigation. I have found no further reference to it. Possibly Douglas & Co's mill at Oroua Bridge was the continuation of this enterprise.

Bulls. In May 1879 they were reported to be erecting a large sawmill at Trondheim, near Bunnythorpe,³⁹ as a result of 'the difficulty and delay hitherto experienced in obtaining supplies of timber with which to carry on their various contracts'. As we shall see below, the latter part of 1879 was not a propitious time to enter the timber industry, and this venture⁴⁰ foundered before the year was out.

The third consideration which led entrepreneurs to establish pioneer sawmills in the Rangitikei-Manawatu was the straightforward desire to reap the rewards which the timber industry itself offered. By the end of the 1870s this group had absorbed most (perhaps all) of the resources of the other two groups, and as a result they have been given a little more than their due credit for the pioneering of the industry. The larger and more successful of these firms were, in general, founded by men who came to the district with previous experience in the industry and a certain amount of capital. Peter Bartholomew, who, with Peter Manson, started Palmerston North's first sawmill, was one of a family of four brothers, all of whom were sawmill proprietors in Queensland and New Zealand.⁴¹ James Bull, who had established the region's first sawmill at Bulls, and who expanded his operations with a new mill on the Oroua near Feilding in 1874, had originally come to the Rangitikei as a building contractor. His brother Charles was associated with him in his sawmilling ventures.

39. Rangitikei Advocate, 3 May 1879, p. 2, collated with Wellington Almanac and Directory 1880, p. 289, and AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 90.

40. Rangitikei Advocate, 4 November 1879, p. 2.

41. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, VI, 661.

Richter, Nannestead and Co., who began milling in Palmerston North in 1874, and who established mills in various parts of the Bush over the next decade or two, were a firm of three⁴² Norwegians who had come to New Zealand in 1867-8. One infers that they had had sawmilling experience in their homeland. It was firms such as these that gave continuity to the industry, moving their mills to open up new districts as old areas were cut out, exploring the possibilities of new markets for their timber, and combining from time to time to protect or further the interests of the industry. There were also smaller firms with humbler origins. One such was the Sandon Sawmills, which began to advertise its ability to 'supply timber of all descriptions' to the district⁴³ in September 1874. This steam sawmill was erected by Michael Coyle, who appears in the Wellington Almanac and Directory for 1872 and 1873 as a sawyer in Middle Rangitikei.

Having outlined some of the salient features of the Rangitikei-Manawatu timber industry of the 1870s, and some of the main factors involved in its establishment, we can now turn to an account of its early history. The first new venture in response to the demands and opportunities of the 'Vogel' scheme was that of Bartholomew and Manson. Bartholomew had entered the Manawatu sawmilling industry at least as early as 1869, as he and a James Towe are listed as operating

42. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 1194.

43. I, 5 September 1874, p. 8.

a ^Wsmall at Foxton in the Wellington Almanac and Directory⁴⁴ of that year. In 1871 P. Bartholomew and P. Manson appear⁴⁵ as sawmillers at Pohuetangi, Manawatu. I have been unable to ascertain the location of Pohuetangi, but it would appear to have been on the banks of the lower Manawatu. A small schooner was wrecked on the north spit of the river in mid 1871 when leaving laden with tongued, grooved and dressed⁴⁶ timber for the Waitotara - it must have come from Bartholomew and Manson's mill. This evidence of exports, together with the fact that Foxton continued to import its main timber needs, suggests that the mill did not have access to the more durable timbers - possibly it was cutting mainly white⁴⁷ pine. We have already noted Bartholomew and Manson's establishment of the first sawmill at Palmerston North. It appears to have been a small mill, whose main purpose was to turn out the rails for the tramway. In February 1874 Bartholomew and Manson are reported getting a new engine up to Palmerston North. It must have been of some size, as it⁴⁸ took 24 bullocks nearly a week to haul it from Foxton. With the completion of the Palmerston North-Foxton tramway in September 1873 and the coming into operation of Richter, Nannested and Co's mill, and Brogdens' two mills in 1874 and early 1875, Palmerston North was well established as an

44. p. 186.

45. Wellington Almanac and Directory 1871, p. 212.

46. Wellington Independent, 2 August 1871.

47. Chapter 3.

48. NZM, 24 February 1872.

important timber centre. Elsewhere in the district three other mills had begun production over this period. Throughout 1874 James and Charles Bull were establishing their mill on the Oroua, at Aorangi, not far from the Feilding settlement, to cut timber from a native reserve. In February the whole of James Bull's stud of about 15 cart horses were employed to transport a 6½ ton boiler over to the Oroua. When nearing the site the carriage broke, the boiler fell to the ground, and the driver narrowly escaped serious injury.⁴⁹ All the necessary plant and machinery were on the ground before winter,⁵⁰ but the mill did not begin production until 1 December.⁵¹ Meanwhile Michael Coyle's Sandon Sawmills had begun work by September 1874, and sometime during the year a mill had begun work at Kakariki, on the south bank of the Rangitikei, not far from the site of the future township of Halcombe. The Kakariki timber mill was referred to by the Bulls correspondent of the Wanganui Herald on 8 December 1874.⁵² The following winter its owner was named as C. Dougan, and he was said to have an advantage over his competitors in that the roads to his mill were especially favourable. He was working an excellent totara bush using an 8 horse-power engine which he had imported.⁵³

During 1875 and 1876 two further sawmills began work.

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49. Y, 21 February 1874, p. 12.
 50. Y, 14 March 1874, p. 11.
 51. Y, 12 December 1874.
 52. Y, 12 December 1874, p. 6.
 53. Y, 7 August 1875, p. 4.

After much delay in getting delivery of his machinery, Amos Burr completed the setting up of a small mill in Palmerston North⁵⁴ sometime in 1875. In 1876 this mill was taken over by a Mr Nees, who greatly enlarged it, and added a sash and door factory.⁵⁵ At Halcombe the Corporation sawmill had gone into operation in February 1876, becoming probably the twelfth mill at work in the region. From 1874 through until 1876 these mills enjoyed a strong demand for all the timber they could produce. In November 1874 there was a brief hindrance when floods put the Palmerston North-Foxton tramway out of action for several weeks. Some 500,000 feet of timber accumulated at the four Palmerston North mills, while Foxton⁵⁶ experienced a brief depression. In March 1875 a Foxton correspondent reported sleepers and timber coming down the tramway 'in incredible quantities', and six vessels in the port, including a smart brigantine, the Julius Vogel, from Auckland.⁵⁷ The local market was also absorbing a large quantity of timber. In July 1875 one Palmerston North mill alone was reported to be cutting 5,000 feet of timber a week⁵⁸ for local consumption. With no easy access to outside markets, the Rangitikei mills were all mainly concerned with supplying local needs. In October 1875 a Marton correspondent reported building going on rapidly in all the surrounding townships. Over the winter and spring the activity was being

54. Y, 10 October 1875, p.2; 27 March 1875, p. 10.

55. Y, 2 September 1876.

56. NZM, 21 November 1874, p. 1; 21 November 1874, p. 2.

57. Y, 13 March 1875, p. 9.

58. Y, 10 July 1875, p. 6.

checked by a great scarcity of timber, as the state of the roads prevented draying timber from the Feilding and Sanson mills.⁵⁹ There was some slackening in the Manawatu timber industry in 1876. Brogdens had closed their Te Matai mill by March, ostensibly because of the high tariff on the tramway. The conversion of the tramway to a railway was completed⁶⁰ during the winter of 1876, and it came under full railway⁶¹ regulations in October, but the high tariff hampered the sawmillers and it was feared that the Palmerston North mills would go onto half time, or even stop work. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the local demand for timber had been largely satisfied. A public meeting was called to⁶² consider the problem. The recession seems to have disappeared with the passing of winter. The winning of a contract for 37,000 sleepers by Richter, Nannestead and Co. in November would have helped.

The industry expanded and prospered in 1877. Early in the year Palmerston North's two main local firms brought into operation mills along the recently opened Palmerston North-Feilding railway. Bartholomew and Manson erected their new mill on Kimbolton Road, with a tramway to bring the sawn timber to the Feilding railway station. The engine and boiler, weighing in all about 12 tons, were railed through from Foxton⁶⁴ in October 1876, at a cost of £25 4s, an effortless operation

59. NZM, 9 October 1875, p.17.

60. Y, 13 May 1876, p. 4.

61. NZG 1876, pp. 718-9.

62. NZM, 14 October 1876, p. 16.

63. Y, 18 November 1875, p. 5.

64. Y, 7 October 1876, p. 5.

compared with the getting of their first two boilers into Palmerston North. The mill was in full operation by January 1877, and a railway siding was granted on 6 March 1877.⁶⁵ In January 1877 Richter, Nannestead and Co. were reported to be erecting a new sawmill about a mile beyond Bunnythorpe on the line to Feilding. The mill and its settlement were named Trondheim, after the birthplace of one of the partners,⁶⁶ and a siding was granted on 3 April 1877. In December 1877⁶⁷ the Manawatu Times published an editorial on Palmerston North's trade in timber for the year, after taking 'some trouble to find out a few particulars'. Upwards of 100,000 railway sleepers had been sent away, and about an equal number of fencing posts. Large numbers of telegraph poles had been sent to various parts of the colony. All the district's local timber requirements had been met, and an 'immense quantity' shipped from Foxton to Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch and other distant centres. In addition 'palings, shingles, house-piles, doors, sashes, mouldings, and turnery of every description' had been exported. It was a fine record, but with Grey's new government setting out to re-invigorate the Vogel boom, there were even better times ahead.

The completion of the Feilding-Wanganui railway created new opportunities for the Rangitikei-Manawatu timber industry, and with a buoyant demand for timber throughout the colony the

65. Y, 20 January 1877, p. 4; AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 95.

66. Y, 6 January 1877, p. 5; G.O. Petersen, The Pioneering Days of Palmerston North, [Palmerston North], 1952, p. 46.

67. 19 December 1877.

output expanded at an accelerating rate. To meet the pressing needs of the builders in Wanganui, heavily laden timber trains were repeatedly passed over the unfinished line from Feilding by night, for a month before the line was officially opened. Rangitikei business men also had large orders for firewood, sleepers and fencing posts to be delivered over the new line.⁶⁸ On 17 June 1878 a meeting of leaders of the Manawatu timber trade was held in the barracks at Feilding, A.F. Halcombe having taken the initiative in calling it.⁶⁹ The main concern of the meeting was to get better conditions for the transport and export of the district's timber. It was reported that five further mills were in course of erection in the district. Richter, Nannestead and Co. were exporting from Foxton at the rate of 60,000 to 70,000 feet of timber a month. Mr Cross, a Wanganui timber merchant gave 200,000 to 300,000 feet as the average monthly consumption of (presumably) the Wanganui district. The millers wanted the government to allow reduced railway rates for the carriage of white pine for shipment. White pine was lighter than rimu by a ratio of 5 to 3, and without some reduction there was no inducement to mill it. Cross, the Wanganui merchant, estimated that at least 50,000 feet could be exported monthly. Other requests to the government were for improved motive power, increased rolling stock and an

68. NZM, 25 May 1878, p. 17.

69. Y, 22 June, 1878, p. 5.

additional goods train on the line, and provision for the shipment of timber from the Aramoho wharf. Halcombe took a memorial from the meeting to Wellington. It does not appear to have met with much success.

On 3 July 1878 a public meeting was held in Foxton to press for wharf extensions there, an increase in railway rolling stock, and improved terms for timber freight. The resolutions passed stated that there were now ten mills within the Manawatu County (which extended to the Rangitikei River, and therefore embraced almost all the forest being worked) and that they were calculated to turn out about ⁷⁰ 1,000,000 feet a month. The mills opened, or under erection, in the first half of 1878, included a new one for Richter, ⁷¹ Nannestead and Co. at Hokowhitu, for which a siding was granted on January 1878, a large mill erected by Bailey Bros ⁷² (William and Walter) at Taonui, between Bunnythorpe and Feilding, which was granted a siding on 9 August 1878, and Copeland's new mill at Halcombe, reported as almost ready in ⁷³ August 1878. Despite the growing number of mills, they were unable to cope with the demand. About the beginning of August 1878, the Rangitikei Advocate reported that almost every week timber merchants from Wanganui were travelling through interviewing sawmill owners in an endeavour to obtain

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 orders. Not surprisingly, new entrepreneurs continued to enter the industry, and 1879 probably set a new record for the number of mills commencing operations in the district. The commissioner of Railways for the North Island, in his report for the year ending 30 June 1879, remarked on the extraordinary development of traffic on the Wanganui line. Whereas the previous year there had been only 6 sawmills at work, with all the timber exported through Foxton, now there were no less than 17 mills at work and 2 in course of erection, and the bulk of the timber had gone to Wanganui for local consumption.⁷⁵ Some of the new mills were substantial concerns. In February 1879 the firm of Malcolm, Russell & Co. were reported to be erecting what was believed to be the largest mill out of the Auckland district at Makino, near Feilding. They were moving there after cutting out an area of bush in the Sandon district.⁷⁶ A second mill was going up at Makino for the firm of Nicholls and Tarrant.⁷⁷ Another new firm, Gillies and Henderson, were granted a siding for their mill at Kelvin Grove, just north-east of Palmerston North, on 2 February 1879. Bartholomew and Manson commenced working Ashhurst's first sawmill in March.⁷⁸ At Swainson's siding near

72 (contd) This must have been for their Taonui venture.

73. NZM, 10 August 1878.

74. Reprinted in Patea Mail, 7 August 1878.

75. AJHR 1879, E-1, p. 74.

76. Rangitikei Advocate, 22 February 1879.

77. ibid., 27 March 1879.

78. ibid., 18 March 1879.

Halcombe, three young men, Henderson Bros and Wratt, began working their first mill in May 1879.⁷⁹ William and Matthew Henderson had immigrated to Auckland as boys, George Wratt⁸⁰ was a colonial, born in Nelson. The traffic returns from their siding over the next year or two show that they were operating quite a large mill. Although the railway commissioner reported most of the industry's output going into local consumption, there were considerable exports. In September 1878 the export of white pine began, the first cargo being supplied by Richter, Nannestad and Co., and shipped through⁸¹ Wanganui to Guthrie and Larnach of Dunedin. In January 1879, Cross Bro. of Wanganui had three chartered vessels loading timber at Wanganui. The cargoes, aggregating 175,000 feet, were supplied by Richter, Nannestad and Co., and⁸² destined for Lyttleton, Oamaru and Dunedin. However, in the early months of 1879 the government was having great difficulty in obtaining sleepers for the railway works in progress. Tenders for 100,000 sleepers were called without a single response, and Tasmanian hardwood had to be used to⁸³ prevent a hold-up in construction. Yet just when all seemed auspicious for the timber industry, it was to receive a rude surprise.

In March 1879, Guthrie and Larnach of Dunedin^{get} informed the Manawatu samillers that as they could American lumber landed

79. ibid., 3 & 31 May 1879.

80. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, VI, 543, 545.

81. Y., 14 September 1878.

82. Rangitikei Advocate, 21 January 1879.

83. NZM, 1 February 1879, AJHR Session I 1879, E-5.

at a cheaper rate than they were paying for New Zealand timber,⁸⁴ they intended to use the American material. The influx of American lumber was a quite unforeseen consequence of the abolition of certain customs duties, in Ballance's budget of August 1879. At this time, influenced by his experience of English Liberalism, Ballance favoured free trade and his budget aimed to make a start in sweeping away duties which 'either fall on the necessities of life or clog the wheels of industry'.⁸⁵ Ballance's financial statement was accompanied by a list of the articles on which duty was to be abolished,⁸⁶ showing the amount of duty collected in the preceding year.⁸⁶ It included items such as Swords, £5; Fireworks, £33; Perambulators, £125; Split Peas, £58. The item which concerns us here was 'Building Materials not otherwise enumerated, £161'.⁸⁷ It transpired that Ballance had discussed his proposed alteration of the tariff with one Rangitikei sawmiller, and in his inexperience had been under the impression that the small amount of duty collected indicated that the New Zealand millers had nothing to fear from outside competition.⁸⁸ The lumbermen of the North American West Coast, with excellent timber resources growing adjacent to deep-water anchorages, a multitude of swift-running streams to drive sawmills, and a limited home market, were not slow to grasp the opportunity

84. NZM, 29 March 1879, reprinting from Manawatu Herald.

85. AJHR 1878, E-2, p. 13.

86. ibid., p. 58

87. The tariff had been 2s per 100 superficial feet on sawn timber. See NZS 1871, p. 6.

88. Rangitikei Advocate, 20 May 1879.

offering across the Pacific. On 18 March 1879, the Rangitikei-Manawatu sawmillers met in Feilding to discuss the threat, and appointed a committee of three of their number to take any steps they deemed necessary to ventilate the subject.⁸⁹ Over the next few months various repercussions of the American competition became apparent, while in their largely ineffective efforts to remedy the situation the sawmillers and timber merchants revealed a good deal of the inner workings of their industry. The Rangitikei Advocate of 10 May 1879 rightly concluded that 'the timber-duty question is an all-important one for Manawatu'.

The first effect of the importation of American timber had been the loss of South Island markets, but worse was to follow. The mills in the Marlborough Sounds had likewise lost their southern markets, and by May 1879 they were shipping to Wanganui, undercutting the Rangitikei-Manawatu millers. The local sawmill owners met again in Feilding on Saturday 17 May to organize measures for their mutual protection. They decided to communicate with other timber districts so that a combined and powerful effort could be made to secure the re-imposition of the duty on timber. Public meetings were also planned for their own area, to bring pressure to bear on the Government. There was strong feeling against the timber merchants, for having turned to outside districts for their supplies, after being allowed a discount of 2s per 100 feet by the local sawmillers. The sawmillers

89. ibid., 20 March 1879.

90. ibid., 20 May 1879.

decided to cancel the discount, and establish their own
 general timber depot in Wanganui.⁹⁰ It must have been at
 this meeting also that a general reduction of some 20 percent
 in the wage rates of sawmill workers was agreed on. The new
 rates, to come into effect on 1 June, were made public in a
 circular notice dated 20 May, which was posted in all the mills.

Apart from the reduction in wages, the sawmillers seem
 to have done little^{to}/carry out their plans, and little more
 was heard of their association.⁹¹ Newspaper editorials and
 correspondence columns, however, give interesting information
 on the workings of the industry. The sawmillers, it appears,
 had used their advantage during the earlier shortage of timber
 to negotiate a convenient 'compact' with the Wanganui timber
 merchants. The merchants were to take at a fixed price all
 the timber the mills cut, and in return they would have a
 monopoly of the trade, the mill-owners either refusing to
 sell to individuals outside the 'ring', or charging them the
 price they would pay to the merchants in the compact.⁹² The
 approximate date of this compact is suggested by a brief item
 in the Rangitikei Advocate of 10 April 1879 to the effect
 that 'some differences which existed between the saw-mill
 owners of Manawatu and the timber-merchants of Wanganui' had
 been amicably settled. The reasons for the merchants'
 decision to break the compact also became apparent. A letter
 printed in the Rangitikei Advocate of 22 May 1879, apparently
 from a Wanganui timber merchants, wished the millers well with

91. ibid., 13 September 1879. ('The association is never
 heard of now').

92. ibid., 22 May 1879, reprinting from Manawatu Herald.

their plan for a Wanganui depot, but pointed out the problems of bad debts, waste of timber, and the difficulty of regulating the supply from each mill. It also compared the Manawatu timber unfavourably with that produced elsewhere. The ends were not squared, and bark was left on boards and scantling. The Manawatu Herald explained another factor⁹³ in the situation. The timber merchants owned several schooners, which they employed in part to bring Kauri timber from Kaipara. Now that they had lost their southern markets, it was hard to find enough freights to keep the vessels occupied. It therefore paid them to use the vessels to bring timber from the Marlborough Sounds at cut rates. The Manawatu Herald reported some seven or eight schooners lying in the Wanganui River, having arrived with timber from the Sounds. The Sounds mills were placing the timber in the vessels at 6s per hundred feet, the timber merchants were charging themselves 3s for freight and they paid 4d for wharfage at Wanganui, making a total cost of 9s 4d per hundred feet. The prices they had been paying under the compact ranged up to 16s for totara, 14s for matai⁹⁴ and 11s for rimu.

Over the winter of 1879, many of the Rangitikei-Manawatu mills appear to have been brought virtually to a standstill, and the running of timber 'specials' on the Wanganui line⁹⁵ ceased. The blow to the industry was described as 'a very serious thing' for Feilding, as it drew 'the chief of its

93. ibid.

94. Y, 7 June 1879, p. 3.

95. Rangitikei Advocate, 22 May, 13 September 1879.

96 487

support from its timber-revenue'. An intimate relationship was pointed out between sawmilling and land settlement:-

Numbers of men have taken up sections of land and determined on settling in Manawatu because the saw-mills would aid in the work of clearing, and because the royalty for the timber would assist their income until the land was ready for grass. If the timber trade decays, this class of settlers will be seriously affected by the withdrawal of one of their chief supports, and the whole district will suffer more or less. 97

John Ballance's deep concern for the welfare of the pioneer settler is unquestionable and these repercussions of his free trade measure must have played an important part in his political education.

These hard times probably did a deal of good to the industry, however, forcing it to put its house in order and raise its standards. Some firms took worthwhile initiatives in searching for markets. Malcolm, Russell and Co. had established an agency at Patea by late May 1879.⁹⁸ Several mills had won useful orders in various parts of the colony by September,⁹⁹ and in October Malcolm, Russell and Co. again demonstrated their initiative by shipping samples of totara, rimu and matai to London.¹⁰⁰ In a financial statement on 17 November 1879, Atkinson, the new Colonial Treasurer, announced the re-imposition of the duty on timber, and the following month the Manawatu Times reported the^{re-}sumption of large timber shipments to the South Island.¹⁰¹ One or two mills did not weather the recession (McChesney and Baird's near Bunnythorpe,

96. ibid., 15 May 1879.

97. ibid., 22 May 1879.

98. ibid.

99. ibid., 20 September 1879.

100. Y., 18 October 1879, p. 8.

101. Quoted in NZM, 20 September 1879, p.11.

102
for example), and the scramble to get into the industry was effectively halted.

For the year 1880 we have for the first time the details of the value of traffic at private sidings,¹⁰³ and with their assistance it is possible to gain some idea of which firms¹⁰⁴ had established themselves as the giants of the industry. In addition to their share of the local market, Bailey Bros. at Taonui despatched in excess of 1,700,000 superficial feet by rail, Bartholomew and Manson at Feilding despatched in excess of 1,300,000 feet, and Malcolm, Russell and Co. at Makino in excess of 1,100,000 feet. Richter, Nannestad and Co., with a mill at Bunnythorpe and two in Palmerston North, must have been in the same class, though it is more difficult to estimate their probable output. It is likely that they had a good share of the Palmerston North local market, and they may well have had the district's highest output. J. & C. Bull railed in excess of 700,000 feet from their Aorangi Mill, and in view of their long established reputation as builders, carters, and timber merchants, it seems likely that they also drayed large quantities to various parts of Rangitikei. These five firms appear to have been

102. Y, 18 November 1879, p. 9; AJHR 1881, D-1 p. 90.

103. AJHR 1881, D-1, p.90.

104. For tariffs to 10 October 1880, see NZG 1879, p. 1637, for remainder of the year see NZG 1880, pp. 1395-6. The rough calculations quoted are conservative estimates based on the assumption that all timber railed went to Wanganui, even though some must have been railed to Foxton (the closer port for most mills), and some even shorter distances to nearby settlements. The concession granted to export timber (NZG 1880, p. 1617) has also been ignored.

the leaders of the industry, but several others were probably producing at a rate well in excess of 500,000 feet a year, and a more detailed study might raise one or two of them to rank with the leaders. Some idea of the export market in the South Island in 1880 is provided by a newspaper report in April.¹⁰⁵ Cross Bros., the Wanganui timber merchants, had won a contract to supply 45,000 railway sleepers to Guthrie and Larnach in Dunedin. As Guthrie and Larnach had no corresponding contract with the government, these must have been for the privately constructed Waimea Plains Railway in Southland. Bailey and Co. were to supply these sleepers, and together with Bartholomew and Manson they were also to supply nearly 1,000,000 feet of matai, rimu and totara for which Cross Bros. had orders in Oamaru, Timaru and Dunedin. Foxton's timber trade must also have revived quite strongly, as 883,455 feet are reported to have been exported in the year to 30 June 1880.¹⁰⁶

The sawmillers began the 1881 year with encouraging order books,¹⁰⁷ but through the collapse of their association they were at the mercy of the timber merchants, and were selling at prices that barely met expenses.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, they were having to extend their tramlines ever deeper into the bush to get their logs, and the more desirable timbers, particularly totara, were becoming scarce.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile large resources of white and yellow pine were standing in close

105. Y, 3 April 1880, p. 9.
 106. NZM, 21 August 1880, p. 15.
 107. Y, 26 February 1881, p. 6.
 108. Y, 26 March 1881, p. 3.
 109. Y, 10 December 1881, p. 4.

proximity to the mills, untouched because of the very limited local demand. It was believed that this timber would be saleable in Australia, but such a trade would only be profitable if transport prices were kept to a minimum. By May 1881 the millers were again combining. At a meeting in Feilding on 1 May they agreed to increase their prices and to petition the government for railway freight reductions, particularly on white pine.¹¹⁰ A fortnight later two of their number waited on the Hon. Richard Oliver with their requests, pointing out that unless the white pine trade was made profitable the timber would remain uncut or be burnt on the spot.¹¹¹ The government's response was a concession of 25 percent on the charge for white pine consigned to Wanganui and Foxton for shipment to Australia.¹¹² The concession came into effect on 4 July 1881, and before the month was out J. and C. Bull were preparing a shipment of white pine 'wides', known to be in demand for shelving in Australia.¹¹³ Later in the year five or six millers combined to send a trial shipment of 90,000 feet to test the Melbourne market. Two of their number went with the shipment, as delegates to make personal enquiries about the market. The venture was considered a marked success. While some types of cut did not reach the 11s per 100 feet considered economic for the trade, the shelving 'wides' sold for 22s 6d.¹¹⁴ The year 1882 was to see a steady flow of shipments from Wanganui

110. Y, 7 May 1881, pp. 10, 11.

111. NZM, 21 May 1881, p. 15.

112. NZG 1881, p. 867.

113. Y, 30 July 1881, p. 7.

114. Y, 22 October 1881, p. 11; 17 December 1881, p. 9.

115
to Australia. In the process of cutting this timber the mills were clearing large areas of high class agricultural land. Some mills ran up impressive tallies of production during 1881. The railway siding receipts for the year ending 31 March 1882 show that Bailey Bros' mill at Taonui must have railed in excess of 2,500,000 feet, and P. and J. Bartholomew (formerly Bartholomew and Manson) sent over 2,000,000 feet by rail from their Feilding mill.¹¹⁶ The Yeoman reported a figure of 3,600,000 feet for timber exports from the port of Wanganui, probably for the 1881 calendar year (the item is not clear on this point).¹¹⁷

Despite its large area of forested land, Taranaki was not particularly well endowed from a sawmiller's point of view. In 1886 Kirk noted that, with the exception of a few favoured localities of limited area, good timber was sparse and scattered.¹¹⁸ Fortunately for the settlers of the 1870s, the New Plymouth-Hawera railway tapped some of the best timber areas. In 1877 Captain Campbell Walker had noted that rimu and honeysuckle (rewarewa) were the prevailing trees on the Mountain Road beyond Inglewood. They were interspersed with hinau and tawa, with matai becoming more frequent further inland.¹¹⁹ Kirk noted that totara was very rare in Taranaki, with the result that rimu was commonly used for such purposes as bridge building. Rimu was quite plentiful,

115. See e.g. Y, 21 January 1882, p. 11; 25 February 1882, p. 11.

116. Calculated from AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 95.

117. Y, 12 May 1882, p. 13.

118. AJHR 1886, C-3A, p. 5.

119. AJHR 1877, C-3, p. 5.

and was more durable than was usual in other districts. White pine was the most common timber tree, and was more valued than was common elsewhere because of the comparative rarity of other good timber.¹²⁰

The first forward move of the 1870s in the Taranaki timber industry was made in South Taranaki in 1875, and came about in a rather fortuitous way. A Mr R. Wilson had sold his station in the Lower Wairarapa, on account of failing health, and retired 'home' to Britain. After a long colonial experience Wilson found the homeland 'not what it seemed', and having invested in some land at Hawera before leaving New Zealand, he determined to return and resume the pioneering life. He brought back with him an assortment of farm machinery - two reapers, a mower, a threshing machine, and complete machinery for a sawmill. To drive the threshing machine and sawmill he brought a steam engine of about 8 horsepower, designed to work on either coal or wood.¹²¹ On arrival in the Patea district he found a severe shortage of timber, and accordingly he quickly got his sawmill to work at Ketemarae, on the edge of the bush, just inland from Normanby.¹²² Over the next few years this small mill had little respite, except when winter mud prevented the carting away of its output. In March 1876 it was reported to be turning out about 2500 feet a day, and having a marked effect on the rate of building in the district.¹²³ Over the next year or two the mill was first leased, and then apparently, sold, to

120. AJHR 1886, C-3A, p. 6.

121. Y, 15 May 1875, p. 4.

122. Y, 26 June 1875, p. 2.

123. Y, 11 March 1875, p. 4.

124

Wilson's manager, Robson. A second South Taranaki mill was reported nearing completion in September 1878, at Kakaramea, for the firm of J. Hudson, Guy and Co. ¹²⁵

In North Taranaki sawmilling followed the pioneer settlers at Inglewood, though with rather wavering steps initially. The first sawmilling entrepreneur, named Beaton, had a mill under construction and an engine on the site by February 1876. ¹²⁶ His enterprise came to grief through insufficient capital. His creditors had the engine impounded just as it was ready to begin work. With a touch of the ludicrous such as seems to have typified the early days of Inglewood, they had it taken to Langley's Hotel by bullock team and locked up. ¹²⁷ Although the engine was released from ¹²⁸ durance within a week or two, Beaton failed to get the mill into production, and it passed into the hands of Broadmore and Co., who had the honour of milling the first timber in Inglewood in July 1876. ¹²⁹ Through the failure of the government to provide the necessary roads, Broadmore and Co. were unable to fulfil the government contract for railway sleepers that they had inherited from Beaton. However, they survived this difficulty, and re-won the contract when tenders were re-advertised. ¹³⁰ Broadmore and Co. had earlier been sawmilling on Carrington Road, which seems to have been the centre of the

125. Patea Mail, 18 September 1878.

126. TH, 19 February 1876.

127. TH, 26 February 1876.

128. TH, 11 March 1876.

129. TH, 4 October 1876.

130. Y, 18 November 1876, p. 5.

North Taranaki sawmilling industry from the early 1860s until its displacement by Inglewood in the later 1870s. Inglewood's second sawmill was established by Colonel Trimble. The machinery, accompanied by an engineer, arrived in Auckland from England in December 1876,¹³¹ and the mill provided for the first trainload to leave Inglewood when the line reached the township in August 1877.¹³² Shortly after the opening of the line, a second Carrington Road sawmiller, Henry Brown,¹³³ moved his mill to Inglewood. For a year or two these three Inglewood mills established themselves as the main suppliers of North Taranaki's timber needs. In 1878 they issued a common price list.¹³⁴

The opening up of new timber country by the Inglewood to Hawera railway over the years 1878 to 1881 and the rapid growth of Taranaki's population in this period, encouraged a steady expansion of the timber industry in the early 1880s. A siding granted to T. Marne at Tariki Road, halfway between Inglewood and Stratford, on 20 October 1880, must (from the volume of its outward freight) have been for a sawmill.¹³⁵ At Mangawhero, just south of Eltham, Southey and Willy had established a sawmill by 1880, before the advent of the railway, and at first used bullock waggons to get their timber to Hawera.¹³⁶ Early in 1881 they were adding

131. TH, 2 December 1876.

132. TH, 30 August 1877.

133. TH, 29 August 1877; J.E. Gifford, 100 Years of Timber, New Plymouth, (1963), p. 10.

134. Gifford, 100 Years of Timber, p. 12.

135. AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 90; 1882, D-1, p. 95.

136. H.J. Andrews, The History of Eltham, New Zealand, Eltham, 1959, p. 9.

a range of woodworking machinery to their mill.¹³⁷ With the completion of the railway, Ngaere, between Stratford and Eltham,¹³⁸ began to emerge as an important timber centre. Following the settlement of the Waimate Plains, several small mills¹³⁹ began to operate in the bush inland from Manaia. Over this period the Taranaki sawmills were principally concerned with supplying their rapidly growing local market, in which they had little to fear from outside competition. Their total production for the year 1880 was returned as 3,899,471 feet,¹⁴⁰ in the 1881 Census.

Hawke's Bay remained a heavy importer of timber (mainly from Auckland)¹⁴¹ as late as 1880. Until the railway tapped the Seventy Mile Bush, the most important source of local supplies was the forest that spilled down from the northern stretch of the Ruahine Ranges onto the lower country, with the Tikokino area as the main milling centre on account of its fine totara forests and its proximity to the settlements most remote from Napier, where imported supplies were landed.¹⁴² The Seventy Mile Bush had some good stands of timber trees, particularly in its northern reaches. There were several large tracts of totara, some extending to as much as 3,000 acres.¹⁴³ Also present in considerable quantities were rimu,

137. Hawera Star, 23 February 1881.

138. See e.g. Hawera Star, 23 February 1881, 4 August 1882, 12 December 1882; Y, 25 May 1883, p. 5.

139. Hawera Star, 27 August 1881, 17 September 1881, 23 January 1883.

140. Census of New Zealand, 1881 p. 302.

141. AJHR 1878, E-1, p. 50, cf ibid., 1879, E-1, p. 74 and 1880, E-1, p. 92.

142. Wilson, History of Hawke's Bay, p. 272, for the early history of Tikokino's timber industry.

143. Hawke's Bay Almanac and Directory, 1878, p. 67.

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matai and white pine. Towards Hawke's Bay's southern boundary the forest deteriorated in quality, and most of it was worthless to the sawmiller. Unfortunately it was the northern stretches which were settled first, years before the railway arrived to make milling an economic proposition. As a result the pioneer settlers had to destroy a large area of the best forest in the bush in order to 145
establish their farms.

A steam sawmill was reported at work on the northern edge of the Bush as early as March 1875, 146 and by 1878 there were several mills at work. 147 The railway reached Kopua, on the edge of the bush on 25 January 1878, but the next section, extending into the bush as far as Makotuku, was not opened until 9 August 1880. 148 The timber industry was slow to respond to the arrival of the railway. Like the Manawatu-Rangitikei, the Hawke's Bay timber industry was affected by the influx of American lumber in 1879. The North Island Railway Commissioner's report for the year to 30 April 1880 mentions mills at Tikokino and Waipawa idle over the previous eight months, and small traffic from mills at Kopua and Takapau. 149 The Seventy Mile Bush mills had the additional handicap of the long haul of over 64 miles from the edge of the bush to

144. AJHR 1886, C-3A, p.2.

145. ibid.

146. NZM, 20 March 1875, (reprinting from H. B. Herald).

147. H. B. Almanac and Directory, 1878, p. 67.

148. AJHR 1878, E-1, p. 21; 1881, D-1, p. 25.

149. AJHR 1880 E-1, p. 92.

the chief market, Napier. The 1881 railways report shows that the sawmilling industry was at last beginning to forge ahead, the tonnage of timber handled being double that of the previous year.¹⁵⁰ The returns for 1882 show that it had almost doubled again.¹⁵¹ A feature of this early Hawke's Bay timber industry, which provides a marked contrast to the pattern in the other two Bush Provinces, was that the main sawmills were outside the Bush itself, in Napier or in country centres such as Waipawa and Waipukurau. As a result logs competed with timber for transport on the railway, and its facilities were not always adequate for the traffic offering.¹⁵² Of such mills, the one most closely associated with the Bush itself in the early 1880s was Wilding and Bull's at Waipukurau. In 1881 this firm operated private sidings at Kopua, Takapau and Waipukurau, paying £2441 in outward traffic dues,¹⁵³ which put it almost in the same class as the leading Rangitikei firm of Bailey Bros., who paid £2,703. However, a good deal of Wilding and Bull's dues would be for freight on logs consigned to their main mill in Waipukurau, and as the haul to the Napier market was also much more costly than Bailey Bros. to Wanganui, it is clear that the output would have been much less. Although mills outside the Bush dominated the industry, there were some substantial mills within the Bush, such as the Ormondville

150. AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 67.

151. *ibid.*, 1882, D-1, p. 84.

152. AJHR 1886, C-3A, p. 4; Y, 23 April 1881, p. 11.

153. AJHR, D-1, p. 95.

154
 Steam Saw Mills, all of whose employees gave a free day's work in early May 1881 to cut the timber for the township's first Wesleyan church, turning out 5,000 feet for the cause. 155
 As there is an earlier report of emulation between Anglicans and Wesleyans in erecting their churches in Ormondville, 156
 it seems likely that this sawmill was owned and manned by Wesleyans.

