

Here then we have an assessment of the increasing wealth of a new colony arising from its situation and qualities in relation to the trade with China, the islands and Peru and from the thriving whale fishery. All these were foreshadowed in the proposals of Matra, Young and others, in the journals of Cook's voyages and in the requests of the whaler merchants of London well before the official decision to make the settlements was announced. The growth of such a colony was foreshadowed by the motto chosen for the Great Seal of New South Wales: "*Sic fortis Etruria crevit*". The British had seized the key to the new situation and were building on a position of strength.

Peron urged that the colony be destroyed as soon as possible, concluding: "Today we could destroy it easily: we shall not be able to do so in 25 years time." His postscript stated that M. Freycinet had examined all points favourable to the landing of troops.

Scott's treatment of this document is almost pointless. He cites and paraphrases²⁵ another report to the Minister of Marine, presumably by Freycinet, assessing the military weakness of the settlement due in part to the large numbers of dissident Irish. His main concern is for the moral turpitude of Peron and Freycinet though his strictures could also apply to Flinders' intentions when he called at Mauritius²⁶. These details which show specifically why "fear of the French" was warranted are ignored as is the evidence which enlightens the original purpose of the British government in making a settlement.

He points out minor errors of the report while making no comment on the broad truth. For example, where Peron stated that the government was seeking a strong military base nearer to the coasts of Peru Scott's footnote reads: "This statement was entirely false." Yet in 1792-4 Colnett's official expedition had sought harbours for whalers in the Galapagos Islands and whalers using these had taken many prizes in the ensuing war. The desire for a military post (a naval base) had substance; it was not "entirely false" but a shrewd inference at least from the information Peron had received. Had Scott seen the Pitt papers on this he would have found Enderby's proposal of 1799 for an expedition against Peru and Chile using Port Jackson as a main base and convicts as recruits for a landing force.

The report is a logical appraisal of the reasons for making several settlements but historians still take the view that there were discovery expeditions that were purely scientific. In 1943 Prof. Greenwood reached the conclusion that on the weight of evidence Baudin's expedition was pure. If there is any evidence *at all* to the contrary then such a statement is illogical.

The Whaling Industry, 1770-1800

THE loss of the American colonies has been commonly accepted as the dominant cause for settlement of Australia because of the need for a place where convicts could be disposed of. The fallacy will be treated elsewhere. Another view is that there was need of an alternative source of supply for whale oil because the American supply was now lost¹. This is also too simple to be true. The oil came from America in the sense that it was collected there for shipment to London but much oil came from the Arctic whale fleet in Britain itself. The sperm whale oil came from the South Atlantic where it was taken by New England whalers. Nantucket Island was the chief base for these but though the industry was manned by Nantucketers it was dominated by the finance of London, their chief market. During and after the war the centre of operations became London itself but the personnel of the industry was dominated by the skilled "loyalists" who defected from the United States in large numbers. This was the origin of the British Southern Whale Fishery which was so closely linked with the founding, supplying and using of the new settlements at Port Jackson, Norfolk Island and later Hobart.

It is of some significance that the French government also established a Southern Whale Fishery at Dunkirk, in 1785, with several families from Nantucket and with Nantucket ships².

After the Treaty of Paris the Americans had the status of foreigners and were in theory subject to the full rigour of the Navigation Acts. They also were free of the previous prohibition on trade to the regions monopolised by the East India Company. To use this freedom much capital was needed and the Americans began to discover how much of their colonial trade depended on the finance-capital of London. Political freedom and economic

²⁵—Pages 254-264.
²⁶—See Scott: Flinders, Page 304.

¹—Greenwood: *op. cit.*, Page 64
²—P.R.O., B/1, 5/3, Page 263.

freedom were very different; having won the first they found they had only begun the struggle for the second.

Their trade with the British colonies shows much divergence between law and practice. In the West Indies their previous trade continued in spite of the Navigation Acts because it was to the advantage of the colonial merchants there. Mahan shows how Nelson's treatment of American ships in West Indian ports conflicted with the virtual free trade permitted by the governors in the local interest. Thus his zealots attempted to enforce the law incurred local displeasure and even his admiral failed to support him³.

In European trade in oil, rice and tobacco it was a different matter. With whaling their position was very weak. This is clearly shown in the letters of Jefferson, from 1785-1790, when he was ambassador in Paris. He feared, and with reason, that Pitt's main design was to recover the lost colonies or at least to prevent their expansion beyond the Allegheny Mountains and into the Caribbean remnants of the Spanish Empire. Such dominant facts as the refusal to surrender the fur-trading posts on the frontier (until 1796), the attack on New Orleans in 1813 and the opposition to the acquisition of Texas in 1840, show how this policy persisted.

Jefferson's negotiations centred on persuading the French government to reduce the duties on oil, furs, rice, timber and naval stores. The Americans hoped also for a preferential trade to the French West Indies but this was a delicate matter which cut right across French mercantilism. He did not press for this and the economic advantage the Americans held was allowed to work out undisturbed. In 1776 Adam Smith had noted the activity of this trade.

The reduction in oil duties was readily obtained and Jefferson hoped "this branch of our commerce will soon return to its activity"⁴. At the time it was moribund; the ships had been lost, the men had migrated, some to Nova Scotia, some to England. Grass grew on the quays of the old whaling ports.

The Virginian tobacco trade was also in a bad state. There was still an active export but the outstanding debts were estimated at from £2 million to £3 million. He found that "British merchants gave good prices and credit until planters were in debt and never permitted them to get clear... debts became hereditary... planters were a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses in London"⁵.

Early in 1786 he went to London to negotiate on trade and found out there how deplorably weak was his country's position.

3—Mahan: Nelson, Chapter 2. Also P.R.O., B/T, 5/3, Pages 323-6.

4—Jefferson: Memoirs, I, Page 395.

5—Ibid., Page 403.

He wrote to Jay: "Even the opposition dare not open their lips in favour of a connexion with us. Not that they think our commerce unimportant to them... but they are sure of keeping it on their own terms". No minister would even see him. The only conference he could arrange was with Duncan Campbell, Chairman of the Committee of American Merchants, who had been the government's contractor for the transportation of convicts to Virginia. Even here they were at loggerheads over the delay in paying old debts on the one hand and the delay in handing over the fur trading posts on the other⁶.

Ten days later he wrote from Paris of the hopeless prospect: "They say they will pocket our carrying trade as well as their own. Our overtures of commercial arrangements are treated with derision." He admitted that free trade with the West Indies was the great object and that there was no hope of this — the main reason for the severity of the old colonial system and main cause of the war⁷.

It is worth noting that he reported the use in London of a newly invented lamp for which sperm whale oil was the best. In 1784 the Argand lamp, a Swiss invention, was patented in England and later described as "the greatest advance in artificial illumination to that date". The new industrial civilisation was demanding more light and the expansion of whaling which concerns us here was paralleled by improvements in burners, which were as much a product of the new cheap metal manufactures of Brummagem as of studies in the chemistry of combustion. Gas lighting began also; in 1784 it was first used in Louvain University and in 1792 Murdoch was attempting to use it in Cornwall but it is necessary to add that in 1829 the streets of Paris still had 3,000 oil lamps to 40 gas lamps. The bulk of the demand for oil came from the big cities but in office and workshop, in factories and mines, in harbours and on lighthouses, more light was essential to the increase in production and the improvement in its quality.

It was the realisation of the superior properties of oil from the sperm whale that made users pay higher prices for it and so stimulate whalers to equip for longer voyages and face the higher risks in hunting this pugnacious mammal. Just as the political philosophers found it necessary to explain the technical facts, so must the historian if he is to explain the course of political events. Jefferson's observations here summarised cover ten pages of his Memoirs.

Whale oil was used in making cloth, leather, soap, but the greatest demand was from lighting of houses and cities (and we

6—Ibid., Vol. II, Letter to Jay, 23/4/1786

7—Ibid., Page 20.

might add workshops). Vegetable oils were inferior in cold weather and in lighting intensity. Sperm oil was taken mainly on the coasts of Guinea and Brazil, and on the Cape and the Horn grounds. It gave the best light, was resistant to low temperatures and burned with no smell (hence its use indoors). It sold for three times the price of common whale oil but the true spermaceti (what whalers called the Head Matter) fetched double the price of sperm oil itself. It was used in making high quality candles and also medicinally⁸.

The common oil, or Greenland oil, from the Right Whale, was slightly more resistant to low temperatures, its light was less brilliant and "the smell was insupportable within doors". In France its price was £16 a ton.

The Black Oil was better than Greenland in warm weather but worse in cold — it brought £13 a ton. He noted that there were refineries where blends of oils were made for different purposes.

In 1791 the Committee for Trade and Plantations sought technical facts to help it in recommending policies. For street lamps a blend of southern whale oil and Greenland oil with some seal oil from Quebec and Greenland was used, as seal oil was best for frosty weather. During summer the southern oil was used by itself and in very hard frost was not used at all. Sperm oil was chiefly used in lighting houses; in large lamps of warehouses, southern oil had least smell, after sperm. The contractor for city lamps said that Greenland oil had declined in quantity and much was not fit for burning. (The Northern fishery brought back blubber for boiling on shore; the Southern fishery brought its oil in barrels, after trying-out at sea, because of the need to economise space. It kept better in that way.) Curriers gave evidence on the use of cod oil in their trade, the increase in the price and the seducing of their workmen by Germans. Skill was in increasing demand in Europe. A workman of Mr. Newman had established a manufacture of oil in Normandy. Clothiers were using animal oil only because olive oil was up to £50 a ton. Linseed oil was becoming cheaper⁹. Here then was a complex market situation, a growing and changing demand for lighting, cloth working and leather making, with a composite supply drawn mainly from external sources and some (rape seed oil) from home sources where the demand for grain and meat was competing for the land available. The Greenland whalers had been the largest suppliers for a century but in 1788 the bounty paid was 63% of the value of their produce¹⁰. It was seasonal and in some years the losses of ships were heavy. The Southern

Fishery could produce the year round and the sperm whale abounded in the vast oceans while the Right or Greenland whale was plentiful also in the coastal waters. The world's oil reserves were expanding.

