THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY
1825–1842

by

A. L. MESTON, M.A.

Arranged for publication by W. M. Meston

Introduction by K. M. Dallas, B.Com.

Edited by
FRANK ELLIS
Director of the Museum

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Summary

From a study of the wool trade in Britain and the increasing inadequacy of the supply of fine wool the work proceeds to the chartering in 1825 of the Van Diemen's Land Company. Its grant was to be outside the settled areas and its powers confined to growing fine wool. Edward Curr, its colonial agent, found the colonists suspicious of absentee monopolists and the Governor prepared to put on his instructions the interpretation least favourable to the Company.

The regions of land grants were quite unsuited to raising fine woolled sheep, the surveyors had to contend with forested mountains and severe weather to find the few likely areas. Stock losses were heavy from weather, marsupial wolves and aborigines.

In 1835 the opening of Port Phillip led the Company to seek a transfer which was refused.

Curr was dismissed in 1841 just before the boundaries of lands were finally approved. His vigorous management was unable to overcome the natural and official obstacles but his pioneer work was very important for the later development of North-West Tasmania.
Introduction

The Van Diemen's Land Company was limited by its charter to land operations and also to a region of the island hitherto untouched. Its agents arrived to find the Governor and his officers prepared to give it the full rigour of the law and use every device to put upon its charter the interpretation least favourable to it. Curr reports frequently the rejoicing of the local landholders at every discomfiture, as, for example, when his indentured servants absconded and were employed and given legal protection by his rivals.

Even if it had been permitted to select land in the Port Phillip region it is certain that it would still have been harassed by attacks both through official channels and by individual squatters. In support of this view that the Company was discreetly thwarted within the law by the Governors and the colonial oligarchy, one should study the official despatches concerning its mainland counterpart, the Australian Agricultural Company. In much more favourable circumstances it suffered the same rigour of colonial regulations. When the stress of the 1842 crisis sharpened economic issues, we find Gipps writing to Lord Stanley of the extent to which colonial property was falling into the hands of absentee mortgagees (he had seen the same thing at first hand in the West Indies) and adding bluntly "This colony has never derived, nor is it likely to derive, any advantage from companies formed in England, neither from the Australian Agricultural Company, the Bank of Australasia nor any other. I cannot but apprehend that the high pretensions of the recent companies which have started into existence else where, and especially of those formed for the colonisation of New Zealand, will end in disappointment, if not in disaster."

Thus the trial of strength was not merely between persons but between systems of colonisation and Curr was the agent of the obsolete one. The notebooks Meston filled with extracts from correspondence show how Curr's advice based on local knowledge was repeatedly ignored by the Court of Directors or acted on when the conditions on which it was based had changed.

In its restriction to unsuitable land lies the main reason for the failure of the Company, but in the given conditions the covert opposition of colonial settlers and Governors was also inevitable. The remoteness of the location and the unfavourable climate compelled Curr to branch out into rearing stud stock instead of concentrating on large scale wool production, and to resort to tenant farming, but the policies decided in London and the impatience for dividends harassed him continually. It is a matter for regret that Meston has left us only a notebook record of these aspects, but his study of the location difficulties provides the essential bases for future historians.

As the Company was compelled to select land outside the settled regions the choice of specific areas depended very much on the reports of its surveyors. All of them were more or less recent arrivals in the island but also the region they were asked to survey was one of peculiar difficulty and the historian quickly comes up against discrepancies in the journals themselves when comparing them with contemporary and later maps.

The problems posed by the explorers' records could be resolved only by an equal zeal and effort. In 1925 Meston spent a week on foot surveying the Surrey Hills, checking by map and compass the route taken in 1827 by Henry Hellyer, seeing the conditions of the first abortive attempts at sheep-farming there and discovering in a remote corner a remnant of the Company's herd of Kyloes. The record of Hellyer's return journey through the forested gorges of the Arthur River is confused and Meston held that the privations and exhaustion which nearly cost the lives of his party had caused them to mistake rivers and other features. He worked on the hypothesis that somewhere in that still unexplored region there was a large tributary which Hellyer mistook for the main stream.

The best maps available marked the region as unexplored. The river basin is densely forested and cut by deep, precipitous gorges. It is separated from the similar Pieman River valley by a belt of high, heathy hills, which run to the West Coast. Few had penetrated the Arthur Valley or traversed it within living memory. In the summer of 1931 Meston organised a small party, including Mr. D. Jones, a farmer who had in youth searched for minerals on the fringes of this forest. They crossed the Arthur River but torrential rain and the confusion of river gorges prevented any decisive discovery. The next summer he tried again and in five days succeeded in forcing a passage, finding the suspected tributary and following it to its headwaters. The hypothesis was untenable.

The completed chapters of this work do not reveal the vast labour that was necessary before they could be written, a labour performed necessarily in time borrowed from the scant leisure of a full and active life. A. L. Meston did nothing by halves. To test the accuracy and assess the worth of the written records it was necessary to see the lands occupied by the Company, judge from the contemporary condition of its extensive grants the nature of the problems faced by its founders, to traverse
(Perforce on foot) the roads and tracks opened by its surveyors and check the accuracy and veracity of its explorers by going over their routes with map and compass.

With indefatigable zeal and energy and a keenly sceptical mind he set himself the task of amassing the evidence of this field work and collating the text of the Journals with this and with the official reports. Where other historians have been content to take at face value the picturesque record left by Jorgenson, Meston, who had a vast and intimate knowledge of the topography, forests and climate, was not merely content to brand some of his claims as absurd. He followed in detail the sequence of Jorgenson’s journeys and proved in his own person that they were indeed absurd.

Not always successfully for he was often frustrated by time and circumstance. In 1935, for example, he had only five days in which to travel to the West Coast and climb the remote Mt. Sunday. He wished to verify by visual checking that Jorgenson’s claim to have seen Mt. Dundas from its summit was a palpable error. He climbed the mountain but low cloud cut off the view and one small point remained untested. Nevertheless, he gained at first hand the data necessary to a full assessment of Jorgenson’s narrative. This region has remained almost unused by men, mute evidence of the sober accuracy of the representations made about it by Curr in his repeated pleas to the Governor to be allowed to change the location of the Company’s grant.

No one ever vindicated as Meston did the soundness of R. H. Tawney’s dictum that “what historians need is fewer documents and stouter boots.” It is necessary to insist that he was never merely the historian of the Company. He was also aggressively Tasmanian, with a consuming interest in Tasmanians past and present and not least among these our aboriginal predecessors. He was the Scholar Gipsy whose zeal for knowledge as a power to take at face value the picturesque record left by the aborigines over centuries of visits to their inland summer hunting grounds. The paths they pioneered to these became the cattle tracks of the Company. Had he lived to write it we should have been the richer for his knowledge of the neglected influence of the aborigines on many other forms of European activity.

It is certain that, falling when it did, in the persistent, detailed, strenuous examination of the physical and social survivals of the early years of the Company, Meston has given us, even in its incomplete form, an authentic picture of the bases of Tasmanian development.

His plan to tell the story of the Company’s relations with the aborigines would have grown out of his full and precise knowledge of the whole aboriginal culture of the island. In December, 1927, and January, 1928, he made his first visit to Woolnorth, and in two days traversed the whole coast-line of that region, returning with detailed notes of the Company’s work there and also a heavy load of aboriginal implements for the valuable collection now owned by the Melbourne Museum. In 1930 he studied the carvings on the basalt rocks of Mersey Bluff, and in 1931 read a paper to the Royal Society of Tasmania describing them. Scientists differed as to the origin. Some ascribed them to natural agents, others denied that they could have been done by the extinct Tasmanians.

The controversy led to a report, reaching Meston at fourth hand, of carvings seen on sandstone rocks near Woolnorth. His knowledge of that coast, of the Company’s records of numerous tribes in the
area and his zeal to establish the significance of early Tasmanian culture, made him eager to test the report. In December, 1931, he revisited Woolnorth.

The manager, Mr. Wainwright, who had known the place from boyhood, had never heard of the carvings and described the original source of the rumour as “the biggest liar we ever had here.”

Meston spent one long hot day searching many miles of the West Coast, and returned to camp late at night with his confidence much diminished. Next morning Mr. Wainwright came to report that his shepherds knew of the carvings and described exactly their location.

This discovery disturbed considerably all previous conceptions of the level of Tasmanian culture, and has led to many similar finds which clarify considerably the relation of the Tasmanians to human history. It is hardly open to question that without the man and his methods such a discovery would have been very long delayed.

The Company’s records have much information about the aborigines derived from articulate and not unsympathetic observers, who, nevertheless, were instrumental in driving them out of a region where they had been previously unmolested.

Meston alone could have reconstructed this situation. The records are still there but no one can now find the people who amplified to him, from local legend, the details recorded, and no one will have again the comprehensive knowledge of that region in its relation to the rest of the island as it was in that age of transition.

K. M. DALLAS.
EXPLORATION
ORIGINS AND CHARTER.

The foundation of the Van Diemen's Land Company is closely bound up with the manufacture of woollens, the traditional staple industry of England. The Company was the direct outcome of the conditions existing in that industry in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Those conditions had their roots deep in the past and if we are to understand them at all we must look back to the preceding centuries.

From the time of the Normans the woollen manufacturer was protected by restrictive legislation and, as time went on, this fostering care was increased. The assize of wool under Edward III was intended to ensure a regular supply of wool for the English manufacturer by checking the export of this product at low rates, thus giving him a preference: Edward IV laid down specific times when raw wool might be exported. This, however, was not sufficient and towards the close of Elizabeth's reign agitation sprang up for the absolute prohibition of the export of wool. Both James I and Charles I issued proclamations against this export, and the Restoration (5) and Revolution Parliaments (6) by legislation placed an embargo on it, which continued throughout the next century and was renewed as late as 1788 (7). The object of these measures was not merely to give English weavers a preference but, by preventing industrial rivals from procuring a supply of English wool, to shut out competition: for it was believed that English wool was so superior to other wools as to be essential in certain branches of its manufacture. This policy, which tended to lower the price of wool, was favoured by the manufacturers but aroused the jealousy of the landed interest.

The production of wool received a setback when, in the first year of William and Mary, Parliament encouraged the growing of corn by a bounty (4). No attempt was made to increase the production of wool by this means since, doubtless, the effects of the enclosure movement of the sixteenth century were still too fresh in the public memory and legislation for this purpose would have aroused widespread opposition. As the wearing of wool was almost universal, the demand for woollen goods was increased by the clothing needs of the rapidly growing population in the closing years of the eighteenth century. But this population had to be fed and there was an increasing demand for the sheep as mutton. This demand led to an improvement in the breed of English sheep in which it was more the object to obtain a greater weight of carcase than to improve or preserve the quality of wool. Under the influence of this, English wool deteriorated, for "the heavier the carcase the coarser the fleece" (8). Indeed, Alexander Williams writing in 1800 laid it down as a maxim that "so long as Englishmen are fond of fat mutton they must not expect to grow fine wool" (9). By the close of the eighteenth century English wool was far coarser than in earlier times: In 1557 an Italian wrote "the wool is so fine that the Spanish wools cannot be compared with it" (10) but, in 1802, the English manufacturer imported five and a half million pounds from Spain to make the finer cloths, indisputable evidence of the deterioration.

The increased demand, and the falling away of the local supply owing to the deterioration of the fleece, caused a rapid rise in the price of wool. Long wool quoted at fourpence per pound in 1780 was, in 1791, sevenpence three-farthings: short wool, fourpence three-farthings in 1780, was ninepence in 1795 (9). In 1795 there was such a shortage as to amount almost to a famine and the price again rose.

Jealously watched by the woollen manufacturers, the cotton industry steadily developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, but it was not a serious competitor until Arkwright invented roller spinning (the water twist) in 1769 and Crompton developed the mule in 1779. These inventions were at once applied to the spinning of cotton and the trade went ahead by leaps and bounds. The possibility of an enormous and indefinite expansion was now revealed. In Lancashire cotton replaced wool. "From the year 1770 to 1788," writes Radcliffe, "a complete change had gradually been effected in the spinning of yarns—that of wool disappearing altogether, and that of linen was also nearly gone—"
cotton, cotton, cotton was become the universal material for employment, the hand wheels with the exception of one establishment were all thrown into lumber rooms, the yarn was spun on common jennies, the carding for all numbers up to forty hanks in the pound was done on carding engines (n). *n*

As cotton goods were only one-eighth of the price of woollen articles the serious nature of the competition can be readily judged. Moreover, there was no limit to the supply of raw material, the Southern States in America and the East offering an unlimited source of supply. The rapid increase in the manufacture of cotton goods may best be gauged by the imports of raw cotton: in 1785 eighteen million pounds were imported, in 1800 fifty-six million pounds (13). *n*

With the woollen industry it was far different. The jealous protection for centuries by Acts of Parliament had robbed the trade of initiative, with the result that from the time of Elizabeth I., scarcely an improvement had been made in the process of manufacture. In spite of the increasing population the industry was practically at a standstill and afforded a striking contrast with that of cotton. To apply the new mechanical inventions to its manufacture would not solve the problem for the supply of wool, unlike that of cotton, was strictly limited and expensive machines, if installed, must lie idle a great part of the time. The manufacturer had long required the long staple merino wool of Spain for some of the fine cloths, but the main supply of wool was the English clip. The rise in the price of the local wool, the inadequacy of the supply to meet the demand, and its deterioration in quality drove the manufacturer more and more to seek sources of supply of raw material abroad. This demand for fine wool was accentuated by a change in fashions. Customers were demanding finer and finer cloths and for these the coarse English wools were unsuitable. From Spain the manufacturer turned to Saxony where wool-growers were specialising in producing the finest wool. In 1800, only 8,609,000 lbs. of foreign wool (mainly Spanish) were imported, of which 412,394 lbs. were from Germany; but in 1814 the German amount had risen to 3,432,465 lbs., and in 1825 to 28,799,661 lbs. Importation from Spain had dropped but it was still approximately five times the amount exported from Germany in 1800. These figures afford striking evidence of the growing dependence of England on foreign wools (13).

It must be remembered that machine production did not supplant hand-weaving in the woollen industry until after 1823.

This dependence upon foreign supplies was the cause of great anxiety, not only to the manufacturers who saw their supplies would be seriously threatened by the advent of a foreign war (19), but also to many patriotic Englishmen. Merinos were imported from Spain and an attempt was made to improve the breed of English sheep; George III., Sir Joseph Banks, Lord Weston and Mr. J. K. Trimmers being especially active in furthering the scheme. It was on the grounds of relieving England from its dependence on foreign nations for wool that John Macarthur, in 1804, based his request to Earl Camden for an extensive grant of land in New South Wales. Many advocated the repeal of the export embargo, arguing that permission to export would raise the price of wool and thus induce landed men to increase the supply (19). This was strenuously opposed by the manufacturers who had long enjoyed the monopoly of the home supply and wished to retain it. The influx of superior wool depressed the price of the home product to such an extent that agriculturists, disappointed in their efforts to produce wool equal to the Spanish and Saxony wool in fineness, demanded that Parliament tax all imported wool. In 1819 this was done and a duty of 6d. per lb. was imposed on foreign wool. All this tended to increase the price of the finished article and enabled cotton goods to get a greater share of the market. As early as 1803 we find the clothiers lamenting that, owing to the scarcity and advanced price of Spanish wool, large orders of fine cloths had for some years been frequently rejected. The exorbitant price of the raw material and the contingent expenses of the trade made it almost impossible for them to supply the continental markets with any profit to themselves (14).

The introduction of machinery into the cotton industry had reduced the price of manufactured goods two hundred per cent., although the price of the raw material had advanced. Experiments had proved that the same machinery was applicable to the woollen industry and, if applied, the British manufacturers would be enabled so to reduce the price of woollen cloths and wool securities throughout the world the most complete monopoly that any people ever possessed (19). But the limited supply of raw material was the greatest obstacle. Macarthur visited England in 1804 and applied to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for a large grant of land in New South Wales to produce fine wool. He was convinced that the mother country might in a few years obtain from New South Wales all the fine wool it would require (17) and at a price much lower than was being paid for Spanish wool. New South Wales in short, offered boundless possibilities for the woollen industry. He proposed to found a company in England with a capital of £10,000 for producing fine wool in New South Wales. The Government was to assist by granting one million acres. Woollen manufacturers throughout England, alarmed for their supply of fine wool, "it being mostly drawn at this time from a country influenced, if not dependent on France" (14), were interested in his project. From all parts of the country memorials were presented urging the Government to give every encouragement to the undertaking. He failed to obtain the use of English capital, but public interest was aroused. After examination by the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations, he received a grant of 5,000 acres of land in New South Wales for his purpose (17). He then purchased seven merino rams and two ewes at a sale of the King's stud sheep and, having obtained permission from the Government to take them out of the country, returned to Australia.

Macarthur was highly sanguine of his expectations and predictions. In twenty years he estimated there would be five million sheep in New South Wales and, calculating two pounds
and a half of clean washed wool to each sheep they would produce almost twice as much wool as England purchased from Spain, at an annual expense of one million eight hundred thousand pounds (4). This was not to be. The great floods of 1806, 1809 and 1817, and the serious droughts of 1813, 1814 and 1815 played sad havoc with the flocks, and it was not until 1816 that "a considerable quantity of wool was on its way from New South Wales" (2). Compared with the imports from foreign sources, however, this was in reality but a small amount. Two years later, when 180,000 lbs. of wool reached England from Australia, Germany sent over five million lbs. and Spain three and a half million (2).

Of this foreign clip the English manufacturer had no monopoly and English wool-buyers had to face serious French competition, for under Napoleon the French woollen industry had made considerable progress. If the British woollen industry was to survive, foreign wool was essential. Cloth manufactured partly and altogether of foreign wools were rapidly driving cloth made only of English wool from the market, until, by 1824, cloth made of English wool would not sell in competition with that made of foreign wool (2).

Then, too, further development in cloth manufacture was hampered by the limited supply of materials. The introduction of machinery would cheapen the manufactured article and enable it to compete with nothing but there was not sufficient material to keep the machines at work. It was imperative to find new sources of supply.

In 1819 Wentworth published "A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales." There was a ready sale for the book and it ran into three editions in five years. Public attention was again focussed on the colony and Macarthur's plan of 1804 was revived in 1820, when a proposal was made to Governor Maquarie for the establishment of a joint stock Company in New South Wales for the growth and production of fine wool (2).

The advantages offered by Van Diemen's Land for producing fine wool were stressed when James Dixon, of the ship Skelton, published his narrative in 1822 (4). "The country is peculiarly adapted for sheep," he wrote, "and that animal thrives well and increases astonishingly . . . Taking its climate into consideration, it is much superior to Australia where the burning heats in summer dry up everything." He advocated a joint stock company associated for agricultural purposes provided the Government would give a grant of land commensurate with the capital, and in this way "large wool establishments might be formed which would supersede the necessity of importing from Saxony and Spain." The idea of a joint stock company was to be recommended by another and more powerful agent. Early in 1823 Commissioner J. T. Bigge published his narrative of the same beneficial course of industry " should receive grants of land in New South Wales " in proportion to the number of convicts they engaged to employ and to the numbers of sheep and cattle they took with them " (5). In the growth of fine wool he saw the principal if not the only source of productive industry within the colony from which the settlers could derive the means of repaying the advances made to them from the mother country, or supplying their own demands for articles of foreign manufacture.

These suggestions soon attracted a group of English capitalists. In April, 1824, a meeting was held in London in the office of John Macarthur Junior and it was resolved to form the Australian Agricultural Company to follow agricultural and pastoral pursuits on the lines laid down in Bigge's report, with the production of fine merino wool as an article of export to Great Britain as the primary object (2). The Colonial Office was at one approached and arrangements were discussed. Finally, on the 22nd of May, 1824, the proposals were submitted to Earl Bathurst in writing and the formation of the Company was approved. A grant of land of one million acres was made and no rival incorporated or joint stock company with similar objects could be established in New South Wales for twenty years.

Attention had been directed to the latent possibilities of Van Diemen's Land, not only by Dixon's narrative, but also by the glowing picture issued by Godwin in his Emigrants' Guide (6) and by Deputy Surveyor Evans' account of its fertility and rapidly increasing wealth (7). In consequence, a meeting was held on 12th of May, 1824, to discuss proposals for establishing a joint stock company to obtain a grant of land in Van Diemen's Land, the object of the company being the production of Merino and Saxon sheep on an extensive scale. After "very mature deliberation" and prolonged discussion with John Ingle, who had lived for 15 years in Van Diemen's Land and had amassed a fortune there, it was unanimously resolved to approach the Government for a grant of half a million acres for the purpose.

The proponents, eleven in all, were closely connected with the woollen industry of the West of England and, since 1819, had been associated in agitating for a repeal of the tax on foreign wool. Three of them were Members of Parliament; John Pearse represented the borough of Devizes, Wiltshire, Joseph Cripps that of Cireneester, Gloucestershire, and Matthias Attwood that of Callington, Cornwall. In addition, Pearse was one of the directors of the Bank of England and was extensively concerned in army clothing and the cloth trade.

Of the other eight, John Maitland had represented the borough of Chippenham, Wiltshire, in the last Parliament and for more than forty years had been chairman of the wool and woollen trade in London; Joseph Bond was his partner; James Bischoff was a London merchant mainly engaged in exporting woollen goods abroad; Henry Hughes was a factor of Blackwell Hall, London; Edward Phillips resided at Melksham, Wiltshire and was chairman of the woollen trade of his county; John Saunders was a woolen manufacturer of Bradford, Wiltshire; and John Jaeb and W. M. Everett were London wool merchants.
The counties of Gloucester, Wiltshire and Somerset produced the finest English wools and the manufacture of fine cloth had long been established there. The manufacturers sent their goods to Blackwell Hall factors in London who distributed them throughout the United Kingdom. Some of the Blackwell Hall factors had also established woollen factories in the West of England. This district was well served by Bristol, which in the opening years of the nineteenth century still ranked as the second seaport in Great Britain. But the consumption of English wool spread even to the West of England and by 1816 Wiltshire was the only county that had kept the quality from deteriorating (\textsuperscript{4}). Side by side with this deterioration went a change in public taste, consumers everywhere demanding a finer cloth and, to produce it, fine wools had to be imported from abroad, as was shown earlier. The merchants of Bristol trading with Spain and Portugal brought back fine wools from that peninsula and thus maintained the manufacture of fine cloth in the West of England.

But in 1823 the position had changed. German wools were superior to those of Spain and, in consequence, were better adapted for the finest cloth. Hull was a more convenient port than Bristol for trade with Germany and the rise of the port of Liverpool gave to the northern counties increased advantages of communication. Before long, from its advantageous situation, it was capturing much of the American trade carried on from Bristol. Leeds now became an important centre for the manufacture of the finest cloth. The manufacturers of the West of England and the London factors saw their trade slipping away and turned to Van Diemen's Land, where they confidently expected to produce wool superior in quality to that of all other countries (\textsuperscript{5}) in the hope of maintaining their supremacy. From those best qualified to judge, they had learnt that the climate was in the highest degree favourable to sheep and that the wool was not only capable of all the mollification and improvement which it was found to attain in Europe, but possessed some of the qualities most essential to the woollen manufacturers in a degree superior even to the choicest fleeces of Spain and Germany (\textsuperscript{6}). Because of its superior softness, Australian and Van Diemen's Land wool was better adapted than German wool for the manufacture of the finest cloth. Moreover, wool could be brought from Sydney or Hobart Town at a less expense per lb. than from Vienna or Leipsic (\textsuperscript{7}).

Germany offered a striking example of what could be done in a country adapted for wool-growing. In 1765 a few merino sheep were introduced from Spain and, by judicious management, so great was the consequent improvement of the local breeds that, by 1823, Germany supplied England with the bulk of her fine wool, exporting thence more than twenty-five million pounds. Van Diemen's Land had already proved itself; for the wool exported, though small in quantity, possessed a softness of texture and length of staple admirably adapted for the manufacture of the finer worsted fabrics.

A sub-committee waited upon Horton, who gave it as his unofficial opinion that the Government would raise no objection to such a grant on conditions similar to those just agreed upon with the Australian Company; but, as the land in Van Diemen's Land was valued at a higher rate than that in New South Wales, there would in all probability be a difference in price. He also told them that he felt it his duty to inform the Australian Company of the application (\textsuperscript{8}).

Confident that there would be no official opposition to the grant, the promoters appointed John Pearse as President, Joseph Cripps as Vice-President, agreed on 24 directors, appointed eight, and named a director's fee. Two days later Cripps threw a bombshell when he stated that he had learnt from Scott, a V.D.L. settler, that Ingle's information was quite inaccurate. Further conversations with Ingle and John Marsh (a prominent woolbroker of London who handled V.D.L. wool) reassured them, however, and on 22nd of May, 1824, acting on the advice of Horton, they applied for a grant of 500,000 acres in Van Diemen's Land "upon the same terms which we understand are to accompany the grant which is now being made to the Australian Company" (\textsuperscript{9}).

Bathurst agreed to receive the promoters on 5th June and discuss their plan. Pearse advised his companions of the principal objections that would be raised and it was decided that Marsh and Ingle should be present. Much to the surprise of all, Bathurst was not so favourably inclined as he had been, but it was not until later that Pearse learnt that this was in great measure owing to intrigue by the Australian Association.

The frenzied speculation of the time and the campaign of the Australian Company made Bathurst cautious and he could not be convinced. The deputation withdrew to combat three main objections, viz., that two large bodies going into the market to buy sheep would so enhance the price that both would be materially injured; that if fine wool sheep were exported the wool would deteriorate; and that there was insufficient unlocated land in the colony for the grant, without interfering with the present settlers.

No time was lost in obtaining the necessary evidence. John Marsh showed that there was a gradual improvement in the wool (\textsuperscript{10}). John Ingle reconfirmed what he had already told them, that there was an abundance of unlocated land, the possession of which would not interfere with free settlers. He advised them to ask for their grant to be given in the northern half of the island and two-thirds of it east of the Western Tiers. John Briggs, who made his first acquaintance with the island in 1819 as captain of the convict transport \textit{Admiral Cockburn}, confirmed Ingle's statement. As Briggs possessed a considerable estate in the island and owned large flocks of sheep, he was able to tell them of the marked improvement in the fineness of the wool within the space of a few years (\textsuperscript{11}).

In addition, Pearse exerted his personal influence and before long was able to report that Bathurst appeared to have shed his principal objections and wished them to make a formal request in writing (\textsuperscript{12}). On the 13th July they forwarded the evidence they had obtained of the suitability of the
island, quoted official reports made to Parliament, and applied for a grant of 500,000 acres "for the purpose of breeding from the best flocks which can be selected in Europe." They stated that they confidently expected a very large quantity of wool would be speedily produced and asked that the grant be made between 147° and 148° 20' East Longitude and 41° and 42° 35' South Latitude in five different allotments "as the wool is considerably improved by the frequent change of pasture and as the quality depends in a great measure upon the nature of the land" (40). In particular, they desired their grant "on the east side of the island between the hills and the sea to the West and North of Oyster Bay" (41), where there were no located lands and therefore could be no interference with any of the settlers, a condition on which, as we have seen, Bathurst insisted.

The evidence produced was not sufficient to resolve the doubts in official quarters (41) and, in spite of frequent interviews with Bathurst and Horton, Pearse could not convince them, for persons were continually coming to the Colonial Office and stating that there was not sufficient land in the island. At the end of the year Horton told him that he wished the promoters to meet Lt. Colonel Sorell who, having relinquished the government of Van Diemen's Land, had just reached England (42). Sorell's statements were quite different from those of Ingle and Briggs and confirmed Bathurst's doubts. He declared that all the good land had been granted away and that two-thirds of the island was barren rock, although he said he had little or no knowledge of the north-western district (43). It was now necessary to satisfy Bathurst that Sorell was mistaken and it was resolved to write to all the interested parties on the detached and unlocated parts of Van Diemen's Land and the openings therein for an extensive grant". The latter stated that only in the north-east and north-west quarters were there extensive and unoccupied areas, but that he had a poor opinion of the suitability of the north-east. "From Port Sorell to Circular Head," his memorandum concludes, "would be the most suitable tract for an extensive alienation of land. To whatever extent the quality of the country might admit of a large grant being carried back from the sea (upon which of course would depend the measurement along the coast), even were the interior to be found so unpromising as to narrow the location materially, the space from Port Sorell to Circular Head would afford all that could be required" (44). But he warned Horton that he considered the island contained a greater proportion of inferior land than any country of the same extent and that its mountainous character made it unlikely that there would be many large or continuous tracts of good or useful land (45). There were, however, good prospects of fine wool and the island offered a splendid opportunity for the use of capital in pursuing the black-whale fishery, in opening up the iron deposits at Port Dalrymple, in exploiting the abundant beds of limestone, in shipbuilding and in carrying out distilling, brewing, and tanning. No country could be superior for grain. Wheat was the chief export, not only to Sydney, but to Rio de Janeiro and the Isle of France. The crop had never been known to fail and the insects which attacked wheat in New South Wales, both in stack and granary, never appeared. Potatoes, which were exported in large quantities to Sydney, offered great possibilities (46).

