

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The thesis examines the relationship between Britain and New South Wales during the period 1891 to 1914, focusing on the role of colonial governors. The thesis aims to explore the role of governors both as formal representatives of imperial authority and as promoters of a shared sense of cultural community. The central purpose of this exploration is to uncover the patterns of adaptation of governors to local expectation of them over the period and to evaluate their degree of success in furthering imperial interests by so doing.

The position of governor is the oldest office of public authority in New South Wales. Yet the role of governor has changed greatly over the period since the foundation of the colony of New South Wales in 1788 and, indeed, had already evolved considerably over the hundred years between foundation and the opening of the period explored here. In particular, progress of governorship from 1788 until the 1890s moved through various phases that witnessed the gradual handing over of political control for domestic matters to colonial policy-makers.<sup>1</sup> Until 1823, the governor was the sole administrator. Then he received advice from the first Legislative Council of seven members appointed by the British Government. This body was enlarged in 1842 when the British Parliament consented to 'Representative Government', which meant that two thirds of the thirty-six member Council were elected on a property franchise. Further colonial demands for management of their own affairs led to a new Constitution that granted 'Responsible Government' in 1855. It provided a legislative structure of an elected Assembly and a nominated Council during the period being examined. As a consequence of this constitutional change, the authority of the governor was effectively reduced from executive control to acting on the advice of his ministers.

While these changes were taking place in New South Wales, parallel changes were taking place in the role of the source of governors' authority – the British Crown. British hereditary monarchs were adapting to a wider range of constitutional checks on the exercise of their power, in part

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<sup>1</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, pp. 1-9.

compensating by diverting more of their efforts to social and cultural interaction with their subjects.

By the period when this thesis begins a further local challenge to traditional hierarchies of authority had become apparent – the emergence of a form of colonial nationalism which had the potential either to assist or to complicate imperial efforts to embrace an Australian federation within the Empire. The time-span of 1891 to 1914 has therefore been selected as these years are strong signposts to bracket the period for appraisal of Britain's strategic association with New South Wales in a federating and democratising environment. The opening marker is the arrival of the new Governor, Lord Jersey on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1891, shortly to be followed by his welcome of delegates to the first National Australasian Convention in Sydney. The closing year relates to the beginning of the First World War when pre-war issues lost any sense of priority and a new era of relations with Britain began.<sup>2</sup>

The sources available for study of activities of, and attitudes towards, state governors over this period are extensive. Among primary sources two types of evidence have been chosen as particularly useful. The first consists of correspondence between people holding public office in Britain and New South Wales, as recorded by the Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) microfilm records at the Mitchell Library, Sydney and the British National Archives. This includes governors' regular 'Report on Affairs' to the Colonial Office together with the relevant sections of the personal papers of Lord Ripon, Colonial Secretary, 1892-5, in the British Library. There is also a selection of printed correspondence and memoirs of local politicians as well as a useful survey of contemporary Colonial Office knowledge of local constitutional practice across the Empire drawn up and published by the Colonial Office's legal adviser, A.B. Keith.<sup>3</sup> While this official and semi-official material casts useful light on many aspects of the work of governors it has sometimes to be used with caution. The 'Report on Affairs' in particular sometimes rely on hearsay and it is only occasionally possible (from evidence of reply or file annotation) to trace what response they aroused from Colonial Secretaries or their departmental officials.

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<sup>2</sup> For the period before 1891, see N.I. Graham, 'The role of the Governor of New South Wales under Responsible Government, 1861-1890', PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1909.

The second type of primary evidence consists of contemporary printed sources, particularly the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Bulletin*. These press sources have been used to trace the social aspects of vice-regal activity and to supplement the perspective supplied by official despatches with local political and cultural commentary. The *Sydney Morning Herald* was chosen as the most appropriate source for the governor's movements as it favoured the imperial connection. The newspaper content was closely monitored by the Fairfax owners, father and two sons, in this period and their conservative views were known to include 'Protestant Christianity, British Monarchy, rule of law, middle class values, private property and free enterprise capitalism'.<sup>4</sup> The Fairfax name was representative of the social elite close to Government House and governors were associated with the family's community welfare projects. The *Bulletin* was chosen as a source in order to balance the *Herald* perspective against a more radical one. J.F. Archibald, editor of the *Bulletin* favoured 'tariff protection, republicanism, Australian nationalism', and radical policies such as 'payment of parliamentary members, female suffrage, abolition of plural voting and the Legislative Council'.<sup>5</sup>

The secondary literature relevant to this subject is also extensive. It can broadly be classified as falling into two varieties, the first presenting a local (Australian) set of perspectives, the second an Imperial set of perspectives. The Australian perspective has been associated with the rise of colonial nationalism and its effect on the distribution of political power. First within an Australian set of perspectives there is the literature primarily concerned to explain the emergence of a distinctive Australian identity and a distinctive set of state and federal political institutions. The work of Luke Trainor, Helen Irving, and Beverley Kingston has been particularly useful here in setting out the preoccupations of locally based political elites and the implications for local expectation of the role to be played by state governors.<sup>6</sup> A further body of research which concentrates on exploring the continuing framing role of 'Britishness' in defining Australian cultural identity has also been taken into account when attempting to interpret and contextualise the evidence of actions and activities of governors. Key work relied on here includes research

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<sup>4</sup> G. Souter, *Heralds and Angels: The House of Fairfax 1841-1990*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> R.B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1976, p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> L. Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the late Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1994.

H. Irving, (ed.), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1999.

B. Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006.

findings of writers approaching Australian history from a variety of ‘Australia as dominion of empire’ perspectives. These include Schreuder and Ward, Meaney, and, most recently, Lake and Reynolds.<sup>7</sup> The original comparative imperial history tended to be written by lawyers as a form of constitutional history, most famously by H.V. Evatt in his *King and his Dominion Governors* (1936). This comparative constitutional approach continues to cast light on the history of imperial adaptation to particular local circumstance and recent surveys by Twomey and by Boyce have been especially useful aids to evaluating the political role of New South Wales governors in light of governors’ roles in other Australian states and beyond.<sup>8</sup> A third and final Australian history perspective is provided by biography, and by two key works in particular – Chris Cunneen’s study of early Australian governors-general, and a recent multi-author history of *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*.<sup>9</sup> While this latter work (to which I contributed a chapter) is a comprehensive survey of its subject on an ‘individual career’ basis, it makes no systematic attempt to move beyond the biographical to provide an explicit, historically contextualised, account of an evolving role such as is presented in this thesis.

This thesis, while relying heavily on approaches adopted by Australian historians to the interpretation of Australian history, has also found it useful to draw on approaches to the study of adaptation of hereditary authority to democratic expectation more generally over the late-nineteenth/early twentieth-century period. These approaches have usually been pioneered by British historians. The comparison of the role of colonial governor with that of the British

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<sup>7</sup> D.M. Schreuder & S. Ward, *Australia’s Empire*, especially chapters by Hirst and McKenna, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.

N. Meaney, ‘Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography’, *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 116, 2001, pp. 76-90.

M. Lake & H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the Question of Racial Equality*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> H.V. Evatt, *The King and his Dominion Governors: A study of the reserve powers of the Crown in Great Britain and the Dominions*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936.

A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*.

P. Boyce, *The Queen’s Other Realms: The Crown and its Legacy in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2008.

See also A.S. Morrison, ‘The Role of the governor in constitutional issues in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, 1901-1925’, PhD thesis, London University, 1984.

<sup>9</sup> C. Cunneen, *Kings’ Men: Australia’s Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983.

D. Clune & K. Turner, (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009. Other biographical resources relied on include *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, (Davison, G., Hirst, J., and Macintyre, S., eds.), Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998.

*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, Australian National University,

Canberra, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm>.accessed.8.8.2010

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004.

<http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/online>.accessed.8.8.2010

monarch over the period is an obviously relevant comparison to make, yet one not as yet much developed. As this thesis sets out to evidence, the parallels can often cast light on reasons for continuing respect for hereditary authority in democratic colonial society otherwise difficult to account for. On the one hand, therefore, there is reference to literature that highlights the place of ritual and the picturesque in democratising cultures. As was realised by some at the time, and as has been demonstrated by historians such as David Cannadine in more recent times, hereditary authority can often retain (or invent) a glamour not readily available to democratic representatives of the people. It could be an important part of vice-regal ceremonial authority to create a visual link to Royal and aristocratic traditions.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, as historians such as Frank Prochaska have argued, it was also a shrewd adaptation technique for hereditary elites to aim to appear benevolent as well as glamorous. As will be argued here, just as the rise of the British ‘welfare monarchy’ during this period concentrated on developing a renewed image of community-binding benevolence associated with the Crown, so it also provided a model for governors to follow.<sup>11</sup> The organisation of such welfare-promoting programs had an additional feature that it had particular potential to enhance the role of gender and the recognition of female citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

The argument of the thesis is presented in seven chapters following this Introduction. The first chapters, two to four, concentrate on the pre-Federation governors, 1891-1900. Chapter five deals with the transition period in 1900 between the pre-Federation and post-Federation stages. The following chapters, six to eight, examine the post-Federation governors, 1901-1914. The post-Federation chapters take up themes which mirror the themes first identified and explored in the pre-Federation chapters. Themes are as follows.

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<sup>10</sup> W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Fontana/Collins, Glasgow, 1977.

D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, Pan Books, London, 1992.

P. Russell, ‘Ornaments of Empire? Government House and the idea of English Aristocracy in Colonial Australia’, *History Australia*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (2004), pp. 196-208.

<sup>11</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> J. Parry, ‘Whig monarchy, Whig nation: Crown, politics and representativeness 1800-2000’ in A. Olechnowicz (ed.), *The Monarchy and British nation 1780 to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

P. Russell, ‘A Woman of the Future? Feminism and Conservatism in Colonial New South Wales’, *Women’s History Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, (2004), pp. 69-90.

The First theme deals with local and imperial expectations of the role itself, and of the qualities relevant to governorship. Chapter two before and chapter six after Federation review British and Colonial perspectives on the role of the governor. As will be set out, Britain was anxious about the possibility of colonial moves to independence, promoting strategies to embed loyalty such as trade and imperial federation, and managing the changing status of vice-regal appointees. Colonial concerns related to economic recovery, political stability, integrity of imported governors, balancing emerging nationalism with ingrained feelings of Britishness, and preserving state sovereignty in the face of constitutional change. The capabilities of each vice-regal appointment are considered for holding office.

The Second theme explores expectations of the political dimensions of the governor's role. Chapter three before and chapter seven after Federation investigate the level of political authority that the governor retained after responsible government had been effectively in force for nearly four decades. While Britain had delegated responsibility for domestic management to the colony, the Colonial Office still required regular intelligence from the governor on the political climate, radical threats to imperialism, and developments about federalism. These chapters look at areas where the governor still retained prerogatives of mercy and constitutional accountability for good government, which entailed imperial assent for domestic legislation and decisions on issues of dissolution and prorogation of parliament. Additionally, two areas unique to the governor were responsibility for Norfolk Island and his position after Federation as the guardian of state sovereignty.

Finally, attention is focused on the social and cultural dimensions of the role. Chapter four before and chapter eight after Federation consider the social and philanthropic engagements of the vice-regal family. These chapters reveal the wide range of activities and travel by the governors to generate the spirit of imperial unity within the community in both city and country areas. The philanthropic undertaking has been compared with the British 'welfare monarchy' of the Victorian and Edwardian periods to model the compassionate role of the governor within the community and encourage attachment to Britain and the Monarchy. The valuable contribution of vice-regal wives and other kin is also recognised for their support and initiatives that enhanced the imperial presence. An attempt is also made to evaluate the cultural limits of governors' ability to project themselves as symbols of community.

A brief Conclusion then evaluates the effectiveness of the Governors of New South Wales in adapting to meet both imperial and colonial expectation of their purpose over the period 1891 to 1914.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **1891-1900**

The 1890s presented an era of uncertainty for Britain in its relationship with New South Wales and the other colonies. Federation was becoming the focus of both the Imperial Government and the Colonial Premiers and anticipation of the outcome had both positive and negative features for the Mother Country. A united Australia could be a strong member of the Empire. On the other hand, it might be the impetus for moves towards independence. The governor, as a frontline representative of the Crown, was well placed to encourage the processes towards an Empire-friendly form of Federation.

This chapter is concerned to identify the expectations – both imperial and local – which came into play when appointments of colonial governors were contemplated. It then explores the career backgrounds of the four colonial governors appointed during the 1890s with a view to assessing the reasons for their selection and the appropriateness of their skills and experience to the circumstances facing them on appointment. It was unusual from past experience to have four imperial representatives in ten years and the reasons for each short term residence will also be appraised.

#### **British perspectives on the role of Governors**

The fundamental British interests at stake in New South Wales were strategic and economic. In strategic terms it was in the imperial interest that the colony should be politically and socially stable. In practical terms this meant that it should be administratively and fiscally self-reliant within imperially set limits and that its public leaders should practise the skills of parliamentary government which had served Britain so well across the nineteenth century. The results of successfully practised responsible government, it was assumed, would be the preservation of respect for authority, avoidance of sectarian confrontation (such as already racked Irish public life) and encouragement of continuing loyalty to a shared vision of Britishness (conventionally symbolised by loyalty to the person of a benevolent but ‘constitutional’ hereditary monarch).



In economic terms, it was in the imperial interest that New South Wales should remain the shining example of Britain's Australasian colonies in its commitment to a policy of free trade. At the same time, it was important that the colony should remain a safe destination for British capital investment, and that the relations between capital and labour in the state's strategically significant industries (mining and wool in particular) should be successfully managed.

The potential points of tension, therefore, that a governor of the 1890s might have to keep in mind on assuming the role included the increasingly self-confident democratization of colonial political life, the recurrent religious sectarianism of its cultural life, and the growth in strength of organised labour in its economic life.<sup>1</sup> Already in the later 1880s, New South Wales had experienced a limited outbreak of republican sentiment. Radicals benefitted from the unnecessary expense of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in 1887 for a distant monarch and from commemoration of the centenary of settlement in 1888 that reminded people of the penal colony days.<sup>2</sup> As plans unfolded for the creation of a federation of states in a 'Commonwealth of Australia', they gave opportunity to canvass options for more radical forms of transformation,<sup>3</sup> some of them (as we shall see) contemplating an end to respect for imperial representatives of hereditary monarchs altogether. At very least, imported governors ran the risk of being the focus of local accusations that they cost too much and were no better qualified than a local appointee would be. Lord Jersey had told the Colonial Secretary in 1892, 'Already the legislatures of several colonies have been asked to reduce the salaries of their Governors, which shows that there is a wind for shift at present, blowing in this direction'.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, it was important for the Colonial Office to ensure that a capable person was appointed as governor in the mother colony. Since the granting of responsible government, it had become ever more apparent that the position did not carry the status for appointment of a top level political figure. While this was still the era when governorships were handed out to men conventionally expected to have links to the landed establishment, the attraction was necessarily diverted to second-rate public figures due to the limited political influence of the office.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Brabazon, 'A Britisher's Impressions of America and Australasia', *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 33 no. 193, (1893), pp. 493-494.

<sup>2</sup> M. McKenna, *The Captive Republic: A History of Republicanism in Australia 1788-1996*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp. 170-173.

<sup>3</sup> L. Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the late Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 20.11.1892, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 6-9, Ripon papers.

As noted above, the appointment of men of hereditary rank presented both risk and opportunity. Such appointments gave opportunity to give personal embodiment to hereditary authority, thus potentially renewing respect for the authority of a hereditary yet necessarily distant monarch. They also risked drawing attention to the well-known nineteenth-century alternative view that talent was not necessarily hereditary. One of the proponents of that view was in fact the prominent Liberal Unionist minister, (from 1895 Colonial Secretary), Joseph Chamberlain, a Birmingham businessman by background. Joseph Chamberlain's attitude suggested he thought most appointees to governorships were stronger on 'high rank' than on 'remarkable distinction'. The essential duties of proconsuls covered such matters as 'constitutional sovereign, guardian of imperial interests, and adviser of the colony', which did not keep them fully occupied. Supplementary duties like an imperial presence at ceremonial occasions and social engagement with the community created the decorative image.<sup>5</sup>

A leading historian of the fortunes of aristocracy over this period has in fact labelled these aristocrats who filled overseas postings as the 'Great Ornamentals' with the deduction drawn that 'most were not men of great ability'.<sup>6</sup> The chief attraction of proconsular service, he goes on to suggest, was that it provided the peer with an attractive salary and other benefits to escape from debt-ridden estates of the landed elite at home at a time of prolonged agricultural depression. In addition, service usually attracted recognition through conferment of imperial honours, and had the potential to qualify retired governors for lucrative directorships or appointments to Royal Commissions on return home.<sup>7</sup>

Cannadine's model may be more suited to explanations of the filling of vice-regal posts in the non-self-governing territories of empire than to the Australian colonies (though he included Australian examples). The model, as we shall see, may also over-rate the financial return and under-rate the expense to the appointee of holding even an 'ornamental' vice-regal office. But it does reflect a strand of opinion about the quality of appointees not infrequently expressed at the time in both mother country and colony and therefore poses yet again the issue of opportunity and risk in the convention of appointing governors from a limited recruitment pool visibly linked to a narrow range of 'tradition-validated' backgrounds.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, Pan Books, London, 1992, pp. 591, 600 and 601.

<sup>6</sup> Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, pp. 588 and 591.

<sup>7</sup> Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, pp. 591 and 599.

Despite this generally dismissive view of proconsuls, it can be argued, nevertheless, that such appointments served to meet expectations not only of those appointed as governor but of those to be governed as well.

### **Colonial perspectives on the role of Governors**

The essence of good governorship of New South Wales in the 1890s depended on the governor's appreciation of the changing political climate in the colony. In the early years of the decade the major political parties, generally styled Free Traders and Protectionists, lacked management control while the emerging Labor Electoral League, holding the balance of power, readily supported the party that offered them policy concessions. Lord Jersey complained to the Colonial Office in 1892 that there was 'absolute want of cohesion and of party discipline on the part of the opposition'.<sup>8</sup> This chaotic situation gradually changed to respect the leadership within the major parties, particularly to combat the challenge of the Labor Party that was demanding its members agree to a 'solidarity pledge' in parliamentary voting.<sup>9</sup> Irrespective of the party in power, the governor was expected to remain impartial in his discussions with members of the various political interests. The frequency of new governors in this period meant there was a short learning span available to each – though this was, to a degree, offset by already acquired experience of the parliamentary traditions of the British system.

As New South Wales had practised responsible government for nearly four decades, the political parties were confident of handling their own affairs and resisted interference from the Mother Country. This was evident from issues such as rejection of overtures from the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, to establish an imperial federation through preferential trade, tense negotiations about naval contributions and restrictions on alien immigration that were harmful to British ideals of Empire.<sup>10</sup> The Imperial representative in New South Wales needed all his diplomatic skills to walk the fine line between protecting sensitive British interests and placating the assertive nature of the colonial off-spring. The government placed strong emphasis on the importance of governors acting on the advice of their ministers. The governor was generally happy to comply in domestic affairs provided government actions did not affect British interests.

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<sup>8</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 9.10.1892, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 1-5, Ripon papers.

<sup>9</sup> H.V. Evatt, *William Holman: Australian Labour Leader*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1979, pp. 35-39.

<sup>10</sup> Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, p. 66.

There were also instructions from the Colonial Office for matters where the imperial representative could not give assent to legislation. These matters included areas like divorce, currency, treaties, rights and property of subjects outside the colony.<sup>11</sup> Controversial political duties that placed heavy responsibility on the governor were his exercise of authority to grant prorogation or dissolution of Parliament or appoint additional members to the Legislative Council. This last task made the role of governor in state politics more prominent than in most Australian colonies. Queensland and New South Wales apart, all the other Australian states had elected upper houses.<sup>12</sup> Resolution of these disputes frequently revolved around the personal working relationship and mutual respect that had developed between the governor and the premier. Emotions were usually running high in the political debate on such occasions and the tactful handling of the situation by the governor was critical to an impartial outcome. These issues are examined in the next chapter.

As will also be discussed in chapters three and four following, the current affairs about which a governor would need to be briefed during the 1890s included progress towards Federation, political changes like the growth of the Labor Party, and depression and drought conditions as they affected the economy. Also other issues arose only during the term of one or two governors like republicanism in Lord Jersey's time, serious industrial disputes in the terms of both Lord Jersey and Lord Hampden and collapse of the banking system during Sir Robert Duff's residency. On these occasions the governors were in a position to discreetly act as personal adviser to their premier or just assess the situation in reports to the Colonial Office on the current state of affairs in the colony.

Apart from the political and administrative aspects of the office, the governor was the visible representative of the distant Monarch and upheld the virtues of the British Empire. It was a paradox of the time that while the spirit of nationalism was gathering momentum in the colonies, as highlighted by moves to a federated union, there were strong feelings of Britishness within the thoughts of the community. Historians have suggested various explanations for this alignment to Britain. The theories included the obvious fact that an overwhelming proportion of the population was either British born or had ancestral links to the Mother Country and 'found it easy to accept

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<sup>11</sup> Instructions to the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of NSW, 9 July 1892, National Library of Australia, MS 51, Papers of Sir Edmund Barton, Series 7: Other political papers 1892-1911. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms51-7-1025-s1.accessed.6.2.2011>; SMH, 25.8.1892, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1909, pp. 103-104.

their racial and cultural heritage as the basis for their idea of nationalism'. It has been further suggested that 'the sense of having but a fragile hold on a vast land set in an Asian sea' meant Australians were anxious to retain close ties to Britain for defence purposes.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, this culture-based empathy for Britain helped to neutralize otherwise persuasive political reasons to appoint a local person as governor.

The colony certainly expected their governor to have an aristocratic family background for the prestige of the office and to conform to the standard of past appointments. As already mentioned, the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain recognised this symbolic importance when giving consideration to a vice-regal appointment.<sup>14</sup> It was also important for imperial representation in New South Wales to have equal standing to the other Colonies, particularly Victoria. The southern colony had been graced with Lord Hopetoun's flair for ceremony and millionaire Lord Brassey's public display of wealth, as noted on his regular visits to Sydney in his private ocean-going yacht, *Sunbeam*, during this period.<sup>15</sup>

The *Sydney Morning Herald's* editorial greeting for each pre-federation governor reminded them that their community duties were 'more involved in the social life than the political issues of the Colony'.<sup>16</sup> It was expected that the governor would be rich so that he could satisfy society's anticipation for balls, garden parties and lavish dinner parties at Government House and similarly gatherings elsewhere. The Colonial Office did not officially support excessive entertainment costs but it was a consideration when deciding on a vice-regal replacement. On the occasion of Lord Beauchamp's appointment in 1899, he was told by Chamberlain's private secretary that they wanted 'someone rich enough to pay for the privilege of governing New South Wales over and beyond the official salary...'<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> N. Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 116, (2001), pp. 77-82.

<sup>14</sup> Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, p. 589.

<sup>15</sup> *SMH*, 4.8.1897, p. 7; H. Vellacott (ed.), *A Girl at Government House: An English Girl's Reminiscences: 'Below Stairs' in Colonial Australia*, O'Neil Publishers, Melbourne, 1982, pp. 43-45.

<sup>16</sup> For further information, see Ch. 4, p. 54 – Governor as a symbol of Imperial unity; *SMH*, 16.1.1891, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> G. Freudenberg, 'William Lygon, Earl Beauchamp (18 May 1899 – 30 April 1901)', in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 382.

## The Governors of New South Wales in the 1890s

The pre-Federation governors' capabilities are considered here in terms of the qualities of good governorship in respect of an acceptable public image, career achievements including their political background, and being conversant with the processes of government.<sup>18</sup> In view of the short term residency in each case, conclusions are presented for their sudden resignations. The lengthy vacancy periods between governors also necessitated the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor and the one person who filled the position for the decade was the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley. He has been added to this introduction of the governors due to the significant role he played in this period.

*Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey, (1845-1915), Governor of New South Wales 15.1.1891-2.3.1893*

Lord Jersey was forty-six years of age when he arrived in the colony and described as having a 'most affable demeanour', promising to 'enter into all the amusements as well as the work of the people'.<sup>19</sup> He was an impressive figure standing six foot (183cms) tall even if the *Bulletin* chose to degrade his appearance as 'small and baggy'.<sup>20</sup>

The new governor satisfied governorship criteria as a peer with parliamentary experience, and it was enhanced by an impressive aristocratic background. Victor Albert George Child-Villiers had succeeded his father, George Augustus Frederick Villiers, to the earldom as the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey at the age of 14 years while he was still at Eton and inherited estates of nearly 20,000 acres. His mother, Julia, was the eldest daughter of Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel. By 1885 he was in heavy debt, due in part to his horse racing enthusiasms, but he had also achieved a useful career in politics, serving as Paymaster General (1889-90) in Salisbury's Conservative government. Lord Jersey was also principal proprietor of the old established Child's Bank.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> P. Boyce, *The Queen's Other Realms: The Crown and Its Legacy in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2008, pp. 192-194.

<sup>19</sup> *SMH*, 9.1.1891, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> C. Cunneen, 'Jersey, seventh Earl of (1845-1915)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090479b.htm>.accessed.7.8.2010.

<sup>21</sup> Cunneen, 'Jersey', *ADB*; Marc Brodie, 'Villiers, Victor Albert George Child-, seventh earl of Jersey (1845-1915)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36659>.accessed.7.8.2010.

Jersey was to be assisted in his role by Lady Jersey. Lady Jersey's departure from England had been delayed as she was recovering from a serious bout of typhoid fever and arrived in the colony on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1891. They had married in 1872 and had two sons and four daughters, although the eldest daughter died in infancy. Lady Jersey had a passionate concern for the welfare of children and over time she was actively involved in children's organisations and wrote plays and stories for them. As a communicator, she was a good public speaker which was not one of Lord Jersey's strongest assets.<sup>22</sup> A further attribute was her travel writings. These were published in the *Nineteenth Century* and included an article she wrote on 'Three Weeks in Samoa' while in the colony.<sup>23</sup>

The Jerseys' attributes usefully complemented each other. Lady Jersey, like other governor's wives, was recognised as acting as the Queen's representative promoting 'images of maternalism, grace and feminine virtue' that were symbolic of the sovereign's reign.<sup>24</sup> Lady Jersey enforced Victorian moral standards to scrutinise invitation lists to Government House and relied on them as a basic theme of her public speaking commitments.<sup>25</sup> She was also politically minded and absorbed the debates as a spectator at the Federal Convention. While this willingness to take an interest might please some, it also had the potential to undermine respect for the governor, especially in view of Lord Jersey's limitations as a public speaker. The republican *Bulletin* in particular was to go out of its way to insinuate that Lady Jersey was 'the Governor's governor' or that they exercised 'joint' authority.<sup>26</sup> In practice, as we shall see, leading politicians were to find him a discreet and useful adviser, and the business community welcomed him for his experience as a banker.<sup>27</sup>

Lord Jersey was to remain governor, however, for only two years. The reasons he gave for his resignation give some glimpse into the strains faced by aristocrats in accepting colonial office. In a private letter of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1892 to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, Lord Jersey resigned his governorship. The reason put forward was that his chief agent who managed his

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<sup>22</sup> Cunneen, 'Jersey', *ADB*; Marc Brodie, 'Villiers', *ODNB*.

<sup>23</sup> *SMH*, 31.12.1892, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> P. Russell, 'A Woman of the Future? Feminism and Conservatism in Colonial New South Wales', *Women's History Review*, vol. 13, 1, 2004, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> P. Russell, 'Ornaments of Empire? Government House and the Idea of English Aristocracy in Colonial Australia', *History Australia*, vol. 1, 2, (2004), p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Russell, 'A Woman of the Future?' p. 78; *Bulletin*, 9.8.1890, p. 14 and 30.5.1891, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> *SMH*, 13.1.1891, p. 4; *SMH*, 8.8.1891, p. 6; T.W. Campbell, 'My dear Lord Jersey – My dear Sir George Dibbs', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 88, pt. 1, June 2002, pp. 25-30.

British property had died and his brother-in-law would not take responsibility for selecting a replacement. A leave of absence would have been granted but this solution was dismissed by Jersey. He felt ‘...prolonged absence would give rise to dissatisfaction in social circles, whilst in other less loyal circles the occasion would be seized upon in order to show that a governor is not needed’. Jersey considered that ‘The governor of a colony like New South Wales had very few responsibilities, but he is all the more expected to carry out a great many social duties’.<sup>28</sup> Lord Salisbury suggested that Jersey had found that there was ‘less individual power to his office than he imagined’.<sup>29</sup> This comment was probably close to the truth. Jersey had told Premier Dibbs confidentially that ‘the office of Governor of a self-governing colony is [not] altogether to my taste...I do not feel well fitted to act as a figurehead’.<sup>30</sup>

After his resignation it was disclosed that Jersey had negotiated an option to return if personal circumstances demanded it.<sup>31</sup> It is possible that the return of Mr. Gladstone’s Liberal Party to power in Britain three months prior to Jersey’s resignation acted as trigger to his decision. The *Bulletin* suggested that ‘it is whispered that Lady Jersey has for long made no secret of her intention to leave this impossible country in March ....’<sup>32</sup> There did not appear to be a great urgency to return home as the Jerseys ‘did not take the most direct route to England but visited China and Japan’ during the voyage’.<sup>33</sup>

*Sir Robert William Duff (1835-1895), Governor of New South Wales 29.5.1893-15.3.1895*

There were undertones of disillusionment in political and social circles that the appointment of Sir Robert Duff did not follow past experience by sending a peer to the colony. It was, however, the conviction of the incoming British Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, that it was not necessary.<sup>34</sup> The *Bulletin* was looking forward to welcoming ‘plain Mr. and Mrs. Duff to govern N. S. Wales’<sup>35</sup> but they were thwarted by imperial intervention. The new governor was knighted

<sup>28</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 20.11.1892, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 6-9, Ripon papers.

<sup>29</sup> Cunneen, ‘Jersey’, *ADB*.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, ‘My dear Lord Jersey – My dear Sir George Dibbs’, p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> *Bulletin*, 13.5.1899, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Bulletin*, 11.2.1893, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> G. Bolton, ‘Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, Earl of Jersey (15 January 1891-2 March 1893)’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 358.

<sup>34</sup> M. Rutledge, ‘Duff, Sir Robert William (1835-1895)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080374b.htm> accessed 19.2.2009

<sup>35</sup> *Bulletin*, 4.3.1893, p. 17.



and during a detour on his trip to Australia through Italy where the Queen was holidaying, he was 'invested with the insignia of Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George'.<sup>36</sup>

As the *Sydney Morning Herald* candidly admitted, there was a feeling of being let down because Duff was not an aristocrat but of pleasure that he was rich. It meant that 'a hospitable and socially brilliant period at Government House, to which the precedent lords had accustomed people' would be continued.<sup>37</sup> The source of his wealth arose through the family heritage. Sir Robert Duff was born at Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, Scotland, only son of Arthur Abercromby and his wife Elizabeth, nee Innes. His father assumed the surname of Abercrombie on inheriting his mother's estates. Sir Robert reverted to Duff in 1862 when he became the successor to the large estates of his uncle including Fetteresso Castle. In 1871, he married Louisa Scott, youngest daughter of Sir William Scott, 6<sup>th</sup> Baronet. They had three sons and four daughters.<sup>38</sup>

While the aristocratic link for this vice-regal role had been broken, Sir Robert Duff was able to comfort his critics with a respectable 'public career in naval and parliamentary' service.<sup>39</sup> He joined the navy in 1848 and retired in 1870 with the rank of Commander. The parliamentary career commenced in 1861 and in his thirty-two years representation in the House of Commons he held positions of Junior Lord in the Treasury and Government Whip, 1882-85 and Civil Lord of the Admiralty in 1886. He was appointed a Privy Councillor in 1892.<sup>40</sup> The career background suggests Sir Robert achieved moderate success through hard work, and exposure to various experiences produced a person of maturity who was capable of being promoted to responsible positions without the easy passage of hereditary rank. According to a later historian, he was viewed as being 'never an extreme politician, but interpreted the old Whig traditions in a generous spirit, though his bias was inevitably Scottish'. The period of service in the Parliament appeared to be non-confrontational as 'He was not a frequent speaker. Personally popular at Westminster, where he was somewhat conspicuous as the oldest Scottish member, he was not widely known'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *SMH*, 16.3.1895, p. 5; Rutledge, 'Sir Robert Duff', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 363.

<sup>37</sup> *SMH*, 16.3.1895, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Rutledge, 'Duff', *ADB*.

<sup>39</sup> *SMH*, 16.3.1895, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Rutledge, 'Duff', *ADB*.

<sup>41</sup> M. Brodie, 'Duff, Sir Robert William (1835-1895)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8173.accessed.7.8.2010>.  
*SMH*, 16.3.1895, p. 9.

Sir Robert had personal qualities that suited the requirements of office, being described as 'handsome, bearded, with a luxuriantly curling moustache and high forehead'.<sup>42</sup> The *Bulletin* added that 'He wears his moustache waxed at the tips – he pulls his 'mo' tremendously ...when he is pondering things'.<sup>43</sup> 'He carried out his duties with dignity although in his personal dealings, particularly in times of crisis, he was seen to be highly strung and nervous'.<sup>44</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* credited him with being a man of 'sound judgement, maturity, public services and high personal character'.<sup>45</sup> The final assessment of his governorship will be based on the handling of the political controversy of 1893-4, as reviewed in the next chapter.

Sir Robert was the first governor of New South Wales to die in office on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1895, just under two years in the colony. Did he have health issues that he did not disclose before he left England? Perhaps he felt a trip to the colonies would improve his condition? It is a harsh assumption but within the first twelve months he missed the Highland Gathering of 1894, a traditional New Year affair for governors, offering a vague apology.<sup>46</sup> Then in March he told Lord Ripon that he took a sea voyage as 'I had not been well for some little time'.<sup>47</sup> He died a year later at Government House, Sydney, from 'multiple hepatic abscesses and septicaemia'.<sup>48</sup>

*Sir Henry Robert Brand, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Hampden (1841-1906), Governor of New South Wales 21.11.1895-5.3.1899*

The sudden death of Sir Robert Duff left the Colony in shock. It also left the Colonial Office unprepared. Who to appoint? After two months had elapsed the Premier, George Reid, sent a 'hurry up' telegram on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1895 suggesting that 'a local appointment should be made if Her Majesty's Government cannot come to a decision'. The attitude of the premier upset the Colonial Secretary and after a flutter of notes around Colonial Office officials, Lord Ripon decreed on 6<sup>th</sup> June that 'no answer to be sent'.<sup>49</sup> The British Opposition suggested the delay was because the government had no Lords to spare as the result of the split in the Liberal party over Gladstone's

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<sup>42</sup> Rutledge, 'Duff', *ADB*.

<sup>43</sup> *Bulletin*, 3.6.1893, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Brodie, 'Duff', *ODNB*.

<sup>45</sup> *SMH*, 16.3.1895, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> *SMH*, 2.1.1894, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Duff to Ripon, 26.3.1894, BL. Add. MSS 43560, ff. 33-36, Ripon papers.

<sup>48</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Robert Duff', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 369.

<sup>49</sup> Reid to Ripon, 28.5.1895 and Internal CO memo 6.6.1895, CO 201/617, ff. 498-503, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1892.

plan for Irish Home Rule, which in turn triggered the secession of many Liberal peers from the party.<sup>50</sup> The tensions were relieved when the appointment of Lord Hampden, Liberal Unionist, was announced on 17<sup>th</sup> June and the premier was able to send a congratulatory telegram to the Colonial Secretary that was read to the House of Commons.<sup>51</sup>

Lord Hampden had negotiated a short term appointment for his governorship of New South Wales before he departed from home. He had told the Colonial Office that he ‘foresaw difficulties of a private and family nature that were calculated to render the curtailment of his occupancy of the post imperative’.<sup>52</sup> It was agreed that the term would be four years but it was not made known to the public until he resigned. He had irritated the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, by refusing to accept the honour of a KCMG, which appears to have been offered at a personal meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1895, with Lord Hampden’s rejection stated in a written reply: ‘In what you said today you laid stress upon the personal question rather than upon the question as it affects the dignity of the office held by the individual. It is the latter which forms in my opinion the most important question...’ Lord Ripon’s draft reply, written on the top of this letter, suggest his feelings, ‘You will I hope excuse me if I say that I think you have come to the wrong conclusion but of course from your last letter I shall not submit your name to the Queen’.<sup>53</sup>

Henry Robert Brand, second Viscount Hampden, was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1841 at Government House, Devonport, Devon. He was the eldest son of Henry Bouverie William Brand, first Viscount Hampden, army officer and later Speaker of the House of Commons, 1872 to 1884, and his wife, Elizabeth Georgina, the daughter of General Ellice. He succeeded to the title in 1892. On 14 April 1868 he married Susan Henrietta, the daughter of Lord George Henry Cavendish; they had six sons and three daughters.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Reid to Chamberlain, 18.6.1895, CO 201/617, ff. 516-518, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1892; *SMH*, 20.6.1895, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1898, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Hampden to Ripon, 25.6.1895, BL Add. MSS 43637, f. 144, Ripon papers.

<sup>54</sup> C. Cunneen, ‘Hampden, second Viscount (1841-1906)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online edn., Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090174b.htm> accessed 20 February 2009; M. Brodie, ‘Brand, Henry Robert, second Viscount Hampden (1841-1906)’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32042.accessed.20.2.2009>.