To tap these fields more was needed than enterprise and a spirit of adventure. Abstract nouns may describe; they don't explain. The prolonged voyages needed larger ships and larger outlay on stores; it was essential to have bases for repairs and protection and for fresh supplies. To keep these costs down, provisions had to be cheap — this is the essential cause of the trouble with the Rum Corps and its monopoly in New South Wales. Their profit-seeking was inimical to cheap services to navigation. Beside all this, skill was essential. This was abundant in Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, both island bases near Boston. Jefferson stated that before the war Nantucket had 300 vessels and Britain only 100 (all in the Northern fishery) and the British, seeing the moment was critical, had offered extravagant advantages but only to those who settled in Britain "foreseeing they might have to purchase them a second time if they went to Nova Scotia". We should note the bearing of this on the term "loyalist" and the British fear of defections from Canada. The French were aware of the danger if "6,000 seamen should all decide to postpone country and friends to high premiums" so they made similar offers. In 1785 nine Nantucket families of 33 persons in all moved to Dunkirk. The English began to deluge the French market with bounty-fed oil and this underselling was countered by a high duty of £18 a ton. Jefferson thought this ineffective. In 1786 Enderby reported that he exported from 200 to 300 tons to Ostend and Dunkirk, which he believed went to France. He believed the French fishery from Dunkirk had been unsuccessful¹¹.

After pointing out that the French had stocks of oil which remained unsold because of English competition, while Americans were in distress because they could not fit out vessels for the Southern Fishery, came Jefferson's cry of despair: "We must accept bread from our enemies if our friends cannot furnish it. This comes exactly to the point to which that government has been looking. She fears no rival in the whale fishery but America or rather it is the whale fishery of America of which she is *endeavouring to possess herself*!" While before the war America had had 309 vessels and the English less than 100, by 1786 England had 151; in 1787 286 and in 1788 314 while the American fleet had fallen to 80. The British ships divided between the Northern Fishery of 255 and Southern 59; the total catch was

⁸—*Ibid.*, Pages 393-403.

⁹—*B/T*, 5/7, Pages 312-5.

¹⁰—*B/T*, 5/5, Page 272.

¹¹—*B/T*, 5/3, Page 263.

¹²—*Author's italics.*

8,640 tons which earned bounties of £175,580, paid on the tonnage of shipping, not the size of the catch. "England has gained," he wrote, "exactly what America has lost. France by her ports and markets holds the balance and gives the victory to whom she pleases. We have still precious remains of seamen, capable of recovering it from the English. The new order of duties (in France) endangers the transferring to Britain of every man of them."

The long memorandum concluded with a summary of the position: the three principal American products were tobacco, whale oil and rice and "time and trial might add a fourth — timber". Hostilities in America had led the English to seek more supplies from Russian sources but now "a new spirit of hostility had driven them back to make contracts for American timbers". This refers to the incident over Oczakow on the Black Sea, a region only recently won from the Turks. Pitt wanted this port left in Turkish hands because the French government was trying to get supplies of mast timber from Russian sources by this back door¹³.

Shortly after the memo. was written the French removed the duties on American oil and Jefferson exulted that this "would put a hundred English vessels immediately out of employ" but feared that if enough Nantuckois were to settle at Dunkirk the American oil would again be barred¹⁴. As he had shown earlier, this would be done on the advice of the Dunkirk whalers themselves, loyalists to themselves and their calling.

Meanwhile, in America Hamilton, Jay and Madison were publishing in the "Federalist" their pleas to Americans to form a more perfect union. They show a keen appreciation of the dangers from the forming of separate confederations and from the intrigues of foreign powers to promote that end. In the fourth number Jay wrote: "With France and Britain we are rivals in the fisheries and can supply their markets cheaper than they can themselves", notwithstanding the use of bounties or duties. They also were in a strong position in the carrying trade and in the trade to India and China where they were able "to partake in advantages which they (the British) had in a manner monopolised". In the European colonies in America the cheapness of their produce, their nearness and the enterprise of their merchants would give them a greater share of trade "than consists with the wishes or policy of their respective sovereigns"¹⁵. Hamilton stressed that the wars of Spain and England had grown out of commercial rivalry and the English attempts to

ply illicit trade and that an efficient union was essential for the creation of an effective navy which could at least hold the balance of power in the West Indies. Also no military operations were possible there without supplies from the United States. Thus they were in a strong position to bargain for commercial privileges. His confident assertion of the destiny of the United States foreshadows the Monroe Doctrine. "A price will be set not only on our friendship but on our neutrality. By a steady adherence to the Union we may hope ere long to become the arbiter of Europe in America and to be able to incline the balance of European competitions in this part of the world as our interest may dictate." For this maritime strength the resources of the regions were complementary. He wrote: "The Southern states furnish naval stores, tar, pitch and turpentine. Their wood for the construction of ships is more solid and lasting... the Southern and Middle states yield iron of better quality. Seamen must chiefly be drawn from the Northern hive."¹⁶

The sending off of new swarms from this hive was not due merely or even mainly to the war. The community so well described by Crevecoeur in "Letters of an American Farmer" (1770) had grown with the cod fishery and the Greenland whaling, when ships were all small, with crews of about thirteen men, and the larger ships which took oil and whalebone and salt fish to Europe loaded at an outport. The shallow entrance made the whalers of the pelagic sperm fishery move to deeper harbours like New Bedford; one group moved to the Hudson River¹⁷ but as the cruising grounds were extended, from the Azores to Brazil, to the Guinea coast, to the River Plate and the Cape, and the oil was tried out at sea, the advantage of the larger ships sailing direct to European markets was strong and the economy of working from bases in Europe was obvious to the merchants whose capital dominated the trade. The logic of economic forces supported, if it did not dictate, the policy of British governments.

The stages by which the merchants of the Southern Fishery pressed their claims for encouragement can be followed chronologically from the minutes of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations¹⁸.

In 1784 there are only sporadic references to the oil trade from Nova Scotia and the looseness of the regulation of it. In December, 1785, the Lords of the Committee had a question referred to them from His Majesty in Council concerning the encouragement it might be proper to give to the Southern Whale Fishery. They accordingly sought information on steps being taken in

13—Bamford: *Forests and French Sea Power*; also Pitt-Auckland, 7/3/1791, in

Journals, etc., of Auckland, Vol. II, Chapter XXI.

14—Jefferson, Vol. II, Page 413.

15—Federalist (Everymen), Page 13.

16—Ibid, No. XI, Page 50.

17—Stackpole: *The Sea Hunters*, Chapter VIII.

18—B/T, 5/1, to B/T, 5/12.

this matter by the French government to establish a Southern Fishery and to admit oil from the United States¹⁹.

In January, 1786, a memorial was received from Samuel Enderby & Sons, John St. Barbe and Alexander Champion asking for bounties on the Southern Fishery and suggesting regulations for its improvement²⁰. In March the three spokesmen submitted details of the fishery. By 1785 there were 17 ships employed; whales were abundant between Cape Verde Islands and Brazil but most abundant in South Latitudes 31° to 36°, on the edge of soundings, about 40 leagues from the coast. Asked whether whales were also found eastward of the Cape, Enderby stated that he had "very good information from Captains of East Indiamen" that this was so. They had produced evidence in quantities of "Ambergrease which is part of the dung of these whales". The principal fishermen were all Americans, all resident in Britain. Some had been with Enderby for ten years. The French had offered high pay to get some to go over but their fishery had been unsuccessful²¹.

So even before the Declaration of Independence at least one London merchant was importing skill from America.

They also reported that 30 American-owned ships were operating from Nova Scotia and asked that colonial ships be made to bring their oil direct to British ports to prevent such frauds. They asked for bounty on oil taken from the South Atlantic and as far eastward as Madagascar. They wanted permission from the Portuguese to use a stated port in Brazil²².

The limits asked were not arbitrary but were based on data on the migrant habits of whales. On Brazil, it is worth noting that about 1770 the Nantucket men had taught sperm whaling to the Portuguese there and that Governor Phillip was familiar with this industry from his naval service with the Portuguese government²³.

In May, 1786, the Committee called in the three merchants to hear a report on the Southern Fishery and got their agreement to taking licenses from the East India Company for ships passing eastward of the Cape. They agreed also to give security not to engage in illicit trade. The Committee wrote to the East India Company and the South Sea Company asking their Chairman and Deputy-Chairman to confer on the desire of merchants to pass both Capes; after submitting the matter to their Court of Directors they agreed to the resolutions²⁴.

¹⁹—B/T, 5/2, Page 346.

²⁰—Ibid, 5/3, Page 110.

²¹—B/T, 5/3, Page 263.

²²—Ibid, Pages 271-4.

²³—P.R.O., B/T, 5/3, Pages 457-469, and H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 613.

²⁴—Ibid, 3/9, 382-4, 397.