Early in February the directors renewed their application, sending evidence of unlocated land suitable for their purpose, the result of their recent enquiries, and asked for a grant of 500,000 acres or such a quantity as Bathurst thought fit. They were ready to subscribe a capital of one million sterling and, in addition to growing fine wool, they suggested using some of their capital to develop the coal and iron mines which they had learned the island possessed. "We are not proposing," they wrote, "to enter upon this undertaking with temporary or speculative view, but with the sole intention of carrying the measure into effect with a liberal spirit" (47). Time had wrought some changes since the last application in the preceding July. Not only had the scope of operations been enlarged but the proposal had aroused much interest in the city and a number of capitalists seeking a good investment had joined the ranks of the men connected with the woollen industry of the West.
of England. Twenty-four signatures were now affixed to the application.

Sorell's support of the project, and his statement that he considered the proposed company would find sufficient land for its purpose west of Port Sorell, convinced Bathurst, in whose estimation he stood high. The applicants were, therefore, asked to send a deputation to discuss the matter at the Colonial Office. Satisfied of their bona fides, Bathurst informed them of his readiness to promote their design and asked them to lay before him a fuller statement of the objects which the Company desired to accomplish and of the powers which it solicited from the Government to carry these objects into effect.

In his dealings with the Company Bathurst, on all occasions, showed himself devoted to the public interest. He fully realised the value of capital to a young and growing community and saw in the Company a means of conferring great benefits upon it, but he knew that small private settlers and local merchants might be injured by the presence of so powerful an organisation. In consequence he made it quite clear that the grant must be remote from the settled districts and offered them the unexplored region lying west of Port Sorell hoping, thereby, to open up for settlement an undeveloped territory at little cost to the public. In consequence of the limited size of the island only 250,000 acres would be granted. His concern for the public interest is again shown in the pledge he extracted from the applicants, "that the shares should not become a marketable or speculative property until the charter should be obtained (36).

The year of 1825 was one of frenzied speculation terminating in a crisis comparable with the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. Thousands upon thousands of pounds were invested by credulous speculators in the maddest schemes. No project was too wildly improbable, not even that of inventing perpetual motion, or of sending Scotch milkmaids to milk the wild cattle of Buenos Aires. The Ministry of the day, which included Huskisson, Canning, and Liverpool, openly deprecated the unreasoning speculation and vainly pointed out the consequences. By March, 1825, the price of shares had reached such a height that a crash was inevitable. Bathurst knew full well that the growth of interest in the Van Diemen's Land Company was in part a result of this speculative activity and the pledge demanded, which the Company honoured both in letter and in spirit, was part of his endeavour to repress the mania for share dealing, and to stem the flood.

Foiled in their first attempt to prevent the establishment of the Company by raising official doubts of the existence in the island of a sufficient quantity of suitable unlocated land, the "Australians" immediately planned to obtain an injunction to restrain the Van Diemen's Land Company from purchasing sheep in Europe for five or six years on the ground that the competition between the two would materially raise the price. The secret was not well kept and Pearse, who learnt of it the day before the "Australians" approached the Government, at once wrote to Horton protesting against the unfairness of the proposal and showing the invalidity of the argument. "They cannot send more than 1000 annually, reckoning 300 a vessel," he wrote, "and they would not take up vessels solely for sheep, but, supposing the extent of their purchase would be 3000, and they were to send out vessels answerable to this number, their purchase would produce the same effect in the market in Germany as the purchase of three sheep would in Smithfield (44). The Van Diemen's Land Company would agree not to purchase sheep for a year, but the "Australians," for their part, should agree to obtain all the sheep they needed in that time so that they might not interfere with the Van Diemen's Land Company when it went into the market. As an alternative he suggested that the Company to different districts for their sheep: "Let them choose Germany exclusively and we will go to Spain, or let them choose Spain and we will go to Germany, and settle it in the same manner that Abraham and Lot managed their concern under similar circumstances (55).

Bathurst summoned the leaders of both groups and exhorted them to settle the business by mutual arrangement in a fair and reasonable manner. If no agreement could be reached he would decide between them. The Van Diemen's Land Company, fearing that the more powerful interests behind the Australian Company might sway the Government, trod warily. The "Australians," asked what they wished, submitted two proposals. The Van Diemen's Land Company was to pledge itself neither to buy sheep in New South Wales or any sheep imported from there into Van Diemen's Land, openly or collusively, directly or indirectly, for twelve years, nor to buy sheep in the markets of Europe during the years 1825, 1826 and 1827 (56).

The island Company accepted the first proposal, although it pointed out that such a restriction might prove injurious to other interests both in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. The second they rejected as unreasonable and unjust, declaring that it meant the Australian Company would have a monopoly of the markets for sheep in the whole of Europe for three years and for no better reason than that the price of sheep might, by the competition of another buyer, be raised in the European market. Since, by a moderate computation, the sheep of Europe numbered 100,000,000, it was absurd to think that purchases made in any one year by the companies for the purpose of exportation to the other side of the world could have any effect on the market price. The great distance alone placed a check on the number that could be shipped. Moreover, the Van Diemen's Land Company failed to see how such restriction squared "with the acknowledged principles of free trade so ably advocated by many of the leading members of the Australian Company." As such a proposition would paralyse the proceedings of the Company, it could never be accepted (56).

Pereceiving that the "Australians" would not budge from the position they had taken up, Pearse sent a copy of the negotiations to Bathurst declaring that his Company had done everything possible to settle the dispute (56). This he was unwilling to do except as a last resource.

As a way out of the impasse Pearse suggested, in conversation with Horton, that the Van Diemen's
obtained a pledge from the "Australians" that application had been made to him (C1). In addition, either company to buy in any market after a special Markets, with the proviso that Bathurst could allow Company and those of Germany to the Australian to intervene. Eventually the markets of Spain and Portugal were allotted to the Van Diemen's Land Company on the ground that they would be highly injurious to the colony (C1).

A few days later the Van Diemen's Land Company made another conciliatory proposal. Curr informed Bathurst that his Company had under offer 5000 Merino sheep to be delivered at the port of embarkation at 40s. a head. He suggested the Australian Company be given the first option. If after one month they decided not to exercise it, the Van Diemen's Land Company should be at liberty to buy; and that this should be the practice followed in buying sheep during the years 1825 and 1826 (C1).

After this there could be no convincing talk of ruinous competition in the sheep markets of Europe. But even this liberal proposal failed to change the attitude of the Australian Company, which was so obviously unreasonable that Bathurst was forced to intervene. Eventually the markets of Spain and Portugal were allotted to the Van Diemen's Land Company and those of Germany to the Australian Company for the period of three years and each company pledged itself not to buy in each other's markets, with the proviso that Bathurst could allow either company to buy in any market after a special application had been made to him (C1). In addition, the Van Diemen's Land Company sought and obtained a pledge from the "Australians" that they would not adopt any measures likely to hinder them in obtaining sheep.

In accordance with Lord Bathurst's wish, on 22nd March Curr sent him a detailed statement of the Company's intentions and made formal application for a bill to be introduced into Parliament to establish it (C1). At the moment of the application Pearson was confined to his bed by sickness and could not, as he wished, interview Horton personally. He sent a letter, however, which reveals that the directors were growing impatient under the protracted delay. He declared that they had done everything within reason to meet the wishes of the Government and to prevent the mania for share dealing. In deference to Bathurst's doubts the Bill had been held over in the last session, but, as these doubts were now dissipated, it was due to the Company to have it brought in as early as possible (C1).

The scope of the Company's suggested activities had been greatly enlarged since the first application in May, 1824. The primary object was still the growth of fine wool and the improvement of some considerable portion of the waste and uninhabited lands, but mining, the growth of wheat for export to New South Wales, the Isle of France and the Brazils, the breeding of blood horses for India, whaling and sealing, distilling and brewing from their own produce, the lending of money on mortgage and on such personal securities as are not transferable by mere delivery and endorsement, the advancement of money to the colonial legislature for the purposes of the colony, and the undertaking of public works, were to engage its attention (C1).

Bathurst referred these suggestions and his intended reply to Sorell and asked him how far he considered the Company was likely to promote the welfare of the Colony and how far the provisions, which he proposed to sanction for its establishment, were adapted to the objects in view. Sorell's reply, afterwards printed as document 2 in a House of Commons Paper, was entirely favourable.

"The circumstances of Van Diemen's Land induce me to entertain a sanguine expectation of the beneficial results of a company investing an extensive capital in the island, to be applied to different branches of the colonial resources. Such an establishment, under the regulations proposed by your Lordship and conducted with judgment, cannot fail to invigorate the present colonists, to assist the development of the valuable products of the country and, directly or collaterally, to bring into action several important objects which, from want of capital, now either languish or remain wholly unattempted . . . ."

"The grant of land which Your Lordship proposes to concede the Company for agricultural improvements, though smaller, of course, in proportion to the capital from being in a country of limited extent than that which the Australian Company received, is adequate to the realisation upon an extensive scale of the improvements pointed out in Your Lordship's letter to the Managers of the Company, especially of the principal and original object of their plans, the improvement of sheep, for which the climate and soil of Van Diemen's Land are so favourable, as in the opinion of competent and experienced judges, guided by the success of all experiments for the improvement of wool which have yet been made, to leave no doubt that the same care and perseverance will give to the colony a breed of sheep not at all inferior in wool to the best in New South Wales: and, should the operations of the Company in this important branch exceed the capability of the present grant, and their claim be supported by practical success, it may be possible, when the island is become perfectly known to the Brazils, the breeding of blood horses for India, whaling and sealing, distilling and brewing from their own produce, the lending of money on mortgage and on such personal securities as are not transferable by mere delivery and endorsement, the advancement of money to the colonial legislature for the purposes of the colony, and the undertaking of public works, were to engage its attention (C1).

In view of the difference of opinion which arose on the location of the grant at a later time, Sorell's comments are important:
"The North West Quarter of Van Diemen's Land appears to me, under the imperfect information which I had the means of procuring from the remote parts of the island, to be the best suited for this grant. From Port Sorell, situated a short distance to the west of Port Dalrymple, to C. Grimm, the North-West point, there is a tract of mixed land, narrow at the East end, but becoming more open and clear of mountains as it extends to the westward, and having in it three ports or anchorages. I beg leave to suggest to Your Lordship that the tract of country between Port Sorell and Cape Grimm, bounded on the North by Bass's Straits, on the West by the Ocean, and on the East and South by two lines drawn from either shore so as to afford the depth required, might be allowed for the selection of the Company's Grant. And under these rules and measurements prescribed by Your Lordship, and I am of opinion that, with this latitude of selection, the measurement under these rules will realise Your Lordship's intention with respect to the extent and quality of the grant, and will sufficiently guard against any deterioration of the remaining country" (18).

On the 15th April, 1825, Bathurst wrote to Curr setting out clearly the terms upon which he was "prepared to advise His Majesty to sanction the projected Company." To prevent the concern from becoming a mere speculative venture he insisted that before a Bill was brought in, at least four-fifths of a capital of £500,000 should be subscribed and, before a charter was granted, the subscribers must deposit in the hands of the directors five per cent on the amount of capital subscribed, whilst the directors, in their part, must give him an assurance that the subscribers were "persons of capital and substance adequate to the payment of their subscriptions." The capital subscribed was to be divided into shares of £50 each and the shareholders' certificates were to be endorsed accordingly. Any additional increase of capital which, if so desired, could be doubled, had to be sanctioned by the Government. As soon as the proposed Charter of Incorporation shall be obtained and the necessary surveys completed, he wrote, "I shall be ready to advise His Majesty to make the Company a grant of 250,000 acres of land in the Island of Van Diemen's Land, and one of the primary objects on which the Company will be authorized to expend their capital will be the Clearing, Improvement and Cultivation of this Tract of Land. The words Improvement and Cultivation will be understood in a large and liberal sense as including the formation of Roads, Drains and Bridges, the erection of Houses, Mills and other Works and Machinery necessary or convenient for the occupation or profitable cultivation of the soil, the depasturing of Sheep or Cattle, and generally such operations of Agriculture or Pasturage as the exigencies and peculiar situation of settlers in a new country may require" (19).

He also looked to them to settle immigrants on their estates. They could engage in mining operations, but only on lands expressly demised or granted to them by the Crown for that purpose, and unless the Crown gave permission they were not at liberty to mine even upon their own lands. This restriction did not apply to quarrying for building materials. He did not approve of their engaging in whaling or sealing on the grounds that the conduct of a whale fishery upon an extensive scale required so much attention, involved so much risk and so large an expenditure that he could not deem it right to sanction the diversion of the Capital of the Company or the time of its Agents into such a channel; but loans of money, provided the total amount so used did not exceed £20,000, might be made to private individuals engaged in those pursuits. Although, at the wish of the directors, Sorell wrote of the opportunities awaiting and the benefits arising from the application of capital to the oil fishery (20) he was adamant on the restriction. Within certain defined limits they could contract and carry out any public works and could lend money to private settlers on mortgage and on personal security.

The total extent of money employed in public works was to be confined to £50,000; that on loan to the Government to £100,000; that on mortgage to £90,000, and the mortgages had to be registered: that on personal security to £20,000. Moreover, the power to engage in public works and to lend to the Government was restricted to a period of ten years. Banking and any species of trade other than the disposal of their own produce were wholly forbidden. No land could be purchased in the colony without the Governor's licence, but £20,000 could be expended in the purchase of houses, wharves and buildings.

"The Company will receive their grant," he continued, "in the North-West district of the Island, that district being for the present purpose considered as bounded on the North by Bass's Straights, on the West by the Ocean, and on the East and South by lines drawn from either shore so as to afford the necessary depth of Country. Within that district they will be at liberty to select any ungranted Lands at their own discretion; those lands must, however, be in one continuous and unbroken tract approximating to the form of a Square, as nearly as may be compatible with preserving a clear and well defined natural boundary. The whole quantity of useful land, that is of land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage, to be contained in this square is 250,000 acres; whatever useless and unprofitable land may be unavoidably included in order to complete the square figure will be granted to the Company gratuitously" (21).

Although Bathurst had named no eastern limits for the district, on all occasions Sorell, to whom the Government looked for advice, made it perfectly clear that he recommended the whole of the North-Western quarter of the island, which he defined as that part lying between Port Sorell and Cape Grimm, as the area wherein the Company might make its selection. There is no doubt that when Bathurst spoke of the "North-West district" he fully accepted Sorell's definition as did all concerned. Naturally enough, but unfortunately for the Company, no one thought necessary either to mark on a map the area open for selection, or to ask for a definition of the Eastern boundary and the resulting hiatus in official documents had a serious and harmful effect on its future activities in the island.

The survey and valuation of the land was to be carried out by five commissioners, two appointed by
the Crown, two by the Company, and one elected by the other four. If no agreement could be reached the Governor of Van Diemen's Land was to nominate the fifth commissioner.

The land was to be held in free and common seacoage, but an annual quit rent amounting to thirty shillings for every £100 of the value of the good and productive land was to be paid. This quit rent was not to become payable until five years after the date of the grant. The Company could redeem it wholly or in part, by giving six months' notice and paying into the Colonial Treasury a sum equal to twenty times the amount proposed to be extinguished, or in other words at twenty years' purchase. If the Van Diemen's Land Government was able and willing to supply convicts the Company must employ and maintain at their own expense as many convicts as they had free men. The employment and maintenance of these convicts was to be allowed in payment of the quit rent. £16 being the estimated amount saved the Government by wholly or partially engaging a convict for a year. If within fifteen years from the date of the grant the Company had, by the maintenance of convicts, saved the Government £75,000 the estate would be entirely free from quit rent.

The terms offered by Bathurst (in reality those agreed upon at the interview early in April) were at once accepted and on the 10th June, 1825, Parliament sanctioned the Bill. Although no charter had yet been granted, the understanding with the Government was definite enough to begin operations. The directors purchased sheep and cattle, hired servants under indentures and chartered the brig Trammele to carry them to the colony. At the same time they equipped an advance party to select the land and make the necessary arrangements for receiving the brig and her cargo, persuading Edward Curr to take charge.

In July, 1825, R. W. Hay, who had taken great interest in the project from the beginning and had exerted himself in forwarding its establishment, was appointed an additional Under-Secretary for the Colonies and given charge of British possessions in the Eastern Hemisphere. This appointment and the assurance of Bathurst's cordial assistance augured well for the Company.

Favourable as the terms of the land grant were, even better terms were to be obtained. On 15th September Curr wrote asking that the value of the estate would be entirely free from quit rent.

Just before his departure Curr again wrote to Bathurst asking that he recommend the interests of the Company to the protection of the local authorities in the Colony. At the same time he made particular requests about the assignment of convicts, the appointment of a military guard to prevent excesses on the Company's establishments, the survey of lands and the utilisation of natural boundaries, the working of mines and the division of the proposed grant.

A copy of these requests, together with the replies, Bathurst sent to Arthur, entrusting the despatch which contained them to Curr himself. Since the number of convicts required by the Company would tend to decrease most materially the great expenditure which their maintenance caused the State, Arthur was to pay attention to any applications for convicts; but with respect to convict mechanics he was to use his own judgment, taking care that in supplying these he hampered neither public works nor private settlers.

The matter of a military guard was left to Arthur's discretion. The appointment of Commissioners to measure the Company's lands might be waived if the Company's servants were satisfied with the award proposed by the Crown surveyor. Good natural boundaries were to be used wherever possible and if the Surveyor-General reported that it was impossible to grant the lands in one continuous and unbroken tract in the allotted district, Arthur could, upon the written application of the Company's general agent, allow part or the whole of the grant to be taken on any of the islands in Bass Strait, provided no serious inconvenience would result from this deviation from the original plan. As the quit rent and the other terms of the grant were made upon "the principle of the lands being marked out in one continuous tract in the North-West part of the island hitherto unexplored," the Company could not make selections in other districts, closer to the cultivated parts of the island, which would be of more value than the remote quarter to which they were confined. The Company could, if it so desired, work any mines found on its grants.

Provided with letters of introduction from Lord Bathurst and Under-Secretary Hay the little band comprising Edward Curr, chief agent; Stephen Adey, local authority; Alexander Goldie, agriculturist; Henry Hellyer, architect and surveyor; and Joseph Fossey and Clement Powell Lorymer, surveyors, sailed on the 12th of October, 1825, from Cowes, via Rio de Janeiro, in the Cape Packet, a ship of 200 tons, W. Kellie, captain. Curr and Adey were accompanied by their families.

Hopes ran high. All were young (their leader was only twenty-seven) and they faced the future with expectant enthusiasm. Curr was returning to the island as the chief representative of a wealthy
and influential company. Moreover, Lord Bathurst had named him as one of the six nominee members of the Legislative Council about to be instituted in the colony (*), a sure sign of the esteem in which the Company was held by the Home Government and the support it could look for at its hands. To a man of energy and ambition the prospect was bright. The lure of little voices led on the others no less strongly. They were going to an unknown land where anything was possible. Little did they anticipate the difficulties, anxieties and disappointments that lay ahead.

On the 10th November, when the advance party had been a month at sea, the Company's charter passed the Great Seal. The capital was set down at £1,000,000 sterling to be raised in shares of £100 each. Adequate provision was made to enforce the expenditure of considerable capital in improvements, and no land could be alienated until five years after the date of the grant.

II. LOCATION OF LAND.

On the 14th March, 1826, after a voyage of 143 days, the Cape Packet anchored in the Derwent and the passengers gladly came ashore. Immediately on landing, Curr forwarded to Government House the despatches relative to the Company's affairs which Bathurst had entrusted to him, (*) together with a letter from the directors recommending their agents to the Governor's protection and favour, and personal letters of recommendation obtained from friends before leaving England (*). Arthur showed none of his characteristic austerity of manner. He at once invited Curr to dinner and was extremely courteous and friendly. Curr was delighted with the reception and from the Governor's strong assurances of goodwill came away convinced of his cordial co-operation and assistance.

Much to Curr's surprise, in the course of conversation Arthur mentioned Cape Grim as the locality of the Company's operations. By some neglect of the Colonial Office, it appeared that he had not been kept in touch with the negotiations for the formation of the Company and knew only of Bathurst's reply to Curr of the 15th April, 1825. By the despatch enclosing this he learnt of the establishment of the Company "for agricultural operations generally but more especially to the rearing of flocks of sheep of the finest and purest breed." He was instructed "that the north-west part of the island bounded on the north by Bass Straits, on the west by the ocean, and on the east and south by lines drawn from either shore" was to be reserved until the Company had selected its land, (*) and at once marked off an area of about 500,000 acres at Cape Grim.

By this reservation Curr saw the favourable conditions obtained from the Colonial Office greatly diminished and immediately discussed the matter with Adey (*). They determined to lose no time in obtaining a greater latitude of selection and on the following Monday waited on the Governor and discussed the position with him at length. Curr quoted Sorell's letter (*) in support of his claim for a wider choice of selection and gave Arthur his "most positive assurance" that Bathurst intended the Company to make its selection in the district between Port Sorell and Cape Grim. The interview ended without any decision being reached, but on the next day Arthur sent for Curr and informed him that he might select the Company's grant within the limits described by Colonel Sorell in his letter to Lord Bathurst (*). This was subsequently confirmed by letter and he was told that there need not, on account of the Government, be one day's delay in proceeding to select the exact location of the grant (*).

Curr noted with satisfaction the general progress of the colony since his departure in June 1825. On every hand there were abundant signs of prosperity. The private buildings recently erected were of a better class than formerly and the export trade was rapidly increasing. Every description of property was maintaining its value while the cost of living had substantially decreased.

"In a word" he wrote to Inglis "a little more liberality on the part of the Government, a little more personal condescension in the Governor, and success against the bushrangers would make this a very happy colony." The stage seemed set for the speedy success of the Company's undertaking.

Arthur's initial goodwill was again shown by his readiness to supply a small detachment of soldiers. Curr had applied to Bathurst for a military guard to prevent excesses by the convicts assigned to the Company and the state of the colony on his arrival furnished an additional motive for his request. The whole colony was kept in a state of alarm by the depredations of bushrangers and such was the general terror that he found the inhabitants of Hobart mounting guard.

"You cannot figure to yourself any description of outrage which these miscreants have not been guilty of," he wrote, "and nothing is more astonishing than the success which has attended them. One person is in gaol who has committed eight murders, and some of those who are still at large are scarcely his inferiors in crime" (*). It was the period when Brady, McCabe, Jeffries and Dean were terrorising the colony. Arthur exerted all his powers against them with such effect that within three weeks of Curr's letter, he could inform Bathurst that "bushranging has been for the present pretty well put down" (*)

By the time Curr was ready to set out to locate the grant there was very little to fear from bushrangers. Arthur well knew that the harmony of an establishment depended on efficient and capable management, not on a display of force, yet because they wished it, he promised the Company's agents that he would send a few soldiers to their first establishment.

Although Arthur seemed prepared to give the Company the same countenance and support it had received from Bathurst, he was equally determined that the interest of the colony should not be sacrificed to it. He had always doubted the wisdom of bestowing extensive grants in Van
Dielmen's Land. Seven months after his arrival, and at the time that the founders of the Company were renewing their application, he informed Bathurst that, owing to the paucity of good land in the colony, the portioning out of the valley from Hobart to Launceston in such extensive grants as had been done was a great misfortune ("). In the light of this his concern at the granting to the company of 250,000 acres of land, all of which was to be usable, any unprofitable land being granted gratuitously, may be readily appreciated. What the Island needed, he informed Horton two months earlier, was some of the superabundant farming population of Great Britain. "It is men of this description we want even more than large capitalists," he wrote ("). Then too, he viewed Van Diemen's Land as primarily an establishment for convicts and he saw in the location of the Company in the north-west quarter a threat to the efficiency of his dread prison at Macquarie Harbour. The inhospitable and savage region between it and the inhabited districts had hitherto made escape extremely hazardous and almost impossible but now escapees would find a convenient half-way house, for in the assigned servants of the Company they would find accessories ready and willing to supply food and clothes and further their escape ("). He foresaw difficulties in fulfilling the Company's request for assigned servants, (" and he realised quite well the power and influence of a large and wealthy company of merchants numbering several Members of Parliament among its proprietors, with its headquarters in London and having ready access to the Secretary of State and the Under Secretaries. In spite of these misgivings he was prepared to do what he could for the agents. "They have experienced and shall continue to receive every possible assistance from the local government," he wrote to Hay, and if the plan breaks down I hope you will have no reason to complain of me ."

The voyage out had taken a month longer than Curr had anticipated and he was worried lest the lateness of the season should hamper the search for suitable land. Much to his annoyance, the captain was still further delayed by a legal prosecution arising from the voyage. The excessive monotony unavoidably associated with a long sea journey, and the cramped quarters, bad enough at the best of times, were made unbearable by the captain's disposition and outbursts of temper. A petty tyrant, he lost no opportunity of exercising his authority over both passengers and crew. One hundred and three days out from England matters came to a head. On 24th of January, when the ship had been becalmed for some days, Adey and Goldie asked the captain to let them take one of the boats and go ward-shooting. He peremptorily refused and soon after went below. Then followed an extraordinary incident that reveals the overwrought state of all on board. The mate, Ruxton, who had secretly abstracted the captain's shot belts, ordered a boat to be lowered and, recommended by Adey, Goldie and two seamen, pulled away. A little later the captain, Kellie, came on deck and, furious at seeing his orders so flagrantly disobeyed, at once boisted a signal of recall. Then, seizing a musket from his cabin, he fired three shots at the culprits who at once returned. When they came alongside he roundly abused the mate and told him if he had not returned he would have fired a carronade into the boat and sunk her.

On the 11th February he had another violent disagreement with Ruxton and, accusing him of insubordination, put him in irons. Between 11 and 12 o'clock on the same night two of the crew, Howard and Silver, filed them off.

When he saw the mate at liberty Kellie called all hands aft, asked who had dared release the mate, and ordered the carpenter to put the irons on again. The crew tried to reason with him but he would not listen. Howard stepped forward to intercede and at once the skipper knocked him down. Rising to his feet Howard seized a marlin spike and threatened to run Kellie through if he touched him again. Kellie thereupon drew forth a pair of pistols and, holding one in each hand, drove the mate and the crew before him into the forecastle. Standing in the doorway he again ordered the carpenter to put on the irons and threatened to blow out the brains of the first man who interfered. Reluctantly the carpenter set about his task but his movements were too slow for Kellie who cried out, "You hold him and I will put them on myself," and suited the action to his words. Valentine Hobbs, a member of the crew, then appealed on behalf of Ruxton and asked that he be placed under bond and, if he broke that, the captain could do as he liked. In a towering rage at this interference, Kellie shouted, "Out of this everyone of you ", and at the same time fired one of his pistols, wounding Hobbs in the side.

Immediately on arrival at Hobart the officers and most of the men left the vessel. Hobbs laid information against Kellie for maliciously wounding him, Ruxton and Howard applied for warrants against him for assault, and Adey for using firearms with intent to do bodily harm. Defended by Gellibrand, Kellie pleaded in defence that the ship's crew was in a state of mutiny. Curr, Adey, Goldie and Fossey were cited as witnesses and all affirmed that they never saw any malicious behaviour or disturbance on the part of the crew. For three full days the case dragged on, the court sitting until 9 o'clock each night, and on the last day, Saturday, March 26th, until 11. Gellibrand threw himself into the defence with characteristic energy (at one stage he cross-questioned Howard for four hours) and eventually obtained Kellie's acquittal (").

Almost another month had been lost by the trial but Curr had made what preparations he could. Men were engaged, carts and horses purchased and every attempt made to get information of the district from Port Sorell westward.

On the 12th of April the advance party left Hobart. On the 20th, the whole party left Mr. Dry's farm on Western River, their rendezvous, and two days later entered the district in which the Company's lands were to be selected—the northern part of the island west of Port Sorell.
Here, bordering on the Port itself, they found that Captain Malcolm Laing Smith, a free settler who had come to the colony under Earl Bathurst’s special recommendation, (25) had already selected 2000 acres. Curr immediately returned to Hobart to ask that this selection be not confirmed, on the grounds that Bathurst had ordered the district to be reserved until the Company had made its selection. This objection reopened the question of the district in which the Company might select its lands. Arthur saw with concern the clash between the Company and an individual settler. After a re-perusal of the despatches appertaining to the Company’s grant, he informed Curr that he doubted whether Bathurst really intended the Company’s grant to be near Port Sorell and qualified his former permission by stating that it must be subject to confirmation from the home authorities (26).