In the Wairarapa section of the Seventy Mile Bush 157
 sawmilling did not get under way until the mid 1880s, owing to the later development of this district. In the southern Wairarapa large areas of fine totara forest extended eastwards from the Tararua Ranges, and encouraged an early development of sawmilling for the valley's needs, with a steady flow of exports over the Rimutaka Range. About October 1874 the Greytown Wairarapa Standard reported eight steam sawmills at work in the Wairarapa, turning out a total of 600,000 feet per month, of which 500,000 feet was going to private consumption in the district, 50,000 to government 158
 contracts, and 50,000 to the Wellington market. The completion of the railway over the Rimutakas in 1878 encouraged a rapid expansion of the industry. In June 1878 the Carterton district, which had established itself as the main sawmilling area, was reported to have seven large saw- 159
 mills in full work. The leading firm appears to have been

154. H.B. Almanac and Directory, 1880, Advs. p. 102.

155. H.B. Weekly Courier, 20 May 1881, p. 13.

156. *Ibid.*, 29 April 1881, p. 11.

157. See e.g. Eketahuna Diamond Jubilee 1873-1933, (Eketahuna, 1933), p. 27.

158. Reprinted in Y, 10 October 1874, p. 7.

159. NZM, 29 June 1878. For a good account of the early history of Carterton's sawmilling industry see A.G. Bagnall, (Over)

Booth and Co. On New Year's Eve 1881 the 60 employees of this firm entertained its head, William Booth, to a dinner. In his speech Booth referred to the current hard times, but said the firm had sent away 2,000,000 feet of timber in the previous three months. In the year to 31 March 1882 the Wellington-Wairarapa railway carried 15,870¹⁶⁰ tons of timber, which would amount to approximately 7,935,000 feet, and much of this must have represented exports from the lower Wairarapa.

Having surveyed the development of the timber industry in the various Bush districts, we must now turn to consider briefly the daily life and work of the sawmills. Captain Campbell Walker provides a useful summary of the general working methods of the New Zealand mills in his report of 1877.¹⁶¹ He found that felling was usually performed with the axe, and found the saw in general use for this purpose only near Hokitika. The use of the axe meant a wastage of several cubic feet in a fair-sized tree, and gave less control over the direction of fall, and so occasioned more damage to the standing crop. However, the New Zealand sawmillers economised in labour rather than timber. Once the tree was down they took only the larger logs, leaving the 'top, lop, and branches' lying in the forest. The logs chosen for milling were next rolled down a timber slip to the nearest siding on the tramway, or dragged to the tram, generally by bullocks.

159.(contd.) A History of Carterton, Carterton, 1957, pp. 23-8.

160. AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 84.

161. AJHR 1877, C-3, pp. 40-1.

Except in the Auckland kauri forests screw-jacks were not much used, but bushmen elsewhere made much use of what were known as cant-hooks. Walker found the universal use of the tramway a marked feature of the exploitation of the New Zealand forests - 'no sawmiller ever dreams of working a forest without one'. They were, as a rule, constructed by bushmen on contract, and varied widely in detail. A few had iron rails and assumed 'the shape of a regular light railway', with locomotives running on them, but most had wooden rails, with horses to provide the haulage. Walker was impressed with the New Zealand sawmills, and remarked that he had nowhere in Europe seen machinery better adapted for the purpose or so generally employed. He found the circular saw, with patent feed and latest appliances, to be by far the most commonly used. A supply of more or less skilled workmen was also generally available.

All of the features described by Captain Walker could be copiously illustrated from the Bush Provinces, including the occasional iron tramway. Booth and Co. of Carterton were about to lay iron rails in mid 1878, and had already acquired
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a locomotive to run on them. In the Manawatu there was a line which wavered uneasily between being a bush tramline and a railway branch line. This was the Taonui Branch Line, constructed in 1879 by the Public Works Department to give access to the reserve of totara timber set apart for the government in the Manchester Block. Messrs. West and Cooper

won the contract to cut the sleepers from the reserve. For a few months Railway Department locomotives ran in to bring out the timber, but in April 1880 the Public Works Department took charge of the line, and the sleepers were hauled out by horses. By June 1882 the contractors had cut out the timber on the reserve, but the line remained in use to service other areas of the bush until 1895.¹⁶³ A good description of a typical large sawmill is provided by an account of Malcolm, Russell and Co's Makino mill, published in the Rangitikei Advocate of 22 February 1879:

The mill covers a considerable area of ground, and the shed, which is a very substantial structure, and is to be roofed with iron, is 180 ft long by a width of 80 ft. ... Under this, is the whole of the machinery, which consists of three horizontal engines, with attached furnaces; and in the same line, and nearly alongside is a furnace and boiler for producing a constant supply of hot water with which to supply the three engines, the whole of which work together with one combined power of 34 horses, or separately as occasion may require. There is, also, a vertical saw and travelling bench with a break-down 50 ft., for reducing the timber into more useful lines. There are two ripping benches and one travelling ripping bench, which alone will cut up 12,000 ft. daily, and in addition to this it also breaks down its own timber. The three ripping saws are capable of cutting 20,000 to 22,000 ft. daily. The only other saw in use is a small ripping saw, which is kept almost continually at work cutting up firewood for the supply of the engine. There is also an American planing and moulding machine, which disposes of 8,000 ft. daily. The mill, which is situated just below the railway line, is connected with it by a siding substantially constructed and supplied with iron rails, and as there are any amount of shunt lines at the mill, trucks in any quantity can be loaded as required. In the bush the tramway is, of course, made of timber, and the whole of the permanent portion of it is spiked down to solid sleepers. The saw-dust produced is utilized by being taken away into the bush in trucks specially formed, and there used for ballasting

163. New Zealand Railway Observer, December 1948, p. 117.
(Reprinted in R.E. Clevely, Bunnythorpe and District, 1872-1952, Wellington, 1953, pp. 30-4.)

purposes. A very convenient blacksmith's shop is also attached to the premises ...

One of the problems faced by the sawmillers was the high risk of fire. Captain Walker noted that the wasteful methods of logging left a mass of debris which resulted in fires commonly sweeping through the cut-over bush. Fires started by settlers burning-off, or by sparks from railway locomotives, could thus travel a great distance in dry weather, and so endanger the sawmills. There were, of course, the more immediate dangers arising from the fires of the mill's boilers, and those in the cottages of the sawmill settlement. Over the period of this study quite a number of sawmills were razed by fire. In March 1875 Bartholomew and Manson's¹⁶⁴ Palmerston North mill was burnt down. In September 1877 two small mills, one at Carnarvon in Rangitikei, and another¹⁶⁵ near Carterton, were destroyed. In March 1879 Richter, Nannestead and Col. lost their Terrace End mill at Palmerston¹⁶⁶ North, and also in the dangerous month of March, in 1881, Gillies and Henderson's mill at Kelvin Grove, near Palmerston North, was destroyed, and about the same time Robinson's¹⁶⁷ sawmill west of Carterton was razed. Because of the high insurance rates involved, the mills often carried little or no insurance, so that their loss was a severe blow to their owners. There was often a considerable delay before they, or their successors, could begin rebuilding, so that the workers also suffered as a result of a fire.

164. NZM, 20 March 1875, p.19.

165. NZM, 22 September 1877, pp. 18, 19.

166. Y, 29 March 1879.

167. Y, 19 March 1881, p. 3; NZM, 9 April 1881, p. 17.

While many of the mills were located in permanent townships, so that their workers were involved in the general community life, a good number set up their own short-lived villages. Where, as was usual, a large proportion of the work-force were bachelors, a communal style of life was followed, with a cook-house and bunk-house. One of the attractions of the life was the sport of shooting wild cattle,¹⁶⁸ pigs, and native game, especially over weekends. Most large mills, however, soon attracted a number of married men, and¹⁶⁹ erected settlements of cottages to house them. The decision as to whether the children of such ephemeral settlements should be provided with schools out of the slender resources available for education was one of the questions which had to be faced by the new Education Boards, whose work we will study in our next chapter.

168. Andrews, *History of Eltham*, p. 10.

169. See *Rangitikei Advocate*, 31 May 1879, for such a settlement at Henderson and Wratt's sawmill, Swainson's Crossing, Rangitikei.

CHAPTER 12

THE NEW EDUCATION BOARDS AND THE
BUSH SCHOOLS, 1877 - 1881

The Education Act of 1877 gave New Zealand a national system of free, secular primary education. By providing that the Colonial Government should finance the system, it clearly acknowledged the colony's duty to make an elementary education available to every child in the country. The compulsory clauses indicated that parents had a corresponding duty to ensure that their children took advantage of the schools, but the provision that these clauses should be inoperative until invoked by local committees was an acknowledgement that neither public opinion nor school facilities were yet ready for such a measure. The schools were to be secular in curriculum and control so that the divisive influence of denominationalism should not hinder their progress. The continuing strength of provincial and local sentiment found expression in the vesting of the main administrative powers in twelve local boards, based on groupings of the newly formed counties, but in general corresponding closely to the old provinces, and in the local school committees elected by householders for districts served by a single school, or a

group of schools. A central department, under the Minister of Education, was envisaged as having a comparatively minor role to play. The Act was a compromise, in which some of the provisions were vaguely expressed, and some carried important implications which were not apparent to the politicians who framed it. It has been well remarked that 'the possibility¹ of change was latent in the Act from the start'. The forces which shaped the Act, and the longer term fortunes of its various provisions, are well documented elsewhere.² Our concern here is to examine the early years of its implementation in the Bush Provinces, and the place of the Board schools in the life and progress of the Bush settlements.

The North Island had more at stake in the 1877 Act than had the South. As A.G. Butchers has written, 'it is ... indeed, perhaps not too much to say that it was the large land revenue derived from Canterbury and Otago that in the first years of the national system built the schools of Auckland and Wellington, to say nothing of those of the smaller settlements'.³ In general, the South Island settlements were making good progress in the provision of schools, and their educational systems were already adequate for the kind of social order they had been developing. While the North Island had made considerable educational

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1. N.Z. Commission on Education, Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand. Wellington, 1962, p. 72.
 2. e.g. ibid., esp. pp. 69-77; Leicester Webb, The Control of Education in New Zealand, Wellington, 1937; A.E. Campbell, Educating New Zealand, Wellington, 1941; John Mackey, The Making of a State Education System, London, 1967; J.L. Ewing, The Development of the New Zealand Primary School Curriculum, 1877-1970, Wellington, 1970.
 3. A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand, Dunedin, 1930, p. 2.

progress in the mid 1870s, it was already becoming clear that the advance of settlement was facing the colonists with demands with which they could not cope unaided. Yet, more than was realised at the time, the whole colony had a large stake in the successful outcome of the North Island experiments in colonising the Bush. In the 1880s it was to become the main frontier of development that absorbed much of the exodus from the depression-ridden south, and so minimised the colony's loss through emigration. Moreover, the success of the Bush settlements was, in the broadest sense, the success of an educational endeavour. Settlers drawn from a class who had long been schooled in implicit obedience to their 'betters' in economic, social and political affairs were undertaking the task of building for themselves in virgin lands a new social order, based on democratic processes and a considerable measure of economic co-operation. They succeeded in creating and managing the institutions for a series of formidable tasks - the clearing of the bush, the forging of a viable subsistence economy, and the subsequent creation of specialised agricultural export industries. The achievement of a success sufficient to attract a continuing flow of new recruits to the task required the learning of a wide range of social and industrial skills. Thus the whole Bush community was engaged in a complex educative experience, to which the Board schools made an important, probably, crucial, contribution. They maintained and extended literacy under exacting pioneer conditions, and they provided in each small district a centre and focus of

community co-operation. The Act may be criticized for its vagueness as regards the relationship between the boards and committees, but by giving to the committees 'the general ^{al} management of education/matters within the school district', and leaving them to work out their own modus vivendi with the boards, it provided the opportunity for invaluable experience in practical politics. The inability of successive governments to provide the Bush Provinces with educational votes adequate to their needs, faced the Bush settlers with further demanding tasks. It might be maintained that the very deficiencies in the Act's administrative provisions and in the votes for education served to give the adult Bush settlers an invaluable educative experience in the rudiments of the democratic process and the principles of social action. The inadequacies of the work of the pioneer schools are also manifest, but by giving at least basic literacy to the majority of the Bush children, they contributed to the continuing and growing social and economic success of the settlements. When, in July 1880, the education system came under attack in the Legislative Council, Rolleston, as Minister of Education, came to its defence in the House, and his words showed a genuine awareness of what was being accomplished:

Going through the country as he had done, in his capacity of Minister of Education, he was in a position to say that there was no more healthy sign in the country than the energy with which this educational system had been taken up and worked by the people. The school-buildings which were to be seen in every little knot of population were an evidence of the firm hold that this system had got upon the people, and of their determination to carry it out. It did not only mean

the maintenance of school learning, but it meant also the binding together of the people as a whole and as a nation in a manner which nothing else in our system of government could possibly effect. 4

The Legislative Council debate which Rolleston was answering served to show that the implementation of the Act could expect to meet continuing political criticism and opposition. Waterhouse, who initiated the debate by moving a resolution for a return of salaries paid under the Education Act, said that he feared that New Zealand would sink under a system of bread and education, just as the Roman Empire had done under a system of bread and games.⁵ Colonel Whitmore⁶ deprecated the erection of 'such palaces of school buildings', and Henry Chamberlain of Auckland said that he would sketch a caricature of New Zealand as

the John Bull of the Southern Hemisphere in the folds of that very ugly animal, the boa-constrictor, with a head representing that Minister of Education. Upon that boa-constrictor I would picture the teachers, male and female, of this colony - blood pouring forth from every pore while this New Zealand John Bull was endeavouring to rise and cast off the monster crushing him to death. 7

Chamberlain was critical of 'a gentleman in a high position in this colony' who was taking advantage of the Act to have his children educated free, and maintained that the real purpose of the Act was to educate the ragged children, who nevertheless⁸ were still roaming the streets instead of being at school. Such remarks showed that the speaker had no conception of the common school ideal which was abroad in the land as a vital influence

4. NZPD, Vol. 36, p. 491.

5. NZPD, Vol. 36, p. 176.

6. ibid.

7. NZPD, Vol. 37, p. 4.

8. ibid., p. 3.

reshaping the social order. The Wellington inspector, Robert Lee, in his annual report written a few months earlier, had shown a clearer grasp of these social realities:

So strong is the popular sense of the value and necessity of education in the present day, that there is no fear of our present school system collapsing for want of popular support. The people as a whole, demand education for their children, and are willing to pay for it. I am much pleased to observe, year by year, that the State schools are becoming more and more the common schools for the whole community. Men of position and education are largely using the public primary schools in preference to any others. The class prejudice and the religious feeling which have hitherto been drawbacks to the establishment of large common schools will certainly in time either die out or be ignored. 9

This common school ideal was well attuned to the yeoman ideal of the Bush settlements and they had much to gain from its furtherance. In their local affairs it was to help to mute various divisive feelings (religious, especially) and foster community life and common social action. In the larger national realm it was to serve as a levelling influence against class prejudice, helping the Bush settlers to win their way in due course to acceptance as men cast in the same general mould as the colonists of the older established open country settlements, though it must be admitted that a certain sense of the social superiority of sheep farming over, for example, dairying, has persisted. Had the implementation of the Education Act failed to cope with the needs of the Bush settlements, New Zealand might well have developed a 'poor white' problem such as appeared in a number of European colonies elsewhere.

Before we survey the work of each of the Bush Province

Education Boards in turn for the period 1878 to 1881, it will be worthwhile to give a general survey of the difficulties they faced and the amount of progress made. The Act provided for the education system to be centrally financed so that inequalities between richer and poorer districts might be ironed out, but it is a well-known fact that this took many years to accomplish. It is important that the reasons for these continuing inequalities should be clearly established, as some writers have made loose or inaccurate statements on the subject. Thus A.G. Butchers¹⁰ and Leicester Webb¹¹ both quite inaccurately maintain that in distributing buildings grants the government consistently and from the start allocated them solely¹ according to population, without any consideration for differing needs. This is far from the truth as regards the earlier years of the administration of the Act, when strenuous¹² efforts were made to 'fill the gaps'. For the years 1877 to 1881 inclusive, special building votes totalled £369,650.¹³

Had these been distributed on the basis of the population returns of the 1878 census, the North Island would have received £141,132, the South £228,518. The actual distribution was North Island £168,550, South Island £201,100. Furthermore, not only did the needy North Island receive this advantage in the distribution of the votes, but its widespread and efficient timber industry gave it a further advantage over the South in

10. Education in New Zealand, p. 20.

11. Control of Education in New Zealand, pp. 39-40, 44.

12. The 'filling the gaps' aspect of the 1870 English Act may well have helped to make this politically feasible in New Zealand.

13. The figures used in this discussion are drawn from AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 4, Table 4.

building costs. Thus, in a return of 1 January 1880 the Wanganui Board estimated the cost of new wooden schools at 6s 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d a square foot, whereas the corresponding estimate from South Canterbury was 14s 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.¹⁴ One of the heaviest burdens for several of the boards was the purchase of sites for city schools, but this was not an important issue for the two main Bush boards, Wanganji and Taranaki. Even if, to allow for their rapid population growth, we relate these two boards' share of the 1877-81 special building grants to the 1881 population census figures, they still did very well in the allocation. On this basis the Taranaki Board's 'share' would have been £7,643, whereas it actually received £9,050. The corresponding figures for the Wanganui Board are £20,071 and £22,000. In 1879 the building grants to the Taranaki, Wanganui and Hawke's Bay Boards were considerably greater than their capitation grants, and this was the case again for Taranaki in 1880.¹⁵ Using the educational statistics for 1881 a politician would have had no difficulty in maintaining that the gap between North and South had practically been filled. Thus the Wanganui Board, with a population of 26,602 in its district at the 1881 census, owned 52,754 square feet of school space at the end of that year,¹⁶ while Southland's population of 30,160 was provided with only 50,597 square feet. Even backward Taranaki's 1.804 square feet of school space per head of population compared more than favourably with Southland's

14. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 47.

15. AJHR 1880, H-1A, pp. 55, 57, 63; AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 57.

16. Figures on area of school space in this paragraph are calculated from AJHR 1882 E-1, pp. 42-55, Table 10.

1.678. South Canterbury another rural South Island board, with 1.839 square feet had not done much better than Taranaki, and could not match the Wanganui Board's figure of 1.983. All the evidence points to several years of sincere endeavour to close the gap between richer and poorer districts.

Why, then, was there a persisting discrepancy between the quality of Bush schooling and that of the main South Island rural districts? It would seem to be largely accounted for by the combination of a more difficult climate and physical environment, resulting in an education system which was more expensive to run, and a much more rapid growth of population in the Bush districts, for which no special allowance was made in the building grants after the initial effort to close the gap. In the open country of the South Island a school could often be placed so as to draw its pupils from all points of the compass. In the North Island Bush, population was spread laterally, along the main communication routes lanced through the forest, and the side roads which formed the next stage of development, so that in many cases pupils could be drawn from two directions only. Land speculators often added to the problem by holding land undeveloped along the more desirable frontages, and around cross roads, while waiting for the unearned increment. Because of the state of the Bush roads, pupils could not reasonably be expected to travel nearly as far to school as was commonly the case in the open country. Sheltered by the standing bush from sun and wind, the Bush roads quickly deteriorated to muddy sloughs in wet weather, and

were slow to dry out when the rain passed. These conditions forced the establishment of a large number of small schools, costly to staff and to administer, and even so, frequently poorly attended. Thus, though the South Canterbury Board had more than twice as many pupils as the Taranaki Board at the end of 1881 (3,531, as compared with 1,709), it had almost the same number of schools (33, as compared with 30). With fewer schools (and hence proportionately fewer teachers), and better attendances, South Canterbury fared much better than Taranaki under the capitation grant system. Thus, for the year 1880 South Canterbury teachers earned an average of 31.91 of the £3 15s capitation grants for their board, while the Taranaki teachers earned their board an average of only 24.30.¹⁷ Throughout the colony country schools tended to be a liability to their boards under the capitation system, but it was the Bush schools that most notably required subsidising from the grants earned by the towns and closely settled areas of their districts. To add to the problem, a steady advance of settlement into the Bush was in progress. A continuous flow of internal migration was reducing the growth of demand on school places in the South Island, and increasing the demand in the Bush Provinces. The capitation grants received by the Bush boards had not only to finance the running of less economic school systems, but also to

17. Calculated from AJHR 1881, E-1, pp. 3, 4. The 1881 figures have not been used, as a prolonged measles epidemic rendered this year untypical for South Canterbury.

provide a disproportionate number of new school places. In the circumstances the success achieved in providing schools for the Bush was very commendable. The achievement owed a good deal to a large measure of self-help from the local settlers, but the greatest contribution came from the teachers of these board district, who, until the introduction of a national salary scale in 1901, made an enforced contribution to the cost of providing education in the pioneer Bush settlement, in the form of low salary scales. It must be pointed out that the Bush settlements gained some benefit from the good fortune of the more favoured South through an influx of the products of the southern schools.

The 1877 Education Act defined the boundaries of the Board districts of the Bush Provinces along lines indicated by pressures which had been developing within the provinces prior to abolition. The Patea district had clearly expressed its desire for separation from the New Plymouth settlement, and there had been repeated agitation for the creation of a new province based on Wanganui. These two areas (comprising the counties of Patea, Wanganui, Rangitikei and Manawatu) were therefore put together to form the Education District of Wanganui.¹⁸ This left Taranaki as a small district of a single county, and reduced the Wellington Education District to the three counties of Hutt, Wairarapa East and Wairarapa West. Shorn of its West Coast districts, and with the settlement of the Wairarapa's Forty Mile Bush lying largely in the future the

18. The lack of careful attention to the Bush Provinces in the past is exemplified by a curious error made by both Butchers and Webb, who state that it was the new Taranaki Education District which consisted of two former districts. See Education in New Zealand, p.9; Webb The Control of Education

new Wellington Education Board had little involvement with pioneer Bush settlements over the period we are considering. The Hawke's Bay Education District was considerably larger than the provincial district through the inclusion of the counties of Cook and Wairoa, the greater part of which were in the Auckland Provincial District. In considering the provision of schools for the Bush we shall therefore be concerned mainly with the work of the Hawke's Bay, Wanganui and Taranaki Boards, with a brief glance at the Wellington Board. Before we begin this survey, it will be well to remind ourselves of the general nature of the task they faced. It is easy to overlook the extent to which the smooth running of our present primary schools is facilitated by an inherited capital of physical facilities, social attitudes and expectation, and organisational skills, most of which had to be created from scratch in the Bush settlements. Habits of regular and punctual school attendance took years to become widely established. The work of the schools was further handicapped by the failure of many parents to adopt a responsibility for equipping their children with the necessary books and writing materials. Some communities were slow to produce committees aware of the part they should play in supporting their school, and attending to the simple physical needs of the schoolroom and playground. When to these lacks in the community are added the deficiencies of inadequately trained (or untrained) teachers, and the poverty of the boards, it is not surprising that year by year the reports of both boards and inspectors should express

considerable dissatisfaction with the work of many of the Bush schools. Yet these reports themselves, widely publicised by the press, served a valuable purpose in educating both the community and the teaching profession to higher standards and expectations.

The new Wellington Education Board began its work under fairly favorable circumstances. It retained the services of its able and experienced inspector, Robert Lee. His final report before the new board took office showed that the new Wellington Education District had 38 schools with 3,595 children on the rolls. Half of these were attending the six schools in the City of Wellington,¹⁹ a very encouraging position in the light of the capitation grant method of finance. The final report of the old board commented on the very rapid growth of the city, and the resultant pressure on school accommodation.²⁰ The reports for the next year or two show that the board saw its main problem in this period to be the extension of facilities in the city - particularly owing to the high cost of suitable sites. Once established, however, such schools would be 'profitable' under the capitation system, and would assist in subsidising the less economic country schools. In his annual report for the 1878 year, Lee reported that while the number of schools in operation was one less than the previous year, there were 1,000 more children on the rolls. He considered the country districts to be fairly supplied with

19. AJHR 1878, H-1, p. 65.

20. ibid., p. 32.

²¹ schools. The board's annual report of the following year made the same point. It contended that no settlement more than two miles from an existing school was uncared for, and that in fact the country had received more consideration than the city of Wellington.²² The situation the Wellington Board found itself in was quite unlike that of the other Bush Province boards. Thus, for the year 1881, despite an increase of 5 in the number of schools, the total number of children on the books remained almost static. This was reported to be due to many families having left the district 'some for employment in mines or on railways in Australia, and some for new settlement in the Patea county'.²³ The comparatively favoured Wellington district was, it seems, adding to the demand on the more meagre resources further north.

Before we leave the affairs of the Wellington Board, one or two of Robert Lee's more professional comments are worthy of note. In his report on the 1879 year, he remarked on the impact a school could have on a country district:

I have been often impressed by the social influence which a school exercised in an up-country district. Children whose lives hitherto seemed aimless, are brought together, they are dressed daily for school, they have set occupation, the school life interests alike pupils and parents. An educated person is an acquisition to the small community, and the school-building is the Areopagus of the district. ²⁴

The school, in its turn was deeply influenced by its district. In his report on the 1881 year, Lee noted that where a healthy public spirit was manifested in favour of educational progress,

21. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 79.

22. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 59.

23. AJHR 1882, E-1B, p. 6.

24. AJHR 1880, H-11, p. 10.

indifferent parents were influenced by the popular voice, and the children apparently caught the infection. Unfortunately, though, great popular enthusiasm in school matters while a new school was being started, was not always maintained as time went by.²⁵ Lee was disturbed by the 'thoughtlessness, cupidity, or dense ignorance' of parents who were quite indifferent as to their children's educational welfare. Their children were kept away from school 'because the weather is too hot or too cold, to nurse a baby or pick potatoes, to mind a cow, or to do any trivial thing which might be done out of school hours'.²⁶ To illustrate the wide difference in the standard of attendance between different districts, Lee quoted one or two of the best attendance figures, a few average returns, and one or two of the lowest. He drew particular attention to the good record of the Carterton School, and the poor return from Lower Hutt. It is of interest that Carterton was a sawmilling centre, while Lower Hutt was a small-farming community. A comparison of sawmilling settlements in various parts of the Bush with Bush farming settlements shows that at this period the former were turning in some of the best attendance returns, while the latter were turning in some of the lowest. Thus Carterton's strict average attendance²⁷ for the last quarter of 1881 represented 79.6 percent of the roll as at the end of 1881,²⁸ and this figures was almost matched by

25. AJHR 1882, E-1B, p. 6.

26. *ibid.*, p. 8.

27. 'Strict', as distinguished from the 'working' average used in calculating the capitation grant. The working average ignored all occasions when less than half the children on the roll were present.

28. This figures and those that follow are calculated from AJHR 1882, E-1, pp. 45-8.

Takapau in the Hawke's Bay District (with 79.5 percent) and by Bunnythorpe in the Wanganui District (with 77.8 percent), while Halcombe's 93.7 per cent far exceeded it. In contrast to these figures from sawmilling centres are such poor figures from small-farm bush communities as Egmont Village's 60.8 percent, Awahuri's 59.3 percent, Norsewood's 50.0 percent and Woodville's 53.7 percent. The overall contrast is not as sharp as that provided by these more extreme examples, but the figures do suggest that sawmilling was more conducive to school attendance than was small-farming. The reasons are not far to seek. Sawmilling settlements were likely to be compact, with many of the children living close to the school. The mill established a regular daily routine for the adult community, into which school attendance could be easily fitted. While there was a constant temptation to draw on child labour for the multitude of tasks of a mixed subsistence farm, their presence on bush tramways, and near the machinery of the mill, was a distraction and a hazard. The regular income from mill employment probably also meant that children in these settlements were more likely to arrive at school properly equipped for their work. The sawmilling phase in the history of the Bush would seem to have been an asset to its educational progress.

One of the early decisions of the new Hawke's Bay Education Board was the appointment of Henry T. Hill as its secretary and inspector. Hill was a gifted young teacher of 29, trained at Cheltenham Training College, and was among a number of teachers recruited in England in 1872 on Rolleston's

initiative to help raise the standard of schooling in Canterbury. On arrival he became the foundation headmaster of Christchurch East School. While in Christchurch he took the opportunity of studying for a B. A. degree. He lived in the Christchurch suburb of Avonside, where Rolleston also lived, and his appointment by the Hawke's Bay Board in June 1878 came as a result of his being recommended to Ormond by Rolleston. He served the Hawke's Bay Board for 36 years, establishing a colonial reputation as a progressive leader in education.²⁹ His annual reports are marked by keen perception and good sense.

The task which faced Hill in Hawke's Bay amounted very nearly to a fresh start in building an education system. Most of the existing schools were denominationally sponsored, and therefore passed from the Board's control when the Act came into operation. The Board found that it properly owned only seven small school-houses and it had to hurriedly hire temporary accommodation to house the large number of children who flocked to the free public schools.³⁰ Hill found generally untrained and inexperienced teachers endeavouring to cope with large classes in unsuitable buildings, without system.³¹ With no previous experience of any standard system, they had somehow to be trained to cope with the ambitious New Zealand standards. It was also necessary to introduce at once Hawke's

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29. Biographical details from H.T. Hill (Autobiographical notes), MS 172/77, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; Scholefield, *Who's Who in New Zealand*, 1925, p. 103.
 30. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 3; AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 61.
 31. The remainder of this paragraph is based on Hill's first annual report, AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, pp. 83-6, and on his MS autobiographical notes.

Bay's first pupil-teacher system, so that the growing staffing needs of the future might be met. The Hawke's Bay Board was fortunate that its new secretary-inspector was a man of energy and organising ability, able to inspire the confidence of teachers and committees. He soon decided that the only way to cope with the widespread lack of training and system was for him to be the organizing master as well as inspector and secretary. In the seven months covered by his first annual report he had already given some assistance with the training of the first pupil-teachers, and was planning to use the new main Napier school as a model to which teachers from all parts of the district might be brought for a short course of practical training. He was encouraging school committees to adopt high aims for the school environment, suggesting that they appoint a sub-committee to visit the school weekly, and see if anything required their attention. He pointed out that there were buildings to be painted, grounds to be fenced, dirty and cobwebs to be removed, and gymnastic apparatus that could be erected. He wished also to encourage school libraries and museums. He suggested that schools in various districts could exchange collections of objects typical of their area, so that, for example, bush children might learn about the sea-shore, and coastal children about the bush. He drew particular attention to the problems of education in the bush settlements. He considered that it would be impossible for the Board to erect schools and provide teachers to serve such a scattered population, yet 'no people in the country have greater claims for assistance than these pioneers of

settlement'. He estimated that in the Forty Mile Bush there would be a least 350 school age children receiving no education whatever, and suggested that the government should make a special grant for the employment of itinerant teachers in the bush settlements.

The Board proceeded to implement the plans drawn up by its inspector, to the extent that its resources permitted. A massive building programme provided new schools designed and equipped in accordance with his advice.³² In all its schools the Board adopted 'the mixed or Scotch system' in which boys and girls were taught together, and it seems to have met with no community opposition to the idea.³³ The Board endeavoured, 'through care and economy', to build up a 'School Fund Account' which could be drawn on for a variety of needs, including the support of sick and retired teachers. However, it was forced to run this account down to support the building programme, when its share of the special grant for buildings was heavily cut in 1880. By the end of 1881 the number of school buildings owned by the Board had grown to 31, but the Board was unhappy that 7 schools still had to operate in rented buildings, and that 15 of the 38 head teachers were not provided with residences.³⁴ Apart from the limits imposed by finance and the constrictions of the standard curriculum, the system was developing along the lines of Hill's plans. Fortunately they were well-conceived, and his leadership seems to have been almost universally acceptable.

32. AJHR 1880, H-1A, pp. 61-2.

33. *ibid.*, p. 62; AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 62.

34. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 65.

All the early inspectors found themselves, for good or ill, in a position of considerable power, but few of them can have exercised as much influence in shaping the teaching force of a district as did Hill. In June 1879 he successfully carried through his first training course for teachers at the Napier District School. It was of a fortnight's duration, with each day's programme extending from 9 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.,³⁵ and all the Board's teachers had been invited to attend. The Board had been fortunate in gaining the services of several British-trained teachers at about this time and they assisted in running the course.³⁶ Similar courses were run from time to time in subsequent years.³⁷ As was common practice with the early inspectors, Hill used his regular visits to the schools as occasions for demonstrating teaching method. From a journalist's account of the annual examinations at Woodville School in 1879, it would seem that even the examination visit was put to this use.³⁸ However, the main opportunity for such demonstrations would have been during the annual 'surprise' visit to each school.³⁹ The regular training of the pupil-teachers provided Hill with yet another means of influencing practice.

His combined position of Board's secretary and inspector gave Hill wide opportunities of influencing the school committees, and educating them to their responsibilities.

35. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 62; *ibid.*, H-11, p. 18.

36. Hill, 'Autobiographical Notes'.

37. *ibid.*

38. *H. B. Weekly Courier*, 31 October 1879, p. 5.

39. AJHR 1880, H-11, p. 18.

After eighteen months in the district Hill remarked on the great change that had come over many of the school grounds: on his first visit he had found untidiness and neglect, but now he found neat school grounds, well fenced, and in some cases enhanced by plantations of trees and shrubs. Both the Board's and the inspector's reports on the 1881 year remarked on the increasing interest and co-operation of the committees.⁴¹ With few exceptions, the school committees had been represented at the annual examinations, and Hill observed that 'those schools where interest was manifested and Visiting Committees had been appointed were far superior in discipline, tone and general class results'. Hill singled out these good schools by name. Obviously he was doing his best to get across the point that teachers and pupils would only give of their best when assured of the community's interest and support. The reports note that a number of the committees had been raising additional funds, which had been used to carry out alterations, to provide gymnasiums and gymnastic equipment and to 'give some little assistance to their teacher'.

With the main features of Hill's administration of his dual post sketched in, we can now briefly turn our attention more particularly to the Bush settlements. Hill's awareness that the task of education leadership included the guiding of the adult community into an understanding of the work of

40. *ibid.*

41. *AJHR* 1882, E-1, pp. 64, 66. (Both reports, of course, embody Hill's reflections on the subject.)

the schools, and that committees would need to be trained in a constructive supportive role, made him an ideal administrator for the Bush schools. He was clearly much frustrated by the way in which the standard syllabus was forcing 'a cruel and unnatural system of teaching' onto the rural schools, and his report on the year 1880, in which he explained the grounds of his frustration, gives a clear indication of his sensitive awareness of the nature of Bush life. It merits quoting at some length.

There are three aspects of life in this district, town, country, bush - and the condition of the people in each of these places is different from the other two - the town from the country, the country from the bush, and also the bush aspect of life is farther removed from the town than from the country. As the aspects are different, so are the conceptions of the people. The modes of life, the surroundings, and the pursuits of the people in the bush, have little in common with the mode of life, the surroundings, and the pursuits of the people in the town, and it seems only natural to infer that the education of the children should be built upon these different aspects of living. But what is the case at present? I am required to go into town, country, and bush schools, and balance the work of each pupil by the same rigid standard. There is no differentiation in the subjects of examination, no allowance made for the varying modes of thought consequent on the differences in the aspects of location, no evidence to show that the subjects of study are made subjective to the future needs of the children in the business of life and no discrimination allowed on the part of the Inspector ... It may be taken as an axiom that the real education of children can only be based upon their early surroundings, and their knowledge will vary in proportion to the use made by a teacher of the social, physical and political aspects of the district in which his school might be placed. But in the standard requirements a teacher is unable to follow this course. 42

Hill then proceeded to explain the absurdity of asking Bush children to memorise dates and facts concerning remote

centuries of English history when they were not capable of forming a correct conception of the life even in contemporary England - because it lay beyond the limits of their own experience. However, the New Zealand standards were not to be lightly moved, and both Hill and the children in the Bush schools had to learn to live with them.

Hill included in his 1881 report a rejoinder to those who criticised the education system on the score of the education being too advanced.⁴³ He remarked that people living in towns could hardly realize the extent to which ignorance prevailed in some of the outlying districts, and he believed that if the system's critics possessed the least spark of humanity they would feel humiliated by this ignorance if they could see it for themselves. On the other hand, the progress of education was also being hampered by many of the rural parents themselves for they seemed to think that if there was a schoolhouse and schoolmaster in their district their children would grow in knowledge whether they attended school or not.⁴⁴ By the end of 1881 the Hawke's Bay education system had made considerable progress in penetrating the Bush districts. At the time of Hill's first annual report, in which he had estimated that 350 bush children were not receiving any education, there had been 7 bush schools with an end-of-year roll of 322 and a fourth quarter average attendance of 229. Now, three years later there were 11 bush

43. ibid., p. 12.

44. ibid., p. 13.

schools, ranging from the two half-time schools of Blackburn and Makaretu to the sizeable school at Norsewood, with an end-of-year roll of 130, and a staff of one master and three pupil-teachers. The 11 schools had a total end-of-year roll of 641 with a fourth quarter average attendance of 411. This meant that in the three years the schools had almost overtaken Hill's original estimate of 350 waiting to be reached, but in the meantime numbers must have grown by perhaps a hundred or more. A considerable gap therefore remained, but the schools were moving in not too far behind the line of pioneer advance.