He served in the Coldstream Guards from December 1858, like his father and grandfather, and retired from the army in October 1865 with the rank of Captain. Brand entered politics in 1868 as a Liberal for Hertfordshire in the House of Commons but was defeated in 1874. He immediately stood for Stroud and was successful but lost the seat in a legal challenge. Eventually he held Stroud from 1880 to 1886 and served as Surveyor General of Ordinance 1883 to 1885. He opposed Irish Home Rule and was unsuccessful at the 1886 elections as a Liberal Unionist for Cardiff.<sup>55</sup>

In his early parliamentary years as a Liberal, Hampden was described by a political diarist, H. W. Lucy: 'Mr. Brand has the serious introspective air which marks the Whig when under forty'. He later added to the description, 'Whigs are always serious people...Mr. Brand is still young in years but is one of the most middle-aged young men of the present epoch. There is a deliberateness in his movement and a gravity in his manner'.<sup>56</sup> He had a 'domed forehead and a drooping moustache, partly concealing his rather full lips'.<sup>57</sup> The *Bulletin* as usual had a more critical view of the governor: 'He is medium sized, lightly timbered, with a moustache like a well-kept hedge and side-boards of grizzled hair'.<sup>58</sup> As his father had noted in his diary on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1882, Mr. Gladstone had said he was 'sorry he was not able to secure Henry's service in his ministerial promotion' as there were other stronger claims.<sup>59</sup> 'He was an appreciator of sport and had the reputation of being genial'.<sup>60</sup> The governor was fortunate that during his term of office the political scene was relatively stable with George Reid as Premier for the whole colonial period.

There was no satisfactory reason given to the public by Lord Hampden for his resignation on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1898, just three years after his arrival.<sup>61</sup> He told the press, 'a situation of pressing urgency has eventuated' and his letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> November to the Colonial Office offered little further detail except that 'owing to the pressure of private business arrangements I am compelled to tender you the resignation of my appointment'.<sup>62</sup> It then became known that he had negotiated with the Colonial Office to accept the appointment 'under special and unusual conditions',

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<sup>55</sup> Cunneen, 'Hampden', *ADB*.

<sup>56</sup> Cunneen, 'Hampden', *ADB*; A. Hampden, *Henry and Elisa*, Haywards Heath, Sussex, Private Print, n.d, p. 193.

<sup>57</sup> Cunneen, 'Hampden', *ADB*.

<sup>58</sup> *Bulletin*, 30.11.1895, p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Hampden, *Henry and Elisa*, p. 194.

<sup>60</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1898, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 21.11.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 191-193, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

meaning he would stay for only four years.<sup>63</sup> There was some conjecture that the reason was to return home for his eldest son's wedding but this does not sit well with the comments above.<sup>64</sup> He was offered six months leave of absence but it was declined. The governor also stated that Lady Hampden would not return if he was obliged to come back after any leave of absence.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps the most pressing reason became clear at the time of Lord Beauchamp's appointment. An official in the Colonial Office quoted from Lord Hampden's resignation letter to the Colonial Secretary complaining, 'the expense of the governorship: it had cost him some £12,000 a year'.<sup>66</sup> Apparently the Colonial Secretary was not too sympathetic as he wrote to Beauchamp later, 'I imagine that it was generally known that the acceptance of an Australian Governorship involved considerable personal expenditure'.<sup>67</sup>

*William Lygon, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Beauchamp (1872-1938), Governor of New South Wales 18.5.1899-30.4.1901*

Once again the Colonial Office was thrown into disarray with the early resignation of Lord Hampden. As an official in the Colonial Office exclaimed, 'This is a mess'.<sup>68</sup> The selection of Lord Beauchamp seemed to be a haphazard occurrence. He received a letter from Chamberlain while he was touring Greece offering him the governorship of New South Wales. The reaction of the recipient has been frequently reported: 'I scarcely knew where was the colony and certainly nothing about it...The offer was very nearly forthwith refused so ridiculous did it appear to me'.<sup>69</sup>

William Lygon became the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Beauchamp when he succeeded his father, Frederick Lygon, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl and his wife Lady Mary Catherine, daughter of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope, in 1891 and inherited an estate of 5,000 acres.<sup>70</sup> He was educated at Eton and Oxford and became a devout High Churchman associated with the Christian Social Union and the Christ Church mission in

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<sup>63</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1898, p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Cunneen, 'Hampden', *ADB*.

<sup>65</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 15.11.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 181-183, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

<sup>66</sup> M. Davie, *Anglo-Australian Attitudes*, Secker & Warburg, London, 2000, p. 63.

<sup>67</sup> Davie, *Anglo-Australian Attitudes*, p. 63.

<sup>68</sup> Internal CO memo, 15.11.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 181-183, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

<sup>69</sup> C. Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp, seventh Earl (1872-1938)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online edn, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070233b.htm>, accessed 20.2.2009; Davie, *Anglo-Australian Attitudes*, p. 63.

<sup>70</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1899, p. 6.

London's East End. On arrival in the Colony, Beauchamp could not claim the parliamentary experience of his predecessors but he had been the Mayor of Worcester in 1895-96 and a member of the London school board in 1897-99.<sup>71</sup> These positions may have been impressive at the time but Cannadine drew attention to the popularity of country aristocrats occupying 'ornamental' mayoral roles in the 1890s. He included 'Beauchamp at Worcester'<sup>72</sup> as an example, adding that 'showing a greater interest in the well-being of the community', made them 'better able both to safeguard their property rights and to enhance their own personal prestige'.<sup>73</sup>

Lord Beauchamp was a young man of 27 years (born 20<sup>th</sup> February 1872) when he became governor of the colony. His appointment created considerable anticipation. The *Daily Chronicle* reported that 'his high character and eloquence, his notable public spirit, and his handsome appearance and fine manners and bearing will contribute to his success in his new sphere'.<sup>74</sup> The social pages were excited by reports that he was 'strikingly handsome and distinguished looking', as well as being 'a bachelor and a great entertainer'.<sup>75</sup> The *Bulletin*, recognising the strength of colonial social snobbery, speculated that 'the appointment ...of an unmarried figure-head may be due to a cunning suggestion. Heigh-ho! for the tightening of those 'silken bonds' if the Earl finds his 'Countess' amongst the Sydney 'Naicest'.<sup>76</sup> He was accompanied by his sister, Lady Mary Lygon, to assist with the social demands of this high office. She was the Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess of York and it had been acknowledged that 'It would be hard to find a more gracious or unselfish character than her'. She was very fond of music and private theatricals.<sup>77</sup>

Beauchamp had character traits that won him admiration and also acted as a source of irritation to colonials during his term of office. As will become apparent in chapter four, his credentials for diplomacy and tact were limited. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial commented on his various indiscretions when he was departing the Colony, 'The motive was right, but the high and somewhat difficult position of governor made them inexpedient'.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp', *ADB*; R. Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp (1872-1938)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34643.accessed.5.4.2007>

<sup>72</sup> Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, p. 561.

<sup>73</sup> Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, pp. 562-3.

<sup>74</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1899, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> *SMH*, 28.1.1899, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> *Bulletin*, 4.2.1899, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> *SMH*, 28.1.1899, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> *SMH*, 1.11.1900, p. 6.

On the other hand, he was untiring in his travels around the countryside and in admiration for the bush people and enjoyed the company of writers such as Henry Lawson. He was able to withstand political pressures for dissolution of parliament from Premier George Reid and revealed his skill in handling administrative matters.<sup>79</sup> These complexities of his governorship will be taken into account in the chapters ahead, as will his fortunes as the governor in residence during the transition to federation.

Lord Beauchamp may have been surprised when offered the governorship but he would have realised the uncertainty of duration with federation likely to arise in the near future. In fact, as will be shown in chapter five, his tenure was made intolerable with the political manoeuvres of the Premier, Sir William Lyne, to win Colonial Office support for the governor-general's residence to be in Sydney. He was obliged to vacate Government House for this purpose and accept a reduction in salary. Beauchamp expressed his feeling in a telegram to Chamberlain: '[C]hange of residence and still more loss of influence and dignity which must come after federation are much greater arguments against remaining ...'.<sup>80</sup> The governor departed on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1900 and did not return.

*Sir Frederick Darley (1830-1910) as Lieutenant-Governor in the interregnum between Governors*

Given the high turn-over of governors during this decade, it is not surprising that there were calls for a local person such as the Chief Justice to assume the role of governor. These demands were more related to economy in the vice-regal structure than any threat about loyalty to the Crown. One colonial officeholder in New South Wales was acknowledged as an alternative person for this high office. It was Sir Frederick Matthew Darley, Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor, who stood in place between appointments of governors throughout the 1890s and served a lengthy term of office between Lord Beauchamp's departure, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1900 and arrival of Sir Harry Rawson, on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1902. According to his biographer, his 'administrative skill, urbanity, fervour for protocol and noble deportment all fitted him for the role which he filled to

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<sup>79</sup> Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp', *ADB*; Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon', *ODNB*.

<sup>80</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 2.8.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 129-130, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

the satisfaction of local society and of the Colonial Office'.<sup>81</sup> In view of his long tenure in these two positions, he was closely allied to imperial responsibilities and has frequent reference in the next chapter on political issues. He was also congratulated by the *Sydney Morning Herald* for taking 'a warm interest in the life of the colony, participating in its sports and festivities, and leading the way in charitable enterprises'.<sup>82</sup>

As recognition for his public service, he was 'knighted in 1887 and appointed KCMG in 1897 and GCMG in 1901 and became a Privy Councillor in 1905'.<sup>83</sup> Lady Darley provided strong support for the Lieutenant-Governor. 'She was a member of numerous charitable and benevolent organisations, and an accomplished hostess'.<sup>84</sup> During the South African War she was active in raising funds for troop comforts and presided over the Ladies' Patriotic Fund.<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

As has been argued here, the basis of a good rapport with New South Wales was for the Colonial Office to find a candidate who fulfilled the basic requirements of an acceptable public image, a successful career that included parliamentary experience and a good understanding of the processes of government.

Each office bearer satisfied the anticipated public image model. Each could claim aristocratic status or association with ancestral and chivalrous traditions of public duty such as military or naval service, as well as being large property owners. There was a fine balance on the perception of Beauchamp's public performance. He was prone to being reported for making undiplomatic comments. On the other hand, he energetically travelled around the colony to meet the people and enhance the connection with the Monarchy.

While these vice-regal representatives were able to provide a career résumé acceptable for an upper-class background, their parliamentary experience was really in the moderate range. The

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<sup>81</sup> J.M. Bennett, 'Darley, Sir Frederick Matthew (1830-1910)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online edn, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040019b.htm>, accessed 7.8.2010

<sup>82</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> Bennett, 'Darley', *ADB*.

<sup>84</sup> Bennett, 'Darley', *ADB*.

<sup>85</sup> *SMH*, 7.12.1899, p. 4.



public offices they held were second ranking to the policy makers. In fact, Beauchamp could only call on a couple of years in municipal administration and that was most likely more ceremonial than administrative.

In terms of training for their constitutional role, the Colonial Office could rely on the governors knowing enough about processes of government and constitutional issues with the availability of back-up support from the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley or reference back to the Imperial Government. The lack of experience that would have been gained by a long term appointment, which stood in stark contrast to the lengthening years of experience in the job of the Queen herself, was probably balanced with the goodwill of the people towards the prestige of the office.

There was an expectation that a New South Wales governor would serve for about five to six years according to the precedent set during the 1870s and 1880s. As far as the public were concerned that arrangement still prevailed in the 1890s. The Governor retained office at the Queen's pleasure but in practical terms there was an agreement as to the term of each commission.<sup>86</sup> Sir Robert Duff commented at a banquet in London before his departure for the Colony in 1893 that he intended to remain for five years after the surprise resignation of Lord Jersey with just two years completed.<sup>87</sup> Subsequently, the press reported that the tenure of office was six years at the time when Lord Hampden went home after three years service.<sup>88</sup> *The Bulletin* critically summarised the situation as it mocked the progress of the decade on the arrival of Lord Beauchamp:

Governor Beauchamp hasn't allowed it to transpire how long his exile is to last. Only at resignation did Hampden let out that his compact with the CO was for four years, three and a half of which he dutifully put in. Jersey too, admitted at the close that he had bargained to return when his private affairs called. Carrington made no stipulation, but put in the full time (1885-1890). Poor Duff was the only man of late years who assured all and sundry that he intended to stay 5 years. In a sense, he did so, and is here yet.<sup>89</sup>

Of course, Beauchamp was destined to be a short term appointment as already described.

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<sup>86</sup> Boyce, *The Queen's Other Realms*, p. 56.

<sup>87</sup> *SMH*, Editorial, 29.5.1893, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1898, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> *Bulletin*, 13.5.1899, p. 10.

The qualifications of those selected for this high office have now been detailed for each governor of the 1890s. The next task is to explore how effectively those appointed in the pre-Federation period faced the political and cultural challenges of their time in office as representatives of the Crown.

### CHAPTER THREE

## GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND POLITICAL LIFE, 1891-1900

This chapter will explore the levels of political authority available to the governor in the environment of the 1890s. Although vice-regal influence had been curbed after the introduction of responsible government, a meaningful role for British governorship was being cultivated in this decade. Imperial duties were drawn into three well discerned areas of responsibility. Firstly, the governor acted as intelligence agent keeping the Colonial Office informed on domestic politics and current affairs in the colony. Secondly, he stood in the place of the Monarch to manage constitutional issues such as the formation of governments, prorogation or dissolution of parliament, and the appointment of members to the Legislative Council. He could also assent to legislation on behalf of the Crown within defined limits. Finally, he had the unique responsibility for executive control over the Crown Colony of Norfolk Island. This chapter examines each of these distinctive areas of vice-regal accountability in turn.

### **Governor as imperial intelligence agent**

The Colonial Office requirement for gathering information on current activity in the Colony was a regular 'Report on Affairs'<sup>1</sup> from the governor, which had to be marked 'secret'.<sup>2</sup> While the Colonial Office drew attention to lapses in quarterly reporting, they left it to the governor's discretion about the subjects discussed. The commentary covered such items as local politics, industrial disputes, government finances and rural production. Any noteworthy comments by Colonial Office officials on these despatches have been included when topic is examined in the thesis. The Colonial Office usually just sent an acknowledgement of the report to the governor as any serious issue was handled in other despatches. Lord Jersey enhanced the pool of information with private letters to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, but it was a short-lived personal arrangement due to his premature resignation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Report on Affairs' was used in the 1890s but later it changed to 'Affairs Report'. The former term has been retained throughout the thesis for consistency purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 21.5.1896, CO 201/619, f. 108, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1896.

<sup>3</sup> Jersey to Ripon, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 1-26, Ripon papers.

The most significant feature of the 1890s was movement towards federal union of the Australian colonies and it formed the background to activities of the four governors who held office in New South Wales during this decade. Their status was imperial observer as they made no direct contribution to the constitutional deliberations, just regular report of progress to the Colonial Office. While Lord Jersey ‘...presided over the formal banquet that marked the opening of the National Australasian Convention...’<sup>4</sup> in March 1891, he was soon expressing his concern about the lengthy period of federal inactivity thereafter. He informed the Colonial Secretary, late 1892: ‘I almost think that the colonies have got a little further apart since the Federation Convention last year’.<sup>5</sup> Governor Duff’s speech to the opening of Parliament in August 1894 noted previous lethargy towards the subject of union: ‘No time has been lost in asking the other Australian Governments to concur in restoring the subject of Federal Union to a position worthy of its commanding importance’.<sup>6</sup>

It is evident from the press reporting of Lord Hampden’s social engagements, that he had instructions from home to reaffirm the British Government’s commitment to the Federation movement.<sup>7</sup> He was also sending regular reports to the Colonial office on political progress to federation. One report included information about the enabling legislation to elect delegates to the National Australasian Conventions, passed in New South Wales on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1895.<sup>8</sup> A later report on the People’s Federation Convention at Bathurst in November 1896 noted the governor’s belief that it would arouse the ‘...attention of the people to the importance of the Question’.<sup>9</sup>

The political scene in New South Wales was tense in 1898 with defeat of the constitutional referendum and the Reid Government’s survival at an election with the support of the Labour Party. Despite this result, the governor’s regular account remarked: ‘I believe that, with the exception of the nineteen Labour members, every representative is pledged to promote the early Federal Union of the Australian Colonies’.<sup>10</sup> After Lord Hampden had departed from the Colony, Lieutenant-Governor Darley advised the Colonial Office he had agreed to the appointment of

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<sup>4</sup> G. Bolton, ‘Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, Earl Jersey (15 January-2 March 1893), in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 353.

<sup>5</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 9.10.1892, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 1-5, Ripon papers.

<sup>6</sup> Duff to Ripon, 27.8.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 261-262, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>7</sup> For fuller discussion see ch. 4, p. 50: ‘The Governor as symbol of imperial unity’.

<sup>8</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 21.5.1896, CO 201/619, f. 113, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1896.

<sup>9</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 15.1.1897, CO 201/621, ff. 9-11, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1897.

<sup>10</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 1.8.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 91-92, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

twelve additional members to the Upper House so that a further enabling bill could be passed.<sup>11</sup> This action ensured the passage of the bill and resulted in the successful 'Yes' vote at the referendum on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1899. Lord Hampden made the premature claim to the Colonial Secretary, prior to his departure: 'It is a great satisfaction to me that I am able, at the close of my service in this Colony, to advise you that such good progress is being made towards the Federal Union of the Australian Colonies'.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond debates about federalism, radicals were promoting even more dramatic visions of institutional change. On the one hand, republicans sought to sever links with constitutional monarchy altogether. On the other hand, labour unions sought ways to gain direct political representation by forming their own political party. It was evident by the early 1890s that public support for a republic had slumped while the Labour Party had emerged as a threat to the major parties.

There still remained a marginal attraction towards republicanism during Lord Jersey's term of office but it was really more sentiment than an actively organised movement. Celebrations for the Jubilee and Centenary had passed and Republicans could not maintain the passion for their alternative to imperial dependence. There was no clear plan for government and conflict between groups such as republicans, socialists, anarchists, secularists, and variations of these associations, discouraged support from the wider population.<sup>13</sup>

Wage earners could not be convinced that the imperial connection was a restraining influence on reforms that affected their standard of living. It was a sobering fact for republican leaders that the public was apathetic to radical change of the constitutional structure for the colony. One of the planks of the new Labour Electoral League in this period was the removal of the governor but it was low on their priorities for immediate reform. The *Bulletin* had strongly advocated a republic but by 1897 it reluctantly accepted that the best possible result at that time was 'Federation under the Crown'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Darley to Chamberlain, 10.4.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 110-115, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899; This was the interregnum between Hampden and Beauchamp.

<sup>12</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 9.2.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 42-43, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899.

<sup>13</sup> M. McKenna, *The Captive Republic: A History of Republicanism in Australia 1788-1996*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp. 170-173.

<sup>14</sup> McKenna, *The Captive Republic*, pp. 201-203; J. Hirst, 'Empire, State, Nation' in D.M. Schreuder & S. Ward (eds.), *Australia's Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, p. 153.

The movement to gain direct parliamentary representation for organised labour can be traced to union resentment generated by the failure of a maritime strike at the end of 1890.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, the Trades and Labor Council was determined to achieve their objectives through parliamentary representation and the Labour Electoral League was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1891.<sup>16</sup> In the New South Wales election two months later, the League astounded political circles by winning 35 seats in the Legislative Assembly and holding the balance of power between free trade and protectionist parties.<sup>17</sup> This had two major consequences for governors during the decade which followed. Firstly, it made the path to Federation more complicated because of Labour suspicion of the project as driven by commercial and business interests.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, (as further explained in the following section of this chapter), it contributed to government instability, thus drawing governors into political life more often than was usually required of them in an era of two-party politics.

Governor's reports during the 1890s also give evidence about economic developments affecting the imperial interest. As historians of this period of colonial development have noted, the 1890s was a decade of exceptional economic and industrial strain, with flow-on effects depressing social conditions and government revenues. The secret reports from Lord Jersey and Sir Robert Duff expressed concern about the state of the economy and government deficits.<sup>19</sup> There were several factors contributing to the depressed conditions. They included falling wool prices on overseas markets, collapse of British investment, bank failures, long-term drought conditions, industrial disputes and trade barriers. Optimism of the 1880s had faded as wool prices gradually fell and requests for new loans from Britain for government and private works were severely cut back. These circumstances contributed to a fall in economic output of thirty per cent between 1891 and 1895.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> L. Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the late Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> S. Macintyre, 'Federation and the Labour Movement' in M. Hearn & G. Patmore (eds.) *Working the Nation: Working Life and Federation, 1890-1914*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 2001, pp. 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> B. Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> Macintyre, 'Federation and the Labour Movement', pp. 12-19.

<sup>19</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 17.12.1892, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 10-13, Ripon papers; Duff to Ripon, 23.10.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 264-266, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889.

<sup>20</sup> S. Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 129-130.

Although historians have tended to attribute severe drought to the period 1895 to 1903,<sup>21</sup> Lord Jersey advised the Colonial Office that ‘...drought persists in western districts’ as early as October 1892.<sup>22</sup> Conditions varied in the second half of the decade. Lord Hampden reported some relief in January 1897: ‘[G]eneral prosperity of New South Wales has been greatly advanced by the seasonable rains...’.<sup>23</sup> On a visit to Moree in 1899, Lord Beauchamp learnt that severe drought had lasted almost continuously for the past five years.<sup>24</sup> The depressed state of the eastern colonies was reflected in a fifty percent reduction in sheep numbers for the decade from 1891.<sup>25</sup>

Industrial disputes came and went in this period but governors’ reports to the Colonial Office concentrated on two areas, Broken Hill and Newcastle. Lord Jersey detailed a dispute at the Broken Hill silver mines in July 1892, when the directors announced that they intended to introduce ‘payment by contract instead of as hitherto by day work’.<sup>26</sup> They claimed that the current system did not ensure a fair day’s work. The miners said they would lose pay and it was an attack on the union. Newcastle miners had Lord Hampden’s attention in a despatch of 25<sup>th</sup> August 1896. The colliery owners had refused the miners union demand for ‘...an increase of 6d in the ton in the hewing rate which then stood at about 3/-s’.<sup>27</sup> There is a noteworthy comparison between the governors’ attitudes to these two strikes. Lord Jersey was keen to take an active role in negotiations as he told the Colonial Office that he was watching developments for ‘...an opportunity to offer his services to help the parties to confer’.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Lord Hampden’s report suggests he was prepared to stand back and let the government be responsible for resolving the dispute. It was probably the correct approach for the vice-regal position but lacked the leadership displayed by Lord Jersey.<sup>29</sup> A common feature of these disputes throughout the 1890s were employers dictating terms on the basis of ‘Freedom of Contract’.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> R. Evans, C. Moore, K. Saunders & B. Jamison, *1901 Our Future’s Past*, p. 276; Macintyre, ‘Federation and the Labour Movement’, p. 130.

<sup>22</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 9.10.1892, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 1-5, Ripon papers.

<sup>23</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 15.1.1897, CO 201/621, f. 5, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1896.

<sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 7.7.1899, pp. 5-6.

<sup>25</sup> Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p. 130.

<sup>26</sup> Jersey to Knutsford, 25.7.1892, CO 201/612, ff. 151-157, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1887.

<sup>27</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 25.8.1896, CO 201/619, f. 178, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>28</sup> Jersey to Knutsford, 25.7.1892, CO 201/612, ff. 151-157, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1887.

<sup>29</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 25.8.1896, CO 201/619, f. 181, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>30</sup> J. Rickard, *Class and Politics*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1976, p. 25.

The judgement of governors was also put to the test in times of commercial crisis. The despondent mood of the financial market at the beginning of 1894 is revealed by a press review commenting that ‘The year just closed has been the most disastrous known in the history of the colony’.<sup>31</sup> The collapse of the land and building societies in 1891 and 1892 followed by the Federal Bank in January 1893 created pressure on other banks of issue. There were substantial numbers of British depositors in the Australian banks that had head offices in United Kingdom and nervous directors soon started to instruct their colonial branches to suspend payments. The crisis reached its peak during April and May 1893 with 13 banks closing for reconstruction and eventually over three months 10 businesses reopened their doors.<sup>32</sup>

Currency legislation would normally have required assent by Her Majesty but the Governor’s Instructions allowed for local approval in an emergency. As Sir Robert Duff did not arrive in the Colony until 29<sup>th</sup> May 1893, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Frederick Darley authorised the necessary legislation. It covered two acts. Firstly, the *Bank Issue Act* provided stability for note issue within the Colony and also released gold that was being hoarded rather than deposited in the banking system.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, the *Current Account Depositors’ Act* allowed Treasury to pay customers half of their account balances with security for eventual recovery from the suspended Banks when funds were available. There were approximately 60,000 depositors on current accounts that included over 57,000 with balances not exceeding £300.<sup>34</sup>

A further recurrent source of imperial anxiety – and therefore of private report – was colonial tariff policy. When Sir George Dibbs took over government on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1891 his trade policy was to introduce a protectionist tariff for the development of local industries and the well-being of the community through further employment opportunities. The disappointment of the British Government can be gauged by the Prime Minister’s comment in the press: ‘Lord Salisbury regretted that New South Wales was in danger of no longer wearing the unspotted robe of free trade’.<sup>35</sup> Against government predictions for an improved industry outlook, a despatch from Lord Jersey reported the first year of protection was not up to expectation and the *Sydney Morning*

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<sup>31</sup> *SMH*, 1.1.1894, Commercial Retrospect 1893, Monetary Review, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> *SMH*, 1.1.1894, Commercial Retrospect 1893, Monetary Review, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Darley to Knutsford, 8.5.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 87-96, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1893.

<sup>34</sup> Darley to Knutsford, 27.5.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 115-124, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1893.

<sup>35</sup> *SMH*, 11.11.1891, p. 4.



*Herald* confirmed: 'The new tariff has had no material effect in developing local industries or manufacturing enterprise...'.<sup>36</sup>

The Government of George Reid was elected on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1894 with a platform of returning to free trade although political manoeuvres delayed the reversal of the protectionist tariff until the start of 1896. Trade was more buoyant during 1896 without the impediment of the tariffs but there was also a general rise in world trade confidence at this time.<sup>37</sup> When Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary in 1895, he was convinced that preferential trade could lead to an imperial federation within the Empire. During Lord Hampden's term of office, he had to follow a fine line between Chamberlain's ambitions and the reluctance of Premier Reid to participate in any scheme that might threaten the independence of the colony. Also there was resistance from the self-governing colonies at the Colonial Conference in 1897 to any suggestion of imperial federation based on trade that might result in the colonies being dominated by the Mother Country.<sup>38</sup>

A final occurrence touching on commercial interests with imperial implications concerned the legal proceedings arising out of an incident involving a barque, *Costa Rica Packet*, owned by Burns Philp & Company, and used in a whaling venture headed by Captain Carpenter. The incident began in January 1888 when Captain Carpenter found a partly submerged prauw floating unattended off the coast of the island of Boeroe<sup>39</sup>, a possession of the Netherlands Government, and salvaged a small cargo of spirits and other goods. Almost four years had passed when he was arrested at the port of Ternate on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1891, but finally released four weeks later due to lack of evidence. Local newspapers inflamed the situation with emotive reports such as the 'dignity and loss to a British subject' and an insult to 'national honour'. Carpenter was an American, who became a British citizen and had resided in Sydney since 1886. Lord Jersey's despatch revealed that the parties were claiming £25,000, covering £10,000 for Carpenter, £10,000 for Burns Philp & Co., and £5,000 for the crew.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 9.10.1892, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 1-5, Ripon papers; *SMH*, 31.12.1892, Commercial Retrospect, Review of Year 1892 – Trade and Commerce, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> *SMH*, 3.1.1897, Commercial Retrospect, Monetary Review, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> J. Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, Longmans, London, 1967, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> Colonial Dutch name for Buru, Indonesia.

<sup>40</sup> S. Mullins, 'The Costa Rica Packet affair: colonial entanglements and tests of Empire in pre-Federation New South Wales', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 87.2, (2001), p. 267.

The British Foreign Office was alarmed at the level of damages claimed. They currently had good relations with the Netherlands Government and did not wish to see them disturbed by this case. British Law Officers' opinion agreed that Carpenter had grounds for compensation although the amount claimed was excessive. They considered there was no case for Burns Philp or the crew. They recommended settlement for £2,500.<sup>41</sup> When it became known in Sydney there was a storm of protest that led to a citizens' select committee reviewing the evidence and supporting the plaintiff.<sup>42</sup> This dispute arose during the period when Premier Dibbs was in conflict with the governor over legislation for the Electoral Bill and rejection of a request for additional members to the Upper House (detailed later in this chapter). While Governor Duff received despatches about the case from the British Government, Dibbs chose to deal direct with his Agent-General in London, Sir Saul Samuel, when pressuring the British Government to accept the higher compensation figure.<sup>43</sup> The parliamentary dispute may have been the reason for Dibbs ignoring the governor with his return correspondence or he assumed the imperial representative would have a conflict of interest to pursue a claim contrary to his master's intentions. Duff became involved in return despatches after the Reid Government came into office in August 1894.<sup>44</sup> The negotiations continued until 1897 when the final result was a successful arbitration award of £11,082.7.6 that paid Carpenter £3,150, crew £1,600 and Burns Philp £3,800 plus interest and costs.<sup>45</sup>

Governors could find themselves in difficulty when acting as imperial reporting agent in this era of responsible government. While they were aiming to act as detached observers in local matters, certain events demanded more involvement depending on public reaction or political intensity. On the one hand, Whitehall expected to be forewarned on developments that could have wider implications for the smooth running of a trade-based global empire. On the other hand, there were occasional cases when, either because of urgency of local conditions or vehemence of local opinion, governors had to report on their part in the crisis and justify the action they had taken. The assent to banking legislation by the Lieutenant-Governor typified urgent action and the *Costa Rica* case revealed the limits of the governor's ability to restrain local initiative even when

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<sup>41</sup> Law Officers to Foreign Office, 19.4.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 596-598, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889.

<sup>42</sup> Mullins, 'The Costa Rica Packet affair', p. 274.

<sup>43</sup> Dibbs to Samuel, 15.7.1893, CO 201/614, f. 428, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889 and subsequent despatches.

<sup>44</sup> M. Rutledge, 'Sir Robert William Duff (29 May 1893-15 March 1895), in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 368.

<sup>45</sup> CO to Samuel, 26.2.1897, CO 201/622, ff. 373-376, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1897.

it was contrary to the imperial interest. This apparent limitation on the governor's effectiveness can be contrasted with his influence as constitutional monarch examined in the next section.

### **Governor as constitutional monarch**

Britain still had residual controls over internal affairs of the colony notwithstanding the supposed freedom granted to New South Wales under 'Responsible Government' since 1856. These controls were both formal and informal – statute-based and practice-based. Formally, the statutes granting responsible government to the colony allowed governors to reserve certain legislative acts for review and, if necessary, imperial disallowance if they were found to contravene imperial policy. Reserved subjects included 'divorce, currency, differential customs duties, inconsistencies with treaty obligations, the discipline or control of the defence forces, the alteration of electoral districts, and the salary of the governor'.<sup>46</sup> In practice, it was becoming increasingly difficult to exercise such powers.

An example of the difficulties with legislation was the intended restriction of alien immigration in the 1890s. In November 1896, New South Wales extended the *Chinese Restriction and Regulation Act* of 1888 to exclude all coloured races from Asia, Africa, Pacific and Indian Oceans.<sup>47</sup>

The governor was obliged to reserve the Act in view of its affront to the dignity of non-white races within the Empire in regions such as India and Africa. Lord Hampden had a friendly relationship with the Lands Minister, Joseph Carruthers, after working together on the Norfolk Island report (considered later in this chapter), and in a private letter he commented that 'I am aghast at reading the report of the debate on the Alien Restriction Bill... Do they seriously consider that they are not insulting a brave and cultured people when they sweep the whole of India into this net?'<sup>48</sup> Notwithstanding this comment, he advised the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, that there was 'strong public feeling against the immigration of coloured aliens'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, p. 14; Source of Governor's instructions detailed in the Barton papers cited in Chapter 2, p. 12: Colonial perspectives.

<sup>47</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 3.12.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 295-300, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>48</sup> Hampden to Carruthers, 18.10.1896, ML MSS 1638, Vol. 20.1, ff. 103-106, Carruthers papers.

<sup>49</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 27.11.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 254-256, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

As expected, there were protests to the Colonial Office from India and Japan.<sup>50</sup> During the 1897 Colonial Conference, Chamberlain persuaded the New South Wales Premier, George Reid, to reconsider the stark nature of the restrictions.<sup>51</sup> The legislation was subsequently amended to provide for aliens to be subject to the Natal language test rather than a blatant exclusion.<sup>52</sup>

The informal – or convention based – controls over political life which the governors exercised were controls which mirrored the prerogative powers of the British Crown as restricted and interpreted by British parliamentarians over previous centuries. These were powers still actively evolving by trial and error as more democratic forms of politics emerged in both the United Kingdom and its white settler colonies during Queen Victoria's reign and after. The principal prerogative powers and their accepted constitutionally conventional interpretation, were as follows.

Constitutionally, the governor was expected to act on the advice of ministers for domestic matters and he usually followed their recommendations. However, he was at liberty to reject their guidance if he deemed it inappropriate but the consequences would most likely be the resignation of the premier and his ministers. Rejection of advice suggested a lack of confidence in the government. The governor had to be convinced an alternative leader was available to form a government or there was justification to hold an election. Otherwise the governor would suffer the embarrassment of recalling the ministry that provided the original proposal.

Apart from issues that led to a vote of no-confidence in the government there was a manoeuvre by the premier for additional friendly members to a hostile Upper House. These appointments had to have some political or administrative reason for approval by the governor beyond a sham for the benefit of the governing party. Also, any additional appointments had to comply with the understanding that nominated members in the Legislative Council were about half the number of the Assembly, which was elected by popular vote.

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<sup>50</sup> Colonial Office to India Office, 3.12.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 295-300, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894; Japanese Minister to British Prime Minister, 26.1.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 412-421, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

<sup>51</sup> Chamberlain to Reid, 19.7.1897, CO 201/623, ff. 152-154, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1897.

<sup>52</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 29.7.1898 and 10.8.1898, CO 201/624, ff. 83-85 and 138-142, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1898.

There were six significant occasions, amongst numerous votes of no-confidence in the decade, when parliamentary business was disrupted and decisive action was required from the governor or lieutenant-governor in office. The issues concerned prorogation or dissolution of parliament or the appointment of additional members to the Legislative Council. The resolution of each dispute depended on the circumstances that prevailed at the time as there was no consistent approach to resolution.

The first political predicament occurred in 1891. Government was a precarious occupation in this era. The Ministry depended on a loose arrangement of various special interest groups as well as support from the rising power of the Labour Electoral League, whose allegiance could change at any time. Sir George Dibbs, Leader of the Opposition, moved a vote of no-confidence on 28<sup>th</sup> May but the result was sixty-three for and sixty-three against and the Speaker voted against the motion. The Premier, Sir Henry Parkes considered there was inadequate support for his government and requested dissolution of the parliament. Lord Jersey indicated he had ample time to consider the question and in his opinion it was ‘the right course to be taken in the interests of the colony’<sup>53</sup> While Sir Henry was returned to power as the result of the election, he was defeated on the Coal Mines Regulation Bill and resigned on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Sir George Dibbs was invited to form a government and accepted.<sup>54</sup>

The Opposition Leader, George Reid and his Free Trade Party was seeking to destroy the Government’s protectionist policy and had demanded dissolution to secure an election so that the public view on the issue could be ascertained. When parliamentary moves failed to achieve this objective by February 1893, the free trade leaders organised a series of meetings in Sydney and in the country to demand dissolution of parliament. Lord Jersey informed Lord Ripon that a deputation had visited him with the resolutions from these meetings to press their demands. He pointed out to this group that ‘he would not as long as my Ministers had a majority in Parliament take advice of a public meeting of partisans in preference to theirs’.<sup>55</sup> This private letter was written as Lord Jersey departed the Colony and he hoped that his action would give the new governor time to settle in before the political situation deteriorated further.

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<sup>53</sup> Jersey to Knutsford, 8.6.1891, CO 201/612, ff. 70-71, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1887.

<sup>54</sup> Jersey to Knutsford, 23.10.1891, CO 201/612, ff. 100-102, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1887.

<sup>55</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 10.3.1893, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 23-26, Ripon papers.

The second episode occurred in November 1893 and it soon developed into a crisis that questioned the competence of the newly arrived Governor, Sir Robert Duff, who had been just six months in office. The parliamentary opposition had been keen to find an opportunity for a vote of no-confidence against the Dibbs Government. The occasion arose when it was discovered that the Attorney General, Barton, and Minister for Justice, O'Connor, both held a brief from a contracting firm, Proudfoot, against the Crown in a civil action brought against the Railway Commissioners. It was alleged that the ministers were pursuing legal proceedings in their professional capacity in conflict with ministerial responsibilities. The Government was condemned for allowing such a breach of propriety and lost a subsequent confidence motion by twenty-one votes – sixty-nine to forty-eight. It would have been expected that the Government should resign. However, they requested prorogation of Parliament until 16<sup>th</sup> January 1894, which the governor approved.<sup>56</sup>

The Governor had a dilemma on his hands when he decided to prorogue Parliament on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1893. The Electoral Bill to which he assented on 13 June 1893, two weeks after he arrived in the colony, provided for new Electoral Districts that reduced the Legislative Assembly from 141 to 125 seats and nullified the old electoral rolls. The Electoral Districts had to be promulgated 'as soon as possible' after the Act came into force so that new Electoral Rolls could be completed. It appears that the governor was unaware of this detail as the legislation was passed by Parliament before his arrival and he just gave assent to the Bill. Sir Robert was recovering from a period of illness and had undertaken a sea voyage with the navy. Duff advised Lord Ripon: 'I received a telegram from Sir George Dibbs requesting my assent by telegram to a proclamation concerning the Electoral Act; the details of which he did not enter into but stating the matter was urgent'. The governor added that, 'the matter referred to me being of a purely local character, I submit that I was acting in conformity with the spirit of my instructions, in placing confidence in my responsible Minister'.<sup>57</sup> The premier had justified his actions as the Electoral Districts were completed in early October: hence there was a need to comply with the stipulation for prompt promulgation.