The report referred to states that from information received through the Ambassador to Portugal a small whale fishery had existed in Brazil for a long time but that until 1764 little attention was paid to it. Then a company was formed with a monopoly for thirteen years. It was a coastal fishery, carried on by small boats, based on the island of St. Catherine. In 1769-70 some American vessels were seized but the crews were released on promising to teach the Portuguese how to distinguish sperm whales and to extract the spermaceti. (This might be construed as barratry—we might be excused for holding that this was one way for Americans to set up a base in Brazil.) Before the war Nantucket had 140 vessels in the Southern Fishery and in a single year 5,000 tons of oil was shipped to Britain, worth £200,000. Two-thirds of this came from Nantucket.

This fishery, by 1786, was greatly diminished and the people of Nantucket appeared disposed to remove to where they might be able to carry on the fishery to more advantage²⁵.

In the report appears the forthright statement of policy which dominates all the work of the committee for the ensuing decades: "The Committee does not think it right to leave this trade without future encouragement... it is of great importance at the present moment when the American fishery is declining and it is doubtful to what countries the people heretofore employed in it may resort and whether Great Britain or any foreign country may get possession of it, that a proper effort should now be made to secure to this country the advantages of a fishery which was once so lucrative to the Americans, and with this view the Committee, after mature deliberation, do humbly recommend the following plan:—That the premiums be available to ships manned by British or by Americans who make oath that they are established or intend to establish themselves and families in Great Britain or some part of Your Majesty's European dominions. They may take the oath of allegiance after five years' residence."²⁶

Both Charles Jenkinson and Pitt were present when this was done. In July Jenkinson became Lord Hawkesbury. In August, three months after the declaration, the Committee was dissolved and reconstituted with Lord Hawkesbury as Chairman and Grenville as Vice-Chairman. Five days before this Lord Sydney had issued his Heads of a Plan about a projected settlement at Botany Bay. The new measures for encouragement of shipping and navigation were embodied in Geo. III 20c. 38.

In April, 1787, before the First Fleet sailed a Commission for the trial of pirates was prepared for New South Wales and also

²⁵—B/T, 5/3, Pages 457-469.

²⁶—Ibid, Page 464.

the Commission appointing Arthur Phillip as Governor. The Committee made certain amendments in the draft of instructions under the Commission and submitted the amended instructions for Royal approval²⁷.

In June, 1787, a petition was referred to the Committee on behalf of Samuel Starbuck and Timothy Folger of Nova Scotia praying that British register be granted for five ships which they claimed to have brought from Nantucket to Nova Scotia in 1785 and employed in the Brazil Whale Fishery. The Committee recommended that the petition be granted under the act of the previous year²⁸. In October of that year an application was made by Enderby, St. Barbe and Champion for amendments to the new Act making its provisions for premiums more elastic and extending the protection from impressment to the whole crew, as an inducement to fishermen still remaining in Nantucket. A further request from Champion was for the extensions of the limitations to 54 degrees East and as far northward as the Equator, i.e., to the Mocambique and Seychelles grounds. On this a letter to the Commissioners for the affairs of India asked whether the East India Company could have any reasonable objection²⁹.

In March, 1788, Enderby and colleagues were called in and told that the Committee was proposing a Bill to amend the Statute varying the times ships must be on the fishing grounds to qualify for premiums and extending the limits to 51 degrees East longitude and 180 West and as far north as the Equator, with lump sum bounties to those bringing back the biggest catch. Those doubling the Capes were to have licenses and also licenses to arm, on giving security not to commit hostilities. To attract Americans the first foreign ship to come over would be allowed to bring in 70 tons of oil duty free; the second and third would pay reduced duties³⁰.

On March 26th, 1788, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company were asked to put to their Court of Directors the committee's reasons for wishing to extend the limits. They were told: "Their Lordships desire to receive the consent of the East India Company thereto with all convenient speed."³¹

It is quite clear from this language, and the compliance of the Company, that it was not in a position to refuse. The fishery was flourishing. Enderby furnished returns for 1788 showing that the price of sperm and spermacei was rising while Brazil and Greenland oil and bone had fallen; though 45 ships had returned that year (40 of these to London) and 49 were still out

27—Ibid, 5/4, Pages 239, 253.

28—Ibid, 295.

29—Ibid, Pages 377, 380.

30—Ibid, 5/5, Page 53.

31—Ibid, Page 63.

(41 from London). The Southern Fishery brought back 668 tons of sperm oil and 133 tons of spermacei, it had taken also 2,424 tons of common oil which was cheaper than Greenland. Enderby had eight ships and with £1,700 was the biggest receiver of premiums. The Greenland fishery had had a bad year with many ships lost from being caught in ice³².

In April, 1789, the Southern whalers petitioned for further extensions of latitude round Cape Horn and to be relieved of the expense of taking licences from the South Sea Company but were promptly told that "it would not be proper to recommend to parliament at present"³³. The Greenland fishery asked for bounties to be restored to previous levels but were refused. It was ceasing to be profitable. The overall position for 1788 was that about 14,000 tons was brought in from all sources and almost a third of this exported — on the Greenland oil the bounty amounted to a benefit to foreign manufactures. Whether its encouragement should continue because of the number of seamen employed was a question of policy, not of commerce³⁴.

The clashes with Spanish coastguards off Patagonia produced by this expansion are first recorded in October, 1789, but relate to the previous spring when a Spanish frigate had ordered whalers to depart from those seas. "A general prohibition would be destructive to our fisheries but if we were confined," said the merchants, "to fish not nearer shore than five leagues it would answer all the purposes." The Black Whale was taken commonly at that distance; the Sperm Whale was usually caught on the edge of soundings at about ten leagues from the shore. In December further complaint was made to the same effect; one ship drying skins at Port Desire, in Patagonia, was forced to leave 7,000 skins behind³⁵.

The Committee recorded at length its opinions of this situation, stating that it was important that the Spanish claims should now be denied and resisted as "the liberty of fishing" was necessary to the Southern Whale Fishery which was "every year increasing and extending the trade and navigation of H.M. Dominions". It was proper to assure Madrid that there was no intention of contraband trade or making settlements. They cited the case of the Falkland Islands, where a settlement made in 1770 was soon abandoned, but asserted the right of British ships to land for taking seals, making repairs and replenishing water³⁶. On March 9th, 1790, Mr. Enderby, Jr., reported the arrival at Gravesend of the first whaler to fish westward of Cape Horn³⁷.

32—Ibid, Pages 181-4, 220.

33—Ibid, Pages 261-7.

34—Ibid, Pages 270-6.

35—Ibid, Pages 388, 407.

36—Ibid, Pages 420-424.

37—Ibid, Page 142.

In May, Mr. John Mears was asked to appear and gave evidence on the fur trade of the North West of America but was asked about the number of whales on that coast and replied that they were present in great quantities³⁸. In July a further report came of a ship off Patagonia being detained by the Spaniards³⁹.

On August 30th, 1790, Samuel Enderby, Jr., wrote to Pitt personally a brief statement of the progress of the Southern Fishery and of the expanding market for its oil. He stated that further progress depended on enlarging the fishing regions; that the limitation imposed by the South Sea and East India Companies did not apply to their foreign competitors who could carry on the fishery without hindrance "in those places which we have explored for them", and that when the whales were hunted away they could "follow them into places where the English whalers dare not go"⁴⁰.

Shortly afterwards, in an undated letter, he wrote to Pitt offering to carry convicts and stores to Botany Bay "as the vessels would afterwards go whaling on the coast of Peru or elsewhere". He enclosed an account of the Southern Fishery which then employed 68 vessels (10 of them Enderby's) and 1,400 seamen and apprentices, paid on a profit-sharing system. Deaths from scurvy were rare though the average duration of voyages was twelve months; the employment given at home to shipwrights, ropemakers and allied trades was greater in proportion than any other branch of commerce. The very nature of the fishery led to an increase in the knowledge of distant coasts and islands, thus conducing to the extension of other commerce⁴¹.

On November 25th, 1790, he wrote again expressing pleasure that the Nootka Convention (October 28, 1790) contained "more privileges for the fishery than we expected". He had intended to send four ships into the Pacific that year even though war had seemed likely. Further extension would follow proper encouragement and the removal of geographical and other restrictions. He referred to "the four vessels taken up to carry convicts" and the intention to circumnavigation by the Enderby vessel among them. The conclusion describes Pitt as an "admirer of the fishery, to whom it owes so much of its prosperity, though much is still to be done by removing parliamentary obstructions"⁴².

In January, 1791, Enderby, St. Barbe and Champion attended the Committee for detailed interpretation of their rights under the Convention and also for complete relief from taking out licenses, for freedom from imprisonment to be extended to apprentices and better observed with officers and for increased premiums.

38—Ibid, 5/6, Page 234.

39—Ibid, Page 269.

40—P.R.O., 30/8/133.

41—Ibid.

42—Ibid.

They sought assurance that ships taking convicts to Port Jackson should be eligible for premiums, though it lay outside their legal limits⁴³. The Committee asked them whether it would ever be in their interest to send their ships into the North Pacific and if so, would they sign bonds not to engage in illicit trade⁴⁴. They replied in writing that it would be to their advantage to work north of the Line for the joint purposes of fishing and trading with the natives of North West America⁴⁵. Their Lordships deferred decisions on this until the matter had been referred to the Government.

On February 4th, 1791, the Committee resumed consideration of the request. Those present were Hawkesbury, the Duke of Montrose, Lord Grenville, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Ryder and Lord Dundas. They ordered the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, after perusing the charters of the East India, South Sea and Hudson's Bay companies, to report whether any of these had such an interest as entitled them to exclude other subjects from carrying on their commerce and fisheries in those parts where such privileges had not been exercised for a great number of years⁴⁶.

