

"EARLY PUBLIC SERVICE IN QUEENSLAND"

[By D. W. FRASER, I.S.O., Public Service Commissioner
for the State of Queensland.]

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This paper was first inspired by the publication "*Triumph in the Tropics*" by Sir Raphael Cilento and Mr. Clem. Lack covering a century of Queensland's history. This gave rise to there being printed in the Annual Report of the Public Service Commissioner for the Centenary Year of 1959 some paragraphs dealing briefly with the early history of the Public Service.

Research involved in these paragraphs stimulated a desire to know more of our early history, resulting in the undertaking of research of documents in the Public Record Office, London, the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and the Oxley Memorial Library, Brisbane, to which institutions grateful acknowledgement is given.

I wish also to acknowledge the great help of Mr. Bruce Winter of the Public Service Commissioner's Department, who undertook the research necessary for this paper and incidentally was able to bring to light the Journal of Cunningham on the settlement of Moreton Bay and other field notes, the existence of which was not generally known. I am also grateful to Mr. Winter for his collation and compilation of a substantial amount of the material in the paper.

To those historically interested in the Queensland Public Service, thoughts arise as to its beginning, how, when and where it was commenced, who were its first officers and in what capacities they served.

Public Service in Queensland can be said to have commenced with the arrival at Redcliffe on 13 September 1824 of the brig "*Amity*" from Sydney, carrying the first convicts for settlement at Moreton Bay. The few persons in charge and performing services in association with the settlement, although then employed and paid by the Government of New South Wales, constituted the first Public Service in that part of the Colony of New South Wales which was to become in 1859 the Colony and subsequently the State of Queensland.

SETTLEMENT POLICY

What were the thoughts of the promoters and originators upon settlement at Moreton Bay?

An examination of the correspondence upon this settlement gives rise to the question as to whether the Moreton Bay area was to be used as a Penal Establishment. There is definite evidence that this area was meant for free colonisation rather than as a Penal Settlement.

In September 1822, following the tabling of the Bigge Inquiry* in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Colonies instructed Sir Thomas Brisbane to avail himself "of the experience and services of Mr. Oxley, the Surveyor-General, and of any other officer whom you may deem competent for the Service, and instruct them to proceed without delay to Port Bowen, Port Curteis, and Moreton Bay, and, after an examination of those Stations and the country immediately adjoining, to report to you fully upon the capacity of each for the purposes of Convict Settlements."⁽¹⁾

The proposed establishment of penal settlements at these three places was one of the recommendations of Bigge.

Oxley was dispatched to examine these parts of the coast and his report was enclosed with a letter from Sir Thomas Brisbane to the Secretary of State dated 3 February 1824:

"In compliance with the instructions conveyed to me in your letter of the 9 September 1822 the Surveyor-General was despatched on the 22nd of last October in His Majesty's cutter *Mermaid* to examine Port Bowen, Port Curtis and Moreton Bay, with the country immediately adjoining; and his report upon the capacity of the two latter for the purposes of Convict Settlements I have now the pleasure to enclose, as it commences a new era in the history of the Continent of New Holland by the discovery of a large and an important river.

"The first part of Your Lordship's Command having been thus carried into its fullest effect by the zeal and intelligence of Mr. Oxley, the second will be proceeded upon the moment that the rainy season concludes, by the establishment in Moreton Bay of a few, not exceeding fifty souls, for the purpose of providing accommodation for themselves, and for the reception of any number of convicts it may be deemed expedient to send hereafter."⁽²⁾

All this was in accordance with the Secretary of State's instructions.

* The administration of the Colony of New South Wales was under severe Parliamentary criticism during Macquarie's governorship. In January 1819, John Thomas Bigge was appointed a commissioner to inquire into the state of the Colony. The first part of the Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry dated 6 May was tabled in the House of Commons and ordered to be printed on 19 July 1822. This section dealt with the employment and management of the Convicts in New South Wales.

(1) Historical Records of Australia (H.R. of A.), Series I, Vol. X, p. 791.