Curr argued dispassionately but strongly in support of his claim. He showed clearly that his interpretation was quite consonant with Bathurst’s despatches and that such “select” must be given than Arthur’s original reservation would permit, if the word ‘select’ were to bear its usual meaning. To Curr the qualification was serious, for he had given Arthur his positive assurance that it had been Bathurst’s intention to allow the wide selection he claimed. Arthur, in effect, doubted his word and placed him in a most invidious position. Still, Arthur was in a dilemma! On the one hand he had Curr’s positive statement, on the other, his despatches and Curr’s own letters to Bathurst which spoke of the Company’s land as being “located in the extreme north-west at a distance of several days’ journey from the inhabited districts and, as far as it is at present known, wholly inaccessible by land” (27). Curr himself appreciated Arthur’s position and, in placing the proceedings before the directors, wrote, “I am not certain that in his place I should not think as he does.” But he must be freed from any charge of duplicity, for the authoritative sketch map of the colony, (29) that of Thomas Scott, Assistant Surveyor General, showed the north-west district completely shut off from the rest of the island by ranges of mountains and established a belief in its remoteness and inaccessibility; and in negotiations Sorell had stressed Port Sorell.

The explanation of this conflict is to be found in the comparatively rapid development of the colony. When Sorell left, settlement was mainly confined to the valley between Hobart and Launceston, shut in on the east and west by ranges of mountains. On the west in particular, the escarpment of the central plateau known as the Western Tiers prevented expansion by a precipitous wall 3000 feet high. Forty miles from the northern coast the wall terminates in a bold promontory, Dry’s Bluff, and wheels back at right angles to its former direction. A line drawn back from the base of this bluff is in a northerly direction to the sea marked the frontier of settlement at Sorell’s departure. Here, only 17 miles west of Launceston, was the last farmhouse, that of Mr. Richard Dry, whose son, Sir Richard Dry, was to win fame some years later as the champion of political liberty. When the Company was authorised to make its selection, this was the limit of settlement known to Curr and Sorell. But between the departure of Sorell and the arrival of the Company’s agents the tide of settlement had flowed westward and the country beyond Dry’s farm was being eagerly taken up. When Curr arrived, Port Sorell, instead of being remote from settlement, was in reality bordering upon it and a rough cart-road had been formed as far as Simpson’s Run which actually lay within the boundaries of the district claimed by the Company’s agents as being reserved to them for selection, (29) being nine miles beyond the ford on the Western River and 22 miles beyond Dry’s farm. The country west of Dry’s, although heavily timbered, was free from scrub and admirably adapted for cattle. The extent to which settlement had taken place is well illustrated by Curr himself. “On the 22nd of April”, he wrote, “crossing the River Quamby (30) nine miles from Mr. Leith’s we entered, for the first time, the district within which the Company’s lands are to be selected. Beyond the Quamby two herds of cattle and one small flock of sheep have been pastured for the last 18 months, and another herd of cattle was brought over after the last crop. Two cart roads were made and provisions for the stock keepers had also travelled this way.” (31) By means of this rough cart-track Curr and his men had ready access to the Port Sorell district.

While there is no doubt, as Curr claimed, that Bathurst intended the Company to select anywhere between Port Sorell and Cape Grim, it is equally certain, as Arthur affirmed, that he meant them to select in a district removed from settlement. His despatches to Arthur, and his letters to the Company’s representatives containing frequent statements of the remoteness of their lands, leave no doubt of this. “As the quit rents to be paid by the Company on the lands granted to them”, he wrote, “were made upon the principle of the lands being marked out in one continuous tract in the north-west part of the island, hitherto unexplored I am not prepared to authorize the Company to make selections in other districts more adjacent to the cultivated parts of the Island” (32). Curr himself, at any rate while in England, thought of the grant as being remote from the settled districts, for he asked for a military guard to prevent excesses by the assigned convicts, which they might be led into “from the distance of the Company’s Establishments from the inhabited part of the colony;” (32) and in an earlier letter, it will be recalled, he wrote of the grant as “being located in the extreme north-west several days’ journey from the inhabited districts” (33).

The growth of the colony had thus markedly increased the value of the Company’s concession if they were to be allowed to settle near Port Sorell and Curr, as the Company’s representative, was determined to make the most of these advantages which the passage of time had conferred. An examination of the district convinced him of its quality. While it contained some utterly barren and useless land, the good land he described as “not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, by any in the island”; (34) and in addition its proximity to the
settled districts was highly advantageous. He had no hesitation in deciding that this should eventually form part of the Company's selection. "I consider it of the greatest importance that Port Sorell with a stream which runs northward into it should form our eastern boundary" he wrote (5). Here between Port Sorell and the Mersey he proposed to begin fanning operations. It was essential therefore that Captain Malcolm Smith's location be not allowed.

Arthur was determined that the Company should not be so placed as to stem the tide of settlement and, placing great stress on the word 'extreme', did everything in his power to force selection further to the west. When Curr in several letters affirmed his interpretation that the Company's selection should begin from Port Sorell and work westward, Arthur replied that it should begin from Cape Grim in the extreme north-west and work eastward. Both referred the matter home.

Meantime the Company's officers were busily engaged in exploring by sea and land all the district between Port Sorell and Cape Grim. On the 1st of July, Adey landed at Circular Head and was delighted with the beautiful and comparatively open country he found. Here, instead of the dense unbroken forest further east, were "tracts of from 200 to 500 acres of clear and grassy lands, and hills not so heavily timbered" (6). The harbour he found good, the anchorage excellent, and there was no want of fresh water. From this and other reports it seemed to him a place admirably adapted to the Company's purpose, the production of fine wool. As the Tranmere with the first consignment of live-stock was expected in a few weeks he was anxious that the location should be settled as early as possible. These reports, coupled with the Governor's determined opposition to a grant in the Port Sorell district, brought a decision to occupy Circular Head (7) as a beginning. A letter from Adey (8) a fortnight later, stating that Goldie had found in the vicinity of Circular Head and Cape Grim from 50,000 to 70,000 acres of good land of service to the Company, reinforced this decision and inclined Curr a little more favourable to Cape Grim.

On the 30th of October, 1826, nearly a week after Circular Head had been occupied, Curr, bowing to the inevitable, wrote Arthur to the effect that he accepted his ruling in the location of the Company's land, but he in no wise retracted from his former statement that it was Bathurst's original intention to permit a selection anywhere between Port Sorell and Cape Grim. His own words are a clear and effective statement of his position.

"I beg leave to state that it is my unaltered opinion that the words of Lord Bathurst's various despatches . . . do clearly authorise the Company's Commissioners to select their lands anywhere within the north-west quarter of the Island: but it is not inconsistent with this opinion to admit that the different view which His Excellency has taken of His Lordship's meaning, proves that reasonable doubts may be entertained whether I have correctly understood the meaning or not. It is more than probable that, when the question is referred to Lord Bathurst, his Lordship will know nothing from recollection, and will only be able to ascertain what his intentions were from what appears on the record of the despatches which His Lordship wrote at the time. His Excellency has shown me that a conclusion diametrically opposite to that which I have arrived at may be drawn from those despatches; there would be a considerable risk, therefore, in acting upon my own understanding of them, through His Excellency leaves me at liberty so to do: for, should I be in error, the consequence would be that His Lordship would not confirm the grant selected for the Company; much time and money would have been expended upon the lands which afterwards must be vacated, a risk which I do not feel myself authorised to incur" (9).

Had no obstacle been thrown in his way he would have chosen the land near Port Sorell and he therefore claimed the Company had an equitable claim for compensation, because he had been compelled to take a less valuable grant than they were entitled to. He expressed himself as determined to point out to the directors the compensation he considered would most nearly balance the loss. He was equally resolved to lose none of the concessions and, lest his acceptance of Arthur's ruling in regard to the location might be regarded as surrendering the right to make a selection on the islands in Bass Strait, he definitely stated that he did not relinquish this privilege.

At this time he was considering King Island as forming part of the Company's grant. He had received flattering reports (10) of the island and was awaiting with interest the result of the survey which Arthur, fearing that the value of his penal settlement at Macquarie Harbour would be diminished if the Company's grant were placed at Cape Grim, had instituted in the hope of finding land suitable for the pasturing and rearing of fine woolled sheep, the Company's avowed purpose; or failing this, of estimating its eligibility for a penal establishment. The report though not available until August, 1827 proved the island unsuitable for the Company's purpose.

Curr at once advised his directors that, as he had not been allowed the freedom of choice agreed upon in England, they should claim as compensation 10,000 or 20,000 acres "the best and in the best situation near the settled districts, and beyond the Ouse, which can be found" (11). In support of the claim he stated that, with the exception of the south-west quarter, he considered the district of Cape Grim the worst adapted in point of situation of any land in the island for the Company's purpose (12). Moreover, the climate was less severe and mild than that of the eastern districts. He had brought the suggested grant in the Ouse under the notice of Arthur, who was disposed to give the Company the occupation for two or three years to help them over the difficult period of beginning. This did not satisfy Curr at all. "If I accept of this" he wrote "I will be principally with the view of gaining time which the Court may employ in exerting what influence they may have with the Colonial Government at home to obtain a
grant of the reserved district as part of the 250,000 acres assigned to the Company" (**). Thus we see the fear so often reiterated in the Van Diemen's Land papers, that the Company would exert its influence to undermine the local government, was very real.

A fortnight later Curr applied for a grant of land west of the River Ouse, on the grounds that he needed a depot for such stock as would be purchased until it could be driven to the Company's own lands (**). He asked for a two years' possession. Arthur referred the application to his Executive Council. Curr, as a member, was present when the application was considered and was asked to explain the purposes for which he required the land. He stated that he intended to purchase 10,000 sheep at once and, as no overland route to Circular Head had yet been found, he needed a temporary pasturage near the settled sheep districts. After mature deliberation the Council considered it but reasonable to grant his request, provided the location was not near enough to the settled districts to cause any inconvenience to free settlers who might arrive during the period of possession. Fearing that the temporary occupation might become permanent, the Council added a rider to the effect that it would not be advisable to make a permanent grant of land to the Company in the neighbourhood of the settled districts and so far removed from its grant (**). Hedged in by such restrictions, the concession was useless and Curr soon abandoned it. Arthur had correctly divined the meaning of the thrust and, by calling in the Executive Council to his aid, had cleverly countered.

While it gave great satisfaction to Arthur to know that the Company had made a beginning at Circular Head, he was fully aware that the dispute was by no means over. The Company was to receive 250,000 acres of "land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage ", and there was ample room for difference of opinion. The granting of land on such a principle was quite novel in either New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. No free settler obtained his grant in this way, and the Australian Agricultural Company received nothing but a straight grant of 1,000,000 acres. Curr made no secret of the fact that to obtain the requisite amount of suitable land a vast area would be necessary. "It may take 1,500,000 or 1,800,000 acres to include the 250,000 acres of useful land," he wrote to the Directors (**), and in a later despatch (**), he thought even 3,000,000 acres might be necessary.

This he told Arthur, who was highly indignant at what he considered sharp practice, asserting that Curr had played upon the ignorance of the Colonial Office and had used his personal knowledge of Van Diemen's Land to obtain a concession detrimental to the interests of the colony. Whether, with Arthur, we regard this as a piece of chicanery or, with Hay, as a legitimate stroke of business (**), there is no doubt that he had gained a valuable concession for the Company. "I submit," wrote Arthur to Bathurst, "that it would have been better to have given the Company a million or even two millions of acres upon the principle of admeasurement observed towards the Australian Company (**): for from the unequal quality of the soil and rugged features of a large portion of Van Diemen's Land, the manner of taking the Company's land must lead to their occupying a vast extent of the country. According to Mr. Curr's present idea scarcely less than one fourth of the whole island, the whole North West quarter, will give such a grant as to qualify it as intended by Your Lordship that the Company should possess, so that Mr. Curr, although setting out from Cape Grim may yet anchor the Company's vessel which he is steering in the much desired haven of Port Sorell." (**).

But of his opposition he left no doubt: "I cannot approve of their occupying such a space as must operate in a very great degree to the exclusion of future settlers" (**).

In a letter to his directors Curr was no less definite: "If these conditions of giving the Company 250,000 acres of useful land be correctly acted upon the badness of the great majority of the north-west quarter of the Island will have the obvious advantage that the further the limits of the land extend the nearer they will approach the settled districts" (**).

Arthur was hopeful that 100,000 acres would be found in the vicinity of Cape Grim without detriment to future settlers. For the location of the balance he had other plans which would enable the Company to obtain the necessary suitable land without injury to the Colony. On the morning of the 15th of November he sent for Curr and suggested that the Company obtain the right to select a portion of its land in Australia, pointing out Westernport and King George's Sound as two likely localities. Curr considered King George's Sound too remote, but was pleased with the thought of Westernport. Attention had been directed to this district by a report, published in 1825, of a recent overland journey made to the south coast of Australia by Hume and Hovell. They had found excellent country admirably adapted for sheep on the western shores of Port Phillip but, by an error in their reckoning, thought they were further east. Consequently the report spoke of the excellent country at Westernport and it was this district which Arthur now suggested.

The official ignorance of Australia generally is well illustrated by Arthur's despatch to Bathurst and by his conversation with Curr. The charter of the Australian Agricultural Company decreed that no rival incorporated or joint stock company could be established in New South Wales, which, at this time, was defined as extending from the latitude of Wilson's Promontory in the south, to the latitude of Cape York in the north, and from the east of Australia as far west as the 129th meridian. Westernport lies within these limits it is obvious that the Van Diemen's Land Company could not obtain land there. But Arthur was fully convinced that Westernport was not within the territory of New South Wales, spoke of it as being not more than four hours' run from George Town on the Tamar, and was sure that Bathurst would "willingly and even gladly entertain such a proposal from the
He further proposed to Bathurst that portion of Australia lying west of the 129th meridian be placed under the Government of Van Diemen's Land and spoke of there being with this territory "a very ready intercourse across the straights". His ignorance of the distances involved is remarkable. Westernport is 200 miles from the mouth of the Tamar and is separated from it by a strait notorious for inclement winds and rough seas; while any settlements made west of the 129th meridian would be more than 1200 miles from the Tamar, and scarcely to be described as having ready intercourse.

Curr at once fell in with Arthur's suggestion and strongly advised the directors to approach Bathurst with a view of obtaining all but 100,000 acres of their grant at Westernport, quoting as a precedent the Van Diemen's Land Association, which was permitted to take 10,000 acres in Van Diemen's Land and 10,000 acres at Westernport. He further advised them to solicit a larger extent of land, pointing out that Bathurst had granted only 250,000 acres in Van Diemen's Land because of the restricted area of the island but this limitation would not apply to Australia. If Curr had forgotten that the Company was restricted by its charter to Van Diemen's Land the directors had not, and the proposal was rejected.

The important question of the quality of the land that the Company was bound to accept, Arthur referred to the Executive Council. This, and the application for a temporary grant on the Ouse, had been listed as Council business for the same day, but the discussion on the quality of land was so prolonged that consideration of the grant had to be deferred until the next meeting. Arthur asked Curr to draw up a Minute of his claim for consideration of the Governor-in-Council. It was clearly and ably drawn and Curr was present to explain, discuss and enforce its contents. The whole question turned on the interpretation of Bathurst's amplification of the term useful land, "that is land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage".

Curr maintained that land covered with a dense forest of heavy timber and producing no grass, even if the soil was good, could not be classed as useful land within Bathurst's meaning. Although it was true that such land could be made useful by clearing, yet the excessive cost of the operation made it, in Bathurst's words, useless and unprofitable. The terms of the Company's grant, he argued, differed greatly from that of individuals. They received a grant in gross and must take the good with the bad, but the Company had received a net grant. He was entitled to take only such land as could be put under the plough with little or no expense for clearing or, if not suitable for cultivation, could be used as pasture: the worst kind of land he should be expected to accept was that which in its natural state produced grass and was at least capable of being used as pasture land.

The Council considered these expectations unreasonable and advised Arthur to refer the subject to Bathurst for further instructions as to his intentions, pointing out that it would require nearly one-quarter of the Island to provide a grant such as described by Curr. Furthermore, Bathurst had refused a gross grant of 500,000 acres as excessive, and they could not assume that he intended to make a grant at least five times as extensive. These were the arguments Arthur had used weeks before. Secure in the support of his Council, he found its concerted opinion a substantial makeweight against any representations made by the court of directors in England.

Meanwhile the Company's officers pushed on with the exploration of the north-west district in an endeavour to find a suitable area. In February, 1827, Hellyer discovered in the vicinity of St. Valentine's Peak, about 25 miles from the north coast, two extensive tracts of open country, the smaller of which he named the Hampshire Hills, the larger, the Surrey Hills. He gave a glowing report of his discovery, and wrote of "gently rising, dry, grassy hills resembling English enclosures in many respects, being bounded by brooks between each, with belts of beautiful shrubs in every vale". The whole country he described as being grassy; timothy, foxtail, and single kangaroo constituting the chief grasses. Here he ascended the most magnificent grassy hill he had seen in the Island, beyond which there was not a tree for four miles. Kangaroos, a sure sign of the goodness of the soil and herbage, were abundant. The trees were dotted about as in a park, each a hundred yards from the others, but affording the requisite amount of shade for flocks on a summer's day; on all sides arose grassy hills without number. Across the district ran a brook the banks of which were green with trefoil. "Brooks with hard pebbly bottoms free from mud, and the water as clear as crystal, traversed the country in all directions". Possey, another surveyor who was instructed to enter the Surrey Hills from the eastward, confirmed Hellyer's report. The country in the vicinity of the Leven he represented as "having very much the appearance of a nobleman's domain both as to extent and good quality". The whole district, so far as he was able to ascertain from actual observation and appearances, was a tract both as to extent and other qualities likely to suit the purposes for which it is required.

Curr received these reports with delight. Here apparently was land eminently suited for the Company's purpose, but he was not disposed to relinquish Circular Head and there was some most desirable land at Cape Grim. To retain these districts and acquire the new land must involve another conflict with the local government, because either the grant must be broken into separate locations, or the Company must acquire at least one-sixth of the Island. Nothing daunted he resolved to use every effort to secure the land discovered by Hellyer, and recommended his directors to do the same. Because there was insufficient good land at Cape Grim, he declared his intention of making a settlement at the Hampshire Hills early in the next Spring.

This decision was barely reached when despatches from England brought Bathurst's decision as to the extent of country wherein the Company might select its lands. When Curr's letters telling of the dispute with the local government about location reached
England, the directors at once approached Hay with reference to an interview relative to the matter; James Inglis, as chairman of directors, met Hay and Horton at the Colonial Office and proposed a north and south line through Port Sorell as the eastern boundary and an east and west line through Mt. Heemskirk as the southern. Hay would not agree to this as it would interfere with land already allotted to, or considered requisite for, grants to private settlers. However, as there was some doubt of what passed when the agreement was under discussion, it was necessary to have a meeting with Colonel Sorell and Mr. Barnard who were present at the earlier negotiations.

Accordingly on the 28th December, 1826, the Company's representatives, James Bischoff, Captain Dundas and James Inglis, met the two Under-Secretaries at the Colonial Office and found Colonel Sorell and Mr. Edward Barnard already in attendance. A map was produced and Sorell was asked to describe on it the boundaries of the territory he had in mind when he wrote to Lord Bathurst on the 2nd April, 1825. His reply was a strict confirmation of Curr's statement: "He had in contemplation that the Company might be allowed to begin their survey westward of Port Sorell and to follow the northern shore of the Island to Cape Grim. He did not contemplate that they were to be limited in the first instance to any number of acres, particularly so near to Cape Grim as appeared to have been understood in the Island" (4).

As a result of this it was agreed that a letter should be sent to Bathurst asking for his approval of the boundaries asked for by the Company and that it should be accompanied by a map of the north-western part of Van Diemen's Land upon which was traced two inland lines as suggested by Sorell.

Realising that the difference of opinion between Arthur and Curr arose from inconsistencies in the wording of the agreement, Bathurst compromised. While he agreed that he meant that there should be a much greater latitude of selection than Arthur had conceived, yet he was insistent that he never intended the grant to border on the settled districts. That this was well understood by all he proved, as Arthur before him, by citing as evidence Curr's letter written on the eve of his departure from England, in which he stated that the part of the Island in which the Company's lands were to be located was in the extreme north-west at a distance of several days' journey from the inhabited districts, and as far as it is at present known wholly inaccessible by land" (58). However, he was prepared to meet the Company if land in the remote districts was, after an examination made by the Surveyor-General, found unfit for the feeding of sheep, the land might be chosen anywhere within the limits marked out on the map sent him (58), that is between Port Sorell and Cape Grim, and he would instruct Arthur accordingly.

That there might not be any future misunderstanding in determining the quality of the land that should be considered adapted for their purpose, he laid it down that, as the breeding of fine woolled sheep was the Company's principal object, "the fitness or unfitness of the land which may be surveyled for the use of the Company must principally depend on its suitableness for Sheep Pasturage (4). This was what Curr had always maintained, and the directors were no less insistent on such a view:

"The Court have in all their views and plans for forming the Company calculated on the acquisition of large tracts of natural pasturage at least for sheep; with only partial or occasional improvements by tillage (4). Three months later they were told that a small grant of land would be made to them on the shores of Port Sorell, if it were advantageous to them (4).

There was, however, to be a limit to the amount of land received. Before long Arthur received further instructions as to a definite ruling on Curr's claim to take in an area equal to a quarter of the Island, if necessary, to get the requisite good land. Bathurst expressed surprise at Curr's claims, and showed that in the preliminary discussions with the Company he had expressed a doubt as to their finding unlocated land available for their purpose, but that the Company's representatives declared that they were able to show that an infinitely greater quantity of land adapted for their purposes would easily be found, "distinct and wide from the present located districts" (4). He could not consent to allow them to occupy so vast an area of country as to bring them into contact with the settled districts, or inconveniently near the penal settlement of Macquarie Harbour. If sufficient land were not available on the main, then recourse was to be had to the alternative suggested by Curr just before he left England, that portion of the grant should be taken in one of the dependencies of Van Diemen's Land. As to compensation, he refused to admit that the Company had the slightest claim.

It will be recalled that when Curr prepared a minute for the Executive Council he stressed that the Company expected to obtain lands that were suited for sheep pasture without any clearing and we find the directors strongly supporting this claim: "The Court have in all their views and plans for forming the Company calculated on the acquisition of large tracts of natural pasturage, at least for sheep; with only partial or occasional improvements by tillage (4).

The result of the appeal to Bathurst reached Van Diemen's Land most opportunely for Curr. No longer confined in his choice of lands to the north-west corner, he could enter into fresh negotiations with the local government. True, the southern limit as marked on the map intersected the land discovered by Hellyer, but he thought that by the concerted efforts of the directors at Home and himself in the Colony these limits could be extended (4). As to Circular Head, he was determined it should be retained no matter where the rest of the grant should be placed.

Accordingly, although the good temper which had marked the earlier negotiations had long since departed, he entered into a long personal conference with Arthur with satisfactory results. An officer of the Survey Department was to be sent to examine the district at Cape Grim and it was thought that from 100,000 to 150,000 acres of land suitable for the Company's purpose would be found. Arthur also
promised to recommend to the Secretary of State that the grant be broken into three separate portions, the first to comprise an area at Cape Grim, the second all the available land at Circular Head, and the third to take in the Hampshire and the Surrey Hills and, in addition, that the Company be allowed to move the southern limit of location a few miles to the southward for this purpose. By this agreement, in reality a compromise, Arthur kept the Company to the west of Round Hill and Curr obtained Circular Head and the new country. Arthur, however, had gained his point. The Company must begin from Cape Grim and work eastward and be confined to a district far removed from the settled districts. Once more he had shown his cleverness and the adroitness with which he parries all attacks and triumphs over all his enemies (*). But the hopes of the directors were short lived. The Prime Minister, Canning, died on the 8th of August and, a few days after the deputation, the King sent for Goderich to form a cabinet. Huskisson proved far less compliant than Goderich. He would not agree to any extension of the area open for selection because "it was clearly understood that the grant should be made in a part of the Island distant and distinct from the present located lands". Nor would he sanction the Company's definition of useful land and regarded the expectation of the directors as unreasonable because "in any new country the clearing of timber has always formed one of the principal operations by which it has been settled. Any land that could be cultivated must be regarded as good land for the purposes of the Company's purpose" (*). He brought to the problem a mind free from any preconceived notions and, taking the words of the terms arranged by Bathurst at their face value, ruled that "within the district described, the Company might select any continuous tract of 250,000 acres which best suited their object and purposes. It was the liberal intention of His Majesties Government not to reckon as part of the useful land, or 62,500 acres in all. But at the same time he intimated that there would be some addition to the amount of quit rent.

They knew, they said, that such a claim could not be substantiated merely by the terms under which the grant was made by Bathurst, wherein one of the primary objects on which the Company was to spend its capital was "the clearing, improvement and cultivation" of the grant and "generally in such operations of agriculture and pasturage as the exigencies and peculiar situation of settlers in a new country may require" (*); but, at the initial negotiations, it was clearly understood on both sides that the Company's lands were to be sheep pastures similar to those of the older districts where clearing was not a difficult matter. It was never intended that the Company should be expected to take up dense primeval forest which could be cleared only after vast labour and expense.

Meanwhile the directors for their part were not idle, and sent a deputation to Downing Street. Robinson, better known by his later title of Lord Goderich, had succeeded Bathurst at the Colonial Office and gave them favourable audience. As far back as September 1826 Curr had written that he did not think the land could be obtained in one continuous block, a hint which the directors now acted upon. They sought permission to select their grant in detached portions free from forest in the north-west and the north-east of the Island and asked that a small allotment be granted on the route from Hobart Town to Circular Head as a place of refreshment for travellers and stock in passing to and fro. As no objection was made to these proposals, they were sanguine that they would be allowed and were further heartened when a despatch to Governor Arthur, wherein he was asked to put the most liberal construction on the agreement with the Company, was read to them (*). But the hopes of the directors were short lived. The Prime Minister, Canning, died on the 8th of August and, a few days after the deputation, the King sent for Goderich to form a cabinet. Huskisson proved far less compliant than Goderich. He would not agree to any extension of the area open for selection because "it was clearly understood that the grant should be made in a part of the Island distant and distinct from the present located lands". Nor would he sanction the Company's definition of useful land and regarded the expectation of the directors as unreasonable because "in any new country the clearing of timber has always formed one of the principal operations by which it has been settled. Any land that could be cultivated must be regarded as good land for the purposes of the Company's purpose" (*). He brought to the problem a mind free from any preconceived notions and, taking the words of the terms arranged by Bathurst at their face value, ruled that "within the district described, the Company might select any continuous tract of 250,000 acres which best suited their object and purposes. It was the liberal intention of His Majesties Government not to reckon as part of the useful land, or 62,500 acres in all. But at the same time he intimated that there would be some addition to the amount of quit rent.

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Arthur received this with consternation. The terms now agreed upon were much more favourable to the Company than any Curr had claimed and, in effect, would be much more harmful to the young community. He saw all his defences swept away and the Company "boldly planting themselves in the very portal of the located districts" (1), for the restriction that necessity alone should bring them adjacent to the free settlers was no longer imposed. The new arrangement would also enable the Company's agents to "peacock" the whole district between Port Sorell and Cape Grim. Five locations judiciously placed would lock up a vast area and hamper future settlement. Not only would access to some districts be made extremely difficult but, as the Company was not bound by the charter to fence, its cattle roaming far and wide would bring ruin to the small settlers shut in between the locations. He was determined to keep the Company west of the Mersey and, if at all possible, west of Round Hill. Accordingly he called for reports from the Land Commissioners and from the Surveyor-General on the location and arrangements of the Company's Lands. By their aid he hoped to convince Huskisson that his ruling had been based on false information and so obtain a review of the conditions.

These reports, as well as a later one by Wedge, (2) bear every sign of having been inspired by the known wish of Arthur and betray the sycophancy of his officers. They pointed out that it was never intended that the Company should approach the settled districts. Indeed, the Surveyor-General ingeniously called in mathematics to his aid and proved that the north-west district, the term used by Bathurst which Curr construed as one-fourth of the Island, was in reality only the ninth part of it and that not Port Sorell but Round Hill should be the eastern boundary of the land open to the Company for selection (3). These reports, together with a covering despatch, Arthur at once sent to Huskisson.

Two months later an opportunity to renew his protest arose and he promptly accepted it. At the beginning of the year he had instructed a Government Surveyor, J. H. Wedge, to examine and report on the land adjacent to Cape Grim. This report was now to hand. In it Wedge recommended that the limits of the grant be extended and that a compact block, extending from Cape Grim as far south as Mt. Balfour and as far east as the Detention River, be granted the Company. In this block he estimated the land was "at least 50,000 acres of land fit for the reception of stock without any considerable outlay being required". The useless land he estimated at about 100,000 acres. "The forests", he wrote, "are extensive and may be estimated at about 700,000 acres. This land, being heavily timbered, is unpromising in its present state and such as no private individual could possibly undertake to improve. It is, nevertheless, of excellent quality and such as the Company's resources might be employed upon with prospect of ultimate success. There is no doubt but the expense of clearing such land will be great; but, if a judicious system be laid down and acted upon, it will not be so heavy as it would appear at first glance; for, if it be progressively done, the produce of that which is first cleared will contribute largely towards improving the remainder. The timber in these forests, of which the greater portion is pencil cedar (4), may prove a valuable article of export and defray a great proportion of the expense of clearing the land. It is therefore my opinion that this description of land is available for the Company's purposes for it will undoubtedly, when cleared, be some of the most valuable in the Island; and, in support of this opinion, I may instance that in the United States and other New Countries in America, the land with the greatest quantity of timber upon it is chosen as being the most valuable (5). The Surveyor-General minuted the report to the effect that Mr. Wedge had stated that the district he recommended for the Company bore a far greater proportion of good land than Van Diemen's Land generally offers. The report thus minuted, together with a covering letter hostile to the Company's requests, was at once forwarded to Sir George Murray who had succeeded Huskisson at the Colonial Office, but a copy was not sent to Curr lest the directors be forewarned and supplied with an adequate defence. His comment when he was able to read the report was outspoken and bitter: "I look upon both his facts and opinions as wilful falsehoods and malevolent assertions".