On February 14th the same members present and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company attending, it was ordered that propositions be submitted to the Court of Directors of the Company in these terms:—"That all British ships whose owners and officers gave bonds not to engage in illicit trade could proceed via Cape Horn to any part of the Pacific eastward of the longitude of Canton and go to Chinese ports to sell the produce of their trade and fishery.

That ships returning from thence should carry Asian produce only on account of the East India Company.

That ships entering the longitude of Canton should touch there for certificates to the above effect⁴⁷.

On the 24th, the Court of Directors was reminded that the Committee was still awaiting their opinion and on March 3rd, with Pitt again present, a minute of the secret Court of Directors dated 25/2/91 was considered and it was agreed that it should appoint a special committee to confer with their Lordships and the Commissioners for Affairs of the East Indies "on Monday next"⁴⁸. On March 7th the committees conferred, Pitt again present, and adjourned to the Thursday, adding the proposition that the ships be allowed to trade in "the seas of the East India Company" under the same restrictions as country ships. On

43—B/T, 5/7, Page 10.

44—Ibid, Page 19.

45—Ibid, Page 21.

46—Ibid, Page 45.

47—Ibid, Page 52.

March 10th the three committees met, Pitt again present. The select committee of the Court of Directors submitted that ships trading to the west coast of America be allowed to import only at Canton, that such ships if arriving there between November 1st to January 15th would be freighted with tea to a total of 1,500 tons at £10 a ton and that they should not land European goods at Canton.

Certain alterations were suggested by the committees and agreed to by the Company's representatives to the following effect:—That whalers or traders to North West America might bring cash or goods to Canton or other places east of its longitude.

The Company would freight ships to a total of 1,500 tons if they arrived between September 15th and January 1st.

Ships were to be under the orders of the Company's supercargoes except in selling their cargoes. Ships could return to Europe by the Cape or Cape Horn.

Whalers could fish without licence east of the Cape without limit provided they returned by the Cape; to 10 degrees North they were free to go and as far as 60 degrees East. (This extended the scope around Madagascar northward to the Maldiv Islands).⁴⁹

On March 14th the Committee (Pitt present) resumed consideration of the fishery and trade to North West America and agreed to the final draft to be submitted to the Court of Directors of the Company.⁵⁰

On March 21st (Pitt absent) the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Company were present but their Lordships held to the propositions submitted by them except that they agreed that ships sailing around the Cape should also have licences. They hoped that the Court would not insist on certain other alterations they had proposed, as these propositions did not affect the trade actually enjoyed by the Company and were calculated to permit a further extension of the commerce of His Majesty's subjects.⁵¹

On the 25th the Company replied but the minutes do not record details and on April 5th the Committee ordered the Attorney-General "with all convenient speed" to prepare a bill to allow fishing within the terms of the propositions as altered by the Court of Directors of the Company.⁵²

This detailed resume of two months of negotiations, with Pitt attending assiduously such frequent meetings, has been given

because this was the crucial period when the Third Fleet of ten transports was preparing to sail and Pitt had already agreed to four whaling ships being included, thus enabling them to earn an outward freight and engage in whaling after a refit in Port Jackson, a very profitable concession to them in exploring new grounds. We must remember too that at the same time Vancouver was preparing to sail to the North West Pacific to resume ownership of the trading post at Nootka Sound. The East India Company was over-ridden on all its previous objections to allowing whalers and traders to enlarge their activities. It is quite clear that the Government was convinced of the national advantage arising from the profit opportunities seen by the free traders and it is also of moment that the East India Company was being ousted from one form of obstruction after another. The trial of Warren Hastings (and of the whole administrative system) was still dragging on, the India Act of 1784 had removed foreign policy from the Company, but it was also under attack by numerous commercial interests of which the whalers and the fur traders were important groups. Among others the minutes of the Committee record these:—In 1788 the Manufacturers of Calicoes and Muslims petitioned against its import of cotton goods and cotton yarn from India⁵³; in 1790 the tin producers of Cornwall showed how they were suffering from the trade in East Indian tin; and in 1791 the gunpowder makers succeeded in getting the Committee to recommend changes in its monopoly position on the import of saltpetre.⁵⁴ Their memorial pointed out what everyone knew—that its charter was running out. The Company was not in a position to offer effective resistance to claims that its monopoly was restricting commercial progress.

The force of the whalers' case was shown also in private letters. In January, 1789, Enderby wrote to Geo. Chalmers, Secretary to the Committee, concerning lists of oil prices supplied to him and to Lord Hawkesbury "who first took the fishery under his protection in 1785". He wrote: "Nothing is wanting to make this Fishery complete but an unlimited right of fishing in all the seas; the British Adventurers would soon explore the most distant parts and the settlements (sic) of New Holland would be often visited as there are many whales in those seas."

"Our house received a letter from America a few days ago, to inform us one of the whaling Captains had been on a voyage to China and seen more Spermacei whales about the Straights of Sunda... than he had ever seen before... and offer is made to be concerned in a ship under American colours and to send that Captain awhaling in those seas which we shall decline... it is

48—Ibid, Page 64.
49—Ibid, Page 73.
50—Ibid, Page 85.
51—Ibid, Page 94.
52—Ibid, Page 121.

53—B/T, 5/5, Pages 69-104.
54—P.R.O., B/T, 5/7, Pages 124-371.

hard on us we cannot send a ship there... we have two ships fitting to sail in March and we are undetermined which branch of the fishery to send them on; we should like to send them to the Streights of Sunda but dare not without permission."⁵⁵

Let us note that at this date no news had been received that the First Fleet had arrived and yet Enderby writes of "settlements". He knew that more than one was intended and it is also certain that he knew his friend, King, would be in command at Norfolk Island. It is of more importance that he implies the economic logic of the new situation — the Americans had freedom but lacked capital and were prepared to buy it where it was most readily available. The scope this gave to English to evade the navigation acts, already common in the West Indies as we have seen and soon to become common in Australia, could be countered only by giving to British traders a like freedom to that the Americans had won. Only by this could the policy of getting possession of the "precious reserves of seamen" in Nantucket be effected.

We are entitled to assume that what was clear to Enderby, to Jefferson, Hamilton, Jay and Madison and to the French government which sent out La Perouse, was equally clear to Chalmers, Hawkesbury, Pitt and the Court of the East India Company. The emphasis varied from time to time and for every merchant or statesman concerned. How far members of the government were convinced in 1786 that a settlement in New South Wales, or that vicinity, would help in the future trading competition with French, Americans and others can not be known but it is on record that several projects put to the government pointed that way. It has been shown that Enderby began, even before the American war, to import skilled Americans and pursue the fishery from London. A migration of capital was beginning; the emigration of loyalists, to Canada and Britain as well as France, meant a migration of capital too. A part of this was the extension of the fishery to the Pacific which then began. This was one sense in which the political independence (and commercial ostracism practised with some success at first), of the United States led to the formation of settlements in Australia. This clearly involved government investment on a considerable scale.

Whatever the mixture of government motives in 1786, it has just been shown that the same people, in 1791, were pushing aside in detail the legal obstacles to the use of that settlement. Before we follow the events of the Third Fleet we might note another detail on the interest in the new settlements. In 1789 when Hunter arrived at Capetown in the "*Sirius*" he was told

by the master of the "*Harpy*", a London whaler, that in England there was general anxiety to hear of the safe arrival of the adventurers, and that the government only waited on this assurance to send out other ships.⁵⁶ Whalers were not likely to worry about personal safety in such matters; the term "adventurers" is one of commerce, not of gaols. Collins thought such remarks worthy of mention because he too saw such settlements for what they were. He shows that Enderby's expectations were held by the whaling captains also, most of them still Nantucket men, who knew that their counterparts in the United States could, and soon would, make use of the settlements.

The Third Fleet sailed in March, 1791, and Commander King, returning to his command at Norfolk Island, took passage in *H.M.S. "Gorgon"*, the escort of the Fleet. We have noted elsewhere his conferences with private persons while in England. While the "*Gorgon*" was still at the Cape Verde Islands, the whaler "*Britannia*", owner, Enderby, arrived. As he knew the "*Gorgon*" was to make a long stay at Capetown, he feared the "*Britannia*" might precede him to Port Jackson, "which," he wrote, "by no means answers my expectation."⁵⁷ She did not do so but King's anxiety, in the light of what happened when she arrived, shows that he had talked with Enderby about whaling in Australian waters and that Nepean was privy to this.

Other aspects of trade emerged at Capetown. An American ship there asked a price of fifteen hundred guineas to freight the stores salvaged from the "*Guardian*" to Port Jackson, "a step too delicate for subalterns" like Parker, Captain of the "*Gorgon*" and himself. Also a Whitehaven captain told King of his intention to go to America for a cargo of meat for sale at Port Jackson, quoting a price of 7d. a pound. King wrote: "He wished encouragement which was not in my power to give" but added that he was prepared to run the risk without it.⁵⁸ Collins states that King had suggested to the captain, Patrickson, the advantage of taking a cargo on speculation.⁵⁹

Which is more accurate is immaterial — what matters is that Americans, and their co-partners, had advantages over British traders from the existence of any kind of settlement. King's official status prevented him from openly encouraging British traders. Also, he had served in the West Indies and it is certain that every naval officer knew of the Nelson incidents told by Mahan.⁶⁰

Other evidence of illicit trading accumulated. King was "credibly informed" while at Capetown that each transport had

⁵⁶—Collins: *English Colony in N.S.W.*, Whitcomb and Tombs, Edition (1910), Page 55.

⁵⁷—King-Nepean, H.R.N.S.W., Vol. I, Part II, Page 468.

⁵⁸—*Ibid.*

⁵⁹—Collins: *op. cit.*, Page 161.