(2) H.R. of A. Series I, Volume XI, p. 215.

Attached to this piece of correspondence is a memo. by Earl Bathurst, which reads as follows:

"Let me know whether the dispatch recommending the occupation of Norfolk Island revoked the instructions to send men to one of these places—and inform Sir Ths. Brisbane that in consequence of the discovery of this river that part of the country must not be made a place of punishment."

In reply, the Colonial Office advised:

"The dispatch of 9 September 1822 authorises the Governor to send 50 men to Moreton Bay if he should think it desirable to form such an Establishment there.

"A despatch for the reoccupation of Norfolk Island was *written*; but the Home Department questioning the expediency of the measure, that dispatch does not appear to have been sent—nor does it appear that the instructions for forming a Convict Establishment at Moreton Bay were ever revoked by any subsequent orders."⁽³⁾

CONFLICT OF IDEAS

Now let us turn our attention briefly to inter-departmental correspondence relevant to our discussion which passed between Downing Street (Earl Bathurst's Office) and the Home Department Offices in Whitehall in 1823.

On 16 July 1823 Earl Bathurst directed a letter to Mr. Peel,* the Secretary of State for the Home Department, enclosing letters from Captain King and a Mr. Hall concerning a proposition to reopen Norfolk Island as a penal settlement. Earl Bathurst expressed the sentiment that Norfolk Island would be more suitable than those places recommended by Bigge in his report, viz. Moreton Bay, Port Curtis and Port Bowen.

Peel considered this proposal and suggested to Earl Bathurst that it would be unwise to reopen Norfolk Island as the place for secondary offenders primarily because of its inability to subsist a large number of convicts (approximately 4,000) who were to be sent to the new penal settlement. The Colonial Office was advised in these terms.

Earl Bathurst was not to be so easily dissuaded and, in spite of the objections Mr. Peel had raised, replied on 28 August 1823 to the Home Department that he had directed the Governor of New South Wales to exercise his discretion in making a choice of any one of the four positions which had been suggested as possible sites.⁽⁴⁾

But this was the dispatch that was not sent.

(3) Public Record Office—Secretary of State for the Colonies. Correspondence Ref. C.O. 201/150.

* In 1830 became Sir Robert Peel following the death of his father.

(4) Public Record Office—Letters from Secretary of State for the Colonies (domestic) 1823-1824. Ref. C.O. 202/11.

Bathurst was anxious to reopen Norfolk Island and this factor combined with a previous dispatch, which I shall quote a little later, resulted in the following instruction being issued to Sir Thomas Brisbane on 22 July 1824:

“In consequence of the discovery made by Mr. Oxley of a new river opening between the first Mangroon Islands and the mainland in Moreton Bay, that part of the country, by reason of its fitness for general colonisation, no longer appears to His Majesty to be calculated to fulfil the objects in view, when I directed your attention to the formation of a Convict Establishment at that Station for the worst class of offenders. I am disposed to believe that the reoccupation of Norfolk Island, for the purpose of employing there the worst description of convicts, would be a measure far preferable to the occupation of Moreton Bay.”⁽⁵⁾

Thus, it will be clearly seen that as far as the British Government was concerned Moreton Bay should not have been opened as a penal settlement.

This dispatch was received by Sir Thomas Brisbane on 23 January 1825 by the ship “*Granada*” and on 25 January 1825 the Sydney “*Gazette*” published the following statement:

“It is reported that Moreton Bay is not intended as a penal settlement. . . .”

Was it, however, Brisbane’s intention to set up Moreton Bay district as a penal settlement?

On 3 November 1824, in a letter written from Government House, New South Wales, by the Governor to Earl Bathurst, it was stated:

“I propose going to visit the newly discovered river and country at Moreton Bay, with a view to determining by personal observation the comparative benefits, which may result to the Mother Country from its being converted into a penal settlement, or left open to the purposes of colonisation and commerce.