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<sup>56</sup> Duff to Ripon, 24.11.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 269-298, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889; Rutledge, 'Sir Robert William Duff', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 364-366.

<sup>57</sup> Duff to Ripon, 7.4.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 60-61, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

While the Electoral Districts were in place the new electoral rolls were not available when the possibility of an election arose after the vote of no-confidence was lost a few weeks later. Hence the governor considered the only course was to prorogue Parliament rather than dissolve as the new ministry could not take its place without the opportunity to go to the electorate. Perhaps Sir Robert Duff should not have agreed to the proclamation without knowing the detail; however he relied on his ministers. It was suggested by Lord Ripon that there was some lack of sincerity on the part of the Premier.<sup>58</sup> After some doubts by the Colonial Office about Sir Robert Duff's actions, they decided that he had taken the most appropriate course of action when he explained the above sequence of events in his despatch of 7<sup>th</sup> April 1894.<sup>59</sup>

The election result was the forerunner to the third critical event. The electors clearly favoured the Free Traders. They secured sixty-one seats, with the Protectionist Government of Sir George Dibbs on forty seats and the Labour Party with twenty-four seats able to influence the party taking over the government. It was expected that a test vote in Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> August would see the defeat of the existing Ministry.<sup>60</sup> On 30<sup>th</sup> July, Sir George Dibbs submitted a proposal to the governor for the appointment of an additional ten members to the Legislative Council. When Sir Robert Duff declined this request, the Premier resigned and George Reid was commissioned to form a ministry. If the governor was expected to follow the advice of his ministers, how could he defend the refusal of the new appointments? Sir Robert Duff used the precedent set by Lord Ripon in a celebrated New Zealand decision of 26<sup>th</sup> September 1892, when the Colonial Secretary decreed:

A Governor would, however, be justified in taking another course if he should be satisfied that the policy recommended to him is not only in his view erroneous in itself, but such as he has solid grounds for believing, from his local knowledge, would not be endorsed by the legislature or by the constituencies.<sup>61</sup>

Sir Robert offered 3 additional members to cover vacancies but he expressed the view that 'to have added 10 members would have given the defeated ministry the power of obstructing the will

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<sup>58</sup> Ripon to Duff, 16.2.1894, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 31-32, Ripon papers.

<sup>59</sup> Duff to Ripon, 7.4.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 60-61, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>60</sup> *SMH*, 30.7.1894, p. 4; Duff to Ripon, 18.7.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 171-175, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>61</sup> Duff to Ripon, 6.8.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 241-249, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890. This decision is also consistent with a proviso to Clause V1 of the Royal Instructions to the Governor dated 9 July 1892 that allowed a Governor to dissent from a recommendation of the Executive Council.

of Constituencies, as recently expressed at the ballot box'.<sup>62</sup> It was clear from the election that the electors favoured a change of government and supporting the means of ensuring a hostile upper house was not in the best interests of the colony. The New Zealand case provided the precedent for the governor to disregard ministerial advice. In these circumstances 'The Governor, being an Imperial Officer, is responsible to the Imperial authorities for the due maintenance and the right of the discretionary power placed by them in his hands',<sup>63</sup> notwithstanding the usual practice of accepting ministerial guidance within the terms of self government. The rejection of these appointments raised the ire of Sir George Dibbs and it was reported that he intended to cable the Colonial Secretary to have Sir Robert Duff recalled.<sup>64</sup> The Government was defeated in the following week so this threat does not appear to have been carried out.

The fourth intervention into the business of the parliament occurred less than twelve months after the 1894 election. In July 1895, during the interregnum between governors, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, received a request for dissolution of the Parliament. Mr. Reid had been elected in July 1894 on a promise to return the colony to free trade, which would be achieved by abolition of customs duties on overseas imports and replaced with an income tax upon incomes over £300 and Land Tax over the capital value unimproved of £470. These measures were passed by a very large majority in the Legislative Assembly despite the combined efforts of opposition from Sir George Dibbs and Sir Henry Parkes. When the measures went to the Legislative Council they were defeated by forty-one votes to four. If Sir Frederick Darley had refused dissolution Mr. Reid would have resigned. There was no possibility of an alternative government being formed as the Free Traders combined with Labour, (who supported the new taxation), had a majority in the Lower House of eighty to forty-five. It was emphasised that the financial policy of the government depended on the new fiscal measures. Press reports suggested that there was popular public support for the new approach. Consequently, Sir Frederick Darley deemed it advisable to follow the advice of ministers and dissolve parliament.<sup>65</sup> The state of the parties was in a similar position after the election. In Lord Hampden's first report on the colony he indicated that the Legislative Council still resisted the fiscal changes but after private meetings between the two Houses and some concessions by Mr. Reid, the legislation was passed and became law on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1895. While the premier was in such a position of strength he also

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<sup>62</sup> Duff to Ripon, 30.7.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 185-186, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>63</sup> *SMH*, 31.7.1894; Duff to Ripon, 6.8.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 241-249, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>64</sup> *SMH*, 30.7.1894, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Darley to Chamberlain, 8.7.1895, CO 201/617, ff. 166-173, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1891.



secured agreement from the lieutenant-governor to appoint ten additional members to the Upper House.<sup>66</sup>

As a consequence of this recurrent demand for further members to dilute a hostile Legislative Council, the authorisation process in this period focused on the governor (or lieutenant-governor). The Constitution associated with responsible government endowed the governor with unique authority to make appointments to the Upper House. There was no upper limit to Legislative Council numbers and each member was appointed for life. Prior to the First World War, some control was maintained by a convention that advocated the Upper House membership should be approximately half the size of the Legislative Assembly. The governor was expected to accept the advice of his ministers when such demands were made. If he was not satisfied about the propriety of the request, an option existed in Clause VI of the Royal Instructions to the Governor to reject the recommendation.<sup>67</sup> There was concern about ‘swamping’ the Upper House with compliant members as it would minimise the value of this institution as a House of Review. On the other hand, rejection of the minister’s advice usually meant the government would resign, so the governor had to be confident there was an alternative party to form a government.

The fifth interruption to routine parliamentary business occurred when the Legislative Council obstructed legislation for the amended Federation Enabling Bill in April 1899. Again the responsibility for interpreting the constitutional conflict fell upon the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, as the colony awaited the appointment of a new governor after the departure of Lord Hampden. The Legislative Assembly had passed the Bill for the referendum with an overwhelming majority as the opposition, led by Barton, supported the Government. After the second reading of the Bill, the Legislative Council inserted two amendments. They required that the referendum have an affirmative vote of a quarter of electors on the Electoral Rolls and that Queensland accept the Federal Constitution Bill. Parliament was prorogued by the Lieutenant-Governor on the advice of his Ministers. Reid recommended the appointment of fifteen members to the Council but Sir Frederick Darley was concerned about any criticism of ‘swamping’ the Upper House and offered ten appointments. The premier compromised with twelve appointments pointing out that the overall numbers in the Council would be sixty-nine, which was still below

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<sup>66</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 21.5.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 108-114, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1896.

<sup>67</sup> H.V. Evatt, *The King and his Dominion Governors: A Study of the reserve powers of the Crown in Great Britain and the Dominions*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936, pp. 121-127.

the 1892 figure of seventy-five. In reality the membership would be above the conventional level but Reid stressed that the appointments were for life (not elected at that time) and usually there were absences from the Chamber due to old age, infirmity, departure from the colony and lack of interest from some persons.<sup>68</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor knew that if he did not agree to the proposition Reid would resign and Barton had the same view on this issue. Also an election had been held less than twelve months beforehand and now the only issue to take to electors was whether the Council was correct in its judgement. It was unrealistic to call an election. Consequently, Sir Frederick Darley agreed to the additional numbers, which pressured the Bill through the Upper House without amendment although actual government supporters were still in a minority.<sup>69</sup>

The last disruptive occasion occurred in September 1899 when Reid was desperately fighting for the survival of his government. The opposition had raised an issue regarding an unauthorised payment and achieved a successful vote of no-confidence. Reid asked for Parliament to be prorogued and the alleged payment to be investigated by judges. The governor refused the request as it was not considered to be an appropriate reason for such action. Then Reid submitted a request for dissolution based on three grounds. Firstly, he considered that the opposition was insincere in its no confidence vote and Labour members had been manipulated to vote against the government. If the vote was taken again it would be in favour of Reid. Secondly, the fate of Federation was still insecure as there were many enemies of the union. Lastly, the government needed to go to the people with an amended constitution for the colony to reflect the changes that would be brought about by federation. The governor refused the request as he was aware that the new Leader of the Opposition, Lyne, could form a government as he had the confidence of the Labour Party, Federation was not as insecure as suggested and it was too early for an election on the question of a new constitution. As a result of Lord Beauchamp's decision, Reid resigned and Lyne agreed to form a new government.<sup>70</sup> The governor was fortunate to have the counsel of the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, who had extensive experience in constitutional matters in this

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<sup>68</sup> Duff to Dibbs 27.7.1894, CO 201/617, ff. 5-10, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1891.

<sup>69</sup> Reid to Darley, 6.4.1899 and Darley to Chamberlain, 10.4.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 109-115 and 156-162, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899.

<sup>70</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 12.9.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 317-329, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899; G. Freudenberg, 'William Lygon, Earl Beauchamp (18 May 1899-30 April 1901)', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 386.

decade.<sup>71</sup> The Colonial Office expressed its approval of Beauchamp's handling of the matter.<sup>72</sup>

While the power of the governor was curtailed in domestic matters, he had responsibility to ensure good government was maintained in the colony as an essential feature of preserving British interests in this pre-Federation period. The formal obligation was fulfilled by scrutinizing all domestic legislation and giving assent to bills within his imperial instructions. Copies of all domestic legislation went to Britain, which could possibly result in disallowance of an act if a subject concerned should have been reserved.

The unsettled state of political power in this decade determined an important role for the governor to make sure there was continuity of sound administration. It implied that the governor's past experience in the processes of government was valuable background to interpretation of conventions when political confrontation occurred. The governors were also fortunate to receive counsel from the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley with his constitutional experience, throughout this period.

### **Governor as executive agent of the Crown**

The Governor of New South Wales was also the Governor of Norfolk Island and he had control of the island as a separate Crown Colony within the British Empire.

There was an uneasy feeling in the Colonial Office about activities in Norfolk Island during the 1880s and early 1890s. Unfortunately, an irregular shipping service made communication difficult with this Pacific island community over 900 miles from Sydney and the rugged coastal terrain that lacked a protected harbour also discouraged closer supervision.

After Lord Jersey became governor of New South Wales in January 1891 he was constantly engaged with incidents related to the islanders throughout his term of office. On the eve of his departure from the colony in February 1893, he wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, to flag some of the problems that should be conveyed to the next governor before he left England.

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<sup>71</sup> C. Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp, seventh Earl (1872-1938)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online edn, Australian National University, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070233b.htm> accessed 20.2.2009.

<sup>72</sup> Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 26.10.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 317-329, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899.

There was concern that moral standards of the people were degenerating due to intermarriage within this small isolated community. It was compounded by a general lack of respect for law enforcement as local authority had been in the hands of the Chief Magistrate, who was elected annually by the community. The office holder usually had no legal training and the governor had been informed that ‘the people prefer to elect someone who will not take his position too seriously’.<sup>73</sup> There was a critical need for a resident magistrate and policeman from outside the island to maintain law and order but there were no funds for such an arrangement. Also there were difficulties with recovery of debts and deterioration of buildings.<sup>74</sup>

Lord Jersey also raised issues that had not been resolved from visits to the island by Lord Augustus Loftus during May 1884 and Lord Carrington in November 1885. Loftus had been appalled at the deplorable state of agriculture, which he attributed to a lack of market and ‘a listless spirit of idleness and indifference’ of the population.<sup>75</sup> He sent a Commissioner, Wilkinson, to the island, who reported that only 150 acres of agricultural land had been cultivated out of 3567 acres allotted in free grants. Lord Jersey was concerned about confusion with these grants. Loftus had proposed future land sales at £3 per acre, however the islanders believed Lord Carrington had reversed this decision during his visit. There were applications for free grants received before the Loftus ban and others had developed properties without approval from the governor, which were still unresolved up to 1893. Lord Jersey had recommended all these sites be approved provided the land owners developed their properties within five years.<sup>76</sup> The situation was further complicated by unsatisfactory registration of land titles.

There were three stakeholders to be reconciled in the 1890s to avert the deterioration just described - Norfolk Island community, the British Government and the Governor of New South Wales.

Firstly, the inhabitants of Norfolk Island were descendents of HMS *Bounty* mutineers, their Tahitian wives and some other colonists. They had previously settled into a subsistence way of life on Pitcairn Island with religious guidance from the last remaining mutineer, John Adams. This apparent carefree life with the community managing their own affairs and no external

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<sup>73</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 2.2.1893, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 18-22, Ripon papers.

<sup>74</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 25.1.1896, CO 201/619, f. 369, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>75</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 25.1.1896, CO 201/619, f. 364.

<sup>76</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 2.2.1893, BL add. MSS 43560, ff. 18-22, Ripon papers.

interference appealed to ideas of a utopian existence in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain.<sup>77</sup> When this small island could no longer sustain its population growth, the British Government assisted resettlement of the 194 descendents to Norfolk Island in 1856.<sup>78</sup> Each family was provided with fifty acres of land and thereafter grants were made on marriage. The new arrivals were also given occupancy of the convict buildings and agricultural equipment.<sup>79</sup> They believed that Britain had ceded Norfolk Island to them for their continued seclusion.

Secondly, the British Government finalised plans to settle the Pitcairn Islanders on Norfolk Island after the convict settlement closed in 1855 as a move to deter French interest in this location.<sup>80</sup> Concurrent with the convict settlement, there had been changes to government responsibility for the island. It was attached to New South Wales until 1843 when it was annexed to Tasmania, known as Van Diemen's Land at the time, and then by Order-in-Council in 1856 it became a separate dependency under the British Crown.<sup>81</sup> Sir William Denison, Governor-General of the Australian Colonies and Governor of New South Wales in 1856 had been influential in the move of the *Bounty* descendents to Norfolk Island. He viewed the move as an 'experiment' in self government for the community and had an assurance from the Colonial Secretary that no outsiders would be allowed to settle on the island.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, Lord Jersey's private letter to Lord Ripon confirmed reports from Governors Loftus and Carrington in the 1880s about the declining state of affairs. The reputation of the Empire could be damaged if the British Government allowed the alleged 'evil practices' to continue unabated.

The third interest in the administration dilemma was the Governor of New South Wales who was also the Governor of Norfolk Island. As Norfolk Island had been declared 'a distinct and separate' settlement by Order-in-Council, the New South Wales Government had no concern in the management of island affairs.<sup>83</sup> It was the sole responsibility of the governor as the imperial representative of this Crown Colony and he had plenary powers under their constitution. Sir

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<sup>77</sup> J. Williams & L. Bataille, *Norfolk Island 1856-2006 Sesquicentenary Celebrations*, Studio Monarch, Norfolk Island, 2006, pp. 8-9.

<sup>78</sup> Williams & Bataille, *Norfolk Island 1856-2006 Sesquicentenary Celebrations*, pp. 8-12; R Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement: The First Hundred Years: The Pitcairn Era 1856-1956 and The Melanesian Mission 1866-1920*, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 2006, p. 56.

<sup>79</sup> Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement*, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> Williams & Bataille, *Norfolk Island 1856-2006 Sesquicentenary Celebrations*, pp. 5-11; Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement*, p. 46.

<sup>81</sup> Colonial Office confidential briefing paper, 25.1.1896, CO 201/619, f. 363, AJCP, ML PRO Reel 1894.

<sup>82</sup> Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>83</sup> Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement*, p. 50.

William Denison had exercised this imperial authority in 1857 when he enacted a new code that observed the law as it applied at Pitcairn with suitable adjustments to meet the new circumstances. In this situation the governor depended on the island executive to carry out his instructions and he had no other effective means to enforce the law for any infringements.<sup>84</sup>

Despite Lord Jersey's letter expressing concern in February 1893, there was little progress until Lord Hampden arrived in November 1895. In the meantime, the new governor, Sir Robert Duff, was rebuffed on three occasions when he asked the Colonial Office for financial assistance to organise institutional change.<sup>85</sup> It was not an option to induce the New South Wales Government to take over the administration. The Premier, Sir George Dibbs was quite hostile to the suggestion in 1894 as he considered the island as a 'white elephant'.<sup>86</sup>

Fortunately, Sir Robert was able to rearrange shipping costs to the island so that he could use the investment income from the meagre 'Norfolk Island Fund', accumulated from earlier English supporters and proceeds from sale of land to the Melanesian Mission and government livestock on the island.<sup>87</sup> He sent a commissioner to investigate and report on complaints emanating from the island. An essential part of this report recommended a British contribution of £200 a year for five years to subsidise appointment of a resident magistrate.<sup>88</sup> The Colonial Office rejection of this request and the death of Sir Robert Duff caused further delay.

In the interregnum, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, discovered irregularities in the payment of medical fees and school fees by some of the islanders and issued a proclamation that such persons could not vote in elections for the Chief Magistrate and Councillors.<sup>89</sup>

It became the task of the new Governor, Lord Hampden, to tighten the controls on the island activities. He had been briefed by the Colonial Office before he left England and clearly told to 'fix the problem'.<sup>90</sup> After an initial assessment of the situation, he informed the Colonial Office

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<sup>84</sup> Colonial Office confidential briefing paper, 25.1.1896, CO 201/619, f. 382, AJCP, ML PRO Reel 1894.

<sup>85</sup> Ripon to Duff, 12.5.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 568-573, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889.

Duff to Ripon, 2.12.1893, CO 201/614, ff. 344-349, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1889.

<sup>86</sup> Duff to Meade, 17.1.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 363-365, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>87</sup> Duff to Ripon, 15.10.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 403-418, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890; Nobbs, *Norfolk Island and its Third Settlement*, pp. 145 and 212.

<sup>88</sup> Duff to Ripon, 15.10.1894, CO 201/615, ff. 403-418, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1890.

<sup>89</sup> Darley to Chamberlain, 30.9.1895, CO 201/617, ff. 371-377, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1892.

<sup>90</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 21.8.1895, CO 201/618, ff. 702-712, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1893.

that Sir William Denison's experiment in self government with a simple code of regulations had failed and New South Wales should again be responsible for this territory. On this occasion there was no objection from the Premier, George Reid, for the colony to be involved, provided that the rights of the island land owners were preserved and the government could use the Norfolk Island Fund for administration purposes. The governor appointed another commission to investigate conditions on the island and requested £500 for preliminary expenses from the Colonial Office. This time there was no resistance to funding the expenditure.<sup>91</sup>

During February 1896, Commissioner Oliver visited Norfolk Island and conducted interviews and inspections to consider the issues that had arisen over recent years while a surveyor assessed the validity of the land grants. The commissioner required another election for the chief magistrate and councillors as the last occasion included persons with outstanding school and medical fees, which invalidated the result. The same candidates were returned in the new election.<sup>92</sup> It was probably a protest vote as the islanders considered it was their right to make laws which should not be vetoed by any outside source such as the governor of New South Wales. Oliver explained that they only had permission to occupy the island, which was still a possession of the British Empire. Other matters in the report included the moral condition of the community, the idle nature of the young men, non-payment of debts, deterioration of buildings, petty theft and destruction of property and being unable to obtain redress at law.<sup>93</sup>

The commissioners had recommended that the Imperial Government should make a cash payment £2,000, instead of an annual grant for five years, towards the deficiency on administration costs plus £1,000 for repairs to buildings.<sup>94</sup> Surprisingly, the Premier, George Reid, was happy if this contribution was limited to £1,000 for restoration of the historic buildings. This conciliatory move by the premier may have been intended to impress the Imperial Government as decisions were pending regarding the retention of the British naval station in Sydney and development of the Garden Island establishment, around this period.<sup>95</sup> It made Lord Hampden's task much easier when pressing the Colonial Office for final agreement on their assistance. The ideal arrangement would have been to annex Norfolk Island to New South Wales

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<sup>91</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 20.1.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 388-415, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>92</sup> Gaythorne Hardy to Adams, 6.1.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 420-421, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>93</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 19.3.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 461-493, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>94</sup> CO to Treasury, 7.10.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 547-566, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>95</sup> Trainor, *British Imperial and Australian Nationalism*, pp. 148-189.

but this entailed legislation in both the Imperial Parliament and the Colonial Legislature. Such a procedure would be time consuming and it was considered that the implementation of new controls were urgent. The alternative was an Imperial Order-in-Council covering ‘administration’ of Norfolk Island, which authorized the governor of New South Wales to issue a proclamation specifying new laws and regulations for the island. The annexation would be legislated at a later date by either New South Wales or the impending federal authority.<sup>96</sup> On this basis Lord Hampden travelled to Norfolk Island on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1896 and issued the Proclamation covering new laws and regulations that applied immediately. He also installed the new resident Chief Magistrate, Colonel Spalding, who accompanied the governor to the island.<sup>97</sup>

Lord Hampden was obviously satisfied with the outcome as he commented in a private letter to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, in January 1897, ‘I feel that I can now speak with confidence of the excellent results of the policy of which you were good enough to approve’.<sup>98</sup>

The Norfolk Island solution satisfied the governor and Colonial Office that law and order had been established but the islanders were left brooding about their long held belief that the island was ceded to them. The relief expressed by the governor suggests that a period of official complacency began and isolation of the community meant that further attention to their complaints would have a low priority for either the New South Wales governor or government.

## Conclusion

An overview of the three main strands of the governor’s official political role reveals the changing pattern of his authority in this decade. Firstly, he continued to perform the intelligence reporting on the state of affairs in the colony but his influence with resolution of issues had become less effective. This was emphasized by Lord Jersey’s efforts to mediate in the Broken Hill strike being rebuffed and Premier Dibbs direct handling of the banking crisis (apart from assent to legislation) and negotiations following the *Costa Rica* incident. These matters underline the erosion of vice-regal status when engaged with intermediary duties between the colony and

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<sup>96</sup> Law Officers to CO, 31.10.1896, CO 201/620, ff. 277-280, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1895; Law Officers to CO, 10.12.1896, CO 201/620, ff. 281-292, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1895; Norfolk Island Proclamation, 19.1.1897, CO 201/622, ff. 281-287, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1897.

<sup>97</sup> Hampden’s Proclamation on Norfolk Island, 7.11.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 606-613, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894; Hampden to Chamberlain, 28.11.1896, CO 201/619, ff. 614-623, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1894.

<sup>98</sup> Hampden to Chamberlain, 7.1.1897, CO 201/621, ff. 517-520, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1896.



Whitehall. The ability to by-pass the authority of the governor was assisted by improved telegraphic communication and the development of the Agent-General's office in London to directly confer with the British Government.

Secondly, the Constitutional Monarch's role became more prominent after 1891 when the advent of the Labour Party resulted in the break-up of the two-party discipline in parliamentary politics. As Labour strategy was to support the major party prepared to grant concessions in accordance with their policy, no government in this era was confident of surviving a no-confidence vote. Consequently, the governor's role as administrator of the constitution was critical as he contemplated requests for prorogation or dissolution of parliament in such disputes. The governor also needed to understand the changing political situation when he gave consideration to increased numbers in the Upper House. He had to ensure such decisions were based on public interest grounds rather than a political manoeuvre to unnecessarily swamp hostile resistance.

Finally, the governor had exercised complete executive control of Norfolk Island but it was probably a role that he was content to relinquish. The isolation of the community meant he had to depend on local inhabitants to administer the law, which they considered an invasion of their ownership rights. It was more likely that their activities would embarrass the governor rather than enhance his reputation in the eyes of the Colonial Office. As Lord Hampden had given instructions for a Commissioner to visit Norfolk Island within the first couple of weeks of his arrival in the Colony, it is apparent that he had strict instructions before he left home to sort out the issues. Obviously the comments in the despatch above indicate he was satisfied that the anomalous executive role had been resolved by the transfer of Norfolk Island administration to New South Wales. This optimistic view was going to be short-lived as occurrences early in the new century created further difficulties for the new governor.

Consequently, the governor's authority went through a period of reconstruction in the 1890s. On the one hand, he had less political influence in current affairs and his executive powers over Norfolk Island became aligned to his colonial responsibilities. On the other hand, his mediation in the role of Constitutional Monarch generated an enhanced value in this tentative political era of colonial government.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE PEOPLE 1891-1900

While the scope of the governor's political authority evolved in the course of the 1890s, the cultural role of governors as foci for expressions of allegiance to Queen and Empire also evolved – indeed expanded. This chapter will contend that the governors' cultural interaction with the people of the colony was in fact critical for the preservation of the office in this decade before federation. Colonial governors closely followed the trend towards 'welfare monarchy' noted by historians such as Frank Prochaska<sup>1</sup> as crucial to the adaption of the Crown in Britain itself over the late Victorian period.

There are three aspects of the vice-regal relationship with the people to be examined in this chapter. Firstly, it was important for the governor to keep in touch with the community to maintain the focus on loyalty to the Queen and unity within the Empire. Secondly, the vice-regal family should mirror the philanthropic endeavours of the Monarchy. Lastly, the governor had to adopt an impartial approach in his contact with all sections of the community.

#### **The Governor as symbol of imperial unity**

There was a strong belief in late nineteenth century Britain that 'The use of the Queen, in a dignified capacity, is incalculable'.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, one of the concerns of the British Government was the withdrawal of the Queen from public life in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. It was acknowledged that '[w]hen she appeared in public as head of state...statesmen were part of the ceremony and a little of the monarchical magic rubbed off on them'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, leading citizens of New South Wales would have been comfortable with the reflected eminence gained from such official occasions as the ceremonies to greet new governors in the 1890s.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Fontana/Collins, Glasgow, 1977, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 110.

Due to the frequency of vice-regal arrivals in this period, the government planners became more adept at staging the event. After ceremonial experience with the fourth governor in the decade, Lord Beauchamp, the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial related with satisfaction that, ‘no function of the kind has so far as we remember, been more successfully carried out or with more elaboration, and every citizen is entitled to congratulate himself upon the result’.<sup>4</sup> While it was disconcerting that these governors did not serve their full term of five or six years, each occasion renewed the visible link to the Crown and an opportunity for the people to demonstrate allegiance to their revered Queen Victoria.

The natural splendour of Sydney Harbour provided an excellent backdrop for a welcome to each governor. The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron had marshalled a small fleet of steam launches and sailing ships to greet Lord Hampden in 1895 and they braved threatening skies and a strong wind to escort the overseas vessel from the Heads to the berth at Athol Bight, Bradley’s Head.<sup>5</sup> On each occasion the Premier and Ministers came on board to greet the new imperial representative. Then it became part of the routine for governors to be ferried to the Man-of-War Steps and make an unofficial inspection of Government House, where they were greeted by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley and Lady Darley.<sup>6</sup>

Overcast weather conditions providentially lifted on each occasion for the official reception. The sunshine enhanced the scene of the white sails of pleasure craft and decorated vessels, crowded with spectators seeking a glimpse of the governor designate as he boarded the government launch and headed to his formal introduction to the colony. Boats from the men-of-war berthed at Farm Cove and a naval brigade formed a guard of honour channel to Prince’s Stairs, Circular Quay. (The Prince’s Stairs were in front of the Customs House but have since disappeared under the ferry terminals and broadwalk). The stairs were described in their day as ‘This somewhat insignificant landing stage which rejoiced in the high sounding title’, and had been refurbished specially for Lord Hampden to set foot in the Colony in 1895.<sup>7</sup> The harbour welcome gave an impressive first glimpse of the colony but mainly presented by those persons privileged to have access to waterborne craft. The next step was to give the general public the opportunity to express their feelings as the vice-regal party moved towards their residence.

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<sup>4</sup> *SMH*, 19.5.1899, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *SMH*, 16.1.1891, p. 5; 30.5.1893, p. 5; 22.11.1895, p. 4; 19.5.1899, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 5.

The official proceedings from the reception at Circular Quay to entry at Government House provided the opportunity for the citizens to see each succeeding governor. Newspaper reports estimated that up to 20,000 people crowded around the Quay to see the arrival of the Earl of Jersey in 1891 and Sir Robert Duff in 1893. These spectators were spread across vantage points at the Customs House, Paragon Hotel opposite, surrounding warehouses and on nearby vessels. Then there was a short transit for these two imperial representatives up Loftus Street and left into Bridge Street to Government House.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps organizers were concerned about crowd control or just wanted to give ordinary citizens a chance to see their new governor, as an extended route was adopted for Lord Hampden and Lord Beauchamp. A procession through the city was arranged that turned right from Loftus Street, through Macquarie Place to Bridge Street, into Pitt Street, across Martin Place to George Street as far as Park Street, and returned via College Street and Macquarie Street to Government House.<sup>9</sup> It was a festive scene which prevailed with street decorations, business premises providing their own welcome display and private houses contributing flags and bunting. On the last occasion, the procession passed the Post Office in Martin Place through a concourse set up with 50 flag poles, 25 each side and flags designed with Lord Beauchamp's Colours of white and red.<sup>10</sup> The streets were crowded with interested spectators that gave a lasting impression of friendship that the people of the colony wanted to convey to the imperial representative.

After each Swearing-in ceremony, the governor received addresses of welcome from several public bodies representing religious denominations and business organisations. The Federation movement was represented by the Australasian Federation League after 1892. These messages had already been submitted to Government House for preparation of an appropriate response. Then an oral presentation was made to the governor and he read the prepared reply. The messages had a stereotype theme of loyalty to the Crown and Empire as well as encouragement to the governor for the future of his appointment. Lord Hampden, particularly, broke away from this procedure with an occasional impromptu addendum on a subject like Federation.<sup>11</sup> The addresses may appear to have little value in the overall relationship between the office of governor and the colony, but these groups were representative of a large proportion of the

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<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 16.1.1891, p. 5; 30.5.1893, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 6; 17.5.1899, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *SMH*, 17.5.1899, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 6.

population and a powerful link for the bonding influence between Great Britain and the people of New South Wales.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* held an interview with each governor at the conclusion of this ceremony to ascertain his reaction to the welcome from the people and other matters of interest. Generally there was high praise for the organisation of the event and the warm welcome from the people. The governors stressed the reception was recognition of the allegiance to the Crown and not them personally. Sir Robert Duff emphasised the importance of protection provided by the British navy and how it demonstrated the strength of the Empire. 'It exemplified the extension of the spirit of loyalty and showed the Powers that 'The Greater Britain across the sea' was not a mere geographical expression but a factor'.<sup>12</sup> Lord Hampden concentrated his attention on the importance of federation to the people and their 'willingness to be citizens of United Australia within the British Empire'.<sup>13</sup> This aspect of federation within the Empire was an obvious direction that the governors wished to pursue.

On only one occasion did the reception of a governor become a subject of press controversy. Lord Beauchamp was determined to avoid contact with the press and refused to give interviews at intermediate ports on his progress to Sydney. All communications were to be conducted through his private secretary.<sup>14</sup> After his confirmation in Sydney, he was prevailed upon to give interviews as it was explained to him that this was an important feature of his communication with the people. He still limited the subjects that could be discussed.

It was probably just as well that he did not have interviews during his transit to Sydney. The initial contact at Albany through his Private Secretary, Cochran, was a public relations disaster. The press received an astounding message from the Governor to the people of New South Wales, which was an adaptation of a verse of Rudgard Kipling's 'The Song of the Cities':

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<sup>12</sup> *SMH*, 29.5.1893, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *SMH*, 18.5.1899, p. 5.

Greeting- Your Birthstain have you turned to good  
 Forcing strong wills perverse to steadfastness  
 The first flush of the tropics in your blood  
 And at your feet success – Beauchamp.<sup>15</sup>

The *Bulletin* exclaimed ‘What on earth could ever have induced the young Governor to thus ‘put his foot in it’ by leading off with so direct a reference to the One Forbidden Subject’. Lady Poore, wife of the Australian Station Commandant, commented in her book, *Recollections of an Admiral’s Wife 1903-1916*:

Unlike Lord Beauchamp, who had, one must suppose, left England to take up his appointment as Governor of NSW without realising that one does not allude to ‘birthstain’ in Australia. I never spoke of the old penal settlement days until the topic was introduced in the course of conversation by one of our friends.<sup>16</sup>

It was realised in Britain that ‘separation of the Monarch from the actual business of government has elevated her above party strife and made her a symbol of national unity’.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorials gave some patronizing advice in its columns to each governor on arrival that could achieve the same result. It told Governor Jersey in 1891 that he should be more involved with the social life than the political issues in the Colony.<sup>18</sup> The social aspect was also emphasized to Sir Robert Duff in 1893: ‘In everything that promotes the intellectual, moral, and even the material wellbeing of the community, the Governor is in a position of surpassing influence’.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Lord Hampden was advised in 1895 that ‘If it has long ceased to be the custom of Australasian Governors to take a personal part in the government of the colonies, it has become the fashion with them to take a citizen’s interest in all that makes for progress and prosperity’.<sup>20</sup> Earl Beauchamp was counselled in 1899 that ‘...of all the positions in which a direct political influence can be exerted the Governor’s office under institutions like ours is perhaps the least open to use in that way. But personal influence with the vice-regal prestige behind it has so often shown its value...’.<sup>21</sup> Social involvement would be the critical factor for measuring their success in office, according to the press commentators. The paradox of this

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<sup>15</sup> *Bulletin*, 20.5.1899, p. 10; G. Freudenberg, ‘William Lygon, Earl Beauchamp (18 May 1899-30 April 1901), in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 381.

<sup>16</sup> Lady Poore, *Recollections of an Admiral’s Wife, 1903-1916*, Smith Elder & Co, London, 1916, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> *SMH*, 16.1.1891, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> *SMH*, 29.5.1893, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1895, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *SMH*, 18.5.1899, p. 6.

relationship with community was that governors gained insight into the concerns of the people, which could be tactfully used for political purposes when presiding at Executive Council meetings and reviewing impending legislation with the power to reserve.

While ceremonial arrivals stimulated public interest with the links to the Mother Country, it was essential for the governor to maintain the imperial fervour within the community after arrival. The initiatives to achieve this goal appeared to follow an established pattern. In Sydney, there were official functions at suburban localities, recognition of important occasions, individual visits to community organisations, as well as support for charitable associations and fundraising efforts. Country visits were a limited package of all these events. A sample of these activities will demonstrate their importance to the well-being of the imperial connection.

A municipal visit in Sydney was frequently associated with a specific duty such as the official opening of a new building. Two examples highlight the activity carried out by all the governors. Firstly, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1895, Governor Hampden opened an extension to the Balmain Cottage Hospital.<sup>22</sup> The vice-regal party was escorted to the boundary of the municipality by a half squadron of Lancers where the Governor received the address of welcome from the Mayor of Balmain. The speech proudly mentioned that this was the third visit from a governor in the last ten years. Then a procession was formed of carriages carrying aldermen and prominent locals, with members of friendly societies, Masonic lodges and unions related to the hospital, marching in front of the conveyances. They proceeded through streets decorated with flags and bunting, two triumphal arches strung across the roads with welcome signage and a cheering crowd along the way. A guard of honour from the training ship, *Sobraon*, and local school cadets awaited them at the hospital. There was another address of welcome from the vice-president of the hospital and the governor performed the opening ceremony. He travelled back to his residence on a ferry secured for this purpose. Secondly, a similar welcome was enjoyed by Governor Beauchamp when he opened the new Town Hall at Botany on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1899.<sup>23</sup> The address of welcome disclosed that this was the first occasion that anyone in authority had officially shown interest in the suburb and the Governor's past involvement with municipal administration was warmly appreciated. He had been Mayor of Worcester at twenty-three years of age and a few

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<sup>22</sup> *SMH*, 8.3.1897, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> *SMH*, 14.7.1899, p. 6.

months after this Botany engagement he entertained the metropolitan mayors at a Government House lunch.<sup>24</sup>

Further opportunities for symbolic leadership were provided by the cycle of annual celebrations on such occasions as New Year's Day, Anniversary Day (Australia Day) and Queen's Birthday. Large annual crowds (13,000 to 20,000) attended the Highland Gathering to mark the start of another year, which was described as 'a gorgeous display of kilts, hose, plaids, bonnets, naked knees, tartan, heather, thistles and Macs'.<sup>25</sup> Each governor was patron and attended their luncheon. There was considerable disappointment when Sir Robert Duff did not appear for the 1894 occasion.<sup>26</sup> The luncheon toast to the Governor was met with some hostility. The Chairman raised his glass: 'It is our duty as loyal subjects of her Majesty ... to drink the health of his Excellency the Governor of the Colony (Voices: 'He ought to be here'; 'Where is he?'). I regret that the other engagements of his Excellency do not permit of his being here on this occasion, and therefore, for the first time in five and twenty years it is our duty to drink the health of the Governor in his absence'. The toast was drunk in silence'.