⁶⁰—Life of Nelson, Chapter 2, See also B/1, 5/3, Pages 290-326, for Nelson and Collingwood reports on illegal registering of U.S. ships.

upwards of 200 tons of iron, copper and lead, beside other articles⁶¹. Later Phillip reported to Grenville that four transports had quantities of copper, lead, iron and cordage which had been "received publicly, intended for a Portuguese settlement in India, put on board by the owners after the ships had loaded all government stores and provisions. The masters had never declared their ships full" and the ships had regular clearances⁶². He felt he had no authority to seize the cargoes, pleading that he had not received the latest Statutes relating to the Fishery. It is possible he was referring to the very recent changes made just before the Fleet sailed, and not yet printed. Phillip was later censured for not seizing the cargoes. His lack of vision in this case may be excused. Clearly there were port officials, navy agents and merchants in Britain who were ready to take advantage of the new settlement and it is morally certain that ministers who had pressed for relaxation of the Company's restrictions knew such practices were common. King was not privy to this, nor were the whalers implicated. None of the ships named by Phillip were whalers.

Light is thrown on King's "expectations" by a letter from Thomas Melville, captain of the "*Britannia*", to Enderby. Captain Hunter thought it worth quoting in full because it showed "the first introduction of the fishery" to New South Wales. It is also worth noting that the letter was made available to him so shortly after its arrival in England⁶³.

Melville reports that he took 42 days from the Cape to Van Diemens Land and 55 days to Sydney. His ship's sailing quality had been shown by a smart passage to the Cape Verde Islands — yet she took three weeks longer than the "*Gorgon*" from the Cape to Sydney, and 13 days from South Cape to Sydney. Clearly, he was making a survey of coasts and whaling possibilities.

En route he "made" the island of Amsterdam by a good lunar observation but thick weather prevented him from examining its sealing possibilities. Its Longitude, 76 degrees East, means it had until the recent changes, been outside the legal limits. Though on a government charter, he was acting in his owner's interests, in a manner which would have voided a marine insurance policy. He reported great shoals of whales on the coast of New South Wales and a "very great prospect of establishing a fishery". He and Enderby knew that permission for this was a foregone conclusion.

His report of his interviews with Phillip shows the importance of those two months of pressure on the Company just before he

61—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. I, Part II, Page 506.

62—Ibid., Pages 547, 550, 554.

63—Hunter: *Journal of Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, 1793*; also in *Phillips MSS., Mitchell Library and, in part, in Dakin: Whalermen Adventurers, Pages 9-11.*

sailed. At the first, Phillip wanted to send him straight on to Norfolk Island to unload his convicts and also to buy his ship. He refused this, told Phillip of the whales he had seen and took his leave.

Two hours later he had a second interview. There was no more talk of buying or chartering his ship. Phillip had in the meantime read the contents of the mail brought by Melville. He took him to a *private* room and promised every service and despatch in sailing on a whaling cruise. Next day Phillip sent every longboat in the port to unload his convicts and stores and a cooper from the "*Gorgon*" to set up his barrels. The news set the other whalers astir but the "*Britannia*" was first to sail, though last to arrive. Some ships had arrived a month earlier.

In concluding he wrote: "Captain King used all his interest in the business; he gave his kind respects to you."

King, a personal friend, had been on hand during the organizing of the Third Fleet; Hawkesbury was a protector and Pitt an admirer of the fishery. All facilities of the settlement were put at the disposal of one captain, and presumably the others in their turn. When a Captain R.N. and a Governor of a colony can be so quickly moved from his first intentions to show such favours we cannot take seriously the view that this had been intended as a purely penal colony. No doubt there are many official statements to that effect but they did not deceive the French government. There was no need to mention whaling possibilities when the First Fleet sailed but as we have seen, the whalers were ready to explore these grounds. This could not be done with profit until such a base had been established. Taking into account the delay in getting news to England of the finding of Port Jackson and the fact that whalers were simultaneously exploring around Cape Horn and into East African seas, the Third Fleet shows a strong will to adventure and use the new facilities provided for them. The intense activity of the Committee for Trade and Plantations against the East India Company's legal obstructions must be seen as the basis for the orders (and private letters) for Phillip carried by the "*Britannia*".

Collins wrote a full account of the whalers' activities, their success not up to expectations because of the gales at that season, their desire to obtain knowledge of sheltered anchorages on the coast and their appreciation of the conveniences of Port Jackson⁶⁴. In March, 1792, Phillip wrote to Nepean that the "*Britannia*" intended staying three months on the coast before proceeding to Peru⁶⁵. He added: "From information received since the ship sailed, I fear the fur trade on the North West

64—Collins: *op. cit.*, Page 135.

65—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 613.

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coast of America and trade amongst the islands is too great to admit them giving this coast a fair trial."

Collins also reports that two whalers sailed with convicts in their crews and had been permitted to do this⁶⁶. The recruiting of crews was as normal a practice as replenishing water and was an advantage which whalers would have foreseen. It was normal practice for whalers later to supplement their crews with Maoris and other Polynesians while on the fishing grounds; the convicts were similar temporary hands who, after working for their keep, were quite willing to desert before the full ship sailed for London.

Before going on to Norfolk Island, King wrote to the Marquis of Buckingham, of the prospects of the fishery which would "greatly add to the consequences of this settlement", and that whalers destined for the coast of America had altered their plans. A "most experienced master" of one had declared he saw more whales in one day off New South Wales than he had seen on the Brazil coast in six years⁶⁷. Both King and Phillip stress the advantages in spite of their fears that seamen and carpenters would be tempted to leave the colony after their sentences had expired. It was not the escape of convicts as such that was feared but the loss of skilled men. The needs of sea-trading men were completely at variance with the notion of a penal settlement and the examples of the working of this were seen even before the Third Fleet arrived. Phillip foresaw a prosperous future for the fishery but thought that small vessels would prove more suitable on the coast, as he had found in Brazil⁶⁸. He had seen in Brazil an empire founded by convicts and did not wish to see this repeated in Australia. This is a more plausible origin for his cryptic remark, written before leaving England, on the strength of which our historians, bent on the quest for Great Men who are so rare in Australia's story, have dubbed him visionary. He saw in the eagerness of the whalers the first practical manifestation of the kind of empire a prosaic post-captain would have seen, a more prosperous fishery than that of the South Atlantic which he already knew well.

The Prosperity of Whaling

THIS grew rapidly during the time that King was Governor at Norfolk Island and at Sydney. The expectations raised by the whalers of the Third Fleet were deterred by the outbreak of war. After 1792 occasional British whalers came with convicts and supplies. In 1793 the East India Company's charter was renewed for twenty years. Both this and the war deterred development in whaling as it did in seaborne trade, partly because it brought other opportunities like privateering.

To illustrate the other opportunities which some whalers exploited we might review the career of another ship called "*Britannia*", sometimes confused with Enderby's ship of the same name. In October, 1790, Enderby wrote to Nepean about an application to him by John St. Barbe, who was "concerned in the South Whale Fishery", about carrying the convicts to Botany Bay. He wished to do this in joint venture with Enderby "and afterwards prosecute the fishery in those seas"¹. St. Barbe's ship was not among those chartered for the Third Fleet but was later chartered as a store ship and sailed independently. Her cargo included mill stones and mill gear². She had a three years' licence for whaling and sailed first for New Zealand to land a sealing party. "Having more people in the ship than was necessary for her management", her captain, Raven, left his second mate, carpenter and party to build a house and a 53-foot boat. He left a year's supplies, iron work, cordage and sails. This was written in a report to King at Norfolk Island³. The futility of regulations against boat building at Port Jackson is patent — neither of the local governors saw anything improper in this.

Before Raven sailed for Port Jackson, Grose and the officers asked Phillip to support them in chartering "*Britannia*" for a

66—Collins: *op. cit.*, Page 136.
67—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 528.
68—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 613.

1—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. I, Part II, Page 407.
2—Enderby-Nepean Phillips MSS., Mitchell Library.
3—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 92.

voyage to the Cape⁴. Phillip refused but did not forbid them from doing this, though he feared it would lead to contraband trade. He pointed out that he had already asked for the Acts relating to the South Whale Fishery. The charter price was £2,000⁵. In December, 1792, Raven proceeded to Capetown via Cape Horn and in June, 1793, returned to Port Jackson. In August, Grose, now in command, chartered him on government account for a voyage to India, with leave to call at Dusky Bay to pick up his sealing party and orders to convey to Grose "every information respecting the place". The government schooner "*Francis*" went with him for this purpose. Grose wrote Dundas that he wished to ascertain "how far that place, which possesses all the advantages of Norfolk Island with the addition of safe harbour and seal fishery, may tend to the benefit of His Majesty's service as connected with this settlement"⁶. The party had taken 4,500 seal skins and built a boat of the spruce fir which grew along the shore "in any quantity and size". Fish and game were plentiful, the animals sent there throve, flax was in great abundance and was much used by the Maoris for lines and ropes. In November, 1793, she arrived at Norfolk Island and was commandeered by King to return the kidnapped Maoris. King sent to Dundas a long report on New Zealand written by Raven, suggesting that a survey or a settlement be made there.

She left Norfolk Island for Bengal but was turned back at Malacca by pirates, bought supplies at Batavia and in July, 1794, returned to Sydney. In August she sailed for the Cape, under charter to the officers for stores (read "spirits") and cattle⁷. In March, 1795, she returned with horses, wine and spirits⁸. The same despatch reports the arrival at Sydney of a small vessel from New Zealand with a cargo of spars for India, reporting no trouble with the natives and the abundance of timber to be had for the cost of a few pounds of iron. Another vessel was taking timber of New South Wales to India.