In the division of the Wellington Provincial District between the new Wellington Education District and the Wanganui Education District, the Wanganui District received 42 schools, 4 more than the Wellington District, but their total roll of 1,639 pupils was less than half that of the Wellington schools, which meant that the Wanganui area would be markedly less economic to run. In addition the Wanganui Education District covered the former Patea Board's district, with 6 schools at which 219 children were enrolled. Unlike the Hawke's Bay Board, Wanganui inherited a reasonable supply of school buildings, but to offset this, the Wanganui Board had to cope in its early years with a faster rate of population growth than the other three Bush Province Boards. The new Board was fortunate in that all of its schools, including those in the Patea, had been working under the guidance and inspection of Robert Lee. It is not surprising that one of the first

decisions of the Wanganui Board should have been to enquire of Lee whether he would be able to serve as their inspector in addition to his duties for the Wellington Board. Lee was willing, provided the two boards could come to an arrangement, and provided a sub-inspector was appointed to assist him in the Wanganui District. The Wanganui Board decided that in these circumstances they would be better advised to appoint one inspector who could give his whole time to their district.⁴⁵

The appointment of its inspector was the most crucial decision facing each new board. As the Wanganui Board came in course of time to regret its original appointment, and finally gave him notice of dismissal after more than five year's service, the circumstances of the original decision⁴⁶ are worthy of a brief examination. We have already noted the presence of a significant, education-minded Scottish minority both in the Patea and Rangitikei districts. It is therefore not surprising to find that there was a majority of men of Scottish origin on the original Wanganui Education Board.⁴⁷ Six of the 9 members appear to have been Scots, including the chairman, W.H. Watt, and a Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. J. Ross. At the inaugural meeting of the Board, after the decision to approach Lee had been reached, there was some discussion concerning the possible appointment, in the event of Lee's refusal, of a candidate, 'provided with the most excellent testimonials, and put forward by Mr Williams, of

45. Y, 13, 27 April 1878.

46. Chapter 6.

47. Scots: Watt, Duthie, Ross, Dalrymple, Williams and Bryce.
English: Sanson, Jones and Fox.

Patea'. It was decided that should Lee decline, this gentleman would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board. The gentleman proved to be Richard Foulis, a 45-year-old Scotsman, recently headmaster of the largest school in Edinburgh, who had travelled to New Zealand for health reasons, and was staying with a friend at Patea. He was interviewed by the Board at its next meeting, and on the motion of Williams and Ross was appointed as inspector. An amendment by the Englishmen Sanson and Jones seeking to make the appointment a temporary one for three months while further applications were invited, was negatived by the majority vote of five solid Scots. John Ballance's Herald published an editorial criticism of the Board's failure to put this most important post up for competition.

Robert Foulis (1832-1885) had been for the six years previous to coming to New Zealand (earlier in 1878) the headmaster of James Gillespie's Edinburgh Merchant Company School, which had an average daily attendance of nearly 1200. When this school was taken over from the Merchant Company by the new School Board, the London Times sent a special correspondent to report on the running of the school under its new headmaster, Foulis. This correspondent was much impressed by the military precision with which the whole school was run.

48. Y, 13 April 1878, p. 2.

49. John Bryce voted with the 3 Englishmen. Apparently he considered himself a New Zealand^{er} with no strong special loyalty to any one part of the United Kingdom. See Scholefield, Dictionary of N.Z. Biography, I, 109

50. Y, 4 May 1878.

51. Biographical details from TH, 21 July 1885; Wanganui Chronicle, 29 April 878; Patea Mail, 27 April 1878.

52. The details which follow are from extracts from this report, reprinted in the Patea Mail, 18 May 1878.

A drill sergeant was employed to teach simple movements, and the school day commenced with a military muster in the playground, followed by a silent march to the classrooms. Each classroom had two entrances 'through which the ubiquitous Head Master constantly passes and repasses observing everything that is done'. A positive aspect of the regime was that backward or neglected children were withdrawn from their classes to receive special help, and were not permitted to be made laughing-stocks by more advanced classmates. Prior to his appointment to James Gillespie's School, Foulis had been for ten years headmaster of George Heriot's Hospital Foundation School, Edinburgh. He brought with him impressive testimonials from his earlier appointments, which he made⁵³ freely available to the colonial press.

It would be both tedious and unnecessary to follow the details of the charges, complaints and investigations that punctuated Foulis's inspectorate. As the Yeoman⁵⁴ commented at the time of his dismissal, he had been from the time of his appointment the 'burning educational question' of the district. The underlying reasons for the widespread discontent need, however, to be indicated, and their significance discussed. It seems clear that Foulis failed to win sufficient confidence in either the quality or the impartiality of his work. The stream of complaints from teachers, committees and parents was clearly not entirely without foundation, and while the Board did not sustain the earlier complaints, the final

53. See e.g. Wanganui Chronicle, 29 April 1878.

54. 28 September 1883, p. 9.

dismissal was based on the acceptance of charges of carelessness in conducting examinations, and injustice in the dismissal of a teacher. When the progress of a child through the school, and the reputation and career of a teacher, were both dependent on one man's judgement, it was important that his judgement should command widespread acceptance and respect. The custom of freely publishing in the press the inspector's reports on the work of the teachers, and the results of his examination of the children meant that any considerable lack of confidence in them could only result in continuous public complaint and protest, to the detriment of the Board's education system. Parents began to feel, perhaps with some cause, that the inspector was driving the best teachers from the district, when they saw one after another move to the Wellington Education District, where they would again be working under Lee.⁵⁵ It must not be forgotten, however, that parochial loyalties and prejudices from the homeland persisted for long in the new country. Foulis doubtless suffered in part from English prejudice towards Scotsmen, and resentment at their having pushed themselves into control of the Board. The first shot in the campaign against Foulis appears to have been a letter signed 'Cantab'⁵⁶ published in July 1878. 'Cantab' disagreed with the substance of Foulis's first published report on the schools, but also complained of its poor style. This looks like English prejudice reacting against Scottish

55. Y, 5 March 1881, p. 11; Y, 16 April 1881, p. 7.

56. Y, 20 July 1878, p. 15.

educational pretensions, but it may not have been thereby without some measure of justice. Foulis's prose style is by no means elegant, and his annual reports do not bear comparison with those of Lee and Hill, and if, as was alleged, his spoken English had an accent which often made him unintelligible to children being examined, this was a justifiable cause for complaint. The military style of Foulis's Edinburgh headmastership suggests that he may also have had some difficulty in fitting into the more relaxed, egalitarian ways of colonial life. Yet, if he could be brusque and coldly efficient, one must make some allowance for the heavy demands which inspecting a large district imposed on a man past the prime of life. He must be credited with having guided the Board's education system over difficult years of rapid growth. On his dismissal it became clear that he had evoked widespread and genuine respect and friendship as well as opposition.⁵⁷ He went from the inspectorate to the headmastership of the New Plymouth Central School, and met his death eighteen months later as a result of a fall from his horse.

The rapid growth of the Wanganui Education District may be illustrated by comparison with the Wellington District. Starting with a little over half as many children on the rolls, the Wanganui Board had an increase of 2,630 in the four years to the end of 1881, giving a total of 4,488 pupils. The Wellington Board's roll increase over the same period was only 2,552. Related to the roll at the beginning of the period

57. Y, 28 December 1883, p. 6. See also Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back, pp. 168-171.

Wellington's increase was 71.0 percent whereas Wanganui's was 141.6 percent. While Wellington's increase represented the growth of existing settlements, much of Wanganui's came from the settlement of new country. Between the 1878 and 1881 censuses, the population of the Manawatu County grew by 52.5 percent, from 5,730 to 8,738. Most of this growth came from the extension of sawmilling and bush settlement. The Wanganui Board had also to cope with a 93.7 percent growth in the population of Patea, which moved from 2,988 to 5,789 between the censuses. This Patea growth represented both bush settlement, and the occupation of the open country of the Waimate Plains. The census figures for the Taranaki and Waipawa counties show that neither the Taranaki nor the Hawke's Bay Board had to cope with the rapid extension of settlement which the Wanganui Board experienced over these years in the Patea and Manawatu Counties.

The Wanganui Board was well aware from the start of its disadvantages under the capitation system. Its report for the 1878 year pointed out its difficulty in staffing country schools.⁵⁸ It had adopted a salary scale based on average attendance, but to assist teachers in small schools, they were given a greater capitation than those with a larger attendance. The Board also endeavoured to induce committees to supplement salaries at these small schools, though it pointed out that such a system appeared precarious, and was not by any means universally approved of. Despite these

58. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 48.

measures, it was having great difficulty in filling vacancies in the smaller schools. It hopefully suggested that the Act be amended to give one rate for the towns with comparatively large populations, and another for less favoured centres. While the Board was thus expressing its dissatisfaction to parliament, some of its country committees were expressing their dissatisfaction in an attack on the Board - a pattern which was to become familiar in New Zealand educational affairs. By a unanimous decision, the Matarawa School Committee issued a manifesto over the signature of its chairman, Major Noake, setting forth the raw deal the country districts were being
 59 given. The Board, it was complained, gave the impression that it was quite indifferent to the views of committees. It paid country teachers so miserably that few persons were willing to take the positions except as stop-gaps while they looked round for something better. As a remedy the Board suggested that committees supplement teachers' salary, and had even gone so far as to threaten a committee that if it failed to do so, its teacher would be moved on. But why should country settlers be called upon to pay thus, when town folk were getting better education provided free? And how could children be expected to learn while there was a continual change of teachers? The Matarawa Committee followed up its manifesto by calling a conference of country school
 60 committees. Twelve schools were represented by committee members at the conference, and an appropriate resolution was

59. Y, 8 February 1879.

60. Y, 15 February 1879.

adopted for forwarding to the Education Board. These endeavours may have helped to educate committee members regarding the Board's position, but they appear to have achieved very little else. The Board continued to expect a measure of self-help from country districts, and its report on the 1879 year pointed out that the difficulty in the payment of teachers of small schools still existed.⁶¹ In its report for 1880 it stated that it was working harmoniously with the⁶² committees.

In handling the difficult economics of its education system the Wanganui Board showed a judicious caution in the setting up of new schools. Despite the amount of new country occupied, the number of schools in operation had increased by only 9 up to the end of 1881, while the number operated by the Wellington Board had increased by 10. The Wanganui Board resisted the pressures which in the Taranaki Board's district were allowed to splinter the education system into a large number of small schools. Settlers were not so prone to press for two or more small schools, where one more centrally situated could reasonably serve a district, if they knew that this would increase the pressure for local funds to supplement the teachers' salaries. When new schools were requested, the Board investigated the situation carefully before proceeding. Thus, in 1881, it at first discouraged an application for a

61. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 56.

62. AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 57.

school at Beaconsfield in the Kiwitea district, and it was only after the settlers had presented a strong case that the forming of a school district was agreed to. If there was any doubt as to the best placing of a school to serve the likely future location of the population, it was a common practice for a deputation from the Board to visit the district and examine the situation. This was the course followed in locating the first bush schools along the Mountain Road between Stratford⁶³ and Normanby. Unlike the Wellington Board, which had a policy of opening a school as soon as an average attendance⁶⁴ of 25 could be guaranteed, the Wanganui Board maintained a complete freedom of action, and stated in its report for 1881:

This Board does not bind itself by any iron rule to erect either schools or residences in any particular locality, but will meet the wants of each district in such a manner as in its judgement is most conducive to the public weal.⁶⁵

The new Taranaki Education Board continued to employ the aging William Crompton as its inspector. He was retained on a part-time basis at £100 a year (as compared for example with Foulis's £400), but in fact he devoted the greater part of his time to the work. While he may never have had the chance of gaining 'a practical acquaintance with school management⁶⁶ and method according to the more recently approved systems', his reports indicate that he had sound practical good sense. The Taranaki Board was fortunate in having a man of his quality

63. See e.g. Y, 3 September & 29 October 1881.

64. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 59.

65. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 62.

66. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 73.

prepared to give so much of his time to the schools for this salary. The task involved him in incessant travelling, as the absence of connecting roads made it impossible to fit most of the schools into round trips. Much of his work therefore consisted of journeys out from New Plymouth and back over difficult bush roads, with only one or two schools visited each trip. However, through the government's obvious concern to assist Taranaki in updating its education system, Crompton received special encouragement and assistance in his work. In November 1878 John Hislop paid a special visit to Taranaki, and spent the best part of a fortnight visiting the schools in Crompton's company. One result of Hislop's visit was that the government approved the employment for 3 months of 'a professional gentleman' as organising master of the Taranaki Board's schools.⁶⁷ The Board secured the services of James Pope, who began the work early in March 1879.⁶⁸ Both Hislop and Pope provided reports on their visits to Taranaki.⁶⁹ These, taken together with Crompton's reports, provide a good picture of the work of the Taranaki schools in the opening years of the national system.

Butchers reports that Hislop's visit to Taranaki was made in order to investigate the diversion of the grant for school committees to the general account and its employment for the payment of teacher's salaries.⁷⁰ The Taranaki Board appear to have welcomed Hislop's visit, granted him every encouragement

67. TH, 11 December 1878

68. TH, 11 March 1879.

69. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, pp. 73-6.

70. Education in New Zealand, pp. 30-1.

to see all he could of the work of the schools, and sought⁷¹ his advice on the various difficulties they were facing.

In his interview with the Board following his visits to the schools, Hislop expressed himself as agreeably surprised at much of what he saw. Although untrained, the teachers appeared to be a good deal better than he had expected, and the order and discipline in the schools appeared to be very satisfactory indeed.⁷² The educational endeavours of the closing years of the provincial period had evidently succeeded in effecting some solid progress. Hislop was, however, able to suggest improvements in many details of equipment and arrangements. One issue which he took up with the Board was their policy of setting up separate schools for boys and girls. He explained the practice of the Otago schools, where boys and girls were mixed at all levels for instruction and taught by either a master or a mistress, the only difference in their work being the sewing done by the girls, instructed by a part-time sewing teacher where necessary. There were separate playgrounds for the two sexes, and they sat apart in class. He was able to assure the Board that in his own long experience of mixed schools he had never found any cause for the terror some persons seemed to feel on the subject, but rather found that the mixing of the sexes tended to implant feelings of chivalry and politeness. Hislop must have felt that the Taranaki Board was adding a further uneconomic

71. TH, 19 November 1878.

72. ibid.

complication to their already splintered system by opting for separate schools. With stolid English conservatism the

Monarchist Board refused to be swayed by the arguments of the

He has rendered good service to education in the Taranaki district, and I am disposed to think that in the past disorganized and impoverished condition of the settlement his services have been perhaps even more valuable than those of a smart Inspector with abundance of technical knowledge, but wanting in the colonial experience, the kindly heart and manner, and the good sense which characterize Mr Crompton's official action. He seems to have been exercising a humanizing influence in his intercourse with the settlers and their children in the remoter bush localities. 76

Hislop came to a sympathetic understanding of the problem of the school committee grant in Taranaki. In his report to Ballance he explained the difficulty in Taranaki of getting committees of sufficient business capacity and intelligence to manage the local school affairs, with the result that the Board had got into the way of taking charge of school business handled elsewhere by the school committees. As a result of his visit Hislop had come to the conclusion that in some school districts, more particularly the remoter bush settlements, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to get committees competent to take the work in hand, because the parents were not themselves sufficiently educated. However, in other localities he met men quite able and willing to do all that was wanted, who complained of the state of tutelage in which they had been kept by the Board. He had therefore impressed upon the Board the advisability of encouraging the parents and the committees elected by them to take an interest in school matters, by taking their views into account, and entrusting them with the expenditure of money on local

requirements. Hislop pointed out that there was, however, a financial problem involved. Owing to the uneconomic nature of its system, the Board had been compelled to draw on the Committees' grant in order to meet even the very small salaries that it was currently paying, and any sudden withdrawal of this money would mean hardship for the teachers. He therefore recommended that the government not insist on absolute immediate compliance with the regulations, but that where there were committees willing to take their duties in hand, they should be encouraged to do so, and as far as possible put in possession of the necessary funds. In its report on the 1879 year the Board recorded that its experience with regard to school committees had not been satisfactory, as they had been either apathetic, or hostile or extravagant. Most were apathetic, while those that were active required curbing as regards prerogative, and especially as regards expenditure. The Board obviously would have preferred to continue in a position of benevolent dictatorship, yet the very deficiencies to which it pointed were evidence of the need to gently induct the rural settlers into the art of handling their own affairs. This they gradually began to do. At the school committee elections of 1880, only 4 school districts⁷⁷ out of 11 elected committees, whereas in 1882 11 districts⁷⁸ out of 13 did so. In 1880 only 3 school committees elected⁷⁹ to expend their share of the capitation allowance, in 1881⁸⁰ the number had risen to 5.

77. TH, 10 February 1880.

78. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 61.

79. AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 57.

80. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 61.

James Pope's report on his three months as organizing inspector in Taranaki in 1870 explains his approach to training the teachers in classroom method. He first made a preliminary visit to all the schools to discover their general condition and decide on the measures that would need to be adopted to render them thoroughly efficient.⁸¹ He found that Crompton's efforts had already brought about considerable advances towards the new organization, as well as making the teachers receptive to the new system. Having completed the preliminary visits, he then spent two days in each school. On the first day all the children were examined and classified according to the colonial standards, and a timetable suited to the wants of the school was drawn up. On the second day he took charge of the school and taught it himself, while the teacher observed how the work specified in the timetable was carried out. He then made a final visit to each school to see how the teacher was coping with the new system, and expressed himself as in general gratified with results.

As a further means of compensating for the lack of training of the Taranaki teachers, the government provided funds for four selected teachers to attend a short course at the Dunedin Training College. As a result of these various measures Crompton was able to report widespread improvement in the work of the schools. His 1879 report concerns itself with the six months following Pope's departure.⁸² In these six months

⁸¹ AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, pp. 74-6.

⁸² AJHR 1880, H-II, p. 5.

Crompton had visited all of the schools twice and some more frequently. He was evidently making every endeavour to see that the teachers persisted with the improved practices that had been demonstrated to them. He reported that the community was now aware of the government's and the board's determination as regards education, and that attendance had generally become more regular and punctual. There were, however, still plenty of hindrances in the way of Taranaki's progress towards efficient primary education. In his report on the year 1880, Crompton noted the effect of hard times, including the collapse of ^{of the price} ⁸³ grass seed, on the schools. Many children had had to be taken from school for farm-work and other services, and this, together with the removal of families to bush farms, had led to an almost complete change in the rolls of the schools. Crompton estimated that about 70 percent of the previous year's roll had left. The work of many who were at school was sadly hampered by the failure of their parents to provide them with the necessary books. Other parents supplied their children with 'such miserable rubbish in the form of books and pens' that it was impossible for the master to teach them. Some masters supplied their pupils with books and equipment, and then endeavoured to collect the cost from the parents but this tended to lead to disputes, which the inspector had been called in to settle on more than one occasion. The North Taranaki bush communities seem to have been

more than commonly disputatious at this period. In his report for 1881, Crompton wrote that:

If it were possible to stamp out the discordance which exists in the Kent Road and Albert Road Districts, and the settlers would combine for the common good, most beneficial results would ensue. 84

The Board's report for the same year remarked that disagreements between parents had affected the numbers on the roll and average attendance figures. Newspaper files give further evidence of these disagreements.

At the close of 1881 the Taranaki Board had 30 schools in operation, with 1,709 children on the rolls. Many new school buildings had been erected, the older ones had been enlarged, painted, provided with chimneys, and improved in other ways. The equipment of the schools had been greatly improved, and various school grounds had been cleared and fenced. Yet, because of the uneconomic nature of these small schools, it was to prove difficult to maintain the progress in the years ahead. An interesting comparison can be drawn between the Taranaki Education District (population 10,130 at 1881 census), and the schools of the Wanganui Board in the bush county of Manawatu (population 8,738 at 1881 census). The schools of the Manawatu county had been kept down to 16 in number at the close of 1881, yet they had 1,473 children on the roll, representing 65.4 percent of the 5-15 age group, whereas the Taranaki Board's 30 schools had only enrolled 64.5 percent of this age group. Furthermore, the Manawatu

attendance figures for the fourth quarter of 1881 represented 74.2 percent of the end of year roll, whereas the corresponding figure for the Taranaki Board's district was only 64.5 percent. The contrast between the two areas had become even more striking by March 1882. By reopening several temporarily closed schools, as well as one or two new ones, the Taranaki Board had raised its number of schools at work to 35, 6 of them half-time.⁸⁵ The Manawatu County had opened one further school, to give a total of 17, none of which was half-time. The more economic arrangements in Manawatu can be largely accounted for by its more favourable terrain, and the concentration of bush settlements near sawmills, giving good sized schools at such places as Bunnythorpe, Makino Road, Halcombe and Taonui. The Taranaki bush settlers were mainly farmers, scattered over the difficult terrain created by Egmont's radial stream pattern. The Taranaki Board recorded that 'educationally, the district is subject to great disadvantages in having a scattered population, and in being subdivided into a number of long and narrow portions by the physical features of the country'.⁸⁶ The heavier Taranaki rainfall accounts in part for the discrepancy between the attendance figures for the two counties. However, both the splintering into a large number of small schools and the poor attendance had been aggravated by the lack of concord in the community. Elsewhere district unity had been fostered by such

85. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 61.

86. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 54.

institutions as settlement associations, special settlements, and large sawmilling concerns. Apart from Inglewood district, the North Taranaki bush settlements had not had the benefit of these unifying influences. Rather, social history had tended to exacerbate the problems of geography. When all this is taken into account together with a considerable amount of popular prejudice against education, the amount of progress achieved is commendable. Crompton, with his kindly, persistent, old-settler approach, must surely be given a considerable measure of the credit.

Thus, throughout even the most difficult areas of the Great Bush the schoolhouse was taking its place in the march of pioneer settlement. Like the Bush settlers, it bore the marks of poverty, and like them it was feeling its way, awkwardly and not without frequent mishaps, towards an uncertain but hopeful future. Not surprisingly there were growing signs that it was winning an assured place in the lives and affections of the communities it served.

CHAPTER 13

THE BUSH SCHOOLS AND THE BUSH COMMUNITY.

Our last chapter gave a broad survey of the implementation of the 1877 Education Act in the Bush settlements, with a particular emphasis on the efforts made by the Boards and their inspectors to create and direct the more advanced and comprehensive school system envisaged by the Act. The present chapter represents an endeavour to examine more closely the place and influence of the teacher and the school in the Bush community. What background did the teachers bring to their work, and how successfully did they adapt to the Bush environment? What were the influences that increasingly led the Bush settlers to look upon the school as 'our' school, and what were the social consequences of this growing acceptance? Is it possible, especially for communities as inarticulate as those that pioneered the Bush settlements, to construct a convincing account of influences so everyday and pervasive as these? It would seem that if we wish to recapture something of the flavour of the Bush experience, and breathe a fuller measure of life into

the picture we have sketched of the working of the institutions of education the attempt must be made.

When a new Bush community wanted a school it generally had to take the first initiative in the matter. Except in the short-lived flush of liberal building grants in the first year or two after the passing of the Act, the Education Boards did not commonly go looking for opportunities to erect schools, but awaited requests from local committees. Although in some Bush communities it took years to get many of the parents to adopt a proper responsibility for seeing that their children received a regular and adequate schooling, the desire that a school should be available seems to have been almost universal at an early stage. In January 1881 the Stratford correspondent of the Taranaki Herald¹ reported that some of the first questions asked by family men among intending bush settlers were, 'What schoolhouse have you here? and where is it situated? and how carried on?' The Stratford settlers were unhappy with their school, situated a mile from the centre of the township, and taught half-time by an allegedly unsatisfactory teacher based on Midhirst, who, they claimed, put in an irregular attendance at Stratford, and when he was there, devoted a great part of his time to novel reading instead of teaching.² The Stratford settlers elected a local committee, and successfully pressed their case with the Board. A good, full-time teacher took up his

1. 21 January 1881.

2. TH, 5 July 1881. See also TH, 11 July 1881 for the teacher's denial of these charges. The Board appears to have dispensed with his services a month or two later.

duties at Stratford on 1 November 1881,³ and a new school was erected early in the following year.

The Taranaki Education Board despite its straitened finances, does not appear to have called on local communities to make their own contribution towards the cost of establishing and running their schools. Probably, considering the state of Taranaki public opinion on education, it would have met with little response to such requests. The Wanganui and Hawke's Bay Boards, however, had no qualms about throwing a measure of financial responsibility on the local communities. Thus, when the settlers at the sawmilling centre of Makino Road approached the Wanganui Board in May 1879, with a list of 36 children who would attend school if the Board would erect one on a one-acre site which they had agreed on, and which the Board could obtain at a cost of £20, the Board resolved that it would provide the school if the settlers would pay for the site.⁴ This decision was made in a time of liberal building grants and concerned a school with a promise of a good attendance. When, in 1881, Alton (on the edge of the bush, inland from Kakaramea) negotiated for a school for 25 children, the terms were tougher. The settlers agreed to accept the government capitation grant earned by their school, and make up the balance of a teacher's salary themselves. They provided a one-acre site for the school, and raised the cost of the building the main shell of the schoolhouse.

3. AJHR 1882, E-1, pp. 16, 61.

4. Y, 3 May 1879, p. 12.

They requested that the Board line the school and build a porch and other outbuildings. The Board in its wisdom decided instead to give them a tank, chimney, and school⁵ requisites. Also in 1881 the bush settlers in the Kiwitea district began to negotiate with the Board for schools. Because of the difficult nature of the country, two schools were asked for, one at Beaconsfield where there were 20 children of school age, and one at Kimbolton Road where there were 17 children. At Beaconsfield one settler offered a room in his house for the school, and the wife of another offered to teach for three months to get the school started. On the Kimbolton Road the settlers were building a 30 x 16 ft⁶ school by private subscription. Faced with a cut in its government grant, the Board refused to be hustled by these offers, and it was not until 1883 that a single school was⁷ opened for the district.

In the face of hard times caused by government retrenchment, the Hawke's Bay Board was equally reluctant to undertake new responsibilities in the Seventy Mile Bush, and the settlers were forced to adopt a large measure of self-help to get new schools. By September 1880 the settlers of the Heretaunga Special Settlement were becoming anxious lest their children's education should be neglected. Families were beginning to move onto the clearings, so that by September there were 16

5. Y, 1 January 1881, p. 1; 2 April 1881, p. 12; 29 October 1881, p. 4.

6. Y, 28 May 1881, p. 3.

7. AJHR 1884, E-1, p. 19.

children in the settlement, with 9 more expected in families shortly to arrive. The district's Anglican clergyman, the Rev. E. Robertshaw, was endeavouring to meet the situation temporarily by giving the children one day's schooling a week.⁸ The settlers had come to an agreement with the Board whereby they made a substantial contribution towards the cost of a school, the plans for which had been approved by the Board, and also made an annual contribution towards the teachers' salary. In December 1880 the secretary of the special settlement wrote to the Board stating that the lowest tender for the new school was £380, which was far beyond their means. They therefore asked the Board to approve modified plans, or to increase its grant. The settlers would give £50, and clear and fence the site, as well as guarantee £30 per annum towards the salary of a teacher, but they could do no more than that. The Board decided to give £150 towards the building subject to the plan being approved by the Board.⁹ In its annual report dated 31 January 1882, the Board was at last able to report that a tender had been accepted for the erection of this school.¹⁰

It was as well that Board watched Committee and Committee watched Board, for both were liable to make ill-considered decisions arising from inexperience, parsimony, or sheer carelessness. Thus, it is recorded that the Norfolk Road School, in Taranaki, built in 1879, had its windows on the

8. H.B. Weekly Courier, 24 September 1880, p. 8.

9. H.B. Weekly Courier, 24 December 1880, p. 9.

10. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 65.

south side, with the sunny side taken up by a tank and two porches - no doubt the result of a careless failure to adjust¹¹ to the change of hemisphere. Again, the land which the Ormondville settlers made available for their new school in 1880 was on the edge of an area considered too swampy for grazing, and for many years access to the school was by way of a raised causeway.¹² Further examples of faulty decisions are not hard to find.

Having obtained a school, often as a result of considerable endeavour, the local committee and community usually continued to find a good deal of local money and labour to maintain and improve it. For major extensions or alterations it was generally necessary to mount something of a campaign to extract funds from the board, but minor improvements were often thrown back onto the local community. It is not surprising that the local settlers should develop a certain proprietary feeling towards the school building. Its existence must have seemed to be due in a large measure to their agitation, and a good deal of their money and labour had been invested in it. In a large measure, the effects which might have been expected to flow from local rating were achieved almost fortuitously by a continuous pressure on the local community to supplement the central government's meagre financial provision. The Bush settlements probably felt these effects more than most parts of the colony, for many of their

11. E.C.M. Corney, ed., Combined Norfolk and Durham Schools 90th Jubilee - 1879-1969, n.p., [1969], p. 9.

12. [R.W. Ward, ed.], Ormondville School Jubilee, 1878-1960, n.p., 1960, p. 18.

schools were established during the years of the long depression, and the breaking in of a Bush schoolground was a much more lengthy and labour-consuming task than that which faced the open-country settlers. In many Bush settlements also, the school was the only substantial building, and so of necessity became the main social centre. It did not face the competition of woolsheds and large drawing rooms as a venue for dances, concerts and parties, as did the schools in squatting districts. If it competed with the public house or a church building, it did so on more than equal terms in a community divided by denominations and involved in a great debate on 'the liquor question'. For many a small Bush community it provided the one neutral forum, acceptable to all sections of the community. Its out-of-school use was in the hands of the democratically elected local school committee. For all of these reasons, it is not surprising that the building, at least, should have rapidly been accepted as 'our' school, and constant acquaintance with the school building can hardly have failed to encourage an acceptance of the schooling for which it was built.

Having acquired a schoolbuilding, the next task was to provide it with a teacher. The act prescribed that teachers should be appointed by the boards after consultation with the committees affected. The act did not define 'consultation', and the result, particularly in the earlier years, was a fluid situation, with board, inspector and committees interacting to influence appointments in varying ways according to

varying circumstances. Sometimes, as we have seen, the local community approached its board, seeking a school, offering its own contribution towards the cost, and naming a person who was prepared to undertake the teaching. If, as was not uncommon, the board had no better candidate willing to join the pioneer community, it was likely to acquiesce with the local suggestion. On the other hand the board often had a list of desirable persons seeking employment, or wished to provide promotion for a deserving teacher, and therefore took the initiative in naming the teacher for a post. As we have seen, the political realities of the situation led to a great deal of power gravitating to the inspector, provided he retained the confidence of his board. Often the operation of the system is reminiscent of the cricket field, with the inspector as the captain directing the field, endeavouring to match the diverse talents of his team to the needs of a constantly changing situation, but with the original selection of the team lying only partly within his influence.

But who were the teachers who manned the Bush schools in the early years of the new order inaugurated by the 1877 Act? What qualifications and experience did they bring to their task? The discussion which follows is based on an endeavour to find out as much as possible about the teachers on the staff of the Taranaki, Wanganui and Hawke's Bay Boards

at the end of 1881,¹³ together with information on some of the teachers who had served these boards in the period 1878-1881, but had left before the end of 1881. For the sake of brevity, teachers' names have bracketed after them the school they were teaching in at the end of 1881 (also, where necessary, initial letters of the board district). As we have already seen, all four inspectors of the Bush Province Education Districts had been educated in Britain. Most of the better qualified teachers must also have been British¹⁴ educated. We have already seen that in 1874 Lee found that 14 of the teachers employed in the Wellington Province had received training at English training colleges, and there had doubtless been additions to this number in the ensuing years. Others had had an English grammar school education, and one or two possessed University degrees.¹⁵

J. Coendox Hill (Crofton, Wa.)¹⁵ had been educated at Bitterley Grammar School, and trained as a teacher at Bangor Training College, North Wales. After 13 years of teaching he had resigned a position at Montgomeryshire Middle-Class School on account of ill-health, and emigrated to New Zealand in 1878. His first New Zealand appointment appears¹⁶ to have been to Normanby School, in October 1878. Here he advertised that he was taking young gentleman boarders, to be

13. As listed in AJHR 1882, E-1, pp. 16-22.

14. Chapter 6.

15. Biographical details from Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 1227; Patea Mail, 16 November 1878 (advt.)

16. E.A. Free, Normanby School, Eightieth Jubilee, 1876-1956, Hawera, [1956], p. 8.

'specially prepared, by private lessons in the evening, for the Legal or Medical Profession, or for Mercantile pursuits'.

In the same advertisement a Miss M.C. Hill (probably his sister)¹⁷ offered lessons in Pianoforte and French to young ladies. How the private lessons fared is apparently not recorded, but the Normanby School failed to flourish.

Besides the common deterrent of muddy roads, attendance at the Normanby School suffered at this period from the children's fear of the wild cattle which roamed the bush,¹⁸ and from the recurrent Te Whiti scares. At one stage the local Defence Committee required Hill to work on the block-house. Finally in August 1880, he tendered his resignation. In later years he taught at various schools in the Bush districts, and, while still teaching, owned a 1,000 acre bush farm at East Road, near Stratford.

The Rev. Robert Wilson Rowson B.A. (Taonui, Wa), another Englishman who travelled to New Zealand for health reasons, also found employment in a Bush school. Something of his background, and a rather pathetic first few weeks in New Zealand, are revealed in letters he wrote to William Rolleston,¹⁹ preserved in the Rolleston papers. Rowson had a B.A. degree from Trinity College Dublin, and was a theological licentiate of Durham. He had been an assistant master at

17. Patea Mail, 16 November 1878.

18. Free, Normanby School, pp. 5, 8.

19. R.W. Rowson to Rolleston, 5 June 1880 (enclosing copy of R.W. Rowson to W.J. Habens, 24 May 1880); Rowson to Rolleston, 18 June 1880: Rolleston Papers, General Assembly Library, Wellington, Box 3.

Whitchurch Grammar School, Shropshire, for 4 years, and then second master at Humberstone Grammar School, Lincolnshire, for 9 years. While at Humberstone he also had charge first of one, later of two, small North Lincolnshire parishes. As a result of an illness his doctor recommended that he take a long sea voyage. He left England in 1879, and on his way to New Zealand he spent six months in Tasmania, where he relieved a clergyman requiring rest, and conducted a small private school. On arrival in New Zealand his fortunes changed. He first saw the Bishop of Christchurch, but he had no position immediately available. Proceeding to Wellington he approached Bishop Hadfield, but again there was no available vacancy. He then approached Lee for a teaching post with the Wellington Education Board. Lee advised him to apply to Habens for a certificate of classification as a teacher. In his letter to Habens, Rowson claimed to be thoroughly proficient in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, English and Arithmetic, to have a fair knowledge of French, and to have given considerable attention to Astronomy and Botany. He obtained the certificate but Lee then told him that he thought it would be useless for him to hope to get appointed to a Board School, 'as men who have been trained in the system are preferred'. Rowson was by now getting into debt, and in desperation he again approached the Bishop of Wellington, and also endeavoured unsuccessfully to get an interview with the Premier, Hall. Finally he wrote to Rolleston, as Minister of Education, saying that he was 'in terrible straits' and was

about to go up country to look for work such as fire-wood splitting as 'anything would be more honorable than running into debt without a prospect of paying'. In his second letter to Rolleston, a fortnight later, he asked for a £7 loan to pay his debts and get to Christchurch to see whether the Bishop there had found anything for him. It was probably Rolleston's enquiries that led to his appointment to the school at the Manawatu sawmill settlements of Taonui. He is recorded as the teacher there at the end of the years 1881 and 1882, and then disappears from the record. Possibly he returned to England.

Other well qualified teachers in the Wanganui Education District included Clement W. Lee (Otaki)²⁰, educated partly at the Royal School, Enniskillen, Ireland, and partly by his father, the rector of East Clandon, Surrey. Before coming to New Zealand in 1875 in search of health, Lee had taught in his father's grammar school and conducted a boarding school on his own account. Before going to Otaki he had taught at Manutahi and Wangaehu, and he was later to teach at Pahiatua, so he made a considerable contribution to bush schooling. The Rev. Josiah W. Alloway, B.A. (Awahuri)²¹ was, like Rowson, a teaching clergyman, and also probably an Anglican (as, unlike the nonconformists, the Anglican Church could not support all its available well-qualified clergyman). S.L. Brown, MA. (Rongotea) may possibly also have been a clergyman.

20. Biographical details from Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 863.

21. NZG, 1881, p. 846, indicates his clerical status.

John J. Pilkington (Upper Tutaenui) was a 28-year-old Englishman educated at Bridgworth Grammar School, Shropshire. He had emigrated to New Zealand in 1874.²² Alexander W. Williamson, B.A., although English-born was brought to New Zealand as an infant, and grew up in Wanganui. After taking his degree as one of the first graduates of the University of Otago, he went to his first teaching appointment, Turakina School, in 1874.²³

We have already noted²⁴ that the Hawke's Bay Education Board secured the services of several British-trained teachers in its early years, and that Henry Hill made use of them in running teacher training courses. In his report on the first training course in 1879, Hill's timetable shows seven teachers, and also Mrs Hill, as giving demonstration lessons.²⁵ Most of these (perhaps even all) would have been British-trained. These teachers were, however, all teaching in or near Napier, and could only have an indirect influence on Bush schooling. One of them, William Murray, was, however, to become the Taranaki Education Board's second inspector in 1884. Within the Seventy Mile Bush itself, William Gibb Crawford was head teacher at Woodville School. Crawford was the son of a Glasgow manufacturer, and had been educated principally at the Glasgow Andersonian Institute. Before coming to New Zealand in 1874 he had had 20 years in mercantile

22. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, I, 1076.

23. ibid., p. 835.

24. Chapter 12.

25. Report of the Board of the Education District of Hawke's Bay, for the Year Ended December 31st 1879, Napier, 1880, p.37.

life in London.