It may have been because of illness.<sup>27</sup> Sir Robert complained to Lord Ripon, Colonial Secretary, in March (two months later) that 'I had not been well for some little time, and my doctor advised me to take advantage of an offer the Admiral made me to take to the sea for a few days'.<sup>28</sup> He died from a liver complaint a year later, which suggests possible earlier periods of incapacity that he did not disclose to the public.<sup>29</sup>

The Regatta was the major event for Anniversary Day covering rowing and sailing races on the Harbour. The governor was patron and in 1896 Lord Hampden followed the usual pattern of vice-regal involvement by lunching with the organizers on the Flagship, *Ormuz* and then departing for the afternoon attractions of races and cricket.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 22.9.1899, p. 4; C. Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp, seventh Earl (1872-1938)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, Australian National University, 2006. <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070233b.htm> accessed 8.10.2010.

<sup>25</sup> *Bulletin*, 11.1.1896, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> *SMH*, 2.1.1894, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *SMH*, 2.1.1894, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Duff to Ripon, 26.3.1894, BL Add. MSS 43560, ff. 33-36, Ripon papers.

<sup>29</sup> *SMH*, 15.3.1895, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *SMH*, 28.1.1896, p. 5.



The Queen's Birthday was recognised by formal functions such as the Review in 1896 at Centennial Park where the governor, as commander-in-chief, took the salute on the march past of approximately 2,000 troops from various units. In the evening there was an official Queen's Birthday dinner held at Government House with an extensive guest list of distinguished citizens that included the Chief Justice, Premier, Cabinet Ministers, Leaders of both Houses, Religious Leaders, Military and Naval Commandants, and other prominent officials.<sup>31</sup> These holiday commemorations were well attended and gave audiences an appreciation of some aspects of the formal role played by the governors.

The Jubilee celebrations for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1897 allowed Lord Hampden a particular opportunity to emphasise the close connection with the Mother Country and its imperial heritage. Although the *Bulletin* could not see how the celebration was justified for 'a lady whom it never saw has sat down hard on a throne or anything else for an unusually long period'<sup>32</sup>, nevertheless, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that '...the city streets were thronged with sightseers, and great enthusiasm prevailed...' on the day.<sup>33</sup> A crowd of several thousands watched the Review at noon when the Governor took the salute from about 4,000 troops at Centennial Park. In the evening, the Governor invited about 1,500 guests to the gardens of Government House to watch a fireworks display from Fort Denison<sup>34</sup> It was the finale to the celebrations with the city and harbour presenting a jubilant atmosphere at night as the new electric lighting produced 'illuminations of great brilliancy' and the battery at Dawes Point boomed out a sixty gun salute.<sup>35</sup> The Editorial of the *Sydney Morning Herald* proudly proclaimed, 'The chief result of the commemoration is the proof it has afforded that whatever may be the differences of class and party, in the sentiment of common citizenship of a great Empire we are one and undivided'.<sup>36</sup>

At more local level, a rather belated recognition of the Jubilee occurred when Governor Hampden visited Ryde on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1897. The citizens of the district had subscribed to a fund for a drinking fountain to celebrate the occasion and the Governor performed the unveiling. He praised their loyalty and felt that the fountain would 'serve to perpetuate in the minds of the people of the

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<sup>31</sup> *SMH*, 26.5.1896, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Bulletin*, 19.6.1897, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> *SMH*, 23.6.1897, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *SMH*, 22.6.1897, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *SMH*, 23.6.1897, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *SMH*, 23.6.1897, p. 4.

borough the sentiment of attachment to the name of her Gracious Majesty'.<sup>37</sup> After this ceremony the party adjourned to the local St. Ann's school hall where Governor Hampden responded to a toast with a lengthy speech about a range of subjects, which included a veiled criticism on the slow progress towards federation, pointing out that 'so long as it is treated as an academic question only, so long will it be like a ship at sea – that is without steersman or rudder, liable to every wave that may come against it'.<sup>38</sup>

All the governors in the 1890s performed the official opening of the Sydney Royal Agricultural Society Show in March or April. It provided another occasion for the vice-regal representative to be observed by large crowds attending the most important day of the show calendar. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, officiated on three occasions during the interregnum that occurred between each vice-regal appointment in the decade.<sup>39</sup> The most notable year was 1896 when Lord Hampden took particular interest in attending on four occasions.<sup>40</sup> Naturally the Members of the Council were delighted with the official presence and Lord Hampden gained a reputation for being an agricultural expert. The Governor and his family also gained some additional recognition from their portraits being the focal point of a photography show exhibit by Crown Studio that year. He opened the show on the following two years. The Lieutenant-Governor had to substitute in 1900 when Lord Beauchamp was in mourning for the death of his brother in the South African war.<sup>41</sup>

There were a number of smaller shows that had vice-regal support in Sydney. While the Royal Agricultural Society catered for all aspects of the rural scene, a more focused group was the New South Wales Sheepbreeders Association. Governors regularly opened their conferences and exhibitions. Lord Hampden invited the leading members to dinner at Government House in 1896.<sup>42</sup> In 1899 the Association applied for the title of 'Royal' to be prefixed to their name. It caused quite a flutter in the Colonial Office as they were concerned about the organisation's standards. The Association pointed out that they represented 200 members, 14,000 sheepbreeders and 40 million sheep. This was not good enough and the governor was advised that the request

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<sup>37</sup> *SMH*, 1.11.1897, p. 3. The assistance of the Ryde City Council Librarian is appreciated in locating this historical feature at the junction of Blaxland and Victoria Roads, Ryde.

<sup>38</sup> *SMH*, 1.11.1897, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> *SMH*, 30.3.1893, p. 4; 12.4.1895, p. 4; 30.3.1899, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> *SMH*, 6.4.1896, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *SMH*, 4.4.1900, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 30.4.1896, p. 4.

was declined as the Royal Agricultural Society already represented the industry under the privileged title.<sup>43</sup> Other small floral shows like Chrysanthemum, Rose and Spring Flower Exhibitions were usually opened by the governor's wife.

It is evident that the governors wanted to be associated with the future potential of the colony, supporting both structural growth and educational standards. Colonial progress was celebrated by reliance on governors to officially launch new developments, for example, Lord Jersey started water supply systems at Penrith<sup>44</sup> and Richmond,<sup>45</sup> while Sir Robert Duff seemed to specialize in railway extensions,<sup>46</sup> and Lord Hampden opened the Hawkesbury Agricultural College<sup>47</sup> following Lord Jersey laying the foundation stone for this institution.<sup>48</sup> Educational interest was mainly associated with distribution of prizes at, for example, Fort Street Model Public School,<sup>49</sup> Church of England Grammar Schools for Boys and Girls,<sup>50</sup> Technical College,<sup>51</sup> and Scots College.<sup>52</sup> There was a close association with King's School, Parramatta, and every governor from 1832 to Federation addressed the students at various functions.<sup>53</sup> Lord Beauchamp officially opened a new wing at the school to be used as a school dormitory. The Headmaster assured the Governor of '...the school's attachment and loyalty to the throne when he stated that the old school was represented in South Africa by 40 of the old boys'.<sup>54</sup>

Vice-regal patronage also extended, though rather fitfully, to encouragement of the fine arts. Lord Beauchamp followed the usual practice of governors at the time and brought some of his art collection from England. It consisted of '30 pictures, some Oriental armour, a number of agates, some of my best books and also some specimens of illuminations which were executed by Monks who lived many generations ago', as he disclosed in an interview on his arrival.<sup>55</sup> He readily shared his interest and displayed the treasures at a Government House 'at home' reception for

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<sup>43</sup> Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 12.10.1899, CO 201.625, ff. 351-355, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899.

<sup>44</sup> *SMH*, 12.2.1891, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *SMH*, 27.9.1892, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> *SMH*, 2.6.1893, p. 7, North Kiama to Nowra; 12.9.1893, p. 3, Cootamundra to Temora; 18.12.1893, p. 4, Parkes to Forbes.

<sup>47</sup> *SMH*, 15.4.1896, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *SMH*, 9.4.1891, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *SMH*, 9.10.1891, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *SMH*, 21.6.1898, p. 4; 8.8.1899, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *SMH*, 5.4.1898, p. 4; 21.5.1900, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *SMH*, 10.12.1895, p. 5; 9.12.1899, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> *SMH*, 19.6.1896, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> *SMH*, 25.6.1900, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *SMH*, 19.5.1899, p. 5.

120 members of the Society of Artists.<sup>56</sup> Also he loaned ‘a unique and beautiful collection of old and new books’ to the National Art Gallery for a two month public exhibition.<sup>57</sup>

On a more urgent symbolic note, governors were expected to raise morale in moments of military need. Soon after Lord Beauchamp had taken up residence in Sydney the tensions in South Africa over the rights of Uitlanders escalated into war with the Boer population of Transvaal.<sup>58</sup> As the Governor was Honorary Colonel-in-Chief of the Australian Horse Contingent,<sup>59</sup> he committed himself to a close association with the troops. He visited the district camps at Mudgee, Gundagai and Gunnedah to understand the training conditions and at the first location he joined in the evening concert and slept at the camp site.<sup>60</sup> He inspected various contingents prior to their departure for South Africa and checked on troop ships’ accommodation.<sup>61</sup> On the home front various patriotic funds were formed by prominent ladies such as the Mayoress of Sydney and Lady Darley, wife of the Chief Justice.<sup>62</sup> The Governor attended some of these fund raising events.<sup>63</sup> Subsequently, the troop ships were returning with the casualties of the campaign, soldiers disabled with war wounds or recovering from disease, which revealed the depressing aspect of preserving the glory of the Empire.<sup>64</sup> Lord Beauchamp visited the ships and talked to the soldiers about the conflict and their injuries.<sup>65</sup> The war touched the lives of many people, including the Governor whose brother, E.H. Lygon, was killed in action<sup>66</sup> and Admiral Pearson, Commandant of the Australian Station, who lost his son from typhoid fever.<sup>67</sup> Lord Beauchamp while in mourning cancelled several subsequent engagements including (as noted) his opening of the Agricultural Show<sup>68</sup> and the ball at Government House.<sup>69</sup>

It was a recognised palace strategy in Britain that Royal tours to cities outside London should be an important feature to entrench loyalty to the Monarchy. The Queen and Prince Albert had

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<sup>56</sup> *SMH*, 20.6.1899, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *SMH*, 23.8.1900, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> C. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2002, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> *SMH*, 5.6.1899, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> *SMH*, 31.8.1899, p. 6, Mudgee; 12.10.1899, p. 4, Gundagai; 15.11.1899, p. 6, Gunnedah.

<sup>61</sup> *SMH*, 1.11.1899, p. 6; 28.12.1899, p. 4; 17.3.1900, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> *SMH*, 8.12.1899, p. 4; 21.2.1900, p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> *SMH*, 20.3.1900, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>65</sup> *SMH*, 30.5.1900, p. 8; 29.6.1900, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *SMH*, 26.3.1900, p. 8; Freudenberg, ‘Beauchamp’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 387-388.

<sup>67</sup> *SMH*, 3.3.1900, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *SMH*, 4.4.1900, p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> *SMH*, 20.3.1900, p. 4.

carried out several successful programs in the peak years of their marriage, around the 1850s, with huge crowds celebrating these occasions.<sup>70</sup> In the same way, country engagements in New South Wales ensured that the loyalty message was spread across a broad audience who normally missed the personal association with the Queen's representative. As time permitted, these visits included inspections of local industries, visits to farming and grazing properties and various functions in the towns. It was significant that a large number of the tours entailed the opening of agricultural shows. These rural occasions provided an excellent opportunity for the governor to be associated with large numbers of people, many travelling from miles around to attend the annual event.<sup>71</sup> A toast to Lord Hampden on his Grafton visit confirmed, '...such a visit had the very useful effect of stimulating the loyalty of the people to the Empire to which they belong'.<sup>72</sup>

The basic mission of these country visits was to strengthen ties with the Monarchy but the message gradually widened to include support for other emerging challenges such as impending federation and the war in South Africa. It was only a casual comment about federation in the early years. Lord Jersey maintained a strenuous country program of visiting a district almost every second or third month, travelling to far west centres of Broken Hill and Bourke as well as Grafton in the north and south to towns close to the Victorian border. During his visit to Albury in 1891, he concentrated on the value of defence throughout the Empire by drawing attention to the recent arrival of cruisers in Sydney Harbour. There was also a passing reference to Albury as having 'a still more significant role in the coming decade' – perhaps the Governor was boosting the locals enthusiasm for the city to be the future national capital as the outcome of the Australasian Convention for Federation held earlier in that year.<sup>73</sup>

Sir Robert Duff made an extensive tour of Broken Hill in October 1893<sup>74</sup> and a visit to Newcastle on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1894.<sup>75</sup> Federation was not a prominent feature in these engagements. Apart from some isolated country trips for special occasions, he confined his activities to Sydney. Perhaps ill health restricted his movements. It is noticeable that Lady Duff was involved in numerous reported functions during the later months of his term.

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<sup>70</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, pp. 87-89.

<sup>71</sup> *SMH*, 7.4.1892, p. 5, Bathurst; 16.3.1894, p. 4, Newcastle; 28.4.1896, p. 4, Grafton; 21.6.1900, p. 7, Tweed.

<sup>72</sup> *SMH*, 30.4.1896, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *SMH*, 10.9.1891, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> *SMH*, 30.10.1893, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> *SMH*, 16.3.1893, p. 5.

It was surprising that Lord Hampden did not carry out many country ventures as his background included sheep production in England.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps the takeover of Norfolk Island administration in 1895,<sup>77</sup> Lady Hampden's nine month visit to England in 1896-97,<sup>78</sup> as well as Queen's Jubilee preparations in 1897,<sup>79</sup> placed more local pressures on him. In April/May 1896, he had a busy three week period in the country opening rural shows at Bathurst<sup>80</sup> and Maitland<sup>81</sup> as well as an arduous eleven day tour of the Grafton district with his daughters, Margaret and Alice.<sup>82</sup> They travelled by steamer to the region, making several stops at settlements along the Clarence River to be greeted by enthusiastic crowds and official addresses of welcome. While governors were not supposed to indulge in political controversy, Lord Hampden was probably close to being reprimanded for his Federation speech on the last night at a banquet in the Grafton School of Arts. He was capturing his audience's attention with statements such as 'a great deal has been done in the opposite direction to federation' – 'There had been agitation for the division of North from South Queensland' – 'It was absolutely absurd to create a fresh judiciary,...'. He attacked the disjointed national railway systems and recommended one Governor for Australia after Federation. One of Hampden's concluding statements set the challenge: 'This was one of those opportunities that offered themselves but seldom to statesmen, and it ought to be seized with boldness and courage'.<sup>83</sup> The Governor and suite had a closer look at the countryside by riding horseback to Glen Innes and then to Sydney by train.<sup>84</sup>

The *Bulletin* reported an incident from Glen Innes that underlined the importance of the governor creating good public relations. The town was making a great fuss about a visit of the English cricket team that included signage near the ground claiming 'New England welcomes Old England'. The locals were upset about a ball given in the evening when the 'distinguished visitors refused to take part in the dancing, and declined to be introduced to any of the ladies present'. 'The Glen Innes people are comparing this conduct with that of Gov. Hampden, who, when he

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<sup>76</sup> *SMH*, 17.4.1896, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> *SMH*, 27.11.1896, p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> *SMH*, 10.6.1897, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> *SMH*, 22.6.1897, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *SMH*, 17.4.1896, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> *SMH*, 24.4.1896, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> *SMH*, 28.4.1896, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> *SMH*, 1.5.1896, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> *SMH*, 1.5.1896, p. 8.

visited the district about a year ago, not only attended with a large party the ball given in his honour, but took part in the dancing and made himself agreeable in every possible way'.<sup>85</sup>

While Lord Beauchamp made the usual complimentary responses to addresses of welcome on his country tours, a typical comment at a Moree banquet suggests the flippant style of humour he used to amuse his audience: 'If I am to confine myself to an uninteresting subject, such as that of the Governor of New South Wales, you will allow me to say that I came out from Sydney last evening in the hope of spending a little holiday. That little holiday has already meant a public breakfast, a public dinner, receiving and responding to four addresses, the making of one speech already, and the obligation to make another in a few minutes...'<sup>86</sup> The *Bulletin* also covered this 'peaceable holiday jaunt: But lo! at every railway station His Ex. fell into the arms of Mayors and Mayoresses ...and was showered with addresses that commenced tremulously, 'Y'hexcellency and suet, we 'aving come ere to bid yous welcome' and continued in a corresponding strain'.<sup>87</sup>

Lord Beauchamp gained a reputation for his consuming enquiries into the local industries and the people involved. He studied the mechanics of artesian bores on his visit to Moree and Narrabri,<sup>88</sup> inspected mines and travelled through a duststorm (locally called a 'darling shower') during his tour of Cobar, Wilcannia and Broken Hill,<sup>89</sup> and was impressed with the mechanical equipment used for sheep shearing at Bourke.<sup>90</sup> On his outward journey to Bourke, he walked from the last train station but one, a distance of three miles, and arrived in the town an hour after the mail train, so that he could appreciate the condition of the countryside in the drought.<sup>91</sup>

One would hardly expect that the visit to Cobar could have created an international incident but Lord Beauchamp managed to achieve the impossible. 'He offended the French colonists by condemning the Dreyfus trial in France and expressing pride in being an Englishman not a Frenchman'.<sup>92</sup> An internal Colonial Office memorandum to Mr. Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, advised that the French Consul General in Sydney had reported the matter to the

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<sup>85</sup> *Bulletin*, 4.12.1897, p. 10.

<sup>86</sup> *SMH*, 7.7.1899, pp. 5-6.

<sup>87</sup> *Bulletin*, 15.7.1899, p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> *SMH*, 7.7.1899, pp. 5-6.

<sup>89</sup> *SMH*, 25.9.1899, p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> *SMH*, 21.10.1899, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> *SMH*, 21.10.1899, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> Hazlehurst, 'Beauchamp', *ADB*; Freudenberg, 'Beauchamp', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 388.

French Government.<sup>93</sup> There were meetings between the French Ambassador and the Foreign Office to resolve the situation and demands for Beauchamp to give a public explanation. Unofficially, it was not considered that the matter was of great import, but a most inopportune event as the British and French Governments were confidentially improving relations after many years of friction between these two nations. Lord Beauchamp may have been unpredictable at times but was also well regarded. As the Chairman at the 1900 Official Luncheon of the Sydney Royal Agricultural Show said, 'During his Excellency's term of office in the Colony he had endeavoured to make himself acquainted with its resources and had travelled through it, thereby obtaining his knowledge in the best way'.<sup>94</sup>

As the governors had limited political authority, it was important that their social contact engendered the spirit of Britishness, already inherent in the colonial people. The wide range of events described in the preceding pages reveal how loyalty to the Monarchy and strength of the Empire were woven into the fabric of their interaction with the people. As the decade progressed, a further message on Federation within the Empire became a dominant topic. It implied a high degree of anxiety in Britain that the federated union had the potential to over-run into ideas of independence. Consequently, this process of building a relationship with the people, both metropolitan and country, provided the visible link to the homeland and a feeling of being part of a large family.

### **Vice-regal family philanthropy**

Philanthropy took many forms for relief from distress in the nineteenth century when state institutions were not dominant in welfare assistance. In Britain, '[t]he Monarch's support for charitable campaigns promoted social harmony while creating allegiance to the Crown'.<sup>95</sup> Correspondingly, the vice-regal family in New South Wales gave sympathetic help to a variety of charities to alleviate distress of less fortunate citizens in the community. When the governor granted his patronage, it conferred a sense of respectability and social standing to a charitable body that persuaded prominent citizens to associate their name and offer their organisational ability.

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<sup>93</sup> Internal Colonial Office report to Chamberlain, 6.12.1899, CO 201/626, ff. 442-454, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1900.

<sup>94</sup> *SMH*, 13.4.1900, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 86.



As part of vice-regal philanthropic endeavours governors and their families gave their patronage to a number of relief organisations as typified by the following four bodies. There was the Boys' Brigade who took boys off the streets and provided education and recreation to assist them to become responsible and disciplined citizens.<sup>96</sup> A highlight for the boys was a visit to Government House like Lord Hampden's invitation in October 1896, when the grounds were invaded by 200 boys enjoying games of cricket, competitive foot races and other activities followed by light refreshments.<sup>97</sup> Each governor provided patronage for a ball to assist the Brigade's struggling finances. In 1899, Lord Beauchamp attended along with 450 to 500 people at Paddington Town Hall with visible support from the Chief Justice, the Mayor and Army Commandant with partners and several army officers in uniform.<sup>98</sup>

Two women's organisations were prominent receivers of vice-regal support. Firstly, the Girls' Friendly Society providing cheap lodgings and a home for girls out of work and finding new places for them.<sup>99</sup> The Society was particularly useful for assisting young women who arrived on immigrant ships and had no means of support in the colony.<sup>100</sup> Lord Beauchamp's, sister, Lady Mary Lygon, was the patron of the club and their means of fund raising was mainly by fetes and sale-of-work stalls.<sup>101</sup> The club had strong socialite backing as revealed by these fetes such as the one held in the gardens of Colonel and Mrs. Roberts, Greenoakes, Darling Point. On this occasion it was favoured with the attendance of Lady Bertha Wilbraham, a member of the governor's suite, who was an associate of the Society in England, and had contributed considerable time and effort to support the organisation while in Sydney.<sup>102</sup> Secondly, there was the Working and Factory Girls' Club who provided assistance for girls and women in distress with introductions to employment, classes and cheap meals.<sup>103</sup> Patronage over the decade was secured from the governor's wife (or sister in the case of Lady Mary Lygon) and fund raising tended to be organized through fetes and balls.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *SMH*, 19.11.1898, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> *SMH*, 28.10.1896, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> *SMH*, 19.7.1899, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> *SMH*, 1.9.1900, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> C. O'Neill, *A Girl at Government House: an English Girl's reminiscences: 'below stairs' in Colonial Australia*, O'Neill Publishers, South Yarra, 1982, p. 26.

<sup>101</sup> *SMH*, 29.4.1896, p. 5; 18.10.1898, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> *SMH*, 30.8.1900, p. 6.

<sup>103</sup> *SMH*, 11.7.1899, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> *SMH*, 14.9.1893, p. 3; 16.5.1898, p. 4.

The fourth body was the National Shipwreck Relief Society which assisted widows and seamen in distress after an incident involving colonial vessels and awarded medals for bravery in sea rescues.<sup>105</sup> All the governors bestowed patronage on this organisation that boasted it was well funded to meet catastrophes. The annual report for 1896 disclosed applications from sixteen widows and thirty-two distressed seamen but when the Society celebrated their twenty-first year of operations in 1898, the number of widows had climbed to twenty-seven and an undisclosed number of distressed seamen. The governor addressed the audience after the annual report and the governor's wife presented the bravery medals.<sup>106</sup> The *Bulletin* was critical of the committee's entertainment indulgences, particularly the 1904 occasion to greet the Governor-General, when it also stressed that 'the backbone of the 'Royal Shipwreck' is several large endowments which were bestowed on it for the aid of distressed sailors, and not to be dissipated in tawdry medals'.<sup>107</sup>

Apart from the above examples, the vice-regal families were engaged in a wide range of philanthropic undertakings. The names of the institutions are self-explanatory. They included Sydney Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital, St. John Ambulance, City Mission, City Night Refuge, Mission to Seamen, St. Martha's Industrial Home, Deaf and Blind Institute, Sydney Sailors Home, Freemasons Benevolent Institution. The governor granted patronage to these organisations and became involved in various functions such as annual meetings, laying foundation stones, opening new buildings or attending balls to provide financial aid. The wives (sister for Lord Beauchamp) supported charity fund-raising with activities such as bazaars and sale-of-work stalls. On occasions it became the responsibility of a family member, like Lord Hampden's daughter, Mrs. Margaret Ferguson who opened the Methodist Bazaar<sup>108</sup> and Roman Catholic Bazaar<sup>109</sup> when the Viscountess was on a visit to England for nine months from June 1897.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *SMH*, 15.12.1896, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> *SMH*, 15.12.1896, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Bulletin*, 18.8.1904, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> *SMH*, 3.9.1897, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> *SMH*, 9.10.1897, p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> *SMH*, 18.6.1897, p. 4.

The wife of each governor (including Lord Beauchamp's sister, Lady Mary Lygon) achieved individual recognition by taking the initiative to introduce new programs for the benefit of the community.

Lady Jersey applied her poetic gifts to the task. On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1891, the Minister for Education, Joseph Carruthers, asked her to compose a few verses for Arbor Day, which was celebrated by planting trees at schools. She sent him a cantata of about 40 lines, twelve days later with an apology for the delay. The General Chorus gives the flavour for the occasion:

Rise for the morning is bright in the sky!  
 To plant for the future we call;  
 The voices of children ring clear and high,  
 And hope is the message to all.  
 For this is our day – it is Arbor Day  
 In hope we work – in hope we play,  
 And think how a future far away  
 Shall joy in the deed we do today.<sup>111</sup>

She was very pleased that it was put to music and sung by children at public schools on the appropriate occasion. She also arranged for a copy to be sent to the Queen. Lady Jersey's interest in the welfare of children also included the New South Wales section of the Australian Home Reading Union.<sup>112</sup> On her return to England she became the President of the Children's Happy Evenings Association.<sup>113</sup>

Lady Duff called a meeting at Government House to consider the promotion of silk culture in the Colony.<sup>114</sup> There are no further reports on the subject so it may have lapsed due to her early departure.

Lady Hampden followed the example of Queen's Cousin, Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck's enthusiastic work for the British Needlework Guild<sup>115</sup> and launched a similar organisation in Sydney, to make 'useful articles of clothing for men, women and children for distribution

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<sup>111</sup> Lady Jersey to Carruthers, 12.5.1891, 24.5.1891, ML MSS 1638, vol.20/1, ff. 139-158, Carruthers papers.

<sup>112</sup> *SMH*, 28.3.1892, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> *SMH*, 10.6.1899, p. 7.

<sup>114</sup> *SMH*, 28.7.1893, p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, pp. 116-117.

amongst the poor'.<sup>116</sup> Each member was required to prepare two garments a year and the collection was distributed through parishes after display to members at Government House.<sup>117</sup> The London Guild reported that 55,000 articles had been distributed to 303 charitable institutions in 1898.<sup>118</sup> Lady Mary Lygon opened the third annual exhibition in 1899 when 4,321 articles had been produced.<sup>119</sup>

Lady Mary Lygon hosted several musical occasions at Government House and just prior to her departure from the Colony, she arranged a Schools' Musical Competition. It was held over three days in September 1900 with Lady Mary attending each day. She also accompanied Lord Beauchamp to their concert on completion of the event.<sup>120</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial praised her on the day of departure; 'Not the least of her public services was her generous offer to guarantee the expense of the Schools' Musical Competition in the Town Hall last week'.<sup>121</sup>

Philanthropy provided a value-added feature to governorship beyond the executive role that was sympathetic to distressed areas of the community and also benefited the cultural aspirations of some social elites. The presence of imperial patronage and active benevolence demonstrated a caring vice-regal role and was possibly a contributing factor to the public apathy towards republicanism in the late nineteenth century. It also enabled women in the upper and middle classes who supported these causes to make a valuable contribution to society when they were excluded from political careers.

### **Vice-regal impartiality and the limits of cultural unity**

Impartiality was not just an attribute of the governor's character restricted to the handling of political controversy. A governor had to be seen as being fair-minded in his association with all sections of the community. In this era when sectarian animosity was close to the surface in public life, the governor had to use his discretion about participation in activities where there was any perception of religious prejudice. This required considerable tact, due to two cultural circumstances.

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<sup>116</sup> *SMH*, 21.5.1898, p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> *SMH*, 10.12.1898, p. 8.

<sup>118</sup> *SMH*, 1.4.1899, p. 7.

<sup>119</sup> *SMH*, 24.6.1899, p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> *SMH*, 4.9.1900, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> *SMH*, 12.9.1900, p. 6.

The first was that it was taken for granted in the colony that the governor would be Anglican as appropriate to the predominant religion in Britain and about forty-five per cent of the New South Wales population during the 1890s. Friction arose mainly from tension between majority Protestants and Roman Catholics who made up around twenty-five per cent of the colonists.<sup>122</sup> A large proportion of Catholics were Irish immigrants from their once famine stricken homeland or descendants from the convict era and averse to British rule in Ireland. And, while the case for assuming united Australian-Irish opposition to Empire can be overstated,<sup>123</sup> there is no doubt that, under the leadership of Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney (1884-1911), the relationship between Catholics and local Protestants was a combative one.

The second circumstance requiring tactful recognition was the fact that religious organisation overlapped with a variety of other social networks, some of them linked with the world of politics.<sup>124</sup> Among them stood both the masonic and temperance movements.

Temperance became a major issue in the 1890s with both Protestant and Catholic leaders giving support - though the more militant wing of the movement was Protestant dominated. Anglican clergyman, Canon F.B. Boyce founded the Local Option League in 1882 (later became Temperance Alliance) to promote temperance.<sup>125</sup> The League brought together the Anglican, Congregationalist, Methodists and Presbyterian Churches with groups like the 'Band of Hope, the Blue Ribbon Army, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Rechabites, the Sons of Temperance and the Good Templars', to support this cause.<sup>126</sup> This movement clashed with Lord Hampden in 1895 during an address of welcome on his arrival in the Colony. They sought his sympathy with the aims of their movement but the governor replied:

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<sup>122</sup> R. Broome, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: Protestant Christianity in New South Wales Society 1900-1914*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, Qld., 1980, p. 166.

<sup>123</sup> P. O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, NSW, 1987, p. 163.

<sup>124</sup> M. Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, p. 151.

<sup>125</sup> Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, p. 147.

<sup>126</sup> J.D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1972, p. 50.

Each of us, in our individual capacity, must do the best we can to further the cause. I myself am not a total abstainer – I take stimulants moderately; and I may add that my own personal opinion is that the man who takes stimulants moderately sets a good example to his fellow men, as well as he who take no stimulants at all.<sup>127</sup>

The league kept a critical eye on the governor. Over two years later, they ‘respectfully suggested’ that it was anomalous that he was patron of the Licensed Victuallers’ Association when he had declined to become involved with the Local Option League on the grounds that it was a political organisation. Governor Hampden felt obliged to release correspondence with the league, pointing out that he went to a picnic that benefited workers and not the association. Similarly, he was present at a sports day for workers supporting the Eight Hour Committee but did not attend their public banquet. He drew a distinction ‘between patronage of an association and patronage to an entertainment provided by it’.<sup>128</sup>

The *Bulletin* had joined in the temperance debate prior to Lord Hampden’s arrival with an attack on the founder of the Local Options League:

Rev FB Boyce, the well know cold tea crank, wrote to the *Telegraph* to point out that the £4m spent in one year for the NSW drink bill would allow a bright sovereign to be put on every one of the letters of the Bible. The *Bulletin* suggests that while the £4m remains on the Bible, it does no more good to anybody than a ‘dead possum on a fence’.<sup>129</sup>

Governors, as explained above, also had to expect controversy if they took ‘too close an interest’ in the denominational religious life of the colony, as was discovered by Lord Beauchamp. Religion was an important part of Lord Beauchamp’s life, as mentioned in chapter two, and the monastic items in his art collection described in the first section of this chapter. While other governors regularly attended St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Lord Beauchamp also closely associated himself with activities of the Anglican Church. In August 1900 there was an Intercolonial Synod in Sydney where the governor attended sessions, chaired meetings,<sup>130</sup> invited certain bishops to lunch<sup>131</sup> and some stayed as guests at Government House.<sup>132</sup> Lord Beauchamp also gave a garden

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<sup>127</sup> *SMH*, 30.11.1895, p. 3.

<sup>128</sup> *SMH*, 26.4.1898, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Bulletin*, 2.3.1895, p. 18.

<sup>130</sup> *SMH*, 30.8.1900, p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> *SMH*, 31.8.1900, p. 4.

<sup>132</sup> *SMH*, 25.8.1900, pp. 7 and 8.

party for all attending clergy and organizers<sup>133</sup> and he accepted invitations to other social functions.<sup>134</sup> On other occasions he visited country areas for Diocesan festivals such as Bathurst<sup>135</sup> and Goulburn.<sup>136</sup>

The tensions between Protestant and Roman Catholic hierarchy was reaching extreme levels in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Cardinal Moran was taunting Protestant leaders by raising an 1895 controversy over the South Sea Missionaries again in July 1899. He alleged that the missionaries in Samoa ‘...requested the British naval authorities, during the recent trouble, to shell the Catholic Presbytery and Church, where hundreds of old and infirm had taken refuge’.<sup>137</sup> While the charge was denied by Missionary Societies and British authorities, there was a large Protestant protest meeting at the Town Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> July to condemn the accusation. Cardinal Moran ignored requests to provide evidence to substantiate the allegation. This was the prevailing mood that would judge any actions of the governor to be in touch with other major religions.

Lord Beauchamp’s even-handed approach to other denominations upset the Protestant establishment when he attended the dedication of the Roman Catholic St. Mary’s Cathedral on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1900.<sup>138</sup> The Council of Churches submitted resolutions from a protest meeting at the Town Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1900 that condemned Governor Beauchamp’s attendance at the dedication of the Cathedral. Their wrath focused on two complaints. Firstly, the governor attended in his official Windsor uniform, ‘...thereby causing grave hurt and offence to Her Majesty’s loyal subjects of the Protestant faith and contrary to her Majesty’s sworn profession of faith...’<sup>139</sup> A despatch from Lord Beauchamp to the Colonial Office included a covering memorandum from Premier Lyne that pointed out in 1821 Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone of St. Mary’s Cathedral. In 1866 Governor Young attended a meeting to raise funds to rebuild St. Mary’s Cathedral. In 1894 Governor Duff attended a Requiem for memory of French President Carnot, and in 1899 Governor Hampden attended Requiem in memory of

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<sup>133</sup> *SMH*, 31.8.1900, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> *SMH*, 28.8.1900, p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> *SMH*, 27.5.1899, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup> *SMH*, 22.9.1900, p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 9.8.1899, CO 201/626, ff. 418-425, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1900.

<sup>138</sup> *SMH*, 10.9.1900, p. 4 and 1.11.1900 Editorial p. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 1.11.1900, CO 201/628, f. 381, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1901.

French President Faure. Consequently, it was not unusual to attend the Cathedral for official occasions.<sup>140</sup>

Secondly, Governor Beauchamp was accused of being present at the Cathedral dedication Mass and by his silence did not object to visiting New Zealand Archbishop Redwood including a lengthy denunciation of Protestantism.<sup>141</sup> The charge against the governor was deflated when it was discovered that there were two dedication speeches. Lord Beauchamp heard the version that omitted the offending statement. The full text was issued to the press and caused uproar in the Protestant community. Fortunately, Lord Beauchamp was accompanied by the Vice-President of the Executive Council who vouched for the edited account at the Mass. The *Bulletin* observed: 'The first practical outcome of Archbishop Redwood's foolish attack on Protestantism was visible at the annual ball in aid of St. Vincent's Hospital'. The attendance was down and suggested the 'Protestants were conspicuous by their absence'.<sup>142</sup>

Unfortunately, there was very little goodwill between the Protestant and Roman Catholic religions on the verge of Federation. The two protest meetings at the Town Hall, mentioned above, were reported as each attracting over 4,000 people, which provided a barometer of the ill-feeling that prevailed. Clearly, there were limits to the amount of cultural reconciliation any governor could achieve, however skilful and well-intentioned he might be.

## Conclusion

Despite the distance there were strong ties to the homeland and reverence for the Monarchy. Pageantry of vice-regal occasions provided an experience of Royalty that was otherwise lacking in the colony. The ceremonial events with the arrival of four governors in the space of ten years engraved the euphoria of the festive experience in the minds of most Sydney people. This linkage to underlying imperial loyalty in the community was consolidated with the attendance of the governor at municipal functions, troop reviews, Jubilee celebrations and exploratory trips into country areas rarely touched in the past. The governors ensured that it was an imperial experience that touched the citizens throughout the colony and not just metropolitan Sydney.

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<sup>140</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 1.11.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 379.

<sup>141</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 1.11.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 379-385.

<sup>142</sup> *Bulletin*, 29.9.1900, p. 10.



‘Philanthropy was the human face of the Empire, which made imperialism palatable and congenial to subjects in Britain and the colonies alike’.<sup>143</sup> The vice-regal families were perpetuating these humanitarian ideals in New South Wales with their patronage and involvement in numerous social and charitable organisations to help the less fortunate in the community. In an era when the necessity for British governors was being questioned, such activities established a bond with the people, which could not be ignored by the political parties. The reality was that some of the goodwill rubbed off on the government of the day and it was not uncommon to see political leaders standing on the same promotional platform as the governor to be associated with worthy charitable programs.

There was a common thread of appreciation for each governor on his departure from the colony, similar to recognition for Lord Hampden: ‘His Excellency has, perhaps, experienced closer actual association with all sections of the community than has fallen to the lot of most Governors in this colony, because he has thrown himself into public and semi-public life without restriction’.<sup>144</sup> The acknowledgement of interest in the welfare of the people underlines the contention of this thesis that the value-added factor of community relations has not been fully realised when examining the contribution governors have made to the on-going association between Britain and New South Wales.

This message of anticipated British continuity in the federated colonies can be heard resonating in the following excerpts of an address Lord Beauchamp gave during the Commemoration of the Commonwealth banquet at Goulburn on 21 September 1900’:

All here tonight were occupied with one feeling that of confident hope in the Commonwealth of Australia...There was never a time in which so great a revolution had been brought about in world history without bloodshed...The people of England realized and were most heartily grateful for the work which the Australian troops has done in South Africa...Never was a time in which the British Empire was as strong as it stood today...Neither was it so united.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 120.