In May, 1795, Paterson chartered "*Britannia*" for another government voyage to India. In January, 1796, Hunter reported a suggestion from the Indian government that she should be chartered to take to India 200 recruits for the army, at a cost of £12 per man. He was told that further supplies of "as many as could be procured" would be acceptable. Yet it is alleged that Botany Bay was chosen as a place from which it would be difficult to escape. We might add — until the government wanted to export conscripts. For Raven it would have been just another cargo.

In August, 1796, Hunter chartered "*Britannia*" to send home invalids and "useless officers"⁹. Whether this was to suit Raven's convenience or not, Hunter was censured for incurring such expense¹⁰. She was also to call at Norfolk Island for Governor King and his family. Thus Raven had stayed five years in East Indian waters on a three years' licence, with his ship fully employed, without engaging in the fishery except for the sealing venture.

In 1792 Dundas informed Phillip that convicts and stores would be sent in future only by ships in the service of the East India Company¹¹. That this arose from the sharp practice of the Third Fleet is likely; nevertheless whalers were given charters now and then. In 1792 the "*Chesterfield*" was sent¹² and in January, 1793, the "*William*", W. Folger master, owners St. Barbe and others, transported salt pork from Ireland¹³. Later in 1793 another tender by St. Barbe was not accepted¹⁴. The "*Chesterfield*" had touched at Kerguelen¹⁵ probably for a survey of sealing if nothing more, and at Sydney was re-chartered for supplies to Norfolk Island¹⁶. She then appears to have gone to the East Indies and thence to the Cape¹⁷. In June, 1794, the "*Speedy*", under Melville, probably the same who commanded the first "*Britannia*", reached Sydney with stores and proceeded whaling. She was owned by Enderby. In June, 1797, the first "*Britannia*" reappeared with a cargo of convicts¹⁸.

Thus a few whalers were favoured with charters. Up to June, 1793, the total of freight paid for transports was £186,000, a big proportion of the total outlay on the settlements of £473,000. From 1794 to 1801 the total outlay was £181,000 of which hire of ships took £142,000¹⁹. These costs are for private contractors and do not include the costs of naval vessels used. The whalers' share was in effect a further bounty, a windfall profit.

In January, 1798, King was given a dormant commission as Governor of New South Wales, through the effort of Sir Joseph Banks²⁰. His departure was delayed through troubles in fitting out the "*Porpoise*" to transport plants in charge of Caley, the botanist. Banks wrote of Caley's researches into vegetable and mineral products that might prove "of national importance and the foundation of trade with that hitherto unproductive

9—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Page 73.

10—Ibid., Page 293.

11—H.R.A., Vol. I, Page 353.

12—Ibid., Page 421.

13—Ibid., Page 440.

14—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Page 160.

15—Collins: op. cit., Page 167.

16—H.R.A., Vol. I, Page 421.

17—Collins: op. cit., Page 230.

18—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Page 235.

19—Ibid., Vol. II, Pages 39-43; Vol. IV, Page 595.

20—Ibid., Vol. III, Page 353.

4—H.R.A., Vol. I, Page 381.

5—Collins: op. cit., Page 157.

6—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. II, Page 63.

7—Ibid., Page 253.

8—Ibid., Page 285.

colony"²¹. Hunter was instructed to give Caley rations, accommodation and facilities for travel "under a full persuasion that he will be able to discover something useful to the manufacturers of the mother country"²².

Within two months Banks wrote Hunter of the critical situation in Europe, so critical that Ministers could hardly give a moment's audience on colonial matters. Yet he added: "Your colony is already a most valuable appendage to Great Britain and I flatter myself we shall before long see her ministers made sensible of its real value."²³ There is no contradiction in these assessments. From the land itself nothing, but the indirect advantages to navigation had been obvious from the start while the insurance against enemy privateers could not be assessed. The offensive operations against Spanish shipping were to become considerable but are not our concern here.

After the Third Fleet ventures the whaler merchants began to press for ports of refreshment on the Spanish coast of America or on suitable islands in the Pacific. There were complaints that crews had suffered from scurvy for lack of ports of refreshment²⁴. At a meeting of the Committee held on April 20th, 1792, Pitt attending, Lord Hawkesbury told Enderby and St. Barbe that it would recommend the sending of a ship under a naval officer to make a survey²⁵. Lieutenant Colnett R.N. was appointed to the command — the same who had been captured by the Spaniards in 1790 at Nootka Sound. The permission then given to whalers to use Spanish ports was so strict as to be prohibitive and the merchants wished to discover some of their own on some unoccupied parts of the coast. At first the intention was to hire *H.M.S. "Rattler"* to Enderby. As alterations for whaling would make the ship of 374 tons unfit for further naval service, she was sold to Enderby and refitted. Colnett bought a half share in the ship as an assurance to him that naval matters would not transcend his and Enderby's private concerns. She was ready by November, 1792, equipped with every nautical instrument for determining longitude but was delayed because of political events in France — Enderby, Champion and others were anxious to use her to convey intelligence of political affairs to their ships in the seas around Cape Horn²⁶.

The voyage was completed in 1794. Its chief specific discovery was of many suitable anchorages in the Galapagos Islands, one of which became later the "Post Office" of the whale ships.

²¹—*Ibid.*, Page 516.
²²—*Ibid.*, Page 517.

²³—*Ibid.*, Page 532. Written February 1st, 1799.

²⁴—B/T, 5/7, Pages 384 and 402.

²⁵—B/T, 5/8, Pages 8, 16.

²⁶—Colnett: *Voyage to South America round Cape Horn, for the purpose of extending the Spermaceti Whale Fisheries and other objects of Commerce.* Published 1798. Pages viii-xvi.

The importance of the Peru grounds is shown in a return to the Committee. In 1792 the spermaceti from this ground was 1,394 tons; from the Guinea coast 704 tons. In 1793 the amounts were 2,339 and 97 tons respectively; in 1794 the Pacific returned 1,677 tons, the Guinea ground 39 tons. In 1790 the supply from America had been over 1,000 tons; in 1794 none came from that source²⁷.

In December, 1797, a memorial of the "Merchant Adventurers in the Southern Whale Fishery" was received by the Committee asserting that it was absolutely necessary that vessels should put into some port or island in the Pacific Ocean. War risks made Spanish ports dangerous. Also there was reason to believe that seals and whales were plentiful at Kerguelens Land, off the coast of New Holland, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Formosa. The Statute Geo. III 35 restrained them from proceeding round the Cape any farther north than the Equator and any farther east than the 51st meridian. They prayed that restrictions be removed.

It was ordered that a copy be sent to William Ramsay, Chairman of the East India Company, expressing a hope of compliance as far as might be consistent with its rights²⁸.

Ramsay's reply a fortnight later said there was no objection to ships going beyond 51 degrees longitude, provided they did not go northward of 15 degrees South but the Court could not acquiesce in an act authorising whalers to proceed to the Philippines and Formosa²⁹.

It was not until the end of 1801 that the Court of the Company surrendered and allowed whalers to proceed eastward from the Cape to Australia and New Zealand. The seas between Asia and the 180th meridian were still out of bounds but the South-West Pacific was open to them at last.

Two years earlier Enderby had proposed to Pitt that an expedition be sent against the Spanish American ports via Australia, using New South Wales as a place of rendezvous and last refit and landing a force drawn from the N.S.W. Corps and "as many recruits...procured from the convicts as it might be prudent to trust"³⁰. This was just after King had sailed with a dormant commission to succeed Hunter, so Enderby would have been assured of support for whaling interests in such an expedition. The role of convicts in such settlements was what it had always been — a reserve of manpower for any national purpose which they might serve.

²⁷—B/T, 5/9, Page 422, dated March 6, 1795.

²⁸—B/T, 5/11, Page 43.

²⁹—*Ibid.*, Page 50.

³⁰—P.R.O., 30.8.133.

The whalers would have been chartered as transports and after the taking of the ports would have had full freedom to carry on the fishery from them.

King went out when the boom in whaling was at its height, when oil was at high prices inflated by war finance, when the British had seized Capetown and banned American whalers from the coast³¹ and whalers and ships were still coming over from Nantucket via Nova Scotia to work from bases in Milford Haven, Falmouth and London. In May, 1799, Hunter reported that two whalers with Letters of Marque had brought in a valuable Spanish prize. One of them had refitted in Sydney before sailing for Peru. He wrote: "Permit me, my Lord, to take the liberty of observing that this colony may prove, at some future period, *from its situation* (his italics) a settlement of much importance in case of either a Dutch or Spanish war"³². The destiny foreseen by Admiral Young, Phillip, Enderby and Pitt was making itself manifest.

King was going out with the policy of multiplying settlements in Van Diemens Land or in Bass Strait to serve the needs of sealers, whalers and traders. He wrote to Dalrymple, the Hydrographer to the East India Company, for a copy of the French survey of the harbours of Van Diemens Land³³. The "*Lady Nelson*" was specially built for coastal surveys—of shallow draft, with a sliding keel for weatherly qualities and the novelty of small iron chains "boomed" round her cables to prevent chafing in foul anchorages "absolutely necessary for the service for which she is destined"³⁴. In June, 1799, Hunter wrote to Portland that whalers fitted for the variable weather on the coast would succeed fully and get cargoes of oil in six months. Ships fitted only for the serene weather off Peru had been frequently obliged to return to Sydney for repairs and had lost time because iron for this was scarce. Woodwork had been abundantly supplied³⁵.