These comparatively well educated immigrant teachers formed a small but significant part of the teaching force. In 1881 the majority of adult teachers in the Bush districts would have had little more than a reasonable elementary education, either in Britain or the colony, followed by varied amounts of self-education, and of teacher-training 'on-the-job'. The Taranaki Board's teachers, apart from six pupil-teachers, seem to have been all of this class. The careers of such teachers were not considered noteworthy, and few biographical details have been preserved. However, various aspects of their lives will be illustrated as this chapter proceeds. One of the tasks facing the new boards and their inspectors was the continuation of the weeding out of unsuitable teachers begun during the educational reforms of the previous few years. Some were given direct notice of dismissal, others withdrew after meeting with various forms of official discouragement. The certification and classification of teachers by the Department of Education, provided for in the Act, and inaugurated by Habens in regulations issued in September 1878, provided one form of discouragement for the poorly qualified. While boards had the right to appoint uncertificated teachers under a temporary 'licence to teach', and had of necessity to use it widely, the issuing of the licence allowed boards and their inspectors to exercise

discrimination.²⁷ This, however, was only possible if better teachers were available. Thus, on 2, 3 and 4 December 1878, Henry Hill conducted a teachers' certification examination in Napier, doubtless to provide the better of the unqualified Hawke's Bay teachers with a chance to obtain an Education Board certificate before 31 December 1878, as board certificates issued after this date would not be recognised²⁸ for translation into Education Department certificates.²⁹

Fourteen teachers sat what Hill considered a moderately easy series of papers on the various primary school subjects and school management, but only five obtained the 40 percent²⁹ needed for a pass. The weakest candidate, a man who scored only 27 percent, and the next weakest, a woman who obtained only 10 percent in each of the two arithmetic papers, were obviously unfitted to hold 'licences to teach'. But this woman was still teaching at the end of 1881, as were both the teachers immediately preceding her in the list of results. In some instances local communities pressed for the retention of unsatisfactory teachers. At the May 1878 meeting of the Wanganui Board a letter was received from the Kohi School Committee asking the Board to approve their appointment of a Mr McCormish as teacher.¹ Apparently McCormish had a reputation as a drunkard, and it was the decided opinion of most members of the Board that he was not a proper person to have charge of

27. On the certification and classification of teachers in this period, see Ewing, Development of the New Zealand Primary School Curriculum pp. 6-7.

28. For the regulations on this see NZG, 1878, p. 1308.

29. Report of the Board of the Education District of Hawke's Bay . . . 1878, p. 31, tabulates the results.

any of the Board's schools. It transpired, however, that the Board's Chairman, W.H. Watt, had been approached by McCormish, and had encouraged him to apply to the Kohi committee, as Kohi 'was far removed from public house influence'. Watt's action was condemned by other members, and a resolution passed that the Board decline to sanction the appointment.³⁰ The Kohi community, however, thought otherwise. At its September meeting, a Mr Kenah from Kohi waited on the Board, as a delegate from the parents and school committee. The school was progressing very satisfactorily under McCormish's charge, and all were anxious that he be retained. On Kenah's assuring the Board that the committee pledged themselves to suspend McCormish 'at the least appearance of any misbehaviour on his part' the Board decided 'to take no present action in the matter'.³¹ McCormish had, however, left the Board's employ by the end of 1879.³²

The pupil teachers are the remaining group to be discussed. Those teaching in the Bush districts in 1881 whose backgrounds can be ascertained, fall into two groups - those from teachers' homes and those from farmers'.³³ Kate Hall (Lepperton, T.) trained under James Hall, Nelly Thomson (Bulls) worked under the headmastership of Andrew Thomson and Hetti Poole (Waipukurau) was the sole assistant to John Poole, apart from the help of Mrs. J. Poole as sewing teacher. It

30. Y, 1 June 1878, p. 6.

31. Y, 28 September 1878, p. 7.

32. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 13. It is of interest that McCormish, Watt and Kenah were all Scots.

33. As the evidence used is solely identity of surnames, there is some possibility of error.

seems likely that Alice McKay (Normanby) was the daughter of the Mr McKay who was one of five 'trustworthy and competent persons' elected by the Ketemarae Small Farm Association in November 1877 to inspect a block of land on their behalf.³⁴ Herbert Sanson (Marton) was probably the son of H. Sanson, Education Board member, and leading settler of the Sanson settlement. Ahn Sanson, who had completed her training as a pupil teacher at Sandon School in 1878, and continued on the staff as an assistant mistress, was probably a daughter of the same family. Norsewood had three pupil teachers with interesting backgrounds. Neils Friberg must have been the son of Bror Eric Friberg the government agent who had guided the early days of the Hawke's Bay Scandinavian settlements. Friberg had died early in 1878, leaving a widow, a son and four daughters.³⁵ Ellen Levy must have been the daughter of Alfred Levy, founder of the Small Farm Association which settled Ormondville in 1876.³⁶ The third Norsewood pupil teacher, Joseph Worboys, was almost certainly the son of the Rev. John Wesley Worboys, at this time minister of the Free Methodist circuit of Waipawa and Woodville. Annie Inglis (Tikokino) was probably the daughter of J. Inglis who is shown by the 'Return of Sheepowners'³⁷ to have had a flock of about 480 sheep at Tikokino in the early 1880s. These pupil teachers would seem to have been among the best of the products of their schools. Ellen Levy, for example,

34. Y, 8 December 1877, p. 3.

35. A.F. Webb, Pilgrimage, Wellington, 1949, p. 65.

36. For Alfred Levy's close involvement in Norsewood affairs see H.B. Weekly Courier, 12 November 1880, p. 11; N.Z. Wesleyan, VII, 9 (1 September 1877) p. 208.

37. THE 1883. H-19. n. 14.

despite her bush schooling, took third place among 15 candidates in the Hawke's Bay Scholarship Examination, Class A, held in Napier on 2 and 3 December 1878.³⁸

Apart from the obvious advantages of its cheapness as a method of training teachers and augmenting school staffs, the pupil teacher system had the additional advantage of alleviating the problem of teacher housing. Schools, quite understandably, were given priority in the building programme, with the result that the possibility of efficient schooling was sorely compromised in many Bush districts by the lack of a teacher's house. The situation is well illustrated by the case of Blackburn School in the Makaretu district, as explained by the Hawke's Bay Education Board in a letter to Hislop, Secretary of the Education Department, in November 1880. The settlers in this district on the eastern slope of the Ruahine mountains were Scandinavians, and they had not less than 50 children of school age. The Board had therefore erected a school building, but was now in a quandary as to how to staff it. There were no houses in the district; the settlers all lived in whares. They had therefore little enough room, comfort, or privacy for their own families, and could not be expected to take in a teacher to live with them. The Board had no funds to erect a teacher's house, and yet it recognised that a married man might do much good in such a district.³⁹ The letter to the Department apparently brought

³⁸ Report of the Board of Education, District of Hawke's Bay for . . . 1878, p. 32.

³⁹ H.B. Weekly Courier, 19 November 1880.

no help, and the Board was forced into the unsatisfactory arrangement of running the school half-time with Makaretu, where there was a teacher's house. Even this arrangement suffered through the Board's poverty. The school site at Blackburn was unfenced, and the bush cattle came in and ate off all the grass, with the result that the teacher's horse wandered off into the bush in search of food, and often took several hours to find. When the Ongaonga school committee, which was responsible for these two half-time schools, put the problem to the Board in September 1881, the Board promptly⁴⁰ approved of the expenditure of £20 on fencing. The inspector's report on the 1881 year comments on the very⁴¹ unsatisfactory attendance at Blackburn, doubtless a result of the half-time system, and the lack of any real contact between the teacher and the local community. Other Hawke's Bay Bush schools which lacked a teacher's house at the end⁴² of 1881 were Ongaonga, Ashley Clinton, Takapau and Makatoko.

Though its circumstances were better than those of the Hawke's Bay Board, the Wanganui Board also had its housing problems. At its July 1878 meeting the Wanganui Board had before it a letter from the Feilding School Committee complaining that the funds allocated for the needs of its school and teacher's residence were quite inadequate. In discussing the matter one board member, Sanson, described the teacher's residence as 'a wretched hovel, consisting of only two rooms,

40. ibid., 23 September 1881, p. 17.

41. AJHR 1882, E-1B, p. 10.

42. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 48.

one 8 x 12, and the other 11 x 12, with a lean-to⁴³. The Board built anew residence at Feilding the following year.⁴⁴ In due course the Feilding headmaster apparently provided himself with a private residence, as he is recorded in the 1887 Electoral Rolls as owning two town sections. In the course of time such a move must have been quite commonly made by the better-paid teachers in the Bush townships. Thus, late in 1882, the Wanganui Board had cause to investigate matters concerning its teacher's residence at Halcombe. The Board's secretary inspected the residence and his report stated that it was not fit for a teacher to occupy. However, the teacher was not living in it, as about three years previously he had purchased a comfortable residence for himself, and let the Board's residence with the permission of a former school committee, notwithstanding the Board's rule to the contrary. The Secretary reported that the Board had been the victim of a misplaced confidence, as it had bought the residence from a private vendor in 1879 for £262, on the basis of what it had considered a reliable report, and now found that it possessed only a shanty worth perhaps⁴⁵ no more than £60. This would appear to have been a case where a local committee had not dealt honestly with its board, but had nevertheless taken care of its teacher's interests. However, there were districts with much worse housing problems than those of these larger Bush townships. In March 1881

43. Y, 3 August 1878, p. 6.

44. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 56.

45. Y, 5 January 1883, p. 7.

a family man, F. Whitcombe, was sent to open a school at Rongotea for the Douglas Special Settlement pioneers. He brought his household goods by wagon from Marton, but it could only get within 15 chains of the school on account of stumps and logs. A wheelbarrow was commissioned to get the goods along a narrow track to the school. Having stored his furniture in the school building, the teacher obtained board for himself and his family with the local storekeeper, and proceeded to erect at his own expense a 10ft x 15ft whare of white pine slabs, with a wooden (doubtless clay-lined) chimney.⁴⁶ Whitcombe and his family endured the winter in these quarters, but he resigned on 14 November 1881 just as the erection of teacher's residence commissioned by the Board was beginning.⁴⁷

As might be expected from all that we have seen of its circumstances, the Taranaki Board faced worse teacher's residence problems than the other Bush Province boards. The majority of the 35 schools that it had open at the end of 1881 were in bush districts, and of these about a dozen had no teacher's residence.⁴⁸ One example of the consequences of this deficiency is given in Crompton's report to the Board on 10 November 1880 on his first inspection of the new half-time schools at Stratford and Midhirst. The Midhirst School was conducted in a rented building, and here the master lived and slept in a corner of the room fenced off by an old

46. Rongotea School, 70th Anniversary 1881-1951. Jubilee Souvenir, n.p., [1951], p. 6.

47. Ibid., p. 8; AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 62.

48. AJHR 1882, E-1, pp. 45-6.

curtain. Crompton commented that 'the meanest hind in the province would not submit to be lodged in such a miserable, windy and cold chamber'⁴⁹. In his report on the year 1880, Crompton maintained that the practice of teachers improving themselves by study during their leisure hours would never become general so long as some of the teachers had to walk or ride to and fro (even as much as ten miles a day) from New Plymouth to their schools in the country.⁵⁰ In its report on the year 1881, the Taranaki Board indicated that it was beginning to lose hope of overtaking the deficiency of teachers' residences, and was considering allowing rent in lieu of a residence, but it pointed out that there were cases in which a teacher could not hire a house, as there were none to let.⁵¹ It is possible to ascertain who some of the teachers were who made the daily trek between a New Plymouth home and a country school. William Collis conducted the half-time schools at Smart Road and Egmont Road from his resident at Vivian Street, New Plymouth.⁵² Miss E. McLauchlan, who taught at the Upper Mangorei School, and was plagued by discipline problems arising from quarrels between families outside the school,⁵³ was probably the daughter of James McLauchlan, carpenter, residing in Courtenay Street, New Plymouth.⁵⁴ Mrs Louisa Dymond, teaching at the

49. T.H., 11 November 1880.

50. AJHR 1881, E1-B, p. 5.

51. AJHR 1882, E-1, p. 61.

52. Wise's New Zealand Directory for 1880-1881, Dunedin, (1880), p. 205.

53. TH, 26 July 1881.

54. Wise's N.Z. Directory, 1880-1881, p. 206.

Upland Road School, may also have lived in New Plymouth. At a meeting on 10 January 1881 the Board received a memorial from the Upland Road residents, requesting that it erect a teacher's residence, and an application from Mrs Dymond for an allowance in lieu of residence. The Board⁵⁵ did not accede to either request. Miss A.M. Swanston at Lower Kent Road School was probably a daughter of John⁵⁶ Swanston, tailor, of Brougham Street, New Plymouth. John A. Hill, teaching at Frankley Road School, and Miss Ada Tatton At Lower Mangorei, may also have lived in town. R.A.M. Earl, who taught the half-time schools at Upper Kent Road and Albert Road probably still owned the cottage in Kent Road,⁵⁷ in which he had conducted a school in the early 1870s.

Fortunately the majority of Bush school teachers were able to find a reasonable home in their school district and so could take their due part in the life of the community, and thereby win increasing acceptance for the aims of the school. Perhaps equally important in establishing the school and the teaching profession in the regard and affections of the Bush settlers was the sharing by many of the teachers in the interests, activities and even ambitions, of their settler neighbours. A good example is provided by George Fort, the young Englishman whom we have earlier referred to as recording his experiences as a farm worker in the Rangitikei in the late 1870s.⁵⁸ Sometime during his stay

55. TH, 11 January 1881.

56. Wise's N.Z. Directory, 1880-1881, p. 207.

57. N.Z. Government Gazette, Province of Taranaki, XXIV, 4, p.15.

58. Chapter 8.

(probably in mid 1878) he answered an advertisement in a local paper for teachers for the state primary schools. To his surprise, not only was he promptly accepted, but he was immediately appointed to the sole charge of the South Makirikiri School, in a district settled by Scots crofters. He appears to have remained at the post for about a year, exercising his wits in school in 'a desperate game of bluff' with the sharp 16 year old Scottish youths and maidens, who knew more about arithmetic than he did, and out of school hours enjoying the vigorous physical activities of cattle mustering, horse-breaking and hunting, with the local settlers. This light-hearted involvement of a teacher in the rougher side of pioneer rural life would not have been typical, but neither can it have been unique.

More typical and significant than the adventurer would have been the more settled, and especially the married, teacher. Many of these were involved in the central interests of rural life by their working of their own garden and orchard, or farmlet, and a significant number were even more deeply involved by an ambition to eventually take up land and go farming. There is considerable evidence that the teacher was not only allowed, but also expected, to use part of the school site as his 'glebe'. Thus, in his final report as Hawke's Bay inspector, dated 30 June 1877, Colenso comments

59. Fort, Chance or Design?, p. 22.

60. ibid., collated with ASHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 13.

61. Fort, Chance or Design?, pp. 23-5.

that at each school 'the space about the teacher's house ... should have been made into a decent and tidy (if not a model) garden'. In Taranaki in 1878 the life and status of the rural school-teacher became for a time a matter of public debate. In the course of an editorial in his Taranaki News⁶² Benjamin Wells, the Chairman of the Education Board, gives an even fuller and more explicit expression of this glebe concept:-

Which, we ask, is the most dignified - the man who rises betimes, milks his cow, feeds his pig, cultivates his garden, makes the school tidy for the children, and after teaching and dismissing them returns to useful and healthy employment; or the person who rolls out of bed into the schoolroom impressed with the idea of his amazing condescension in accepting such lowly duties, teaches the children as their prime lesson that he has an amazing amount of blue blood in his veins, and that useful labour is dishonourable and degrading and beneath his dignity ... What would not ... thousands of city clerks and warehousemen confined to business the lifelong day in the gloom and murky air of some narrow London street, give to exchange their lot with a country school teacher of this district surrounded by the pomp of groves [and] the garniture of fields ...

The Taranaki Education Board's report for the 1879 year gives the information that in country districts the school sites were in no instance less than one acre in extent, and in most instances were of several acres. On these sites the teacher, when he chose, had a garden, and there was also sufficient pasturage for the horses of children who came from a distance.⁶³ The Wanganui Board in its report for 1879,

62. 24 August 1878 (Under the heading 'Laborare est orare').

63. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 54.

reports that it had passed a resolution that no schools should be erected on a site of less than one acre, but that in a great many instances the sites comprised double that ⁶⁴ area. No mention is made of the teachers' use of this land, but some years later the Wanganui inspector recommended that the Board adopt the policy of setting aside sufficient land to enable the teacher to graze a horse and a cow, as a supplement to the poor salaries in bush districts. ⁶⁵ The early teachers at the Rongotea School certainly looked on the school site as a source of food. Late in life their pupils recalled the tempting apples seen through the fence in the teacher's orchard, and the teacher who kept his gun handy, and went in search of native pigeons whenever the children reported their presence in the surrounding bush. ⁶⁶

That a significant number of rural schoolteachers shared in the ambitions of their settler neighbours is shown by the fact that in the course of time a number of them took up land for themselves. The search for the information on which the following discussion is based began with a scrutiny of the 1887 electoral rolls for the Bush Provinces, to discover whether any of the 1881 Taranaki, Wanganui and Hawke's Bay Education District teachers had changed their occupations to 'farmer' or 'settler', or possessed a voting qualification based on land ownership. Information thus obtained was followed up and supplemented from various other sources.

64. *ibid.*, p. 57.

65. AJHR 1888, E-1B, p. 15.

66. Rongotea School. 70th Anniversary 1881-1951, p. 12.

It is, of course, quite possible that some of these teachers took up land elsewhere in the colony, or turned to farming interests later than 1887. Even so, the range of farming interests uncovered by this limited search is quite impressive. In Taranaki Thomas Bennett (Bell Block Boys') appears as a farmer at Inglewood in the 1887 electoral rolls. He was last listed at his teaching post at the end of 1883.⁶⁷ Also shown as a farmer at Inglewood in the 1887 electoral rolls was Robert Stevens, last listed as the teacher at Inglewood Boys' School at the close of 1884. William Johnson, who became the first full-time teacher at the Stratford School in November 1881, is last listed teaching there at the end of 1883. He had taken up a bush section as one of the pioneer settlers of Cardiff, four miles from Stratford.⁶⁸ He was a married man with eight children, and not surprisingly he took a leading part in the agitation for a school at Cardiff. The Wanganui Education Board was favourable to the request, but slow to build a school. When the Johnsons moved from their original pioneer ponga whare into a large timber dwelling, they provided a room in which a school could be held, and the Board thereupon appointed a teacher.⁶⁹

We have already noted⁷⁰ that J.C. Hill, who taught at Normanby School from 1878 to 1880, and subsequently at various

67. References to listing as a teacher refer to the list of public schools and their staff printed annually as appendices to the reports of the Department of Education. (AJHR; E-1, for each year from 1881).

68. W.L. Kennedy, 'Stratford History', MS 091/[c.1939]/P, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (no pagination).

69. ibid.

70. p.557above.

other schools in the Bush districts, was the owner, later in life, of a 1,000 acre bush farm near Stratford. He was followed at Normanby School by W.A. McCutchan, who is last listed as a teacher there at the end of 1882. He seems to have been farming before he took the school post, as he is listed in Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory for 1880-1881 (p. 209) as a settler at Normanby. His interest in the land is shown by his purchase in 1879 of a deferred payment bush section of 72 acres near Eltham.⁷¹ Whether he ever occupied this land is not clear as Wise's 1885-1886 Directory (p. 786) shows him as a landbroker at Manaia, and the 1887-1888 Directory shows him as a settler there. David Scott (Waverley) last appears in the list of teachers at the end of 1882, but he could be the David Scott who appears as a settler at Feilding in an 1885 electoral roll. Berkley Tyerman (Mars Hill, Wa.) is last listed at his teaching post at the end of 1882, but a Berkley Tyerman appears as a farmer at Nukumara in the 1885 Waitotara electoral roll. In 1879 a newspaper paragraph reported the luck of an unnamed Manawatu school teacher, who went to the Manchester Corporation's great land sale at Feilding on 26 March 1879, and 'promiscuously' purchased a section of suburban land, discovering to his delight, on visiting his purchase, that it was covered with splendid totara timber.⁷² The only suburban land offered at this sale was near Halcombe, in sections of from 5 to 40 acres.

⁷¹ NZG, 1879, p. 1291; TH, 14 October 1879.

⁷² Y, 3 May 1879, reprinting from Manawatu Herald.

Hawke's Bay teachers also were becoming landowners. William Thompson (Kaikora) does not appear on the list of teachers at the close of 1882, but he could be either the W.J. Thompson, settler, Makaretu, or W.R. Thompson, settler, Woodville, listed in the 1888 Hawke's Bay Almanac (p. 207). However, William Thompson was a common name, and our next example is more convincing. Samuel W. Hardy (Hampden) last appears in the list of teachers at the end of 1882, but S.W. Hardy first appears as a sheepowner at Hampden in 1884, with 876 sheep.⁷³ Wise's 1885-1886 Directory (p.527) lists him as Sam. W. Hardy, sheepfarmer, Hampden. James Stewart (Takapau) is last listed as teaching there at the end of 1882. In 1883 his place is taken by John Stewart, and a James Stewart appears as a settler with 78 acres of freehold at Opaki West in the Wairarapa North electoral roll of 1886. William Gibb Crawford, the Woodville headmaster whose background we have already outlined⁷⁴ appears in the Waipawa electoral roll for 1886 as the owner of a section in the Woodville special settlement.

The involvement of teachers in rural interests through an ambition to own land was clearly considerable. We have already noted that a good number of pupil teachers were drawn from farming homes. A further close link between the school and the Bush community was provided by the widespread marriage of women teachers to settlers. At the August 1878 meeting

73. AJHR 1885, H-11, p. 12. Hampden is the present day Tikokino.

74. p.561 above.

of the Wanganui Education Board it was stated that female teachers gave the Board as much trouble as all the rest of its business put together. Female pupil teachers, it was complained, generally married before their time was up, invariably when they were competent to take a responsible situation under the Board.⁷⁵ This continual easy movement between schoolteaching and life on the land must have helped greatly to define the status of the teacher as one of rough equality with the settler. The settler's life was less 'regimented' and gained status from the high regard for land-ownership inherited from the homeland, but the school teacher's regular money income, limited though it often was, must have been the envy of many of his Bush settler neighbours. Probably a considerable number of men entered teaching as a temporary expedient in order to save the means to purchase land. Some may have come to prefer the teaching life, and remained in it, others may have left to go farming, and decided after trying it to return to teaching. One such was discussed by the Wanganui Education Board members in July 1879. He had left the Board's employ to 'better himself' by taking a farm, but was now an applicant for a teaching position. An agricultural member of the Board enquired as to the man's salary when previously in the Board's employ, and was told it had been £100 a year. 'Ah' he replied, with a mournful shake of the head, 'no wonder he wants to give up farming'.⁷⁶ This exchange is no doubt of a kind with much

75. Y, 31 August 1878, p. 5.

76. Y, 5 July 1879.

good-natured banter that passed between Bush settler and school teacher. All the evidence would point to the development of a large measure of mutual understanding, with a resultant spirit of camaraderie, as the typical state of relationships between teacher and settler in the Bush districts.

Out of this widespread mutual understanding what did the Bush community come to expect from its teachers and schools? It would seem that from the classroom there was a common desire for a practical and relevant education given in an atmosphere of tolerance, and that from the teacher outside the classroom the community welcomed a measure of social leadership. When John Stevens stood successfully against Sir William Fox for the Rangitikei seat at the 1881 general election, he made his appeal particularly to workingmen and yeoman settlers. His views on education as expounded in an address at Marton on 17 November 1881 were received with repeated applause.⁷⁷ He was emphatically of the opinion that the State should concern itself principally with providing reading, writing and arithmetic. Supplied with these, boys of ability would manage to secure fuller education in some way. A young colony required sturdy settlers, not a race of lawyers, clerks and civil servants. He quoted the case of an accomplished young gentleman, a farmer's son, who after five years of State schooling was sent by his father to the mill with six bags of wheat, and could not tell how many bushels there were, although he was quite familiar with the area of

⁷⁷. Rangitikei Advocate, 18 November 1881.

the Mediterranean and the length of the principal rivers of the world. As J.L. Ewing has shown in his two works on the New Zealand Primary School Curriculum, this pragmatic criticism of Haben's New Zealand curriculum which drew such ready applause from a rural audience, would have received a large measure of support from the contemporary teaching profession and inspectorate. Following one of the early examinations for teachers' certificate, the Taranaki Herald 78 printed a letter forcefully criticising the Habens idea of a trained teacher. The correspondent went on to explain the kind of teacher wanted in the Taranaki Bish:

What is wanted in a school teacher, except for the High School, is merely a good general education, a good constitution, and thick-soled boots. Teachers must also be active, or they will not be able to get out of the mud-holes and swampy places on the unformed roads which are to be met with near most of our school-houses, and if they can run along a pine-log so much the better, for they will then be able to go out visiting; they must be good-tempered and kind to dirty children as well as to clean ones; be able to put up with the whims of children's parents, and the mania of the local committee for holding every kind of local meeting in the school-room; be good at finding out where the key of the room has been left when the meeting is over, and at sweeping out bushels of dirt left by the audience of the previous night, and putting all the forms and desks in order again- and be content to do all this at a very moderate salary.

The letter concludes by doubting whether the gifted few with gigantic intellects as envisaged by the examination will prove the right persons to educate the settlers' children. That an atmosphere of broad tolerance was looked for in the school is implied in the above quotation. A more explicit expression of

this expectation is contained in an indignantⁿ letter from
 'Protestant' published in Ballance's Yeoman⁷⁹ the following
 year. It reports an incident which occurred at the 1881 annual
 examination of the Waverley School. A lady visitor present
 for the occasion noticed that an ink bottle had been over-
 turned by one of the school girls in passing between the
 desks. The visitor asked for the name of the culprit, but on
 being told, soundly boxed the ears of the girl nearest her.
 On being informed by the other girls that she had/punished the
 wrong one, she coolly inquired 'Is she not a Catholic?' 'Yes',
 was the answer. Then replied the visitor, 'That's why I did
 it'. The correspondent wrote that he numbered amongst his
 friends and acquaintances many estimable persons professing
 the Catholic faith, and he made abundantly clear that he
 considered the conduct of his fellow-protestant to be a
 disgraceful example of bigotry. His surprise that such an
 incident should be possible in a New Zealand state school shows
 that there must have been a rapid growth of tolerance in
 schools and community. In fostering tolerance the schools
 were imparting a more valuable lesson than much that was
 included in their formal curriculum. It was particularly
 important to the Bush settlements with their considerable
 European minorities and with their Roman Catholic children
 generally of necessity attending the state schools.

The kind of community leadership which a teacher might
 give must now be briefly illustrated. When in 1880 widespread

unemployment among the Scandinavian settlers of the Seventy Mile Bush was reducing many of them to destitution, Charles Bruford, headmaster of the Norsewood School, took a prominent part in the agitation which brought their need to the attention of the wider community and the government. He chaired a meeting of the unemployed of Norsewood held in the schoolroom on 8 November 1880, and in opening the meeting associated himself unequivocally with its purposes.⁸⁰ He was one of the committee of four appointed by the meeting to prepare and forward a petition to the Minister of Public Works.

Leadership provided under more ordinary circumstances might be illustrated by the activities of William Grayling and his wife at Egmont Village, as recorded over a period of time by the local correspondent of the Taranaki Herald. During the winter months of 1880 they took the initiative in organising a monthly entertainment on a Friday evening in the schoolroom. These concerts were so successful that they were resumed as soon as the farmers' busy time had passed in 1881. The local newspaper correspondent credited them with creating a united and friendly spirit among the settlers,⁸¹ an atmosphere which other news items show to have been not as common as it might have been in the North Taranaki bush settlements. The entertainments were planned so that the settlers could find their way home by the light of the moon.⁸² The Egmont Village settlers were fortunate in that their teacher was not one of the daily

80. H.B. Weekly Courier, 12 November 1880.

81. TH, 18 April 1881.

82. TH, 11 August 1881.

commuters from New Plymouth. Early in 1880 a new school building had been erected, and the old building, a former blockhouse, converted into a teacher's house. A similar monthly concert, possibly inspired by the Egmont Village example, was fostered at Waipuku in the winter of 1881 by the teacher, Mrs Surrey. From the programmes it is evident that she was ably assisted by her husband. The chairman of the October concert commented on the beneficial effects of these occasions on the unity of the district.

Having shown that there were constructive forces in the Bush communities fostering mutual understanding between settler and teacher and establishing an assured status for the teacher, we must balance the picture by indicating the more negative influences frequently at work. Drawn as they were mainly from a British rural working class background, the settlers had had little experience in the handling of public affairs. A minority had no time for the schools. The Taranaki Board's report for 1878 complained of a number of neglected children throughout its district growing up in ignorance, chiefly 'the offspring of ignorant persons, unable to estimate aright the value of education'. But even those who saw worth in the schools had still much to learn regarding their proper role as parents of school children, and their children, especially if they began their education at an advanced age (as frequently happened in the circumstances of

83. AJHR 1880, H-1A, p. 54; Egmont Village School. 81st Jubilee. 1877-1958, n.p. (1958).

84. TH, 10 October 1881.

85. AJHR 1879, Session I, H-2, p. 46.

of Bush life) often failed to adjust to the discipline of the schoolroom. With teachers also often unsure of themselves and lacking adequate training, it is not surprising that some schools had a stormy history. The kind of situation which could develop may be illustrated from happenings in 1878 at the Albert Road School, in the bush of the lower slopes of Mount Egmont, inland from Egmont Village.⁸⁶ The inspector had for some time been expecting an outbreak of some sort because of circumstances in the district. At the centre of the school's problems were two boys pupils named Alexander, the elder one of whom was apparently a sizeable lad and reported by the inspector to be thoroughly unruly, and continually inciting his brother to insubordination. Outside the school a quarrel between these boys' mother and the teacher's wife, Mrs Crean, eventually reached the magistrate's court and was decided against Mrs Alexander. A good proportion of the school roll consisted of girls, who not surprisingly were ceasing to attend regularly. The teacher complained that he could get no support from the parents in his discipline problems. The school committee, under a chairman appropriately named Quarrel, appears to have sided with the recalcitrant element in the community. Finally the teacher was goaded to an unseemly loss of self control,^{and} the community took the opportunity to meet in the Kent Road School and prepare an indictment to be forwarded to the Board. The inspector was

86. The details which follow are from TH, 15 October 1878, collated with Taranaki News, 19 October 1878, p. 11.

sent to investigate. The teacher confessed that he was grieved over his recent loss of temper, but denied a variety of other charges, including accusations of throwing tea-leaves and slops over some children and throwing a fire-shovel at a boy. The latter he explained, was a distortion of an incident which occurred when he was covering up the fire, apparently after school hours. He observed one of the boys creeping in to take away a stick he used for chastising the children, and in jumping up, threw the shovel on the floor, but not at the boy. The inspector advised the closing of the school as a short term solution, and in the longer term the separating of the sexes at the older age levels into two separate schools, to serve the Kent Road-Albert Road district. There were apparently quarrels in the Kent Road district arising from 'the objectionable mixture of the sexes' there. The Board accepted the proposal to close the Albert Road School, on the understanding that Mr Crean was still to be employed elsewhere, though the Chairman, in advising him of this decision, was to inform him that the Board did not entirely acquit him of the charges. The school was reopened as a half-time school in January 1880, but only after a deputation of residents had waited on the Board.⁸⁷ The district probably suffered in other ways from its quarrelsome reputation, as some families were reported to have left the neighbourhood, and others who had intended settling there had gone elsewhere. Discord similar to that at Albert Road appears to have occurred from time to

87. TH, 11 June 1879; AJHR 1881, E-1, p. 14.

time in various of the Bush districts, but only in the 'parish' atmosphere of the New Plymouth settlement were the details thus fully reported in the press. It is clear that it took time for some of these communities to produce leaders with the skill, tolerance and urbanity needed for the smooth conduct of local affairs.

A general tendency towards a higher status for school teachers is evident following the 1877 Education Act, but it had to overcome a considerable amount of resistance from a variety of quarters. Understandably, it seems to have been in Taranaki that they had most difficulty in improving their position. Some of the Taranaki Board's administrative arrangements seem to have treated the teachers as a particularly lowly type of junior clerk. A teacher who wrote to his newspaper in 1880 under the pseudonym of 'A Reluctant Grumbler'⁸⁸ was not only concerned that the Taranaki teachers appeared to be New Zealand's worst paid, but also that the manner in which payment was made appeared shabby. He pointed out that the Wellington Board's teachers received their salaries monthly by post, each cheque being accompanied by a stamped printed form of receipt which the teacher had merely to sign and return to the Secretary, whereas the Taranaki teacher, no matter how far out in the country he might be located, had to apply personally at the Board's New Plymouth office, 'for his miserable pittance', and then was refused unless he had come furnished with a duty stamp to affix to his receipt.

88. TH, 3 May 1880.

Earlier, in 1878, the teacher at Mangorei, R. Stevens, had boldly raised the issue of his status by informing the local commissioners⁸⁹ that he refused to light the fires or sweep out the school rooms, as he did not consider it his place to perform these tasks. As he had the two half-time schools of Mangorei Lower and Upper to attend to, and these chores would have been no light task in the rain and mud of the Taranaki winter, one can sympathise with the teacher's stand. The commissioners, however, did not consider that the children should have to do this work, and referred the matter to the Board for a ruling, with the result that it became a subject of public debate. The Board was divided on the subject.⁹⁰ A minority agreed with the Wesleyan minister on the Board, the Rev. F.W. Isitt, who contended that they should treat their teachers as gentlemen, and support their dignity in the matter, rather than the dignity of a child. The majority, including chairman Benjamin Wells, thought that teachers should do the work, and carried a motion, 'That the teacher of the Mangorei school is expected to make provision for the warming and cleansing of the school buildings'. Isitt gave notice that at the next meeting he would move 'That the resolution be rescinded'. In the month which intervened there was considerable newspaper discussion on the topic.⁹¹ There was criticism of the Board for requiring that its teachers be proficient at polishing up the fire-stove as well as the

89. Appointed on the failure of the district to elect a committee.

90. TH, 13 August 1878; Taranaki News, 17 August 1878.

91. See e.g. TH, 17, 21, 26 & 30 August 1878; Taranaki News, 24 August 1878.

youngsters, and 'Enquirer' claimed to have some thoughts of offering his services as a teacher, but wanted to know whether the teacher had to act as nightman to his school, as that would debar his way to the profession. Others sided with Benjamin Wells who wrote editorially in his Taranaki News to maintain that teachers should not consider themselves debased by honest labour. When the Board next met it had before it besides Isitt's motion, a letter from the Mangorei teacher, stating that while he was always willing to assist in making the children of his schools comfortable, he would have to resign his appointment if the Board imposed on him the duty of warming and cleansing the schools.⁹² In speaking to his motion of rescission, Isitt maintained that the teachers felt the Board's resolution to be an injustice and an insult to them. Isitt's motion was carried, as also was a further motion moved by him to the effect that the Board saw no objection to either scholars or teachers performing these tasks voluntarily, but could not impose them as duties. When Hislop, Secretary of the Education Department, had an interview with the Board some two months later, Isitt asked him whether the duties of cleaning and warming the schools rested on the committee or the teachers, Hislop replied that the committees were understood to be responsible, and that usually they made an arrangement with the teacher and made him an allowance for the purpose.⁹³

92. TH, 10 September 1878; Taranaki News, 14 September 1878.

93. TH, 19 November 1878.

Having surveyed some of the difficulties which arose in local school affairs, the evidence justifies our ending this chapter on a more positive note. In the Bush districts the yeoman ideal and the common school ideal were maturing together, to their mutual advantage. Farm and school were slowly gaining in efficiency and sense of direction, and as they did so they had more to contribute to each other. The benefits of literacy were increasingly realised and received increasing support from the community as its life and institutions became more developed and complex. The inspectors did a certain amount to educate local committees and communities to value and support their schools, but the teaching profession itself had to play the main part in winning its way to deeper understanding and esteem. Inevitably this was a long-term process, but there is considerable evidence of progress from these earlier years. Thus, in January 1877 there is a report of the Kakaramea settlers expressing their appreciation of a good teacher by presenting him with ⁹⁴£10, and when the first teacher of Taonui School (then called Bunnythorpe School) ⁹⁵resigned after two years of faithful service, the sawmilling community showed their appreciation by presenting him with 'a very handsome copy of Shakespeare and a nice collection of New Zealand ferns'. ⁹⁶The interest and support which more mature districts gave to their schools can be illustrated from the reports of the end-of-year

94. Y, 6 January 1877.

95. Clevely, Bunnythorpe, p. 81.

96. Rangitikei Advocate, 17 December 1881.

prize-givings of the Bulls, Feilding, Marton, Halcombe and Sandon schools, published in the Rangitikei Advocate during December 1881. Money for prizes had been raised in various ways, such as by a subscription canvass or a concert. Sir William Fox, Mrs D.H. Macarthur (wife of the Manchester Corporation's local agent), a Presbyterian and a Wesleyan minister, had been enlisted to present the prizes. Sports and picnics had also been arranged by the committees to mark the end of the school year. At Sandon the children presented two oleographs and vases to their teacher and an album to their pupil teacher. Such details may be trivial in themselves, but they are important as indications of local attitudes, and are indeed important elements in the development of civilized community life.