<sup>144</sup> *SMH*, 22.11.1898, p. 5.

<sup>145</sup> *SMH*, 22.9.1900, p. 9.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND TRANSITION TO FEDERATION, 1900

While the Australian Delegation was in London negotiating the final issues of the Constitution Bill with Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Premiers were reviewing organisational changes that heralded the dawn of the new Commonwealth on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1901. The States had succeeded in preserving a position for themselves in the Constitution as ‘sovereign within their sphere’<sup>1</sup> and a prime consideration was to establish the role of the governor in this new era. In New South Wales, Lord Beauchamp had to endure the political manoeuvres of the Premier, Sir William Lyne, who sought to retain a leading position for the State in the new Commonwealth

This chapter explores three transitional aspects about establishing the future relationship between New South Wales and Britain as the result of Federation. Firstly, there was the premier’s concern about retaining the influential position of the senior state after Federation and its implications for the state governor. Secondly, the need to determine the status and salary of post-Federation governors. Lastly, the strategic importance of retaining British influence with future vice-regal appointments.

#### **Protecting State influence after Federation**

Queen Victoria gave royal assent to the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1900.<sup>2</sup> It obviously spurred the premier to apply pressure for the colony to take a prominent part in the inauguration of Federation. Lord Beauchamp was instructed to telegram the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, to advise ‘that in order to celebrate properly establishment of the Commonwealth, New South Wales intend to promote great public rejoicing here on the arrival of the Governor-General’.<sup>3</sup> The telegram further advised that the premier wished Lord Beauchamp to entertain the governor-general from the time of arrival and governors of all federating colonies for the celebrations. The governor should also vacate Government House so that it was ready for

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<sup>1</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> R. Evans, C. Moore, K. Saunders & B. Jamison, *1901 Our Future’s Past*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 1997, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 17.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 57-60, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1901.

the governor-general by the time of the first session of Federal Parliament. The week following this telegram, Sir William Lyne submitted to Parliament, 'a bill altering the position and salary and allowances of the governor to take effect from the establishment of the Commonwealth'.<sup>4</sup>

The Colonial Office was not impressed with the proposed arrangements. They doubted whether Lord Beauchamp realized that it might take months to arrange the first parliament. Writs had to be issued and returned as well as arranging a program. The premier's proposal for the governor to entertain the governor-general for two weeks or so before the ceremony and thereafter, and also host five governors for the week of celebrations, was considered quite unconscionable. Also, the governor was expected to vacate Government House and accept a reduced salary from the establishment of the Commonwealth. The Colonial Office pointed out the undesirable nature of the request but advised the governor that it was his decision whether he would participate on this basis. If so, he should request a special allowance for the hospitality accorded.<sup>5</sup> Lord Beauchamp had to evaluate his obligations to high office against personal disillusionment of a subordinate role with downgraded benefits.

Lord Beauchamp would have been aware by late 1899 that Government House could be seconded for the governor-general's residence. On 10<sup>th</sup> August, a Colonial Office despatch drew attention to Section 125 of the Commonwealth Bill that provided Parliament should sit at Melbourne and sought views from the colonies on the location of the governor-general's residence. South Australia and Tasmania considered it was logical to house the governor-general in Melbourne and Victoria was prepared to offer their Government House for this purpose. A response from Queensland to a despatch of 3<sup>rd</sup> November, after it agreed to federate, stated it had no objection to either Sydney or Melbourne.<sup>6</sup> New South Wales pointed out that Section 125 did not make provision for the governor-general's residence and only required the Federal Parliament to meet in Melbourne until the seat of government was established. Accordingly, the governor-general should be received first in Sydney and reside in Melbourne only when the Federal Parliament was in session. New South Wales undertook to provide a suitable residence at all other times.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 17.7.1900, CO 201/628, f. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 17.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 57-60.

<sup>6</sup> Internal Colonial Office Briefing Paper, 1.6.1900, CO 201/627, ff. 47-49, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1901.

<sup>7</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 27.9.1899, CO 201/625, ff. 339-340, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1899; Internal Colonial Office Briefing Paper, 1.6.1900, CO 201/627, ff. 47-49.

This subject was raised again at the Premiers' Conference held in Sydney from 24<sup>th</sup> January 1900<sup>8</sup> It soon became clear that there were two contenders, New South Wales and Victoria, to provide the residence for the governor-general. The conference did not wish to see this subject escalate into a public wrangle and decided to pass responsibility for a decision to the imperial authorities. A Colonial Office internal briefing paper of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1900 used the replies noted above to their despatches of 10<sup>th</sup> August and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1899 to consider their recommendations. Their opinion was that the governor-general must reside close to the headquarters of the government and on a temporary basis that would be Melbourne. Eventually the permanent legislature must be located in New South Wales, more than 100 miles from Sydney, to comply with Section 125 of the Bill. This feature combined with New South Wales as the Mother Colony with the largest population, swayed the Colonial Office to agree with their proposal outlined above.

While Colonial Office officials may have favoured the New South Wales proposal they did not commit themselves to the colony in June 1900. The premier had become quite agitated as he was being pressured by parliament to disclose telegrams about the use of Government House.<sup>9</sup> Lord Beauchamp implied this distress in his telegram of 16<sup>th</sup> July: 'I have thrice telegraphed to you asking for permission 30 June 5 July and 7 July...Grave inconvenience has been caused to the Prime Minister...' <sup>10</sup> In the meantime, the Colonial Secretary had been seeking the attitude of the delegates in London for the Constitution Bill but they wanted to consult their governments. Only Tasmania confirmed that they had no objection to the governor-general residing in New South Wales when the Federal Parliament was not in session.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the Colonial Office gave a guarded response to quell the premier's anxiety, 'The Governor-General will be sworn-in and the Commonwealth inaugurated at Sydney, and if the other colonies have agreed to his omission of residing there [in Melbourne] during the parliament recess, her Majesty's Government will not object...' <sup>12</sup> The premier was happy that the governor-general would land first in Sydney and took the cautious answer to residence in the recess, as approval.

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<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1900, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *SMH*, 12.7.1900. p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 16.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 51-52, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902. The term 'Prime Minister' here refers to the New South Wales Premier. In the pre-Federation period 'Prime Minister' and 'Premier' appeared to be used loosely. Generally the text will read as 'Premier' for the Colony but in this case it is an extract from the Governor's despatch.

<sup>11</sup> Internal CO memorandum, 7. 7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 31-32, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>12</sup> *SMH*, 18.7.1900, p. 8.

It did not completely resolve the matter. The government needed to know if the governor-general wished to have Government House vacant on his arrival or Lord Beauchamp to remain for the inauguration. The reply upset the premier again. Lord Hopetoun preferred to 'leave his carriage and establishment at Melbourne and visit Sydney as ... guest' of the governor.<sup>13</sup> He was prepared to occupy Government House if Lord Beauchamp desired to leave early. Lord Beauchamp was instructed by Premier Lyne to advise the Colonial Office 'that would be so unpopular here' if the governor-general decided to set up his establishment in Melbourne first.<sup>14</sup>

Beauchamp's telegram went on to say that colonial legal opinion interpreted Section 125 as meaning 'that the Governor-General must reside in New South Wales till the meeting of Parliament about March otherwise the actions of the Executive may be insufficient'. The Colonial Office reply suggested that it was unreasonable to expect the governor-general to remain in Sydney 'during hot weather in February and March and he proposed to spend time ... visiting Southern Colonies' during this period.<sup>15</sup> They pointed out that Section 126 allowed the governor-general to appoint a deputy for business purposes. The Colonial Office ignored a further telegram protest by the premier for the governor-general to remain in Sydney, advising that visits to the other colonies should go ahead.<sup>16</sup>

In view of the potential delay with the opening of parliament, the premier agreed that the governor could leave before the governor-general arrived. Lord Beauchamp decided to return to England and departed from the colony on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1900. At a farewell function, Premier Sir William Lyne referred to the Governor's cordial relations with the Ministry and regretted his early departure, 'due to the anxiety felt that the Governor-General should reside in New South Wales. He was quite aware that the Governor had sunk his personal feelings in the matter in order that the interests of the colony might be advanced'.<sup>17</sup>

Politically, the premier deemed it important that New South Wales should maintain its standing as the senior state after federation and anticipated that recognition of the Federal Parliament being housed temporarily in Melbourne could detract from its preeminent position.

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<sup>13</sup> Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 8.8.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 141-144, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>14</sup> Beauchamp to Colonial Office, 12.8.1900, CO 201/628, f. 157, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>15</sup> Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 18.8.1900, CO 201/628, f. 158, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>16</sup> Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 22.8.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 165-167, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>17</sup> *SMH*, 1.11.1900, p. 6.

Unfortunately, the governor could have been an impediment to his plans. No doubt Lord Beauchamp would have felt demeaned by the premier's demands. He was expected to entertain the governor-general from the time of his arrival, host the other state governors for the Federation ceremony while being evicted from his residence and forced to accept a lower salary. Also, it would have been uncomfortable for his aristocratic dignity to give precedence to the governor-general at all joint functions.

### **Establishing the Status and Salary of post-Federation Governors**

There was constant political pressure to reduce the cost of vice-regal representation in New South Wales during the 1890s. Lord Jersey's resignation letter in 1892 mentioned that 'legislatures of several colonies have been asked to reduce the salaries of their Governors'.<sup>18</sup> When Lord Hampden was appointed in 1895 his salary was maintained at £7,000 but he had to pay for two personal staff out of this figure.<sup>19</sup> The British House of Commons was also questioning the cost of representation and suggested it would be cheaper to allow the Chief Justice in each Colony to undertake the vice-regal role. It was passed off as a matter for consideration at Federation.<sup>20</sup> Certainly, the colonies were seriously considering the opportunity to reduce governors' salaries from the inauguration of the Commonwealth. The Governor of South Australia, Lord Tennyson, informed the Colonial Secretary in 1899 that it was anticipated his salary of £4,000 would be reduced to £3,000 or even £2,500 for the next appointment. He claimed to live economically but still spent £7,000 per annum and could not see how the appointment of a governor-general would greatly alter the situation in South Australia.<sup>21</sup>

The salary and status of governors was a major issue for the Premiers' Conference of 24<sup>th</sup> January 1900. This subject had become quite a sensitive matter during earlier debates on the Federal Constitution and opponents of Federation argued strongly that it was intolerable to carry the expense of a governor-general in addition to the vice-regal structure existing in the colonies. The response to this objection was that there would be corresponding savings in state arrangements to compensate for the forecast expenditure. The premiers recognised that they had to address this matter within the coming months but admitted there were practical problems. It was

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<sup>18</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 20.11.1892, BL, Add. MSS 43560, ff. 6-9, Ripon Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Internal CO memorandum, 22.4.1895, CO 201/617, ff. 481-484, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1892.

<sup>20</sup> Internal CO memorandum, 24.5.1895, CO 201/617, f. 391, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1892.

<sup>21</sup> Tennyson to Chamberlain, 19.12.1899, BL, CO 881.10.22.

acknowledged that people were inclined to misjudge the governor's 'salary' and did not understand the demands upon his remuneration. This was especially the case with Lord Jersey, 'whose entertainments were on so exceeding generous a scale that money he received from the Colony was quite insignificant'.<sup>22</sup> It was also known that Lord Hopetoun and Lord Brassey, as Victorian Governors, spent two to three times more than their salary.<sup>23</sup> The premiers believed that important occasions in future would most likely be hosted by the governor-general and overseas visitors would not expect so lavish hospitality from state governors. There was consensus within the meeting that many issues previously handled locally would be transferred to the governor-general and consequently there should be a reduction in the governor's salary. Each state had to decide what action should be taken but it should be made known that governors would not be expected to exceed their salaries for entertainment purposes.<sup>24</sup>

After further local consideration, the Governments of Western Australia,<sup>25</sup> Tasmania<sup>26</sup> and Queensland<sup>27</sup> decided not to reduce the salary of their governors for the time being. They considered that the governor-general would have only a marginal affect on their vice-regal activities and expenses would be unlikely to reduce in such circumstances. While Sir William Lyne suggested privately to the Colonial Secretary, via the Agent-General, that he expected Victoria and South Australia would reduce their governors' salary; he had an alternative approach for his state.<sup>28</sup> He believed that if the governor-general, Lord Hopetoun, was also appointed Governor of New South Wales, Parliament could be persuaded to allow the present salary and allowances to remain unaltered. The Colonial Office was dismayed at such a proposal, which would bring vigorous objections from the other states about conflict of interest between the two roles. When the Colonial Secretary declined to support this approach, Sir William Lyne proceeded with his legislation to reduce the governor's salary to £5,000. The Colonial Office decided they could not press their objections as Lord Beauchamp had advised that the governor of the state would be able to live on the reduced salary in a smaller Government House planned by the Government.<sup>29</sup> In a telegram to Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Beauchamp expressed his attitude to the revised terms, '...Change of residence and still more loss of influence and dignity which

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<sup>22</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1900, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Lt-Governor Sir John Madden to Chamberlain, 28.3.1900, BL, CO 881.10.22.

<sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1900, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Acting-Governor Sir A.C. Onslow to Chamberlain, 19.9.1900, BL, CO 881.10.22.

<sup>26</sup> Tennyson to Chamberlain, 15.8.1900, BL, CO 881.10.22.

<sup>27</sup> Lt-Governor Griffith to Chamberlain, 9.2.1900, BL, CO 881.10.22; *SMH*, 15.9.1900, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Lyne to Agent-General Copeland, 30.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 102-103, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>29</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 30.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 95-101, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

must come after federation are much greater arguments against remaining, though reduction in salary and allowances will be not less than £3,000 per annum'.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the 1890s there were objections to the alleged high level of governors' salaries by opponents of the imperial presence. As Federation approached, this debate widened to question the cost of the whole vice-regal structure in the states, particularly when the governor-general could carry the responsibility of the Commonwealth to represent the Crown. Any decisive action had been avoided by promising a review at the time of federal union and now the premiers had to consider the issue. The premiers justified a salary reduction on the basis that the governor-general would take over important functions and less hospitality would be required by state governors. Such an approach had the effect of downgrading the status of governors particularly when they were instructed to live within their salaries for hospitality purposes.

### **Preserving British influence with the appointment of Governors**

The New South Wales Government may have adopted a resolute position on salary and residence for the governor after Federation but was relaxed about Britain retaining the right to make vice-regal appointments.<sup>31</sup> There was some talk in the colonies about appointing a local man to the position as a reward for distinguished public service but in political circles there was strong resistance to such an idea. It was felt that a colonial appointment would create 'prejudices and jealousies' and detract from the dignity of the office.<sup>32</sup> The *Adelaide Register* bluntly suggested 'the incumbent of the office would have gained his prominence through close association with partisan politics, and would not be regarded without suspicion'.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, the premiers believed the appointment of governors by Britain was important to maintain the close connection with the mother country and ensure impartiality of the office.<sup>34</sup> This independent link upheld state sovereignty which would be weakened with a local

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<sup>30</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 2.8.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 129-130, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.

<sup>31</sup> Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> *SMH*, 23.8.1900, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Tennyson to Chamberlain, 22.8.1900 enclosing press clipping from *The Register*, 16.8.1900, BL, CO 881.10.22.

<sup>34</sup> Beauchamp to Chamberlain, 25.7.1900, CO 201/628, ff. 84-86, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 1902.



appointment.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, it was believed that when a governor returned to England he was a good advocate for the colony.<sup>36</sup>

The British attitude to appointment of a local man had serious implications as far as they were concerned. The Colonial Office view was expressed by A.B. Keith: 'To the Imperial Government the Governor is the means of exercising imperial control, while the colony or State benefits by having at its head a man who, whatever his demerits, is yet not a party politician, and who can be expected to be impartial in a crisis'.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, as the local debate favoured the British position at this critical time, the Colonial Office could stay aloof from the decision-making process.

The downgraded status of the governor meant that the posting would not be so attractive to hereditary aristocrats. Consequently, the British Government took the view that state governors should be appointed from retired military or civilians with political connections because the role was considered more 'ceremonial' than 'operational'.<sup>38</sup>

Britain was apprehensive about a lengthy vice-regal vacancy that could occur while the political debate raged over the future status of the governor. In addition to issues of this nature arising in 1900, the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, was concerned with the satisfactory resolution of Australian Federation and with sustaining empire-wide commitment to the on-going crisis of the South African War. He sought to bind imperial links with a promotion of symbolic focus on allegiance to 'the Crown'. This promotion, he persuaded a hesitant Edward VII<sup>39</sup>, should include an eight month Royal Tour of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa by his heir, the Duke of Cornwall and York and his wife in 1901. Chamberlain announced that:

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<sup>35</sup> Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, p. 30.

<sup>36</sup> *SMH*, 23.8.1900, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1909, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup> Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> J. Hirst, 'Empire, State, Nation', in D.M. Schreuder & S. Ward (eds.), *Australia's Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, p. 155.

The purpose of the visit was not only to recognise the significance of the federation of Australia but also the loyalty and devotion which have prompted the spontaneous aid so liberally offered by all the Colonies in the South African War, and of the splendid gallantry of the Colonial Troops.<sup>40</sup>

For the first time since 1868 the local subjects of a distant monarch were able to view royalty directly and they rose to the occasion with enthusiasm. Sydney gave the Royal couple a spectacular welcome on their arrival for an eight day visit to the state from 27<sup>th</sup> May 1901. While the *Bulletin* predictably and sourly remarked that ‘The public appearances of the weak, frightened-looking little man were all most painful to sympathetic onlookers...’<sup>41</sup>, the *Sydney Morning Herald* by contrast declared: ‘The tens of thousands of people who lined the streets bore generous testimony to the State’s devotion to Crown and Sovereign’.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

There were some concerns in Britain that progress to Federation in the 1890s was also the path to separation from the Empire. The constant budgetary threats to reduce vice-regal salaries and press comment about local appointment for the governor’s office were seen as moves towards independence.<sup>43</sup> When Lord Jersey sent his letter of resignation in 1892 and referred to pressure from Colonial Legislatures for revision of governors’ remuneration, he described it as ‘a wind for shift at present, blowing in this direction’.<sup>44</sup> It was clearly the implicit duty of the governor to dispel such thoughts of autonomy as he engaged with political leaders and the community. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the governor took the opportunity during social commitments to impress upon all parties the relationship with Britain and the value of the Royal Navy to provide security for the colonies and keep the trade routes open.

The Premiers’ Conference of January 1900 would have been some comfort to British observers. Certainly the negative features of potentially lower salaries for governors and vacating Government Houses in Sydney and Melbourne could have led to the inference that imported

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<sup>40</sup> P. Buckner, ‘The Royal Tour of 1901 and the Construction of an Imperial Identity in South Africa’, *South African Historical Journal*, no. 41, (Nov. 1999), p. 326.

<sup>41</sup> *Bulletin*, 15.6.1901, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 28.5.1901, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> L. Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the late Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> Jersey to Ripon, 20.11.1892, BL, Add. MSS 43560, ff. 6-9, Ripon Papers.

governors were not indispensable. On the other hand, all the premiers agreed that Britain should still have the authority to make future vice-regal appointments to the states. This link was important as the states would not want to see their governor's status eroded by a local appointment. In fact, the smaller States of Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania subsequently decided that governors' salaries would remain unaltered as their duties should not be seriously affected by the governor-general's activities.

The Premier, Sir William Lyne, recognised the precarious situation for New South Wales if he allowed the governor-general to reside full time in Melbourne. This city was the temporary seat of Federal Government and gradually all the important functions of a national capital would develop in Victoria. The permanent seat of government might be in New South Wales in the distant future but by that stage Melbourne would have a dominant position that would be almost impossible to overhaul. Therefore it was essential that Sydney share the immediate prize of Federation by being recognised as the regular home of the leading citizen, the governor-general.

Unfortunately, Lord Beauchamp was an obstacle in the way of Premier, Sir William Lyne's ambitions to promote New South Wales in the new Commonwealth era. As the Governor lamented in his telegram of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1900, 'the loss of influence and dignity', mentioned above, would have been difficult to accept. He would have to make way for the governor-general at many functions that would be held in Sydney where the governor was previously the centre of attention.

As events unfolded, Sir Frederick Darley was again sworn-in on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1900 as Lieutenant-Governor and carried out this role until the next state governor, Admiral Sir Harry Rawson arrived on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1902.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

#### 1901-1914

The turn of the new century brought Federation to the Australian colonies. It also brought the prospect of continuing – possibly intensifying – rivalry between the European great powers. In this context both British and colonial political leaders were given incentive to review and in some areas, revitalize the links of empire. There was serious debate about imperial federation. This enthusiasm for the broad domain was attributed to the imperialist spirit and dominating character of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. There was also a belief that the colonies were ready for further collaboration after their willing support for the Mother Country in the South African War.

This chapter concentrates on three areas of the post-Federation relationship between Britain and New South Wales up to 1914. The first section examines British expectations of pursuing its wider imperialist agenda, while maintaining loyalty of the state with vice-regal appointments that satisfied the lower status specified for the governor's position. The second section considers the Colonial basis for accepting imported British governors by the various parties in power during this period. Lastly, the State Governors are introduced and their qualities and capabilities appraised.

#### **British perspectives on the role of Governors**

Joseph Chamberlain could not persuade the federating colonies to relinquish the domestic independence of their self-governing status for any formal arrangements of imperial union. While the possibility of creating a 'Greater Britain' was rejected at the 1897 Colonial Conference, colonial support for the Mother Country in the South African War raised political discussion again about the potential of an imperial federation.<sup>1</sup> On the eve of the 1902 Colonial Conference in London there was favourable comment about such a union from speakers at the Colonial Institute dinner on 30<sup>th</sup> April.<sup>2</sup> It was attended by past Governors Jersey, Hampden and

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<sup>1</sup> J. Kettle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911: A Study in Imperial Organization*, Longmans, London, 1967, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> *SMH*, 2.5.1902, p. 5.

Beauchamp and the British Empire League attracted press attention with similar references at its council meeting.<sup>3</sup> Chamberlain's enthusiasm for closer relations was dampened by the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who cautioned against any early moves towards imperial federation. He believed that if it was at all possible it lay far into the future and should be the workings of 'Nature and Providence'.<sup>4</sup> While this mood in Britain for close relations with the self-governing colonies reflected politicians' appreciation for support in the war, they failed to agree on the best approach to cement the relationship.<sup>5</sup>

Although the 1902 Colonial Conference may have dismissed any resolution directed towards an imperial federation, Chamberlain believed there would be gradual acceptance by defence co-operation and/or preferential trade arrangements within the Empire. While unofficial approaches to Canada and Australian Colonies about creating an imperial council for defence were rebuffed in 1900,<sup>6</sup> there was still an expectation in Britain that the matter had not been laid to rest. When retired naval and military officers were appointed as state governors after federation, therefore, a widespread local assumption was that they had, for example, a secret agenda on defence. Sir Harry Rawson was interviewed at Auckland on the subject during his travel to New South Wales. He said that '...his appointment as Governor had no significance in connection with any scheme for the reorganisation of colonial defence'.<sup>7</sup> The appointment of the former army officer Sir George Sydenham Clarke as Governor of Victoria around the same time added to the suspicions that the governors were on a defence mission.<sup>8</sup>

The reality of the situation was that the Colonial Office had delayed appointment of the governor. They could not determine the class of person to be offered the governorship until the essential features of the vice-regal salary and benefits had been resolved by the new state government.<sup>9</sup> Initially, the Colonial Office view was to downgrade the status level from the heads of noble

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<sup>3</sup> *SMH*, 3.5.1902, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, p. 37; *SMH*, 9.5.1902, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> P. Buckner, 'The Royal Tour of 1901 and the Construction of an Imperial Identity in South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, no. 41 (Nov. 1999), pp. 332-333.

<sup>6</sup> Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 23.5.1902, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 24.5.1902, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> A.S. Morrison, 'The Role of the governor in constitutional issues in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, 1901-1925', PhD thesis, London University, London, 1984, p. 78.

families to retired military or civilians with political connections;<sup>10</sup> however this attitude changed during the first post-federation decade. After the first Governor, Sir Harry Rawson, was drawn from naval ranks, a system of promotions within the existing aristocratic governorship developed, such as moving from a smaller state to New South Wales. It seems probable that the next two governors after Rawson, Lord Chelmsford and Sir Gerald Strickland, accepted the position in fulfillment of their aspirations to office in the senior state in spite of the reduced remuneration.

In the early years after Federation it was inevitable that some difficulties would arise over the movement of government departments from state to federal jurisdiction. No doubt the states sensed the loss of authority as defence, posts and telegraph, customs and excise and immigration moved to federal control. The British Government also had to recognise the separate spheres defined for each government and adhere to the appropriate 'channel of communication' (discussed in the next chapter). Similarly, British politicians did not hesitate to question any interference with the expected lines of political management. The Leader of the British Opposition, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman wanted to know why it was necessary for Sir Harry Rawson to send a despatch to the Colonial Secretary about a federal matter of preferential trade.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the governor was only acting on the instructions of Premier Sir John See but it suited the British Liberals to direct their line of attack at the imperial representative. The despatch basically complimented the Colonial Secretary for his effort to create preferential trade within the Empire.<sup>12</sup> It was a premature contact from the premier at that stage of trade development and an unnecessary diversion from state business. Any comment should have been directed to the Commonwealth for their negotiations with Britain.

The constitutional arrangement of Commonwealth and States after federation was not completely satisfactory for imperial authorities as they would have preferred communication with one source, the governor-general, on a similar basis to Canada. In Australia by contrast, the states retained their separate sovereignty and tended to act as if the direct link with the home government was considered vital for their future development. This situation had implications for the role of state governors.

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<sup>10</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> *SMH*, 13.6.1903, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *SMH*, 19.6.1903, p. 5.

A final consideration to be taken into account – even more so after Federation than before – was to ensure that governors appointed understood that their association with the people was an essential element to preserve loyalty to the Crown and to the Empire. Sir Harry Rawson appeared to understand this aspect. As he commented on arrival, ‘...he intended casting his lot in with the people for the next five years, and that he would do everything within his power to promote their happiness, comfort and prosperity’.<sup>13</sup>

### **Colonial perspectives on the role of Governors**

The euphoria of entering a new century and celebrating the Federation of the Australian Colonies disguised upheaval in the political life of New South Wales. The Premier, Sir William Lyne, had resigned to take a ministerial position in the Federal Government and his successor, John See,<sup>14</sup> had to select a new ministry from depleted party ranks.<sup>15</sup> In fact, twenty-one members of the local legislature had been elected to the Federal Parliament, which included some of the best men in public life.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the critical decisions on salary and residence for the next governor were not a priority, particularly as the governorship was in the experienced hands of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, in the meantime. Three months after a state election in July 1901, the Parliament agreed to a salary of £5,000 for the governor and a five year lease was arranged on a residence, ‘Cranbrook’ at Rose Bay from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1902.<sup>17</sup>

A strong argument for the appointment of British governors at the time of Federation was that their lack of previous involvement in colonial politics ensured impartiality with all political parties. Certainly, the first State Governor, Sir Harry Rawson satisfied this assumption with his naval background. In his term, New South Wales politics was gradually moving away from the instability of minority governments towards a party governing in its own right. Initially, he faced an unsettled political scene with John See’s Progressive Party, elected in July 1901, as they depended on the Labor Party and independents to remain in power.<sup>18</sup> After the election of 6<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *SMH*, 27.5.1902, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> John See knighted KCMG in the Coronation honours 1902 – M. Hogan, ‘John (later Sir John) See (28.3.1901-14.6.1904)’, in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Premiers of New South Wales 1856-2005*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, vol.2, 1901-2005, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> Darley to Chamberlain, 2.4.1901, CO 418, f. 275, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2140.11.

<sup>16</sup> *SMH*, 10.4.1901, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Darley to Chamberlain, 22.10.1901, CO 418, f. 437, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2140.11; *SMH*, 10.10.1901, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Hogan, ‘John See’, in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, p. 24.

August 1904, Joseph Carruthers led his Liberal and Reform Association Party to office. They won half of the Assembly seats to establish the two-party system of government in New South Wales.<sup>19</sup> Carruthers resigned due to ill-health in 1907 and was succeeded by Charles Wade who held office when Lord Chelmsford commenced his term in 1909. Chelmsford witnessed the historic election of the first majority Labor Government in 1910 with James McGowen as Premier.<sup>20</sup> Labor was still the government party when war commenced in 1914 and Sir Gerald Strickland was the governor. Significant political events of this era are examined in the next chapter.

This aspect of vice-regal impartiality was raised again in 1904 as one of the reasons to accept British governors instead of a local appointment.<sup>21</sup> It followed the controversy in Queensland about the resignation of Sir Herbert Chermiside related to salary reduction, and revived debate on the value of the Governor's office in New South Wales.<sup>22</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* was usually supportive of the imperial relationship and its editorial of 1<sup>st</sup> October 1904 on 'State Governors' launched an attack on the doubters of the current structure. The article concentrated on the impartial role of the governor. Firstly, there was the recurrent comparison at this time with Canada. Canadians had decided that the provinces forming the Dominion would accept a Lieutenant-Governor answerable to the Governor-General. The disadvantage was that the provinces did not have direct access to the Crown. In Australia, the States had a separate sovereignty to the Commonwealth with the 'full and impartial view' of the Governor that would carry more influence with the home government than a local appointment. Secondly, the paper questioned the impartiality of a Lieutenant-Governor in a general sense, while not making any accusation about current holders of the title. Given that the Lieutenant-Governor was also the Chief Justice, the editorial suggested 'it might be that he had been elevated to the Bench for political services', which implied that an Australian resident would be less likely to be unprejudiced in the role of Lieutenant-Governor. Thirdly, the editorial emphasised that

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<sup>19</sup> D. Harwin, 'Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Hector Carruthers', in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 58.

<sup>20</sup> L. Taksa, 'James Sinclair Taylor McGowen', in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 103.

<sup>21</sup> For further information, see Ch. 5, p. 80: 'Preserving British influence with the appointment of Governors'.

<sup>22</sup> Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, pp. 28-29. The Queensland Premier announced in parliament that the governor offered to reduce his salary due to the difficult economic conditions. Twomey stated this was 'spin' and the aim was to persuade the governor to resign.



The Imperial officer...is absolutely above the strife of local parties. He has never engaged in it and he brings an unbiased mind to the consideration of politics and of politicians. In this way, he exercises a salutary influence from the start which the local Lieutenant-Governor would take years to obtain.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to Federation it had also been stressed how New South Wales would benefit when a British governor returned to England as he would be a good supporter for the future progress of the colony and Australia generally. An advantage of the existing appointment system was that 'each Governor who returns to England becomes an earnest advocate of the aims and aspirations of the colony and is, therefore, a valuable advocate'.<sup>24</sup> This aspect was still being argued in the 1904 editorial by pointing out that

Another advantage which we should lose by the substitution of the local Lieutenant-Governors for Imperial Governors of the States is the acquaintance with our conditions which these officers carry back to the old country when they have fulfilled their term.<sup>25</sup>

While the plausibility of the impartiality claim will be considered in detail in chapter seven following, it is convenient to review the reality of the 'representative for life' claim at this point in argument. Just how realistic was this expectation of the governor supporting the state on his return to Britain prior to the war? Apart from Lord Jersey, there does not appear to be a significant contribution from governors appointed after 1891. Sir Robert Duff died in office and Lord Hampden's speeches in the House of Lords concentrated mainly on the British army.<sup>26</sup> He died in 1906 after a long illness.<sup>27</sup> Earl Beauchamp's ambition was directed to other areas in the British Government. Sir Harry Rawson died within eighteen months of returning home so any good intentions were not fulfilled. Lord Chelmsford returned to England in the year before the war and had little time to give effective support to the state. Sir Gerald Strickland was more concerned with Maltese politics and probably wished to forget the unfortunate events of his term in New South Wales.

Lord Jersey's name was constantly used as a person of influence in England who could be relied upon to assist the state in relations with the political, commercial and social establishment of the Mother Country. The ex-governor made a return visit to New South Wales in 1905 and during a

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<sup>23</sup> *SMH*, 1.10.1904, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 23.8.1900, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> *SMH*, 1.10.1904, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> *Times*, 24.6.1901, p. 11; 31.3.1905, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> *Times*, 23.6.1906, p. 10.

welcome banquet given by the Chamber of Commerce, its President J.P. McArthur, said 'It is remarkable how deeply in two years Lord Jersey had stamped and attached to himself people occupying widely different positions'.<sup>28</sup> There was an intervening period of twelve years after the two years of governorship and this visit, where Lord Jersey maintained his friendship with leading citizens of the state.

Lord Jersey became more involved politically with New South Wales after Federation. The Premier, Sir John See, asked him to fill the role of acting Agent-General in London from July 1903 while Copeland took six months leave of absence.<sup>29</sup> He appears to have managed the duties effectively as press reported, 'The acting Agent-General took a genuine interest in his duties, and spared himself in no way in performing them'.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, Copeland died in August 1904 and Lord Jersey was reinstated as acting Agent-General and performed this responsibility until succeeded by Coghlan in April 1905.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Lord Jersey was a temporary replacement on the Pacific Cable Board.<sup>32</sup>

Soon after Lord and Lady Jersey's arrival in Australia on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1905, Lady Jersey received advice that her father, Lord Leigh, had died and consequently she was unable to take part in any social functions.<sup>33</sup> The recognition of the ex-governor's past performance soon became evident with the endless round of activities that celebrated his assistance to the state. A Parliamentary banquet on 20<sup>th</sup> November was a spectacular affair to honour the ex-governor, the occasion being described as 'quite unusual...because it is seldom that an unofficial citizen sits at a public dinner presided over by the Premier of the State, and attended by vice-regal and legislative representatives'.<sup>34</sup> Premier Carruthers referred to 'the admirable work the guest and the Countess of Jersey had done for New South Wales during their vice-regency and to the valuable assistance the former had rendered the state during his return to London'.<sup>35</sup> In this way, intriguingly, an absent ex-governor helped to maintain loyalty for an absent Sovereign by demonstrating the essential benevolence of hereditary forms of authority.

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<sup>28</sup> *SMH*, 23.11.1905, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *SMH*, 4.7.1903, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *SMH*, 7.4.1904, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> *SMH*, 24.8.1904, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> *SMH*, 15.3.1905, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> *SMH*, 25.10.1905, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> *SMH*, 21.11.1905, p. 7. Sir Harry Rawson was in England due to the serious illness of Lady Rawson. Lt-Governor Darley attended the banquet.

<sup>35</sup> *SMH*, 21.11.1905, p. 7.

There were reports in English papers that Viscountess Hampden and Lady Duff were still interested in the welfare of people in New South Wales, and provided comforts to the troops in the South African War. Lady Duff had raised funds to send a large consignment of clothing, tobacco, pipes, cigars and stationery to the first contingent of New South Wales troops and had collected enough money to provide similar items for the second contingent. Viscountess Hampden had sent clothing, tobacco, pipes and chocolate to troops in the Lancers and Australian Horse contingents.<sup>36</sup>

### **Governors of New South Wales, 1901-1914**

In contrast with the disruption of four governors in the 1890s, the state enjoyed two popular imperial representatives up to the year before the war. The third appointment in this era, Sir Gerald Strickland, was a controversial figure (though most of the negative aspects of his term gathered momentum beyond the period being investigated).

*Admiral Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843-1910), Governor of New South Wales 27.5.1902-27.5.1909*

The weather was dull and cloudy but fine as the new State Governor, Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, KCB, stepped ashore at Farm Cove for the official welcome on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1902.<sup>37</sup> The admiral's uniform complemented his 'big tall burly Jack Tar'<sup>38</sup> figure, while his fifty-nine years were revealed in the aging 'broad forehead, shaggy eyebrows and a beard alloyed with silver'.<sup>39</sup> He gave the appearance of 'steady and kindly sailor's eyes' but naval officers stationed at Garden Island, with past association, regarded him as a strict disciplinarian; at the same time he respected those under his command.<sup>40</sup> Lady Poore, wife of Vice-Admiral Poore, Commander of the Australian Station, found him 'tactful, but prompt and straight forward on the verge of

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<sup>36</sup> *SMH*, 10.3.1900, p. 7; *Times*, 20.4.1900, p. 3, reported the arrival of the comforts to the troops.

<sup>37</sup> *SMH*, 28.5.1902, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> M. Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson (27 May 1902 – 27 May 1909)', in D. Clune and K. Turner (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 402; A 'Jack Tar' means a sailor.

<sup>39</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 402.

<sup>40</sup> *SMH*, 1.2.1902, p. 11.

bluntness,<sup>41</sup> a judgement tempered by the premier's impression of the governor as 'approachable, unassuming and considerate of others'.<sup>42</sup>

Sir Harry was born on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1843 at Upper Islington, Liverpool, England, the second son and third child of Christopher Rawson, Merchant, and his wife Ellen Francis, nee Wright. He married Florence Alice Stewart Shaw on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1871. When he became Governor of New South Wales he had valuable support from Lady Rawson, whose health was fragile, together with his devoted daughter, Alice and teenage son, Wyatt.