Some whalers had obtained Letters of Marque in Sydney and sailed for Peru. Two ships which had remained on the coast had succeeded pretty well. One of Enderby's expected to sail in a month with a full cargo of oil³⁶. This was the first "*Britannia*" which had brought out convicts in May of that year³⁷. Enderby and Champion had ordered their captains to stay a whole year (if necessary) on the coast to prove its possibilities. (It is possible that Collins was in error; he mentions a "*Britannia*" arriving

31—Stackpole: *The Sea Hunters*, New York, 1953, Page 175.

32—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Pages 669-70.

33—Ibid., Page 543.

34—Ibid., Page 676.

35—Ibid., Page 689.

36—Ibid., Page 716.

37—Collins: *op. cit.*, Page 352.

in July³⁸). In June, 1799, Champion's "*Albion*" arrived with salt pork after a record passage of three months and fifteen days.

The time compares favourably with the average of the wool ships a century later. A basic fact to be applied at all times is the lower cost which went with despatch. Whalers were not interested in breaking records but fast passages brought pre-empt from shippers of supplies and convicts and more frequent returns to owners. The additions to knowledge of coasts and weather contributed to increased profits to those who had freedom to use the ports that were being provided to meet these needs.

In Saunders' News Letters of November 13, 1799, it is stated that nine vessels reached Port Jackson early in that year for the fishery. The names are listed but Collins names three (perhaps four) which it does not include. The letter states that the first attempt to establish a fishery had failed because of the onshore gales of the summer but that the winter conditions with westerlies prevailing gave "most sanguine expectations". The establishment was "particularly opportune" because Spanish cruisers had captured fifteen whalers on the coasts of America³⁹. In January, 1800, Hunter reported another prize taken by three whalers⁴⁰.

On February 21st Portland wrote Hunter his instructions for the "*Lady Nelson*" stating: The survey of the southern or south-eastern coast appears to be of the most immediate importance — the probable benefits of the whale fishery and the shortening of the passage through the straits, which are discovered to exist between the main and the group of islands known by the name of Van Diemens Land, would be of high importance. He mentions "the convenience of shelter for shipping" and the "probable utility of the produce of the soil" and enjoins the planting of seeds and vegetables near landing places in which safe and commodious anchorages and easy landing render it likely that shipping may hereafter frequent⁴¹. There is no question of finding more sites for convict establishments. At this time Hunter was complaining of labour shortages and enquiries were being made about bringing convicts from India. Of geographical discovery for its own sake there is no hint.

Captain Schank wrote to Under-Secretary King⁴² that Lieutenant Grant was to explore Bass Strait for harbours useful to whalers and sealers but also to call at St. Pauls or Amsterdam Island to see if Americans had been sealing there as *H.M.S. "Lion"* had reported. Thus by 1800 whalers not only had an

38—Ibid., Page 380.

39—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Page 741.

40—Ibid., Vol. IV, Page 7.

41—Ibid., Page 58.

42—Ibid., Page 77.

excellent base in Australian waters but had a special vessel assigned to the survey of working harbours and to keeping check on the doings of their rivals. The use of such anchorages was vital to success — Collins mentions that the "*Albion*" had used Broken Bay and that her 600 barrels of oil represented only a quarter of the whales killed. The rest had been lost through bad weather⁴³. The bearing of this on profitable voyages is obvious.

The whaler merchants continued to press for the supplementary advantages that might be made available. In 1800 Messrs. Enderby and Champion wrote the Earl of Liverpool (formerly Lord Hawkesbury who in 1785 had taken the fishery under his protection) that "after many years of fruitless and expensive attempts" they had proved the value of the fishery in Australian waters. They requested that whalers be permitted to carry goods to New South Wales on private account, on the grounds that it would reduce prices there and enable them to pay for necessities and refreshments. The comment of Under-Secretary King was that the East India Company should agree to this as whalers could carry goods nowhere else but to New South Wales⁴⁴.

At the same time King wrote to Portland in the same terms: the fishery on the coast would be active, especially during war. The advantages to the colony of more frequent communication and the lower costs of bringing out convicts and stores were considerable but also goods brought for sale were commonly 150 per cent. above English prices. The whalers would sell only such stores as they had in oversupply⁴⁵.

There is no need to suspect collusion in these letters. Both saw the same facts from the same viewpoint. The local traders were profiteering and that meant dear provisions and high port charges for all ships. To both King and Hunter, as well as to Bligh later, the "destructive speculations" of the "trading factions" were intolerable because the gain of the colonial interest was jeopardising the prosperity of the mother country⁴⁶. This was, in little, the same situation as had led to the war with the American colonies — the commercial interests in the colonies challenging and frustrating the commercial interests in the mother country, for whom the colonies had been established.

Again, as in the matter of whaling grounds, the activities of American traders provided an unanswerable argument for extending the privileges of British free traders. (Free in the sense of freedom from the Company's monopoly — they were still subject to the control of the governor but privileged as against

colonials). In 1801 King wrote of his "duty to oppose this faction" and of the increasing competition of American traders whose goods were bought because of need and because they were often cheaper. Their pork was 3d. a pound cheaper than English⁴⁷. In October, 1800, the "*John Jay*" called for wood and water on her way to China and King bought from her 88,000 pounds of salt meat besides rum, tobacco, tea and tar⁴⁸. In 1801 he wrote the American minister in London about an American ship calling to sell spirits. She was refused because she had not bothered to obtain a permit.

In April, 1801, a general order stated that an investment of goods had arrived by the "*Britannia*", South Sea Whaler, "with the approbation of the government and the consent of the East India Company"⁴⁹. At the same time King wrote to Banks that two whalers had arrived with the well-assorted investments for general use "but not a drop of spirits" and hoped the practice would continue of allowing them to bring goods to be sold at regulated prices⁵⁰. In May, 1801, a ship from Philadelphia arrived; her supercargoes had been assured the government would buy her goods which included spirits, wine, chocolate, tobacco, sugar, soap, glass, earthenware, candles, hats, cloth, paper, iron, steel, anchors and grindstones. King bought the cargo. Some goods were probably re-exports from the United States; if so, English merchants were using an indirect entry to Pacific trade⁵¹.

A General Order of June, 1801⁵², announced the whaler "*Greenwich*" whose investment had government permission and Company sanction. Portland wrote to King: "I shall submit to the Committee of the Privy Council the suggested alterations for the Act for regulating the whale fishery"⁵³ and on June 8 King stated that the stores brought by whalers and transports had released the inhabitants from monopoly and oppression⁵⁴.

A continuing fact about the trade relations of the colony was that ships chartered by the East India Company called at frequent intervals on their way to China, bringing convicts and stores. Their common practice was for officers and petty officers to trade on their own account so it is certain many goods reached Sydney by this means. Morse reports two or three ships a year arriving at Canton via Port Jackson⁵⁵. One important difference

47—Ibid, Page 502.

48—Ibid, Page 226.

49—Ibid, Page 339.

50—Ibid, Page 338.

51—Ibid, Page 375.

52—Ibid, Page 380.

53—Ibid, Page 424.

54—Ibid, Page 434.

55—Morse: East India Company trading to China, Vol. III.

43—Collins: op. cit., Page 440.

44—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. IV, Page 116.

45—Ibid, Page 184.

46—Ibid, Page 643.

was that whalers' cargoes were bought outright by the government; they could not deal privately. This had certain advantages for them, in quick and certain payment, as well as for the governors in their continual troubles with colonial speculators.

In 1801 Lord Pelham made a move on behalf of the whalers when he suggested to the Transport Board that whalers be invited to tender for the transport of convicts. This was rejected on the grounds of uncertainty, expense and risk of less humane treatment, though in the last the record of the whalers had been good and they were noted for their fast passages⁵⁶. In the same year came the extension of the legal limits noted earlier. This meant that whalers no longer needed specific licence and government charters for each voyage made. The safeguards on illicit trade were of no importance because whaling was too profitable for ships to lose the time needed to smuggle goods into ports outside the legal limits. A bulk loading to Sydney was worthwhile because the ships were on passage and the reef there was necessary whether they brought cargo or not; in economic terms the prime cost was small and the overhead cost zero. In the Pacific they needed no trade goods except the trifles bartered for fresh food and access to wood and water.

In his report for 1801 King stated that three whalers had gone home full; that the coast would always be preferred to Peru as the run to Van Diemens Land did less damage to ships' gear than the westward passage round the Horn, besides giving the chance of freights from carrying stores and provisions. In May, 1802, he submitted to the captains in port a questionnaire the replies to which favoured Australia and New Zealand waters and said they had more abundant and cheaper supplies from Norfolk Island than from Port Jackson. King persisted in urging the value of the island though it had gone downhill somewhat since he left⁵⁷. In June he wrote to Banks on the success of the fishery, stating that the answers to his questions had been sent to the Admiralty, the Secretary of State and one of the principal owners. He wrote: "You will observe how deserving that employment is of encouragement from government."⁵⁸

He reported good prospects for sealing in Bass Strait. Though Grant's survey had disproved the supposed opening of Western Port into the Gulf of Carpentaria, it was still not certain that New Holland and New South Wales were part of one land mass. The persistence of the belief in a seaway through the continent shows that this was wished for. At this time, the whole world over, the only economical transport was by water and for any but

high value goods land transport was too costly except for very short distances. No land however fertile could produce wealth unless its products could be given the indispensable attribute of buoyancy.

Hence the character of Bass Strait was an exciting discovery which also brought new problems. In 1802 a French sealer came to Port Jackson using the common gambit of asking permission to sell cargo to pay for repairs. He was given permission to take seals anywhere except on Cape Barren Island and King Island, as English vessels already had rights over these places. King wrote to Banks: "Policy requires us having a settlement in these straits." The flag was following trade⁵⁹.