The terms of the new arrangement with Huskisson Arthur at once forwarded to Curr but bluntly challenged it by declaring "I apprehend the decision rests entirely upon the faith placed in your reports, of the accuracy of which I am at present unable to form any positive opinion" (6).

The implication of this, coupled with the fact that Arthur had emphasized that the Company must take such land as when cleared would be useful, stung Curr to fury and blinded him to the advantages of the decision. Quite erroneously, as we have seen, he saw in the conditions the hand of Arthur. Thus the Company must take land that, when cleared will come under the denomination of useful land was, he considered, "in direct contradiction to the grant as intended, and to be given a stringy bark forest for the purpose of breeding large flocks of fine woolled sheep was mere mockery" (7).

But the location of the grant had advanced a further stage before the despatch which stirred Arthur's indignation had even reached him. Heller's report of the Surrey and the Hampshire Hills arrived within a few weeks of the deputation to Huskisson and in the middle of December, 1827, the directors appeared at Downing Street with a fresh proposal. They asked for a southward extension of the boundary of selection so as to take in the Surrey Hills. "The main object of the Company," they explained, "always had been and is to settle a large sheep farm for the growth of an improved wool for which it is indispensable to have a large tract of naturally clear land well adapted for sheep pasture. This object was in all the early communications with His Majesty's Government clearly explained and enforced by a variety of arguments. Hitherto no sufficient tract of that description has been found after 16 months of indefatigable exertion but in the Surrey and the Hampshire Hills" (8). They also asked that the suggested increase in quit rent be not enforced.
The upshot of this deputation was an agreement by which the Company was allowed to take one block of 20,000 acres at Circular Head, 220,000 acres in two blocks at the Hampshire and the Surrey Hills, and one block of 10,000 acres in the vicinity of the lakes as a depot or resting place for those employed by the Company and for stock on their journey to the capital, with an allowance of one-fourth more for useless land. It was expressly stipulated that the blocks were to be as compact as possible and on no account would the Company be allowed to take one occasioned the directors great uneasiness. They were by no means sure what the effect on the new ordinary settlers (T5). Except that no land was to be taken at Cape Grim, this was almost identical with the arrangement that Arthur and Curr had agreed upon some months earlier.

In spite of this agreement, Wedge’s report occasioned the directors great uneasiness. They were by no means sure what the effect on the new Colonial Secretary would be. They urged Curr “not on any account to come into conflict with any officer under Government which may give rise to unpleasant feeling”. To them Wedge’s recommendation was anathema: “The Court has no hesitation in giving its unanimous opinion that, if it was compelled to take its land in the district examined by Mr. Wedge or to abandon its object altogether, it would under such alternative submit to the loss of all the money expended, great as it is, rather than accept land of that description” (15). When we regard the issue from the viewpoint of Curr and the directors there is much to be said for their request that they should not be saddled with forest land. The Company’s main object was, and always had been, the growth of fine wool. This the directors maintained on all occasions without contradiction and this Bathurst recognised when he ruled that the criterion of the land to be allotted was its capability to pasture sheep. They had looked forward to obtaining land similar in quality to that of the older settled districts, where there were considerable areas naturally clear of timber; where dry, thinly wooded hills producing in abundance the highly nutritious native grasses provided ideal conditions for pasturing fine woolled sheep. There was almost total ignorance of the excellent quality of the soil but he also knew that, before sheep could be pastured in such a district, the land must be cleared of forest. All the good land in the north-western district was, almost without exception, clothed right down to the sea-coast with dense forest. Near the coast the prevailing trees were eucalypts, white gum and stringy bark, towering often 250 feet; further inland these were replaced by sombre beeches, the myrtles of the colonists, of great size. In the dense shade of the forest mighty tree-ferns grew in profusion and the ground was carpeted with a small fern and be-strewn with dead timber. In many places horizontal, bauera and cutting grass formed a tangled impenetrable mass and forest giants torn up by the roots were strewn in every direction. Those most recently fallen, with their vast upturned roots, wide spreading heads, and wall-like boles (for trees 150 feet high and eight feet in diameter were plentiful) formed a most formidable obstacle to progress. Then, too, the fall of each monster caused a widespread confusion of smaller trees.

Some idea of the density of the forest may be gathered from the report prepared by Hellyer for use in discussing with the Government what was to be considered useful land. On one acre there were 2384 trees, 12 of which exceeded 12 feet in girth, and four, 30 feet. On another there were 1976 trees, 28 of which exceeded 12 feet in girth, eight 21 feet, and eight 30 feet (17). This was typical of most of the forest.

Curr gives us a graphic picture of his first journey through the forest behind Emu Bay. “The myrtle tree, scarcely known except in this district, and enormous stringy bark trees, many of them 300 feet high and 30 feet in circumference near the root, exclude the rays of the sun and, in the gloom which their shade creates, those trees flourish which affect darkness and humidity and in the other parts of the Colony are only found in the deepest ravines and by the sides of creeks, as sassafras, dogwood, pepper tree, musk tree, and in some situations blackwood of the best quality. The forest trees and undergrowth described, which latter rise to a height of from 80 to 100 feet, create and retain on the ground such great degree of humidity and almost dungeon darkness that all the tribes of cryptogamous plants flourish there to a degree that I never observed in any other situation, fungi, mosses, lichens, ferns. The most remarkable of these plants, the fern tree which has precisely the form of the cocoa-nut tree with a stem of often seven feet in circumference near the ground gradually increasing in girth towards the top, grows to the height of 35 feet. Every trunk, stem, root and branch of every kind of tree is closely invested with a thick coat of moss, this moss again becomes the receptacle of the roots of parasitical plants as well as of others not generally parasitical, and these, in their turn, nourish their share of moss and ferns which latter often invests the trunks of the fern trees and their summits and of the forest trees to the height of near 100 feet from the ground (15). As they passed along Hellyer pointed out a stringy bark which he had measured and found to be 198 feet to the first branch, and another which at five feet from the ground was 60 feet in circumference. Some idea of the difficulty of breaking one’s way through such forest may be gauged from the fact that it took him nearly a day and a half of strenuous exertion to cover four miles, and anyone who has had experience of such forest knows full well that this is no exaggeration.

No greater contrast with, the older settled districts could be imagined. Curr realised fully the excellent quality of the soil but he also knew that, before sheep could be pastured in such
country, it must be cleared and sown down with grass. The cost of clearing such land would be so great that for the company's purpose it must be regarded as unprofitable.

Seven months after the discovery of the Hampshire and the Surrey Hills, Curr paid his first visit to them. From the reports, he had been led to expect country equal to the best in the older districts, but was sadly disappointed. Neither Hellyer nor Fossey knew anything about sheep, they had no colonial experience and, to Hellyer in particular, that he was, the appeal of the picturesque was paramount. And the Surrey Hills, seen as they were by him for the first time, in bright sunshine, the blue expanse of the heavens broken and heightened by a few fleecy clouds, the level park-like country stretching before him interspersed with open plains, the countless mountain peaks beyond, standing aloft in all their glorious colours and entrancing shapes, the cool limpid streams crossing in all directions, and the invigorating air that sends the blood coursing through the veins, would charm and take captive one of far less romantic nature than he. The sheer beauty disarmed his judgment and forced its way into his report.

Unaware of this weakness Curr took the reports at their face value and acted upon them. Keen was his disappointment and bitter his thought when he realised he had striven and fought for such an inferior district, whose "value to the Company was to say the least very doubtful". Now, more than ever, he realised what had been a daily cause of regret to him since his landing, that none in the service of the Company had any knowledge of local conditions. "The Surrey Hills", he wrote, "can never be a first nor even a second rate sheep pasture. Neither was that which I saw good arable land. Another disadvantage is that the climate is rather cold and backward". His opinion of the Hampshire Hills was more favourable and he considered that it would be suitable for sheep but would not bear to be heavily stocked. The natural grasses he examined and found to be inferior to those of the sheep lands of the older districts and noted that there was a striking absence of kangaroo grass, so highly prized by sheep owners. He looked in vain for the large forest kangaroo which was always considered by the older settlers to be indicative of a good sheep country. Further visits to the district confirmed him in the unfavourable opinion he had formed of its usefulness to the Company and the experience of the winter of 1828 proved that his opinion of the Surrey Hills was accurate. Only too well he realised that they had made a very bad bargain and deeply regretted the rejection of the land around Cape Grim. The best that he could hope for was that it might be made profitable in some manner.

He must take some measure of the blame for securing the district, in that he did not assure himself of its nature soon after its discovery, either by a personal inspection or by calling for a report on its capabilities from Goldie, the Company's agriculturist. As chief agent he should have done so. He knew that neither Hellyer nor Fossey were versed in matters appertaining to sheep and sheep rearing and had no experience whatever of colonial conditions, even though he did not know of Hellyer's weakness "of looking upon everything with a painter's eyes". The latter's inability to report on sheep country was amply confirmed a few months later. Goldie, reporting on Goderich Plains, said by Hellyer to be the most magnificent grass hills he had seen in the country, described them as "very high, cold and bleak, the feed very bad with a great deal of stoney rocky ground, the grass being very wiry and the tussocks far apart". Picturesque the area certainly is but that is all. Bitter is Curr's comment on the conflicting reports. "Climate cannot be judged in a day's walk, but stoney rocky ground with tussocks far apart no person ought to have converted into the most magnificent grass hill he had ever seen in the country." The lesson was not lost on Curr. He no longer accepted any report at its face value.

Hellyer's glowing accounts, published in the Third Annual Report, stirred in Arthur a desire to see this magnificent country for himself and he arranged to visit it. Accompanied by a party of six which included Captain Montagu, the Attorney-General, and George Frankland, the Surveyor-General, he left Westbury on the 14th of January, 1829. For three days they rode along a rough bush track, euphemistically styled the inland road, before entering the Surrey Hills. They saw very little good land. The elevation and the cold harsh weather they experienced showed conclusively that this district was not suitable for the production of fine wool. They met with some extensive open country but found it covered with "species of long wiry grass unfit for pasture." Such spaces as these occupy thousands of acres of the Surrey Hills and are quite worthless. The long wiry grass is the misnamed button grass, a kind of rush. This journey showed Arthur the difficulties the Company faced and convinced him of the sincerity of Curr's protests.

The latter had received no intimation that Arthur intended to visit the Hills. He happened to arrive at Emu Bay on a visit of inspection and was surprised to hear that the Governor had left the night before, intending to ride along the coast to Port Sorell. By good fortune the Fanny was at Emu Bay. He at once embarked and, the wind being fair, reached the Mersey in a few hours. Here he found the Governor and his party waiting for slack water to cross. Then began a conference which lasted five hours.

To Arthur's inquiries whether the land he had seen on the journey through the Hills was a fair sample of the remainder, Curr replied that it was, and further stated that the Surrey Hills were neither first rate nor second rate sheep pastures. In proof of this he said he had been afraid to run there the merino sheep lately imported from Europe and had been obliged to hire a farm to maintain them. Arthur asked why he had not taken Cape Grim where even he admitted there was a fair grass. The cost of clearing such land would be so great that for the company's purpose it must be regarded as unprofitable.

In reply Curr said that had he accepted Cape Grim at first he doubted whether permission would
have been given to divide the grant, especially in view of the report recently submitted by the Government Surveyor (\(^1\)). Although he had not been privileged to see it, he understood it stated that, within reasonable limits, a grant of average quality could actually be found there. Such a report would certainly have fixed them irrevocably at Cape Grim.

The Governor did not reply to this observation but asked if Curr now wished to have Cape Grim. The latter replied that he did, provided he need only take the grassland which comprised about 50,000 acres. He wanted neither heath nor forest. He also protested "against the Company being sacrificed to the whims of the surveyor, or of any man who choose to speculate upon their clearing forests, or improving barren heaths which were undertakings foreign to their purpose." The 10,000 acres, which were to be taken somewhere on the road leading to the settled district, he asked to be granted at the Middlesex Plains, a fine stretch of open country lying some 10 miles to the east of the Surrey Hills. Arthur's journey had brought to him a full realization of the difficulties that beset the Company should he be forced to ruin staring itself in the face unless some variation were made in the conditions. His objections to the locations had been met when they were fixed west of Round Hill, for they would not now inconveniently approach the settled districts. He readily agreed to the proposals, but refused to pledge himself to anything conclusive until he had referred to all the papers connected with the subject. This he promised to do immediately on his return to Hobart. As the agreement with the Colonial Office permitted the main grant to be broken into only two parts and as one would now be taken at Cape Grim and the other at the Surrey Hills, he said that it would be necessary to make arrangements with respect to the Hampshire Hills where the Company had already begun to erect buildings. He therefore unhesitatingly stated that he would allow them to take 10,000 acres there, this being the estimated amount of good land at that place (\(^2\)).

A perusal of all the documents relating to the Company's land location convinced Arthur that there were no obstacles in the way of the proposals tentatively made on the banks of the Mersey and he at once confirmed them. The Company was to continue in occupation of 20,000 acres of land at Circular Head; to retain possession of a block containing 10,000 acres at Hampshire Hills; to substitute 10,000 acres at the Middlesex Plains and the hills surrounding them for the block allowed at the lakes; and to take the remaining 210,000 acres in two blocks of such dimensions as was desired at Cape Grim and the Surrey Hills. A proviso was added that the surveyor should within two months after his return take in hand a quick survey of the entire block so as to project a shape as possible with reference to natural boundaries (\(^3\)). A copy of these proposals he transmitted to Sir George Murray, stressing the necessity of the change if the Company were to survive (\(^4\)).

Soon after the Governor's return, there appeared in the Hobart Town Courier (\(^5\)) an account of the journey from the pen of the Surveyor-General. In it the inferior quality of the Surrey Hills as a sheep pasture was stressed. Curr did not think quite so poorly of the district and had hopes that the grass would improve. Moreover Goldie, the Company's agriculturist, had eight months earlier reported favourably. "I may now state from the country I have lately seen," he wrote, "I am quite prepared to receive any stock you may think of sending me." Within two months of Arthur's visit, however, he sent in a second report which contradicted his former statement and completely verified Surveyor-General Frankland's judgment (\(^6\)).

Having received Arthur's sanction to take land at Cape Grim, Curr lost no time. Profitting by past experience he determined upon a personal inspection. On the 14th of February, accompanied by Richard Frederick, an expert boatman, he left Circular Head in a whaleboat. He landed near Maandai Point and traversed the country as far as Mt. Cameron West, making as careful and minute observation of the capabilities of the country for running sheep as the time at his disposal would admit. From the top of the mountain he gazed over a wide expanse of poor country, "absolutely worthless and the greater part of it of no more use for the purpose of settlers than so much sky or water" (\(^7\)). He found some excellent grassland and admirably adapted for sheep but its extent was strictly limited, consisting, as it did, of an area in the vicinity of Cape Grim and a narrow strip fringing the west coast and extending south beyond Mt. Cameron West as far as the eye could reach. The weather being calm and the sea smooth he examined Trefoil Island and was delighted with its capabilities. In general, however, he thought less favourably of the Cape Grim district than anyone else who had seen it.

Soon after his return he received Goldie's gloomy report on the Surrey Hills and for the moment even his indomitable will bent before the blow. For the first and last time he hints at defeat; "I have thought it possible that the court, disheartened by the partial disappointment of their hopes, might be disposed to withdraw from the occupation of their lands at least for the present" (\(^8\)).

But failure was not to be thought of and he threw himself into his task with greater vigour than ever. Cape Grim must be occupied before the end of the winter. The excellent pasture land he himself had seen and the mildness of the climate convinced him that there was a district of almost service to the Company, provided that he could secure all the good land without acquiring too great an area of worthless scrub and heath. Once in occupation he hoped to attain this end.

Hellyer was at once dispatched to Cape Grim to make an accurate survey of the district. In particular, he was to note all the good and useful land and determine the most favourable boundaries. While there, he visited the neighbouring islands and reported very favourably on Robbins and Hunter Islands. That he should report so favourably of Hunter Island once more demonstrated his ignorance of what constituted good land.

Upon receipt of the report, Curr took Renwick, the shepherd, with him and examined Robbins Island. From here they proceeded to Cape Grim where they made a further examination of the
The Van Diemen's Land Company, 1825-1842

land and Curr inspected the anchorage. On his return he conferred with Goldie and Hellyer. As a result of their deliberations it was decided to secure as much land as possible in the neighbourhood of Circular Head and Cape Grim (**).

Accordingly, when Hellyer had completed his map of the Cape Grim district, Curr sought to obtain a grant there which would comprise all the land suitable for pasture. He pointed out that it was impossible for the Government to do justice to the Company unless there was a variation in the condition that the grant had to be as nearly as possible in the form of a square. The Company, he reiterated, had been incorporated principally with a view to producing fine wool for the British market but the Surrey Hills, the only extensive tract of pasture land available to it for selection wrote, as Arthur knew from personal observation, not at all adapted for the feeding of fine woolled sheep. The land bordering on the west coast, however, was in many parts quite suitable, and he applied to have the existing conditions varied to enable him to take a strip of land 40 miles long by three or four miles wide, together with some of the islands in Bass Strait. Such a grant would extend as far south as Sandy Cape and would have as its eastern boundary the Welcome River and a line extending southwards therefrom. "No injury would be done to the prospects of future settlers by granting such a tract to the Company ", he wrote, "because the quality of that extent of coast does not in fact shut settlers out from one acre of land which is of any value. Its utter worthlessness will render it forever unavailable ... Were the heathy plains, of which the greatest part of it consists, within 10 miles of the City of London they would not sell for 40 shillings an acre "(**).

On the same day, he wrote to the directors urging them to make every exertion to obtain the land at Cape Grim without any reference to compactness of figure. He stressed the importance of obtaining the grass land which he estimated of sufficient extent and quality to feed 50,000 merino sheep. What was not grass land was absolutely worthless, "and it was really of no importance to either party whether half a million acres of it were granted to the Company or retained by Government"(**).

Asked to report on the application, the Surveyor-General expressed himself as strongly opposed to such a variation of the conditions as would enable the Company to hold a narrow belt of country along 40 miles of coast. His opposition was based on the grounds that "such an arrangement would effectually prevent the future introduction of free settlers in that quarter, for, as all the back land of the coast appears valueless, it is the belt of grassy country alone which would admit of private locations in it, and it, therefore, becomes a question of policy whether it be expedient to sacrifice the present immediate interests of the Company to the future wants of emigrants, or, on the contrary, to abandon all intention of hereafter locating private settlers in that quarter and to surrender to the Company all the lands which are available for sheep grazing without previous outlay"(**). Nor did he think it politic to grant the islands in perpetuity.

Arthur viewed the application sympathetically. Without waiting for Frankland's report he immediately sent a copy of Curr's letter to Downing Street with the comment that "as I find that preparing the way for some concession will be considered a great favour, I cannot hesitate to forward Mr. Curr's letter and to express the hope that the directors in England may have the assurance that His Majesty's Government will be disposed to grant the Company every reasonable relief to overcome the difficulties which were not foreseen"(**).

He kept back the Surveyor-General's report for two months and, when he did send it on, said nothing to support the opposition. His conduct on this occasion was in marked contrast with that shown earlier. Having forced the Company west of Round Hill he offered no further opposition and, as he had done on this occasion, was quite sympathetic.

Curr's plan was again thwarted, though in a quarter that he least expected. Realising the importance of time the directors, upon receipt of their agent's dispatch urging them to get all the grassland in the neighbourhood of Cape Grim, again hastened to the Colonial Office. A long conference followed (**). Sir George Murray realised that some further concessions must be made if the Company were to survive and readily agreed to permit a selection at Cape Grim. But he would not permit them to acquire the long narrow strip they asked for; any grant there must approximate to a square figure. On this point he was adamant, for he considered that such a grant as Curr desired would shut out settlers from some of the best part of the island. He had, of course, no knowledge whatever of the country and based his conception on Wedge's report. His argument received no other confirmation from Tasmania.

The Company was permitted to divide its grant into six locations, instead of four as determined by Huskisson, and the allowance of unproductive land was raised from 62,500 to 100,000 acres. Of the 350,000 acres now granted, the bulk was to be at the Surrey Hills and Cape Grim, 150,000 acres at each place: 20,000 acres were to be taken at Circular Head; and areas of 10,000 acres each at the Hampshire Hills, Middlesex Plains, and the islands adjacent to Cape Grim. Murray informed the directors that they could expect no further concessions and left Arthur in no doubt of the position. "I have already informed the Van Diemen's Land Company that I shall not feel myself warranted, under any circumstances whatever, in departing from the terms which have now been agreed upon between the Company and His Majesty's Government, and it only remains for me to desire that they may be considered final by you—suffering no arguments on the part of the agents of the Company to induce you to defer the completion of their grant, the limits and bounds of which you will direct the Surveyor-General to fix as expeditiously as can be accomplished with convenience, according to the arrangement communicated to you in this despatch"(**).

The directors expressed their entire satisfaction with the arrangements and were confident that they would now be enabled "to push forward the objects for which the Company was formed, with
the prospect of remuneration to those who have embarked property in the undertaking, and with the hope and expectation of extending benefits to those who may settle in the immediate neighbourhood of the Company's lands, as well as generally to the Colony itself.""

Curr heard of the arrangements with mingled feelings. With Arthur decidedly friendly he had hoped that the directors would be able to overcome any opposition in London and already in his mind's eye pictured the Company prosperous and affluent. Now all these pleasant images were rudely shattered and he saw the Company burdened with at least 125,000 acres of land at Cape Grim "of equal quality with the deserts of Africa." In exceeding bitterness of spirit he wrote, "But I am forbidden to request any deviation from the final decision. I should at once apply to the Government to resume 100,000 acres in order to save the expense of defining the boundary. Could I have known that the whole of the useful country in that district would not have been granted I should have hesitated to incur the expense of the additional establishment, as that expense must bear a very large proportion to the income which it is possible to derive from it.""

Disappointed in his hopes Curr again reverted to the idea of a grant on the mainland of Australia. He first made the suggestion in 1826 but the directors received it coldly. He now found them reviewing it as a possibility. Their interest had recently been aroused by the glowing reports of Captain James Stirling and the botanist, Fraser, who had examined the Swan River district in 1827, and in particular by the enthusiastic letters written by Stirling to influential persons in England. As a result, within a few days of hearing of the "definitive and final" arrangement of the grant, Curr heard from the directors that they were considering the advisability of acquiring land at the Swan River or in some other part of Australia, although they were not prepared to take any immediate steps. Without hesitation he advised them to give earnest consideration to extending their activities at once, since he was of the opinion that, while the Van Diemen's Land undertaking would eventually be moderately profitable, his hopes could go no further. He was as convinced as ever of the soundness of the project but the lands they had acquired were not sufficiently good to ensure the prosperity they once hoped for. If they determined to acquire land in Australia there was no time to lose, as delay would allow others to secure the most valuable locations. In two years time their stock in Van Diemen's Land undertaking would be isolated from Circular Head and the management of the estate would be extremely difficult. It must always be remembered that the only means of transferring stock from Circular Head to "The Hills," or vice versa, was to bont them to or from Emu Bay.

When he discussed the Company's position with Arthur at the Mersey in January, 1829, he had understood that this concession would be granted but the letter confirming the arrangement, definitively entered into was silent on the matter. He at once informed the Colonial Secretary of the omission but it had not been rectified. He now saw with grave concern that Murray's final arrangement was equally silent about land at Emu Bay.

He refused to accept the decision as final and resolved to get better conditions. Having occasion to visit Hobart on business he determined to seek an interview with Arthur, hoping by this means to gain what he sought. Arthur was absent from Hobart, being engaged on a tour of inspection of the midlands. Curr, however, was not to be denied and, learning of his whereabouts, set out and met him at Jericho. Arthur was non-committal and asked Curr to submit his request in writing for it would be necessary to obtain an opinion from the Surveyor-General. He was playing safe.

In the subsequent letter Curr requested that the small "Plains" on the road from Emu Bay to the Hampshire Hills be granted the Company, or exchanged for ten times the quantity of land at Cape Grim and that from 1000 to 1500 acres of land be granted at Emu Bay with facilities for wharf accommodation. At the same time he suggested boundaries for the grants at Surrey Hills and Cape Grim. For the latter he proposed such boundaries that it could be made to join on to the Circular Head block, paying no respect to compactness of figure."

The Surveyor-General was of the opinion that it was not reasonable for the Company to expect to receive such small lots of picked land at such wide intervals as were the isolated plains in the forest between Hampshire Hills and the coast. He was also opposed to a grant at Emu Bay. "The Company should be placed precisely on the same footing as individuals receiving such allotments from the Crown as they require for building and on the same tenure; and, with respect to wharves, the Company should be subject to the regulations which the Government might enact on that head."

He also pointed out that the boundaries of the Surrey Hills, as proposed, would enclose an area
400 acres in excess of the approved grant and that the suggested boundaries at Cape Grim deviated considerably from those proposed by the Secretary of State (18).

Curt's requests, together with the Surveyor-General's report, were then placed before the Executive Council. This body advised the Governor not to deviate in the slightest degree from the instructions of the Secretary of State respecting the size and position of the several blocks of land granted to the Company. The plains lying between the Hampshire Hills and the coast should be disposed of under the Ripon regulations of 1831, whereby land could be obtained only by auction at an upset price of 5s. per acre. "The isolated plains should be sold in due course under the new regulations whenever it can be perceived by the Government that there will be sufficient competition for them by settlers so as to enable the Government to realise the value of these several pieces of land" (18).

Curt again sought an interview with the Governor and learnt that he would consent to any boundaries which conformed to Murray's instructions but not to any that conflicted with them. Accordingly, he submitted new proposals for boundaries which, on being referred to the Surveyor-General, met with unreserved approval. He still desired land at Emu Bay and on the road to "The Hills" and sought permission to relinquish 50,000 acres at Cape Grim, taking in exchange the same quantity between the Emu and the Cam rivers extending southward to the Hampshire Hills block (18).

The Surveyor-General viewed this modification of Murray's "definite and final" instructions quite favourably, although he stressed, as did Wedge before him in the report of 1828, the importance of a township reserve at Emu Bay:

"It will, I think, be considered that this proposition very much coincides with the first views of His Majesty's Government and of the colony at large, as it concentrates their grant, nearly two-thirds of which would thus be brought into one almost continuous tract. And I may add, from the nature of the ground, it is exceedingly improbable that any private individuals could for many years undertake the clearance of such forests, while the enterprise would be much more within the range of the Company and quite consistent with its principles. Should Mr. Curt's proposal be conceded, the river boundaries which he suggested would be preferable to the ideal straight lines and, on the course of those rivers being surveyed, the difference in area could be adjusted with the Woolnorth block. I observe that Mr. Curt in his letter loses sight of the reserve for a township at Emu Bay. But I do not think it would be desirable to relinquish that reservation which should, like others, consist of four square miles" (18).

His hurried trip through the district had revealed to him the "very great richness of soil" but, as this extract shows, he was also aware of the tremendous difficulties which would face the settler in developing the area, characterised as it was "by the most stupendous and tangled forests in Van Diemen's Land."

When the question was referred to the Executive Council a difference of opinion arose. While the majority opposed the exchange, the Chief Justice saw no objection to it, provided land was reserved for a township at Emu Bay and the Company was placed on the same footing as other settlers in the acquisition of town allotments (19).

Poised in his attempt to secure the exchange from the local government, Curt urged his directors to strain every nerve to win the consent of the Colonial Office and the Chief Justice, for it was "an object of the last importance to the Company and must be carried at any cost."

His object was not to acquire a rich but densely forested area for future development. He feared that if, as was confidently hoped, tenants were established at "The Hills," speculators would erect public houses and stores in the neighbourhood and "draw the very blood from their veins. The Company might supply tenants with goods, but the crops would go to the private store and the public house." To develop "The Hills" it was essential that a road be constructed and, unless the exchange he requested was obtained, the Company would have to construct an expensive road through Crown lands and would not obtain the full benefit from their outlay. The land through which they built a road should belong to the Company (18).

The directors at once referred the question to the Colonial Office and asked that, in view of the importance of the result upon their activities, an early decision be given. They were fortunate in that Goderich was now at the Colonial Office. He proved much more compliant than Murray and without reference to Arthur, granted the exchange.

The boundaries of the new tracts of land were to be defined by the local authorities and the Company was to construct at its own expense such a road from Emu Bay to the Hampshire Hills as the local government deemed suitable (19). No area was set aside as a township reserve.