The newspapers had conveyed the hero status of Sir Harry Rawson's exploits during his naval career before arrival so that he was welcomed with the same passion as his aristocratic predecessors.<sup>43</sup> In the early years of service he had been involved in the Second Opium War in China (1857-60) and subsequent disturbances. He was seriously wounded in the thigh while driving rebel forces out of Fungwha in October 1862. When Rawson had risen to Commander-in-Chief of the Cape of Good Hope Station (1895-98), there were two colonial policing actions that demanded his attention. On the first occasion, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1896, he bombarded the Sultan of Zanzibar's palace to remove a pretender to the title. Secondly in February 1897, he led a punitive expedition to eliminate insurgents from Benin in response to the massacre of a British diplomatic and trade mission at the beginning of the year.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from Rawson's proven combat record, he had displayed sound technical and diplomatic skills. There were opportunities for him to take the initiative in fields of naval modernization, such as steam propulsion, gunnery, armaments, torpedoes, revision of the international code of signals and development of tactical exercises and manoeuvres for the fleet. Over the years of service there were several occasions for him to understand the value of the Monarchy and importance of promoting a strong Empire. He was assigned to the Royal yacht, *Victoria and Albert* (1870-71) and served as Naval ADC to Queen Victoria (1890-92). When he took command of the Channel Squadron (1899-1902), the King and Queen of Italy visited his flagship HMS *St. George* off Sardinia in April 1899 and three weeks later he entertained the King and Queen of Portugal at Lisbon. A return visit of the squadron to Portugal in 1900 was a diplomatic

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<sup>41</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 402.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 27.5.1902, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> *SMH*, 31.1.1902, p. 5; 1.2.1902, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 396-401.

success.<sup>45</sup> It challenged the impression of Anglophobia on the Continent that had been stirred up by pro-Boer sympathizers and others during this period.<sup>46</sup> These background features suggested that Sir Harry had a depth of experience, a passion for public service and personal skills that were well suited for the governorship of New South Wales.

Indeed as the result of his successful governorship, both politically and socially, the government was eventually to arrange with the Colonial Office to extend Sir Harry Rawson's term for an additional twelve months from 27<sup>th</sup> May 1908.<sup>47</sup> This was an exceptional decision and the governor's personal qualities played a major role in explaining it. He was not an eloquent public speaker but some of the farewell addresses pinpointed his natural attributes such as 'sympathy and kindness' and ability to 'make people feel he was one of them'.<sup>48</sup> It was a unique 'robust manliness',<sup>49</sup> moulded from his years of naval service that struck a chord with the people.

When Sir Harry Rawson concluded his governorship on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1909 there were numerous interested parties vying to arrange farewell functions that included a Parliamentary banquet,<sup>50</sup> Lord Mayor's dinner from the citizens of Sydney,<sup>51</sup> a Masonic farewell<sup>52</sup> and other engagements that extended over two weeks. The *Bulletin* wondered 'What will Excellency Rawson's digestive apparatus be like by Wednesday next, when he quits these shores? Every day he is officially lunched or dined and last night the Union Club gave him the Pure Merino banquet on a grand scale'.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 396-401.

<sup>46</sup> G. Rawson, *Life of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson*, Edward Arnold, London, 1914, p. 201.

<sup>47</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 28.1.1908, CO 418, ff. 51-55, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62; Chamberlain to Rawson, 5.2.1908, CO 418, ff. 69-72, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62; *SMH*, 13.12.1907, p. 6; Rawson took leave from 24.3.1909 to 27.5.1909 within the extended twelve months. Rawson died 3.11.1910 from complications after an appendicitis operation.

<sup>48</sup> *SMH*, 23.3.1909, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> *SMH*, 7.6.1905, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> *SMH*, 19.3.1909, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> *SMH*, 23.3.1909, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *SMH*, 10.3.1909, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Bulletin*, 25.3.1909, p. 23.

*Frederic John Napier Thesiger, Baron Chelmsford, (1868-1933), Governor of New South Wales 28.5.1909-11.3.1913.*

Lord Chelmsford, after his term of almost four years in Queensland, was available to ensure a smooth transition from Sir Harry Rawson. The new governor officially arrived in Sydney on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1909. He was ‘tall, athletic and clean-shaven with a pleasant, intellectual face, but rather pale’.<sup>54</sup> Lord Chelmsford did not read his speeches during the ceremonial welcome and his clear, unhesitating manner of presentation impressed the audience. The governor would have been memorable to the public from earlier press reports. Soon after his arrival in Queensland he participated in a cricket match at Toowoomba, which resulted in sun stroke and advice from his doctor to take three months rest.<sup>55</sup> He had become involved in a constitutional controversy with Queensland politicians at the end of 1907 (as will be further explained in chapter seven).<sup>56</sup>

Frederic John Napier Thesiger was born on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1868, being the eldest son of Frederic Augustus Thesiger, who became the second Baron Chelmsford and his wife Adria Fanny, nee Heath. Following education at Winchester and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he graduated B.A. (first class honours in law) in 1891, he was elected to a fellowship at All Souls College (1892-99) and called to the bar (Inner Temple) in 1893.<sup>57</sup> As an enthusiastic cricketer, he captained the University X1, which probably encouraged him to participate in that life-threatening game at Toowoomba. On 27<sup>th</sup> July 1894 he married Frances Charlotte Guest, daughter of Lord Wimborne. When they landed at Farm Cove, Lady Chelmsford attracted attention as being ‘tall and stately, with an ever-ready smile that suggests a sunny and optimistic nature’.<sup>58</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial acknowledged the governor’s intellectual background and suggested that he could contribute to discussions on education given his past membership of the London School Board (1900-1904) and election to its successor, the London County Council in 1904.<sup>59</sup> He succeeded to the barony in 1905 just prior to his appointment as governor of Queensland.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *SMH*, 29.5.1909, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> *SMH*, 15.3.1906, p. 7; 17.3.1906, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> *SMH*, 22.2.1909, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> D. Clune, ‘Frederic John Napier Thesiger, Baron Chelmsford (28 May 1909 – 11 March 1913)’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 415.

<sup>58</sup> *SMH*, 29.5.1909, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> *SMH*, 23.2.1909, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> Clune, ‘Baron Chelmsford’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 415.

As will be set out in following chapters, Chelmsford's governorship was judged a success from both local and imperial perspectives. A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial acknowledged the inherent values that had been retained by the efforts of this governor despite the difficulty of following someone as respected as Sir Harry Rawson, by recognising, '...yet through possession of qualities different but equally admirable, Lord Chelmsford at once won his way to our hearts'.<sup>61</sup> The Lord Mayor summed up the governor's contribution at a Citizens' Farewell Reception with appreciation for his 'keen and active interest in the affairs and welfare of the people'.<sup>62</sup> The influential women's organisations such as the National Council of Women and the Mothers' Union were spontaneous with their praise for Lady Chelmsford. The welfare of women and children was her main concern. She had 'the gift of speaking the right word at the right moment, and kindly offered and gave much good advice in her many enarming [*sic*] addresses delivered at meetings, or at the opening of bazaars, fetes, and similar gatherings'.<sup>63</sup>

The Colonial Office also was pleased with Lord Chelmsford's performance with a comment on one of his earlier reports, 'he is one of our best Governors'.<sup>64</sup> They knew that the governor had tactfully provided useful guidance to the Labor Ministry, which was also protective of British interests in the state. He had reported 'They are conscious of their own inexperience and are perfectly ready to listen and learn. I have found it so with myself'.<sup>65</sup>

When Lord Chelmsford's resignation was made known to the public on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1912, he was anxious to tell the people that 'I am leaving on entirely and purely family reasons'.<sup>66</sup> His eldest son was now 16 years and had been living with relatives for the last five years in England. Lord Chelmsford felt he should go home to help him through the next two years before the son entered a profession. The governor also mentioned in a despatch to the Colonial Office that his eldest daughter was seventeen years and would soon be coming out. The other children needed to go home for schooling, which was not easily available in Sydney.<sup>67</sup> Lord Chelmsford accepted the position of New South Wales governor only on agreement with the Colonial Office that he

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<sup>61</sup> *SMH*, 16.1.1913, p. 8

<sup>62</sup> *SMH*, 5.3.1913, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> *SMH*, 25.1.1913, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 423.

<sup>65</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 12.4.1911, CO 418, ff. 102-103, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.

<sup>66</sup> *SMH*, 26.10.1912, p. 21.

<sup>67</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 423; Chelmsford to Harcourt, 3.9.1912, CO 418, ff. 291-303, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.

could return to England early in 1913. The governorship in two states meant he had been away from home for seven and a half years.<sup>68</sup>

The governor worked his way through the farewell functions that paid tribute to his term of governorship. The *Bulletin* noted: 'The Chelmsfords have departed in a flood of fulsome flattery. Lord Chelmsford has been described as a kind of super-man, a being of so great and lofty a mind that he must have blushed at the god-like attributes ascribed to him in sundry after-dinner speeches...'<sup>69</sup>

*Sir Gerald Strickland, Count della Catena (1861-1940), Governor of New South Wales 14.3.1913-27.10.1917.*

There was an expectation that the new Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, would ensure a high standard of governorship in view of his past experience. He had been a successful administrator, holding various positions up to Chief Secretary in Malta from 1886 until assigned to governorship of the Leeward Islands in 1902. It was a short appointment as he became the governor of Tasmania in 1904 and then of Western Australia from 1909.<sup>70</sup> He seemed to be an obvious choice for New South Wales with his experience, wealthy inheritance to cover any salary shortfall and availability for transfer within Australia. Less promisingly, he was Roman Catholic now posted to a state with a well-earned reputation for religious sectarianism. His previous experience as a practising politician (before becoming a career governor) might also prove a drawback, given his ambition and track record for tactlessness.<sup>71</sup>

These misgivings were laid aside as Premier McGowen welcomed Sir Gerald Strickland as he stepped ashore at Farm Cove on a sunny morning of 14<sup>th</sup> March 1913. His Excellency was fifty-one years, solid build, and an imposing figure in the full dress uniform of the governor 'with its heavy gold facings, and decorations shining on his coat'.<sup>72</sup> He was born on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1861 in Valetta, Malta while his father, Captain Walter Strickland, was stationed with the British navy at

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<sup>68</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 426. Lord Chelmsford died from a heart attack 1.4.1933.

<sup>69</sup> *Bulletin*, 13.3.1913, p. 20.

<sup>70</sup> *SMH*, 14.3.1913, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> M. Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland (14 March 1913 - 27 October 1917)', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 429-430.

<sup>72</sup> *SMH*, 15.3.1913, p. 5.



this defence location. The family background stemmed from aristocratic lines in both the North of England and Malta. His mother, Louisa Bonici Mompalao, was the heiress to Sir Nicola Sceberras Bologna, and Sir Gerald succeeded to the title and estate as the sixth Count della Catena after a Privy Council judgement.<sup>73</sup> He was educated in England at St. Mary's College, Oscott, Birmingham and graduated in Arts and Law from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1887; He was called to the bar at the Inner Temple two years later.<sup>74</sup> The law practice was limited as he returned to Maltese politics, as mentioned above.

Although there were protests about his Roman Catholic religion prior to arrival in Sydney, it never really became an issue. The United Protestant Lodges had protested to the premier but there was no response.<sup>75</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* was critical of the sectarian bitterness and stressed that the governor's religion was a personal matter and 'no others had any right to interfere with it'.<sup>76</sup> The governor's community engagements suggested that he was quite impartial in his efforts to meet the people. He was a serious public speaker with a sincere message for his audience without Lord Chelmsford's flair for after dinner speeches. On one occasion in Western Australia he did say that 'Fremantle was destined to become the front door and Sydney the back door of Australia', but that was before he knew about the New South Wales appointment.<sup>77</sup> It was not taken too seriously.

He married Lady Edeline Sackville, daughter of the seventh Earl De La Warr, in 1890.<sup>78</sup> She was described as being 'tall and fair' with a reputation for taking 'great interest in philanthropic works, and especially in the National Council of Women'.<sup>79</sup> Sir Gerald Strickland took great pride in frequently telling audiences that their fifth child, a baby girl born in Perth, was an Australian.<sup>80</sup> It soon became public knowledge that Lady Edeline 'has not enjoyed the best of health' and was obliged to decline many of the regular engagements.<sup>81</sup> According to the Premier's wife, Ada Holman, Lady Edeline suffered complications from the birth of their fifth child and was '...a permanent invalid, scarcely able to walk or speak, with features distorted, a

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<sup>73</sup> *SMH*, 14.3.1913, p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 429-433.

<sup>75</sup> *SMH*, 28.1.1913, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> *SMH*, 29.1.1913, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> *SMH*, 14.3.1913, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 431.

<sup>79</sup> *SMH*, 15.3.1913, p. 12.

<sup>80</sup> *SMH*, 9.4.1913, p. 12.

<sup>81</sup> *SMH*, 24.3.1913, p. 8.

twisted body, and a frame hardly more than skin and bone'.<sup>82</sup> As she withdrew to the governor's summer retreat at Sutton Forest it placed additional pressure on Sir Gerald to visit the residence and keep in touch with her welfare. Lady Strickland died after they returned to England in 1918.<sup>83</sup> The eldest daughter, Mary (b.1896) assisted the governor with some functions such as opening bazaars.<sup>84</sup>

Evidence from Strickland's previous postings in Tasmania and Western Australia suggests that he had the qualities to be a successful governor, at least in his dealings with the general public. In Tasmania the press reported that 3,000 people were at the wharf for the send off to the vice-regal couple.<sup>85</sup> On the departure from Perth, the governor was congratulated for his impartiality and tact as well as enjoying the usual popular functions for the occasion.<sup>86</sup> When he left Sydney in 1917, the *Sydney Morning Herald* observed that 'He will always be remembered for his fairness of mind, his sympathy, his industry, and his hospitality'.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, Sir Gerald appeared to fulfill his obligations to the people of New South Wales notwithstanding the loss of valuable support from Lady Strickland due to her health. Unfortunately, the other character trait to be considered was controversial in relation to vice-regal responsibilities. He had a penchant for constitutional correctness that was endured in the smaller States but it destroyed the relationship with the New South Wales Government and particularly Premier Holman. This aspect will be taken into account in chapter seven.

## Conclusion

When Premier McGowen was supporting a farewell toast to Lord Chelmsford, he confirmed '...the selection made by the Imperial Government for the post of Governor of New South Wales has had a tendency to bind this portion of the Empire closer and closer to the old land'.<sup>88</sup> This statement suggested that the premier was satisfied with the current policy of vice-regal appointments by the Colonial office since federation. It was initially expected that appointees

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<sup>82</sup> A. Holman, *Memoirs of a Premier's Wife*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1947, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 435 and 443.

<sup>84</sup> *SMH*, 19.3.1913, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> *SMH*, 21.5.1909, p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> *SMH*, 6.3.1913, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 443.

<sup>88</sup> *SMH*, 4.3.1913, p.10.

would be ‘retired military or civilians with political connections’<sup>89</sup> due to their subordinate role to the governor-general and lower salary. Sir Harry Rawson’s naval career complied with these criteria but the subsequent appointments of Lord Chelmsford and Sir Gerald Strickland implied a return to aristocratic ranks. The reason to revert to hereditary selection is not clear. Perhaps it was convenient that Chelmsford and then Strickland were available. Alternatively, the Colonial Office may have seen an opportunity to commence a system of promotions around the Australian States, which would eliminate another problem of lengthy delays between appointments. A remark by A.B. Keith on a Colonial Office file bears out this view that there should be ‘as few as possible interregna in the office of Governor’<sup>90</sup>

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the formative influences on and expectations of the relationship between Britain and New South Wales, and to introduce the post-Federation governors appointed prior to the war. The qualities of these appointments when faced with the realities of governing New South Wales, briefly foreshadowed here, must now be further explored. Chapter seven following explores the political role of governors between 1901 and 1914. Chapter eight explains their social and cultural roles.

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<sup>89</sup> Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup> Internal CO memorandum, 23.2.1910, CO 418, ff. 30-34, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4192.80; This was a CO comment during approval of Chief Justice Cullen as Lieutenant-Governor after retirement of Sir Frederick Darley by A.B. Keith, (1879-1944), member of CO 1901-14 and authority on imperial constitutional affairs thereafter. Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, p. 122.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND POLITICAL LIFE, 1901-1914

The Governor's task after Federation was complicated by Federal/State tensions as each learned to live with the other. On the one hand, the governor had the existing task of tactfully reviewing political issues with his ministers to ensure the best interests of good government in the state, which also complied with instructions on British colonial policy. This consultation process was particularly critical when constitutional issues arose, such as prorogation or dissolution of Parliament and appointments to the Upper House. There were precedents from pre-Federation days but each case needed to be treated on its merits.

On the other hand, there were new challenges after Federation when it was important for the governor to support the state as it jealously guarded its sovereignty against Commonwealth intrusion. There were other occasions when the governor-general and state governor could work together. Norfolk Island was a subject where negotiations for transfer of responsibility to the Commonwealth included initiatives from this level. There was also the need for the governor to consider his relations with the Labor Party that was now an established contender in federal and state politics.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, it reviews the continuing role of the governor as intelligence agent to ensure that the Colonial Office was kept abreast of developments in political activity and current affairs. Secondly, it considers the relationship between the governor and the state government and the success or otherwise in the management of issues that arose in this period. Finally, it reviews the status of the governor as he became involved or avoided disputes between the Commonwealth and the State.

#### **Governor as imperial intelligence agent**

The secret 'Report on Affairs' was still the primary conduit for the governor's commentary on local current events to the Colonial Office. While the first two governors after Federation, Rawson and Chelmsford, reported irregularly, Strickland was reminded by his superiors that a

quarterly advice was expected.<sup>1</sup> Compliance with this instruction was an essential aspect of ‘keeping the Imperial Government informed of affairs affecting imperial interests’. A particular reason for the Colonial Office persistence with the reports in this decade was to have early warning of possible threats to cast off imperial control, such as the states becoming restless over the appointment of imported governors. South Australia had formally made an approach to appoint a local man and the topic was also debated in the Victorian Parliament in 1907.<sup>2</sup> The effective governorship of Rawson and Chelmsford was probably the reason this topic was not a major issue in New South Wales in this pre-war period. Other occurrences involving the state governor’s relations with the state government are discussed in the next section.

After Federation, the climate of Commonwealth and State relations was added to the wide range of regular topics in the Report on Affairs that included local politics, government finances, industrial disputes and rural production. These despatches constantly referred to discord between the Commonwealth and State with varying comments about the liaison, which depended on the resolution of divergent opinions. Sir Harry Rawson advised the Colonial Office in June 1908 that ‘the relationship ...was strained – in fact most of the State Governments are in conflict with the Commonwealth Government’. The Federal Government had created a tense situation by moving to ‘...commandeer the whole of the Surplus of the June revenue’ rather than follow the agreed rebate of customs and excise to the States.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, Premier Wade challenged the *Surplus Revenue Act* of 1908 in the High Court but was unsuccessful.<sup>4</sup> Lord Chelmsford was able to report in February 1910 that ‘It is pleasant to be able to report amicable relations’ with the Commonwealth when the financial agreement (Braddon Clause) of the first ten years after Federation had been finalised and new funding arrangements were agreed. Also the site for the federal capital had been established.<sup>5</sup> This harmonious situation was unlikely to last while these governments were resolving their levels of authority. In May 1912, Lord Chelmsford revealed: ‘We are not yet free from disputes between the Commonwealth and the State’.<sup>6</sup> The introduction of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and occupation of Federal Government House, Sydney were

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<sup>1</sup> Harcourt to Strickland, 28.12.1913, CO 418, f. 361, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4218.113.

<sup>2</sup> A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1909, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 30.6.1908, CO 418, ff. 327-328, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.1.

<sup>4</sup> D. Clune, ‘Charles (later Sir Charles) Gregory Wade (2.10.1907-20.10.1910)’, in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Premiers of New South Wales 1856-2005*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, vol. 2, 1901-2005, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> Chelmsford to Crewe, 1.2.1910, CO 418, ff. 22-23, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4192.80.1.

<sup>6</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 147, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1

topical issues to be determined. Further examination of the relationship between the two governments appears in the third section of this chapter.

In 1903, during the first year of Governor Rawson's term, the economic conditions were disappointing as the effect of the depression and drought throughout most of the 1890s still created hardship for the rural community. Fortunately, there was a change in the weather pattern as '...splendid rainfall about the middle of the year, and continuing every week or two throughout the past six months, have quite changed the aspect of the material situation'.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, Governor Rawson could testify to the change in the weather as he toured Tenterfield<sup>8</sup> and Glen Innes<sup>9</sup> in the rain. Later he opened the Bathurst show in similar inclement conditions with the comment that '...it was much better that some of them should get a wetting than that they should not have rain'.<sup>10</sup> As prosperity depended greatly on rural conditions, Rawson was able to report to the Colonial Office in 1908-09 about improved returns for livestock and dairying although agriculture was suffering a grasshopper plague. Wool production was down due to dry conditions in southern and central parts of the state, although higher export prices compensated for the decline in stock numbers.<sup>11</sup> Overall, Rawson was able to advise that the state enjoyed revenue surpluses from 1904 with Premiers Carruthers and Wade, while Chelmsford referred to 'buoyant conditions' in 1911 and Strickland mentioned that 'pastoral and agricultural interests are prosperous' in 1912.<sup>12</sup>

Industrial disputes were a constant source of concern in governors' reports. On the introduction of the *Industrial Arbitration Act*, 1912, Lord Chelmsford reviewed the history of industrial legislation for the Colonial Office. He recognised: 'The Parliament of New South Wales has given, during the last 20 years, much attention to legislation having for its object the settlement of trade disputes'.<sup>13</sup> The salient points of his commentary commenced with the 1892 *Trade Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Act*, which proved to be ineffective as the parties to the dispute were

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<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 1.1.1904, p. 3, 'Commercial Retrospect'.

<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 3.12.1902, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *SMH*, 6.12.1902, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *SMH*, 25.4.1903, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 30.6.1908, CO 418, ff. 330-331, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62 and Rawson to Crewe, 16.1.1909, CO 418, f. 37, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4184.72.1.

<sup>12</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 12.4.1911, CO 418, f. 106, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.1. and Strickland to Harcourt, 28.12.1912, CO 418, f. 367, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4218.113; D. Harwin, 'Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Carruthers (30.8.1904-1.10.1907)', in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, 1901-2005, p. 59.

<sup>13</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, ff. 154-156, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1

not compelled to submit their case or abide by the award. Further legislation passed in 1899 provided an arrangement for the parties to agree on an amicable settlement but lacked the element of compulsion. The response of the See Government was to introduce the registration and incorporation of unions and enforcement of industrial agreements in 1901.<sup>14</sup> Further legislation in 1908 provided for awards to be binding on the parties concerned and set up Wages Boards to oversee the judgements.

Unrest continued with a report from Rawson that detailed a serious strike at Broken Hill in January 1909, which resulted in rioting and arrest of the leaders.<sup>15</sup> Industrial disputes on the state coalfields in the same year tested the strength of current legislation and led Premier Wade to introduce anti-strike legislation to curb the unions. He took the view that ‘...militant unions did not accept the decision of the arbitration process as final’.<sup>16</sup> The unsettled industrial conditions were part of the process that led to the *Industrial Arbitration Act*, 1912. Chelmsford was anxious to see if it would be ‘any more effective in preventing strikes’.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, as Governor Strickland advised in April 1913, ‘Strikes of a very serious and far reaching character have been in progress ...’, making likely the need for a further revision of legislation.<sup>18</sup> Premier Wade attributed a major share of the disruption to militant socialists such as the Industrial Workers of the World advocating general strikes and a class war, where the reaction of legislative enactments was slow to respond.<sup>19</sup>

Four interrelated subjects in this pre-war period also attracted the attention of Governors Rawson and Chelmsford. They were shortage of labour, immigration, closer settlement and local government. In 1908, Governor Rawson stressed the labour deficiency to the Colonial Office: ‘Authentic reports disclose the fact that farm-hands are eagerly sought...’ He further stated that ‘no inducement or encouragement is offered to artisans, mechanics, miners and labourers...local demand for men in these trades is not sufficient to meet the supply’.<sup>20</sup> This direction was the

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<sup>14</sup> M. Hogan, ‘John (later Sir John) See (28.3.1901-14.6.1904), in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 27. Chelmsford advised that the number of unions had decreased from a peak of 209 in 1903 to 166 in 1910 while membership rose from 73,301 to 127,402 – Chelmsford to Harcourt, 12.4.1911, CO 418, f. 107, AJCP, ML Reel 4199.90.1.

<sup>15</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 16.1.1909, CO 418, f. 40, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4185.72.1.

<sup>16</sup> Clune, ‘Charles (later Sir Charles) Gregory Wade’, in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 84.

<sup>17</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 156, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1

<sup>18</sup> Strickland to Harcourt, 30.4.1913, CO 418, f. 302, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4217.112.1.

<sup>19</sup> Clune, ‘Charles (later Sir Charles) Gregory Wade’, in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 30.6.1908, CO 418, f. 327, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.1.

focus of the State's immigration policy and 'desirable immigrants' would be assisted with subsidised ship fares ranging from eight to eleven pounds and a special subsidy of two pounds for the immigrants that met the employment categories of farm hands and domestic servants.<sup>21</sup>

Closer settlement was a long-term program of Premier Carruthers as identified by the 1895 Crown land legislation. The Government initiative was specified in the '*Closer Settlement Act* 1904 that 'authorised the acquisition of large landed estates by purchase or resumption for division into smaller farms for settlers'.<sup>22</sup> This was an ideal arrangement for desirable farm holdings and aided the direction of the government immigration policy. Governor Rawson told the Colonial Office in 1909: 'Over £1,000,000 was spent last year in the resumption of large estates for settlement...'.<sup>23</sup> The effective introduction of these programs needed a further control mechanism of sound local government, which was lacking in this state. Governor Rawson encapsulated the situation:

The law only provided for the incorporation of towns, and then only those towns which voluntarily petitioned for incorporation. The consequence was that out of a total area of 310,367 square miles there were only 2,813 square miles incorporated in 191 municipalities.<sup>24</sup>

The remainder of the territory was administered by the Public Works Department. The planning was erratic and its 'roads and bridges' program was subject to intervention by politicians currying favour in their electorates. Premier Carruthers introduced a three phase program of a shires bill to compulsorily incorporate rural areas, a further bill to cover the municipalities, and finally in 1906 these two bills were incorporated into the *Local Government Act*. Only a sparsely occupied western area of the state was now outside the act.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the local government legislation, the labour, immigration and closer settlement policies had lost their momentum by 1910. Governor Chelmsford's report of 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1910 was critical of the government inactivity in these areas. He compared the programs with his experience in Queensland where 'large landowners ... have during the past four years been systematically breaking up their estates, while in New South Wales the landowners are

<sup>21</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 16.1.1909, CO 418, f. 38, AJCP, ML PRO 4185.72.1.

<sup>22</sup> Harwin, 'Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Carruthers', in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 16.1.1909, CO 418, f. 38, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4185.72.1.

<sup>24</sup> Rawson to Crewe, 30.6.1908, CO 418, f. 328, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.1

<sup>25</sup> Harwin, 'Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Carruthers', in Clune & Turner, *Premiers*, vol. 2, pp. 60-61.



strenuously opposing such a policy.’<sup>26</sup> This despatch mentioned a further impediment to immigration: ‘Families are welcomed in Queensland. I am afraid they are not in New South Wales. The squatters want labourers and no encumbrances’. Chelmsford was also disappointed with the lack of government action and added that ‘there is little or no enthusiasm on the subject of immigration’. An amended *Crown Lands* Act was passed in 1912 to assist settlers to go on the land and it established new forms of tenure.<sup>27</sup> In 1911, a Commission enquired into the shortage of labour and concluded, contrary to earlier opinions, that there was a need for the ‘introduction from abroad of trained and competent workers for most of the skilled trades and the manufacturing industries’.<sup>28</sup>

### **The relationship between the Governor and the State Government**

There were two significant developments in New South Wales politics during this post-Federation era. Women were eligible to vote for the first time in the 1904 election and the Labor Party were increasing their representation in the Lower House at each election. There was a relationship between these two aspects. Labour women considered they made an important contribution as organisers and canvassers in the party success with the promotion of women’s concerns. Maternity leave and equal pay were live issues although success would not be achieved for some years.<sup>29</sup> The governors needed to be cognisant of the political climate and retain a good rapport with their ministers. The public respect for Rawson and Chelmsford probably assisted them to resolve political difficulties but Strickland’s obsession with constitutional correctness undermined the mutual understanding with the party in power. Certain dominant points of potential friction with the government of the day are considered here. They involve the use of the royal prerogative powers in both the formation and administration of government.

The first clash involved the administration of the royal prerogative of judicial mercy. Rawson was irritated by the disrespect for his authority in a controversial matter that arose in September 1902. Moss Morris Friedman was found guilty by a jury of receiving stolen goods although the evidence suggested he was an innocent man. While Judge Rogers disagreed with the guilty

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<sup>26</sup> Chelmsford to Crewe, 1.2.1910, CO 418, f. 24, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4192.80.1.

<sup>27</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 152, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1.

<sup>28</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, ff. 153-154.

<sup>29</sup> B. Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 118-119.

verdict, he felt obliged to accept it and sentenced the prisoner to twelve months imprisonment. On the recommendation of the judge, the Attorney-General, Bernard Wise, gave approval for the release of the prisoner. The governor was displeased to learn from *Hansard* that the discharge had been given before his consent was obtained. The Attorney-General called on the Governor and apologized, 'but gave as his excuse that he had acted without waiting for my approval as my signature was a mere formality'.<sup>30</sup> Wise supported his decision by quoting from the Governor's Colonial Office instructions that for non-capital cases the governor should act on 'the advice of one at least of his Ministers'. The Governor responded to Wise by stating that after he received that advice 'he had to act on his own responsibility... and that it was quite within his province to refuse if he thought fit'. Rawson confirmed this opinion to Premier See stressing his authority was not a formality and that he retained the responsibility for 'the exercise of the prerogative of Mercy'. No action should have been taken without his approval. The Premier personally apologised to the Governor on behalf of the Executive Council and advised that future decisions of the Attorney-General would be passed through him to the governor.<sup>31</sup>

Further points of tension were generated by the governor's role in the appointment and support of governments. After an article appeared in the London *Morning Post* on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1904 regarding the governor's involvement with the selection of a successor to Premier See, Sir Harry Rawson believed 'it expedient to place my reasons privately before the Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttelton, so that he may be able to judge whether my action was constitutional or not'.<sup>32</sup> Sir John See had informed the Governor in June that he intended to resign due to ill health and discussed the merits of the whole Cabinet as to individual qualifications for the premiership. The Premier believed that Wise, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, was 'best fitted for the Office but he thought Mr. Wise was very unreliable'.<sup>33</sup> That was also the governor's view after the Friedman incident.

The alternative choice from the Premier was Crick, Secretary for Lands, but again this Minister had some unsatisfactory character traits. Crick had upset the governor when he did not attend a ministerial dinner at Government House after accepting the invitation and did not apologise

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<sup>30</sup> M. Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson (27 May 1902-27 May 1909)', in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, pp. 403-404.

<sup>31</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 13.10.1902, CO 418, ff. 467-479, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2151.20.

<sup>32</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 23.9.1904, CO 418, f. 220, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2165.32.

<sup>33</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 23.9.1904, CO 418, f. 221.

afterwards. Despite this rudeness, Rawson would have still considered the minister for the top position, except for his notorious reputation for causing ‘disgraceful scenes’ in parliament while under the influence of alcohol. It was also known that Crick ‘had more than once been summoned before the Magistrates for breaches of the law’.<sup>34</sup> The governor had noted Crick’s behaviour at some Executive Council meetings showed that he had been drinking to excess. Sir John See held a further Cabinet meeting to decide on a nomination for premier, and settled on Waddell; ‘an able Treasurer, sound but not brilliant’.<sup>35</sup> The governor accepted this recommendation and Waddell became Premier when Sir John See resigned on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1904. The new premier was a safe option for the short period to the next election, which was lost to Carruthers, Liberal and Reform Party.<sup>36</sup> The Colonial Office comment on the despatch was that ‘Sir Harry Rawson appears to have adopted quite the right course’.<sup>37</sup>

Governors appointed by the British Government were expected to be impartial in their association with the local political parties. Sir Harry Rawson came close to infringing this criterion when handling a government dispute with the Legislative Council in December 1904. The Premier, Joseph Carruthers, told the governor that he intended to resign if the Upper House maintained their refusal to pass the Stamp Duties Amendment Bill and the Sydney Harbour Rates Bill without the amendments they proposed. If both Houses were determined not to give in, and the ministry resigned, the governor would have to call on the Leader of the Labor Party to form a government.<sup>38</sup> Rawson called in a prominent member of the Council and pointed out ‘that by their present attitude the members of the Council were playing into the hands of the Socialist Party, and the harm that such a course would do to New South Wales’.<sup>39</sup> The Council was now more co-operative and the Premier made some amendments to the Bills so that they passed through both Houses. The Colonial Office was concerned about the governor’s actions and comments on his despatch by Harold Dale, first class clerk, and supported by his seniors, revealed their reaction:

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<sup>34</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 23.9.1904, CO 418, f. 222.

<sup>35</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 23.9.1904, CO 418, f. 223.

<sup>36</sup> Rutledge, ‘Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 405.

<sup>37</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 23.9.1904, CO 418, f. 216.

<sup>38</sup> Rutledge, ‘Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 406.

<sup>39</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 12.12.1904, CO 418, f. 279, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2165.32.

I don't think the Governor ought to have made the remarks as to the harm that playing into the hands of the Socialist Party would do to NSW. It practically amounts to declaring his personal predilections against the Labour Party. If it gets out, the latter will very possibly bring it forward in Parliament. I would gently hint to the Governor in acknowledging this despatch.<sup>40</sup>

Lord Chelmsford carried a mental scar from a constitutional crisis during his term in Queensland. After an election in May 1907, Premier William Kidston, asked the governor to appoint additional members in the Upper House to ensure the policies of the new government would not be obstructed. Lord Chelmsford considered such action would swamp the Legislative Council and refused the request without a mandate from the people. The premier promptly resigned. An alternative ministry was formed by the Conservative Leader, Robert Philp, although his party did not have a parliamentary majority. The Assembly protested about the change of government and blocked supply.<sup>41</sup> Lord Chelmsford granted Philp a dissolution and used his prerogative powers to ensure expenditure was met until the next government took office. Kidston was returned and the same stalemate remained until a coalition was formed with Philp. It avoided a difficult situation for the governor as there had been demands for his recall. On review of Chelmsford's actions, the refusal to appoint additional members to the Upper House could be supported by established precedents. This was not the case with the subsequent fallout from such a decision. The constitutional expert, H.V. Evatt submitted that Chelmsford's error was to have aided Philp to secure a dissolution of a newly elected Assembly 'willing to continue support to Mr. Kidston, and so unwilling to support or condone the acts of the Philp Ministry that it refused him supply'.<sup>42</sup> While the Colonial Office were concerned about Chelmsford using his prerogative powers for dissolution and taking responsibility to meet expenditure prior to another election, there was no suggestion that the governor would be recalled.<sup>43</sup> Otherwise, Chelmsford had a successful term in Queensland, which was repeated in New South Wales.

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<sup>40</sup> Rawson to Lyttelton, 12.12.1904, CO 418, f. 277, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2165.32; Harold Dale (1875-1954) career outlined in J. Rendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911: A Study in Imperial Organisation*, Longmans, London, 1967, p. 121.

<sup>41</sup> *SMH*, 20.11.1907, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> H.V. Evatt, *The King and his Dominion Governors: A Study of the Reserve Powers of the Crown in Great Britain and the Dominions*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936, pp. 137-139; D. Clune, 'Frederic John Napier Thesiger, Baron Chelmsford (28 May 1909-13 March 1913)', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 415-417.

<sup>43</sup> A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1909, pp. 49-50.

While on a leave of absence from April to November 1911, Chelmsford was fortunate to avoid being involved in another constitutional crisis. On this occasion two Labor members of the Legislative Assembly had resigned in July 1911 over impending changes to land policy. It meant that the Government lost their majority and Acting Premier Holman, during Premier McGowen's absence overseas, sought a prorogation of Parliament until the by-elections. Lieutenant-Governor Cullen declined the request as he considered the question of prorogation until a by-election would avoid action being taken by the parliament. There was no precedent for such a proposal and approval on this occasion could lead to abuse in the future. Consequently, the Ministry resigned and Cullen approached the Opposition Leader, Wade, to form a Ministry. He had the same problem of lacking numbers after providing a speaker and declined the opportunity to govern. It meant that Cullen was obliged to ask Holman to return on the stipulation that there would be no further prorogations after this event. The Colonial Office was pleased with the handling of the dispute by the Lieutenant-Governor.<sup>44</sup> In his report of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1912 to the Colonial Office, Chelmsford mentioned that he was impressed with the performance of Sir William Cullen and the 'very good proof of the impartial manner in which he administered the Government'. Therefore, Chelmsford told the Colonial Office he was surprised to learn:

how dissatisfied politicians on both sides were with his [Cullen's] administration...The opposition were sore at his refusal of a dissolution...My Premier and Ministers, on the other hand, could not get out of their heads that he had been once their political opponent in the Legislature...they had no more use for local Governors, who must have a bias whether conscious or unconscious.<sup>45</sup>

Another major issue was looming by March 1912 with the composition of the Legislative Council. The Labour Party had only five supporters and they were unsuitable for debate. The Government had to admit the Legislative Council had adopted a moderate approach to business but Chelmsford did not believe they had 'any virtuous regard for fair play'.<sup>46</sup> He alluded to the recent limitation of power that the *Parliament Act* had imposed on the British House of Lords, which would have caused concern to the Council members. Due to the circumstances that prevailed, Lord Chelmsford was asked if he was prepared to help improve the balance in the

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<sup>44</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 420-421.

<sup>45</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, ff. 142-143, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1.

<sup>46</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 421-422.