“In my way, I shall visit Port Macquarie; and as soon as I return to Sydney, I shall be prepared, from the materials which I hope to collect, to submit to Your Lordship a detailed report upon the subject of the penal settlements and the expediency of either reopening Norfolk Island or forming an establishment at some other part of the Territory in the vicinity of these Colonies, as a place of punishment for increased criminality. At the same time, I hope to be able to furnish Your Lordship with a more particular account of the climate, soil, natural productions, and commercial capabilities of Moreton Bay and of the recently discovered River Brisbane.”⁽⁶⁾

It seems strange that Sir Thomas Brisbane should anticipate instructions from the Secretary of State. However, a dispatch from Earl Bathurst to Sir Thomas Brisbane dated 31 July 1823 indicates why he should have written in this tone back to England.

(5) H.R. of A. Series I, Volume XI, p. 321.

(6) H.R. of A. Series I, Volume XI, pp. 409-410.

"He (Bigge) also recommends the examination of certain parts of the coast with the view of discovering the existence of harbours and rivers, and the nature of their communication with the interior; also a land survey in certain directions to ascertain the character of the country and its capacity for colonisation. . . ." (7)

As regards the aspect of communication with the interior, Oxley of course had the strong belief that the Brisbane River was an outlet from a large collection of inland waters which would provide water communication with Liverpool Plains. Doubtless, he would have apprised the Governor of this belief.

What, then finally induced Sir Thomas Brisbane to "convert" the Moreton Bay District into a penal settlement?

SELECTION OF MORETON BAY

In a letter to Earl Bathurst dated 21 May 1825 Sir Thomas Brisbane justifies his setting up of Moreton Bay as a Penal Settlement and proposes a policy that he has formulated in respect of penal settlements:

"In my former Dispatch No. 13, dated 2 December 1824,* I intimated to Your Lordship my intention of visiting Moreton Bay, and that I should on my return take occasion to address Your Lordship on the comparative benefit of retaining that Settlement for the general purposes of colonisation or converting it immediately into a penal depot.

"Since the forwarding of that dispatch, I have had the honour to receive a dispatch from Your Lordship, No. 25, rather intimating it as Your Lordship's opinion that Moreton Bay should be open to colonisation.

"As Port Macquarie has become almost useless as a penal settlement from the many facilities afforded to the escape of prisoners by the extension of settlers along Hunter's River, and as Norfolk Island would not be sufficient to contain the persons, whom it is found necessary to remove for minor offences to remote parts of the Colony, I have thought it would not be assuming an unsound discretion, if I should take measures for immediately preparing Moreton Bay for the reception of prisoners; and I have adopted this step with the less diffidence, as the establishment of penal depots is the best means of paving the way for the introduction of free population as the example of Port Macquarie abundantly testifies.

"In order that Your Lordship may otherwise clearly understand the views I have entertained of the subject, I shall give a brief outline of the whole plan, which appears to me best suited to the present state and exigency of the Colony.

"Port Macquarie, as I have already mentioned to Your Lordship, is no longer tenable as a penal settlement, and is quite ready for the reception of free emigrants, if Your Lordship should accede to the policy of giving it up for that purpose.

"In consequence of the recent Acts of Parliament, which assign the removal of the convict from one part of the Colony to

(7) H.R. of A. Series I, Volume XI, p. 98.

* Date incorrect; should have referred to letter of 3 November 1824.

another, as the punishment of a numerous class of offenders, such removal has been very common, and consequently requires a depot of sufficient extent and capacity to receive and maintain a great number of persons. It will readily occur to Your Lordship that there must be a necessity for classification of offenders, which to make effectual will require different depots of different systems of discipline.