CHAPTER 14

THE CHURCHES, 1877 - 1881

We now take up the history of the churches in the Bush Provinces from where we left it in Chapter 5, the close of the provincial era. The period with which we have now to deal was one of slower population growth, with much less immigration from Britain. We can therefore concentrate our attention mainly on purely colonial developments, and trace the continuing endeavours of the churches to adapt their work to the Bush environment and to catch up with the march of settlement, which had left most of them well in the rear. We shall also look to this religious history for further confirmation of trends already noted, and for increased understanding of a number of facets of the social history of the region.

As with our earlier chapter, the census reports provide valuable indications of general trends and also raise some questions requiring an answer. A comparison of the figures of the censuses of March 1878 and April 1881 shows that the total growth in the population of the Bush Provinces was 23.89 percent, and that the growth of the main denominations kept roughly in step with this general growth. The Anglicans with a 22.30 percent increase and the Wesleyan Methodists with 22.01 percent, were both growing a little more slowly

than the total population.¹ The similarity of these two figures despite the relative ineffectiveness of Anglicanism in the rural districts, and the remarkably effective presence of the Wesleyans throughout the region, will need to be accounted for. The most rapid growth among the main churches was the 29.68 percent of the Roman Catholics. The evidence suggests that this is largely to be accounted for by immigration, to which the West Coast goldfields made a significant contribution. The 27.89 percent Presbyterian increase appears to have been largely due to immigration, mainly from the South Island, but may also represent a measure of recruitment from other denominations. Two smaller groups dropped well behind the rate of population growth. Lutheran numbers increased by only 6.05 percent, and it is clear that a number of them must have been shifting to churches of British origin. The Primitive Methodist figure of 8.70 percent might seem to represent a steady overall loss to the Wesleyans, but a detailed study of the figures shows a more complex picture. Primitive Methodist numbers had more than doubled in the Rangitikei-Manawatu, but there had been a loss of 16.38 percent in Taranaki. Another deceptive over-all figure is the 24.93 percent increase in those who exercised their statutory right to 'object to state' their denomination. This does not represent an

1. The figures quoted in this discussion are taken from, or calculated from, Part VI - 'Religions of the People' of the two census reports. (1878 Report, pp. 253-75; 1881 Report, pp. 217-39.)

over-all tendency for the numbers of such persons to keep pace with population growth. In 1878 2.55 percent of the colony's population 'objected to state', but the Taranaki County (practically equivalent to the New Plymouth settlement) returned a figure of 4.56 percent. This might be interpreted as due to the suspicion of new arrivals, fresh from the tensions of the English countryside. The Taranaki figure dropped to 3.55 percent in the 1881 census, which might be fairly interpreted as indicating the decline in suspicion as the immigrants became aware of their personal freedom in the colony. But how does one account for the increase in the Patea county figure from 3.01 percent to 3.21 percent over the same period - remembering that Patea was being peopled largely by seasoned colonials? And why should the Manawatu County show a figure of 3.32 percent 'objection to state' in 1878, rising to 4.15 percent in 1881, while the neighbouring county of Rangitikei returned only 0.73 percent in 1878, dropping to 0.51 percent in 1881? An examination of the 'object to state' statistics of these and succeeding censuses suggests that they relate to a religious movement of some significance. This will be discussed more fully later in the chapter. Our main attention, however, must be given to the work of the principal denominations over the years 1877 to 1881.

One of the main developments in the history of the Anglican Church in the Bush Provinces over this period was a vigorous attempt by the bishops, assisted by a small group of clerical and lay leaders, to grapple with the forces hampering the advance of their church. These they saw as a widespread unwillingness to shoulder the burdens of self-support, and a narrow parochialism that gave neither concern nor support to church activities beyond the local district. With his missionary background, Bishop Hadfield could not rest while so much of the newly settled country lacked the ministrations of the church. He strove unceasingly to overcome the diocesan penury that so effectively tied his hands and nullified his endeavours to meet the need. In the late 1870s he pioneered a new approach to colonial diocesan finance, and in doing so, endeavoured to clarify the problem by setting it in the light of church history. The result of this thinking, as presented in his address to the 1879 Diocesan Synod,² well merits a brief treatment.

In examining why it was 'that a comprehensive and adequate system of finance has as yet no existence in any colonial diocese',³ Hadfield traced the cause back to the manner in which church institutions had originated in the colonies. The first stage was one of 'mere isolated efforts on the part of a few

2. Proceedings of the Second Session of the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Wellington, esp. pp. 5-9.

3. ibid., p. 6.

clusters of church people to obtain the ministrations of clergymen for their own localities'.⁴ Beginning thus without system and without organisation, the colonial churches grew with the growing population of the colonies, until the absolute necessity of some supervision became apparent. Bishops and diocesan boundaries were then imposed as something of an afterthought.

But these early Bishops came from England armed with Letters-patent, and enjoying the very questionable advantage of being nominated by the Colonial Office, and moreover receiving salaries from the public treasury, or from sources extraneous to the colony. They did not spring from the colonial churches. They seemed to be accretions from without; and seldom identified themselves with their dioceses. Their position was peculiar; for the primitive church afforded no precedent for such a mode of appointing bishops. The manner in which they were appointed had a tendency to retard rather than promote diocesan organisation on a basis of self-reliance and self-support. They usually looked forward to the time when they might leave their dioceses and return to England. They could hardly be considered as parts of the dioceses over which they presided. Under such circumstances it could scarcely be expected that any foundation for a permanent diocesan system of finance would be laid.

The geographical boundaries of dioceses were equally unsatisfactory. Formed almost haphazard, the early dioceses had boundaries corresponding with the limits of civil government. This gave them vast dimensions, and these, taken together with difficult communications, 'precluded the possibility of any such organisation as ought to exist in a diocese'.⁶ The same

4. ibid.

5. ibid.

6. ibid., p. 7.

applied to what were called parishes - they were large districts, destitute of any organisation, within which one clergyman ministered as best he could to his scattered flock. Clearly this development, as described by Hadfield, had failed to achieve any of the real advantages of episcopal organisation and government, while at the same time also lacking the virtues of a thorough-going congregationalism.

Hadfield pointed out that history afforded no precedents for such dioceses and parishes. Both in primitive and more recent times the expansion of the church had come about through missionaries going out, usually with a bishop at their head, to preach the gospel to heathen people. The missionaries settled down and worked from a centre, developing a well ordered corporate existence, 'having the centre as a living source of work, and gradually extending its influence to the extremities of what was ultimately deemed a diocese of manageable size'.⁷ The formation of colonies composed of Christians who had migrated from their homes, and scattered over extensive districts, had posed new problems, which had nowhere been adequately met. Through the wisdom and forethought of its first Bishop, Selwyn, New Zealand had been saved from many of the evils affecting other colonial churches. At an early stage he had taken steps to divide the colony into dioceses small enough to admit of

7. ibid., p. 7.

real supervision. He had also made provision for the participation of all orders in the management of the church's affairs and had endeavoured to provide for the due security and right administration of the church's property. Circumstances had, however, precluded his tackling the creation of an adequate financial system, though the organisation he had given the New Zealand church had prepared the way for this necessary further development. Like the Bishop of Waiapu, whom we have already quoted,⁸ Hadfield saw one of the major obstacles to be the attitude of colonists who had enjoyed the gratuitous benefits of the endowed and established church of the homeland. He referred to 'a vague impression' held by many churchmen, both clerical and lay, that the colonial church had a duty to work as nearly as possible in accordance with the practice of the Established Church in England. These churchmen had failed to come to terms with the colonial situation, in which the church started without any special sanction or sort of support from the state, and where the law of the land knew nothing of 'dioceses', or 'parishes', or 'churchwardens', or 'vestries'.

Bishop Hadfield's endeavours to acquire more adequate diocesan finance were of vital importance to the Anglicans of the Bush settlements, for without outside help they could not hope to see their church effectively established in their districts. In the early years of his bishopric, Hadfield

8. p. 208 above.

endeavoured to put new life into the Diocesan Fund, which had been created by an act passed by the first Diocesan Synod in 1859 to finance the extension of the work of the church. Thus in August 1876 Hadfield sent out an appeal to the church members of the diocese, pointing out the growing needs created by the flow of immigration, and asking for more generous support for the fund.⁹ When Synod met later in the same year, it passed a resolution which led to the establishment of the Church Chronicle as the monthly journal of the diocese,¹⁰ the first issue apparently appearing in December 1876.¹¹ Members of synod, in carrying the resolution unanimously, expressed a confident expectation that the journal would promote a spirit of unity throughout the diocese. Probably from the start the Church Chronicle was used to publicise the crying needs of the newly settled districts, and to educate churchmen to their financial responsibilities. Certainly this was the case from the date of what appears to be the first extant issue, January 1878 - which carries an appeal from the Bishop for more adequate support for the Diocesan Fund. These appeals resulted in a little improvement in the state of the fund,¹² but by the time synod met in 1878 Hadfield had decided to propose a new approach to diocesan finance. He later pointed out that the

9. Octavius Hadfield, An Appeal from the Bishop to Church Members of the Diocese of Wellington in aid of the Wellington Diocesan Fund, Wellington, 1876.

10. Church Chronicle, II, 14 (January 1878), p. 19.

11. Ibid. - By calculation back from the issue number.

12. NZM, 20 October 1877, p. 19.

Diocesan Fund (omitting annual offertories, special donations, and legacies) had only produced an average of £160 a year in the decade to 1878.¹³ In other words, the Fund's regular and reliable sources of income provided an infinitesimal amount in comparison with the needs of the diocese.

The new approach to diocesan affairs and finance which was tentatively accepted by Synod in October 1878, and, after a year of discussion and investigation, embodied in a diocesan act in November 1879, amounted to a fairly thorough-going centralisation of diocesan finances by means of the establishment of a General Church Fund. The scheme was reported to have originated with the vicar of St Paul's, Thorndon, the Rev. B.W. Harvey,¹⁴ but it faithfully embodies Hadfield's thinking on the essential principles of sound diocesan organisation. The scheme's originators envisaged the growing needs of the diocese being met by a united endeavour under central direction. The proposal was fully explained to church members in the Church Chronicle of November 1878 (pp. 157-8). The resolution which Synod had carried, 'after long and careful deliberation' was first quoted:

That a general canvass of the Diocese be at once instituted, with a view to ascertain whether a sufficient fund can be raised for the following purposes:-

(a) To provide adequate stipends for such a body of Clergy as is demanded for the spiritual oversight of all the Church people within the Diocese:

13. Proceedings of the Second Session of the Ninth Synod of the Diocese of Wellington, p. 8.

14. Church Chronicle, III, 227.

(b) To build all requisite Churches, Parsonages, and Schools:

(c) To train young men for the work of the Ministry.

In outlining the needs which waited to be met, it was pointed out that no fewer than nine important districts urgently demanded the services of a resident clergyman, and that most of these places also needed a church or parsonage or both. They were listed as Porirua, Foxton, Palmerston North, Feilding, Bulls and Sandon, Hawera, Waverley, Waitotara and Featherston. The district of Feilding was quoted as a fair example of the way in which work was being thrown on the church by the material progress of the country. Though barely three years old it already had a settled population of over 2000 souls. Besides the needs of the new districts, existing parishes were also short of manpower, and it was estimated that at least twelve new clergymen were needed if the church was to fulfil her mission at all efficiently. There would also need to be more churches and parsonages, and it was estimated that ten churches and seven parsonages would need to be built in the next two or three years if the work was not to fall hopelessly into arrears. In addition, in simple justice, some help would need to be given in reducing debts already incurred in some places.

The problem of recruiting clergy was discussed at some length. The notorious difficulty of obtaining suitable men from England was alluded to. But tried men could not be

expected to come to the help of the diocese when to the other difficulties and discouragements of their work they were asked to add a lifelong struggle with the trials and cares of poverty. The average stipend of the diocese was only £227, and there were still four clergymen receiving less than £200 a year. The church would have to rely for the future largely on finding and training suitable men from its own parishes, but this could not be done without funds, and men could not be expected to offer themselves unless they could be assured of at least a moderate provision for their maintenance.

The proposal was to rally the churchmen of the diocese to a united effort, channelled through a Central Fund which would meet every demand except for purely local matters which would be provided for by parish offertories. It was estimated that once the diocese was fully organised about £20,000 a year would be needed for the various purposes outlined, but an income of half this sum would allow a very satisfactory beginning to be made. Under the old system a number of willing and easily accessible people had been wearied by the number of appeals made to them, but under the proposed plan the help of all willing people throughout the diocese would be enlisted, and the one contribution would meet every demand, except for purely local matters met by parish offertories. All that was wanted

was to bring the matter fully under the notice of all, and to provide a proper organisation to collect their contributions. The church would then be able to develop her true missionary character, and move with the progress of the country.

Such was the appeal which went out in the diocesan journal, and it was followed up in the ensuing months by an attempt to implement the general canvass envisaged by the resolution of Synod. As the scheme was more fully discussed, further facets of the thinking behind it became apparent. One aspect was clarified when Hadfield addressed the first meeting called to publicise the scheme, in Wellington on 19 December 1878.¹⁵ He explained that it would be unwise to send a deputation into the country districts to commend the proposals there unless the scheme had first been heartily supported in the city. Obviously one aspect of the plan was to use the more developed church life of the larger centres to prime the work in country districts, and subsidise its early stages. In this respect the scheme bears some similarity to the mode of operation of the new Education boards. Hadfield explained the difficulty of getting from the scattered country settlers sufficient co-operation to initiate church institutions, and he also pointed out how the full programme of church, parsonage and minister's stipend amounted to a demand which frightened such settlers

out of the spirit of action. Drawing from the experiences of a visitation which he had made early in the year to the west coast settlements, he quoted the case of Hawera. It was 20 miles from any clergyman, with a large population growing up, many of whom were pretty well off. When he met with a group of churchmen there they had expressed their willingness to do everything possible to establish a church, but when he had explained what was involved, and that he could hold out small hope of any help from diocesan funds, they had felt that what was needed was beyond their power and had decided to defer the matter. The new scheme would meet such a case by providing for united action, instead of leaving the initiative to isolated districts, and consequently weak effort. Over a year later, when commending the new General Fund to a Wanganui audience, Archdeacon Thorpe explained another reason why it was desired that too much should not be left to local initiative.¹⁶ Under the old scheme vestries paid ministers. This put the local clergyman too much in the vestry's power, and he was liable to suffer the 'pressure of the purse' when any dissatisfaction arose. Under the new scheme all stipends would be paid from the General Church Fund.

In February 1879 Hadfield carried the campaign to the rural districts of the Rangitikei-Manawatu. He was assisted by the Revs T.L. Tudor of Wanganui and A. Towgood of Marton,

16. Y, 10 April 1880, p. 2.

and by local lay churchmen.¹⁷ Two days were devoted to canvassing each of Foxton, Palmerston North and Feilding, a day to Halcombe, and a day and a half to Sandon. At Foxton, the school headmaster, Charles Hulke, worked with the delegates for the two days. At Palmerston North the town's mayor, G.M. Snelson, and his wife, drove the delegates about for two days. The local correspondent of the Wanganui Herald reported a meagre attendance at the meeting of parishioners held in the Town Hall.¹⁸ As an outsiderobserver he felt that most who attended were apathetic about their spiritual welfare, and he quoted a recent arrival in the district who told the meeting he was appalled with the spiritual destitution of the place. At Feilding the delegates were again provided with carriages, one of which was driven by Mr or Mrs Halcombe. At Halcombe they again took to their feet, and trudged the district under the guidance of W.H. Lash, the sawmill owner. The delegates were surprised at the number of church people that they found in the various districts, and in general were pleased at the warmth of the response they received. The campaign continued with a meeting in Wanganui on 11 March 1879, and canvasses and public meetings at Waverley, Patea and Hawera over the following weeks.¹⁹ Visits to the Hutt valley and Wairarapa followed.²⁰ The over-all response was sufficiently encouraging for the

17. Church Chronicle, III, 226-7, for all details not otherwise footnoted.

18. Y, 22 February 1879.

19. Church Chronicle, III, 241.

20. ibid., III, 255-6.

Synod to proceed in November to repeal the act establishing the Diocesan Fund, and pass the act establishing the General Church fund. Besides subscriptions contributed throughout the diocese, all pew rents and revenues derived from land or other property were to be paid into the Fund. The Fund was intended to provide for all aspects of church extension, and also to pay all stipends. During the recess of Synod the Fund was to be administered by the Standing Committee.²¹

The new approach to diocesan finance failed, for a number of reasons, to fulfil all the hopes of its originators. The scheme was unfortunate in that its advent coincided with the onset of colonial depression, yet without it much of the church's work would probably have collapsed over these difficult years. Its introduction also coincided with the withdrawal of the S. P. G. annual grant,²² and because it is success that breeds success, this combination of financial misfortunes was doubly unfortunate for the scheme. Some of the effects of the continuing strength of parochialism were also unforeseen. The campaign on behalf of the Fund stirred many churchmen to action, but instead of contributing to the General Fund, and allowing the strategy to be shaped at a diocesan level, they put their contributions into locally sponsored building projects. By April 1882 the Wellington Diocese was

21. For the text of the Act see Proceedings of the Second Session of the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Wellington, pp. 56-8.

22. Proceedings . . . Third Session . . . Eighth Synod . . . , p. 2.

in the paradoxical position of facing a crisis over arrears of stipends, while in a little over two years nearly £3,000 had been raised independently of the General Fund, for the building of churches and parsonages.²³ In its annual report dated 15 September 1881, the Standing Committee noted that churches had been built or were in progress at Greatford, Bulls, Halcombe, Palmerston North, Feilding and Hawera.²⁴ In April 1882 a special session of Synod was called to take measures to meet arrears of stipend. The Standing Committee's report dated 13 April 1882 noted that over £785 was still owing on stipends due at 31 December 1881.²⁵ The General Church Fund was bringing in nowhere near the £10,000 that it had been estimated would be needed to launch the new era in a satisfying manner, its receipts for the year to 30 June 1881 being only £2,468.²⁶ The 1882 special session of Synod amended the General Church Fund Act so as to prevent local districts diverting funds via the offertory to local ends, while drawing their minister's salary from the Fund. The Fund was now to have first call on local offertories and collections in all cases where a district was not making its due contribution towards its clergyman's salary.²⁷

In addressing the special session of Synod, Bishop Hadfield gave expression to his disappointment with the apathy

23. Proceedings . . . Second Session . . . Ninth Synod . . ., p. 16.

24. Proceedings . . . First Session . . . Ninth Synod . . ., p. 43.

25. Proceedings . . . Second Session . . . Ninth Synod . . ., p. 15.

26. ibid., p. 17.

and waywardness of his flock.²⁸ Since the Fund had fallen short of the minimum required to cover all stipends, he was still unable to come to the help of new and needy districts. Church members in well-established parishes had, in general, failed to come to the aid of the poorer parts of the diocese. There was, though, some cause for thankfulness in the great efforts the new districts were making to put up church buildings. Yet this was just another example to prove that parochialism had largely prevailed against the attempt to centralise the diocese. The only effective initiative exercised by the bishop continued to be the stationing of the clergy, and even here the tune was called largely by local effort rather than by local need. Thus in January 1878 there was apparently some resentment that while Palmerston North with its nearly 3,000 inhabitants was without a resident clergyman, 'a much smaller neighbouring town' had been promised one, who was to visit Palmerston North occasionally.²⁹ Palmerston North undoubtedly had the greater need, but it was Feilding that had been exerting itself to some purpose. The shareholders of the Corporation had sent out £250 and also several articles to be sold at a bazaar to help build the church.³⁰ In November 1878 a parish meeting resolved to rescind an earlier resolution to expend £250 on a parsonage, and instead to build one costing £450. In December a highly successful two-day bazaar

27. *ibid.*, pp. 12-14, for the Act as amended.

28. *ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

29. *NZM*, 12 January 1878, p. 17.

30. *Church Chronicle*, III, 309.

organised by Mrs Halcombe brought in £182 for the Parsonage Building Fund.³¹ By March 1879 the parsonage had been completed at a cost of £480, and the Rev. Joshua Jones, late curate of St John's, Queenstown, was in occupation. By July the parish could see its way to wiping off a small debt outstanding on the parsonage; moneys expected included £50 from a bazaar organised by Mrs Hadfield in Wellington.³⁴ The new parish was already having plans prepared for a church. The Corporation had given a second site for the church so that the original site in Manchester Street might be sold, and it was hoped in this way to realise at least £600.³⁵ Building was begun in November 1881.³⁶ At Halcombe, the other township in the parish, a church had been opened the previous July.³⁷ It is not surprising that the Rev. Joshua Jones continued to serve the parish until 1886. Palmerston North could not compete with a neighbour which received such favoured treatment, and church morale apparently sank to a low level. A newspaper report of November 1880 stated that the last incumbent had been starved out through muddling on the part of the Church Committee, who had been negligent in their relations with the Diocesan Synod.³⁸ Some life was shown in the latter part of 1881, when the replacement of the original barn-like church was undertaken,³⁹ but the parish's historian reports

31. Y, 22 December 1877, p. 7.

32. Church Chronicle, III, 309.

33. ibid., III, 213.

34. ibid., III, 309.

35. ibid.

36. St John's Feilding, 1876-1951, Feilding, 1951, p. 5.

church life 'at rather a low ebb' over the years 1882-84, largely due to the frequent changes of clergy, and the unsuitability of some and the ill-health of others.⁴⁰ It might be nearer the truth to say that the better clergy were sent where they would receive the most encouragement.

Bishop Hadfield's endeavours to meet the needs of the rapidly developing Patea-South Taranaki district had met with no success by the end of 1881. In September 1880 the Patea Anglicans met to consider their financial position. They resolved to inform the Bishop that they could no longer afford a minister's stipend, and would prefer to dispense with the services of a resident clergyman until they had managed to pay the arrears owing to the last incumbent. Hawera Anglicans on the other hand, having successfully tackled the building of a church, were showing an unepiscopal initiative that must surely have jarred their bishop. The vestry, having telegraphed a clergyman in another diocese as to his willingness to come to Hawera, proceeded to write to Hadfield asking if he would appoint a clergyman chosen by the local parishioners.⁴¹ The approach did not lead to an appointment, but Hawera's first vicar was appointed the following year.

Having surveyed Hadfield's largely frustrated endeavours to guide his recalcitrant flock into the paths of episcopal unity and a proper concern for the welfare of their brethren

37. *ibid.*, p. 7.

38. *Y*, 20 November 1880, p. 7.

39. Dent, All Saints, Palmerston North, pp. 10-12.

40. *ibid.*, p. 13.

41. *Y*, 20 August 1881, p. 4.

in the Bush districts, we must now turn briefly to the affairs of the Waiapu Diocese, and the fortunes of Anglicanism in the Hawke's Bay Seventy Mile Bush. The Waiapu Diocese well illustrates the haphazard growth of colonial Anglicanism. Its first bishop, William Williams, was a missionary sent to work among the Maoris by the Church Missionary Society. During his bishopric the Society provided his stipend. When he resigned in May 1876, following a paralytic stroke, the diocese had practically nothing in the way of a stipend to offer his successor, although the need of an endowment for the bishopric had been under discussion for years. Nor was there an episcopal residence, the Bishop having to rent a house for himself.⁴² In these circumstances the diocese was very fortunate in securing the services of Edward Craig Stuart, a C.M.S. missionary with 22 years' experience in India. The new bishop was consecrated on 9 December 1877. Fortunately the C.M.S. continued to pay him £450 a year during the first years of his episcopate,⁴³ for the Waiapu Diocese had been able to pay him only £87 5s up to 14 October 1879.⁴⁴ He therefore could speak without any inhibitions to draw the attention of his diocese to its responsibility for the needy rural districts. A Diocesan Fund for the extension of the church's work had been set up by the Synod of 1873,⁴⁵ and Stuart spoke out frankly at his

42. Henry Jacobs, Colonial Church Histories: New Zealand, London, [1889], p. 455.

43. ibid.

44. Proceedings of the First Session of the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Waiapu, p. 56.

45. Watson Rosevear, Waiapu: The Story of a Diocese, Hamilton, 1960, p. 81.

second Synod in 1879 on the utter inadequacy of the £56/10/6 provided for the fund by the annual offertory throughout the diocese, especially in the light of the notice received from the S.P.G. that its £100 annual grant to the Waiapu Diocese was to cease. Stuart was not, however, quite so frustrated as Hadfield by a lack of means to initiate work in the Bush settlements. The Hawke's Bay Trust provided an annual income of about £550 for the work of the diocese.⁴⁶

At its 1879 session, the Diocese of Waiapu took its first major step towards providing for the needs of the Bush settlers. It resolved that a portion of the income from the Hawke's Bay Trust for 1879 and 1880 should be spent in securing land at Woodville, Dannevirke, Norsewood, and elsewhere, for future parsonage sites, glebes, and other church purposes.⁴⁷ The following year the Bishop found a church worker for the Bush districts in the person of EE Robertshawe, who had been conducting services in a mission church in Auckland, under the Bishop of Auckland's licence. The original Waiapu appointment in August 1880 was as a stipendiary lay reader, under the vicar of Waipukurau, with the responsibility for all the settlements from Kopua to the Manawatu Gorge.⁴⁸ At the 1880 session of Synod this area was formed into a separate district.

46. Proceedings . . . First Session . . . Eighth Synod . . .
Waiapu, p. 52.

47. ibid.

48. Proceedings . . . Second Session . . . Eighth Synod . . .
Waiapu, p. 19.

Robertshawe was ordained in June 1881,⁴⁹ and devoted nearly 40 years to ministering to these Bush settlers. In April 1881 he addressed a tea meeting held in the Ormondville schoolroom to discuss the expediency of erecting a church there, and gave his first impressions of the Bush work.⁵⁰ He remarked on the contrast between the city church life from which he had come, with its good churches and excellent choirs, and his new life of hard riding in all weathers to hold services in the scattered bush settlements. He had been impressed with the hospitality of the people, and much surprised to find that the Church of England people far outnumbered any of the other bodies. At Woodville the previous Sunday he had had a congregation of 45 persons although there were two other services conducted by the two Methodist groups in the settlement. The proposed church building at Ormondville was proceeded with in due course, and the work there developed so rapidly that it provided the centre for a new parochial district, to which the Rev. A.S. Webb was appointed in 1884.⁵¹

As we saw in chapter 5, the Presbyterian Church was early on the scene in the Bush districts west of the ranges, and by 1876 was solidly established, with a team of eight relatively well-housed and well-paid ministers. Under the combined care of the Presbytery of Wellington and the Church Extension Committee of General Assembly, the church made quiet but steady

49. Proceedings . . . Third Session . . . Eighth Synod . . .
Waiapu, p.3.

50. H.B. Weekly Courier, 22 April 1881, p. 9.

progress in this region. The work which the student evangelist, Robert McGregor, had begun in the bush districts of the Rangitikei-Manawatu had grown sufficiently for separate Feilding and Palmerston North parishes to be formed. The Church Extension Committee had stationed the Rev. A.M. Wright in Palmerston North early in 1879.⁵² The Church Agent, the Rev. D. Bruce had visited Feilding and Halcombe later in the same year and stimulated sufficient enthusiasm for a permanent charge to be established with the help of a £50 grant from the Church Extension Fund.⁵³ The Rev. H.M. Murray was inducted to this charge in May 1880. In November 1879 the Rev. James Torry was inducted to the charge of a new parish based on Hawera.⁵⁴ A church had been opened there in January 1877,⁵⁵ and the Church Extension Committee's report for 1878 noted that further churches were being built at Normanby, Manutahi and Patea.⁵⁶ Waverley, Wanganui, Turakina, Foxton, Marton and Bulls, were still served by the same ministers as in 1876. These stable pastorates in the midst of the flux of rapid change must in general have been an advantage to the Presbyterian cause. However, in the New Plymouth settlement an unfortunate appointment had led to the suspension of Presbyterian services.

51. Alice Webb, Pilgrimage, Wellington, 1949, gives a good account of the author's father's work at Ormonville.

52. N.Z. Presbyterian Church News, VII, 34 (March 1879).

53. ibid., VII, 108.

54. Dickson, History of N.Z. Presbyterian Church, p. 518.

55. ibid.

56. Presbyterian Church of New Zealand: Proceedings of General Assembly, 1879, p. 59.

East of the ranges Presbyterianism had as yet done little for the Bush settlers, though a little may have been begun by the parish of Waipukurau. Except in the Seventy Mile Bush and North Taranaki, the Presbyterian church was not lagging too far behind the advance of Bush settlement.

In Chapter 5 we noted the remarkable growth of Wesleyan Methodism in the Bush Provinces in the mid 1870s, much of it brought about by immigration. We also surveyed the Wesleyans' impressive record in building churches, and in staffing their work in the newly settled districts. That their denominational organisation continued its steady growth is shown by the 1881 statistics of their Taranaki-Wanganui District, which covered all the Bush settlements west of the ranges. Since the end of 1876 the number of churches had grown by 3 to 17, and other preaching places by 3 to 26. Three additional ministers were stationed in these circuits, giving a total of 10, and they were assisted by 28 local preachers, also an increase of 3. Sunday School rolls had grown from 1,058 to 1,456, and the number of teachers had increased by 63 to 171.⁵⁷ The earlier institutional growth had owed much to immigrant manpower, but it was being maintained largely by recruitment within the colony. It will be worthwhile to examine Methodist polity to see how this was done.

Methodist church work was manned by promotion from the

57. Statistics from Minutes of the Annual Conference, 1877,
p. 8; 1882, p. 13.

ranks, a process well described in an article reprinted by the Wanganui Yeoman from the Nelson Mail.⁵⁸ First the intelligent and pious Sunday School scholar became a 'teacher on trial'. Having proved himself faithful, he was received as a fully accredited teacher. If it was noted when he addressed the Sunday School or engaged in prayer that he had some gifts for extemporary speaking, he was judiciously encouraged and watched, and in time it was proposed that he should preach. Overcoming his diffidence, he would eventually agree to accompany some senior lay preacher and conduct part of a service. Having done this occasionally for several months, and been favourably reported on, he was made a lay preacher 'on trial'. He was now encouraged to read divinity and study composition. After the lapse of not less than a year he would preach a 'trial sermon' before his lay brethren and the ministers, and be carefully examined viva voce in theology. If he gave satisfaction he became a fully accredited lay preacher. Should his gifts continue to unfold, it would be first suggested, and eventually become a confirmed opinion that he should attempt to enter the ministry. After due preparation he would preach another trial sermon and be recommended by his fellow laymen as a candidate for the ministry. He next proceeded to the annual District Meeting, where he preached before a committee of ministers, and was examined viva voce in divinity and by

58. Y, 5 February 1881, p. 8.

papers in literary subjects. Having satisfied the District Meeting he was sent on to Annual Conference where the process was repeated. On acceptance by Conference he was sent to a training institution for from one to three years. From there he went to circuit work as a 'probationer' for four years, under the supervision of some senior minister. Each year of probation he was examined and preached the inevitable trial sermon. Having completed this rigorous course successfully, he was ordained, and also very often married shortly thereafter. He was not allowed to marry while a probationer, not only because his position was not yet assured, but also because he was expected to pioneer new stations for small pay. A new station was staffed by an 'economical' probationer for its first four years. It was then expected to build a parsonage, and find the stipend for a married man. Each probationer might therefore, in a sense, be expected to prepare a home for himself.

This Methodist polity was clearly almost ideally suited to the needs of the steadily multiplying Bush settlements. New districts could be pioneered at a trivial cost largely by lay preachers, yet from the start they would be under the supervision of the circuit minister. As a district grew it could in time support a 'probationer', and proceed step by step to build a church and parsonage, and finally undertake the support of an ordained minister. We must now examine why it was that, despite their excellent system, the 'census' Wesleyans of the

Bush Provinces grew no faster than the much less efficient Anglicans over the period 1878 to 1881. At least part of the answer is suggested by a comparison of figures for the main towns with those for the Bush frontier districts. Census figures show that the combined population of the boroughs of New Plymouth, Wanganui and Palmerston North grew by 29.10 per cent between the censuses, while their Wesleyans lagged well behind with a growth of only 13.45 percent.⁵⁹ On the other hand, in the counties of their Taranaki-Wanganui District, Wesleyan numbers grew by 42.29 percent in this period, which is close to the population growth of 45.30 percent. Obviously, then, the Wesleyans were faring better in the country than in the towns. An even more striking contrast occurs in the Manawatu and Rangitikei counties, where large-scale bush pioneering was in progress. Manawatu population growth was 52.00 percent, but the Wesleyans achieved 78.56 percent. In Rangitikei County Wesleyan growth was 24.54 percent while population grew only slowly at 7.67 percent. That Wesleyans flourished in pioneer districts but did less well in more settled communities was a matter of some contemporary comment. In 1882 the Bishop of Dunedin made overtures for the amalgamation of Otago Wesleyans with the Church of England of his diocese. In addressing his synod on the subject he stated that it was a fact admitted by Wesleyan ministers that through their energy in forming congregations in new districts, their numbers were swelled by the

59. For source of figures in this discussion see footnote 1, above.

adherence of Anglicans. He inferred, however, that their true strength should be measured by their numbers in more advanced communities. In an editorial commenting on the Bishop's address the Wanganui Yeoman⁶⁰ pointed out the fact, which the Bishop had not alluded to, 'that when Wesleyans some times get up in the world, they attach themselves to the more aristocratic and influential Church'. This, the Yeoman maintained, was a matter of the most common observation. What was happening in the Bush Provinces, apparently, was that Methodism was bearing the brunt of ministering to the pioneer settlements, thereby winning some members from other denominations, but also giving pastoral care to many who had no intention of joining in full membership. The other denominations were, in general, moving in later, gathering in members who had been 'conserved' for them by the Methodists, and also winning not a few Methodist members as well. This is to be accounted for largely by the higher social status of the older Anglican and Presbyterian 'national' churches. The Anglican Church would also have gained from the absence in the colony of most of the social tensions which had alienated many Englishmen from the established church of their homeland.

Rather surprisingly, Taranaki, which saw the greatest advance of settlement over these years, does not fit into this general pattern. Despite a population growth of 57.01 percent,

60. 20 October 1882, p. 9.

much of it in new districts, Wesleyan growth was only 29.33 percent. The explanation would seem to be that the new settlers moving into Taranaki, mainly from other parts of the colony, contained few Methodists. This immigration seems rather to have favoured the Presbyterians (77.57 percent growth) and the Roman Catholics (101.65 percent growth). Despite this, the Wesleyans were well to the forefront in new districts. In 1881 the New Plymouth circuit had 4 churches and 6 other preaching places manned by 2 ministers and 9 local preachers. This unusual strength in local preachers probably owed a good deal to the recent immigration from rural Lincolnshire. An Inglewood circuit history mentions the leadership given in the early years by a group of local preachers, one of whom is specifically referred to as 'a Lincolnshire local preacher'.⁶¹ When William Morley, a leading New Zealand Methodist, visited England in 1888, he was struck by the unusual organisation of the Lincolnshire circuits. He described Louth as a typical county circuit, with a central church seating 1200 in the town, and 36 villages in the surrounding countryside with a place on the circuit preaching plan. As two of the circuit's three ministers resided in the town, the 59 local preachers must have undertaken considerable pastoral as well as preaching responsibilities. Alford, with 26 surrounding villages on the circuit plan, had all three of its ministers residing in the town. If the little group of lay preachers at

61. Souvenir to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Inglewood Methodist Church, [Inglewood, 1946], p. 3.

Inglewood all came from this background they would have been well equipped to carry on an effective work in the surrounding bush settlements. The South Taranaki circuit of Patea, with 3 churches and 6 other preaching places, had only one minister and 2 lay preachers. Nevertheless, when the Waimate Plains were thrown open for settlement, the Wesleyans were determined to be the first in the field. Although the circuit had just built a nine-roomed parsonage at Patea, it erected the first church building in Manaia, and in mid-1881 arranged for the chairman of the District, the Rev. D. McNicoll, to visit them from New Plymouth so that they could take urgent action to get a home missionary to help them man the new country. McNicoll took the Saturday train to the new Normanby terminus, preached in Normanby on Sunday morning, met the Normanby and Hawera Sunday Schools during the day, and preached to a congregation of about 130 in the Hawera Town Hall in the evening, the Hawera Wesleyans having been crowded out of their church by the growth of the district. At the circuit quarterly meeting the following Tuesday it was decided to endeavour to secure the services of a Mr Ensor from Springton as a home missionary. By the next quarterly meeting, 5 October 1881, Ensor had arrived, and the office-bearers were wrestling with the next problem - providing him with a horse, saddle and bridle. As he warned

62. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 204.

63. ibid., XI, 276.

them that he could not stay longer than March 1882, it was also decided to press for two circuit ministers at the 1882 Annual Conference. These representations were successful.