Upper House. He appointed nine members to address the party strength and agreed 'that Sir Allen Taylor, the Lord Mayor, should be a 10<sup>th</sup> appointee on his resigning his office'.<sup>47</sup>

A further difficulty had arisen with the deaths of a Cabinet member and also his replacement, which involved the interference of the governor in the selection of a new minister. As it was a general rule that 'a Roman Catholic was replaced by a Roman Catholic',<sup>48</sup> the most likely choice was R.D. Meagher. The background of this member was unsatisfactory as he had been struck off the Law Institute roll and implicated in land scandals. Chelmsford sent for Holman, who was Acting Premier in the absence of Premier McGowen, and 'pointed out the very grave responsibility the party would be taking in electing such a man, both from the public point of view and from their own standpoint'.<sup>49</sup> The Cabinet agreed with this view and selected the Speaker, Cann, as the new Treasurer.

The Colonial Office had agreed that Rawson had taken the correct course on advice to Premier See for his replacement, mentioned above, and a similar reaction occurred with this appointment. A.B. Keith commented on the Colonial Office file:

I am very glad to see how effective was the use of the Governor's intervention in preventing Mr. Meagher from being appointed as Treasurer in the place of Mr. Dacey. It is a good example of the useful effect which can be produced by the exercise of tact on the part of the Governor.<sup>50</sup>

In Chelmsford's last report to the Colonial Office he wrote about the lack of cohesion within the Cabinet and the inability of Premier McGowen to discipline the members. Each Minister was secure in his election by Caucus and managed his own portfolio without reference to Cabinet.<sup>51</sup> This was to provide an opening to the incoming Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland. Strickland focused on this complaint and was determined to formalise Executive Council meetings as a means of ensuring that submissions brought forward had been approved by Cabinet. In his first report to the Colonial Office, Strickland advised that 'I made it clear that I could not reconcile it

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<sup>47</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 26.3.1912, CO 418, ff. 68-70, AJCP, ML Reel Pro 4207.101; Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 144, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.

<sup>48</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 146, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1.

<sup>49</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 152.

<sup>50</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 138.

<sup>51</sup> Clune, 'Baron Chelmsford', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 422.

with my sense of duty to have the Executive Council as a mere ceremonial proceeding'.<sup>52</sup> A further development was the regularity of emergency Council meetings. When the Minister for Labour and Education, Carmichael, questioned this aspect, the governor advised that 'I ruled that they had been duly constituted because I had given authority to summon them under the Royal Instructions'.<sup>53</sup> It was clear that ministers were becoming irritated by the governor's insistence with formalities, which they regarded as lapsed conventions.

The Colonial Office had been apprehensive about advancing Sir Gerald Strickland within the Colonial overseas service due to his inflexible demands for constitutional correctness. He had been tolerated in Tasmania and Western Australia but his tactless approach to such issues was destined to create difficulties in New South Wales. As far as the period covered by this thesis extends, it may be judged that Sir Gerald Strickland's performance may have been irksome for ministers but justifiable in his efforts to demand British standards of constitutional government. While it is outside the scope of this thesis, the unfortunate development of this governorship was that during the war years he could not resist the temptation to impose his interpretation of constitutional procedures in a way threatening to imperial as well as local interests. Strickland had antagonized the British Government with his interference in Commonwealth matters that did not concern him as well as confrontation with the New South Wales premier. The Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, was in no mood to support Strickland's constitutional ideas when it jeopardized relations with a Premier who had fought for the introduction of conscription in the 1916 referendum.<sup>54</sup> While there has been lengthy debate over whether Strickland's views were correct, Anne Twomey conveyed the reason for his downfall from recently available documents: '[T]he cardinal sin, for which Sir Gerald was recalled, was acting in a partisan manner in leaking to the press the fact that he had called for Holman's resignation'.<sup>55</sup> Vice-regal representatives should act in a non-partisan manner.

In summary, the maturing two-party political system in the Assembly emphasised the need to focus the governor's responsibility to working through informal advisory skills or requiring compliance with official procedures to achieve satisfactory ministerial management. This was

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<sup>52</sup> Strickland to Harcourt, 31.3.1913, CO 418, ff. 190-191, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4216.112.

<sup>53</sup> Strickland to Harcourt, 10.6.1913, CO 418, f. 391, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4217.112.

<sup>54</sup> M. Hogan, 'Sir Gerald Strickland, Count della Catena (14 March 1913-27 October 1917)', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, pp. 437-443.

<sup>55</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2006, p. 62.

evident when comparing the performance of Rawson and Chelmsford with Strickland. Also there was mixed evidence of performance to the standards of impartiality expected of an imported British governor but, on balance, expectation was not sufficiently challenged to bring the assumption of political neutrality under serious public doubt during this period. The rise of the Labor Party confronted vice-regal objectivity. When Carruthers had an issue with the Upper House, Rawson revealed his obvious bias against the Labor Party and probably associated them with the current world wide spread of socialism. Chelmsford was fortunate to be overseas when the Chief Justice was drawn into demands for prorogation of parliament. When the governor reported the outcome of this dispute to the Colonial Office, he point out that 'it is interesting to note the inability of the Australian politician to believe in the impartiality of a local man'.<sup>56</sup> On a later occasion, Chelmsford revealed an even-handed approach to additional Labor Party appointments to defuse an obstructive anti-Labor Upper House.

### **The State Governor's status in Commonwealth/ States relations**

It was inevitable that friction would develop between the Commonwealth and the States after federation as the parties settled into their new roles. The Federal Government had intruded into the States' domain by taking over functions such as defence, customs and excise, posts and telegraph, immigration and quarantine. An underlying cause for the uncooperative atmosphere was the further encroachment of the Commonwealth into the authority of the State. Issues included the State Bank being endangered by the entry of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and excessive land demands for the Jervis Bay naval base and various sites around Sydney such as 'Garden Island and the Quarantine Station at North Head'.<sup>57</sup> The States resisted any suggestion of subordination to the Commonwealth by claiming their sovereign rights, as provided by the Constitution, whenever the opportunity arose. As part of this defence, the governor was an important link in the direct contact with Britain rather than centralisation through the governor-general.

This direct contact being the 'Channel of Communication', as it became known, was a hotly debated issue. Initially, the Secretary of State, Joseph Chamberlain, directed that the Governor-General should receive copies of all state correspondence with the Colonial Office. After

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<sup>56</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 143, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.1.

<sup>57</sup> Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, p. 109.



agitation from the States, this instruction was officially modified on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1901 to provide a copy only when the Commonwealth was likely to have an interest in the matter.<sup>58</sup> The intensity of this issue in the first decade, as late as 1908, can be gauged by a speech Sir Harry Rawson gave at a Lord Mayor's luncheon, when he drew attention to a newspaper report:

The Melbourne *Age* a few days ago stated that all communications between States and the Colonial Office were carried on through the Governor General. This is entirely wrong – cheers – because except in those things that were entirely within the scope of the Federation, everything between the States and the Imperial Government was carried on by the State Governors with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, just as it was before – loud cheers – even to recommendation for honours.<sup>59</sup>

While a simplification of the situation, it was a reasonable summation of the state of affairs that existed at the time.

Chelmsford was also conscious of his role in the Channel of Communication. He misunderstood a letter from Governor-General Denman that suggested all confidential and secret despatches would be discussed with the Prime Minister. The governor thought it meant a change of instructions and all state despatches had to be sent to the governor-general. Chelmsford promptly informed the Colonial Office that such action would mean that his Ministers would not disclose anything of value or interest to him. 'Their confidence in us will be hopelessly sapped'.<sup>60</sup> In fact, the instruction quoted by Denman was merely a Colonial Office despatch stating the existing rules for the benefit of the new governor-general.

As far as the imperial perspective was concerned, the rationale of Federation was to simplify and clarify lines of responsibility (and lessen the number of interest groups that imperial decision-makers needed to consult). The result could not be considered an effective use of resources but the Colonial Office was obliged to recognise the state governor as an important source for promotion of British interests. As far as the state perspective was concerned, any channel of direct communication with Whitehall was better than one via the Federal Government. Thus, this new avenue of value for the state governor was just one aspect of a wider state push for a say in

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<sup>58</sup> D. Wright, *Shadow of Dispute: Aspects of Commonwealth-State Relations, 1901-1910*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1970, pp. 2-5.

<sup>59</sup> *SMH*, 9.3.1908, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 5.12.1911, CO 418. ff. 322-323, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90; Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown*, p. 23.

imperial decision-making, which included the activities of the agent-general in London and an attempt by states to demand seats at the Colonial/Imperial Conference of 1907. It was ultimately rejected by the Colonial Secretary who advised the Governor-General Lord Northcote that 'I have firmly resisted the demand of the State Premiers to be summoned to the Colonial Conference'.<sup>61</sup>

Recognition of 'State Rights' strengthened the justification for a British governor to uphold the relationship with Britain. While there were demands within the Labor Party to appoint a local person, state governments were too protective of their distinctive position with the Crown to venture down this path in the early days after Federation.

During the week that Sir Harry Rawson arrived in the colony, the *Bulletin* attacked the theory of 'state rights' and questioned its value to the country: 'The people who mouth it so freely try to make it appear that State Rights are in some way associated with the sacred cause of Liberty, and that if the country fails to defend them it will be ground under the heavy heel of Oppression'. The *Bulletin* attitude was that '...all this is bunkum, that the people are likely to be much happier without any State Rights'.<sup>62</sup> It wanted the Australian Constitution amended to 'allow the abolition of the State Parliaments, State Governors, and all the rest of the State fripperies...'<sup>63</sup> and hand management over to an Australian Parliament.

In one dispute between the Commonwealth and the State, the governor had a personal interest in the result but it was inappropriate for him to interfere in the negotiations. This was the situation with the occupancy of the Federal Government House in Sydney. As related in chapter five, Sir William Lyne, as Premier of New South Wales, had persuaded Lord Beauchamp to vacate the vice-regal residence in 1900 so that it could be offered to the governor-general to use during the recess of Federal Parliament in Melbourne. The collaboration between the two governments had soured by 1905. Premier Carruthers complained that occupation of Government House by the governor-general had averaged only 89 days per annum compared to full residence in the pre-federation days.<sup>64</sup> Subsequent lease negotiations were frustrated by the death of Lady Rawson. Sir Harry told the Premier that he had happy memories with his wife at State Government House,

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<sup>61</sup> Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, p. 87.

<sup>62</sup> *Bulletin*, 31.5.1902, p. 6

<sup>63</sup> *Bulletin*, 17.11.1904, p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> *SMH*, 20.6.1912, p. 7.

Cranbrook, and he would 'decline to remain as Governor if he had to live in any other house'.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the lease was renewed for another five years.

The first indication of a problem with the next lease renewal for Government House was a letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1911, from Acting Premier Holman to Acting Prime Minister Hughes, commenting that he 'understood that the Federal Government would be pleased to be relieved of the occupancy of the premises'.<sup>66</sup> When the State Government made a press announcement in June that it intended to occupy Government House for public use, it unleashed a storm of protest.<sup>67</sup> The Government was accused of disloyalty to the Crown and unsettling the close relationship with the Mother Country. It was envisaged such action would deter the new Governor-General, Lord Denman, from regular visits to Sydney. This controversy added weight to concerns in Britain about the Labor Party in control of both Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments and their attitude to Empire unity during this period of international tensions.<sup>68</sup>

Lord Chelmsford was keeping the Colonial Office informed of developments in his regular secret report of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1912, about twelve months after the two Governments clashed on the future of the Sydney residence. While the governor was sympathetic to the State Government's difficult circumstances, his report revealed that Holman had no firm plans for tenancy after repossession, indicating that 'My Ministers are in a quandary as to the House itself. It is quite useless for any other purposes than those for which it is used at present'.<sup>69</sup> Critics had ridiculed Holman's original suggestion of converting Government House to either a library or museum of arts as being impractical and costly.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, Chelmsford advised, Government reaction was that 'they seem quite determined as to their policy and there does not seem to be any such strong feeling expressed by the general public as will cause them to shrink from pursuing it'.<sup>71</sup> At the time of the governor's report, public opposition was gathering momentum. A small interest group led by Sir William McMillan, business man and politician, enlisted the aid of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Clarke, to arrange a citizens' protest meeting concerned about the State Government's

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<sup>65</sup> *SMH*, 20.4.1912, p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> *SMH*, 18.9.1912, p. 19. Prime Minister Fisher and Premier McGowen were in Britain for the Coronation of George V at this time.

<sup>67</sup> *SMH*, 2.6.1911, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> C. Cunneen, *Kings' Men: Australia's Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, pp. 99-103.

<sup>69</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 148, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.

<sup>70</sup> *SMH*, 3.6.1911, p. 8; 12.6.1911, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 149, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101.

proposed use of Government House.<sup>72</sup> As the result of the protest meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1912, Premier McGowen heard representations from a large citizens' deputation, described by the Lord Mayor as 'an influential one, including citizens engaged in the mercantile, banking and industrial businesses of the community'.<sup>73</sup> The Premier promised to consult the Cabinet further on the matter but considered there was no possibility of a change in policy.

An alternative approach was suggested by Sir Joseph Carruthers, now a past premier, that the state governor should move to Federal Government House and the governor-general occupy Cranbrook on his visits to Sydney.<sup>74</sup> This did not suit Chelmsford as his report mentioned that he was quite comfortable at his present location. He would reside at Federal Government House if instructed to do so.

While the underlying cause for the obdurate stance of the state was the encroachment by the Commonwealth into state rights, Chelmsford identified a basic feature that annoyed the Labor Ministers:

We provide, they say, a Government House for the Governor. We pay him an adequate salary and ample allowances for the upkeep of his position. It is notorious that the Federal Government do [*sic*] none of these things. It is for them to look after their Governor General at their own expense and not pass him round like a poor relation to be quartered at other people's expense.<sup>75</sup>

Federal Government House was returned to the State on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1913 but it was not the end of the dispute. The Lord Mayor's Citizens' Committee took out an injunction against the State Government to prevent occupation of the House. Legal action escalated through the Supreme Court, High Court and eventually to the Privy Council<sup>76</sup>, where it was held that New

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<sup>72</sup> *SMH*, 1.5.1912, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> *SMH*, 20.6.1912, p. 7. The Citizens' Deputation was strongly influenced by political opposition groups such as MLAs Sir William McMillan, T. Henley, MLCs Sir Alfred Meeks, Sir Norman Kater and G.F. Earp, as well as Alderman Sir Arthur Cocks, British Empire League President F.S. Smithurst, and business leaders such as banker T.A. Dibbs and company director W.P. Dunlop.

<sup>74</sup> *SMH*, 20.4.1912, p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 14.5.1912, CO 418, f. 149, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4207.101

<sup>76</sup> H. Radi, 'Henley, Sir Thomas (1860-1935)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, On line Edition, Australian National University, Canberra, 2006, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090268b.htm> accessed 26.4.2010.  
Three politicians associated with the Citizens Committee, McMillan, Henley and Cocks, instigated the Privy Council appeal and incurred £3,500 costs, which was later covered by public subscription.

South Wales had the right to use the premises as they desired.<sup>77</sup> Strickland, unlike Chelmsford, could hardly contain his enthusiasm to move from State Government House, Rose Bay, which he claimed was inconveniently located for transaction of government business.<sup>78</sup> He was restrained by instructions from home stating ‘the Secretary of State does not consider it desirable that he should take any initiative in the matter of Government House’.<sup>79</sup> A note by A.B. Keith on this Colonial Office file suggested that ‘if Sir Gerald Strickland does nothing I should think there is a fair chance ...that he may be able to obtain the restoration of the House’ and that is how it was determined. In October 1915, Sir Gerald Strickland was delighted to occupy Government House.<sup>80</sup>

A final political complexity of this period was the transfer of Norfolk Island to New South Wales. While Lord Hampden reported to Colonial Secretary Chamberlain in 1897 about the ‘excellent results’ of transferring the administration of Norfolk Island to the state, he did not fully appreciate the deep-seated dissatisfaction of the islanders.<sup>81</sup> The older inhabitants were convinced that the Pitcairn residents were induced to settle on Norfolk Island in 1856 on the understanding that the whole island would be divided amongst them. It was recognised that due to the secluded nature of life on Pitcairn Island, they may have misunderstood the terms of the transfer to Norfolk Island, which was limited to providing each family with a cottage and grant of land. There was no external interference with their land management until Governor Loftus visited the island in 1886. He halted the practice of free grants of land and insisted that future grants would be subject to property improvement. The allocation of land continued to be handled carelessly and created difficulties for the future.<sup>82</sup>

These long standing problems of land grants, occupation of government cottages and poor agricultural pursuits still needed to be resolved. Sir Harry Rawson advised the Colonial Office in 1902 that ‘My predecessor visited the Island in 1900 and since then nothing has been done’.<sup>83</sup> Further issues had arisen from Federation, which convinced the governor that Norfolk Island should become a Commonwealth responsibility.

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<sup>77</sup> Cunneen, *Kings’ Men*, p. 102.

<sup>78</sup> Strickland to Harcourt, 31.3.1913, CO 418, f. 187, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4216.112.

<sup>79</sup> Harcourt to Strickland, 31.3.1914, CO 418, f. 99, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4226.124.

<sup>80</sup> Cunneen, *Kings’ Men*, p. 102.

<sup>81</sup> For further information, see Ch. 3, p. 48: ‘Governor as executive agent of the Crown’ concluding comments on the Norfolk Island subject.

<sup>82</sup> Rawson to Elgin, 21.1.1908, CO 418, f. 41, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.

<sup>83</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 14.8.1902, CO 418, f. 323, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2151.20.

The Council of Elders appeared to be testing the resolve of the new governor to interfere with their administration of the island. In October 1902, they submitted a petition to Rawson, 'protesting against annexation to any Colony or to the Commonwealth of Australia'.<sup>84</sup> It was followed by their resignation as a body from the Council in April 1903 after refusing to implement a regulation for the control of dogs.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, Sir Harry Rawson travelled to the island on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1903 and accepted the resignation of the Council of Elders. A private letter to relatives in England conveyed the result of his visit. Rawson bluntly told the Elders that he had 'abrogated their constitution and am going to give them another, which will enable me to come down on them individually. They want ruling with a firm hand and I advised their being annexed to the Commonwealth...'<sup>86</sup>

Edmund (later Sir Edmund) Barton, when practising at the bar in 1899, studied the documents related to the claim that Norfolk Island had been ceded to the Pitcairn islanders for resettlement. He advised 'that there is no foundation for the claim ... that the territory has been 'ceded' to them'.<sup>87</sup> Sir Harry Rawson confirmed this decision on his visit in May 1903 and told the islanders that the matter was closed.<sup>88</sup> While there were some unfortunate delays with the investigation of land and building claims, a final report was submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1905.<sup>89</sup> Properties held by old Pitcairners or their descendents down to grandchildren were allowed to continue rent free and other occupiers would have to pay a nominal rental. When Rawson requested the occupiers to sign a Licence to confirm the arrangements, some of the islanders refused. There were accusations of instant eviction of these persons but in reality the disputes were suitably negotiated.<sup>90</sup> The islanders continued a campaign of petitions, deputations to the Governor and appeals to the Secretary of State to satisfy their grievances. The subject was closed, as Sir Harry Rawson explained the official view to the Colonial Office in 1908: 'The question of the claims of the Norfolk Islanders to the whole of the land and buildings in the island has been raised by them and disallowed over and over again by Governors and Secretaries of State'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 10.1.1903, CO 418, f. 106, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2151.27.

<sup>85</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 406.

<sup>86</sup> G. Rawson, *Life of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson*, Edward Arnold, London, 1914, p. 229.

<sup>87</sup> Rawson to Lyttleton, 9.8.1905, with opinion from Sir Edmund Barton, 21.7.1899, CO 418, ff. 326-338, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2171.38.

<sup>88</sup> Rawson to Lyttleton, 9.8.1905, CO 418, f. 328, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2171.38.

<sup>89</sup> Rawson to Elgin, 3.1.1907, CO 418, f. 18, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2184.53.

<sup>90</sup> Rawson to Elgin, 21.1.1908, CO 418, ff. 30-31, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.

<sup>91</sup> Rawson to Elgin, 21.1.1908, CO 418, ff. 30, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2191.62.

As early as August 1902, Sir Harry Rawson had recommended the administration of Norfolk Island be transferred to the Commonwealth for the benefit of defence of the Pacific Cable station, postal services and relaxation of the Australian tariff on imports from the island.<sup>92</sup> A bill to realise the transfer had been circulating around the Federal Parliament from June 1908 but the prevailing issues with the islanders probably deterred positive action when there were so many urgent matters on the table.<sup>93</sup> The Colonial Office revived the subject in June 1911 when Prime Minister Fisher was in London.<sup>94</sup> The main sticking point was allowing free trade. The Prime Minister felt that Norfolk Island should be treated the same as its other territory, Papua, which was subject to tariff conditions. The matter drifted on to 1913, when Norfolk Island was accepted by the Commonwealth without a trade barrier. It was accepted on the basis of being a small Crown Colony of European race origin, though mixed with Tahitian blood, while Papua had an indigenous population.<sup>95</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1913, Sir Gerald Strickland advised the Colonial Office that the Governor-General had given assent to the Bill for the transfer of Norfolk Island to the Commonwealth.<sup>96</sup>

The two major political changes arising out of Commonwealth/State relations that affected the governor in this era were support for 'State Rights' against encroachment by the Commonwealth and release from his role of executive officer for Norfolk Island. Firstly, it revealed that a less obvious outcome of Federation was the elevated status of the governor rather than the anticipated subordination to the governor-general. He now symbolised the separate sovereignty of the State and became guardian of the direct link to the Monarchy and British Government. The governor's regular secret reports allowed the Colonial Office to gain a balanced view of threats to State Rights through the Channel of Communication instead of a biased view from the Commonwealth that could otherwise apply. It emphasised the contemporary argument of the state for an imperial representative to hold office and not a local person who might be swayed by political pressures.

Secondly, it required the skills of three Governors, Rawson, Chelmsford and Strickland, to establish conditions suitable for the transfer of Norfolk Island from state to federal control. This

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<sup>92</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 14.8.1902, CO 418, ff. 324-325, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2151.20.

<sup>93</sup> *SMH*, 4.6.1908, p. 11.

<sup>94</sup> Colonial Office internal memo 2.3.1911; Discussion between Harcourt and Fisher, 12.6.1911, CO 418, ff. 58-71, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.

<sup>95</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 25.1.1911, CO 418, f. 70, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.1

<sup>96</sup> Strickland to Harcourt, 23.12.1913, CO 418, f. 345, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4218.113.

was one occasion when the two governments were in unison about where the future responsibility for the island should be established. The Colonial Office was satisfied as they had noted on one of the governor's reports: 'Norfolk Island has been a source of great trouble and annoyance to this Office and it would probably be better if it were administered by the Commonwealth'.<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion

The post-Federation period changed the political outlook for the governor compared to the pre-Federation days. In state politics, the maturing two-party system of government in the elected Assembly meant the governor's prerogative powers were now directed more to resolution of conflict with the nominated Upper House. In addition, there were frequent occasions where he had to mediate on political appointments either by personal discussion with the premier or accept ministerial advice. If he used his prerogative powers to reject a recommendation, it carried the repercussion of political upheaval. It underlined the importance of personal relationships between the governor and premier that was successful for both Rawson and Chelmsford.

There was still the on-going debate from the pre-Federation period that the role of governor could be performed by a distinguished colonial citizen. There were confused messages about such an appointment. As Lord Chelmsford mentioned to the Colonial Office, the Labor Government questioned the impartiality of a local person as governor when a decision of the Lieutenant-Governor was unfavourable to them. Nevertheless, there were still other calls for the Chief Justice to take over the role of governor. These demands were usually based on economic considerations rather than a lack of impartiality. On balance, a British governor adopting an even hand towards all political parties was seen as a performance requirement.

The rivalry in Commonwealth/State relations raised the question of State Rights after Federation. It was going to take time to work out how much freedom of action was retained by the states under the federal constitution and what the implications were for the role of the state governor. One aspect gained further importance for the governor. He was now viewed as the embodiment of state sovereignty. This view was given practical credibility by the fact that he had direct access to the British Government and consolidated the separate sovereignty of the States from the

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<sup>97</sup> Chelmsford to Crewe, 1.2.1910, CO 418, f. 20, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4192.80.



Commonwealth. This feature of the governor's role may not appear so vital in later decades but in the period up to the First World War, the two levels of government were still finding their feet. The State link to Britain was a defining aspect of their authority.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### GOVERNORS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE PEOPLE 1901-1914

The New South Wales vice-regal representatives after Federation enthusiastically continued social and philanthropic involvement within the community, which was well established by their predecessors from the 1890s. There were new imperial participants now, the governor-general and his wife, seeking to make an impression on the welfare of the people. On numerous occasions they covered the same social and charitable paths as the governor but also cooperated in meeting public demand for their services.

As in chapter four, three aspects of the vice-regal relationship with the people are considered. Firstly, the governor had to maintain close contact with the people so that imperial unity was preserved in an age of developing nationalism. Secondly, the vice-regal presence had to be seen as a source to encourage voluntary efforts for community welfare. Finally, the governor needed to remain impartial by avoiding entanglements in cultural activities linked to sectarian social division.

#### **The Governor as symbol of imperial unity**

The first decade of the new century was a period of prosperity although business attitude was that 'there is nothing in the shape of a boom'.<sup>1</sup> In Sydney a more vibrant city was being created by investment both in new public infrastructure and updating or replacement of old symbols. The public expected their governors to give formal expression to their pride in achievement and governors were happy to be associated with such projects. Some key examples were Sir Harry Rawson's official opening of Pyrmont Bridge in 1902<sup>2</sup> and after the *Bulletin* reported the governor 'earned his first silver trowel'<sup>3</sup> for laying the foundation stone of the North Shore Hospital, he had further commitments to laying foundation stones regularly for three to four sites each year. Just over half of twenty-four sites visited up to 1908 were church construction, which was a good indicator of suburban expansion. There were occasions when the laying of a church

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<sup>1</sup> *SMH*, 27.7.1907, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *SMH*, 30.6.1902, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin*, 21.6.1902, p. 14.

foundation stone was part of a festive visit to the municipality, such as invitations to Granville and Mosman.<sup>4</sup> It was an excellent opportunity for the governor to be close to the average citizen across the metropolitan area. Similar scenes were experienced with other municipal events like opening a School of Arts at Beecroft and the Town Hall at Ashfield.<sup>5</sup>

Lord Chelmsford also benefited from these positive economic conditions as the *Bulletin* remarked that he had ‘laid quite a large clutch of foundation stones during the past three or four weeks’.<sup>6</sup> Another significant event for the governor was the opportunity to open a building with future historic significance. It was the Mitchell Library built to house David Scott Mitchell’s library of books and manuscripts that he presented to the state. Lord Chelmsford made these notable comments: ‘There are records here...which are not mere records of history, but which are history in themselves’.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to adding glamour to special events marking ‘social progress’, it was also part of a governor’s role to support and embody ‘tradition’. Thus the governor continued to spread his contact with the people through regular vice-regal attendance at annual events like the New Year Highland Gathering, Royal Agricultural Show, and Sheepbreeders’ Show. Rawson told the Highland Gathering in 1907: ‘He once thought he was unable to claim any relationship with the Highlanders, but he had now ascertained that a great aunt of his had married Sir Duncan MacDougall, so that he [Sir Harry] was not altogether outside the pale’.<sup>8</sup> After federation, the governor-general took over the role of performing the official opening of the Royal Agricultural Show although the governor was usually present. In 1904, the Chairman proposed the toast to the State Governor: ‘They looked upon Sir Harry Rawson as a man among men, and a man for the people, and whose dignified conduct would always command their approbation’.<sup>9</sup>

The governors of this period had the benefit of an extensive rail network and more reliable motor vehicles to extend country tours into areas where vice-regal visits were previously unknown. Sir Harry Rawson made several country tours in the first eighteen months and travelled over 11,000 miles within New South Wales, although troubled by his arthritic hip as the result of the old war

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<sup>4</sup> *SMH*, 29.11.1902, p. 3, Granville; 13.12.1902, p. 4, Mosman.

<sup>5</sup> *SMH*, 10.12.1904, p. 10, Beecroft; 26.7.1907, p. 6, Ashfield.

<sup>6</sup> *Bulletin*, 3.12.1910, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 8.3.1910, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> *SMH*, 2.1.1907, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *SMH*, 1.4.1904, p. 4.

wound.<sup>10</sup> Lady Rawson was his constant touring companion regardless of concerns about her health.<sup>11</sup> The usual hospitality was overwhelming with levees, balls, banquets as well as inspections of hospitals, schools and other points of interest. Sir Harry and Lady Rawson made an extensive two week tour in 1904 that included towns of Narrabri, Armidale, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Muswellbrook, Wellington and Singleton. In view of hospitality costs to local communities in drought affected areas and the strain on the visiting party, the governor made ‘a special request that no balls or banquets be given to the vice-regal party during the tour’.<sup>12</sup> The reporting of these country visits had the appearance of informality that was also conveyed in the biography written by his son:

‘Gentlemen’, said one Mayor when proposing the toast of his health – ‘we have had a good many Governors among us, but we have never had such a hearty, uncouth old sea-dog as Sir Harry!’ ...Perhaps a more studied choice of words would have failed to present so striking and life-like a picture of a man distinguished by his geniality, robustness of character, and sailor-like frankness.<sup>13</sup>

As Sir Harry was to point out, he had travelled over 47,000 miles around the State meeting the people while he was in office.<sup>14</sup> In the early years he frequently apologised for the crowded program in a brief visit and said he would endeavour to come back again. Normally such remarks are just treated as a throw-away comment but he was quite sincere. There are several towns where he made return trips. They included Glen Innes and Armidale, Goulburn and Newcastle.<sup>15</sup> In later years the country trips were confined mainly to a specific purpose such as opening an agricultural show or laying a foundation stone. It was the charitable, educational and social work expected from governorship and he gave it to them.<sup>16</sup>

‘Lord Chelmsford was so complete a contrast to Sir Harry in all but essentials of straight dealing and hard work that comparison was out of the question’, according to Lady Poore, wife of the

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<sup>10</sup> For further information, see ch. 6 – Career outline of Sir Harry Rawson.

<sup>11</sup> M. Rutledge, ‘Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson (27 May 1902-27 May 1909)’, in D. Clune & K. Turner (eds.), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788-2010*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2009, pp. 402-403. Lady Rawson’s declining health is considered further in the next section.

<sup>12</sup> *SMH*, 8.4.1904, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> G. Rawson, *Life of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson*, Edward Arnold, London, 1914, p. 220.

<sup>14</sup> *SMH*, 23.3.1909, p. 6; Rutledge, ‘Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 403.

<sup>15</sup> *SMH*, 4.12.1902, p. 5 and 24.9.1904, p. 11, Glen Innes, Armidale; 24.11.1902, p. 5 and 15.3.1907, p. 6, Newcastle; 29.4.1903, p. 7 and 27.10.1906, p. 11, Goulburn.

<sup>16</sup> Rutledge, ‘Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson’, in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 411.

Admiral on the Australian Station.<sup>17</sup> Despite the differences in appearance and character to his predecessor, the new governor achieved similar levels of popularity with the citizens of New South Wales. He was 'a man of quiet temperament' who attracted people 'with his charm of manner, his ready sympathy, his never sleeping sense of humour, and his gentleness of disposition that concealed his trained and robust mind. But the power is there'.<sup>18</sup> The governor was recognised as an entertaining after-dinner speaker with the occasional light-hearted anecdote to maintain interest. When responding to a toast to 'the Governor' at the Royal Show dinner in 1910, he said: 'In Great Britain there was nothing like the Royal Show of New South Wales. Many Australians travelled great distances to see this exhibition, but if a man travelled 500 miles in England to be present at a show he would be regarded as an agreeable eccentric'.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout 1910 and 1911 Lord Chelmsford made several arduous country tours for periods from seven to sixteen days covering most of the State and Norfolk Island.<sup>20</sup> Lady Chelmsford was his constant companion on these trips and also involved herself with the organised events, either alone or with the governor. After a leave of absence in England for the birth of their sixth child, they returned via Broken Hill to cover engagements in that district.<sup>21</sup> It was just as well that Lady Chelmsford took the train back to Sydney from Broken Hill as the motor car trip to Cobar and Wilcannia was exhausting in the trying heat conditions. The public were probably interested to learn that even the vice-regal couple experienced similar travel difficulties to them, when on another tour 'the car obstinately refused to budge from the bed of a stream' outside Collarenebri.<sup>22</sup> Lord Chelmsford earnestly wished to meet the people and as he made known on his visit to Walgett, 'He was determined to try to follow in the footsteps of Sir Harry Rawson.'<sup>23</sup> Apart from the social commitments on these tours, Lord and Lady Chelmsford focused their attention on visits to schools and hospitals.

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<sup>17</sup> Lady Poore, *Recollections of an Admiral's Wife 1903-1911*, Smith Elder, London, 1916, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> D. Clune, 'Frederic John Napier Thesiger, Baron Chelmsford (28 May 1909-11 March 1913)', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 418.

<sup>19</sup> *SMH*, 22.3.1910, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> *SMH*, 23.5.10, p. 9, Norfolk Island; 30.7.1910, p. 10, Western district from Bathurst; 1.9.1910, p. 5, North-West district from Inverell; 17.11.1910, p. 10, Newcastle district; 20.3.1911, p. 8, South Coast from Eden; 21.5.1912, p. 8, North Coast from Hexham to Grafton.

<sup>21</sup> *SMH*, 15.11.1911, p. 10, Broken Hill, Cobar and Wilcannia.

<sup>22</sup> *SMH*, 3.9.1910, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *SMH*, 3.9.1910, p. 8.

Although Governor Strickland's political involvement became controversial as his term progressed, he still maintained his social engagements prior to the war. In the first week after arrival, he addressed a dinner function for the South African veterans,<sup>24</sup> opened the Royal Agricultural Show when Governor-General Lord Denman was absent,<sup>25</sup> and attended the centenary celebration for the birth of David Livingstone.<sup>26</sup> It was announced in the following week that Lady Edeline Strickland would be withdrawing from participation in all charitable functions due to ill-health.<sup>27</sup> While the Governor continued regular social appearances, the illness of his wife created added pressure to his role in the community for the balance of his governorship.

One major opportunity which opened up to post-federation governors was the chance to combine with other vice-regal representatives to promote celebration of community at a national level – and to steer celebration in an empire-friendly way. There were two significant events in the first post-federation decade where vice-regal efforts enhanced the unity of Empire and loyalty to the Crown. These occasions were the introduction of Empire Day in 1905 and the Australian Exhibition of Women's Work in 1907. The Governor-General and State Governors represented the Monarchy in the Empire Day celebrations while it was the vice-regal wives who ensured the success of the Exhibition.

The celebration of Empire Day in 1905 built on the Anglo-Saxon enthusiasms of the early post-federation era. The Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Islands Labourers Act* legislated for whiteness of the nation combined with a desire to strengthen close ties with the Mother Country.<sup>28</sup> As related in chapter three, the colonies had limited immigration from non-white nations such as China and Japan prior to Federation.<sup>29</sup> In 1901 a prime consideration of the Commonwealth was to ensure "its population ethnically homogeneous".<sup>30</sup> Federal Attorney-General Deakin expressed the view that such action was essential for "...self

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<sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 17.3.1913, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> *SMH*, 20.3.1913, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *SMH*, 20.3.1913, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *SMH*, 24.3.1913, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> M. Lake & H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2008, p. 137.

<sup>29</sup> For further information, see Ch. 3, p. 35: 'Governor as constitutional monarch'.

<sup>30</sup> Lake & Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, p. 139.

preservation – for it is nothing less than the national manhood, the national character and the national future that are at stake”.<sup>31</sup>

The impetus to set aside a special day to glorify the achievements and promote unity of the colonies of white settlement of the British Empire has been attributed to the untiring efforts of Reginald Brabazon, 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Meath (1841-1929).<sup>32</sup> He was preoccupied with the ‘well-being of the British Empire and the health and strength of the poor in London’ at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These two endeavours seemed an unlikely combination but it was his view that rural workers should be discouraged from moving to the large cities like London with its poverty and poor living conditions. Meath proposed a state sponsored immigration scheme to improve agriculture in the colonies, which should also help to forge links with the Mother Country. He was associated with ‘physical and technical education in schools and playgrounds and open spaces in cities’ to alleviate social unrest developing in English urban concentrations. Although he was not a politician, he had the ‘ability to initiate and organise national campaigns for reform and form political pressure groups, thereby influencing public opinion and official policy’.<sup>33</sup> He also had extensive travel experience across the Empire, including a visit to Australia in 1892.<sup>34</sup> These efforts permeated into Australia from his position as founder of the Empire Day Movement. Its primary purpose was to educate school children with an understanding of the Empire and provide a particular day, 24<sup>th</sup> May, Queen Victoria’s Birthday, for this purpose.<sup>35</sup> It became one of the British Empire League’s objectives to promote recognition of this day but also inspire adults with the importance of the imperial bond.

A branch of the British Empire League (B.E.L) was formed in New South Wales by E.C.V. Broughton, MLA, as a counter measure to the Anti-War League protesting about British action in the South African War. The parent organisation of the B.E.L had Royal patronage and backing of London’s civic and business leaders as well as representation from the aristocracy. They were essentially a pressure group interested in maintaining Britain’s defence forces and protection for imperial trade routes. The Australian branch also had vice-regal patronage together

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<sup>31</sup> Lake & Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>32</sup> F. Aalen, ‘Lord Meath, city improvement and social imperialism’, *Planning Perspectives*, 4.2, (1989), pp. 127-152.