Arthur was rightly incensed at being thus summarily disregarded and revealed his feelings in a dispatch to his superior that bristles with indignation:

"This proposition received the most deliberate consideration in the Executive Council, and I directed that Mr. Curt should be informed that the local government could not sanction any alteration, neither could it hold out the hope that the request of the Company would be recommended to His Majesty's Government. Under these circumstances I have the honour to recommend that the local government be authorised to issue a grant on the principles expressed in Mr. Hay's letter to Mr. Bischoff of 21st May, 1830 (19).

Mr. Curt's proposal, besides that it is a departure from the stipulations of 1830, would, if entertained, be adverse to the interests of government—the land at Woolnorth (the name given by the Company to the Cape Grim estate) is of inferior quality and is far remote from the settled districts, while that at Emu Bay has facilities calculated to render it at some not very distant period a thriving settlement. Considering therefore the highly advantageous terms on which land has been located to the Com-
pany in comparison with private individuals. I should not think it equitable to entertain Mr. Curr's request, even were not the door closed to all further negotiation by the instructions conveyed to me after the last concession was made to the Company (14). At the end of April, 1833, Curr left Tasmania on a visit to England and, on the representation of Dr. Hutchinson, who acted as chief agent in his absence, the final settlement of the boundaries of the land between Emu Bay and the Hampshire Hills was postponed until his return (14).

While in England, Curr suggested that efforts be made to exchange 70,000 acres of land on the eastern side of Woolnorth, without diminishing its length, for 56,000 acres in the north-eastern part of the island, not approaching within 20 miles of Launceston.

Accordingly, deputation after deputation waited upon Spring-Rice, who was now at the Colonial Office, and asked for this exchange. In pursuance of their application the directors pointed out the disabilities under which the Company was labouring. Owing to the rigour of the climate at the Surrey Hills, the 10,000 sheep they had purchased were reduced to few more than 1000. If confined to that district the object for which the Company was established must be abandoned. The Surrey Hills were found to be available for rearing cattle, but not for fattening them. To make cattle marketable it was necessary to have an area of land adjacent to the settled districts where they could not only be kept for sale but also get into a condition for slaughter. Land in the north-east would also enable them to proceed with the breeding of sheep, the object for which the Company was established.

All the arguments about the original intention of the grant were traversed again and comparisons were made with their position and that of the Australian Agricultural Company. The mainland company, it was stated, had received an additional concession of 300,000 acres; both companies had been promised remission of quit rent as a boon for concessions with respect to land should be made to the Company: and the Australian Agricultural Company was not restricted in its choice of lands. "The result is," they wrote, "the Australian Company is prosperous. The same power that conferred the prosperity can confer it on the Van Diemen's Land Company, and by the same means, the exchange of lands (14)."

For nine months the discussion dragged on but all arguments were unavailing. Spring-Rice refused to sanction the proposal. He bluntly said that they were fortunate in obtaining permission to exchange portion of Woolnorth for the land at Emu Bay before the arrival of Arthur's dispatch containing the opinion of the Executive Council; that no more concessions with respect to land should be made to the Company; and asking for a rescission of the agreement. However, the government had pledged itself and the exchange would stand (16).

Within a few months of this decision, Spring-Rice was out of office and the directors renewed their request to his successor, Lord Aberdeen, who proved less inexorable. Although he refused to make the exchange he promised to send the applica-

tion to Colonel Arthur with directions to bring it before his Executive Council. If it was proved that the Company had not received the extent of suitable land they had been led in the first instance to expect; that it was solely owing to the nature of the land that the flocks of the Company had decreased; and the council considered such a transfer would not be detrimental to the interests of the colony and of private settlers; he would authorize the Lieutenant-Governor to make the exchange (18).

Aberdeen was almost immediately succeeded by Grant, afterwards Lord Glenelg, and in the changeover the matter was forgotten. Accordingly the directors were compelled once more to renew their application. Glenelg was so far favourable to their request that he instructed Arthur to bring the application before his Executive Council and, in a covering letter, wrote that "as the establishment appears to have been countenanced by His Majesty's Government with a view in a great measure to the benefit of the colony, it is desirable to afford the Company every reasonable facility to retrieve their affairs (19)."

The directors on their part were to give such powers to Curr as would enable him, if necessary, to conclude an arrangement which was to be considered final and decisive (19). In addition, they asked that two small islands known as Harbour Island and Stack Island, having areas of 10 and 50 acres respectively, be granted to them. Insignificant in area though these islands are, it was feared that their nearness to Woolnorth would lead to their being held by settlers for the purpose of opening stores or building public houses. As there would be many indentured servants and convict labourers at Woolnorth, it was felt that such neighbours were highly undesirable. Glenelg refused to hand over the islands on the same terms as the original grant but, provided they were not wanted for Government purposes, was willing to sell them on the same conditions as those offered to ordinary settlers.

The latter part of the year 1835 found the whole of Tasmania agog with excitement. In June, John Batman had returned from Port Phillip with glowing accounts of the finest country he had ever seen, consisting of rolling downs extending as far as the eye could reach, thickly covered with grass of the finest description. Besides, he brought back with him the deeds of 600,000 acres purchased from the natives.

In this new district Curr saw a wonderful opportunity for the Company. Here was a vast extent of the very kind of country they had vainly searched for in Van Diemen's Land for more than ten years and which far excelled anything he could hope to find in the north-east district.

His letter urging the directors to obtain a grant at Port Phillip throws an interesting light upon the early settlement of Victoria. "It is understood to be settled between Colonel Arthur and General Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, that the former shall take on himself the provisional government of those matters pertaining to the interests of the British Government as to whether a distinct colony shall be founded here, or whether it shall be subjected to the government of one of the present older
of land exchange to Arthur, who had no inkling of the arrival from England, Curr broached the matter towards the end of March, he journeyed to Hobart. His activities generally aroused Curr to anger and, of the opposition shown to the project and the Company's real object. Compared with Port Phillip, the north-eastern district of Van Diemen's Land was quite unattractive.

"It is quite certain that adjoining Port Phillip, which is a fine and spacious harbour, there is an uninterrupted extent of at least several millions of acres of as fine sheep land as any in these colonies. Port Phillip is about a day's sail from Circular Head: the facility of communication is greater than with Launceston and very much greater than with the North-East quarter of the Island, and respecting the latter country I must add that what remains unlocated cannot altogether be pronounced good, though good farms may still be selected from the mass of inferior unlocated land which is only just capable of feeding sheep".

He would not have his directors satisfied with a niggardly 56,000 acres, the area they were asking for as an exchange in Van Diemen's Land, but suggested at least a quarter of a million acres. In asking for a grant at Port Phillip he thought they would not meet with the opposition of Governor Arthur who was so hostile to the suggested exchange of part of Woolnorth.

If Port Phillip were not added to the territory of Van Diemen's Land, he continued, it would be impossible for them to possess land without a new charter; but so great were the advantages offered that they should spare no expense in obtaining one. To secure land at Port Phillip was of such importance to them that they should obtain all the good land they could on almost any terms which the Government would demand.

To show how highly he thought of the project and how sincere he was in making the proposal, he informed them that, as soon as the land at Port Phillip was open for sale to the public, he would sell all his property in Van Diemen's Land and invest the proceeds and whatever other funds he could raise in land on the other side of the Straits. "If the court shall have unfortunately rejected the advice I have so strongly given them to obtain land at Port Phillip," he wrote, "it will become a matter of regret to them in a few years".

Early in 1835, at the first opportunity after his arrival from England, Curr broached the matter of land exchange to Arthur, who had no inkling that such action was even contemplated. The opposition shown to the project and the Company's activities generally aroused Curr to anger and, towards the end of March, he journeyed to Hobart to interview the Governor. At this interview his indignation boiled over and he spoke his mind in plain unvarnished terms. He said that the Governor continually made professions of goodwill to the Company but never anything but professions; that matters of vital importance he opposed in the most determined manner: that if he were sincere in his utterances he could really serve by promoting the exchange of lands, by paying the salary of the police magistrate from Government funds, by making roads, by placing a Government messenger at Circular Head, and by assigning convict mechanics; but that he had no hopes whatever that any of these things would be done. He also accused Arthur of inspiring a malicious statement, the production of three Government officials, which had appeared in the Hobart Town Courier. Upon Arthur's denial he said that no Government official would write such an article if he did not think that it would be at least agreeable to the Governor. Having insulted the Governor in this way, he returned by coach to Launceston in high dudgeon.

Time failed to soften his feelings and six months later his intense dislike of Arthur again blazed forth in a dispatch to the directors. "He possesses a most unrelenting disposition to oppress all who do not submit themselves to his arbitrary temper, which to people at a distance does not appear arbitrary because so perfectly cool, unimpassioned and collected".

Such behaviour towards one from whom he sought a benefit was, to say the least, highly impolitic and so the directors thought. But it is extremely doubtful whether he would have obtained the exchange had he kept silent. Arthur was always hostile to the Company's estate being near the settled districts and was fixed in his determination to prevent the exchange if it lay within his power. The Executive Council either supported their chief, or viewed the Company (as did the majority of the colonists) as a menace to the interests of the private settler.

In pursuance of his request for an exchange, Curr sent to the local government full details of the negotiations with the Colonial Office, but Arthur made no attempt to bring the matter before the Executive Council until instructed to do so by Glenelg.

In consequence it was not until December, 1835, that consideration was given to it. A long and exhaustive inquiry followed. All the correspondence relative to the location of land from the earliest negotiations with Bathurst, a number of Curr's dispatches to the directors, the reports of the Company's surveyors and of Surveyor Wedge, the Company's annual reports and the proposals for grants issued by the Company, were carefully examined and discussed.

Alexander Goldie, who had for some years been the Company's agriculturist, was called in evidence. He had resigned his position a few years earlier after serious but just censure by Curr. His enmity towards Curr was a by-word in the Colony. As it was to be expected, he attributed the cause of the Company's failure solely to the policy adopted by Curr. "I think I could rear sheep at the Surrey Hills to advantage with a little artificial food and shelter," he commented. But Curr had refused to
A sufficiency of rain falls without a superabundance. Every species of livestock can be reared to advantage in this district. The proximity of Woolnorth to a good harbour will enable produce of every kind to be conveyed to a market speedily, and at no very great expense. There is probably no place in Van Diemen’s Land better (189). From such statements as these they inferred “that the nature of the Company’s estates was by no means such as to account for the want of success which had attended its efforts” (157). The annual report of 1832 was equally misleading. Both publications were the work of the managing director, James Bischoff, who deliberately misrepresented the circumstances of the Company. Immediately on receipt of this annual report, Curr severely criticised it on the ground of exaggeration (159) and told the directors that such statements were detrimental to their interests. On his arrival in England he saw, and at once condemned, the “printed proposals” as incorrect. The directors endeavoured to suppress its circulation, but, unfortunately, a few copies had been sent to Van Diemen’s Land. From the manner in which the Executive Council dealt with these conflicting statements it is clear that the members were strongly prejudiced against the Company, and saw in the inconsistencies an opportunity of preventing the transfer. None of them sought an explanation which could have been obtained with the greatest ease. Curr was summoned to appear before them. He was asked to state any additional arguments he wished to bring forward, but no reference whatever was made to the contradictory statements upon which, they declared to Glenelg, the basis of their objection was laid.

Arthur at once informed the latter of the adverse decision of the Executive Council and his complete agreement with it (159). Upon receipt of this dispatch, Glenelg had no alternative but to notify the directors that he was unable to permit the proposed exchange. He sent them extracts from the minutes of the council showing the grounds on which the proposal was rejected.

The directors read with something like consternation the reason given for the refusal. They realised the unpleasant and delicate situation in which they were now placed and hastened to explain the discrepancies between the statements they had made in asking for an exchange and those contained in the pamphlet for encouraging tenants. They showed that when they discovered the pamphlet was incorrect in part they suppressed it and dismissed with the services of the managing director who was entirely responsible for the erroneous and misleading statements. In view of this explanation they asked that the exchange be reconsidered:

"Whilst I concur with the Council in the opinion that the Government has redeemed every promise
made to the directors, it is nevertheless undeniable that the estate of the Company is, as a pasture for sheep, inferior to the settled districts and would require, to render it productive, a larger expenditure of capital than appears to have been anticipated (134). Then, in the next instance, he points out that such a concession to an incorporated body would be regarded with jealous suspicion by the settlers who had not received such favourable treatment.

So non-committal a policy Curr had often experienced before, and as early as 1827 he made this estimate of Arthur's character: "He will never be disposed to render any assistance which will involve him in an atom of responsibility. He merely strives to be correct, and he torments himself in the search of a safe course" (135).

In reply to the request, Glenelg told the directors that Colonel Arthur was on his way home, and further discussion must be postponed until his arrival. When Arthur reached England he was suffering from a severe illness and the expected conference was delayed. The first business on his recovery was to conciliate him. The directors did by apologising for any real or apparent discourtesy he had received from Curr's official communications and by withdrawing all the claims that they had for some years past been bringing against the Government of Van Diemen's Land for certain payments in connection with pilotage fees and the police magistrate at Circular Head.

At the interview they again asked for 56,000 acres of land in the north-east of Van Diemen's Land in exchange for 70,000 acres at Woolnorth. Arthur said that this could not be allowed as it would excite serious jealousy in the colony; a statement which Glenelg confirmed. Then they made a request for land at Port Phillip, to which Arthur replied that the charter restricted them to Van Diemen's Land and its dependencies. At once they affirmed they would go to the expense of a new charter if 90,000 acres of eligible land at Port Phillip were substituted for the land to be surrendered at Woolnorth. They argued that land in Van Diemen's Land, if fit for pasturage, was worth double the quantity of the same description at Port Phillip. Glenelg would not allow any further concessions in Van Diemen's Land, but promised to consider their application for a grant at Port Phillip and to let them know his decision in a few days (136).

Nearly two months elapsed before he informed the directors that he could not grant their request. Not only did the terms of their charter offer almost insuperable difficulties, but there were grave objections to any company or individual acquiring land in New South Wales except by purchase at a public auction at a fixed upset price (137). It would have been surprising had he decided otherwise. Even the directors must have realised they were supporting a lost cause. The day of land grants passed away with the Ripon regulations of 1831. Men looked on colonies far differently from what they had done in 1825. The theories of Wakefield found many able supporters both in and out of parliament. The basis of his theory was that land must always be sold at a sufficient price, and this had long before 1837 become a fixed principle. The day of the systematic colonizer had dawned.

Nothing daunted, however, they now asked for a deputation to discuss the making of a grant in the north-east or any other part of Van Diemen's Land in place of the shortage of 98,040 acres of land suitable for pasturage or tillage that existed in their grant (138). Once more Glenelg listened to their arguments. In reply, he told them he was surprised to hear of this request again, for he thought that when they expressed their willingness to take land at Port Phillip they had abandoned all idea of further concession in Van Diemen's Land. He would, however, again reconsider their claim. And such was his attitude and general bearing to the deputation that the members departed with the impression that there was a good prospect of their request being granted (139). But these hopes were soon to be destroyed, for Glenelg informed them that he could not sanction any further exchange of the Company's lands, and that they must accept this as the final decision (140).

Even after this rebuff they did not abandon their attempts. They replied to the effect that they considered this decision applied only to land in the north-east, and now requested a strip of land extending along the west coast as far as Sandy Cape (141). In other words they returned to the request made by Curr when he first applied for Woolnorth. If this was not agreeable to the Government they had no further request to make and asked that their lands be surveyed as expeditiously as possible. If, as a result of the survey, it was found that they had not received "250,000 acres of useful land, that is, land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage," they trusted that the Government would, in strict conformity with the letter and spirit of the original agreement and the charter, make good the deficiency. They reminded Glenelg that the Australian Agricultural Company could attribute their prosperity mainly to the fact that they had recently exchanged a very large tract of unproductive land for locations in every way suitable for depasturing sheep.

Glenelg again refused any concession, saying that the conditions of the grant accepted in May, 1830, and modified in favour of the Company in March, 1833, were quite conclusive and the Lieutenant-Governor would be instructed to carry out the survey in accordance with those conditions (142).

To this the directors replied that if, on the conclusion of the survey it was found that they had not received the full amount of useful land they would look to the Government for fair treatment.

Twelve months later they had occasion to interview Lord Normanby, Glenelg's successor at the Colonial Office. Again they declared they were not in possession of the quantity of land capable of being used in pasturage or tillage originally guaranteed to them, and asked for additional land or an exchange of lands (143). Normanby replied that, as his predecessor (with a full knowledge of all the material facts and circumstances) had decided against this, he would not re-open the question (144).

Before the local government began the survey Curr asked to exchange all the islands they had acquired except Trefoil for an equivalent area on the mainland. Gibson, who succeeded him as Chief Agent in 1841, reaffirmed the request but,
after mature consideration, Sir John Franklin decided not to interfere with the arrangements by which these island formed part of the Company's estate (*). 

In January, 1842, Gibson settled all the preliminaries of the survey of the property. In September of the same year, Sprent, the Government Surveyor, began the work, but it was not until the 15th November, 1847, 22 years after the charter passed the Great Seal, that the British Government issued the title deeds.

III. EXPLORATION.

The north-west portion of Van Diemen's Land was almost a terra incognita, but the sea-coast was well known. Bass and Flinders on the voyage of 1798 named and described several of the prominent features of the coast—Round Hill, Table Cape, Rocky Cape, Circular Head, Hunter's Island, Cape Grim, and Tremell Island. Flinders also described a remarkable flat-topped peak, inland, which had much the appearance of an extinct volcano, but he did not name it. In 1804 Acting-Lieut. Robbins, of H.M.S. Buffalo, was sent from Sydney to examine the coast near Cape Grim, and Robbins Island was added to the map. Bass Strait was a favourite resort of whalers and sealers and it is quite certain that the whole of the northern coast was known to them. Although none of the rivers west of the Tamar were named, three of them were spoken of as the first, second and third western rivers respectively. In 1816, James Kelly, on his boat voyage around Van Diemen's Land, went ashore at Circular Head and in the vicinity of Burnie, but did not go inland.

During his administration Governor Sorell encouraged exploration throughout the island and efforts were made to probe the secrets of the north-west. He hoped to find extensive tracts of country suitable for sheep and cattle, but the reports he received were not favourable and a practicable route to the district for stock could not be found. Captain Rolland penetrated some distance inland, but was turned back by a precipitous mountain range. He bought a whaleboat, and hired the schooner Ellen, of 22 tons burthen, for his purpose. With her went Alexander Goldie, the agriculturist of Launceston, who had been out after bushrangers, crossed the Quamby River, and entered the district reserved to the company for selection. If any thought that the location of lands was in the way of being a picnic, he was soon disabused of the idea. The district they entered was a dense forest. The ground, encumbered with fallen trees lying in every direction, made progress difficult, and the tilts, continually striking the trees overhead, were nothing but a hindrance. A careful examination of the country was made, but with the exception of a tract of land extending along the coast they found nothing suitable for the Company's purpose. Eventually, on the 20th May, they reached the mouth of the second western river, which they named the Mersey.

In the meantime Stephen Adey, the second in command, made arrangements to explore the coast-line. He bought a whaleboat, and hired the schooner Ellen, of 22 tons burthen, for his purpose. With him went Alexander Goldie, the agriculturist of the Company. The boats left George Town on the 27th April, under the charge of Richard Frederick, who was "well acquainted with every part of the north-west coast." The Ellen proving to slow, was left to follow as best she could and the voyage continued in the whaleboat. The third western river was entered, and explored as far as navigable. Here Goldie went ashore and climbed a hill, in the hope of seeing land suitable for the Company's purpose. Nothing but forest-clad hills stretched before him as far as the eye could reach. The prospect of finding pasture land in this vicinity seemed hopeless. Indeed, Adey regarded the whole district from Port Sorell to Circular Head as worth-
The heavily timbered country made progress slow, but eventually they succeeded in climbing a lower eminence a little to the south-west of Rolland's Repulse. The mountain which they climbed, Hellyer (who was somewhat of an artist) named Van Dyke, and another further west, Claude; to a mountain mass whose steep northern face stood out black in contrast to the snowfields that extended to the south, he gave the descriptive name Black Bluff. From Mount Van Dyke he saw to the southward "plains as far as the eye could reach, rather woody at the northern end, but open and undulating beyond." At the base of the "peak like a volcano," which lay north-west of him, about 30 miles off, he saw plains of great extent. Provisions gave out and they were forced to return to the Mersey where, had they not met a party of sealers, they must have perished.

In conjunction with these expeditions of Fossey and Hellyer, Burr made arrangements with Jorgen Jorgensen to proceed from the Shannon in a north-westerly direction towards Cape Grim. Jorgensen's was a romantic and eventful career. Born in Copenhagen in 1780, he entered the British merchant service as a sailor joined the Royal Navy. He commanded the Maria while Captain Grant in the Lady Nelson and, as chief officer of that vessel, assisted in the foundation of Van Diemen's Land. In 1825, after a series of remarkable adventures, one of which was the capture of Iceland, he was sentenced to transportation for life and shipped off to Van Diemen's Land where he arrived early in May, 1826. After some months he made application to be assigned to the Van Diemen's Land Company, and with difficulty obtained a transfer, whereupon he presented letters of recommendation, which he bore with him, addressed to Burr by Captain Dundas, a director of the Van Diemen's Land Company. When he was assigned to the Company, Burr used him as a leader of the third party of exploration. Early in September, 1826, Jorgensen, with instructions to proceed through the Clyde and Shannon districts to the west coast, near Picman's River and then northward to Circular Head, set out with two companions, Mark Logan and Andrew Colbert, a black man, both of whom had a good deal of experience in the bush. On the 21st September, after being delayed eight days by flood waters, they crossed the Shannon and reached the south-west portion of the Great Lake just before sunset. During the whole of this journey they met with bad weather and the rivers were so swollen that they were held up for days together. The Ouse was reached on the 22nd but, so deep and rapid was it, no way of crossing could be found. In vain they worked up stream and, baffled, they went back to the hut they had occupied at the south-west end of the Great Lake eight days before. Supplies were running short, so they returned to the farm of Dr. Ross, near the junction of the Ouse and the Shannon, from where Jorgensen sent one of his companions to Hobart Town for supplies. Between the Great Lake and the Ouse he found "a considerable extent of fine open country, of itself sufficiently large to support the quantity of good land which the Company has the exclusive right." In writing of these plains and their location he has: I regretted less being disappointed in getting over as the magnificent plains we are now upon require.
more minute investigation. They stand in a north-east and south-west direction as far as the eye can reach, being bounded on the east by the large lake, and on the west by the river, and from the lake to the river is a distance of four or five miles."

When the messenger from Hobart Town returned on the 11th of October they again set out and nine days later succeeded in crossing the Ouse about the junction of the James River.

[Note.—The paper at this point advances a provisional interpretation of Jorgensen's route across the Central Plateau. This interpretation has since been used by subsequent writers, but was later altered by Mr. Meston after several journeys made in 1940, 1945, 1946, and 1947 over the debatable country and after careful identification of Jorgensen's route, landmarks and bearings in the field. His conclusions are embodied in a paper published in the Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania, 1955, on which the following paragraphs are based.—W.M.M.]

Jorgensen, in his report (Nov. 8th, 1826), claimed to have reached, but not climbed, the peak like a volcano which Hellyer named St. Valentine's Peak four months later; to have discovered the source of the Derwent in a lake adjacent to the peak; and to have penetrated to within twenty miles of the Pieman, a totally impossible feat (1).

Two lofty mountains that he saw in the distance he named Mt. Dundas and Parson's Hood. From the directions he gives, taken on 24th September, it is apparent that he saw first the summit of Mt. Cuvier, then Manfred—a gap—Mt. Gould and the Du Cane Range—a gap—then Ossa and the tops of Pellon East and Mt. Oakleigh. The Du Cane mass received the name of his patron Dundas, and Ossa he named the Parson's Hood.

He greatly overestimates his distances and some of his directions are hopelessly at fault. The latter may be explained by local attraction of the compass needle: for he tells us that "when placing the compass on a rock its vibration was so quick that I could make no observation by it." Thereupon he descended to the foot of the cminen on which he stood (Little Split Rock) and was enabled to take a bearing but, one infers, the attraction would still be present even if the instrument were not seriously impaired (2).

[Note.—In 1945 and 1946 Meston had an identical experience finding his compass unusable at this spot—W.M.M.]

He was making for a peak like a volcano, which, by his description, bearings, and distances must be identified as the highest point on the central plateau now known as the West Wall. He was obstructed by "a frightful chasm many miles in width, to the view a bottomless gulf." Avoiding this, they were impeded by a large river, which he supposed to be the Derwent, that pursued a S.S.E. course, and "issued from a large and magnificent sheet of water which is formed by the peak and a large range of mountains."

Meston resumes.

In view of the fact that, quite recently, Jorgensen's Journal has been quoted as authoritative, it is interesting to note that Curr in Despatch 56, January 5, 1829, writes: "I regret that I did not long since inform you that I have some reason for considering Jorgensen's account of his journey to the Lakes to be in part a fabrication. The route as laid down on the map is certainly wrong as he never was at or near the Surrey Hills or Middlesex Plains. Persons walking the bush often unintentionally overreach the distance they travel in the day by more than half."

The night spent on the shore of this lake was the worst they had yet experienced. Snow fell without intermission and the frost was so severe that the snow on the ends of the log of wood that was burning in the middle would not melt. In the morning the snow was two feet deep and Colbert, the black man, became lethargic and wished to be left behind. Accordingly Jorgensen deemed it not only prudent, but necessary, to return. On the evening of the 26th October, two days after leaving the peak, they reached what, from his description, must have been Lake Echo. From here he proceeded by way of New Norfolk to Hobart Town where he arrived on the 1st November.

Although the country adjacent to Circular Head contained some excellent meadow and grazing land, it was composed in the main of barren, heathy plains and dense forest, so it was necessary to look for a selection elsewhere. Curr thereupon sent Hellyer to examine the extensive plains which had been seen from Mt. Van Dyke, in the neighbourhood of the "peak like a volcano". Leaving Rocky Cape on the 1st February, 1827, he travelled in a southerly direction until he reached Dipwood Mount. From the summit of this mountain he saw a large plain 15 miles south of Table Cape, and a large tract of grassy country on the north side of the peak. To this grassy country he determined to go. On the 7th February, realising that it was impossible to take the horses through the country ahead, he left them at Dipwood Marsh in the charge of the two prisoners he had with him. He and two men used to the bush, Richard Frederick and Isane Cutts, each carrying a gun, a blanket, and a fortnight's provisions, then set off for the open country. For days they journeyed through dense myrtle forest and across a succession of wooded mountains. Although the men climbed trees, they could not pick out any distant object owing to the thick forest which shut them in. On the evening of the fifth day they caught sight of the peak, which appeared three days march from them. Progress had been extremely slow, owing to the dead logs and branches which impeded them at every step, while at frequent intervals they came upon clumps of horizontal scrub, through which they struggled, often at a height of 20 feet from the ground, tearing their clothes to rags. The wet, slippery branches, covered with moss and frequently rotten, caused many a fall, and they were unable to force their way more than 500 yards in an hour. Not wishing to run short of provisions, and desiring of seeing as much of the country as possible, he now shaped his course to the peak, so that from its summit he might obtain an extensive view of the country around. On the sixth day, for a few hours, they came out into more open country and crossed a large river running north which, on account of the emu tracks he saw in
the neighbourhood, he called the Cam. This river we now call the Cam. After passing over a number of thickly wooded hills, they came to the foot of the peak. On the 14th February, St. Valentine's Day, in spite of bad weather, they began the climb from the steep northern side. At two o'clock in the afternoon, while they were still far from the summit, a thick mist and heavy rain, intensely cold, swept down, and they were obliged to take shelter in a nook of rocks. For three hours they waited but, seeing the weather showed no signs of clearing, they descended and spent the night standing against some trees before a large fire. The next day broke fine and clear, and they began the climb early. Hampered by scrub, through which they struggled as best they could, they at last reached the summit, where Hellyer set up a stump of dead tree, and carved on it "St. Valentine's Peak." A glorious sight met his eager gaze. There to the southward lay the very type of land the Company desired, a fine stretch of open country, consisting of gently rising grassy hills. This district he at once proceeded to explore, and found the hills dry and divided from each other by brooks, the sides of which were clothed with shrubs. The country was one which always had an eye for scenery, the prospect was delightful. This country he called the Surrey Hills, "being about the same distance inland as that county in England and the open country north of St. Valentine's Peak, the Hampshire Hills. On the sixteenth day they crossed the Wey and, passing over several wooded hills, crossed a "noble river with a strong current gliding smoothly along from south to north." This river he called the Don, but today it is called, and more fitly so, the Hellyer. For two days he wandered among the hills, "which were delightful to look around upon," and on one occasion saw some native huts, in one of which he found a drawing of the moon done with charcoal. He now determined to make back to the horses, which he had rounded a high forest tier to get a bearing, but nothing could be seen beyond the neighbouring forests. Thereupon he set his course north-west and, on the 19th, came upon a deep and rapid river, larger than the Don, which he named the Arthur, after the governor of the island. With great difficulty they crossed the Arthur just south of the Wandle and plunged into the dense forest beyond. The country hereabouts is an almost impenetrable jumble of hills, densely timbered, and intersected by deep ravines. Along the Arthur valley they toiled, scrambling up steep hillsides, struggling through horizontal, carefully picking their way over rotten logs covered with a thick mat of moss, or pushing through scrub which tore at them and held them back at every step. Progress was extremely slow, a few miles a day. On the 20th they descended a steep hill and found their way barred by the Arthur. Again they crossed. On the 21st again they found the Arthur in their course but, seeing it turned away, they went around the bend and "came up to the foot of a long line of perpendicular cliffs of slate from two hundred to three hundred feet high which, upon examination, proved to be slate of the best quality." He brought away specimens, and engraved upon a large flat piece of the cliff, "Whoever is found stealing slate from this quarry will be dealt with according to law," and added the date. This slab lay there for nearly 100 years, until it was found by Mr. Kirkup in 1917 when, led by Hellyer's report, he took up slate leases on the Arthur. On they went, toiling through the dreary forest, over high mountains and down deep ravines, struggling through horizontal scrub, crawling with utmost difficulty along rocky forest-clad ridges, until in the afternoon of the 22nd they came to the Hellyer where it passes through a magnificent gorge. They succeeded in crossing, and struggled up one of the steepest hills they had yet encountered, to be met at the top with a patch of horizontal scrub. To add to their difficulties it was pouring with rain. Their strength was now failing for, in addition to their terrific struggle with the country and the elements, their food had run short. On the 20th, that is, the day before they crossed the Arthur for the second time, they had no provisions left but a little flour, which they mixed with hot water and ate, allowing themselves a pint a day each: a diet which, as he tells us, "is poor living to take such violent bodily exercise upon." The rain, the lack of food, and the tremendous exertions began to tell on the spirits of the men and they began to consider their position hopeless. Hellyer rallied their falling spirits, and they struggled on. At length, on the 24th, they stood on the brink of a frightful precipice with a river running below. They went along for some distance and, having found a place to descend, crossed the river which was running north-east. They were on the head waters of the Inglis. From a tree a little farther on they saw the sea and Table Cape, and immediately altered their course to north-west. Next day they recognised Dipwood Mount, five miles away, and "became a new set of men in a moment." Not a day too soon did they get back, for the men left on the marsh had given up all hope of seeing them again and had decided to leave the next morning and try to find their way back to Circular Head.