The 1881 census returned only 480 Primitive Methodists in Taranaki - 94 fewer than three years earlier. Primitive Methodism had a tradition of evangelism of a type well-suited to the Bush frontier, and its Taranaki work was to see a remarkable revival in the 1890s. A long decline from the mid 1870s till the early 1890s is probably to be accounted for by the fact that it was the Wesleyans who received the stimulus of new blood in the immigration of the 1870s. The Primitives were also, as we have already seen, hampered by very conservative social attitudes, and, despite their tradition, seem for a time to have become a staid 'old settler' party among Taranaki Methodists. Meanwhile, however, the Rangitikei-Manawatu was seeing something of the pristine vigour of the movement. Led sometimes by one, sometimes by two, ministers, and a group of stalwart lay preachers, the Primitive Methodists of the Manawatu Station carried on a varied and aggressive evangelistic programme. Services were held in sawmills, hundreds of bush settlers were visited in their homes and cottage meetings were held in outlying districts. In November 1877 the Primitive Methodist minister

64. Guy & Potter, Primitive Methodism in New Zealand, pp. 118-9.

teamed up with the Robert McGregor, the Presbyterian student minister, for a series of 'revival meetings' in Feilding.⁶⁵ In the best traditions of Primitive Methodism, the church in Rongotea traced its origins to a camp meeting initiated by a layman in the first year of the Douglas Special Settlement. He was W.T.W. Bull, with an English Methodist background, and he called the meeting in the square at Rongotea on the Sunday before Christmas, 1878. He used a matai stump for his pulpit, and his listeners sat on recently felled matai logs. In due course a little chapel known locally as the 'pill-box' was erected. An open air camp meeting in Rongotea Square became an annual event for local Primitive Methodists.⁶⁶ In 1879 the Manawatu Primitive Methodists began regular cottage meetings through the Gorge at Woodville leading to the building of the settlement's first church in 1881. We have already noted the steady growth of Wesleyan numbers in the Rangitikei-Manawatu. This led to the division of their Manawatu circuit into the three new circuits of Palmerston North, Sandon and Feilding by the 1881 annual conference. A minister was appointed to each circuit, so that, with two Primitive Methodist ministers, Manawatu was manned by five Methodist ministers in 1881. This proved beyond the financial resources of the local

65. Y, 24 November 1877, p. 8.

66. Rongotea School, 70th Anniversary 1881-1951, p. 29.

supporters and the Feilding and Sandon Wesleyan circuits shared a minister in subsequent years.

In the Seventy Mile Bush the Free Methodists continued to provide for most of the British Methodists, the Primitive Methodists had the one congregation at Woodville,⁶⁷ and the Scandinavian Mission was consolidating its work under the auspices of the Wesleyans. The 1881 census showed that in the Waipawa County the Free Methodists had more than doubled their numbers (69 to 142) in three years. An able minister, the Rev. J.H. Worboys, was appointed to the Waipawa and Woodville circuit at the beginning of 1880, and remained for a number of years. On 9 October 1881 the Free Methodists⁶⁸ opened Ormondville's first church. The Woodville Free Methodists, stimulated by the example of their Primitive brethren and urged on by the appearance of competition from other denominations for the use of the public school, built⁶⁹ their first church the following year. At Waipawa, the mother church of the circuit, depleted of its members and temporarily closed as a result of the migration to the bush, was re-established in the early 1880s.

Over the period 1877 to 1881 the Wesleyan Scandinavian Mission was consolidating its work at a sacrificial cost to both pastors and people. By 1880 the work was staffed by one minister and two home missionaries. All three had been

67. Guy & Potter, *op.cit.*, p. 119; C. B. Oldfield, 75 Years of Methodism in Woodville 1876-1951, 1959, p. 10.
 68. *New Zealand Free Methodist*, November 1881, p. 189.
 69. Oldfield, Methodism in Woodville 1876-1951, pp. 9-10.

the owners of some landed property; two of them had sold their land, the third had mortgaged his, in order to finance their missionary work, and be as little burden as possible to their people.⁷⁰ The congregations, in turn, were endeavouring to provide churches, glebes and parsonages, while carrying on their own battles with poverty. To add to the difficulties of both pastors and people, the Lutheran Church had appeared belatedly on the scene, and in the effort to recover Lutherans from the Methodist congregations, was engaging in attacks on Methodism which were leading to increasingly embittered relations between the two churches. An excellent account of these various developments is given in a report by the Rev. W.J. Williams, who visited the stations of the Scandinavian Mission in November 1880⁷¹ in accordance with a resolution of the Annual Conference.

Williams went first to the Norsewood Station, which was under the charge of the Rev. E. Neilsen, the pioneer of the work. He found evidence of the destitution which we have already noted in Norsewood in 1880. Yet somehow the congregation had acquired and fenced a church property of six acres in the centre of the settlement, and on it had built a parsonage,, and the shell of a church. To make the property debt-free they had raised £440 and also contributed a considerable amount of voluntary labour. On Sunday, 7 November 1880,

70. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 71. Whether the land was in Norway or in New Zealand is not reported.

71. ibid., pp. 69-71.

Williams preached morning and afternoon in the recently opened 33 x 20 foot church. He reported that it was neither lined nor properly floored, and that the seats were of the rudest description. The day was cold and wet, and he could not see how the building could be used in cold winter weather without further expenditure. The people, however, had no money left for improvements, and showed a wholesome dread of going into debt. He found that English settlers as well as Scandinavians greatly appreciated Neilsen's visits to their homes. The new church building was being made available for English services conducted on a Sunday afternoon by Werboys, the Free Methodist minister. Neilsen was travelling occasionally to Makaretu and Napier to minister to Scandinavians there.

Williams next visited Palmerston North where a recently appointed home missionary, Edward Christofferson, had been ministering for about three months. The mission had no property at Palmerston North, the missionary residing rent-free in a house belonging to Neilsen. He conducted services sometimes in this house, sometimes in the Stoney Creek School. When the local Scandinavians gathered to meet him, Williams wondered when they were going to stop singing as they 'seemed to have Sankey on the brain'. He found that Christoffersen had, for a Methodist preacher, been much too reticent on the subject of asking for money, with the result that the people were not aware of their responsibility in the

matter. He left them in no doubts as to what Conference expected of them, if it was to continue to station a pastor among them, and met with a ready response.

Finally Williams visited the Mauriceville station, manned by home missionary Otto Christoffersen. Otto Christoffersen was skilled in carpentry, and having already erected a mission house, was just about to commence building a church. Meanwhile, services were held both in the mission house and the school. The people were engaged in paying off the debt on the land and mission house, and so were not yet able to contribute much to their pastor's support. Pastor Christoffersen duly completed the building of the church he had planned, and his wife painted it. It was opened on Saturday ⁷² 9 July 1881. On the following day, Sunday, there were morning, afternoon and evening services in the new church. In all, the people sat through eight hours of church services in the two days, with no sign of flagging interest. By the end of proceedings there was only £5 still owing on the new building.

The work of the Lutheran Church among the Scandinavian settlers in the Bush Provinces began with the arrival of the Rev. Georg Sass in 1878. ⁷³ Sass made Norsewood his centre, and was joined within a year or two by another Lutheran minister

72. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 207.

73. Petersen, Forest Homes, pp. 97-101. Petersen gives only the barest reference to the Methodists' pioneering work.

who settled at Palmerston North. As the majority of the Scandinavians had been Lutherans in their homeland, the newcomers had little difficulty in drawing a large number away from the Wesleyans. Thus by 1880 Sass claimed the support of 120 heads of families at Norsewood, compared with Neilsen's 20 to ⁷⁵30. Having experienced something of the exercised tolerance/in the colony by competing British denominations, the Scandinavian Methodist pastors were appalled by the arrogant attitude adopted by the Lutheran ministers. When a visiting Lutheran minister preaching in the Mauriceville schoolroom in 1881 denounced all who left the Lutheran fold to join another church as traitors and perjurers, Pastor Christoffersen recalled that when he and 450 others had sailed from Scandinavia, not a single Lutheran minister had come to see them off and wish them Godspeed. It was the Methodist pastor Neilsen who had promptly followed them so that they might hear Gospel sermons while they were strangers in a strange land. ⁷⁶ In June 1881 a Scandinavian Lutheran monthly began publication in Napier. It warned Scandinavian Lutherans against falling into the hands of the many 'sects' which were eating about them like flies, and advised them to keep their children away from the Anglican and Methodist Sunday Schools. ⁷⁷ The situation which the advent of the

74. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 70.

75. H.B. Weekly Courier, 2 April 1880, p. 14.

76. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 137.

77. ibid., XI, 253.

Lutheran Church created in the Scandinavian Bush settlements was lucidly summarised in the Rev. W.J. Williams' report on his visitation of November 1880:

The Lutheran Church is . . . the Established Church of the Scandinavians, and Methodism is denounced as an obnoxious form of dissent. The language that is used by the Lutheran authorities concerning our Scandinavian Methodist preachers is much the same kind of language that Methodist preachers generally have been accustomed to hear from a certain class of apologists in the Church of England. Their pretensions to preach are ridiculed, because they have never had a proper classical and theological training, and their action in giving the Sacrament is denounced as a sinful assumption, seeing that they have cut themselves off from the Divinely-authorized channel of sacramental grace. Our brethren, on the other hand, are by no means wanting in the power and will to retort, and the ethical and doctrinal shortcomings of the Lutheran pastors are inveighed against with a vigour which too often shades off into bitterness. They have the excuse of being extremely provoked, and there seems to be too much ground for their assertion, that while Lutheranism lays great stress on religious forms, and sets an altogether inordinate value on the sacraments, it fails to insist upon the necessity for conversion and holiness of heart and life, matters which, as good Methodists, our brethren regards as of supreme importance.⁷⁸

The appearance of the Lutheran pastors provides another explanation for the failure of the Wesleyans to outpace population growth. In the Waipawa County, where the Wesleyans were mainly Scandinavians, numbers grew by only 8.50 percent between the 1878 and 1881 censuses, whereas the population growth was 24.27 percent. Wesleyan church statistics illustrate vividly the sudden development of a religious

78. N.Z. Wesleyan, XI, 70.

rift in the Scandinavian settlements. In the two years from late 1879 to late 1881 the Scandinavian Missions number of 'attenders on public worship' was slashed from 710 to 320. That individuals were being faced with their hour of decision is shown by the rapid rise of 'full and accredited church members' from 73 to 100 over these same two years, while Sunday School teachers rose from 7 to 10, and local preachers from 1 to 3.⁷⁹ However unfortunate the short-term effects of this division and rivalry may have been, it does seem to have served to speed up the integration of the Scandinavian Methodists with their British brethren, leading⁸⁰ to the phasing out of the mission in the 1890s.

As we have noted, Roman Catholics numbers in the Bush Provinces were outpacing population growth, largely, it would seem, due to Irish immigration from the gold fields, perhaps aided a little by the much higher proportion of Irish in the declining flow of immigration from the homeland.⁸¹ These growing numbers were making it possible for their church to begin multiplying congregations and parochial schools in the Bush settlements, introducing yet another division into the communities concerned. By March 1882 Robert Petch was writing

79. Statistics from Minutes of the Annual Conference, 1880, p. 11; 1882, p. 13.

80. For its subsequent history see G.I. Laurenson, The Scandinavian Mission of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, 1872-1894. [Auckland, 1955].

81. Irish made up 50 percent of assisted immigrants in the year to 30 June 1881. See AJHR 1881, D-4, p. 2.

home from Kakaramea complaining that 'this part of the country is now full of Irishmen, who seem to bear great hatred towards the English'.⁸² With this national antagonism to reinforce Roman Catholic/Protestant disagreements, the growth of this further division introduced potent possibilities of social disharmony. There were, however, two important moderating influences. The Bishop within whose diocese the Bush Provinces fell had since 1874 been Henry Redwood, who sprang from English stock and had grown up from childhood in the colony, and a significant proportion of the clergy who served under him were not Irish but Frenchmen. The French involvement in New Zealand Roman Catholicism dated from the original mission under Pompallier, and a flow of priests from France due to the sustained pressure of anti-clerical forces there was helping to maintain it. When Bishop Redwood visited the Patea district in June 1881 and was advertised to preach at Hawera, the local correspondent⁸³ of the New Zealand Tablet reported that 'all the people from the remotest ends of the district, no matter what denomination' came to hear their distinguished visitor. In July 1877 the⁸⁴ Feilding correspondent of the New Zealand Mail, in reporting on the religious life of his district, mentioned the work of the local Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. Delphine Moreau.

82. Robert Petch to his father, 22 March 1882: 'Petch Papers'.

83. 15 July 1881, p. 18.

84. 4 August 1877, p. 19.

The correspondent expressed the opinion that 'the entire absence in this part of New Zealand of anything like the aggressive sectarian spirit', is in no small degree due to the influence of those good French Fathers who have abstained from secular politics.

Of the three Bush Provinces, Taranaki had the largest proportion of Roman Catholics in the 1881 census. They made up almost one seventh of her population, and were particularly strong in the Patea County, where they represented 18.28 percent of the population. In Taranaki County between the 1878 and 1881 censuses, Roman Catholic numbers had been growing at almost three times the rate of the total population (125.28 percent as against 45.45 percent), and they made up 11.89 percent of the population by 1881. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be various reports of the progress of the church in Taranaki over these years. By 1878 a priest was stationed at Hawera, and a church had been built at Inglewood. This is shown by a report in the Patea Mail of 3 January 1878 of the opening of the new Roman Catholic church at Inglewood by the Rev. Father Pertius of Hawera. A newspaper advertisement indicates that a Miss M. Guerin opened a school in Hawera under the patronage of Father Pertius at the beginning of 1878.⁸⁵ On the 18 December 1881 a new Roman Catholic church at Patea was dedicated by Bishop Redwood.⁸⁶ It replaced a church built 14

85. Patea Mail, 1 January 1878.

86. N.Z. Tablet, 20 January 1882.

years earlier, which had become quite inadequate for the growing Roman Catholic population of the district. In mid-1882 the Roman Catholics of Midhurst, Stratford and Ngairi held a meeting at which they resolved to erect a church at Stratford, and elected a committee to collect subscriptions for the purpose.⁸⁷ The committee's treasurer, a Mr Malone, proceeded to tour the Armed Constabulary camps,⁸⁸ where he had many friends, to solicit subscriptions. It is difficult to get a clear picture of Roman Catholic work in the Bush Provinces at this period, as its history is as yet very poorly recorded,⁸⁹ but clearly the church was beginning to get established in some of the Bush settlements.

One significant group of Bush Province christians remains to be discussed - those who deliberately eschewed a denominational label. These people belonged to a movement, or perhaps more correctly movements, whose history it is peculiarly difficult to unravel. By refusing to be labelled they denied themselves a clear place in the census returns, though the 'Object to State' and 'No Denomination' columns provide some interesting material for conjecture. The historical traces of this group's activities are scattered and

87. Hawera Star, 5 July 1882.

88. Ibid., 21 July 1882.

89. There appears to be no satisfactory general history of the N.Z. Roman Catholic Church. The N.Z. Tablet carries little news from the Bush Provinces till later in the 19th century. I have found no local parish histories. Sketch of the Work of the Catholic Church for the Last Half-Century in the Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand, Wellington, 1887, is very useful for the mid-1880s, but it is vague as to the details of development in earlier years.

often nebulous, and it would be easy to ignore them, but this account would lose something of significance if we did so. Yet to carry a treatment of their activities through to reasonably firm conclusions would require a detailed and extended discussion quite out of proportion to its importance to this study. Our procedure therefore will be to present a preliminary and tentative sketch of this group's nature and activities, and then indicate some of the evidence on which it is based.

It would seem that during the 1870s at least two types of 'undenominational' christian were appearing in significant numbers in the New Zealand community. One derived from the interdenominational revivalism of the period, which had received a fresh impetus from the visit of the American evangelists Moody and Sankey to Britain, coinciding with the New Zealand drive for 'Vogel' immigrants. In the New Zealand rural setting this type of interdenominationalism had a strong rational case to support its emotional appeal. Many who mixed on free and friendly terms with their neighbours in secular matters must have come to feel that there was a little folly in the splintering of the community into costly competing groups in religious matters. The other type of 'undenominational' christain belonged to the now much fragmented Plymouth Brethren movement, which repudiated many of the institutional developments of Christendom, and attempted to return to the primitive simplicity of the Early Church.

There were good reasons why this type also should have a particular appeal in the New Zealand rural setting. With no paid pastor or ecclesiastical hierarchy to maintain, the 'system' was cheap to operate and this enabled it to multiply with ease even in hard times, and also to function in communities too small for the traditional type of congregation. Its doctrines also had a particular appeal to the more able layman who found the conventional institutions frustrating. Both these types of undenominationalism in fact, would have appealed to the 'do-it-yourself' approach of the colonial community. Both seem to have been making substantial headway in the Bush Provinces by the late 1870s. The revivalist type was receiving considerable support from the main-line denominations, though rather as a means of evangelism than as an approach to church polity. The Brethren type was being vigorously attacked and 'exposed' by clergy and church periodicals, because it represented a direct criticism of established structures,⁹⁰ and also because it tended to 'steal' some of the more able members from the flock. It was not always easy, however, to distinguish the two types, for Brethrenism had been much influenced by the revival movement, and those influenced by the revival movement were often thereby rendered receptive to Brethrenism. By the end of the century the Brethren movement appears to

90. See e.g. N.Z. Wesleyan, Vol. VI, Nos. 61 & 63 (February & April 1876); Vol. XII, No. 10 (October 1882); Church Chronicle Vol. II, Nos. 16-19 (March-June 1878).

have captured most of the interdenominational congregations created by the revivalist approach.

Besides the continuing impetus of homeland influences such as revivalism and Brethrenism, there would appear to have been strong indigenous elements in the movement. Helen Wilson's account of the strongly millenarian religious fanaticism which swept Ohau in the 1890s⁹¹ would suggest that the bush settlement experience gave rise to potent psychological and sociological forces which found expression in sectarian religion. The rootlessness of the immigrant, the psychological impact of the rape of the pristine landscape, and the feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy of the former rural labourer in the face of his new role as a member of a yeoman farmer community, may all have been involved.⁹² It is quite possible that a number of indigenous sects were originated by forces such as these, and later absorbed into more established movements.⁹³ The persistence of the folk term 'bush Baptist' suggests that movements of this type were common enough to find a place in popular language. Like the terms 'bush beef' (meat supplied by the wild cattle) and 'bush whiskey' (the product of illicit stills harboured by the forest), the term 'bush Baptist' seems to enshrine a folk memory of a colourful and significant aspect of the bush

91. *My First Eighty Years*, pp. 135-7.

92. Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion*, Volume II, *Sectarian Religion*, London, 1967, is a fruitful source of suggestions on this topic.

93. The Foxton 'Feistites' referred to in Chapter 5, appear to be one such. The 'Gooneyites', a sect with a continuing following, especially in Taranaki, appear to be a sect of New Zealand origin which has persisted.

settlement experience.

We must turn now to indicate some of the evidence for this picture. Brethrenism had been firmly established in Wellington in the 1860s, largely through the work of J.G. Deck (1807-1884) an ex-Indian Army Officer who had joined the movement while studying for the Anglican ministry. He had emigrated to New Zealand in 1853, and after some years in Nelson Province settled in Wellington in 1865.⁹⁴ By December 1866 Maria Richmond was writing that 'Mr Deck is said to be drawing large congregations at Wellington. "The Brethren" seem in the ascendant'.⁹⁵ We have already referred to the considerable group established at an early stage in the Feilding district under the leadership of Brother Roots.⁹⁶ In 1875 John Ballance's Yeoman printed several sympathetic reports on a Brethren group in Wanganui.⁹⁷ In January 1876 the Wanganui Presbyterian minister the Rev. J. Elmslie, gave a lecture on 'Baptism and Brethrenism'.⁹⁸ His address made it clear that the Brethren had been making vigorous endeavours to proselytize from his congregation. A week or two later the Brethren opened a meeting house in Mathieson Street, Wanganui, and the leading spokesman served

94. Henry Pickering, Chief Men Among the Brethren, Ldn., 2nd ed. n.d. The title is indicated to be a biblical quotation, thus quixotically evading the accusation that a denominational title has been used.

95. Maria Richmond to Emily E. Richmond, 3 December 1866: Scholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 221.

96. Chapter 5.

97. See e.g. Y, 24 July 1875, p. 5; 13 November 1875, p. 12.

98. Y, 29 January 1876.

notice that he would be replying to Elmslie, as soon as the text of his reply was available in the form of a pamphlet.⁹⁹ There were reported to have been large congregations the Sunday the meeting house was opened. The reply was eventually delivered to 'a respectable audience' in the Odd Fellows Hall, and the Yeoman printed a two-column summary.¹⁰⁰ A history of Wanganui traces the origins of Brethrenism there to what would appear to have been an even earlier beginning in Bell Street.¹⁰¹ This may well have been another branch of the movement. This group is said to have increased in membership with the population of the town, yet when in 1886 the Brethren were first listed in the census returns, only 16 were shown in Wanganui.¹⁰² In 1883 the Plymouth Brethren were the occasion of 'a great division' in the Waverley Presbyterian Church, and a number of families left to join the movement.¹⁰³ Yet in the 1886 census only 4 persons in the whole Waitotara County were returned as 'Brethren'.

That the Brethren commonly 'objected to state' their religious affiliation would appear likely from an examination

99. Y, 19 February 1876, p. 5.

100. Y, 11 March 1876, p. 13.

101. Chapple & Veitch, Wanganui, p. 176.

102. Census, 1886, p. 118.

103. Dickson, History of N.Z. Presbyterian Church, p. 517; Waverley District and Parish: Historical Survey of the first Seventy Years of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, [Waverley,] 1947.

of the statistics for the areas where we have found evidence of Brethren activity. Thus in 1878 only 1.88 percent of the population of Wanganui Borough 'objected to state', but by 1886 this had grown to 3.04 percent. The new Waitotara County returned the unusually high figure of 5.13 percent 'object to state' in the 1886 census. Feilding Borough and Oroua County also appear for the first time in the 1886 Census, and return the high 'object to state' figures of 5.63 percent and 5.17 percent respectively. They also returned considerable numbers of Brethren - 176 (3.94 percent) in the Oroua County, and 74 (5.71 percent) in Feilding. This may reflect the presence of two different branches of the splintered Brethren movement in this district. For comparison, at the same 1886 Census the neighbouring squatter-dominated Rangitikei County returned only 2.21 percent 'object to state' and 0.36 percent Brethren. If our interpretation is correct, the Brethren must have been making strong progress in the Hawera and Patea Counties which returned 8.74 percent and 8.71 percent respectively as 'objecting to state' in 1886. The undivided Patea County had returned only 3.21 percent in 1881. As a further indication that the 'Object to state' option was being used by the Brethren, a curious aberration in the 1891 Census returns can be pointed to. As compared with the 1886 Census, the New Zealand 'Object to State' total dropped by 4,547

104. Census, 1891, p. 111, cf. Census, 1886, p. 105. Population growth between these censuses was 8.33 percent.

(22.86 percent), but the 'No Denomination' figure rose by 1,219 (68.48 percent) while Brethren numbers increased by 358 (11.26 percent). It would appear that the inconsistency of 'objecting to state' something which they in fact maintained they did not have (i.e. a denominational name) must have been faced by one branch of the movement.¹⁰⁵

The revivalist type of undenominationalism might be illustrated by the activities of Gordon Forlong, a deistic Aberdeen legal advocate who became a Christian in 1851, and later became an active revivalist preacher, first in many parts of Scotland, and later in London, where he established a strong undenominational mission.¹⁰⁶ Emigrating to New Zealand for health reasons, he settled first in Bulls, and soon resumed his preaching activities. In the autumn of 1877 he was reported lecturing on 'Atheism' in the Bulls Town Hall and the Marton Presbyterian Church.¹⁰⁸ In September 1877 he had teamed up with the local Wesleyan and Presbyterian ministers in an evangelistic campaign in the Marton Town Hall.¹⁰⁹ In August 1879 he was announced to address the Primitive Methodist Annual Tea Meeting in Feilding.¹¹⁰ By 1881 he had shifted to Dunedin,¹¹¹ where he led an undenominational

105. The remaining loss of 'object to state' numbers may be partly due to the movement of Brethren into the rapidly growing Salvation Army.

106. Chief Men Among the Brethren, pp. 67-9.

107. ibid., p. 69; Y, 18 November 1876, p. 6.

108. Y, 31 March 1877, pp. 5,6.

109. Y, 29 September 1877, p. 7.

110. Rangitikei Advocate, 15 July 1879.

111. Y, 9 July 1881.

mission for some years, before returning to the Rangitikei. Clearly he was not operating as a Plymouth Brother over these years, but a number of his converts became prominent Brethren leaders, and many of his descendants are to be found in New Zealand Brethrenism. The capture of undenominational missions and churches of the type fostered by Forlong can be indicated from the 1896 and 1906 census figures for places of worship. The 1896 returns show 27 church buildings and 9 dwellings or public buildings in use as Brethren places of worship, and 15 churches, 13 schools and 23 dwellings and public buildings in use for undenominational worship. There are no figures for 1901, the returns having been destroyed in a fire. In 1906 no undenominational places of worship are listed, but the Brethren are shown with 69 churches, and using 5 schoolhouses and 2 dwellings of public buildings. As no other group shows a similar dramatic increase in places of worship, it would seem that the Brethren inherited this 'undenominational' work. There are many indications from the decades following the period of this study that both undenominational revivalism and Brethrenism had a particular appeal for the Bush settlers.

This survey of the religious life of the Bush settlements over the years 1878 to 1881 has shown that the activities of the churches brought both gains and losses to these communities. The most retrograde development was the appearance for

the first time in strength of churches such as the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Plymouth Brethren, whose exclusive claims created a considerable amount of social disunity. The rapid growth of Roman Catholic numbers which we noted in North Taranaki may have had a good deal to do with the social tensions which so markedly hampered the progress of community and school life in some of the bush settlements. These Roman Catholics were divided again into those of German and Irish origin. The growth of Wesleyan strength while Primitive Methodism declined may also have caused tension. Yet this religious rivalry cannot have been all loss. It added variety to life, and the controversies it aroused would have had an educative side, and stimulated a certain sharpening of the wits. The multiplication of churches led also to the multiplication of church offices, and so enabled a larger proportion of the community to gain valuable experience in public speaking and the handling of affairs.

From our account it is clear that the churches made a major contribution to community social life. They must also have played an important part in providing welfare for the needy and unfortunate. Another aspect of their work which might easily be overlooked is the valuable support they gave to literacy. It is clear that many children in the Bush districts left school with a very inadequate grasp of the three R's. A large number, however, continued to attend Sunday School at least into their mid'teens, and this

112. The Sabbath School Committee of the Presbyterian Church was complaining in 1879 of the tendency of youths of 'say 16 years or upwards' to drop out of their Sunday School classes. - Proceedings of General Assembly, 1879, D. 53.

provided them with a regular opportunity to improve at least their reading. Some idea of the extent of Sunday School work is provided by comparing the 1456 scholars in the Sunday Schools of the Wesleyan's Taranaki-Wanganui District in 1881, with the 6197 pupils on the rolls of the schools of the 113 Taranaki and Wanganui Education Boards at the end of 1881. Presbyterian Sunday Schools in the Taranaki and Wanganui 114 Education Districts were teaching over 1000 further scholars. Figures are not available for other denominations, but there must have been hundreds of children in undenominational Sunday Schools, and in those run by Anglicans, Primitive Methodists and others. The Presbyterian and Wesleyans alone employed nearly 300 Sunday School teachers. Presbyterian returns show the number of volumes in Sunday School libraries - ranging from 600 in Wanganui and 250 at Turakina, to 50 at Palmerston North and 110 at Bulls. To this massive Sunday School effort must be added the influence on literacy of the ordinary church services, and of personal and family religious practices. It may well have been that the maintaining and extending of the beginnings of literacy imparted by the schools was the most significant social service provided by the churches.

113. Statistics of N.Z. 1881, p. 252; Wesleyan Methodist Church, Minutes of Annual Conference, 1882, p. 13.

114. Calculated from Proceedings of General Assembly, 1881, Appendix XI A; 1882, Appendix XVI. As some parishes were negligent in sending in returns, it is necessary to collate returns for two years to get an approximate figure.

CHAPTER 15

THE BUSH PROVINCES, 1881

In an account of a social movement such as the colonisation of the Great Bush, any stopping point must be in a large measure arbitrary. The last few chapters have already included glances onwards beyond our stated period in order to draw out the significance of some developments, or to provide additional evidence for some of the less well documented trends. Nevertheless the year 1881 does, in a number of ways, provide a satisfying conclusion to this study. The census early in the year provides a statistical stocktaking, on which we have already drawn. The general election in December provides some results whose significance we must discuss, both as representing the consummation of a decade of development, and as foreshadowing a new era shortly to dawn. The opening of the New Plymouth-Hawera railway in October might well be taken as the effective fruition of the strategic communications design worked out a decade earlier. True, the difficult Hawera-Waverley section of the West Coast line was to take over three more years to fill, and a decade was to pass before the Manawatu Gorge link was completed, but both of these gaps were filled by serviceable roads passing through securely settled areas. The only significant native threat remaining at the beginning of 1881 was that arising from Te Whiti's activities at Parihaka. The anticlimax

of Bryce's march on Parihaka, almost immediately following the completion of the railway to Hawera, removed this threat, and so may be taken as marking the end of an era in which military considerations were of major importance in shaping the communications strategy of the Bush Provinces. From then on, economic and settlement considerations were to decide communications policy. Furthermore, an important shift was taking place in the economic outlook of the Bush Provinces. In the 1870s subsistence farming made good sense to impoverished farm labourers and to a government concerned above all with building up settler manpower in threatened districts. By the 1880s the yeoman settler was beginning to look for a little more from life than a mere abundance of the basic necessities, and a colony overburdened with overseas debts was looking for expanded exports to service them. The successful shipment of frozen meat from Australia to England in 1880 was to be followed by the first New Zealand shipment by the the Dunedin leaving Port Chalmers on 15 February 1882. For the Bush settlers this raised the prospect of a better life, based on exports of meat and dairy produce. What had been merely the dream of a few far-seeing visionaries up to 1881, became over the succeeding years first the hope, then the reality, of a majority of the Bush yeomen. Yet it took time even for the old subsistence outlook to pass, and the firm establishment of the new industries was the work of years.

The economic history of the Bush settlements in the 1880s, following the Dunedin's successful voyage, is largely the story of this shift in thought and practice. In this chapter therefore, we will be taking a brief stock-taking of the Bush Province economy before this shift was under way. We will be surveying the results of a decade of Bush settlement aimed largely at achieving local self-sufficiency, while somehow also winning enough money to meet land payments, buy such equipment as could not be locally manufactured and perhaps allow of a trivial luxury now and then. We will also, as we look at the year 1881, take the opportunity to examine some facets of social life which have so far received only passing attention. Of the first of these, the recreations of the Bush Provinces, we will give some account by surveying the activities of the New Year holiday 1881.

New Year's Day 1881 fell on a Saturday. The New Plymouth settlement, which had something of a reputation for taking as many holidays as it could find occasion for, observed the holiday on the following Monday, rather than be satisfied with a mere extra half-day on the Saturday. New Plymouth of 1881 could still be described as a quaint little place, with a primitive old-world atmosphere.¹ On Monday, 3 January 1881, after an early morning rush, it had a more sleepy and slow-moving appearance than usual. A large proportion

1. ESW. Isitt, New Zealand: as it was in 1870, as it is in 1880, London, 1880, p. 21.

of the population had left the township to take advantage of a fine summer's holiday. The principal attraction was the Waitara Jockey Club's race meeting. In addition to the regular trains, two excursion trains ran from New Plymouth to Waitara, and a train left Ngaere terminus at 7.14 a.m., for the benefit of settlers from South Taranaki and the bush settlements.² The Taranaki Herald of 4 January 1881 reported that the excursion trains were crammed, and the road 'lined with horsemen, carriages and vehicles of every description'. With the aid of visitors from as far away as Hawera, the crowd grew to about 1000, and the races were reported a great success. No doubt this included the majority of North Taranaki's 'men of the world', but for that considerable part of the population who did not qualify for this title, other arrangements had been made. In the beautiful bush scenery at the Meeting of the Waters (where the Mangorei River joined the Waiwakaiho, about four miles from town), numerous picnics were held. These would have been organised mainly by church and Sunday school groups. Doubtless a considerable number of bush settlers would have come down to join the crowds both at Waitara and at the Meeting of the Waters.

South Taranaki, in keeping with its much larger Scottish element observed New Year's Day on the Saturday, with Caledonian sports. Here, too, there were two main venues, but the

2. TH, 4 January 1881, p. 3 (advt.).

division may be accounted for by the rivalry of Hawera and Patea, both of which staged their own Caledonian games.³ Both claimed attendances of about 1000, but the figures may well have been inflated a little in the interests of local patriotism. The district had only a little over half the population of the New Plymouth settlement, and there was no railway to move the population in large numbers, so that it seems surprising that it could simultaneously stage two gatherings rivalling the Waitara races. Still, the games would have been acceptable to most of the 'godly' as well as those otherwise inclined, and the Patea County was well supplied with saddle horses for moving its population.⁴ Both the southern townships seem to have been well pleased with their day's sports. On the Monday most of the South Taranaki settlers seem to have returned to the more serious matters of life, although the Patea Presbyterian Sunday School staged a picnic with sports and games, on the local recreation ground, followed by a tea on the church section. The newspaper reporter commented that it was 'a pleasing feature to see the different religious sects meeting and mingling at these social gatherings'.⁵ Again, as in North Taranaki, these activities must have attracted many settlers from the bush districts.

3. Patea Mail, 4 January 1881.

4. Census, 1881, p. 292, shows 4,389 horses for Patea County's 5,789 people. Taranaki County had only 3,108 for its population of 10,130, and a larger proportion of these would have been draught horses than in the Patea.

5. Patea Mail, 4 January 1881.

Further south, at Waverley, which the railway from Wanganui had not yet quite reached, a picnic attended by both townspeople and settlers was held on the beach on New Year's Day.⁶ About 30 came on horseback, and there was a good array of buggies, spring carts and drays. The occasion was described as 'like a large family gathering'. Another, less well attended, picnic was held on the Monday.⁷ A summer picnic at the beach quite understandably became a popular outing for those Bush settlers living within easy reach of the sea.⁸ The ocean's broad horizons must have been very refreshing after months in the narrow vistas of the bush.

The settlers of the Wanganui-Rangitikei-Manawatu region had a variety of choices for their New Year recreation. At Bulls the Marton-Rangitikei Jockey Club completed its two-day race meeting begun on the Friday. As a result of being bypassed by the railway, Bulls was beginning to languish as a township, and must have been considerably cheered to have 'at least 1,000 persons' converge on its race course on New Year's Day.⁹ In Wanganui the local Rifle Volunteer Corps staged a 'Grand Picnic and Fete' on the Racecourse Reserve, in aid of funds for its band. The attractions included

6. ibid.

7. ibid., 6 January 1881.

8. See e.g. Egmont Star, 17 January 1885, p. 11. The Star's Kaupokonui correspondent enthuses on 'The sea! The sea! The blue, eternal health-giving sea!'

9. Y, 8 January 1881, p.2.

athletic sports, contributions by two local bands, and a special programme for the children.¹⁰ Sports were also held up the river at Upokongaro, to which the screw steamer Waitara made two crowded trips, while other holiday-makers proceeded there by road.¹¹ Meanwhile the Wanganui Presbyterian Sunday Schools travelled by special train to Matarawa for their annual picnic.¹² The Bulls Presbyterian Sunday School held its annual picnic in a paddock on the banks of the Tutaenui, as a counter-attraction to the race meeting. The general public were invited to join, and the attendance was about 200.¹³ In Marton the Wesleyan Sunday School held its annual picnic in a local paddock,¹⁴ and their Palmerston North brethren did likewise.¹⁵ In Mr Marsh's paddock at Terrace End there was a specially constructed merry-go-round for the little ones, a miniature athletic sports for the school children, and cricket for the adults. The day concluded with a tea and the presentation of prizes by the mayor.

In the Seventy Mile Bush the big event of the holiday season had been an excursion train on Christmas Day 1880, which had brought visitors from Napier and Hastings for picnics in the bush near Ormondville and Makotuku. Ormondville's first social gathering since the forming of the settlement

10. ibid.

11. Wanganui Chronicle, 4 January 1881.

12. Y, 8 January 1881.

13. Wanganui Chronicle, 5 January 1881.

14. Rangitikei Advocate, 4 January 1881.

15. Manawatu Times, 5 January 1881.

was a well-attended Methodist tea meeting held on 31 December 1880. The programme included 'some excellent singing' and speeches by 'the Rev. Messrs Worboys and Neilsen and several other gentlemen'.¹⁶ The majority of those present waited to see the new year in. New Year's Day saw Caledonian Sports on the Waipukurau Cricket Ground.¹⁷ A good number of the visitors arrived by train from Napier, so this would have been an occasion when town, country and bush effectively met.

Several features of these New Year activities call for brief comment. One is the extent to which the recreation of a considerable section of the community depended on initiatives and organisation provided by the churches. For many settlers the greater part of social life appears to have been church-orientated. There were, though, various simple recreations in which the greater part of the community were prepared to join whether sponsored by churches or secular organisations. A picnic, excursion or athletic sports meeting could gain the support of most members of a settlement. Even so, in the more populous districts the recreations available on a public holiday effected a rough division of the community into the 'godly' and the rest. Recreations provided by the main denominations were, however, made widely available to the community, and must have assisted in breaking

16. Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, 7 January 1881, p. 3.