<sup>33</sup> Aalen, ‘Lord Meath, city improvement and social imperialism’, pp. 128-133.

<sup>34</sup> R. Brabazon, ‘A Britisher’s Impressions of America and Australasia’ *Nineteenth Century*, a monthly review 33:193 (1893 March) p. 493; R. Brabazon, 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Meath, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, John Murray, London, 1923, p. 309.

<sup>35</sup> *Times*, 9.8.1902, p. 7.

with support from politicians and leading citizens. It emphasised all things imperial, such as defence, preferential trade, immigration, text books on empire geography and history and importantly imperial sentiment to bind Britons overseas to the homeland. The first Australian President of the B.E.L was Canon F.B. Boyce, rector of St. Paul's, Redfern from 1899.<sup>36</sup> He was strongly committed to social reform and sympathy for the Earl of Meath's British campaign for educating school children about patriotism and respect for the flag.<sup>37</sup>

In April 1903, Broughton took a deputation to see Prime Minister Barton, with a proposal to celebrate Empire Day on Queen Victoria's birthday, 24<sup>th</sup> May. He argued it would perpetuate the memory of the late Queen and promote union between Britain and other members of the Empire. Barton was reluctant to support the idea at that early stage after federation as he felt that there was 'inadequate appreciation on the part of many people as to what the Empire really meant'.<sup>38</sup> While the anniversary was gaining recognition in other self-governing Dominions and Crown Colonies by 1903, the idea languished in Australia.<sup>39</sup> When the success of the overseas experience in 1904 became known, Canon Boyce convinced B.E.L members that the ideals of the Earl of Meath's English crusade should be revived in Australia. They enlisted the aid of Lady Rawson to arrange a meeting of prospective members to form a women's branch of the league.<sup>40</sup>

The Premiers' Conference in February 1905 approved the first Australian Empire Day for 24<sup>th</sup> May on the basis of a school educational program similar to Meath's promotion. The League ensured it went beyond that basic requirement to include observance by the whole community.<sup>41</sup> Vice-regal participation in the celebrations became an important feature of the day. Sir Harry Rawson performed the ceremony of 'Unfurling the Flag' at Woollahra Public School, followed by a short talk to the pupils. He had attended three other schools by early afternoon to carry out this program and ministers attended further schools with the same message.<sup>42</sup> Many people wore a small Union Jack flag and lunch time crowds enjoyed listening to bands that played patriotic

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<sup>36</sup> For further information, see ch. 4, p. 69: 'Vice-regal impartiality and the limits of cultural unity'. Boyce was founder of Local Options League (later Temperance Alliance) founded in 1882.

<sup>37</sup> M. French, 'One People, One Destiny' – A Question of Loyalty: The Origins of Empire Day in New South Wales, 1900-1905', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 61 pt. 4, (December 1975), pp. 236-244; *Times*, 29.7.1903, p. 2; 25.4. 1905, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *SMH*, 15.4.1903, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> French, 'One People, One Destiny', p. 243.

<sup>40</sup> *SMH*, 18.7.1904, p. 6; 20.8.1904, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> French, 'One People, One Destiny', p. 244.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 24.5.1905, p. 7.



tunes at various locations around the city. The flags and bunting on the buildings and naval vessels with flags strung end to end and illuminated at night added to the atmosphere.<sup>43</sup> The flush of patriotism in 1905 may have also been generated by concern about the Japanese success in the Russo-Japanese war that was coming to an end about this time.<sup>44</sup> The Empire Day celebration was enjoyed each year during this pre-war period with more events progressively added such as school children's tableaux at the Sydney Cricket Ground and elsewhere, cadet reviews and evening concerts.

As usual, the *Bulletin* expressed their annoyance about subservience to imperial masters in verse that included:

*So cheers for the King! – and never mind Australia!*  
*Cheers for the Queen! – the old Queen dead and gone.*  
*Cheers for the Gaud Mayor in his tin regalia!*  
*Cheers for all the noble things they're never done!*<sup>45</sup>

The Women's Branch of the League introduced a further activity of flag exchange between schools in Australia and also with their namesake in Britain or other location in the Empire. A flag was embroidered with a salutation from the sender and in due course a similar response would come back from the recipient. Examples of such an exchange included Lismore, Ireland acknowledging Lismore, New South Wales, or Peel near Bathurst linking with Peel, Isle of Man, or Lewisham, Sydney with Lewisham, London. Nearly 300 flags had been exchanged by 1911 as 'a fitting emblem of Imperial unity'.<sup>46</sup> Sir Harry Rawson 'congratulated the ladies in particular for their zealous efforts in making the celebration so successful' in 1905.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, a member who seconded the adoption of the annual report of 1908 said the Women's Branch had carried out three quarters of the work that contributed to the success of that year.<sup>48</sup>

These anniversary activities made a strong appeal to patriotic sentiment. Lady Poore summed up her experience in 1909; 'Nothing opened our eyes to the meaning of the bonds of Empire which

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<sup>43</sup> *SMH*, 24.5.1907, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Lake & Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, p. 163.

<sup>45</sup> *Bulletin*, 31.5.1906, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *SMH*, 7.2.1911, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> *SMH*, 24.5.1905, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> *SMH*, 29.6.1908, p. 8.

unite the dominions overseas with little far-away England as did the celebration of Empire Day in Australia. It was a tremendous day...’<sup>49</sup>

The most spectacular example of attempts to mobilize specifically women-focused vice-regal philanthropy was the Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work of 1907. This exhibition was the inspiration of Lady Northcote, wife of the Governor-General. The ultimate success of the venture was attributed to her ‘untiring zeal and energy, her personal influence, and her splendid powers of organisation’.<sup>50</sup> She was ably supported by the vice-regal wives in each state, or, in New South Wales, the governor’s daughter, Alice Rawson. They formed an executive committee for each state organisation and locality committees, usually headed by a Mayoress, were arranged to encourage participation of the public. Miss Rawson called her first meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1906 and energetically held executive meetings every fortnight as well as joining other groups to promote the event.<sup>51</sup> When Miss Rawson attended a Lady Mayoress meeting in April 1907, she explained that ‘the main object was to raise the standard of efficiency and perhaps open up new avenues of work for women’.<sup>52</sup>

As a preliminary to the Exhibition, all contributions from New South Wales were displayed at the Agricultural Show Ground in September 1907. There were over 8,000 items covering a vast range of categories such as paintings, needlework, millinery, dresses, laces, enamels, bookbinding and others, with special competitions for schools and colleges. Judges selected the best articles for display at the exhibition in Melbourne.<sup>53</sup> Lady Northcote came to Sydney to open the show and over 30,000 people crowded into the showground during the nine days that it was open.<sup>54</sup> Entertainment included ladies’ riding and driving contests, croquet tournaments, and exhibitions of cookery, laundry, dancing, sports, music, elocution, and horticulture.<sup>55</sup> The social and financial success of the occasion far exceeded expectations.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Poore, *Recollections of an Admiral’s Wife 1903-1916*, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> *SMH*, 5.9.1908, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> *SMH*, 24.11.1906, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> *SMH*, 20.4.1907, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> *SMH*, 24.11.1906, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> *SMH*, 21.9.1907, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> *SMH*, 17.8.1907, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> *SMH*, 21.9.1907, p. 6.

The official opening of the Australian exhibition in Melbourne on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1907 was a gala event.<sup>57</sup> Lady Northcote, standing on a carpet designed by a Sydney woman and created by a large group of hardworking ladies in the city,<sup>58</sup> announced: 'I have very great pleasure in declaring open this Exhibition of Women's Work for all Australia'. The *Daily Telegraph* enthusiastically reported the Exhibition Building was 'thronged with 14,000 to 15,000 people, assembled to witness the opening'. It commenced with 'A fanfare of trumpets to herald the ...procession of distinguished visitors with Prime Minister Deakin leading the way to the platform' and the 'the choir, numbering nearly 1,500 women' in the gallery above the audience, made an impressive display.<sup>59</sup> The Exhibition was arranged to coincide with the carnival atmosphere of Melbourne Cup week and closed on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Sir Harry Rawson and Miss Rawson visited the show regularly as well as the vice-regal representatives from the other states. The *Bulletin* disclosed that 'Lady Northcote largely financed the undertaking' and conceded that 'Her Ex. deserves the success it has won...'.<sup>60</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* declared that the historic opening was 'the great declaration by Australian women of their capacity for usefulness in the work of the world'.<sup>61</sup>

Such efforts to promote imperial unity embraced extensive contact with the public and reports in the press helped to convey the intention of building this close association with the people. It provided relief from criticism of vice-regal preference for high society indulgences at Government House such as balls, levees, and garden parties. The important feature was that the governors were engaged with the community by laying foundation stones, opening new buildings, handing out prizes at schools and showed that they were concerned about the welfare of country people. Empire Day and the Women's Exhibition also created a wider concept of loyalty to the Monarchy as well as of harmony and cohesion among people of 'British stock' within the Empire.

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<sup>57</sup> *SMH*, 23.10.1907, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> *SMH*, 22.6.1907, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> *DT*, 24.10.1907, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *Bulletin*, 5.12.1907, p. 20.

<sup>61</sup> *SMH*, 23.10.1907, p. 7.

### **Vice-regal family philanthropy**

By the time of her death in 1901, Queen Victoria had bequeathed to the Monarchy a strong tradition of patronage and support of the Royal family for organisations that aided the less fortunate in Britain. Her compassion had set a model for sympathetic activities of New South Wales governors that continued after federation. In Britain, the Edwardian era brought new challenges for philanthropic bodies that threatened to undermine the rapport between Royalty and the associated charitable services. The authority of the aristocracy was being challenged by middle class politicians who were conscious of the need for state intervention into health, education and welfare. After the Liberals came to power in 1906, a program of social legislation gradually diverted dependence away from charities to the state. While Edward VII maintained an extensive program of patronage and contributions to worthy causes, it had less public recognition and state-financed welfare promised to be an attractive alternative.<sup>62</sup>

The King's Fund was a charity that began as the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund in London to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and became the best-publicised channel for the Monarchy to retain its influential position in the field of benevolent assistance. Edward VII and his financial advisers called on his plutocratic friends to contribute and help organise donations to an endowment fund that supported voluntary hospitals mainly in London. The city was promoted as the centre of medical excellence for the empire and funding was also sought from outside Britain.<sup>63</sup> The King's Fund became the inspiration for imperial support of hospitals and governors sought to embrace these ideals in the Australian colonies. While there was no likelihood that funding could be organised on the scale of the King's Fund, it was apparent that governors in New South Wales were closely engaged with leading citizens that provided voluntary services and supported fund-raising appeals for hospitals.

Sir Harry Rawson's first public engagement in the week after his arrival was to the Lewisham Hospital. He probably managed to get close to his audience on this occasion and elsewhere as a regular theme of his informal addresses commenced with '...he was afraid that he could not make

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<sup>62</sup> F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy*, Yale University Press, London, 1995, pp. 138-139 and 151,

<sup>63</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, pp. 153 and 163.

a speech, but what little he could say came from his heart'.<sup>64</sup> After the Lewisham Hospital visit the *Bulletin* commented: 'Sir Harry professes to be no speechmaker, but the nut of his 'few remarks' has always a good sound kernel'.<sup>65</sup> Both Governors, Rawson and Chelmsford, had an established program of contact with several metropolitan hospitals such as Sydney, Carrington, Prince Alfred, Marrickville, Royal Alexandra, St. Vincent's as well as Lewisham. It was a regular practice of the governors to preside at their annual meetings, which might include speeches, an inspection of the hospital, prizes to the nursing staff or just a board room presentation. The governors were associated with leading citizens on these boards such as Sir James Fairfax, newspaper proprietor and Sir Philip Jones, physician, surgeon and Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University, as well as numerous politicians.<sup>66</sup> Titles were part of the rewards for community service and a useful device of recognition for imperial devotion of the recipients. These activities also opened the door to Government House society for dinners, garden parties and other social events. Australian titles were usually political favours supported by the governor as part of the British Honours system. In Britain, Edward VII added a large number of decorations, medals and badges as incentives for his charitable programs.<sup>67</sup>

The outcome of Sir Harry Rawson's involvement with these hospitals also meant he was invited to officiate in the expansion of their building programs during his term. There was strong vice-regal association with the Marrickville cottage hospital, where he opened an extension to the hospital in 1905 after Lord Hampden had laid the foundation stone and Lord Beauchamp performed the opening ceremony of the original building. The celebrations included the usual procession through the streets and guard of honour provided by local cadets at the hospital. Rawson congratulated the people for their donations at a time when the economy was affected by the drought. On a lighter note he observed: 'They had heard a great deal about the declining birthrate, but after the experience he had had that afternoon driving through their streets he did not think much could be said against it as far as Marrickville was concerned'.<sup>68</sup>

As part of his relationship with Sydney Hospital, the governor laid the foundation stone for the south wing in April 1906 and opened the extension fifteen months later. Miss Rawson opened a

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<sup>64</sup> *SMH*, 5.6.1902, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Bulletin*, 14.6.1902, p. 12.

<sup>66</sup> *SMH*, 12.4.1904, p. 3; 10.4.1906, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 144.

<sup>68</sup> *SMH*, 15.5.1905, p. 4, Hampden 4.1897, Beauchamp 6.1899.

new ward for women on this occasion. It was followed by attendance at the golden jubilee of St. Vincent's Hospital in November 1907 when the governor laid a foundation stone for an extension. The most gratifying event for Rawson was his association with the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children. As a memorial after the death of Lady Rawson, the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Allen Taylor, set up the 'Lady Rawson Memorial Fund' to endow a cot in perpetuity at a cost of £1,000 and any surplus funds to endow a similar memorial bed at the Thirlmere Consumptive Home for Women.<sup>69</sup> Sir Harry performed the official opening of new buildings in December 1906, recognising the 3,000 ladies who subscribed to the cot in his wife's name.<sup>70</sup> His final sentiments were contained in a letter attached to his will that donated £20 to the hospital.<sup>71</sup>

The dedication of the cot to Lady Rawson was a fitting tribute to her work with charitable organisations in the state. She was described as a 'kind gentle-voiced motherly grey-haired woman' who readily assisted benevolent institutions and charitable fund raising activities.<sup>72</sup> She opened bazaars, fetes, sale of work stalls and other ventures to support hospitals, nurses, churches, missions, kindergartens and other worthwhile causes. Lady Rawson had an interest in the Mothers' Union and National Council of Women, District Nursing Association, Women's Branch of British Empire League, Sydney University Women's Society, Sydney Medical Mission, and maintained the momentum of the Sydney Needlework Guild that was launched by Lady Hampden in 1896.<sup>73</sup> These personal programs were in addition to the functions where she partnered the governor between 1902 and 1904. It all took a toll on her health. By December 1904 she had to cancel all engagements on medical advice. In March 1905 she returned to England to recuperate.<sup>74</sup> Sir Harry took a leave of absence and went home when he learned that her condition had deteriorated.<sup>75</sup> Lady Rawson felt that her health had improved sufficiently to return by December 1905 but she died at sea on 3<sup>rd</sup> December during the journey back to Australia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* Editorial expressed the views of its readers:

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<sup>69</sup> *SMH*, 2.5.1906, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> *SMH*, 13.12.1906, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> *SMH*, 19.12.1911, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 409.

<sup>73</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 409; *SMH*, 13.12.1905, p. 4; Reference to Lady Hampden – For further information, see Ch. 4, p. 67: 'Vice-Regal Family Philanthropy'.

<sup>74</sup> *SMH*, 26.12.1904, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> *SMH*, 7.6.1905, p. 7.

Lady Rawson entered heart and soul into all enterprises which were proposed or maintained for the welfare of the people, and in doing so she showed her own womanly feeling – her own personality – so clearly that all appreciated her worth.<sup>76</sup>

After the loss of his wife, Sir Harry continued his governorship with the assistance of his daughter, Alice. Rawson's biographer commented about Alice: 'Never had man better solace in his bereavement and never did daughter more able fill her mother's place'.<sup>77</sup> She had accompanied Lady Rawson on many occasions in the past and soon gained a reputation for her responsible manner in taking over the same demanding duties as Government House hostess and the community activities. Her ability to handle these commitments was recognised by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in February 1908: 'It is not an easy matter to take up the reins of leadership, but Miss Rawson has always proved herself fit for the position'.<sup>78</sup>

Apart from the hospital connection with the Monarchy and governorship, it was essential to maintain other social and charitable links from earlier years. Edward VII granted patronage to a vast range of institutions and made contributions to many other organisations.<sup>79</sup> Governors followed the example of patronage but there were restraints on personal expenditure. As mentioned in chapter five, the state premiers did not expect governors to exceed their salary and allowances on entertainment. Also Rawson had to remember that it was the King's wish that he 'live within the income provided by the State'.<sup>80</sup> Despite these constraints, the post-federation governors covered an extensive array of social and charitable demands. As the first occupant of the makeshift State Government House at Cranbrook, Rawson soon established it as the entertainment hub for imperial social engagements. Sir Harry and Lady Rawson hosted the usual seasonal balls, garden parties and levees but also used the house and grounds for community activities. There were fund raising events such as fetes to support organisations like the District Nursing Association on at least two occasions<sup>81</sup> and an annual day set aside to entertain children from the Blind Deaf and Dumb Institution.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *SMH*, 13.12.1905, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> Rawson, *Life of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson*, p. 241.

<sup>78</sup> *SMH*, 8.2.1908, p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> Prochaska, *Royal Bounty*, p. 151.

<sup>80</sup> Rawson, *Life of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson*, p. 243.

<sup>81</sup> *SMH*, 5.9.1903, p. 7; 3.9.1904, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> *SMH*, 12.12.1903, p. 9; 13.10.1906, p. 13; 18.11.1907, p. 12.

The District Nursing Association was formed in 1902 and initially funding from functions at Cranbrook provided a 'Comforts' Fund' for nurses.<sup>83</sup> Lady Fanshawe, wife of the Admiral at the Australian Station, encouraged donations to expand this fund to cover a nurse's salary and offer a free home-nursing service to the poorer parts of Sydney. The patroness was Lady Rawson and later Miss Rawson, who were active in the fund raising. Sir Harry Rawson was in the chair for the seventh annual meeting of the Association and expressed his interest in the 'wonderful work done by the district nurses'.<sup>84</sup> The service had grown to five nurses by 1908 covering inner suburbs of the city and the wives of British Admirals, Fanshawe, Fawkes and Poore, ensured the on-going financial backing through their socialite circle.

The vice-regal couple were very conscious of their role to foster support for institutions that helped the less fortunate in the community. A ball was a popular means of fund-raising and their attendance helped to establish the social standing of certain annual events, such as balls for the Freemasons' Benevolent Institution,<sup>85</sup> St. Vincent's Hospital<sup>86</sup> and Boys' Brigade.<sup>87</sup> Sir Harry and Lady Rawson attended up to four and five balls a month during the months of the social season from May to September. He claimed that they participated in nineteen balls during 1903.<sup>88</sup>

Lord and Lady Chelmsford generally followed a comparable path to Sir Harry, Lady and Alice Rawson of supporting community engagements, both socially and philanthropically. As well as the on-going assistance to hospitals, Lord Chelmsford had donated £50 to the Prince Alfred Hospital for the treatment of a member of the household staff. The hospital responded by appointing him a life governor as they had a former Governor, the Earl of Belmore.<sup>89</sup>

In the year before he departed, Sir Harry Rawson launched a fund to provide improved premises and carry on the work of the Seamen's Institute and the Mission to Seamen. It was known as the 'Rawson Memorial Fund',<sup>90</sup> but subscriptions had not reached their target when his term of office closed. When Lord Chelmsford took over the project he was concerned that the growth of funds had faltered. He urged leading citizens at the 1909 annual meeting of the Mission to Seamen to

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<sup>83</sup> *SMH*, 22.7.1905, p. 8.

<sup>84</sup> *SMH*, 26.10.1908, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> *SMH*, 5.7.1902, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> *SMH*, 12.5.1904, p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> *SMH*, 14.8.1906, p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Rutledge, 'Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson', in Clune & Turner, *Governors*, p. 409.

<sup>89</sup> *SMH*, 8.12.1911, p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> *SMH*, 27.7.1908, p. 6.



renew their fund raising efforts. Chelmsford had an ally in the President of the Institute ladies committee, Lady Poore, and he recognised her tireless efforts at this meeting.<sup>91</sup> She later recalled:

Further efforts had to be made and in the next two years I wrote myself blind and talked myself hoarse on behalf of the new Institute which was finally opened by Lord Chelmsford and named 'The Rawson Institute for Seamen', a fitting memorial to the much loved Sailor-Governor who had just then himself 'crossed the bar'.<sup>92</sup>

Lord Chelmsford officially opened the Rawson Institute for Seamen on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1910.<sup>93</sup>

A corresponding facility existed at Newcastle but it was severely damaged in a storm. Consequently, Lord Chelmsford became involved in a further fund-raising project to rebuild the local structure. On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1913, he laid the foundation stone of the new building and it became known as the 'Chelmsford Institute for Seamen'.<sup>94</sup>

This section has associated the philanthropic strength of Edwardian Royalty with the compassionate commitments of the Governors of New South Wales in this era. While Edward VII used his rich friends to establish the financial structure of his Hospital Fund, it is evident that Rawson, Chelmsford and Strickland networked the socialite group that clung to Government House. Invitees to dinner and other occasions at the vice-regal residence were also leaders of hospital committees and charitable institutions. There was also the momentum of fund-raising ventures that built on welfare groups from pre-federation days. These events were the continuation of annual engagements like a ball or opening a bazaar that depended on vice-regal patronage and attendance to encourage public support. Such activities projected the image of the governor and kin as essential to the fabric of community welfare services.

### **Vice-regal impartiality and the limits of cultural unity**

The sectarian conflict that flowed on from the 1890s could implicate the post-federation governors in their regular community activities. As mentioned in chapter four, Governor Beauchamp had criticism levelled at him for attending the dedication of St. Mary's Cathedral.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *SMH*, 9.7.1909, p. 13.

<sup>92</sup> Poore, *Recollections of an Admiral's Wife 1903-1916*, p. 63.

<sup>93</sup> *SMH*, 18.6.1910, p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> *SMH*, 7.9.1912, p. 6; 1.2.1913, p. 9.

<sup>95</sup> For further information, see Ch. 4: 'Vice-Regal impartiality and limits of cultural unity' – Beauchamp, p. 71, and Hampden, p. 69.

In the new era, Sir Harry Rawson had a good relationship with Premier Carruthers, Liberal and Reform Party after 1904, which had ties to Protestant organisations.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, Lord Chelmsford worked harmoniously with Premiers McGowen and Holman, Labor Party from 1910 that had support from Roman Catholic bodies.<sup>97</sup> Sir Gerald Strickland had to overcome protests about his Roman Catholic religion.<sup>98</sup> Consequently, the governors' performance would be scrutinised to satisfy critics of impartiality in social contact.

The intensity of the temperance campaign was much stronger by the end of the nineteenth century than it had been on the occasion when the Local Options League clashed with Lord Hampden in 1895. A new word 'wowsers' had been contrived to describe 'the typical do-gooder who was determined to deprive the ordinary Australian of his Sunday sport, his drink with his mates and his flutter on the races'.<sup>99</sup> The *Bulletin* and John Norton, proprietor of the *Truth*, ridiculed such persons relentlessly.<sup>100</sup> Catholic leaders tended to become less aggressive on the temperance issue and sought to recommend moderation on liquor consumption while Protestants were insistent on tighter restrictions.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, the governors had to be wary of granting their patronage to an institution that could be backed by liquor interests or temperance organisations and possibly be close to one of the political parties.

Rawson could be quite blunt with his comments when the occasion demanded. He was irritated with negative sectarian attitudes that prevailed within the organisation of the District Nursing Association, when presiding at their seventh annual meeting in 1908. He stressed: 'This association was absolutely undenominational. It was not to glorify one religion more than another. He wanted to impress upon everybody that the tendency amongst the bishops and everyone else was to get the denominations to pull together'.<sup>102</sup> Rawson's Anglican background did not prevent him from engagements across this religious divide, such as the Roman Catholic

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<sup>96</sup> M. Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp. 151-152.

<sup>97</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 12.4.1911, CO 418, f. 102, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.1

<sup>98</sup> *SMH*, 28.1.1913, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, p. 147.

<sup>100</sup> S. Sleight, 'Public spaces? Sydney's wowsers and the spatial conception of decency, 1901-1912', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 90, pt 1, (June 2004), p. 76.

<sup>101</sup> Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, p. 148.

<sup>102</sup> *SMH*, 26.10.1908, p. 8.

children's display at the showground in March 1905 and two months later a Catholic ball at Manilla.<sup>103</sup> Sir Harry also attended annual meetings of the Catholic Lewisham Hospital.<sup>104</sup>

Cardinal Moran continued his outspoken criticism of Protestantism and the government in this period. Sir Harry Rawson reported to the Colonial Office that Cardinal Moran had attacked the government because they would not grant a public holiday for St. Patrick's Day:

‘I am afraid that what I heard on arrival out here is but too true, and that the Cardinal is a regular firebrand stirring up sectarian strife on every possible occasion, and using language one regrets to hear from the Head of the Roman Catholic Church. I am doing all I can to prevent the sectarian feeling being further aroused’.<sup>105</sup>

The cardinal was also part of Lord Chelmsford's secret Report on Affairs of 12<sup>th</sup> April 1911. The Governor's despatch informed the Colonial Office that the Roman Catholic Church had backed the Labor Party in the 1910 election. ‘It is now looking for its quid pro quo, and the Labour Government are on the horns of a dilemma’. The Government wanted all children to be educated in public schools, which Moran called ‘Godless’. Moran wanted the government to subsidise Catholic schools. Chelmsford concluded that ‘The general public are [*sic*] satisfied with the law as it stands, and are undisturbed by the Cardinal's fulminations’.<sup>106</sup>

As mentioned in chapter six, there were protests about the appointment of Sir Gerald Strickland by Protestant groups because of his Roman Catholic religion. Conversely, there were Anglican ministers prepared to praise Strickland's sympathy and impartiality towards all denominations, prior to his arrival in Sydney. Archbishop Clarke of Melbourne, who claimed a past association with the governor-elect, extolled his virtues: ‘His family is a very ancient one, greatly beloved in the North of Ireland. He is an English Gentleman to the backbone. He is a King's man and an Imperialist to the backbone...’<sup>107</sup> At Strickland's farewell in Perth, Anglican Bishop Riley, who had known his Excellency for sixteen years, said ‘he wanted to tell the people in the East that in every part of his duty as Governor of Western Australia he had acted fairly’.<sup>108</sup> There were other

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<sup>103</sup> *SMH*, 28.3.1905, p. 10; 10.5.1905, p. 9.

<sup>104</sup> *SMH*, 5.6.1902, p. 3; 14.10.1904, p. 4; 27.10.1906, p. 13.

<sup>105</sup> Rawson to Chamberlain, 2.4.1903, CO 418, f. 159, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 2151.27.

<sup>106</sup> Chelmsford to Harcourt, 12.4.1911, CO 418, ff. 105-106, AJCP, ML Reel PRO 4199.90.1

<sup>107</sup> *SMH*, 18.11.1912, p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> *SMH*, 6.3.1913, p. 7.

similar recommendations on his departure from the West that overall suggest Strickland performed his community duties free from religious bias.

As in the 1890s, this pre-war period was subjected to sectarian jealousies that were perpetuated by both Protestants and Catholics and permeated throughout the community. It is difficult to separate the social issues from the political lobbying as religious groups had infiltrated into the major parties to achieve their objectives. The most significant cultural development was the wowser activity to secure legislative restrictions that intruded on citizens' liberty to indulge in Sunday sports, drinking and gambling.

## **Conclusion**

These were challenging times for the vice-regal representatives in New South Wales to emphasise the loyalty message, when there were distractions such as an emerging spirit of nationalism, governments with welfare programs, and intrusion of social protest groups into public life. Governors used various avenues of imperial influence to retain affection for British links. The recovering economy after the drought enabled Rawson, Chelmsford and Strickland to engage with the citizens at functions for laying foundation stones, opening new buildings, charity fund-raising, and being seen at numerous public events in Sydney. Philanthropy followed the example of the Monarchy with patronage and support for hospitals and societies assisting the less fortunate in the community, a development that even the critics of imperial authority found difficult not to praise.

Rawson and Chelmsford brought the country areas of the state into a close relationship with their British inheritance. There were remote parts of New South Wales experiencing a vice-regal visit for the first time as the result of improved transport facilities and the governors' enthusiastic sense of duty. The enlarged following of faithful citizens was also important to preserve the British connection against critics of empire domination.

The prominence of vice-regal wives also became more evident in this period. Lady Rawson, Alice Rawson and Lady Chelmsford accompanied their Governor at most city functions and established new standards of regular support for country travel that was not a constant feature in the past. They gave leadership strength to women's organisations and worked with charity fund-

raising groups. The vice-regal wives were also the organisational backbone of Empire Day and the Exhibition of Women's Work – events which demonstrated the eagerness of imperial representatives to adapt their role to support the ideal of national community within the Empire.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSION

The thesis has examined the relationship between Britain and New South Wales during the period 1891 to 1914, focusing on the role of the governors. As stated in the Introduction, the aims of this thesis have been to explore the role of governors both as formal representatives of imperial authority and as promoters of a shared sense of cultural community. The central purpose of this exploration has been to uncover the patterns of adaptation of governors to local expectations of them over the period and to evaluate their degree of success in furthering imperial interests by so doing.

Evolution of the role of governor in the pivotal decades before and after Federation has been explored by examination of three key themes. The first theme dealt with the type of person appointed as governor over the period, noting trends in the criteria thought relevant to London and by locals. The second theme dealt with trends in performance of the executive/political role by governors over the period, evaluating effectiveness in ‘furthering British interests’ in the maintenance of a politically stable environment for trade and investment. The last theme dealt with trends in performance of the social/cultural role of governors – trends that recognised the mutation of the governor’s role from exercise of executive power to the exercise of cultural influence on behalf of an imperial vision of shared values.

The first theme identifies the appointment standard of governors. It is noted that in the 1890s, there was an expectation that the governor would have impeccable aristocratic credentials even if the administrative qualities were generally recognised as below the ranking of the policy makers in Britain. The expressions of disappointment when Sir Robert Duff did not have the hereditary background confirmed this belief. While these pre-federation governors had the appearance of Cannadine’s ‘Great Ornamentals’, they were committed to their public duty. Another redeeming feature, as far as the locals were concerned, was that these imperial incumbents were assumed to be wealthy and able to withstand the expense of the social pressures of high office.

The year 1900 was the watershed in the criteria for future vice-regal appointments to the state. The Premiers’ Conference of January 1900 recognised that post-federation governors would have a lower status level after the arrival of the governor-general, which would justify a reduced salary

and in New South Wales an alternative residence with less prestige. The expectation was that appointee would be retired military or civilians with political connections. The paradox of the situation was the appointment of imperial officers after Federation with superior qualifications for the job specification. Rawson complied with the new criteria as a retired naval officer but he had earned his leading professional standing after forty-five years service that included good diplomatic skills with royalty. Chelmsford and Strickland were practising barristers and came to the state with previous vice-regal experience. After Rawson, the Colonial Office reverted to officers of hereditary rank either due to convenience of their location that avoided the interregnum between governors or offered some form of promotion as an aspirational inducement. It also gives the impression that the Colonial Office wanted to have competent officers in the senior state to fend off any criticism about the necessity to have an imperial presence in the new era.

The second theme of exploration identifies how the governor adapted to changing political circumstances. This exploration has provided new evidence on the effectiveness of the governor's prerogative powers over the period 1891 to 1914. The principal feature of this evidence is that it draws attention to the actions of the governor in a political crisis when historical reports generally focus on the event with only passing reference to the decision.

It has been found that the chief challenge governors faced in the 1890s was the even-handed use of prerogative power when called upon to support the minority governments that were a feature of the period. A momentary lapse in the governor's attention to detail could have serious repercussions. An example of this situation was Sir Robert Duff accepting assurances from Premier Dibbs about electoral legislation without the governor being conversant with the requirements of the act. Another feature that came out of this investigation, that is frequently overlooked, was the support of the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, who acted as Lieutenant-Governor during the interregnum between each of the four governors in the decade. He provided the wise counsel to the governors but also had to use his temporary powers on two occasions between vice-regal appointments.

After Federation the chief challenge governors faced was the need to adapt to political implications of the maturing two-party system of government in the Assembly in the face of an entrenched anti-Labor majority in the vice-regally nominated Legislative Council. While there

was less call on the governor's prerogative powers when the government had the numbers to defeat challenges from the opposition in the Lower House, there was more pressure when governments faced Upper House obstruction. Governors also found themselves playing a part in resolution of sensitive matters such as Rawson's advice on a replacement for retiring Premier See and Chelmsford's influence to avoid the appointment of Meagher to the cabinet. In these situations the governor had to be careful that he limited his actions to informal advice to the premier. Interference in these issues could otherwise lead to accusations of breaching vice-regal impartiality, which Rawson was fortunate to avoid when he pressured a Council member for Carruthers' advantage. Informal resolution of a crisis benefited from mutual respect between the governor and premier, such as Rawson and Carruthers or Chelmsford and Holman, and then tactful negotiation of the dispute. It also highlighted the difficulties experienced by Strickland due to his tactless nature. While several of the incidents in this chapter have been noted as receiving attention of historians, fresh evidence has been added in this thesis by study of governor's despatches to the Colonial Office and supplementary newspaper reports.

It has also been noted how, by a strange twist of local politics, post-Federation governors found themselves as involuntary spokesmen for 'State Rights'. In the transitional period prior to federal union, described in chapter five, it was considered that the status of the governor would be downgraded after the appointment of the governor-general. When Commonwealth/State relations deteriorated due to federal intrusion into areas of state responsibility, the separate sovereignty of the states became a critical topic. It was considered vital for the preservation of state authority that they continued to have direct contact with the British Government. As the imperial representative who had personal association with the home country, the governor now achieved new, if temporary, recognition as the guardian of state rights. By contrast, on another even more local front, the post-Federation period also saw the extinguishment of the last vestiges of the active executive role of the governor by the transfer of responsibility for administration of Norfolk Island to the Commonwealth.

The third theme of the thesis explores those parts of the governor's role which have been least noticed and least systematically investigated in existing historical literature. They concern the importance of the vice-regal social/cultural relationship with the welfare of the New South Wales community so that it resonates in a feeling of attachment to Britain and loyalty to the Crown. This bonding with the people followed two broad-based objectives. Firstly, vice-regal family



engagements should be compatible with expectations of the imperial presence in the community. The thesis traced the cultural pattern followed by all governors, before and after Federation, as they visited municipalities, laid foundation stones, opened new buildings, endorsed business prosperity, aided welfare organisations, and attended popular entertainment events. Beauchamp, Rawson and Chelmsford in particular, all made energetic efforts to reach a wider audience. As the railway system expanded around the state and motor vehicles became more reliable, the governors were encouraged to spread their contact more effectively. They gave special attention to country tours so that the imperial association covered the whole state and not just Sydney.

Secondly, special attention has been given to vice-regal philanthropy, in the same chapters, as this interest has received little recognition from other studies of imperial representation in New South Wales. The philanthropic model used by the governors followed recognition of the Royal family as the 'Welfare Monarchy' offering compassionate support to the less fortunate in Britain. The commitment of the vice-regal family to offer similar assistance provided welcome help to the people when the state was not as dominant in the welfare field as it later became. It covered a wide range of activity such as patronage and involvement with benevolent organisations, including visits to hospitals, refuges and missions as well as Government House being used for charitable events and enlisting socialite support for welfare programs. These philanthropic endeavours were spread across the whole community as governors attempted (not always without criticism) to mitigate sectarian rivalry while encouraging voluntary charitable activity.

Finally in this review of social/cultural association with the community, the contribution of the governors' wives and other kin like Lord Beauchamp's sister, Lady Mary Lygon and Sir Harry Rawson's daughter, Alice, require special mention. Apart from being associated with the governors' engagements, they are also remembered for their charitable fund-raising activities and personal assistance to organisations contributing to the wellbeing of the people. While the governors' wives (and Beauchamp's sister) launched individual community initiatives in the 1890s, the vice-regal ladies' community-binding efforts took on a national perspective in the first decade of the twentieth century when vice-regal women became the organisational core of the Empire Day celebrations from 1905 and combined with the governor-general's wife, Lady Northcote, for the successful management of the Australian Exhibition of Women's Work in 1907. By such means governors were able to associate loyalty to empire with both Federation and women's participation in active citizenship.

On an overall assessment, therefore, the governors of New South Wales can be said to have made a successful adaptation to meet the challenges and expectations of the role over the 1891-1914 period. The chief challenges were to ensure that vice-regal representation was seen to be compatible with political democratisation and capable of channelling the rising tide of colonial nationalism within limits which continued to be shaped by a sense of shared Britishness. In the face of these challenges, governors had to focus on those aspects of their role which could be understood and valued by local leaders and local citizens. For local leaders, the expectation was that an outside governor, free from partisan politics, would guarantee fair play between political parties. A notable feature of the maturing political connection was the confidence with which ministers came to accept the governor as a personal adviser. For local citizens, the cultural role of the governor encouraged them to accept him as an embodiment of benevolence and of shared community values 'above politics'. There was also the glamour associated with official occasions as a visible link to the Monarchy. Obviously, it was not possible for governors to convince everyone but, on balance, they managed to please most people. The governors' regular engagement with the people reinforced a sense of security underpinned by continuing membership in a strong Empire loyal to the Crown.

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