Curr was determined that the whole of the district wherein selection was permitted should be thoroughly explored before making a decision. He therefore sent Lorymer and Jorgensen with two men to find a passage from the Pieman to the district about the lakes, recently discovered by Jorgensen. The story of this expedition is one of inefficiency and incompetence, ending in disaster. The whaleboat landed them in a bay about 14 miles north of the Pieman and from there they struck inland. They lacked the fearlessness of Hellyer and, alarmed at the danger of the undertaking, after proceeding for about 15 miles, returned to the coast. Then, keeping to the seashore, they set out for Circular Head, traversing no new country. They loitered on the way and wantonly shot two kangaroo dogs on which they depended for part of their food. When they reached the Duck River, 16 miles from Circular Head, with nothing but heathy country intervening, their food gave out. After they had spent a day wandering over the sandflats trying to find a ford over the river, Lorymer attempted to swim across and was drowned. The others crossed on a tree about four miles higher up and returned to Circular Head, having accomplished nothing.

The land recently discovered by Hellyer seemed to be the best suited for the Company's purpose, so it was decided to make a settlement there. Accordingly, Fossey was ordered to leave Launceston.
with a "cart and party of people to endeavour to find a road from the western marshes to the country which Mr. Hellyer denominated the Surrey Hills." He left Launceston on the 6th April. After crossing the Quamby River he kept close to the foot of the Western Tiers and, although he traversed a forest of giant gums, found no great difficulties until he reached the Mersey. On the way he named a small tributary of the Mersey the Moline River, because, like the river of that name in Surrey, it runs underground for part of its course. Beyond the Mersey the hills rise steeply, almost from the water's edge, and here he was compelled to leave the cart. Taking Richard Frederick and Isaac Cuts with him, he climbed out of the Mersey Valley, crossed the Forth Gorge and entered a park-like country, which he called Middlesex Plains. It seems certain that it is to Fossey we owe the names Cradle Mountain and Barn Bluff. None had penetrated the district before him. From where he stood when he climbed out of the Forth Gorge these two mountains stand like two giant sentinels and could not escape being named. Moreover, it is only from this side that the Cradle Mountain looks like a prospector's candle and after, but not before, Fossey's journey was named Mount May-Day, and entered the Cradle Mountain, but did not climb it. A large open tract, "apparently unbounded," he named Hounsow Heath, and to a charming valley he gave the romantic name, The Vale of Belvoir. Then he crossed an arm of Black Bluff, ascended and named Mount May-Day, and entered the district discovered by Hellyer. He was charmed by its appearance, and writes: "The country in the vicinity of this river [the Leven] is so admirably laid out by nature that it assumes very much the appearance of a nobleman's domain, both as to extent and good quality, particularly that part lying east of the river." Heavy rain set in soon after he reached the hills, and rather than plunge into the dense bush between him and the coast in bad weather, he remained on the Hampshire Hills, where he was reduced to living on kangaroo soup, thickened with a little flour. When the weather cleared he made his way to the coast.

In the meantime Curr and Hellyer examined the islands and the Emu to ascertain their capabilities as harbours and Hellyer was instructed to find a practicable route from the coast to the Surrey Hills. He decided that the road should begin at Emu Bay and sent two letters to Adey requesting three additional men and tools of all sorts to make it. Curr was absent in Hobart Town and the work was begun without his sanction. While in Hobart Town he engaged Mr. George Barnard, who had served as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, to examine the coast between Round Hill Point and Table Cape, with a view to ascertaining the best site for a pier. Hellyer, however, by his decision and prompt action, had committed the Company to Emu Bay, and on the 26th September Curr and Barnard left Circular Head, not only to seek the best situation for a harbour, but "to see what conveniences the situation possessed from which Mr. Hellyer had commenced opening a road towards the Hampshire and Surrey Hills, and to determine the best situation for a jetty and store." Barnard preferred Table Bay for a permanent pier and Curr agreed with him. He also thought that a better route would have been found from the Hampshire Hills to Table Bay than that which was opened to Emu Bay; but the road had been under construction for nearly five months, and four miles were completed, so near the site of the present breakwater at Burnie, Curr ordered a wooden store and a jetty to be constructed. He took the opportunity of visiting the Surrey Hills and for the first time gained some knowledge of what the forest was really like. "The first eight miles lie through a forest altogether unlike anything I have seen in the island," he writes. The myrtle tree, scarcely known except in this district, and enormous stringy-bark trees, many of them three hundred feet high and thirty feet in circumference near the root, exclude the rays of the sun, and in the gloom which their shade creates, those trees flourish which affect darkness and humidity.

If, to this enormous mass of vegetation, be added another whole forest of fallen timber strewn thickly in every part and which occasionally lies in heaps to the height of twenty and thirty feet from the ground, some idea may be formed of the difficulty of penetrating such a country and opening roads.

Curr was sadly disappointed with both the Hampshire and Surrey Hills as sheep country, and realised that the district "could never be a first nor even a second rate sheep country." Nor did the cold and backward climate of the district escape his observation. In a letter to the directors, written soon after his return, he lamented that not one person in the service of the Company had colonial knowledge. "Had the Surrey Hills been discovered by a person who could have drawn a comparison between it and the old settlements," he writes, "I should have known its precise nature and value seven months ago as well as now." Yet he would not have the Court fall into the error of wholly condemning the district, and somewhat naively writes "that it may be profitable to the Company in some manner I have no doubt, and it must never be forgotten that we have no option."

By the 23rd February, 1828, Hellyer had finished the road from Emu Bay, and by the 23rd June of the same year Fossey had made a stock road in from the east. Both roads were necessary for, without the one inland, all the sheep must have been taken by water to Emu Bay, and the cattle either by water, or along the coast by a route much worse than the inland road. Without the road from the coast, all supplies must have been taken in carts over the inland road—an impracticable proceeding by reason of its steepness.

On the completion of the road Hellyer determined to explore the country lying to the south of the Surrey Hills, as far as the line of demarcation agreed upon between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the directors of the Company. In pursuance of this he fearlessly pushed out into the wildest country. On the 7th November, 1828, accompanied by Fossey and three men, he set out on a journey that imperilled the lives of all. His intention was to travel on a S.S.W. course to the line of demarcation, and return through the country south-west of Mount Pearse, but bad weather set in and the rivers ran so full that they were forced to the eastward. On the fourth day, to obtain a view of the country ahead, he climbed a mountain
and saw extensive plains, beyond which rose a high mountain which he mistook for Mt. Heems kirk, though he concluded that, on the chart, it was placed several miles too close to the West Coast. The mountain on which he stood he named Mt. Charter, in commemoration of the day, the anniversary of the grant of the charter to the Company. To avoid the dense scrub, he kept to the hills as much as possible and climbed to the top of another mountain which, from an enormous rock crowning the summit, he called Mount Block. After a laborious and perilous descent, they 'came to "a noble river larger than the Mersey at Gad's Hill."' This Hellyer named the Mackintosh. On an earlier occasion he had given the name Huskison to a river further west, which he now realised must meet with the Mackintosh to form the Pieman. They determined to follow the Mackintosh but, so rugged was the country, after strenuous exertions they advanced only two miles in the day. To reach some open country they crossed the Mackintosh but found their way barred by another large river nearly as wide and very deep. This river, a tributary of the Mackintosh, he called the Brougham. A partly submerged tree spanning it provided a crossing but so rapidly was the river rising, owing to the bad weather that now set in, that before the last man of the party crossed, it had risen six inches. Ahead of them was a rugged mountain mass which he named Mount Eldon, but which the Government Geologist, Mr. Montgomery, in 1895, called Mount Farrell, the name "Eldon' having been transferred to a range further south. Just beyond was Mount Murchison, Hellyer's "Heems kirk," towering above all the surrounding country. He climbed Mount Farrell, and worked along the ridge, determined if possible to reach the summit of Mount Murchison to observe the surrounding country. Suddenly beneath their feet yawned a sheer precipice, at the foot of which ran a river "deep enough to float a seventy-four, about a mile and sixty yards wide." No way across could be found. The Camp at night, as he called this river, "was roaring and foaming along in a terrific manner." Nor could they return by the way they had come for the incessant rain had so swollen all the rivers that it was impossible to cross them. Their only hope lay in working towards the east and trying to head the rivers. After旅行ing for the greater part of three days in this direction, they succeeded in crossing the Brougham a few miles beyond two mountains he named Victoria and Sophia, after the young princesses. Snow now began to fall. They pushed on, only to find their way barred by an appalling gorge. To avoid it they had to move south-east. For one day and part of the next they struggled through blowing snow-storms when, the storm somewhat abating, they found themselves on the slopes of Barn Buff, with the gorge still in front of them. Then the snowstorm came on with greater violence than ever and they were forced to descend the gorge. Here the snow proved an advantage for, as it lay frozen amid the jagged, beetling rocks, it provided them with a support on the almost perpendicular sides of the ravine. In four hours they reached the bottom where the river proved fordable. They struggled on, but the weather was so thick that no landmarks were visible and frequently they had to deviate to avoid precipices. On the second day after descending into the gorge, the weather cleared, and towards evening they came in sight of the lake seen by Fossey the year before on the northern side of Cradle Mountain. Their difficulties were now over and in a few days they reached Burleigh. That there was no clear weather while they were toiling over such high mountains to enable them to see the nature of the distant country was to Hellyer "a mortifying circumstance." He was determined, therefore, to revisit this country, and early in March, 1831, he made an ascent of Cradle Mountain and again suffered severely.

Governor Arthur was anxious that the Company should be confined to the extreme north-western portion of the island—the district around Cape Grim—and acted on instructions received from Lord Bathurst, that the Surveyor-General was to survey the country within the limits prescribed for the Company's selection. Accordingly, J. H. Wedge, the Assistant-Surveyor, received instructions on the 13th December to survey, examine, and report upon the north-west district of the island for the purpose of locating a grant of land to the Van Diemen's Land Company. Rather than accept such land as Wedge recommended, the directors were unanimous in declaring that they would abandon the project entirely and submit to the loss of all money expended.

IV POTENTATE OF THE NORTH.

As the Company's operations would be some 4000 miles from the court of directors, and almost a year must elapse before a reply to any communication could be received, the appointment of the chief agent in Van Diemen's Land was a matter of the greatest moment. From an early period in the negotiations for the establishment of the company Stephen Adey had been led to expect the position would be offered to him. He was well known to several of the directors, had long practical experience with sheep and wool and had proved himself a successful man in business. His prudent character was a further recommendation.

It was not long, however, before a serious competitor appeared in the person of Edward Curr. The letter from the promoters seeking information regarding the possibilities of Van Diemen's Land for the growth of fine wool, on a large scale, was the latter's first intimation of the proposed company. He immediately became interested and resolved to become a shareholder. So vital was his information, so fertile were his ideas that, two months later, on the 2nd March, 1825, he replaced William Wilkinson as secretary pro tem. His services were further recognised in July, when, in addition to a remuneration of £200 he was presented with a hundred guineas "as a testimonial of the zeal and ability he has displayed in assisting to arrange with the proprietors the terms of the Van Diemen's Land Company's Charter, as well as for the valuable information afforded by him on many points of great interest and importance, and particularly for his judicious suggestions towards settling the plans for conducting the Company's business in the Colony" (1).

His intimate knowledge of the colony and his greater personal activity made his appointment as
the Company's Chief Agent in Van Diemen's Land inevitable, but something had to be done to redeem the expectations held out to Adey.

"The question was, "how the authority could be so divided between the two as to give the requisite ascendency to one and, at the same time, preserve as much equality between them as should be consistent with a due subordination and a steady administration of affairs." After much discussion, in which both Curr and Adey participated, an arrangement was agreed upon. They were appointed the two commissioners on the part of the Company for the location of lands, and a council of three was to be set up for the general conduct of business in Van Diemen's Land. Curr was to be first member and chairman, Adey the second member, and the third "a colonist of property and respectability nominated by them." Paramount authority next to that of the council of directors resided in this council, whose power, however, was to be merely legislative and corrective, not executive. Any resolution adopted by a majority of the council had to be put into effect by the chairman, and full provision was made for meetings. Until the council was constituted Curr, as Resident Agent, was to have the executive and chief authority over all the other servants of the Company. He would take up residence in Hobart and remain there as long as necessary. Adey was to reside on the lands as Superintendent of the Company's Estates, directing all operations and having, under Curr, chief authority there. Both men received the same salary, £600 per annum, and the same allowance, 22s. a day, when at their own expense (1). By letter of attorney recorded in the island the powers were given to them jointly (1).

The directors realised that this division of authority, the result of compromise, was a novel experiment of whose success they were somewhat doubtful. The preamble to the joint instructions, issued on the eve of departure, has a note of misgiving:

"They trust that their arrangement in this respect will be acquiesced in, and the duties of their respective stations discharged by both, with that cordiality and regard for the interests of the Company which they have every reason to expect from their known zeal and good disposition."

Applications for the position of Agriculturist poured in, and, eventually, Alexander Goldie was appointed at a salary of £200 per annum. Before he left England, however, this was raised to £300. Henry Hellyer was appointed architect and surveyor, Joseph Fossey and Clement Lorymer surveyors, each at a salary of £100 per annum (2).

The establishment of the Council of Management, the only power which could override Curr's will, was left in abeyance, Curr stating in explanation that there had been no occasion for a third member to settle any difference of opinion between Adey and himself, for none had arisen. The Council, however, had other functions and the advice of a judicious and experienced person would have been invaluable. No meeting could be held while he and Adey were absent from Hobart looking for land and it was decided to defer any action until after their return (3).

No moneys could be drawn from the bank without the warrant of the chairman of the council and one other authorized person. At the beginning this was Adey, but his absence from Hobart searching for suitable lands made it necessary to have another person authorized to join the chairman in signing orders for money. The third member would have been the natural person, but no nomination had as yet been made. As the instructions permitted the Council to appoint a Treasurer, George Cartwright, a solicitor of Hobart and a director of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, was appointed at a salary of £100 per annum, and authorised to countersign money orders. The appointment was merely a temporary one, Curr being unwilling to make it permanent on the score of expense (4).

When the Company was first proposed one of the arguments brought forward in its favour was that the colony would benefit. The great need of the colonists was capital to develop their holdings and they confidently expected that the Company would, in some measure, remedy this want by lending money on mortgage at moderate interest. This the charter permitted them to do. Almost from the hour of their arrival agents were approached to lend money on mortgage, but their hands were tied, for definite instructions forbade them to settle any difference of opinion between Adey and himself, for none had arisen. The Council, however, refused to grant the request of their agents.

This refusal increased the body of opinion hostile to the Company. As early as December, 1823 (5),
Bent's paper, "The Colonial Times," cautioned its readers against anticipations of great immediate advantage to the island arising from the Company's activities. Caution developed into suspicion when, soon after his arrival, Curr called on the editors of the two Hobart newspapers and told them that he did not wish the transactions of the Company to be reported in the colonial Press. Bent now openly wrote of the undue political influence the Company was meant to have, seeing that its chief agent had been proclaimed a member of the newly-constituted legislative council and colour was given to his comment by the fact that, in a council of six, Curr was the only non-official nominee. He had no doubt that the Company was interested in the colony, but only so far as would enable it to make as much money as possible for the proprietors (*). The agents brought with them 20,000 Spanish dollars, the ordinary currency of the colony, although accounts were kept in pounds, shillings and pence, a dollar being reckoned at five shillings. Curr wished to deposit 10,000 dollars in the bank at a fixed sum for six months, but the bank refused on the ground that no interest was given except on a fixed sum for six months. This Curr eventually accepted, but not before the "Colonial Times" had used the incident to bring some discredit on the Company by insinuating that gain for itself, irrespective of the colony's good, was its sole aim—"The gentlemen who represent the Company assert that their object is to make as much money as possible for their constituents" (**).

When Curr returned in June from the preliminary explorations he was unduly reticent. To all enquiries he replied that the result of his search for land would be known in "due time." This air of mystery fanned Bent's hostility and he wrote indignantly: "How wholly inconsistent with the high sounding professions held out in the prospectus of the Company that their principal object was the good of the colony" (**).

Murray, of the "Austral-Asiatic Review," spoke of the land grant "which has been so unwisely and so improvidently granted to it upon promises, as the lawyers say. We have no objection," he continued, "to the English proprietors bestowing their money upon whosoever they please; but we have much objection to our island being cut and carved away worse than uselessly" (**).

All sections of the colonists looked to the Company to use some of its capital in accordance with its avowed objects (*) towards developing the latent possibilities of the island. Bridges and roads were needed, public buildings were wanted, and it was expected that the Company would make loan money available for these purposes. In November, 1826, the Hobart Town Gazette hinted that the Company should make available the capital necessary to construct a bridge across the Derwent (**). A fortnight later, as the agents had given no sign of any such intention, the Colonial Times again raised its voice: "The new bridge, an undertaking so generally useful, is at a standstill for capital—the Company is silent. Settlers have applied for loans—the Company is silent. Public works are projected—a new Gaol, Penitentiary, &c., to wit—the Company is still silent. No loans to Government—no loans to individuals—no contracts or offers of contracts for public works—no rapid articulation of money—no mining—no whaling—no sealing—no distilling—no brewing have been seen, nor any step yet taken in any one way to benefit the Colony by the Van Diemen's Land Company. Its object is evidently monopoly" (**).

The Government organ, the "Hobart Town Gazette," was equally hostile. While admitting that there would be a few immediate benefits arising from sale of stock, the erection of buildings and the making of roads when the Company was settling in, the editor saw the whole economic structure of the island threatened. The presence of the names of members of the British parliament and prominent English merchants in the list of proprietors, he viewed "an intention more benevolent than it would prove beneficial." He envisaged the Company as a great absentee landlord thinking of nothing but dividends for itself, much in the same way as the East India Company thought of India, and proclaimed that it would be prejudicial to the colony.

"We are different from other British colonies. We are not a tropical plantation where a few whites, thinly scattered among a slave population, endure a martyrdom of sickness for the sake of amassing riches to spend in a healthier climate. We, a real and legitimate portion of the British people, have our abode in a land which presents no sudden means of realizing a fortune, but it affords what is better, health and competence. We trust, therefore, that no Company or set of men will drain our island of the fruit of native industry" (**).

He appealed to the emotions as well as to the intellect, reminding his readers that they were in possession of "land which an enthusiastic spirit has led us to improve and to enjoy; on which we have suffered, with comparative pleasure, the severest privations; where, for a time perhaps, we had no covering but the sky, and no sustenance but what the chase and the wild woods afforded and where everything is endeared by the fondest recollections" (**).

Later attacks on the Company by Dr. Ross were poisoned by personal animus against Curr, but when he wrote this there could not have been the slightest indication that he was to be the Company's chief agent, nor would his connection with the Company be known. This personal enmity dated from 1822, when, on his arrival in the colony, Ross considered he was slighted by Curr, at that time a resident in Hobart (**).

Ross was not alone in thinking that Van Diemen's Land possessed all the necessaries required to make it the England of the south. Such a belief was widespread among the free settlers and was of no recent growth. As far back as 1816 Bent wrote in an editorial:—"Twenty-five thousand bushels of wheat have already been exported to Port Jackson out of the late harvest, and still there is enough and to spare for our own needs. From this earnest of industry and fertility in so young a colony, and with so small a population, the mind is led to contemplate on its prosperity and happiness at a remote period when agriculture shall be brought to a state of perfection—when a population more than is requisite for the purposes of agriculture will support the Arts and Commerce, extended through their means:
when fair Science and the Liberal Arts will rear their heads and all the benefits of political society be universally felt ")")

Melville, in his almanac of 1832, also clearly indicates the local distrust and dislike. "The Company itself is not, nor is it likely to become, of a popular character. The merchants view it with exhibited from trading, and cannot, it may be presumed, interfere with them. The settlers like it not, regarding it as an overgrown monster who is trenching upon what should wholly belong to themselves. It stands, therefore, in a manner, alone in the colony, and is not, nor is it likely to become, of a popular character. The merchants view it with distrust and jealousy although it is strictly prohibited from trading, and cannot, it may be presumed, interfere with them. The settlers like it not, regarding it as an overgrown monster who is trenching upon what should wholly belong to themselves. It stands, therefore, in a manner, alone in

The public advertisement of the shares brought forth a letter in the Press from a colonist advising his fellows to boycott "the all-devouring Company" because, if it were successful in cultivating only part of its lands, its competition in the limited local market would be disastrous to all. "In short," he continued, "look at an absentee Company in what point of view you will, they will be found the greatest curse that ever fell upon a country and particularly this: which was intended for the abode of persons who, from various causes, abandoned their native country and fled for refuge, seeking a habitation free from the exactions such as rent, tythes and taxes with which they found themselves overwhelmed. Buy no shares—show your determination—let the people of England see that you will take no part in the concern—that you perceive that it is a death blow aimed at your adopted country "")")

Such attacks not only declare the grounds of opposition to the Company but reveal why there should be so much opposition to Arthur. The free colonists regarded Van Diemen's Land as a haven where they might escape from the disabilities of the old world. Arthur thought of it as a gaol of the old world and ruled it as such.

Although feeling ran high between the supporters of the government and the opposition, it is clear from these newspaper comments that the colonists, no matter what their political opinion, were as a body suspicious of the Company. The position needed tactful and delicate handling, but Curr's methods deepened the suspicions and made the colonists distrustful of his every move.

He was a man of magnificent physique, being six feet one inch in height and well proportioned. He had a fine head, large and square, a massive jaw and abstracted grey eyes. Intellectual ability and an imperious disposition matched his physical appearance. Fixed and determined in his resolves, he brooked opposition with difficulty and was inclined to take the control of affairs as his inalienable right.

His determined independence of thought and action was clearly shown soon after his arrival. As the only non-official member of the Legislative Council the merchants hoped for much from him and the following appeared in the opposition paper: "To him the public looks as the nucleus around which may be found the support for the rights of the people of which it is probable they will stand so much in need "")

In after days, in Victoria, Curr threw himself unreservedly into the struggle against officialdom, but he was never willing to have his path mapped out for him.

Without loss of time he handed his resignation to Arthur. The latter, however, asked him to continue to serve as a councillor, stressing the fact that his knowledge and experience would be invaluable to the colony.

His coolness in an emergency, and something of his personality, are revealed in his encounter with the giant bushranger Pearson. Curr was stuck up the main road about 34 miles from Hobart and...
robbed of his horse, saddle, bridle, watch and small sum of money. "A valise containing my papers I saved," he writes, "but have some reason to believe that the fellow had at one moment determined to murder me. I remonstrated with him on the inutility of such a piece of cruelty and he then seemed to consider that pursuit would be equally well prevented by depriving me of the horse." (60)

Towards the end of October, Adey sailed for Circular Head in the schooner Ellen to receive the Tranmere and to superintend the foundation of the first settlement. Early in December, much to the astonishment of Curr, he remarked in at the Company's office at Hobart. Curr was furious. At no time more than in the initial stages did the infant settlement need the presence of the superintendent, yet here he was in Hobart at least nine days' journey away, having left his post within a month of the landing of the sheep, cattle, stores and servants.

Regarding this as a grave neglect of duty, Curr, as chairman of the council of management, insisted that Adey enter in the minutes a statement of the reason of his absence. This he did, declaring that after landing the indentured servants and stock, the Tranmere sailed for the Tamar with the intention of returning in a short while with provisions, but she was delayed and, provisions at the settlement running short, the inhabitants grew alarmed. Accordingly they petitioned him to take the schooner, proceed to the Tamar in person and send provisions by the first fair wind, assuring him that only in this way would they feel safe. He did not hesitate to act on the petition, for he was desirous of being in Hobart as he had been absent from his family for fourteen weeks, and his wife was expecting confinement. As a third reason he stated that he wished to judge whether the country about the Western Marshes, and that seen by Hellyer from the top of a mountain in the neighbourhood, was adapted for the Company's purpose, and on his return he was going to look at it. He was also going to see if a road to Circular Head could be found in a north-west direction from Hobart, or along the coast itself (51).

That Adey wished to be with his family was a sincere enough reason, but the others were merely specious. If starvation really faced the young settlement. It was his duty to remain and keep up the falling spirits of the inhabitants, sending one of the subordinate officers (there were four of them) to bring provisions. Actually the fear of starvation was the outcome of a state of mind engendered by Adey himself. The land seen by Hellyer and the Western Marshes (59) bordered on the settled districts, and in view of Arthur's refusal to allow the grant being near the settlers, tacitly abandoned by the agents when they established their first farm at Circular Head, Adey would have been wasting his time examining them. So far as the road to the north-west was concerned an exploratory party was already out, and, besides, he had three surveyors for such work. At this time the establishment at Circular Head needed his closest attention.

The true reason for his desertion of the settlement lay in his own character. He was not of the stuff to carve a settlement from the primeval bush far removed from city life. When he accepted the position of Superintendent of Farms he completely failed to imagine the conditions he must face. The giant eucalypts, the scrub, the isolation were so different from the open downs, the neighbouring villages, and "meadows trim with daisies pied" of Great Britain, that his heart quailed. Nor was he constitutionally fitted for such a task. He grew despondent and dissatisfied. To Goldie and Hellyer he was in the habit of saying on all occasions that he did not see how the undertaking was ever going to pay and that it was very probable that it would be abandoned. Soon these opinions were as well known to the men as to the officers and before long no one had the heart to do anything. Adey had many good qualities but he was totally unfit for the position in which he was placed. He was quite unable to control the mixed crew of indentured servants and convicts at Circular Head. He had no idea of managing men. Where he should have been decided and resolute he was capricious and vacillating. In a few days the convicts had taken his measure and were openly insolent and insubordinate. He was equally incompetent to supervise farming operations. Goldie, the Company's agriculturist, never spoke of his management both of men and affairs "otherwise than in terms of the most unmeasured contempt and ridicule." (56)

The great distance at which it was probable the Company's lands would be from the inhabited districts led Curr to ask that Adey be made a magistrate of the colony, so that he might be able to exercise proper control over the servants both free and assigned (49). To this Bathurst agreed (60). This promise clashed with local procedure, for by an act of the Legislature passed in New South Wales when Van Diemen's Land was still a dependency, no magistrate could personally decide in matters relating to his own servants (57). When his attention was drawn to this Bathurst told Arthur to confine Adey's authority "within those limits which the Regulations on that subject may prescribe, excepting in so far as you may judge it expedient to dispense with them in his favour" (56).