17. Ibid., p. 8.

down many prejudices brought from the old world. Another noteworthy feature is the recreational use of the railways. English social historians have noted a 'recreational revolution' taking place during the nineteenth century, as a result of steam transportation.¹⁸ Beginning with steamboat excursions along populous banks of estuaries and navigable rivers, well established by the 1840s, it was thereafter extended throughout the country and speeded up by the advent of the railways. The special excursion trains run for the Great Exhibition of 1851 are taken as marking the arrival of the railway in its recreational capacity. Clearly, the railway excursion was exercising the same fascination of novelty in the New Zealand of 1881. Our brief New Year week-end survey has highlighted the excursion picnic and the specials run for Caledonian sports and horse races. It would be possible, had we the space, to draw from the ensuing months to illustrate the impact of the railway on such diverse activities as football and cricket fixtures, Agricultural and Pastoral Shows, and the Volunteer movement. Thanks to the ample transportation capacity of the railway, the isolated lives of the majority of the Bush settlers were punctuated from time to time by a long day of travel, and the excitement of public occasions involving large crowds. H.P. Mortensen

18. See e.g. Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain, London, 1971, pp. 201-2.

records how the Norsewood settlers would get up very early in the morning and walk six miles through the bush track to catch the train, once the line reached Kopua on the edge of the Bush.¹⁹

In Chapter 2 we saw how defence considerations led to the planning of a great crescent of railways and roads sweeping down the West Coast from New Plymouth to Wanganui and on through the Manawatu Gorge to reach the East Coast at Napier. These communication lines, substantially completed by 1881, were of course having a marked effect on the economic life of the Bush Provinces, as well as on their recreations. We have already studied the rise of the timber industry in the Rangitikei-Manawatu, Taranaki, and the Hawke's Bay Seventy Mile Bush, made possible by the opening of the railways. The timber and firewood harvested from the Great Bush was providing over half of the freight carried by the railways of the Bush Provinces. In the twelve months ending 31 March 1882 they carried 59,499 tons of timber and 30,245 tons of firewood, making up together 58.88 percent of the total freight tonnage carried. The development of communications had made it possible for the Bush to supply almost all the timber needs of these three provinces, as well as providing a substantial

19. 'Reminiscences of the Early Pioneers in Norsewood',
p. 11.

surplus for export from the ports of Wanganui, Foxton and Napier. By the autumn of 1881 the rolling stock available on the Hawke's Bay line was failing to cope with the timber trade of the Seventy Mile Bush and the Makotuku and Kopua stations were reported to be crowded with posts, logs and sawn timber.²⁰ On the West Coast, the opening of the line to Waverley in March 1881 led to the development of a brisk timber trade from the Rangitikei-Manawatu sawmills, to meet the demand created by the occupation of the Waimate Plains, and the expansion of settlement in the Patea district. Drays carried the timber north from the Waverley terminus.²¹ Over the winter they quickly cut the road into 'a fearful state', and there were vehement complaints from other traffic.²²

Large numbers of livestock were also being moved; sheep going by both road and rail, cattle mainly by road. The Bush settlements as yet grazed few sheep, but large mobs were being taken through the Bush districts. The main flow was from the Hawke's Bay sheep runs to the West Coast, to meet the demand created by the extension of settlement, and by the export of fat stock to Wellington and the South Island. The occupation of the Waimate Plains created a particularly strong demand in 1881. The Woodville correspondent of the Hawke's Bay Herald reported a mob of about 3,000 sheep passing

20. Y, 23 April 1881, p. 11, reprinting from Napier Daily Telegraph.

21. Y, 7 May 1881, p. 12.

22. Y, 30 July 1881, p. 13; 6 August 1881, p. 3.

through Woodville on 17 January 1881, making a total of about 60,000 already that season.²³ A practice had developed of railing sheep bound for the Patea, from the Manawatu-Rangitikei area to the railway terminus north of Wanganui. Thus J.SS Caverhill, one of the largest Patea landowners, had 3,000 sheep railed from Rangitikei to the Kai Iwi terminus in April 1880,²⁴ and in April 1881 he had 6,000 sheep brought from Hawke's Bay, and railed from Palmerston North to Waverley.²⁵ On 3 May 1881 the Patea correspondent of the Yeoman²⁶ reported 7,000 sheep and 1,200 head of cattle disposed of at stock sales in the township over the previous week, many of them sent from south of Wanganui. The annual sheep returns show the Hawera County flocks growing by 5,400 to 20,301 in the year to 31 May 1881. Patea County flocks grew by nearly 4,000 to 73,448, over the same period. Over the following year (to 31 May 1882), the flocks of Hawera County added a further 16,266, and those of Patea County 5,738. The Yeoman of 13 October 1882 remarked that the West Coast (of the North Island) seemed to have become the most important outlet for the surplus stock of the sheep kings of Napier. The stocking of the Waimate Plains was of course an exceptional event,

23. Reprinted in Y, 29 January 1881, p. 3. The 60,000 total is hard to credit. It may be a misprint.

24. Y, 1 May 1880, p. 11.

25. Y, 9 April 1881, p. 11.

26. 7 May 1881, p. 12.

but the movement of store sheep through the Gorge to the West Coast for fattening, and then south to the Wellington meat market was a regular trade. In March 1880 James Gear told the Public Works Commission that he had shipped 10,000 sheep from Wanganui and Foxton to Wellington over the previous five months.²⁷ Other Wellington butchers would have been following the same practice. The earlier export of stock to the meat markets of the West Coast of the South Island must also have been continued. Sheep were also being brought to Wellington by rail from the Wairarapa.²⁸ The railway returns show that the Wairarapa line carried 46,802 sheep and pigs in the year ending 31 March 1882.²⁹

The cattle trade followed a somewhat similar pattern to the trade in sheep. Store stock from the East Coast were driven through the Manawatu Gorge for fattening on the West Coast pastures, and then sent to the meat markets. In this case, however, the Bush settlers were directly involved both in raising store cattle, and in fattening them for the butchers. The droving of Hawke's Bay store cattle through the Bush to the West Coast began at least as early as 1872.³⁰ A few years later cattle began to be drawn from the Wairarapa also. A mob of about 350 was reported leaving Masterton for the

27. AJHR 1880, E-3, p. 17.

28. ibid.

29. AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 84.

30. Y, 6 July 1872, p. 3.

Patea district in December 1876.³¹ James Gear told the Public Works Commission in March 1880 that the purchasing of store cattle on the East Coast for fattening on the West Coast had been going on as a regular trade 'during the last four or five years'.³² This would put the beginning of a substantial trade in 1875-6, which suggests that it represented a response to the rapid build-up in population brought about by the immigration drive. The fattening of beef cattle was carried on along the whole of the West Coast from New Plymouth to Wellington, and the evidence suggests that the bush clearings played a significant part. If we accept a 'livestock unit' approach in which cattle figures are multiplied by seven for comparison with sheep figures, the 1881 Census shows cattle predominating in all the West Coast counties except Rangitikei.³³ Taranaki County had 150,325 livestock units of cattle to 14,368 sheep. Patea had the highest cattle numbers - 294,721 livestock units to 91,503 sheep. For Wanganui the figures were nearly in balance - 211,708 livestock units of cattle to 194,771 sheep. In Rangitikei sheep numbers at 182,217 showed a clear predominance over cattle with 131,859 livestock units. Manawatu County, with its much more extensive bush settlements, had

31. NZM, 23 December 1876, p. 21.

32. AJHR 1880, E-3, p. 17.

33. Census, 1881, p. 292.

193,095 livestock units of cattle to 137,226 sheep. Taking the west coast as a whole, cattle appear to have surpassed sheep in importance by 1881. Only in North Taranaki were milch cows kept to meet other than local needs, and even in North Taranaki beef cattle were much the more important.³⁴

The movement of beef cattle, both to the fattening pastures and to market, followed a rather different pattern to that of the sheep trade. As cattle could be much more easily driven, very few of them were moved by train. In the year ending 31 March 1882 the Bush Province railways carried 66,415 sheep and pigs, but only 1,058 cattle.³⁵ Also, cattle were in general driven to the Wellington meat market from the West Coast, not shipped as were the sheep. James Gear told the Public Works Commission in 1880 that he was bringing 250 head of fat cattle a month from the west coast for the Wellington trade, and other butchers were bringing a further 150 a month.³⁶ This represents a total of nearly 5,000 a year. Gear told the Commission that if there were a railway line from the Manawatu to Wellington, he would much prefer to rail these cattle down. The trip down from Foxton to Wellington involved seven days' driving over a very bad road, along which there was no accommodation for

34. ibid. shows only 6,967 breeding cows among Taranaki County's 21,475 cattle.

35. AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 84.

36. AJHR 1880, E-3, p. 17.

the stock. He had known them lose nearly a hundredweight in flesh on the trip in winter weather.³⁷ It is not surprising that he was a strong advocate of the Wellington-Manawatu line. Wellington was not the only market for beef cattle however. Some were probably being shipped to the South Island, and a regular trade was certainly being carried on by sea from Waitara to Auckland. Thus, in November 1880 the Yeoman³⁸ reported a fine mob of fat cattle being driven from Waverley to Waitara for shipment to Auckland. A newspaper report of February 1881 mentions that cattle-drovers were disappointed that a liquor licence had not been granted to the Mangawhero Bridge accommodation house, on the Mountain Road.³⁹ It is clear that in 1881 there was a buoyant market for cattle, arising from the demands of the Auckland and Wellington markets, and from the need to stock new country both on the Waimate Plains and in the bush clearings. But cattle numbers were growing much more rapidly than the colonial demand could be expected to. Once the Waimate Plains became exporters of stock rather than importers, the situation could be expected to change for the worse very quickly. It was this prospect that was already providing the incentive to plan for the export of refrigerated meat, the building of

37. ibid.

38. 20 November 1880, p. 8.

39. Hawera Star, 23 February 1881. In 1881 exports from the port of Waitara included 2,657 cattle, 11,546 sheep, 358 horses and 332 pigs. See Y, 12 May 1882, p. 2.

the Wellington-Manawatu line to provide transport for this new trade, and a shift to dairying, also for exports in refrigerated ships, by some of the cattle farmers.

Our survey of the economic implications of the new over-land communication routes formed in the 1870s has concentrated on the timber industry which dominated the first stage of the colonisation of the Bush, and on the livestock of the pastoral industry which by 1881 was beginning to establish a fairly clear claim on the future of the Bush settlements. We have shown that the new Bush settlements, the somewhat older open country farming districts, and the neighbouring seaports, were being welded into an interdependent economy by these land routes. As yet, however, the Bush had no firm land links to a metropolis. Rather, it had developed economic links of some importance with several major centres by way of coastal shipping. The fuller details of this trade we must leave for the economic historian to unravel, but a brief survey of the general position is relevant. The situation we have outlined led to the development of trading rivalry both between the coastal ports serving the expanding bush districts, and between the merchants of the main outside centres which traded with the region. A rivalry between New Plymouth and Wanganui for predominance in South Taranaki will be illustrated by an incident to be recounted later in this chapter.

A continuing rivalry existed between Napier and Wanganui for the trade of the sheep stations of the southern reaches of the Volcanic Plateau. In the spring of 1882 the Wanganui County Council awoke to the fact that the Hawke's Bay County Council had been quietly pushing on with a cart road that promised to give them control of the region. More than 60 miles had been formed in the previous two years.⁴⁰ Runholders on the western side of the plateau, which Wanganui merchants had looked upon as secure Wanganui territory, began packing wool across to the end of the new road, to be carted to Napier. Apparently all that was left for Wanganui was the supplying of the necessary pack horses.⁴¹ Rivalries of a more local nature had developed between Wanganui and Foxton for the Manawatu trade, and between New Plymouth and Waitara for the coastal trade from North Taranaki. As regards the overseas trade of the Bush Provinces, the Wellington merchants felt that it fell as of right into their sphere. However, the major developments of the 1870s had taken place west of the ranges, in districts with which Wellington was connected neither by rail nor by a worthwhile road. As long as the trade depended on coastal shipping, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin provided Wellington with strong rivalry. In July 1879 the New Zealand Mail drew the attention of

40. Y, 15 September 1882, p. 12.

41. Y, 20 October 1882, p. 9; 5 January 1883, p. 5.

Wellington merchants to the opening of a direct steam service

to a closer look at the progress of the various Bush districts. Beginning with North Taranaki, we will follow the great strategic communication route, dealing with each of the main bush settlement districts in turn, taking particular note of the state of their agriculture over the 1880-81 farming season, and recording any significant local events of these months. An interesting account of the North Taranaki bush settlements is given by a travelling reporter of the New Zealand Mail who visited Taranaki in the spring of 1880.⁴⁴ His overall impression of the New Plymouth settlement was that it was still depressed by its isolation and the continuing native threat. The district was 'in a state of transition, but transition of the slowest', and it was likely to continue to 'vegetate' until the railway reached Patea. He travelled south by train to the Ngaere terminus, and found the bush settlements on the way to be straggling affairs, with primitive habitations, the clearings covered with unsightly stumps, and little evidence of vigorous improvements in progress. The few small towns, however, 'wore an air of average bush sprightliness', and he was assured that there were 'plenty of clearings further back'. He saw many bush roads said to lead to these more developed clearings, and also 'a fair number of people evidently of backwood type'. He was told that a good deal of land

44. NZM, 23 October 1880, p. 17; 30 October 1880, p. 17.

facing the railway and road was in the hands of speculators, who had bought when high prices were ruling and were now stuck with their doubtful bargains. The District Engineer was travelling on the same train, and throughout the journey numerous applications were made to him for 'something to do'. He invariably replied by advising the bush settlers to turn to their land and 'take it out in produce'.

The Mail's correspondent was not impressed with the Taranaki railway. It was apparently a ramshackle affair due to New Plymouth being expected 'to expend the odds and ends of colonial rolling stock'. The Taranaki Herald of this period has a number of reports of exasperating breakdowns and delays resulting from the rickety condition of the rolling stock. Thus, one Saturday in November 1880 the 4.40 p.m. train from New Plymouth, carrying 200 country and bush settlers homeward bound from the weekly market, broke down a few miles from town. As a result, settlers who were expecting to get home in daylight to do their milking and other farm work, did not reach their stations till a late hour and had to grope their way homeward in the dark along bad roads.⁴⁵ In January 1881 the Taranaki Herald's Inglewood correspondent supplied a report of a conversation alleged to have taken place between a tourist and a local inhabitant. The two

45. NZM, 4 December 1880, quoting Taranaki Herald

were seated in a railway carriage at Sentry Hill station when the tourist observed with some consternation that the engine was leaving without them. The local explained that she was taking part of the train on to Waitara, and would perhaps be back sometime to take the rest of the train to Inglewood. When the tourist enquired how soon, the local explained that it could be quite some time, if ever, as 'she blew all her rags out just now'. He had then to explain how the locomotive was kept in operation by stuffing all her cracks with rags. The tourist, who had barely recovered from landing at New Plymouth by surf boat, had a further shock when the local put up his umbrella inside the carriage. He had noticed a rain storm approaching and had no faith in the carriage roof.⁴⁶

While visitors to the New Plymouth settlement may have found it backward and primitive in various ways, the local settlers could point to solid evidence of progress, and developments which held promise for the future. The 1881 census showed their population to have more than doubled in ten years. The railway was advancing steadily towards Hawera, and on 7 February 1881 the foundation stone of the New Plymouth breakwater was laid. The prospect of the breaking the settlement's isolation, together with the growing

46. TH, 11 January 1881.

population, held promise of an early settlement of the 'native difficulty'. Meanwhile there was considerable discussion as to wherein lay the best prospects for the district's farming industry. The mixed farming traditions of England still had firm hold on most of the settlers, and few can have foreseen the shift to an almost completely pastoral approach which was to be made over the ensuing decades. The annual agricultural statistics show that wheat production had been increased markedly in the later 1870s, and at the beginning of the new decade as much was being produced per head of population as a decade earlier. In the bush settlements land clearance was now reaching the stage where a considerable amount of cropping would be possible. In the face of poor prices for cocksfoot and butter in the 1880-81 season, some bush settlers were beginning to consider grain and root crops for the future.⁴⁷ The province had six water-driven flour-mills at which the farmer could get his wheat ground.⁴⁸ A comparison of the livestock returns of the 1871 and 1881 censuses shows some interesting trends.⁴⁹ Sheep numbers had declined somewhat, but cattle had increased five-fold to 21,475. Cattle, of course, played an important part in the

47. TH, 15 March 1881. (Inglewood correspondent).

48. Census, 1881, p. 301.

49. Census, 1871, Table 25; Census, 1881, p. 292.

breaking in of bush clearings, and much of the increase must have resulted from the stocking of the new bush districts. But not all the bush settlers saw cattle as the best long-term prospect in 1880-81. The sheep returns show two Inglewood farmers with flocks of 25 sheep each at 31 May 1881, and by 31 May 1882 there were seven flocks at Inglewood, totalling 459 sheep, and two flocks at Midhirst with a further 103 sheep.⁵⁰ The more discerning, however, were beginning to see that the future lay in dairying. A strong lead was given by W.K. Hulke, who supplied a flow of letters and articles on the subject to the Taranaki Herald. In the issue of 26 April 1880 he advocated that Taranaki's smallholders follow the American example and set up co-operative cheese and butter factories. Over the following eighteen months he gave the paper's readers the benefit of his wide reading on the world dairy industry, and analysed the defects of the industry as it was being conducted in North Taranaki. He pointed out that butter exports already brought the settlement some £17,000 per annum, which was more than any other export.⁵¹ The bulk of this butter was going to Auckland, the rest to Wellington and the West Coast, and from each of these places came frequent complaints of great unevenness in quality.⁵² The reason lay in the way

50. AJHR 1883, H-19, pp. 24-5.

51. TH, 29 December 1880.

52. TH, 4 March 1881.

the local industry was conducted. Each week in the season settlers brought in about three tons of fresh butter to New Plymouth, and bartered it for supplies from the storekeepers, who then rewashed, packed, and exported it. About the same quantity was salted and kegged by farmers and held to be sold the following winter.⁵³ As a preliminary reform, Hulke urged the abandoning of the truck system, and the establishment of an open market. In the longer term he saw factory production as the hope of the future. Of Hulke's many services to Taranaki dairying, one is worthy of special note. In 1876 he introduced the first Jersey cow into the province. She was 'Jenny', whom he purchased from Mrs A.W.F. Halcombe at Marton, and led on foot the 130 miles to his farm at Bell Block.⁵⁴

A description of Inglewood, some seven years from the carving of the first clearing in the bush, must complete our survey of the North Taranaki bush settlements. The township had been well placed to provide a centre for the earlier settled bush districts, and had become quite a thriving local centre. The timber industry had, of course, made an important contribution to its progress. In the building originally erected as a government store, a fine library and free reading room had been developed, probably due to Colonel

53. TH, 29 December 1880.

54. H.G. Philpott, A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry 1840-1935, Wellington, 1937, p.24.

Trimble's influence. As early as 26 January 1876 the Taranaki Herald reported that the reading room had a good supply of English and Colonial newspapers. In the winter of 1881 the Herald's local correspondent drew attention to the quality of the library's stock. The authors he listed included a good range of literary classics, from Homer and Shakespeare to George Eliot and Trollope, as well as scientific writers such as Lyell and Darwin.⁵⁵ By March 1883 the library was reported to consist of about 1,000 volumes.⁵⁶ It is unlikely that any other Bush township of the period had anything that could compare with this. Besides housing the library, the old government store at Inglewood had been extended and improved to serve as the local town hall. Here, on the evening of 11 May 1881, another important development in the district's intellectual history took place - the founding of the Moa Farmers' Club.⁵⁷ Under the patronage of Major Atkinson and Colonel Trimble, and the direction of an enterprising committee, the club grew and flourished. Its central activity was the conducting of monthly meetings at which papers on practical farming subjects were read and discussed. At the initial meeting there was some discussion of co-operative butter and cheese-making. Over the next year or two a wide

55. TH, 16 August 1881.

56. Y, 23 March 1883, p. 8.

57. TH, 23 May 1881; 13 June 1881.

range of subjects was studied, including bush-felling, linseed growing, the types of farm implements suited to bush farming, the hedge plant best suited to the district, 'Ayrshire versus shorthorn cattle', co-operation, and cheese factories.⁵⁸

This sharing of information and experience must have been invaluable to many a bush settler as he shaped his clearings into a farm. Not all the industrial initiatives of the Inglewood district over this period were so praiseworthy. In January 1881 the police uncovered an elaborate illicit still which had been operating in dense bush near Inglewood.⁵⁹ The bush provided excellent cover for such operations, and illicit stills operated in many Bush districts over this period, apparently with a considerable measure of public sympathy and support.⁶⁰ Inglewood expected further excitement on the 23 February 1881, at their anniversary sports, now held a month later than the true anniversary so as not to interfere with the cocksfoot harvest. The highlight of the day was to be a Great Boar Hunt, using a reputedly ferocious animal captured in the bush near Stratford. The boar, however, merely sulked at his tormentors, and the event was a decided

58. Y, 30 March 1883, p. 3.

59. Y, 22 January 1881, p. 12; TH, 25 & 26 January 1881.

60. See e.g. Howitt, Pioneer Looks Back, p. 29 (Taranaki Ranges); Y, 10 October 1874, p. 7 (near Palmerston North); Y, 22 February 1879, p. 4 (Karere); Y, 30 July 1881, p. 7 (near Carterton); Y, 8 December 1882, p. 2 (Pahautahanui); Y, 23 March 1883, p. 10 (near Bunnythorpe); Y, 13 February 1885, p. 2 (near Hawera).

anti-climax.⁶¹

Between the Moa Block and Normanby, the bush settlers of Waipuku, Midhirst, Stratford and Ngaere were still in the first stages of farm development. The most extensive settlement was at Ngaere, where the original settlers were now in their second season. What kind of farming did they have in mind, as they prepared for their second bush burns? They were too far from the markets to make a weekly trip in with dairy produce. Cocksfoot seed and beef cattle were doubtless their immediate hopes as sources of cash, but a number of them must already have been planning to make fruit their main cash crop. By 1883 the district was noted for its orchards, and the Yeoman's agricultural reporter saw a 'preserved fruit factory' as the next desirable development.⁶² Walnuts, Spanish chestnuts and hops had also been planted. Meanwhile that common adjunct of subsistence farming, a flourmill, had been erected at Hawera in time to grind the South Taranaki wheat crops of the 1880-81 season.⁶³

At various places between Hawera and Wanganui bush settlers had worked inland from the coastal strip of open country, and by 1881 they had carved considerable areas of

61. TH, 23 & 25 February 1881.

62. Y, 23 March 1883, p. 4. Detailed research would possibly show strong links with Kent.

63. TH, 14 January 1881.

farmland from the forest. The activities of settlers in such side-districts as Whakamara, Hurleyville, Kohi and Moumahaki received little notice from contemporary reporters, but together they represented a considerable incursion on the Bush. In February 1881 a Patea correspondent of the New Zealand Mail⁶⁴ remarked on the 'number and largeness' of the fires discernible over a wide area, and stated that many successful bush burns had been reported. The nine original Whakamara settlers, who had sledged and packed their equipment and supplies in to their sections by the spring of 1878,⁶⁵ must by now have been quite well established, and had doubtless been joined by others. In December 1883 a travelling correspondent of the Yeoman⁶⁶ visited the Alton-Hurleyville district, and remarked that though little had been heard of the doings of these settlers, few bush districts could show more steady progress. He found little homesteads dotted from end to end of Ball Road, which ran for some nine miles inland from the main coast road, to terminate on the Patea River. Progress had been steady and continuous since the mid 1870s, and an 'enormous area' of bush had been felled. Three settlers had by this date cleared as much as 400 acres each. There were some fine gardens and well-stocked

64. NZM, 26 February 1881, p. 16.

65. Patea Mail, 17 August 1878.

66. Y, 14 December 1883, p. 5.

orchards. One man had an acre of hops, another had nine acres in wheat and potatoes. The pastures were stocked with both sheep and cattle. Robert Petch's⁶⁷ neighbours, in fact, seem to have been making a success of their holdings. In March 1880 the Yeoman⁶⁸ reported on the deferred payment settlement of Moumahaki, inland from Waverley. Despite great difficulties, especially with access, they had made good progress. Settlers in all these bush districts would have been aided by the seasonal demand for labour on the adjoining open country farms. In the 1880-81 season there were 91,503 sheep to be shorn in the Patea County,⁶⁹ as well as 1,679 acres of wheat and 1,073 acres of oats to be harvested.⁷⁰

With this steady development of its hinterland, the township of Patea was flourishing. In August 1879 the Yeoman's local correspondent had proudly reported no less than four vessels in the port one Saturday afternoon,⁷¹ and for a time Patea developed quite grandiose ideas about its port's future. The population was also growing. In February 1881 a considerable number of Wanganui folk were reported moving in, and although cottages were being 'erected in all directions', the supply was not equal to the demand.⁷² The Patea correspondent introduced his report with the remark that he

67. See Chapter 10 above.

68. Y, 13 March 1880, p. 13.

69. Census, 1881, p. 292.

70. Statistics of N. Z., 1880, p. 207. (This gives returns collected in April 1881.)

71. Y, 16 August 1879, p. 10.

72. Y, 19 February 1881, p. 8.

had heard that 'there are lots of houses to let just now in Wanganui'. However the census taken a few weeks later showed that Patea had not made any drastic inroads into Wanganui's population. This was returned as 4,646, an increase of almost 1,000 in three years. Wanganui had no need to fear the pretensions of either Patea or Foxton. She continued to serve as the main port and local capital of the expanding settlements to her north and south. Her real rival was Wellington, which was shortly to put a curb on her growth by means of the Wellington-Manawatu railway. Many a settler in from the bush must have seen Wanganui as it was described by a writer in the Otago Witness in 1882.⁷³ He summed up Wanganui in two words 'pony-carriages' and 'dust'. Because of the dust, which arose in clouds whenever a breeze blew over the sandhills surrounding the town, a great many of 'the better class of people' preferred to live out of town. In Wanganui the grass grew so luxuriantly that even a half-acre paddock was sufficient to feed a pony all year round. So a good proportion of the ladies of the town did their calling and shopping in 'slowly crawling baskets' drawn by these quiet animals.

In the Rangitikei the main pioneering work of the Manchester Corporation was nearing completion. The surveying

73. Reprinted in Y, 12 May 1882, p. 11.

of the block was finished in 1881, and in his report for the year to 31 March 1882,⁷⁴ D.H. Macarthur, the New Zealand agent, was able to report that the settlement was thoroughly self-dependent, with no need to rely on the expenditure of government or corporation funds for its prosperity. A certain amount of road work was continuing, to open the remainder of the block for sale. Macarthur reported that owing to the prevailing depression, a sale at which several thousand acres were offered by public auction at Palmerston North in June 1881 had been a failure. Only two sections were sold. A large number of sales made at the earlier auction of March 1879 had been cancelled owing to the hard times. However by early 1882 the prospects were much brighter, and Macarthur had great hopes that the commencement of the Wellington-Manawatu line in a few weeks' time would stimulate land sales.

In April 1881 the Manchester Block was visited by the Duke of Manchester, the Corporation's chairman, whose influence and money had been so important in launching its operations. He visited the South Island before proceeding to the Block,⁷⁵ and his visit to Feilding was a brief and unostentatious affair. There was some talk of putting on a banquet for him, but the idea was abandoned on the excuse of shortness of notice.⁷⁶ The idea of a New Zealand yeoman settlement entertaining a duke was, indeed, somewhat incongruous, and possibly both parties sensed the fact. The Duke came from Wellington

74. Report on the Operations of the Emigrant and Colonists' Aid Corporation in New Zealand, for the year ending 31st March, 1882.

by way of Woodville, accompanied by an appropriate escort, including John Hall, the premier, and Colonel Reader, Under-secretary for Defence.⁷⁷ He reached Feilding by coach at noon on Monday, 26 April, and the Manawatu Times (27 April) remarked that 'there was little or no excitement at his advent, in fact about a score of Maori women appeared to be the only wondering persons'. The squatters' journal, the Rangitikei Advocate (26 April), noted the Duke's graciousness in shaking hands with almost everyone he came in contact with, 'not omitting our dusky friends'. After luncheon at Belvie's Hotel, the party, accompanied by D.H. Macarthur, went for a drive up Makino Road. The Duke left the following morning for Auckland by way of Wanganui and New Plymouth. The local residents were probably more interested in the possibility of railway concessions resulting from the lobbying of the premier by a deputation of local sawmillers on the Monday evening,⁷⁸ than in anything the Duke had done or said.

By 1881 the real pioneer frontier of the Rangitikei-Manawatu had long ceased to be the Manchester Block. It was rather to be found in the swampy bushlands of Kairanga and Rongotea, lying between the Block and the coast, in the Parekaretu Block, higher up the Rangitikei River, and in the

75. Rangitikei Advocate, 23 April 1881.

76. Y, 23 April 1881, p. 12.

77. Rangitikei Advocate, 26 April 1881.

78. Manawatu Times, 27 April 1881.

Kiwitea district, lying beyond the Manchester Block towards the ranges. A few of the impressions recorded by a reporter from the Rangitikei Advocate⁷⁹ on a trip to Kiwitea in January 1881 must complete this brief glance at the Rangitikei-Manawatu bush settlements. He complained that in an extensive experience of roads in all parts of the Australasian colonies he had never met anything approaching the roads between Marton and Cheltenham for 'downright undiluted badness'. With both his horse and himself well covered in mud, he reached Cheltenham 'township', which he considered hardly deserved the name, for though it had a public-house, it lacked the store and blacksmith's shop which, with the hotel, are generally supposed to constitute a bush township. He found that there was quite a good store a little further out, but that to get their horses shod, or any other smith's work done, the settlers had to go to Feilding or Marton. The reporter left Cheltenham and the Manchester Block, making his way up Kimbolton Road to the estate of the Hon. John Bryce and his brother Frederick. On the seven mile journey he passed several comfortable homesteads and a few bush huts. Much of the land was in the hands of absentee speculators, who had done little in the way of improvements, but the bona fide settlers were

79. 20 January 1881.

rapidly clearing their sections. After spending the night with Frederick Bryce, he explored the settlement further out, under the guidance of Robert McBeth, a neighbouring settler. He found the upper end of Kimbolton Road in a very rough state, and for the last two and a half miles it was completely covered with a forest of Scotch thistle about eight feet high. Side roads were also thick with thistles. On one bush clearing he visited a fine little brewery. The settler grew his own barley, made his own malt, and brewed beer and porter. He was having difficulty in disposing of it because of the state of the roads. Robert McBeth, with whom the reporter spent the second night, had had to pack all his provisions in up to this time, and a neighbour had had to get his wool out on a sledge, a bale at a time.

Through the ranges in the Seventy Mile Bush, the depression which we noted earlier⁸⁰ continued into 1881. Late in April 1881 Ormond visited the Scandinavian bush settlements and found many of the settlers in great distress.⁸¹ Apparently these settlers were practising the timber skills brought from their homeland, on a small scale on their sections, as Ormond reported that they were unable to get their timber to market owing to the scarcity of railway trucks, and in any

80. Chapter 9 above.

81. Y, 7 May 1881, p. 55.

case the freight charges were so high that they absorbed nearly all the profit. The government purchase of hand-hewn sleepers had fallen away. The returns show 6,465 purchased in 1880, but none in 1881.⁸² In August 1882 the member of parliament for Waipawa, W.C. Smith, appeared before the Waste Lands Committee of the House in support of a petition from some Ormondville settlers who wished to be allowed to take up a second section of land on deferred payment. Smith explained that their first sections were small, ranging from 40 to 110 acres, and had proved unsuitable for cropping. The settlers kept cows, and went to work in the timber mill to make ends meet. The availability of work in the timber mill placed these settlers in a more fortunate position than many other Seventy Mile Bush settlers. Over the following years, the rise of the timber industry as the railway penetrated deeper into the forest was to alleviate the poverty of these settlers. The aggregating of sections to form economic farm units assisted to the same end.

The interdependence of the Bush settlements and the older open-country districts needs a brief comment to complete this survey. It was mainly a matter of casual labour provided by bush settlers in the busy season, though the supply of posts and palings for fencing, and perhaps other forest products,

82. AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 61; 1882, D-1, p. 33.

was probably significant. The casual nature of these transactions has resulted in few references to them in the records, but the general position can be inferred from an occasional reference and the obvious facts of the circumstances. Thus, the statistics show that in 1881 Hawke's Bay County had 967,818 sheep and Waipawa County 834,494.⁸³ A letter from a Canterbury shearer, published in December 1881 by the Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier,⁸⁴ shows that shearers came from as far away as Canterbury for the Hawke's Bay shearing season. One can therefore infer that any competent shearer in the Seventy Mile Bush could find a few weeks' of sure employment each year on the neighbouring stations. How long it took for a reasonable number of bush settlers to develop the necessary expertise is not, however, easy to assess. That they did so in the course of time is made clear by the following paragraph printed by the Dannevirke Bush Advocate in the spring of 1892:

The shearing season has at length commenced, and bush-fellers and others are furbishing up their saddles preparing for the fray. Horses with or without legs are in demand, and anything that will carry a man and his swag can realise a fair price.⁸⁵

The Rangitikei-Manawatu bush settlers would have had similar opportunities. The two counties possessed nearly a third of a million sheep in 1881, and shearers were reported as scarce in November 1882.⁸⁶ There was also a strong seasonal demand

83. Census, 1881, p. 292.

84. 30 December 1881, p. 8.

85. Reprinted in Hawera Star, 14 October 1892.

86. Y, 24 November 1882. p. 4.

for labour to harvest the large grain crops of this district. From what we know of station life in the Rangitikei and Hawke's Bay, we can infer that many single women from the Bush would have found domestic employment at the homesteads. Support for this inference is provided by a letter from A.F. Halcombe to the Minister for Immigration, dated 16 November 1876.⁸⁷ Halcombe explained that he had found employment as domestics in the neighbouring districts for a considerable number of single young women brought with their families to the Manchester Block. As the Corporation had thereby helped to supply a pressing demand for domestic labour, he requested that these young women might be included in the tally towards the number of immigrants the Corporation had contracted to place on the Block.

Having briefly surveyed conditions in each of the main Bush settlement districts up to the winter of 1881, we must now turn to the following spring to examine some aspects of two important public events, Bryce's march on Parihaka on 5 November 1881, and the general election of 9 December 1881. In both these events we shall see significant outcomes of the communications and settlement policies inaugurated by the Fox ministry of 1869-72. Events at Parihaka demonstrated the effectiveness of these policies in a final and convincing way, while the general election of the following month showed that

87. MS In 6/4/1 - 76/1453, National Archives, Wellington.

the policies had political and social consequences which their initiators may in a measure have foreseen, but certainly had not desired.

Te Whiti's campaign of passive resistance was at once a protest against the settlers' misuse of their power, and an admission that they had in fact become too powerful to be offered a more direct challenge. The rights and wrongs of the Parihaka affair, and the development of the crisis, lie outside the purpose of this study. What we must concern ourselves with however, are the effects of the crisis on the Taranaki bush settlements. We have already noted⁸⁸ that the Hall government moved to quicken the pace of road and railway building and land settlement in Taranaki in 1879-80, as a counter to Te Whiti. We must now look more closely at the strategy of these moves. While the question of forcing a show-down with Te Whiti was a subject of debate within the ministry until October 1881, the evidence clearly indicates that from early in 1880 strategic roads and railways were pushed ahead in Taranaki, to give the European forces the maximum advantage should matters come to the issue. John Blackett's annual report on work on North Island roads up to 31 March 1880 shows only trivial progress in Taranaki.⁸⁹ A cart-bridge had been completed on a side road near Waipuku,

88. Chapter 9 above.

89. AJHR 1880, E-1, p. 44.

and a contract had been let for 106 odd chains of gravelling on the Mountain Road near Midhirst. The report, however, is unusual in having a postscript on 'Roads on Waimate Plains and Adjoining Districts',⁹⁰ bringing the report for this district up to 10 May 1880, and showing that important new works had been suddenly initiated. From the borders of European settlement on the Waingongoro in the south, and the Stony River in the north, vigorous work had begun in upgrading the coastal road constructed in the early 1870s. Even more significant was the commencement of work on a direct line of communication from Stratford to Opunake. The bush had already been underscrubbed 2 chains wide, and a 16 foot track cleared in the centre, for a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Stratford. A survey line had been cut for another $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and survey and clearing were about to begin from the Opunake end. This line lay almost entirely through bush, and it was not needed at the time for land settlement. It was clearly being constructed for strategic reasons. The new government must have been reaching some firm decisions about Taranaki by late February 1880, as on 25 February it began selecting men from among the unemployed in Wellington to be forwarded to the Waimate Plains for roadmaking.⁹¹ W.H. Skinner records that on 8 April 1880

90. *ibid.*, p. 45.

91. NZM, 28 February 1880, p. 15. (This report states that 150 were to be sent, and that 78 had been engaged. NZM, 6 March 1880, p. 15, gives the number to be sent as 50.)

he received instructions that he and H.M. Skeet were to recommence the survey of the Waimate Plains.⁹² The evidence suggests that in reaching a decision to occupy the plains, the government had worked out a military strategy to cope with any clash which might result.

The Wanganui-New Plymouth railway appears to have been an important element in the government's strategic plan. In December 1879 the Yeoman reported that Atkinson had promised that the railway from Waitara to Hawera would be running by mid-winter.⁹³ It congratulated the Defence Department on the expedition with which the work was being prosecuted, but suggested that the Wanganui to Patea stretch, which was receiving less attention, was of far more importance from a defence point of view. The Hall government's decision to give priority to the Taranaki line appears clearly in the figures for expenditure on railway construction over this period. Under the Grey ministry's administration, more money was spent on the Wellington-Napier line than on the Foxton-New Plymouth line, in each of the two years to 31 March 1880.⁹⁴ In the 1880-81 year the Hall government reduced expenditure on the Wellington-Napier line to £85,395, but increased expenditure on the Foxton-New Plymouth line to £134,612.⁹⁵ In the 1881-82

92. Skinner, Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor, p. 43.

93. Y, 27 December 1879, p. 13.

94. AJHR 1879, B-1, p. 44; AJHR 1880, B-1, p. 54. (Total for the 2 years: Wellington-Napier, £262,980; Foxton-New Plymouth, £227,720.)