King sent to Lord Hobart a copy of his letter to the Frenchman, asking instructions in case others came. He pointed out that sealing was mainly by local small craft, the skins being sold to ships bound for China, i.e., Company ships. Though the price there was not high, he had encouraged the pursuit "among those of industrious and enterprising dispositions among the inhabitants". This was the most considerable among the natural productions "that could be esteemed commercial"⁶⁰.

His apology was officially necessary because the encouragement of sealing, and permission to build the boats required, was against the terms of his commission. Sealers could and did carry convicts to islands beyond his jurisdiction but it was in accordance with the principles of colonial policy to encourage supplementary industries which supplied articles that helped pay for tea cargoes.

In the same despatch he urged further extension of the limits for whalers. He asserted that none had gone beyond the set limits though the temptation was great as the whales generally took a northerly course. The questionnaire had been intended to obtain greater freedom because the fishery was "so intimately connected with the welfare of (the) colony".

The survey of Bass Strait was necessary for two main reasons: to assess its advantages and dangers for sealers and to make it a safe route for ships bound to Port Jackson. Flinders' account of the circumnavigation of Van Diemens Land shows his concern for the fishery. Five days were spent in surveying Twofold Bay and his remark, "a place that would take so little time going in and out", shows that he was thinking of whalers working on that coast. The sealer "*Nautilus*" went with him to the seal rookeries near Cape Barren Island. He surveyed the anchorages there before going to Port Dalrymple. He surveyed the estuary as far as the Supply River, an excellent place for taking water, and

56—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. IV, Pages 518, 523.

57—Collins: *op. cit.*, Page 444.

58—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. IV, Page 785.

59—Ibid, Pages 837, 841, 845.

60—Ibid, Page 890.

described tides, shoals and "islands convenient for ships to land livestock". He gave details of the seal rookeries on the western islands of the Strait.

In the Derwent, while Bass searched on land for fertile soil, Flinders examined the conditions for shipping. Concerning the Strait, the principal object, it would expedite the passage from the Cape by a week but also it would make possible a westerly passage to the Cape or India. "The fear of the great unknown bight between the Leeuwin and Van Diemens Land" had hitherto prevented the trial from being made. We must note his conjecture that a "still larger than Bass's Strait dismembers New Holland", that he had no wish to find a great land mass with an unbroken coast but hoped for open water ways, the only cheap means of access to such people and products as might be there⁶¹.

The estuary of the Derwent and its approaches were fully surveyed in 1792 by D'Entrecasteaux and his charts were available in England before King sailed for Sydney. The East India people in India wanted to know more about it; let us note in passing that in 1794 Commodore Hayes, with two Company ships, also explored the Derwent — further evidence of their interest in the commercial possibilities of the region. The loss of Hayes' charts and journals⁶² prevented his discoveries from influencing policy.

In 1803 Collins was sent from England to make a settlement at Port Phillip. In 1802 King had sent Robbins to explore King Island for the best situations for settlement and also to make detailed soundings of Port Phillip⁶³. Robbins warned Baudin that King Island was British territory, explored Port Phillip and reported back to King. In 1803 King sent Bowen to occupy the Derwent River. If he did this to forestall the French, why did he not think Port Phillip a more valuable situation? It is clear that he knew it was quite unfit for the purposes in mind and that the French would not be so foolish as to try to occupy it.

In June, 1803, Lord Hobart wrote to King that the *position* of Port Dalrymple rendered it "in a political view peculiarly necessary that a settlement should be formed there"⁶⁴. The Home government had the general charts. The positions of both places showed their importance for shipping, and that French occupation would make the Strait useless in war and also threaten all shipping and whaling on the coasts. That was correct in a superficial view — the details King had from Robbins showed that Port Phillip could be ruled out.

Collins arrived at Port Phillip in October, 1803, and on November 5th wrote to King: "I do not see that by staying

here I can answer the intentions of the government in sending hither a colonial settlement. The Bay itself, when viewed in a commercial light is wholly unfit for any such purpose." It lay "in a deep and dangerous bight, to enter which must require a well-manned and well-found ship, a leading wind and a certain time of the tide, for the ebb runs from five to seven knots"⁶⁵.

On November 14th he wrote again: "Port Dalrymple appears to possess those requisites for a settlement in which the extensive harbour is so wholly deficient. Every day's experience convinces me that it cannot nor ever will be resorted to by *speculative men*; a ship must go out at the top of the tide and with a leading wind which is not to be met with every day. When all the disadvantages respecting this Bay are publicly known, it cannot be supposed that commercial people will be very desirous of visiting Port Phillip"⁶⁶. Danger and delay in both entering and leaving the Bay were decisive facts. There was then no question of access to sheep lands and subsistence agriculture was of interest only as a supply to ports for whalers and merchants. Historians have stressed the difficulty in finding water but that is true only of the parts near the entrance. Water in the Yarra River forty miles away might just as well have been a hundred miles — it was of no use to shipping. Collins' judgment has been impugned because the commentators have not understood the intentions of the home government and the overwhelming force of the navigational hazards. They have judged from what Port Phillip became when the objects were different and when seafaring conditions were changed, especially by the use of paddle steamers.

In 1803 there was no interest in wool raising. Banks obstructed Macarthur's export of fine woolled sheep from England because he was then trying to build up such an industry in Britain. He thought the freight cost from New South Wales would be prohibitive compared to that on Spanish wool and wrote: "I am not inclined to advise their Lordships to recommend any special encouragement be given at present."⁶⁷ By 1835 the accessible sheep lands of Tasmania and New South Wales were occupied and the squatters crossed Bass Strait to lands discovered by the sealers of Portland. They used small schooners but even with these the losses were high. Swanson lost 1,200 sheep in one voyage because bad weather prevented the schooner from entering Port Phillip⁶⁸. For many years the settlement had no direct overseas trade, shipping its wool and getting supplies via Launceston. By 1840 steam ships were in use, the entrance was marked by lighthouses, the shoals of the Bay were charted and marked,

61—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, Appendix.
62—J. B. Walker: *Early Tasmanian*, Page 32.
63—H.R.N.S.W., Vol. IV, Pages 908-9.

64—Ibid., Vol. V, Page 136.

65—Ibid., Page 250.
66—Ibid., Page 260.
67—Ibid., Page 225.
68—Swanson: *Letter Books*.

Chapter 7

but even then Geelong rivalled Melbourne as a big ship port. At Melbourne the Yarra entrance had a depth of only nine feet; big ships lay in an open anchorage and landed goods by boats on the beach. Horsburgh's Directory for the East India Company, 1836 edition, prefers Western Port to Port Phillip for ships needing temporary shelter — "Wider in the entrance and with wood and water available". In 1966 Western Port became a deepwater port for oil tankers and site of an oil refinery.

Those who doubt Collins' assessment should study the large scale charts of the Bay. The long narrow channel at the entrance is very deep and with strong tidal streams. The ebb tide was almost too strong for slow sailing ships to stem but if the breeze failed while they were in the channel it was too deep for them to anchor. "Top of the tide with a leading wind" means there is no current and the wind is fair for a speedy run through. Ships arriving had no means then of knowing how the tide was until they were too close to the entrance to retreat and beat off a lee shore and merchant ships did not have the time to send boats in ahead of them, even if they had the boats or the extra men required. Safety came first but time was essential for such precautions. Even when through the channel the Bay is a mass of shoals with winding channels for many miles. Even to-day these present hazards to shipping and it is a common experience for large steamers and small alike to heave-to off the entrance of the Bay for a whole day during south-westerly gales because the entrance is unsafe.

King's reply to Collins was based on Robbins' surveys. On November 26th he wrote: "Your observations on Port Phillip have been fully anticipated...totally unfit in every point of view...removing from thence will be most advisable for the interest of His Majesty's service." He had not intended to fix that settlement until he had heard from England⁶⁹.

The reasons for fixing a settlement at the Derwent follow from those for rejecting Port Phillip — a situation for ships to touch at in perfect safety on their way to China or Port Jackson, good soil, ample water and timber. Although not so well situated as Port Dalrymple, sealers and whalers could be protected there and "this was an object of equal consideration".

⁶⁹—Ibid, Page 263.

The Policy of Transportation

DURING and after the revolt of the American colonies there was much critical examination of the policy of transportation and formulation of the principles on which it should be based. One of the most rational of these appeared in 1787 in a Discourse on Banishment by Sir F. M. Eden, as an introduction to Barrington's "History of New Holland". The keynote is that banishment had often been beneficial to the criminal but always injurious to the community. "The kingdom was deprived of a subject and renounced all emoluments of his future existence."

He went on to consider the possibility of "directing the strict employment of felons in each of the dockyards, stannaries, salt-works, mines and public buildings of the kingdom". We must note the order in which these are stated and also that some form of forced labour, even of serfdom, was still known in these activities and that they were expanding with the commercial expansion of the times and needed an augmented workforce. The term "public buildings" then meant defence works. Of employment in docks and fortifications much was made but one contemporary proposal to use convicts in copper mines was made to Pitt as a "more effectual mode of employing" than confinement in the Hulks and less expensive than transportation to New South Wales¹.

Eden thought the "more enormous offenders" might be sent to Algiers for the redemption of Christian slaves — an exchange of idle, unskilled persons for skilled seamen and merchants — while other "enormous offenders" might be compelled to dangerous expeditions or be sent to establish new colonies, factories and settlements on the coast of Africa and on small islands "for the benefit of navigation".

¹—P.R.O., 30-8-133, T. English-Pitt, 21/10/1722.