No decision had been reached before Adey proceeded to Circular Head. On his return he at once opened the question, stating that because he was not a magistrate he found great difficulty in suppressing insubordination and neglect of duty among the assigned servants. He was merely deluding himself. While no doubt the office of magistrate would be of some assistance in controlling the convicts, he would not supply his defects of character. Arthur was disposed to make him a magistrate and leave him to act or not, according to his discretion where the Company was an interested party. Cartwright, the Company's solicitor, thought that Adey could not legally act. In this opinion he was supported by the Hobart magistrate and others, but Curr dissented. However, to be on the safe side, the latter advised that when the directors appointed a surgeon they should select one fit to be a justice of the peace (56). In the midst of the discussion a letter arrived from Goldie asking that a military officer who could act as a magistrate, and a detachment of soldiers, be sent immediately to maintain order (57). The situation disclosed by the letter revealing the in-
The position that Goldie faced was in the main inability of both Adey and Goldie to control men. There were no immediate developments as it was Sunday, but on Monday and Tuesday they refused to go to work. Wednesday was ration day and Goldie issued the regular allowance with the exception of salt. To his amazement, just before midday, they all appeared before him and declared their readiness to go to work. Such a situation was beyond him; he weakly said that since they had ceased without his consent they might do as they pleased. And they did so. Never a day passed without some of them remaining in their huts under the pretence of being ill. At one stage there were as many as eight away for several days, two of whom had done no work for more than a fortnight. Some of them had not received the regulation allowance of blankets, and under the pretence of having caught cold because he had but one blanket to cover him, one man stayed away from work for some days.

Just before Christmas one, bolder than the rest, demanded more rations and, when they were refused, became insolent. This was more than even Goldie could endure, so he ordered the blacksmith to make a pair of handcuffs, and put them on the culprit. As there was no place of confinement he chained him to a tree, but was unable to keep away his companions, who crowded around openly sympathising with him.

On Christmas Day, to mark the occasion, Goldie ordered fresh meat for all hands and a Gill of rum for each. Angered by the parsimony of the rum allowance the prisoners refused theirs, demanding nothing less than a pint apiece. But Goldie was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better term. Some of the free men clubbed together and bought some additional rum for themselves. This was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better term. Amber by the parsimony of the rum allowance the prisoners refused theirs, demanding nothing less than a pint apiece. But Goldie was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better term. Some of the free men clubbed together and bought some additional rum for themselves. This was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better term. Some of the free men clubbed together and bought some additional rum for themselves. This was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better term. Some of the free men clubbed together and bought some additional rum for themselves. 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Some of the free men clubbed together and bought some additional rum for themselves. This was firm, or perhaps obstinate would be a better ter...
The directors had expressed their desire that Curr should become a resident at the establishment as soon as possible. They felt that his "presence on the lands to direct and encourage the labours in that important department would be of the greatest use and advantage". He was urged to make some temporary arrangements for his family at Hobart Town for the short while that he would need to be at the seat of government. This was discussed by Curr and Adey immediately the latter returned to Hobart. They agreed that as Circular Head, the only place occupied by the Company, would not be its principal settlement and could not be its headquarters since the area available for a sheep farm was far too restricted for their purpose, it would not be advisable to incur the expense of erecting a residence there for the chairman. Moreover, it was not advisable for him to leave Hobart Town at such a stage in the Company's affairs, nor would it be so for at least twelve months. Their hopes of obtaining adequate land suitable for pasturing sheep had again been raised by Hellyer's discovery of the Hills.

By this time Adey realised his unfitness for the position he filled and looked around for a means of escape. His wife, too, had no wish to submit to the loneliness, inconvenience and general disabilities of so retired a place as Circular Head. Shot off from the rest of the island by trackless forests, with no means of access except by the Company's tiny boats of from 25 to 30 tons burthen. Hobart was far enough removed from the amenities of life without imprisoning herself where she would be entirely deprived of personal intercourse with any woman whom she could meet as an intimate.

The directors' request that Curr reside on the Company's lands suggested a method of release. On 9th July, Adey proposed in council that he resign his position as Superintendent of Farming Operations, and become the Company's agent in Hobart Town from 1st October at a salary of £200, the amount Curr himself had suggested as payment of such an agent when both he and Adey should be resident on the Company's establishment. In addition there would be £10 per annum for stationery. He pointed out that this arrangement would not only enable Curr to meet the wishes of the directors in respect of residence, but would be a desirable measure of economy, for the Company would save some twelve or thirteen hundred pounds per annum besides the expense of moving his furniture and family to Circular Head. As resident agent he would purchase such stores as were required, negotiate bills on the Company, procure free and convict labour and conduct negotiations with the Government in accordance with the directions of the Chairman. He would not, however, resign his seat on the Council of Management and would retain his power of attorney.

Such a proposal came as a pleasant surprise to Curr, but he foresaw difficulties in the operations of the Council of Management if he were to be on the north-west coast while the other members were in Hobart. A few days later he signified his agreement to the proposal, but considered that if he were to undertake the superintendence of the farming operations he should do so at once. Hellyer's discovery of the Hampshire and Surrey Hills (the true nature of the district not being yet known) made him think that the Company's chief operations would be carried out on there and at some port on the adjacent coast. As no works of any kind had begun, it was better that he should set them on foot rather than Adey who would no sooner begin than he must return. But the latter was not prepared to resign at once nor could he with propriety enter upon his new post at the old salary. Eventually a compromise was reached. Curr was to go at once to Circular Head while Adey remained in Hobart Town acting for the chairman, entering on his new office from 1st October.

The directors, for their part, had resolved to alter the arrangements for control originally decided. On 13th August they wrote to Curr informing him that the power of the chairman of the council of management was to be paramount. A few months later they abolished the council and instructed Curr "to take upon himself the chief management of the Company's concerns in the colony". He was, however, to consult with his officers in regard to expenditure on any buildings, bridges, piers, &c., which involved a cost of more than £200. He could not construct any works at a cost of more than £500 without the consent of the Court of Directors. The departments of sheep and wool were to be put under Adey's "sole and absolute control," and in Curr's absence he was to have complete charge of the establishment.

Legally the powers of the two men were still equal, for the directors neither revoked nor altered the original power of attorney on record in the island, but they wrote to Adey and asked him to refrain from using his power to interfere with Curr's duties as chief agent. But when these instructions reached the island the position they related to had completely changed.

When Adey proposed to act as the Hobart agent of the Company at a salary of £200 a year he was not relegating himself to poverty. He was a man of considerable means and, in a plan under discussion in the town, he saw an opportunity of investing some of his capital to advantage and of using the undoubted financial ability he possessed. The handsome profits made by the Van Diemen's Land Bank encouraged the sheriff and other public officers to plan a joint stock bank. Adey associated himself with these, and the Derwent Bank with a capital of £20,000 was the outcome. It opened its doors on 1st January, 1828, with Adey, a large shareholder, as managing director and cashier.

Transactions with the bank led to Adey's final rupture with the Company. At the beginning of March, 1828, Adey removed the account of the Company from the Van Diemen's Land Bank to the Derwent Bank, giving as his reason the defalcations of the cashier to the extent of £2000. When Curr learned of the change he objected on the ground that the reason was insufficient and said that Adey, by virtue of his connection with the Derwent Bank, had himself opened the transactions of helping his bank at the expense of the creditors of the Van Diemen's Land Company. In view of the bitter feeling aroused among the merchants by the creation of the Derwent Bank, Adey's action was...
likely to injure the Company and Curr's protest
was justified. As the main business of the banks
of the colony was in discounting bills at three
months, the newly established bank had for some
time to depend almost entirely on its capital, and
whatever the motives that actuated him, Adey's
action benefited his bank.

Curr ordered him to return the account to the
Van Diemen's Land Bank. Adey refused to do so
and demanded that the matter be decided by the
Council of Management. Curr now played his
trump card, producing the Court's despatch of 23rd
August, 1827, wherein the power of the chairman
of the Council was declared supreme. This was
the first intimation of the ruling Adey had received.
He at once restored the account and sent in his
resignation as from 26th August, the date on which
he considered his three years' engagement expired,
but Adey insisted, proposing, if necessary, to take
legal advice as to whether he was entitled to retire
and, as a member of our little society, he is a most
agreeable companion, on the other hand I am sorry
to say that there is a good deal of cunning duplicity
and insincerity about him, and great deal of hiding
of faults to save appearances and as much attempt
to make an appearance of zeal and industry. He
is the very reverse of a candid man. He can
make an effort but he is not uniformly diligent; he
has no anxiety and his zeal is precisely of that quality
which would not regret any misfortune that should
befall the Company so that he was not the person
to blame for it. This feeling was but too con¬
spicuous when Mr. Adey was here and he is much too
familiar with his mch. I fear, prompted apparently
by an inordinate love of gossip and scandal, and
a desire to know everyone's faults and weaknesses.
Accordingly he does know everything that is dis¬
creditable to every person, and I never hear the
scandal of Circular Head until I go to the Hamp¬
shire Hills. As a farmer he does not make a
proper comparison between the end to be gained
and the cost of gaining it. Hence in a great
measure the dreadful destruction of working cattle
wherever he has had the management. The Stallion
sent from England was almost wrought to death,
the Durham Bulls were severely wrought and I was
surprised recently to hear, thoughts from him,
that a very old mare which was left in the
last winter to be forwarded to this place, and
which has done nothing for years but breed, was employed
in carrying a pack saddle through those dreadful
roads and she died under his care. I have had so
much experience of Mr. Goldie's mismanagement
in this way, that I have long determined never
to entrust him with a mare or even valuable horse.
I have an impression that if I had been at the
Surrey Hills last season fewer rams would have been lost.
Not that I understand the management of
stock as well as Mr. Goldie does but that I should
have been more careful and anxious for them and
more provident. Mr. Goldie has had much to learn
since he came here. For instance, when he was
managing here, he sent boats and men 20 or 30
months in quest of fencing materials after he had
had them employed in splitting shingles in the
midst of excellent materials within 4 miles and he
finally erected a fence in which all possible bad
qualities are brought together, the worst I dare
say that was ever put up in Van Diemen's Land,
and such as no man of common sense could have
been expected to tolerate. It is now nearly down
and must be renewed this summer. Even at the
Hampshire Hills amidst the very best of materials
he has done nothing for years but breed, was employed
in carrying a pack saddle through those dreadful
roads and she died under his care. I have had so
much experience of Mr. Goldie's mismanagement
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is in all respects a man of sterling worth. On the other side his prominent fault can only be expressed by the homely proverb "His geese are all swans." He looks more at scenery than at land or grass and his prejudices are insurmountable. No arguments, or facts either, can ever convince him that he has made too flattering an estimate of his discoveries. He has an ingenious answer to every objection. He is exceedingly chimerical in all his ideas, a great projector, and would be expensive to a degree (I do not mean personally) if left to himself. He would have mansions where I have cottages. All these failings being entirely checked and expending themselves in magnificent ideas do no harm: again he is too quiet and easy to manage unruly men, hence he never could with advantage have superintendence of extensive works of any kind unless they were carried out by contract.

Mr. Joseph Fossey: Surveyor, and now in charge for a short time of the establishment at Woolnorth, is a compound of many discordant qualities. He is not a man of talent, neither is he wanting in that respect, but is quite conversant with the principles of his profession but is exceedingly slow in practice arising from too great an attention to minutiae. If he were set to survey a district in Van Diemen's Land he would do it with as much exactness as if he were measuring Covent Garden Market. His expense of the survey would amount to twice the value of land but it would be quite accurate in the end. When he was acting as store-keeper here, he weighed tons of iron to ½ oz. and probably if told otherwise would have said that he would do it right or not at all. He is an exceedingly trustworthy man and can be entirely depended upon for anything he is competent to undertake and hence is in many cases a valuable servant. In his general character he is made up of peculiarities, affecting to think and act on all subjects differently from everyone else and from himself too. Yet altogether he is a man of worth and a conscientious servant of the Company and I am very sorry to part with him, because I know that I can place dependence upon him."

In giving these character sketches Curr says: "In conformity with your desire expressed to me in despatch No. 91, § 3 I beg to give you in this despatch "my character of each person employed in the service." In doing this I think I may safely say that I have no mind to divest myself of any prejudices for or against any individual and that has been my study and practice ever since I have had the direction of your affairs in this colony, making every proper allowance for every person's faults and not expecting perfection from anyone. If I allude to the faults of each individual and particularly of your officers as well as mention their good qualities, you I am sure will acquit me of any desire to depreciate them in your estimation. It is undoubted that each one has his faults and in giving their true characters these must be told."

[Supplementary note by K. M. Dallas.]

From March, 1833, to December, 1834, Curr was absent from the colony on a visit to England to concert plans and study the "immense emigration" then being developed. On his return he began a policy of retrenchment and reorganisation. Whatever the merits of the new policy may have been it would have been upset by the general changes in the colonies arising from the extension of settlement to the Port Phillip district. In December, 1835, Curr reported to the Directors the formation in Hobart of the Port Phillip Association and also that Governor Arthur wanted to have the new district "attached to Van Diemen's Land." Curr urged them to apply for 350,000 acres, seeking a new charter if necessary and informed them that he intended to sell his own lands and buy land at Port Phillip.

He had six more years as Agent during which he must have been continually aware of the opportunities he and the Company were missing. His differences with the Directors were clearly due to the boom which followed, foredooming the efforts of the Directors to find tenants with capital in England and aggravating the labour shortage. Since it was clearly the Australian prosperity which brought about the end of transportation and provided the revenue to finance a supply of cheap labour from assisted emigration. Curr resisted the proposals to send him both tenant farmers and indentured servants. He knew the tenants would prefer Port Phillip and cautioned the Directors against making special promises to unsuitable types, saying "there is hardly a gentleman in England who is not acquainted with some person whom he wishes 15,000 miles away." He lacked the resources to prepare dwellings and farms for tenants who lacked both capital and experience.

On indentured servants there was some divergence of view. The Directors, anxious for dividends, continued to send these, in spite of Curr's protests that Irish families sent in 1840 were equal to second or third rate prisoners and that he preferred to hire ticket-of-leave convicts: in 1841 he complained that his convicts were being corrupted by the Irish servants.

The grounds for his dismissal seem to have been found in his clashes with the colonial Government. Even before he went to England it had been found that indentures of servants were not binding in the colony, except to the extent of recovering the cost of passage, and in 1839 a Bill was introduced to clarify the position. Its rejection was ascribed to Montagu who in the debates described the Company's methods as "kidnapping" and "like those of the recruiting sergeant." Curr was censured by the Directors for his intemperate language in reply and was later threatened with dismissal if he should persist in such conduct. We should note that Montagu was the nephew of ex-Governor Arthur and that Arthur's policy towards the Company did not end with his departure. Moreover, on Arthur's return to England the Directors had apologised to him for Curr's behaviour and a few months later Curr was ordered to apologise to the colonial Government.

The notice of dismissal seems to have been expected. Curr gave the Directors clear advice on the choice of a successor and later commended their choice. In one letter he made the comment: "I retain here an authority the Court did not confer and cannot take away." He was in fact the Company. What measure of success he had achieved in opening up a region whose resources
had then a low economic potential, in proving the possibilities and disproving wishful thinking, in exploiting the new trade to Port Phillip in stud stock and timber, was due to his management. His difficulties were those inherent in an absentee company faced with a colonial Government which gave it the bare letter of its legal rights.

We well may conclude that the crisis of 1841 showed him the folly of linking his own fortunes any longer with those of the Company or the colony, that there was no future for a potenrate of the North.

V THE COMPANY AND THE ABORIGINES.

The initial stages of the Company's development were marked by frequent clashes with the aborigines, that dark-skinned race who inhabited Tasmania long before any white man set foot on its shores. Comparing them with the natives of New South Wales, Curr writes:

"They are inferior to them in every point of view, their persons, their huts, their arms. They are evidently a distinct race as is apparent from the fact that those of New South Wales have lank shining hair and copper-coloured complexions while those of Van Diemen's Land have the crisp curly hair, thick lips and black skin of the African negro(1)."

Curr knew that much of the success of his ventures depended on his being able to live at peace with the natives and the Directors in London were equally well aware of this and continually exhorted their agents to "lose no measure to bring the natives into a state of civilization and usefulness".

This was no easy task. The V.D.L. Company made use of the native trackways in their journeys of exploration and encroached on native hunting grounds for grazing and pasturing.

It is on land owned by the Company that the aboriginal carvings at Mount Cameron West were discovered in 1931, evidence that the coast had been frequented by the natives long before white men set foot there and on much of the land at both Surrey Hills and Hampshire Hills the scrub had been kept down by the annual burnings of the aborigines who hunted there and reappeared quite rapidly after the land had been taken from them(2).

Curr was well aware of the difficulties of the situation. His attitude is clearly expressed both in despatches and orders.

"It is too late to say that they are never to be molested unnecessarily or injured but in self-defence. The dictates of common humanity will protect them so far. It should always be kept in view that, in taking a large tract of country for the necessary purposes of civilization, the original possessors will be deprived in a great degree of their hunting grounds, their only support, and thereby acquire a claim to such assistance and consideration as circumstances may enable the Company's servants to confer.

At the same time the well known character of the people must be kept in view and treachery must be guarded against. No person must suffer himself to be surprised at them at a disadvantage or without arms or to be seduced by any appearance of friendliness to trust himself in their power; the surest way to prevent bloodshed is to be always prepared to repel and punish aggression "(3).

As well as resentment at the loss of their hunting grounds there was a long established hostility, which had begun as early as Marion du Fresne's visit in 1774 when, through misunderstanding, a battle occurred between the French explorers and natives, one of whom was killed.

Nothing was done to improve matters by the gangs of sealers who settled on the islands of Bass Straits. Many of them had with them native women as wives and servants. These women were often used with great cruelty and treated more or less as slaves. Early in December, 1827, and again on December 31st of the same year, Curr records the first concerted attacks made by the natives on the shepherds of the Van Diemen's Land Company at Cape Grim.

Thomas John, a prisoner, was wounded in the thigh and in the second attack a strong party of natives appeared while Mr. Goldie was absent and, in the battle, six of them including their chief were killed and several severely wounded. "No one could feel more anxious than I have been to avoid any kind of contention with these people, and I have always enjoined the men to have no communication with them whatever, either friendly or otherwise, knowing that their friendly visits are only paid for the purpose of ascertaining our means of defence and weak points, and are generally the fore-runner of an attack "(1).

In the following October the storekeepers at Burleigh were attacked, speared and left for dead though he was "truly happy to say that every one of them escaped with his life to the Hampshire Hills and all are doing well "(1). In despatches sent home during 1829, Curr reports further attacks by natives at Hampshire and Surrey Hills and mentions that the aborigines told the white people there that the previous attack at Burleigh was a reprisal for the killing of a black woman by two men who had been to the Mersey in search of bullocks. "Many of these natives having been at Western Marshes and other settled districts can speak a little English "(1).

Later, Curr was instructed by the Colonial Secretary to investigate a worse occurrence of a similar kind, of which he wrote:

"It is apparent that I cannot escape from the painful duty of investigating as I sincerely hoped I might have done "(1).

He unequivocally condemned Mr. Goldie's conduct. "It appears that Mr. Goldie and his party while searching for bullocks fell upon a small and unoffending party of women and children. One woman was killed and a woman and child captured."

The Crown Solicitor ruled that the act of shooting the woman, and by consequence the aiding and abetting of that act, was not an infringement of existing laws. The man who shot the woman in the pursuit was clear of murder, but the boy who struck her with the axe after she was disabled and
secured, supposing that to have been the mortal wound, was guilty of murder. Curr comments, "As the affair is connected with Mr. Goldie’s relinquishment of his situation I have another observation or two to offer to the Court."

"In the first letter I addressed to him expressing the disgust I felt upon the perusal of his statement of the transaction, I beg the Court to observe that I have not expressed an opinion that the act was murder in the eyes of the law.

Had it been a party of white women there cannot be a doubt that the killing by Russell would have been murder in the whole.

And I am sure in that case the Solicitor-General would not have said after Mr Goldie had called his party out, and they had proceeded together, and Mr. Goldie on horseback had put the women to the rout and driven one of them within reach of the gun of Russell, that Mr. Goldie was not present and that he was not aiding and abetting, although at the instant of time when the shot was fired Mr. Goldie and Russell should not have been within sight of each other. If ever it should be held that Mr. Goldie was not present it would only change his position from principal to accessory . . .

It is right also to observe that my view of the case is sustained by Mr. Goldie’s well known and often repeated declaration, for whenever that state of the natives has been spoken of, and you may suppose it is a frequent subject of conversation, Mr. Goldie has always professed the most singular disposition towards them which I have as invariably opposed, saying, and I have said it to him a hundred times, that I would no more have their blood on my hands than that of white people "(*)

Evidence of Curr’s attempts to come to a better understanding with the aborigines is shown in his capture and kindly treatment of a native boy whom he calls “Thursday”. “A youth, about 16 years of age, came voluntarily to some of our people who were in a boat on the isthmus. I have put him on board the Friendship for security where I intend him to remain until he knows at least enough of our language to be made to understand that we mean no hostility to his tribe "(**)."

Two months later he writes of Thursday that he “behaves well except that he is incorrigibly lazy”, that “he is extremely intelligent” (***) “(a statement much at variance with his earlier expressed opinion) “and tractable and a great favourite with everyone”, and that, when taken ashore at Emu Bay, he described to Mr. Heaton how close he had been to the little children and described their having little baskets which they filled with stones. “Mrs Heaton said that must have been 12 months ago but it showed that Thursday had no wish to hurt them "(**).

By the end of the year Curr evidently decided that the time had come to send Thursday back to the Court to his own people and asked him did he wish to go. He replied, “Yes!” and “I told him he must make ready to go to them and bring them all with him to my house (Turanga) at Circular Head, when they should all get bread and blankets and tobacco, for he had become very fond of the latter article.

In a few minutes he presented himself again, his jacket lined with slices of damper and cold pudding as provisions for his journey, highly delighted with the prospect of seeing the people of his tribe. He took a fire stick in his hand and set forward to Robbins Island where he said they would be, and where I have no doubt he found them as I saw their fires soon after he left me.

Thursday was a great favourite with everyone, a good-hearted intelligent fellow who would laugh, talk, eat and drink the day through, but do no work. He has not since made his appearance . . . and I now think he will spend the summer in the bush whilst kangaroo, birds, eggs and shellfish are plentiful and that he will come to us again for shelter and food in the winter. He has met with nothing but good treatment here, and I think cannot have any other than friendly feelings towards us "(**).

A further example of his perseverance in attempting to be on friendly terms with the aborigines is contained in a despatch sent a little later after a party of natives had visited Woolnorth and stolen potatoes from the garden, attempting also to steal blankets from a store. “John McKenzie, a shepherd, came upon them, presented his musket and told them to lay them down, which they did immediately and ran away. Under existing circumstances I consider his forbearance an act of humanity and shall reward him for it "(**). From the earliest days of the Company’s establishment the loss of stock through the depredations of the aborigines was a constant source of anxiety.

Natives in the attack at Cape Grim in December, 1827, killed 116 ewes by driving them into the sea and beating them with waddles.

Later despatches tell the same story. “I feel the consequences will be severe as regards our flocks, the shepherds being afraid to expose themselves in attending them. From the Race Course flocks in charge of Ferguson, 200 ewes are missing and no trace of them can be found. Robson believes the natives have driven them in a body into one of the rivers and drowned them. Some working bullocks, a horse and a colt have also been speared by them. I write to the Governor to represent these things and claim protection "(**).

In spite of Curr’s representations, replies from London continued to show an almost complete ignorance of the situation.

A despatch from the Van Diemen’s Land Company’s office in 1839 reads, “The Court regrets the loss of the lives of so many of the natives and, though it is aware of the absolute necessity to make them sensible of your strength so as to prevent aggression, it trusts that no measure will be neglected which may restore peace and gradually bring the natives into a state of civilisation and usefulness "(**), and one written 12 years later shows no change of sentiment:—"We cannot help referring to our despatch to repeat our anxiety that every measure should be tried to conciliate and civilise the natives to make them your friends instead of your enemies "(**)."

The correspondence of this period shows the Directors in England anxious that the Company’s representatives in Van Diemen’s Land should..."
establish friendship with the natives so that work there might progress smoothly and, possibly, the aborigines be used as labourers.

Curr, quite sure that military aid was necessary to check the depredations of the hostile tribes, never ceased his requests for Government protection.

This state of affairs continued until his resignation and, as late as 1841, he writes somewhat bitterly of the one-sided philanthropy which ignores the murder of shepherds in the Company's service and continues to urge conciliatory methods towards the "poor blacks". "Let no one say that my letters do not seem to contain a single phrase expressive of commiseration for those unhappy people. I intentionally leave to gentlemen who sit secure in their easy chairs in Hobart Town all the honor and credit to be obtained by such one-sided philanthropy" (1).

And a despatch from Circular Head in November, 1841, reads, "The natives steadily continue their robberies in the district, I, as steadily, continue my vain and useless reports to the Government" (2).

James Gibson, who succeeded Edward Curr as chief agent, experienced the same difficulties. He reports the capture of a native woman at Woolnorth, and also that two native men and a woman had attacked a man at Surrey Hills. "During my absence at Woolnorth the natives have made an attack and speared two or three valuable horses" (3).

On several occasions he records attacks made by the aborigines and both he and Curr make mention of Robinson's attempts at conciliation. "We have recently had a visit at the Hills and Circular Head from Mr. Robinson the gentleman who has been for some seven years endeavouring to conciliate and then to remove the aborigines. From Circular Head he and his party proceeded about three weeks since where he now is, and where he goes down to the West Coast in hopes of removing the tribes in that quarter, the only ones remaining at large, and who, though quiet at present, might be dangerous from the results of accidental collision with the whites" (4).

And about two months later, "Mr. G. A. Robinson has been so fortunate as to take a tribe of 23 at West Point and has placed them for the present at West Hunter Island. He expects in his progress towards Macquarie Harbour to meet with more" (5). Two years later reference is again made to the further capture of the aborigines. "Mr. G. A. Robinson has succeeded in capturing another tribe of aborigines on the West Coast, consisting of 12 individuals, men, women and children, whom he has placed upon the W. Hunter until the Edward returns to Woolnorth when he proposes putting them on board that vessel to be conveyed to Launceston. He has returned down the West Coast in quest of more" (6).

Although the natives presented a problem to the white settlers, it is reasonable to assume that they were never very numerous. It has been a common practice to overestimate both the size and number of the aborigines. This is easily understood when we remember that their attacks were often made from behind a screen of trees and bushes and also the speed of their movements.

"It may be remembered that the natives used to appear with an astonishing celerity at the Hills after having been at Woolnorth and vice versa. Since my arrival here, one of them was captured at the latter place within about eight and 40 hours from the time when they took leave at Chilton . . . and there must be a direct track hitherto undiscovered by explorers" (7).

This journey took Henry Hellyer well over a week to accomplish, so that it is evident that the natives moving with speed over their well-known pathways, could easily give a false impression as to their numbers.

By the end of 1842 the aborigines had practically ceased from troubling the Company. "The natives who have hitherto been so troublesome were captured upon the 4th inst. near to the River Arthur, and I forwarded them yesterday to Launceston. This party consisted of a middle-aged male and female, two males about 18 to 20 years of age and three male children 3-7 years old.

This very desirable object has been accomplished by two men who are in the habit of frequenting the coasts of the islands for the purpose of catching seals and who are accompanied by two men, natives of New Holland, and it was principally through their Instrumentality that they were so successful and the moving cause of their exertions was the hope of getting the reward of £50 which I had ventured to offer on behalf of the Company if the aborigines were taken without violence and which I trust the Court will approve of my having paid them.

These were the only natives at large in the Colony" (8).

VI SETTLEMENT OF LANDS.

The joint instructions issued to Curr and Adey on their departure from England bade them form their first establishment where there was a considerable area of land "adapted to the purposes of agriculture and especially for the rearing of large quantities of stock and sheep," and "they were to cultivate there as much land as would be necessary to supply the establishment with food and were strictly forbidden from engaging in any other pursuits until the grand and primary object of the Company should be accomplished" (9).

While the charter allowed the Company to employ its capital in cultivating and improving waste lands, it is quite clear from these instructions, as well as from Bathurst's letter to Arthur of 2nd June, 1825, that the acquisition of forest lands and the clearing of them was but a secondary consideration. What they desired were ample supplies of wool of the finest texture, and for this purpose an extensive area of good pasture land was indispensable. Curr and Adey sought for pasture land similar to the open, lightly timbered country of the eastern districts so eminently adapted for sheep. From information gleaned in Hobart Town soon after their arrival, they thought there would be little difficulty in finding a suitable area in the district
would be fully stocked by the progeny of the 300 ewes. On each farm there should go two or three ewes. In order that there would be more than the farm could carry, excess sheep should be taken off, permanent pastures should be laid down.

When the stock increased to such an extent as to be more than the farm could carry, excess should be used to establish similar farms. A start should be made near the residence of the superintendent which would be the principal homestead. Here the stud sheep would be kept. In order that the system might be corrected or a new system installed, the engagement of all bailiffs, no matter when appointed, should terminate simultaneously in 1837.