95. AJHR 1881, B-1, p. 58.

year the Foxton-New Plymouth line received £76,440, which was well over twice as much as its East Coast rival and represented 16.58 percent of the colony's much reduced expenditure on railway construction. The operation of the line no longer depended on the skill of the engineers in packing old engines with rags. By March 1881 two new locomotives and a further second-hand one had been added to the rolling-stock.⁹⁶

Atkinson had been too sanguine if he was correctly reported in promising that the railway south to Hawera would be running by mid-winter 1880. A first passenger train was run over the unfinished line on 1 August 1881, to coincide with a government land sale in Hawera. It brought about 250 people in ten carriages, and Hawera was 'full of people from New Plymouth' for the day.⁹⁷ The official opening of the line took place on 20 October 1881. At New Plymouth a public holiday was proclaimed to mark this convincing breaking of the settlement's isolation. Some 600 North Taranaki people crowded the three excursion trains which ran to Hawera for the occasion. A reporter for the Patea Mail⁹⁸ described the arrival of the first train at Hawera station shortly after 11 a.m. It brought over 250 persons, who were crowded into the carriages, packed onto the platforms outside them, and huddled into well-filled open trucks. They presented a begrimed appearance,

96. AJHR 1881, D-1, p. 27.

97. Hawera Star, 3 August 1881; Y, 6 August 1881, p. 10.

98. 21 October 1881.

the smoke from the engine and the dust from the wayside having found a resting place on their perspiring faces. If the visitors expected a rousing welcome in South Taranaki, they were to be sadly disappointed. The arrival of the train at Normanby was treated 'with perfect indifference', and at Hawera no preparations had been made to receive the first train, there was no official reception, no bunting was displayed, and not even a cheer was attempted. Hawera, in fact, wore an almost desolate appearance, as many of its citizens had gone to the annual Agricultural and Pastoral Show at Wanganui,⁹⁹ which was reported as the most successful ever held.¹⁰⁰ It would be interesting to know whether the clash between these two events arose from sheer ineptitude on the part of the leading citizens of New Plymouth, or whether it represented a deliberate attempt to compete with the rival centre for the attention of the South Taranaki settlers. Whatever the reason, one can sympathise with the North Taranaki visitors as they wandered aimlessly around Hawera, enquiring for non-existent entertainments. They could not even go shopping, as the principalⁿ business places were closed, no doubt to free their owners and staff to go to Wanganui. Banks, however, were open, builders at work, and 'other avocations being followed', showing how little

99. TH, 21 October 1881.

100. Patea Mail, 21 October 1881.

Hawera heeded the day's significance. Fortunately the weather was ideal for picnics and the visitors had brought their own food supplies. The older amongst them could not remember 'such a turn-out of Taranaki people, largely composed of old identities, in one batch so far from home'.¹⁰¹ They went back to New Plymouth much impressed with the size of Hawera. The day had at least demonstrated that the railway could move large bodies of men quickly across the province whenever the occasion required it.

The road work had meanwhile been pushed steadily ahead. By 31 March 1881 the road from Stony River to Pungarehu, which provided the approach to Parihaka from the north, had been put in 'first-rate order for any kind of traffic'.¹⁰² The road across the plains from the Waingongoro to Opunake had been repaired, 8 of its bridges refloored, and 8 further miles gravelled, making nearly 13 miles of gravel in a total length of 22 miles. The 24 mile Stratford-Opunake pack-track through the bush had been completed so far as to make it available for horse traffic in February. It crossed 95 watercourses. Where practicable, fords had been made, and in other places rough bridges and culverts of round timbers and 'pongas'. About 2½ miles of boggy ground had been 'corduroyed'. The work was continued over the winter months of

^{101.} *ibid.*

^{102.} *AJHR* 1881, D-1, p. 35.

1881, and when the government found progress held up by the inability of contractors to find sureties, it adopted a piece-work plan of work, rather than lose time re-advertising for tenders. This led to a question by Ballance in the House, which indicated that the new practice had been adopted in works to upgrade the Stratford-Opunake track, and in making a road from Manaia to Eltham.¹⁰³ Rolleston's reply stressed the value of the works in giving employment to small settlers.

From these works and the subsequent military operations one can deduce the government's view of the nature of the native threat, and the strategy planned to counter it. It seems clear that the government must have feared that the disaffection centred at Parihaka might spread to other parts of the country. The support given by the Waikato tribes to their Taranaki brethren in the 1860s would not be easily forgotten. It was important both to cut off Parihaka from any possible aid from outside Taranaki, and to prevent Te Whiti escaping with his followers into the interior to become a guerilla leader of the Te Kooti type. It was also important that any coup the Maoris might envisage against the Taranaki settlers should be effectively parried. By the spring of 1881 the government was well placed to counter any of these moves. The railway from Waitara to Hawera with its string of well established settlements effectively isolated Te Whiti

¹⁰³. NZPD, Vol. 40, p. 367 (6 September 1881).

in western Taranaki, preventing either reinforcement or escape. The appearance of either of these moves could be effectively met by the rapid reinforcement of any, or all, settlements on the line. Stratford, situated near the hump of the line, and now connected by the new horse track with the port of Opunake, would probably be the first centre of concentration in the event of any such native moves needing to be countered. The most likely area for a local coup would seem to have been the new settlements on the Waimate Plains, which could be easily reached from Parihaka, using the cover of the extensive South Taranaki forests. The construction of the Stratford-Opunake track meant that any war band attempting such a stroke was likely to find its retreat cut off by colonial forces appearing in its rear.

September 1881 saw the final failure of Rolleston's attempt to find a peaceful solution to the Parihaka difficulty, and he had no option but to set in motion the arrangements for a confrontation, and resign the portfolio of Native Affairs in favour of John Bryce, who had stood consistently for a 'thorough' policy throughout. The events of the ensuing weeks will be treated here from the viewpoint of the Taranaki settlers, and their involvement in the strategy evolved by the government. Although he held no portfolio which gave him a direct concern in the affair, Harry Atkinson's personal interest as a Taranaki settler and as the member for Egmont led

him to become deeply involved in arrangements. He had probably had an influential voice in shaping the government's general strategy over the preceding two years. By 24 September 1881 he had made arrangements to ship further arms to Taranaki so that the supply would be sufficient to arm all settlers.¹⁰⁴ Three days later, he was telegraphing Rolleston, concerned at certain arrangements which the latter had made for the command of the Volunteers.¹⁰⁵ South Taranaki was commanded by Major Noake, with his headquarters at Patea, North Taranaki was commanded by Major Stapp. Both men were veterans of the Crimea and of the Maori Wars of the 1860s. What concerned Atkinson was that Rolleston had extended Stapp's command south to include Manaia and Opunake. Atkinson maintained that if difficulties arose at Parihaka, Manaia would have to be supported from Hawera, which clearly indicated that it should fall within Noake's district. Stapp, he contended, would have enough to do looking after North Taranaki, and the line of settlements inland to Stratford. This message from Atkinson annoyed Rolleston. He telegraphed Hall to say that he did not know that Atkinson had been appointed acting defence minister.¹⁰⁶ He explained that he had sent Noake to Hawera to organise a new rifle corps there, and arrange for other material assistance from down the coast in the case of

104. H.A. Atkinson to A. Standish and others, 24 September 1881; Sholefield (ed.) Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 489.

105. ibid., p. 491.

106. Rolleston to Hall, 28 September 1881; ibid., p. 492.

disturbances. Because he thought 'the Plains were of paramount importance where the remnant of Titokowaru's people are and where settlers are scattered' he had arranged for Stapp to make them his concern. He would make the alteration about Stapp at once if Hall wished it, but it would be going against his judgement.

Major Stapp was busy throughout October arranging for the enrolling, arming and training of Volunteer corps in the settlements behind the mountain. On 5 October he visited Stratford and swore in the first 33 volunteers of the Stratford Rangers.¹⁰⁷ In addressing them he laid considerable stress on the need for a strong depot at Stratford in the event of hostilities breaking out. He pointed out that Stratford would be directly in the line of communication between Parihaka and the King Country, 'hence the necessity of preventing intercourse in that direction'. By 12 October Stratford reported 83 Volunteers enrolled.¹⁰⁸ Other units were formed at Waipuku,¹⁰⁹ Egmont Village¹¹⁰ and Ngaere.¹¹¹ At Inglewood the Volunteer corps formed during the earlier scare in 1879 were revived. A difficulty arose here as to whether the German and Polish settlers could be sworn in, as few of them had taken out naturalization papers owing to the expense. In reply to an

¹⁰⁶. Rolleston to Hall, 28 September 1881; ibid., p. 492.

¹⁰⁷. TH, 8 October 1881.

¹⁰⁸. TH, 12 October 1881.

¹⁰⁹. TH, 10 & 15 October 1881.

¹¹⁰. TH, 15 October 1881.

¹¹¹. TH, 1 November 1881.

enquiry from Trimble, Atkinson forwarded a supply of naturalization application forms, and authorised the enrolment of any foreigner who would fill them in, as the government had agreed to pay the fees.¹¹²

In the event, the effectiveness of these widespread preparations was not put to the test. Bryce had decided to force the confrontation on 5 November,¹¹³ no doubt so that if military operations ensued they would be aided by the full moon. A large force of Armed Constabulary reinforced with militia volunteers drawn from as far away as Auckland and Canterbury, had been assembled around Parihaka. On the fine sunny morning of 5 November this army of perhaps 1,600 marched on the doomed village. At its head rode 'honest John' Bryce on a white horse, bravely risking a bullet from the Maoris who by now regarded him as their chief enemy, a man clearly lacking in a real understanding of what he was doing, a man without feeling for the tragedy in which he was a leading protagonist. Behind him came his troops, many of them men but recently escaped from the servitude of the English countryside, the Manchester Rifles from Feilding, the Palmerston North Rifles, the Wanganui Rifles, the Taranaki Mounted Rifles, the Canterbury Contingent. The down-trodden labourers who had crossed the oceans in search of a plot of land to call their own and a fair reward for the sweat of their brow, had

¹¹². TH, 25 October 1881.

¹¹³. Bryce to Rolleston, 27 October 1881; Schofield (ed.), Richmond-Atkinson Papers, II, 495.

so soon assumed the role of oppressors themselves. Strangely it was men such as Rolleston and Fox, nearer to the squire tradition, who were stirred to a concern for the Maori people. The Parihaka affair was already heavy with irony before Te Whiti, that master of irony, sent the singing children to meet the invaders and welcomed his foes with bread. Men who had given their fervent 'amens' to Joseph Arch's stirring protests helped to raze Parihaka, despoil the well-tended crops in the surrounding fields and disperse the visiting tribesmen. The Volunteers returned home with stories of the amazement of the Maoris at the white man's military might, of the saying that 'every wind brought more soldiers', of the old Maori who exclaimed that he had not supposed there were so many people in the world.¹¹⁴ The government had made its point and the returning tribesmen would spread it through the land.

The arrest of Te Whiti and the destruction of Parihaka was followed by the building of further military roads. On the mountain slopes above Parihaka a new North-South road was made, parallel with the main coastal road constructed by the constabulary, but over five miles further inland. It was continued northwards to give access to the Okato military camp, and to the south it turned eastwards round the mountain to join the Stratford-Opunake track.¹¹⁵ Another road was made

¹¹⁴. Evening Post (Wellington), 16 November 1881.

¹¹⁵. Ibid., 12 November 1881; AJHR 1882, D-1, p. 50. (This is the modern Okahu Road and Wiremu Road.)

from Cape Egmont straight up the mountain slopes through Parihaka to join the new north-south road. These roads gave complete strategic command of the locality. Together with the Stratford-Opunake road, these routes persist in the modern Taranaki road network as a direct reminder of the settlers' response to Te Whiti's challenge.¹¹⁶ Without this challenge the settlement of the South Taranaki bush would undoubtedly have proceeded much more slowly. The completion of the railway across the province, and the construction of these and other roads over 1880-82, represented a heavy investment which could only be recouped by the rapid settlement of the lands to which they gave access.

At the general election of 9 December 1881, two key members of the 1869-72 ministry which had initiated the new development strategy in the Bush Provinces were contesting their home electorates. Ormond was standing for Waipawa, Fox for Rangitikei. In each case they were opposed by a local businessman standing as a Liberal, and advocating measures which would favour the labourer and yeoman farmer at the expense of the squatter. The 1881 general election was the first conducted on the principle of universal manhood suffrage, although the franchise continued to favour the more well-to-do

¹¹⁶. If only settlement considerations had come into account the network would certainly be rather different.

by providing for plural voting based on property qualifications.

In the Waipawa electorate the withdrawal of a third candidate left a straight contest between Ormond and William Cowper Smith (1843-1911). Smith was London-born, had come to New Zealand in 1862 and served in the Waikato was, and had started business in Waipawa in 1872. His only previous political experience was a little with local bodies from 1877 on.¹¹⁷ Ormond was therefore able to make his own wide experience and long service to the district a major feature of his campaign. He claimed that during the previous 20 years he had worked his hardest for the district.¹¹⁸ He took 'absolute credit' for getting the Seventy Mile Bush road, and claimed to be identified with almost every settlement in the Bush, stating that he was told by his friends that he would get a block vote there. He outlined his more recent endeavours to have railway work speeded up to give employment to the Bush settlers. He was opposed to a land tax, but he believed that the non-improving and absentee settlers should 'be got at in every possible way'.

To turn the tables on his experienced 'old settler' opponent, Smith surveyed the results of land settlement in Hawke's Bay. He pointed out how most of the 'good available

¹¹⁷. Scholefield (ed.), Dictionary of N.Z. Biography, II, 313.

¹¹⁸. H.B. Weekly Courier, 18 November 1881, p. 9.

land' had been occupied in large blocks by runholders, forcing small settlers into the bush, where they could only make a living by destroying what should have been the province's future timber supply.¹¹⁹ One disadvantage of the large sheep runs that locked up the best country was that they employed very little permanent labour; another was that their owners frequently absented. He averred that there were 33 large landed proprietors of Hawke's Bay living in different parts of Europe and drawing £100,000 annually from the province to spend abroad. He favoured a graduated land tax which would force either the cultivation or the breaking up of these large estates. Other planks in his platform included full support for the free, secular education of the 1877 Act, the establishing of free libraries, railway concessions for timber, an elective land board, and the reduction of customs duties on all the necessaries of life. His programme would clearly have a strong appeal to the Bush settlers and the working men of the country townships.

The Waipawa election developed into quite a hard-fought contest. Ormond had the support of the Hawke's Bay Herald and its associated weekly, the Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, which must have had a reasonable circulation in the Waipawa electorate. The Waipawa Mail was wholeheartedly behind Smith.¹²⁰ It was reported that Sass, the Lutheran clergyman, was doing his best to push Smith's candidature.¹²¹ Apart

119. ibid.

120. ibid.

121. ibid.

from the influence of the personal qualities of the two candidates, the result depended largely on whether the gratitude and deference on which Ormond could draw would outweigh Smith's appeal to the personal interests of the labourer and smallholder. Working in Smith's favour was the fact that many of the electors were comparatively recent arrivals, with no long experience of Ormond's services to the community. The result was a clear win to Smith by 587 votes to 558. As might be expected, Ormond did well at such squatters' centres as Otane (108 votes to 49) and Porangahau (57 to 16), and also at Woodville (74 to 29) where he owned land, and was proving something of a local benefactor by spending money to improve it.¹²² Smith had good majorities at the older centres of Waipawa (125 to 79) and Waipukurau (127 to 32) and in most of the bush settlements. The vote was in his favour at Ashley-Clinton (20 to 3), Norsewood (31 to 7) and Takapau (41 to 21). Ormondville with its largely English settlers gave its namesake a narrow advantage (37 to 34). The colony's press received the result with widespread surprise. The Rangitikei Advocate recorded that Ormond had been beaten by 'one Smith, a political nonentity'.¹²³ The Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier (16 December) put down Ormond's defeat partly to the apathy of his friends. Two of his personal friends had even ridden

122. ibid., 31 October 1879, p. 5; 8 April 1881, p. 14.

123. Quoted in H.B. Weekly Courier, 23 December 1881.

by a polling booth on election day without bothering to vote, so sure were they that he had a safe majority.

The Rangitikei election followed much the same lines as that in the Waipawa electorate. Fox was opposed by John Stevens (1845 - 1916) who had lived in Rangitikei from his boyhood, and had organised and led the district's first cavalry corps. He had seen active service in the Maori Wars of the 1860s, and had later gone into business as an auctioneer.¹²⁴ Steven's campaign was aimed at the smallholders and bush settlers. He maintained that main roads should be constructed through all blocks of Crown Land before they were offered for sale, and that the Land Fund should provide for the construction of bye-roads.¹²⁵ He wanted the State to concern itself in education solely with providing a practical secular primary schooling, and contended that country settlers were being expected to subsidise higher education in the large centres, although they could gain no benefit from it. As a Liberal, Stevens was supported by Ballance's Herald and Yeoman, while Fox was backed by the squatters' journal, the Rangitikei Advocate. The Advocate (10 December) records in detail the tense conclusion of the closely fought election, with first one candidate, then the other, taking the lead as the results

124. Cyclopaedia of N.Z., 1, 1304.

125. Rangitikei Advocate, 2 & 18 November 1881.

came in. The most striking polling booth figures were those from York Farm, where the runholders gave Fox 49 votes to Steven's 2, and from Cheltenham, where the bush settlers gave Stevens 42 votes to Fox's 6. The final figures gave Stevens 487 votes to Fox's 485. Fox's defeat served to free him of parliamentary duties while he was occupied as Commissioner with the complex task of investigating and settling Maori land claims arising from the confiscations on the west coast and in Taranaki. In the simultaneous defeats of Ormond and Fox we may discern at once an outcome of their own land settlement policies and a portent of the great political upset of December 1890.

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION

We began by surveying the Great Bush in 1869. We saw how effectively it fragmented the areas of European settlement, frustrating further advance, and putting the colonists at a strategic disadvantage as they faced their Maori foes. Our account has shown how completely the picture was altered in little more than a decade by a successful policy of bush colonisation. By 1881 the Great Bush had been convincingly mastered, its more fertile stretches opened up by solidly constructed communication lines, and the earlier pockets of settlement laced together by broad bands of bush settlement. The task had been undertaken by a numerous and growing body of backwoodsmen whose origins, qualities, hopes and achievements we have been able, at least in a measure, to portray. It remains to take a final look at these men, and the communities they had created.

To epitomise the characteristics of the typical Bush settler of 1881, let us take the example of the rural labourer who had left England during the great lock-out of 1874. How would he have changed? Undoubtedly he would have a self-respect and spirit of independence that he never knew in the old country. In this he would be sharing in the common colonial outlook, but in the Bush there was less to inhibit the growth

of this new spirit than in most other parts of the colony. The new self-respect owed much to an improved standard of living, but much also to a new value which colonial life gave to the common man. Here was not only wider opportunity, but the experience of being consulted, of being asked to co-operate rather than being ordered about. Writing in 1879, Arthur Clayden put this English/New Zealand contrast clearly, if a little immoderately:

Never was a social redemption more complete. He leaves England a social Pariah, and finds himself there a man. A stranger to a good dinner in the old home, he finds himself in the new one surfeited with food; the sport of circumstances, and the prey of parish-officers and recruiting-sergeants in England, he finds himself in New Zealand an important factor in the social argument.

In England, the chances are that our labourer would have had his spirit undermined by having no choice but to live in a 'tied' cottage. In the conflict of 1874 he would have received notice to quit. In New Zealand he would have good opportunities of acquiring a much better cottage of his own. Arthur Clayden illustrated the contrast we have just quoted by telling of a Kentish labourer he had met in New Zealand. His employer had 'wished him at the devil' for joining Arch's union, so he had accepted the New Zealand Government's immigration offer. After three years he owned a verandahed cottage, with a good-sized garden, and was adding a kitchen and spare bedroom to it, with only £50 left to pay off. In the House

1. Arthur Clayden, The England of the Pacific, London, 1879, p. 8.

of Representatives in July 1885 Trimble spoke of the government's mistakes in erecting cottages for letting to immigrants. 'The people', he explained, 'were able to put up shanties for themselves almost as comfortable as those built by the Government, at far less cost'.²

In England, though starved for meat, the labourer would have needed courage and ingenuity to flout the anti-poaching laws and help himself to the well-patrolled game. In New Zealand, although meat was cheap and abundant, he was likely to ignore the law with impunity, and enjoy the sport of hunting. In January 1888 the secretary of the Wellington Acclimatisation Society complained bitterly that it was notorious 'that pheasants, hares, and quail are shot and trapped right and left during the close season, and trout dynamited, netted and speared in our rivers by a section of the community that ought to know better',³ In one way or another, the labourer's table in New Zealand would be furnished with foods he rarely or never saw before he left England. At the reception to the Halcione immigrants in New Plymouth in September 1875, Dr Rawson told them that in visiting a great many labourers' homes in England, he had never seen any meat on the table of a weekday, not the sugar-pot or cream-jug. All these they would now be able to have.⁴

Securely housed, and adequately fed, the formerly

2. NZPD, Vol. 51, p. 572.

3. NZM, 20 January 1888, p. 19.

4. TH, 15 September 1875.

down-trodden labourer would soon gain confidence to respond to the democratic tone of the life about him. Alfred Simmons, another rural labourers' union official who visited New Zealand and recorded his impressions of the colony, praised the New Zealand newspapers for their outspoken, independent tone. In comparison, he considered too many English newspapers to be 'mealy-mouthed' in their endeavours to be neutral and please everyone, or else prone to 'pander and sneak, and prowl about, and palaver, to satisfy a certain class or a certain man'.⁵ The 'broad, outspoken and pungent style' which Simmons admired in the better colonial newspapers must, for many an immigrant, have furthered the development of a new social and political outlook, which had been begun by the union movement in the old country. Even the somewhat conservative New Zealand Mail⁶ would print a letter advising 'the pitiful sheep's head aristocracy of New Zealand' to read the signs of the times, which were said to be proclaiming that 'those who cultivate the ground must own it'. Papers more closely associated with the Bush settlers, such as the Yeoman and the Manawatu Herald, entered the lists themselves to express strong views on 'the Squatting crowd'.⁷

With a new respect for himself, and a newly developed feeling that he had as much right as the next man to have his voice heard, the Bush settler was likely, perhaps almost by

5. Alfred Simmons, Old England and New Zealand, London, 1879, p. 68.

6. 3 April 1880, p. 10.

7. e.g. Y, 12 November 1881, p. 13.

accident, to find himself propelled into public affairs. A correspondent writing to the Taranaki Herald⁸ described how this might come about. While working 'harder than any slave' to carve a home for himself and his family in the wilderness, our Bush settler had no time for thoughts political. But when he saw that his first promising little crop of grass seed would go to waste without a road, he would 'lean on his axe, after knocking down the tough old tawa, and think his way through the difficulty of opening up a new life to him - his political status in the community'. The result of these ruminations was likely to be our Bush settler's first public speech, at the next meeting of ratepayers.

He feels very uncomfortable, stumbles out a few sentences, gets hot, denounces everything done by the late Commissioners in pure Saxon; he calls a spade a spade, says the ratepayers have been robbed, and that he would guarantee to open twice the length of road for the same money. Having many sympathisers in the meeting he is elected . . .

Through lack of experience of public affairs, his early performance in office might well have left a good deal to be desired. It would, however, have given him an educative experience that would have been unthinkable in his old country village, and thereby have continued the process of turning him into a different order of man.

Not all the qualities of this 'new man' would have been equally praiseworthy. No doubt he would often be ignorant, opinionated, even uncouth. For all their roughness, however,

8. 8 August 1879.

the settlers living in the bush may have been less jarring to the observer of refined sensibilities than those living in or near the open country settlements. The working man would seem often to have been ill at ease in squatter settlements. The roving newspaper reporter, J.J. Palmer, in writing of his visits to the Rangitikei stations, commented on the pride the working men took in showing rudeness to their employers and to the women of the district.⁹ They were, of course, by no means the first to advertise their escape from servility by a display of incivility. Not much more attractive were the ways of some former labourers who began to ape their 'gentry' neighbours, once they got on a little in the world. In 1882 a Marton correspondent of the Yeoman¹⁰ reported a crop of 'Esquires' in the district, some of whom had not long since worn the fustian coat and corduroy trousers. The correspondent was of the opinion that 'at least some education, if not breeding, is desirable before a man calls himself, or allows others to call him, 'John Moneygrubber, Esq.''. A similar criticism of New Zealand life was made by Arthur Clayden in 1879, in an article in an English religious periodical:

. . . nothing has struck me as being more needed [In New Zealand] than a large infusion of our sound-hearted, reliable, religious, middle-class population . . . Most of the tradesmen, farmers, etc., appear to have risen from the ranks of the working community, and, as a consequence, there is a sad lack of polish and refinement amongst them. I never read the advertising columns of a newspaper without feeling an intense disgust at the vulgar puffing and transparent lies. ¹¹

9. Y, 29 January 1881.

10. 2 June 1882, p. 12.

11. Christian World, quoted in TH, 21 July 1879.

In the long run the 'Jack's as good as his master' outlook appears to have predominated over the 'Jack apes his master' approach in New Zealand rural life. Probably this owes something to the extensive Bush settlements where Jack was in fact largely his own master, and distinctions of class had little opportunity to develop.

The transformation of the immigrant, and the further transformation of his children, growing up with no knowledge of a class-ridden society, suggests comparisons not only with the homeland but also with other frontier societies. Frederick Jackson Turner's much-debated frontier thesis, so fruitful in the development of American historiography, has attracted the attention of the historians of other new countries.¹² Are there instructive parallels which throw light on the New Zealand Bush experience? This present study provides a good illustration of the basic assumption underlying Turner's thesis, that the frontier environment inevitably reshapes the social and cultural inheritance brought from the old world. But once one descends to the details, American history suggests as many contrasts as parallels. In one respect the American experience was the reverse of the New Zealand. America's first settlements were in forested country and it was nearly two centuries before the colonists began to occupy the prairie grasslands. The colonisation of New Zealand began with

12. See e.g. H.C. Allen, Bush and Backwoods: A Comparison of the Frontier in Australia and the United States, (East Lansing, Michigan), 1959; P.J. Coleman, 'The New Zealand Frontier and the Turner Thesis', Pacific Historical

grassland settlements, followed after three decades by the beginning of the main assault on the Bush. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, New Zealand land legislation was being adapted to encourage yeoman bush settlement, while at the same period American yeoman-type legislation was having to be abandoned or evaded as unsuited to the needs of the Great Plains. After making allowances for the aberration of plantation agriculture in the South and the necessary change of style when the wave of settlement reached the semi-arid area of the Great Plains, we can still say that from the beginning the typical American frontiersman was a yeoman farmer. He did not, as did the New Zealand Bush settler, have to establish himself in a social and political order created by an earlier squatter frontiersman. The possible relevance of Turner's thesis to the New Zealand Bush is further undermined by two other contrasts. The settlement of the Bush did not see a long-sustained movement of a frontier of settlement across a seemingly limitless expanse of fertile country. Rather, in New Zealand there was a consciousness of a strictly limited reserve of good land, and the best of it was quickly occupied by a series of local efforts, moving in from the coasts. The expansiveness of outlook encouraged by the American experience contrasts with localism in New Zealand. Again, Turner's picture of a reversion towards primitivism and a slow

12. Review, XXVII (August 1958), pp. 221-37; Russel Ward, (cont.) The Australian Legend, Melbourne, 1958, pp. 221-42.

rebuilding of civilization is not very useful as an interpretation of the Bush experience. The Bush settlers were largely men who in the past had been shut out from many of the benefits of civilization by class barriers. Provided by the industrial revolution with effective tools, they tamed the wilderness quickly, and were soon enjoying more of the benefits of civilization than would have come their way in the old world.

Comparisons with Australia are perhaps more relevant than those with America. Again, though, contrasts loom as large as parallels. The squatter of the Australian pastoral frontier had a direct influence on the colonising of the New Zealand open country,¹³ but the yeoman was the classic failure of Australian settlement. The most admired figure of the Australian frontier was the roving bush-worker. The 'cockey-farmer' was, in contrast, largely an object of either pity or derision. Yet he did have his successes, particularly in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. A comparison of the history of bush yeoman settlement on either side of the Tasman might well be illuminating. It is likely, though, that there is more to be gained by further study of the Bush settlers' British origins, and their response to the continuing influence of British society. The growing body of 19th century British agrarian history needs to be supplemented for New Zealand purposes by

13. On this see A.H. Clark, The Invasion of New Zealand by People, Plants and Animals, New Brunswick, 1949, pp. 90-3, 141-3, 157, 184-4, 203-4.

a deeper understanding of the selective forces that directed immigrants to the colony. We need, too, a fuller knowledge of how institutions developed to meet the needs of the British industrial urban 'frontier' were adapted to the New Zealand Bush frontier. We have in the present study seen how two institutions shaped in industrial England - the Methodist church and the Board school - flourished in the Bush settlements. The Salvation Army was to repeat the pattern. The drums which Booth set beating in the East End slums of the mid 1860s were rolling with equal effectiveness in the New Zealand Bush townships by the mid 1880s. In the Co-operative Societies and Temperance Movement a similar history can be found. It is not only on the colonial scene that the origins of the forces shaping the frontier communities are to be sought.

It might be maintained that their escape from the oppressive burden of the homeland rural hierarchy was as potent in the transformation of the Bush settlers as their new frontier environment. Well might W.C. Smith tell the Waipawa electors in November 1881 that the colony's education system was the great boon of the working class.¹⁴ While the common school was working to undermine such class feeling as persisted in the New Zealand community, in England education continued to be a major buttress of the class system. As late as 1895

14. H.B. Weekly Courier, 18 November 1881, p. 9.

an assistant commissioner of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, Mrs Armitage, could report that her enquiry in rural Devon had shown the reign of 'a system of caste which makes some approach to that of India'.¹⁵ Only the low caste, that is the working-class, sent their children to the elementary schools. The higher caste children all went to private schools to be trained in 'gentility'. In one leap the colony had largely escaped from this entail of the centuries which continued to burden the homeland. It took much longer to fulfil the vision of the editor of the Patea Mail,¹⁶ in 1878, that 'there should be one parish in New Zealand for relief purposes, which should embrace the whole colony'. It is not without significance that it was Atkinson, speaking with the background of his Taranaki bush experience, who first put such a programme forcibly before the New Zealand parliament.¹⁷

But to adequately explore these themes would take us far beyond the limits adopted for this study. It claims only to have grappled with the decade of the origins of the main Bush settlements. An adequate account of their later history and further development has yet to be written. It is a story of some consequence, rich in interest, with its own elements of drama. As a narrative it has nothing to fear from comparison with the history of the 1870s. The 1880s saw the first of

15. Report of Royal Commission on Secondary Education, Vol. IV, 1895, as quoted in Martin, The Shearers and the Shorn, pp. 99-101.

16. 7 September & 6 November 1878.

17. On this see Bassett, Sir Harry Atkinson, pp. 147-53.

the great bush fires that spread terror and destruction over the broad countryside. The 1890s saw the beginnings of the disastrous extension of settlement onto worthless land at the extreme limits of the reach of the communication lines, leading to the tragic heartbreak of fruitless toil that has no parallel in the history of the pioneer settlements of the 1870s. But these years also saw the fruition of many of the dreams of the earlier pioneers, and the emergence of the great new dairying and frozen meat industries, with their promise of a growing prosperity. Till beyond the turn of the century the Great Bush was to continue to provide the colony's main frontier of development.

Source: Adapted from AJHR 1881, C-4, p. 22.

Notes:

- (1). This map provides a general location reference for this study. It is also useful in showing the main communication lines in use in 1881.
- (2). Name Changes:

<u>Map</u>	<u>Modern Name</u>
Raleigh	Waitara
Carlyle	Patea
Hampden	Tikokino

Source: AJHR 1872, D-16, p. 6.

Notes:

- (1). This map was drawn to illustrate A. Follett Halcombe's report as Immigration Officer of the General Government, dated 18 July 1872. It gives a good indication of the administration's communications strategy at this date.
- (2). Of the Special Settlements listed, only 'Colonel Feilding's Purchase' and the 'Scandinavian Road laborers Villages' were carried through. Woodville, which was planned as a Scandinavian special settlement, was not proceeded with as such.

Portion of the
NORTH ISLAND
(Accompanying Mr. Halcombe's
REPORT.

A. KUCH DEL.

REFERENCE.

Roads made. Roads surveyed & partly made. Horse roads. Railway surveyed. Water race.

REFERENCE.

Special Settlements.

1. Colonel Fieldings Purchase.
2. Dutch or Scotch Settlement.
3. Canadian or Nova Scotia Settlement.
4. Highland Scotch Settlement.
5. Small Capitalist Farmers Location.
- Scandinavian Road laborers Villages.
- 70 Mile Bush.
- A. Parae Kuretu Block 47,000 acres.

Source: Adapted from AJHR 1880, G-2, p. lxiv.

Notes:

- (1). This map was printed in colour to illustrate the Reports of the West Coast Commission (appointed to enquire into the Confiscated Lands). Its purpose here is to provide a general location map of North Taranaki.
- (2). The 1880 bush line is clearly indicated - it appears as the thick dark line roughly paralleling the coast, a mile or two inland.
- (3). Name Changes:

<u>Map</u>	<u>Modern Name</u>
Raleigh	Waitara
Manutahi	Lepperton

- (4). The map does not show Egmont Village, situated at the junction of Egmont Rd and Junction Rd.
- (5). 'Hursthouse's Line' marks (approximately) the route of the Stratford-Opunake track, formed in 1880-81.

WILLIAM FOX.
FRANCIS DILLON BELL.

Source: Adapted from AJHR 1872, D-6, p. 14.

Notes:

(1). The lightly sketched bush line is of interest.

(2). Name Changes:

<u>Map</u>	<u>Modern Name (or Spelling)</u>
Waihi	Normanby
Turuturu	Turuturumokai
Mantahi	Manutahi
Carlyle	Patea

(3). Ohawe, Mokoia, and Kakaramea (all shaded on the map) were townships surveyed for the earlier military settlement scheme initiated by Domett. Note the location of the new military settlements of Hawera and Manutahi, initiated by Fox in 1869, on the Railway Reserve. (See p. 67 above.)

Source: AJHR 1877, H-27, p. 7.

Notes:

- (1). 'Fielding' is an incorrect spelling of 'Feilding'.
'Kiwitia' is a variant for 'Kiwitea'.
- (2). Between Bunnythorpe and Feilding the railway forms
the boundary of the Manchester Block.

PLAN OF THE MANCHESTER BLOCK MANAWATU

80 40 0 40 80 120 160 200 240 280 320 360 400 440 480 520 560

Scale of Chains

J. Howard Jackson

Licensed Surveyor

In charge of Survey Manchester Block

August 1877

REFERENCE

- Railways Constructed
- Railways in course of Construction
- Roads completed
- " cleared & formed
- " cleared
- " surveyed

Photo Lithographed by A McCall

Wellington 3rd Sept. 1877

N.Z. Survey Litho Press

C. R. Pollen Del.

Source: Adapted from AJHR 1882, F-1, p. 23, 'Map of the North Island showing Postal Routes, 1882'.

Notes:

(1). This map is included to provide a location map for the Seventy Mile Bush. The 'Seventy Miles' extended from Kopuaranga, a few miles north of Masterton, to Takapau in southern Hawke's Bay. The Provincial Boundary between Wellington and Hawke's Bay cut the seventy miles roughly in half, and both sections were popularly (and confusingly) called 'The Forty Mile Bush'. The Hawke's Bay section was in fact barely thirty miles.

(2). Name Changes:

<u>Map</u>	<u>Modern Name</u>
Hampden	Tikokino
Kaikora	Otane
Makatoka	Makotuku

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

I. PRIMARY

(a) Manuscript and Unpublished

- (1) National Archives, Wellington
- (2) General Assembly Library, Wellington
- (3) Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
- (4) Hocken Library, Dunedin
- (5) Public Library, Feilding

(b) Published

- (1) Government Publications
- (2) Non-Government Publications
- (3) Printed Collection of Letters
- (4) Newspapers and Serial Publications
 - (i) Newspapers (ii) Periodicals (iii) Directories
- (5) Books and Pamphlets
 - (i) The Old World
 - (ii) New Zealand and General
- (6) Published Memoirs and Reminiscences

II. SECONDARY

- (1) The Old World
 - (a) Periodical Articles
 - (b) Books and Pamphlets
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 - (i) Ph. D. Theses (ii) M.A. Theses, University of Auckland (iii) M.A. Theses, University of Canterbury
 - (iv) M.A. Thesis, Massey University of Manawatu
 - (v) M.A. Thesis, University of Otago (vi) M.A. Theses, Victoria University of Wellington
 - (b) Published
 - (i) Periodicals, etc.
 - (ii) Books, Pamphlets, etc.
- (3) Miscellaneous

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