He strongly advocated horse breeding, reporting "let the Company secure a name for its horses and no kind of stock will be so sure of producing ready money and large prices." Grain for export to New South Wales should be grown as a means of paying for the clearing of the ground when the crop was taken off, could be sown down with artificial grasses.

Such a system meant peacocking on a large scale and would in effect have locked up almost all the good land in the north-west district from Port Sorell to Cape Grim, or at least between Cape Grim and the Mersey.

The immediate problem was the choice of a site suitable for the first settlement. Not only was the Tranmere with labourers, stores, and livestock, hourly expected, but existing current expenses at a moderate calculation absorbed £30 a day. Adey's report of his visit to Circular Head in July had been most favourable.

Goldie and Fossey made an examination in August and found much good land, in many places quite clear and in others thinly timbered. They judged that there would be 4000 acres of good clear land and thought that a considerable quantity more could be made clear at a very moderate expense.

Further confirmation was to come from a local source. Curr sought an opinion from C. R. Hardwicke, a well known farmer near Launceston who had visited the Far North-West, and received a favourable account of the district.

Nowhere else on the coast was there anything comparable. Even when in England Curr had been predisposed to the district, "My mind at that time always ran upon Circular Head as the most likely situation from all we knew of it," he wrote. All that he learned from the exploring parties confirmed the belief, and in September he and Adey decided to send the Tranmere to Circular Head. He knew that Circular Head could not provide an area sufficient for their wants, but it possessed all the attributes for a principal homestead. The division of the grant into separate portions was a matter for future negotiation.

On the 29th September the brig Tranmere reached George Town and, on receipt of the news, Curr hurried north. He was delighted with the condition of the stock and made preparations for the immediate establishment of the settlement.
Adey was recalled from the Mersey in the Ellen and future arrangements fully discussed, for as Superintendent of the Company's land he had charge of disembarkation of stock and stores and the well-being of the infant settlement.

On 21st October Goldie and Fossey left in one of the Tranmere's boats as an advance party to erect a few tents and make some preparation for the reception of stock. On their way they called at the Mersey and picked up Hellyer, leaving Lorymer to look after the horses and working bullocks. Three days later the Tranmere sailed with a fair wind and in the afternoon of the 24th October anchored off Circular Head.

Bad weather set in the same evening. The wind veered to the south-west, and fierce squalls swept across the bay at frequent intervals. Captain Wales had cautiously kept well out and, as the wind was off-shore, the brig was in no danger but there was so big a sea running that it was impossible to discharge any of the cargo or stock.

"During the six months that I have been beating about from place to place on the coast," wrote Adey, "I have experienced a great deal of very bad weather, but all has been surpassed by that which set in on the very evening of our arrival here." The wind blew itself out in the night of the 26th and on the 27th the Tranmere lowered her boats and began to discharge her livestock and cargo. By the 29th all the livestock had been safely landed and housed and all hands were busy constructing a store and huts.

Then had weather set in again. The wind, which had for a few days been blowing from the east, the most dreaded quarter on the coast, settled into a gale on the 1st November and brought with it torrents of rain. Soon a great sea was running and the Tranmere, lying at a single anchor, was in grave danger of being driven ashore. At the height of the storm the chain cable suddenly parted. Recovering his anchor when the sea abated the captain at once returned to the Tamar to get the broken chain repaired, "considering that the ship was not safe at Circular Head with only one cable".

On his return he called at the Mersey, picked up the horses and working bullocks and landed them safely at the young settlement. All appreciated their arrival for hitherto materials could be transported only by manual labour; wherever a weight was needed men lifted it; everything depended on the power of human muscle.

The Tranmere brought indented servants from Roxburgh, Berwick and Yorkshire, sheep, cattle, provisions, clothing, agricultural implements, tools and some building material to a new land. Sheds and fences had to be built for the livestock, houses and huts for the indented and assigned servants, a commodious building for the stores, and dwellings for the Company's officers. Many articles were in short supply. These and quantities of foodstuff had to be obtained in the island.

Of the indented servants eight were agricultural labourers, three were shepherds and four were artisans, a mason, a carpenter, a millwright and a blacksmith. The 25 assigned servants were all labourers. The work of establishing the settlement with so few mechanics was slow and laborious. Except for the frame and fittings of the house intended for Adey, a quantity of deal flooring and skirting boards, and a little sawn timber and a few shingles brought from the Tamar, all the timber had to be split or sawn from the bush. Skilled through the mechanics might be they had no experience of such operations as they were now called upon to perform.

Hellyer, upon whom, as architect and chief surveyor, most of the responsibility of building rested, had to learn by experience the way to build turf huts, log and weatherboard houses. Added to this neither Adey nor Goldie were good managers of men. Accommodation was complicated by the presence of four women, wives of indented servants. Curiously enough, herself an indented servant and with a family of their own, Hellyer was entirely satisfactory and Curr spoke highly of her, but the other three were a source of trouble, being "useless, drunken and dissolute". They were under no obligation to the Company which had, however, given them a free passage.

Curr regarded the indented servants with much satisfaction, although he realised there was a likelihood that they would be dissatisfied when they found that "other mechanics of the same kind hired here are paid higher wages than themselves." Some difficulty was experienced in getting the men to carry out work which was not exactly covered by the terms of their agreement. To prevent a recurrence of this he asked that, in all future indentures, additional clauses be inserted—one that all must "conform to the rules laid down for the general management of persons on the Company's lands," and another that every individual be engaged, not only for a specified trade, but "for any other business or duty not incompatible with his profession." For a while berths on the Tranmere were still available, but in mid-January she sailed for the Tamar to bring milch cows, additional working bullocks, improved sheep and sheep for food to the new settlement. In February, having completed her contract, she took her departure.

Trees were plentiful enough at Circular Head but they were unsuitable for converting into building material. A search revealed that about eight miles to the south-east, quite near the coast between Black and Detention Rivers, was a thick forest of fine timber which split freely. Here saw-pits were established and a working gang set about splitting palling and shingles. A bed of good clay was found close by and brickmaking began. From daylight to dark the Company's fleet plied backwards and forwards with material for the builders for, in spite of the delays caused by double handling, water transport was the most expeditious and practical means of bringing material from Sawyer's Bay and Brickmaker's Bay.

Hellyer busied himself constructing a jetty to facilitate the handling of cargoes. On the advice of Captain Wales he built in quite shallow water,
seeking as much shelter as possible from the elements, and made such good progress that the transference with a cargo of improved sheep berthed there in mid-February. On the same trip came Alexander McNab, a resident surgeon. The want of a surgeon had caused much anxiety to Curr. In vain he had advertised. So it was a great relief when at length he offered the position to McNab, the assistant surgeon at George Town, who accepted his offer.

Meanwhile Goldie put his ploughmen to work, for the young settlement had to grow most of its own food, and by the end of April about 100 acres of land had been broken up. The native grasses were harvested and stored for hay.

Goldie was an excellent farmer but had no experience of such a task as confronted him, the making a farm from virgin bush. The want of local knowledge troubled Curr. He suggested that James Gordon, a successful farmer with years of experience in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, should visit Circular Head and give them the benefit of his knowledge. It was never intended that he should interfere with Goldie in any way. His advice would have been invaluable to Curr, his manner such that none could have found occasion for offence. Goldie regarded this visit as a want of confidence and expressed his resentment so vehemently to Adey that Curr abandoned the idea.

In the first few weeks after its foundation the establishment came near to dissolution. The energy which marked the beginning soon waned. Officers and men alike became dispirited, the result of Adey's conduct. The magnitude of the task overwhelmed him and he lost heart. He had no faith in the enterprise and "was in the habit of observing on all occasions that he did not see how the undertaking was ever to pay expenses and intimating daily that it was probable that it would be abandoned" (9). Even Hellyer confessed that "we hear these things until we have no heart to do anything and the men know it all" (10). As mentioned before, the fracas in December, 1826, was mainly the culmination of the general despondency.

Curr's arrival in January dispelled the prevailing gloom. His vitality and indomitable spirit admitted of no defeat, restored the failing courage and enabled the little community to overcome the countless discouragements, hardships and difficulties which confronted it. From now on he gave much personal supervision to the establishment, dividing his time between Hobart and the North-West Coast. When Adey resigned as superintendent, Curr decided to move to Circular Head as soon as the eight-roomed weatherboard and shingled house, in course of erection, could be finished. It was large enough to accommodate his family of eight and the servants. On the 30th November, little more than twelve months from the date of the beginning of the settlement, he arrived with his family from Hobart in the schooner Flamingo, and went into permanent residence at Highfield.

In the midst of all the bustle of settling in, Hellyer brought exciting news. He had at last found an extent of pasture land sufficient for the Company's real object, the production of fine wool on an extensive scale. The discovery was opportune for it had now become evident that there was insufficient good land anywhere in the vicinity of Cape Grim and Circular Head. Curr and Adey, in full agreement, resolved to make a settlement at the Hampshire Hills in the next spring.

Much had to be done before this was possible. As the hills lay well inland and were cut off from communication with both Circular Head and the settled districts, roads must be constructed through virgin forest, a serviceable port discovered and a convenient station found for keeping the improved sheep until the new lands should be occupied.

In April, William Lyttleton lent a farm of 2000 acres, situated near Quamby Bluff. Seven months later the Company leased from G. W. Barnard a farm of 1000 acres on the east bank of the Tamar, five miles from Launceston. Its paddocks and accessibility to the Company's vessels made this a useful depot especially for the shipment of stock to and from Circular Head. It also boasted a neat homestead, a well-kept garden and a stable. By November the Company had a flock of 1900 improved sheep at the Quamby establishment and Reeve was put in charge. Purchases were then suspended until a road could be opened from the settled districts to the hills. In 1829 Curr resumed buying, and on June 26th leased 3000 acres from the Government three miles beyond Westbury. Known as the Red Hill Establishment, it bordered on Lyttleton's farm, so that flocks of the Van Diemen's Land Company grazed a large part of The Retreat, that fertile moderately wooded district between Westbury and the ford over the Meander. The only dwelling was a hut.

When news of the Hampshire and Surrey Hills reached him, Curr hurried to Circular Head with the intention of turning the discovery to account as speedily as possible. On the 19th April, accompanied by Hellyer, he examined the Table Cape River (henceforth called the Inglis) and the Emu River "to ascertain their capabilities as harbours in connection with the country lately discovered" (9). Leaving Hellyer encamped at the Emu he returned to Hobart but left instructions that he should survey and measure that river "in order to open up a road to its entrance to the sea" (10).

Before any works of importance were begun on the coast, Curr thought it advisable that "the opinion of a competent person should be obtained upon the different places between Table Cape and Round Hill point which appear capable of being used as or converted into a port" (10). At his suggestion the Council of Management engaged G. W. Barnard, a retired naval lieutenant, who had been recently employed by the Government to examine King Island.

On the 26th September, the survey of the coastline began, Barnard and Curr setting out from Circular Head in the whaleroar. Emu Bay, they found, was considerably more sheltered than Table Cape Bay, though both were open roadsteads, and Barnard considered that without an expensive pier, neither was eligible for use by large vessels: if harbour works were to be constructed, Table Cape Bay was the more suitable. The Inglis River would in most weathers allow small craft to enter and, when in, they would lie in perfect shelter. With little expense a good wharf could
be made there. No such facilities existed at the
Emu River where the bar dried long before low
water, so that at high water with a 12 feet tide
there was only seven feet on the bar. Entrance
was always dangerous. The ever-present risk was
brought home to the survey party when the whale-
boat swamped in trying to make its way in.
But the survey had little more than academic
value, as some four months earlier Hellyer had
begun the road to the Hills. The Company was
committed to Emu Bay. On receipt of Curr's
instructions, he made an exhaustive search of both
banks of the Emu River and within a fortnight
reached a decision. On the 13th May he wrote
to Adey for three additional men and tools of all
sorts to make a road from Emu Bay. This
went beyond the instruction of the 28th April and
Adey hesitated. When "Hellyer peremptorily
insisted that it should be done" he gave his per-
mission.

There was a strong local tradition that Hellyer's
first camp stood on the right bank some distance
back from the river close to a stream which flows
from the hills behind Wivenhoe. For nearly fifty
years the large tree which served the district as a
bridge was pointed out as that which his men
felled across the Emu to reach their work.

While Barnard continued the survey of Emu Bay
and investigated the possibilities of a landing place,
Curr visited the road under construction and,
accompanied by Goldie and Hellyer, visited the
Hampshire and Surrey Hills, making an intensive
survey in spite of severe weather which prevented
an ascent of St. Valentine's Peak.

The first eight miles of the road were through
eucalypt forest, the like of which Curr had
never imagined, much less seen. "I believe," he
wrote to Arthur, "it will be admitted that a denser
forest does not exist in the whole world." The giant
eucalypts were succeeded by a beech forest (the
Tasmanian myrtle) and continued throughout to
seclusion equal to a penal settlement and with
a good road through it and to clear the land for
huts. The waves surge along the rocks that form
the headland with great violence so Curr would have
the jetty present little surface or resistance to the
sea and allow the water to wash clean through it.
"I hope we shall be able to discharge a cargo
very quickly and with safety in moderate weather," he
concluded.

The bay was free from all danger and afforded
good anchorage for sailing ships, except in easterly
weather. They dared not, however, approach the
shore too closely.

At high water the whaleboat landed or shipped
cargo from the jetty, and at other times from a
large flat rock called Black Jack.

On 23rd February, 1828, Hellyer reported that
the road was finished. A mere track, cleared of
timber to a breadth of from 12 to 20 feet, it
climbed steeply from the coast for two miles and
in the course of twenty miles reached an altitude
of 1500 feet. Curr described it as the worst road
that imagination could picture and realised that
it could not be improved except at very great
cost: "The soil of the forest is deep and strong
eya which cuts up into deep and very tenacious
roots except during wet weather, that is to say
the whole winter and spring, and then the road is
a canal of mud of from 12 to 18 in. in depth."**

Backhouse, who traversed the road five years
after its completion writes just as unfavourably.
"During about four months of the year provisions
are dragged over this road in bullock carts for the
supply of the population in the Hampshire and
Surrey Hills; for the remaining part of the year
the provisions are transported on pack horses;
the road is always damp, being formed of vegetable
and red loam shaded continuously from the sun
and air by the forest; in summer, bullocks often
perish upon it, though two days are taken for
the journey of twenty miles and a relay of bullocks
is provided half-way. The horses are often up to
the saddle girths in mire for considerable distances.
The forest could be a good station for a penal road
party; it would take 100 men several years to form
a good road through it and to clear the land for
100 yards on each side which would be necessary
to keep the road dry. The situation would afford
seclusion equal to a penal settlement and with
a small degree of precaution, escape would be
extremely difficult. A man would be more at a
loss to find his way in these forests if without a
compass and out of sight of a road than a mariner
in the midst of the Atlantic."**

To the few compelled to use this track, the
carefully erected mileboards seemed bitterly ironic.

The first road considered by the agents of the
Company was that from the settled districts to the
Hills. On April 3rd, Curr instructed Fossey to
seek a practicable route from the Western Marshes
to Hellyer's newly-discovered country and make
his way from there to the coast at Table Cape.
"Although," he wrote, "I am of the opinion that
the best route would be found by way of the
Clyde and the Shannon, yet as a road through
the Western Marshes is so much shorter where
you have your supplies and as a comparatively
small portion of it remains unexplored, it seems
you should attempt this in the first instance."**

He had no knowledge of the back country and

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based his opinion on Jorgensen's statement that, in spite of inclement weather and impeded by snow, he had in four days walked from the Great Lake to the foot of the "Peak like a Volcano," traversing vast plains almost the whole distance. Curr decided to investigate in person the possibility of such a road, but Adey's resignation as resident superintendent of the lands compelled him to abandon the idea. The task was then delegated to Fossey but was never attempted. Fossey's exploratory survey in April and his own visits to the inland districts convinced Curr that little reliance could be placed on the information supplied by Jorgensen. A road from the Lakes to the Hills was impossible.

The directors took the opportunity afforded by the visit of William Kermode, a prominent Van Diemen's Land breeder, to question him about the improvement of sheep. He told them that by purchasing the finest Merino rams he could procure and using them with the choicest native ewes, he had, in four crosses, succeeding in obtaining a fleece as fine as that of the original rams. In view of this, Curr was instructed to invest as much as he could in creating a flock by purchases in the island.

This fitted in well with his own ideas. In fact, he had already counselled such a plan. The time was opportune because the low prices received for their wool in England had damped the hopes of many an enterprising breeder. "I do not trust that I shall be so circumstanced within a very short time as to be enabled to take advantage of the depression," he wrote. "I hope at the same time that I shall continue to make the necessary purchases without rising the price of stock in the manner, or to the degree which the Australian Company's agents most inopportune for themselves have done in New South Wales." The brothers had the start by at least one season.

From Thomas Archer, of Woolmers, and his brother Joseph, Adey bought 1500 highly-improved sheep at from 25s. to 30s. a head. The deal was gratifying because by careful selection the Archer Brothers had the start by at least one season of all other persons in the colony. These, with the livestock brought from England in the Tranmere—46 Cotswold sheep (8 rams and 38 ewes), two stallions (a Suffolk and a Cleveland), and four Teeswater or Durham cattle (2 bulls and 2 cows), formed the nucleus of the Company's flocks and herds.

Some may see the irony of fate or the clash of incompatible characters in the long chronicle of frustration and failure, but it is more realistic to recognise that the failure was inherent in the conception of the Company. It was an anachronism. It was a repetition, in Australian conditions, of a method of colonial exploitation which had flourished in America in the previous two hundred years and had been destroyed by the Americans in their struggle for independence. Governor Arthur was, very discreetly, the leader of a group of Tasmanian colonists who saw themselves as the landed aristocracy. The Company's Charter was drafted at a time when the great East India Company was dying; when its last remaining trade monopoly was being lost piecemeal to the new men on the spot, the "country" traders; hence its charter forbade it to engage in trade. In banking and in whaling, that "most profitable of colonial ventures," as Curr described it.

The notebooks afford valuable detail on the contemporary relations between Master and Servant. The Directors enjoined strict religious observance, requiring that records of attendance at worship be included in reports. Bibles were provided, octavo for the officers and duodecimo for other ranks. The virtues of diligence and sobriety and "zeal for the Company's interests" were extolled and should be placed alongside Curr's strictures on the indenture system—that "seven years' slavery" which, in the contemporary British and French sugar colonies, was a legal fiction which prolonged actual slavery long after the legal fiction of its abolition. Curr quoted frankly to the Directors the strictures of the Colonial Secretary, Montagu, on the Company's methods of hiring indentured workers. "Kidnapping" and "methods of the recruiting sergeant" were common to indentured systems everywhere.

CONCLUSION.

by K. M. DALLAS.

The manuscript notebooks from which this paper evolved have been deposited in the University of Tasmania Library and, until the Company's records are available to historians, will prove valuable to anyone studying this period of Australian history. They cover the period 1825-1859, except for two letters of 1871 referring to a subscription by the Manager of the Company to the Mt. Bischoff Mining Company. It is ironical that this rich tin mine should have lain just outside the boundaries fixed by the Government to the Company's lands. Ironical, but also inherent in their purpose, which was to select open pastoral land, not forested mountains.

Meston has written for us the most significant part of the Company's story. The involved series of negotiations to escape from the limitations imposed by its Charter has been thoroughly
analysed and explained. Even before that was over its hopes of great gain or important influence were ended, and the succeeding chronicle would have been one of small expedients tried in the search for mere survival. The Chartered Land Company belongs to the Dinosaur Age of Capitalism. It rested on privilege and vice-regal power, and its size and legal powers foredoomed its机能 in an age when individual capitalism was emerging. In the very year of the Company's foundation occurred the first of the true financial crises of the nineteenth century. Each crisis was marked by the fall of old-style firms and the rise of new men and new forms of business.

The restrictions of its charter reflect the suspicion of the new capitalism towards corporations enjoying special privileges. The Injunction against banking, trading and whaling must be seen as specific safeguards for British interests in these fields. The granting of land outside the settled areas was more for the freedom of individual emigrants than to foster development. Ignorance of the quality of the land and of the climate is a main cause of the Company's failure, and the only one not attributable to commercial jealousy. Had the area proved as suitable for sheep as the eastern parts of Van Diemens' Land it is certain that strife between the Company and private speculators would have followed. If it had been permitted to select land in the Port Phillip region it is certain that it would have been harassed by continual attacks, both through official channels and by individual squatters. The refusal of colonial and British authorities to recognise the claims of the Port Phillip Association arose from the "public" opposition to exclusive privileges.

Thus the project was foredoomed in the sense that the growing of fine wool on a large scale was impossible in the regions to which it was confined. The breeding of stud sheep, cattle and horses was of great importance to the colonies. The notebooks record the extensive sales of these, not only in Van Diemens' Land, but also in Port Phillip, South Australia and West Australia, but this buttered no parsnips. In this as in the matter of land clearing, roads and farming experiments, the capital of the Company and the skill of its officers aided the establishment of later generations of individual farmers, but this was not part of the Company's intention. Yet it was inherent in the conditions of the time that the small man should milk the Company. Its policy of fixed produce prices after 1842 enabled its tenants to survive the lean years at the expense of the proprietors until, by 1850, many were in arrears with calls, and some were in favour of liquidation. The whale was stranded on the North-West Coast and the small fish were living on the carcass.

The remote control was another inherent defect. Repeatedly we find Curr's suggestions ignored, or amended at first and adopted when the chance of profit from them had passed. Failure to heed his warnings against rapid expansion of tenant farming led the Directors into the ruinous fixed price policy which his successor had to adopt. Their greatest failure at the Surrey Hills was due to their insistence that fine-wooled sheep be stationed here in large numbers. The change to coarse-wooled sheep was warranted, but failed also, and ever since then those bleak uplands have served for cattle raising only.

Like its greater and more-favoured contemporary, the Australian Agricultural Company, it was formed to take advantage of cheap land, cheap forced labour, and an expanding British market for fine wool. Also both of them were compelled to select land in areas remote from settlement. The Van Diemen's Land Company had no advantage to compare with the monopoly of coal mining which its counterpart enjoyed for twenty-five years.

Both were stunted on supplies of convicts and found that they could not prevent their free labourers from migrating to more settled parts. The Van Diemen's Land Company was too late in every venture it pursued. The opening of Port Phillip diverted capital and labour from Tasmania, and compelled it to ship its stud stock to that market, but the ending of the Land Boom caused it to resort to tenant farming at a time when rich tenants with capital were not forthcoming.

It persevered with farming during the years of low prices, only to abandon this for leasing and selling land, thus failing to profit from the price boom of the Gold Rush years.

The notebooks show material which suggests a later history of continual frustration of the hopes of absentee investors. They do not extend into the years of Tasmanian prosperity based on mining of gold and base metals.

This brief reference to their contents is added in the hope that other students may profit from the work Meston had to leave incomplete.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

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REFERENCES

1. ORIGINS AND CHARTER.

1) James L., 26th Sept. and 8th Nov., 1814; 24th Mar., 1816; Charles L.

2) 13 and 14 Charles II., e 18.

3) 1 William and Mary, e 32.

4) By 28 George III., e 38, any person exporting wool was liable to a fine of £3 per pound or £50 on the whole with three months’ imprisonment for the first offence and six months for the second.

5) 1 William and Mary, e 12. An Act for the encouragement of the Exportation of Corn. A bounty was given on the export of grain, by Act of 1742. This was continued with suspensions in the four famine years, 1693, 1709, 1740, 1757.


13) Report from Select Committee of the House of Lords on the state of the British Wool Trade, 1828.

14) Memorial of Clothiers to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, 1805, as pointed out by the French already by their influence monopolised some of the most valuable kinds of Spanish wool; and they feared a similar exclusion from that source of supply. H.R.N.S.W., Vol. V., p. 402.

15) Bischoff: op. cit., Vol. I., p. 490, mentions Lord Milton advocating such a policy in 1819, but there was a similar petition in 1821. In 1821, Sir John Dalrymple, in "Question Considered," urged that exploitation should be permitted.


18) Statements of improvements of the breed of fine-wooled sheep in N.S.W., by John Macarthur. Ibid., p. 708.

19) Camden-King, 31/10/1804. Ibid., p. 481.

20) Cottrell-Cooke, 11/7/1804. Ibid., p. 490.


23) The imports from Spain were falling and those from Germany rising. The year 1818, with over 81 million ft., marks the zenith of the Spanish supply.

24) Cottrell-Cooke, 11/7/1804. Ibid., p. 481.

25) Minutes of Court, 10/10/1805. Ibid., p. 707.

26) Minutes of Court, 1 Dec., 1824.

27) Minutes of Court, 2 May, 1825.

28) Minutes of Court, 2 March, 1825.

29) pearce-Horton, 30 Dec., 1824.

30) Pearse-Horton, 29 Jan., 1825.

31) Pearse-Horton, 29 Jan., 1825.

32) pearse-Horton, 23 Apr., 1825.

33) pearse-Horton, 15 and 30 Apr., 1825.

34) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

35) pearse-Horton, 13 July, 1824.


37) Com. to Bathurst, 2 Apr., 1825, ordered to be printed 11 May, 1825, together with curr-Bathurst, 22 Mar., 1825; Bathurst-Curr, 15 April, 1825, and curr-Bathurst, 15 Apr., 1825.

38) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

39) pearse-Horton, 23 May, 1825.

40) pearse-Horton, 22 Apr., 1826.

41) pearse-Horton, 23 Apr., 1825.

42) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.


44) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

45) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

46) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

47) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

48) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

49) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

50) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

51) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

52) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

53) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

54) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

55) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

56) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

57) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

58) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

59) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

60) pearse-Horton, 22 Mar., 1825.

II. LOCATION OF LAND.

1) See p. 34.

2) The paper contained the following:—


Bathurst-Arthur, 2/6/1825.

Curt-Ingles, 11/3/1825.

Sorell’s letter of 2 April, 1825, p. 24.

Curt-Ingles, 11 Mar., 1826.

Montagu (Capt.), Curr, 8 Mar., 1826.

Curt-Ingles, 11 Mar., 1826.

Arthur-Bathurst, 4 April, 1826.


Arthur-Bathurst, 2 Jan., 1826.

Arthur-Bathurst, 4 April, 1826.

Arthur-Hay, 22 April, 1826.

The late of the 83rd Regt. He was personally known to Lord St. Helens, who had recommended him to Bathurst.
(14) Murray's Austral-Asiatic Review, April, 1828, p. 141.
(16) Colonial Times, 15/11/26. Zeal here outran judgment, for
whaling and sealing were expressly forbidden by the
charter.
(18) Hobart Town Courier, Mar., 1835.
(19) Hobart Town Gazette, 29/5/1816.
(20) Melle: Van Diemen's Land Almanac, 1832
(21) Launceston Advertiser, 4/1/1832. Leading article.
(22) Van Diemen's Land Almanac, 1832
(23) V. THE COMPANY AND THE ABORIGINES.

Vol. II., No. 3, provides a useful background to this
section.
(1) Order No. 4, 22 Mar., 1826.
(2) Despatch No. 11, 28 Feb., 1826.
(3) Despatch No. 48, 8 Oct., 1826.
(4) Despatch No. 100, 16 Nov., 1826.
(5) Despatch No. 103, 11 Dec., 1826.
(6) Despatch No. 118, 2 Mar., 1829.
(7) Despatch No. 119, 16 Aug., 1829.
(8) Despatch No. 100, 16 Nov., 1829.
(9) Despatch No. 11, 8 Jan., 1829.
(10) Despatch No. 130 28 April 1830.
(11) Despatch No. 192, 4 Nov., 1831.
(13) Incoming Despatch No. 46, 23 Aug., 1827.
(14) Outgoing Despatch No. 234, 12 Aug., 1841.
(15) Outgoing Despatch No. 241, 8 Nov., 1841.
(16) Outgoing Despatch No. 1, 19 June, 1832.
(17) Outgoing Despatch No. 221, 8 Aug., 1832.
(18) By Dr. J. Hutchins, 10 April, 1834.
(19) Outgoing Despatch, 13 June, 1844.
(20) Outgoing Despatch, Dec., 1842.

VI. SETTLEMENT OF LANDS.

(1) General Instructions, 14/9/25.
(2) Gen. Order 4, 22 Mar., 1826.
(3) O.D., 8/9/26.
(5) Adey-Curr, 27/7/1826.
(6) Report of Goldie to Curr, 28/11/1826,
(7) O.D., 6/3/1827.
(8) O.D., 13 Feb., 1827.
(9) Despatch No. 13, 11/1/1826.
(10) O.D., 13/5/1827.
(11) O.D., 14/5/1827.
(12) O.D., 13/2/1827.
(13) O.D., 6 Oct., 1826.
(14) O.D., 3 Nov., 1826.
(15) O.D., 7 Oct., 1830.

(18) O.D., 86, 13/8/1829.
(19) I.D., 15/12/1827.
(20) Minutes of Council of Management, 13 July, 1827.
(21) I.D., 23/9/1827.
(22) Abolished 11/11/27. See I.D., 15/12/27.
(23) I.D., 15/12/27.