“Norfolk Island is confined; the access to it difficult; and consequently it is not suited to receive many prisoners or frequent transportation. I have, therefore, thought it advisable to reserve that place for capital respites and other higher class of offences. I could wish it to be understood that the felon, who is sent there, is for ever excluded from all hope of return. For minor offenders, who are much more numerous, I have thought Moreton Bay would be the fittest depot on account of its distance, and almost impossibility of escape. Its means of immediately affording employment and subsistence for the prisoners, who may be sent there, and the facilities that a penal settlement in the first instance will afford to the free settlers, when it may be deemed expedient to throw open that part of the Colony; as an auxiliary to both Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay, as also to relieve the gaols of Sydney, I have caused a vessel to be purchased and fitted up as a hulk.*

“I hope that the views, which I have taken on the subjects of this dispatch, will meet Your Lordship’s approbation.”⁽⁸⁾

The only note made by Earl Bathurst when he received this correspondence was:

“I have only been able to glance hastily over this dispatch, but the hulk arrangement appears to me one which requires much consideration.”

The reply from the Secretary of State raised no objections to Governor Brisbane’s actions, but rather gave approval to what had been done by him and the general policy he had laid down in respect of the three types of settlements for the various classes of offenders.

A DECISION OF EXPEDIENCY?

Governor Brisbane’s actions must be seen in the light of their contemporary setting. The exclusionists were pressing for the removal of as many convicts as possible from the Sydney area (Earl Bathurst shared their point of view and Bigge recommended the same), and the recent legislation required the removal of second-class offenders to another part of the Colony. Brisbane’s final decision in regard to Moreton Bay would appear to be that of *expediency* — a problem often facing the administrator who is required to solve the immediate problem and yet seek to have a long-range policy in view.

Some Queenslanders are reluctant to have the origins of

* A vessel used as a prison.

(8) H.R. of A. Series I, Volume XI, pp. 603-605.

this State as a Penal Settlement discussed, *but a Nation's greatness is measured by the distance it has travelled.* For those, however, who might feel a little ashamed of our origin, let them be consoled by the fact that the British Government rescinded the order to commence Moreton Bay as a Penal Settlement in July 1824 feeling it was more suited for general colonisation.

THE COASTAL VOYAGE

From the diary of Allan Cunningham,⁽⁹⁾ who accompanied the band of first white settlers to Red Cliff Point, an interesting narrative can be compiled of the voyage and the settlement there.

The then recently purchased brig, the "*Amity*," under the command of Captain Penson, was anchored in Sydney Harbour ready to sail on 29 August 1824 for Moreton Bay for the purpose of establishing a new settlement on its shores.

In the ship's hold were six months' supply of stores which included livestock (comprising goats, sheep, pigs and poultry) and garden seeds, fruit trees together with a collection of tropical plants which were under the care of a convict gardener from Mr. C. Fraser's Colonial Garden in Sydney.

On the deck was a schooner which it was expected would be useful for the survey of the River Brisbane and afterwards to be attached to the new settlement.

On the brig's passenger list were the names of John Oxley, Surveyor-General of New South Wales, as Commanding Officer and Chief of the Expedition, and Allan Cunningham, the King's Botanist, who was collecting specimens for Kew Gardens, with their respective servants, and Assistant Surveyor Hoddle.

The military passengers comprised the Commandant of the proposed settlement, Lieutenant Henry Miller of the 40th Foot Regiment, his wife and two sons, Lieutenant Butler who was in charge of the small contingent of the 40th, consisting of a sergeant, a corporal and twelve privates, together with their wives.

A Commissariat Storekeeper, Mr. Walter Scott, who was also to act in the capacity of a surgeon, together with an assistant, were also on board.

Among the twenty convicts who accompanied the expedition were carpenters, sawyers and brickmakers.

Unfavourable wind conditions prevented the brig from leaving Sydney Cove until 30 August and, having weighed anchor, she was forced to remain on the Mermaids Ground because of a strong flood tide and lack of wind.

(9) Mitchell Library—Cunningham's Journal A1746-1.

On Wednesday morning, 1 September 1824, the expedition quitted the port by means of a light breeze from the west, setting sail in a north-north-east direction bound for Moreton Bay to commence in the prophetic words of Sir Thomas Brisbane "a new era in the History of the Continent of New Holland."

Miller referred to the journey as "a tedious passage of eleven days during which adverse winds almost continually prevailed."

On Friday afternoon, 10 September, and until after sunset, the "*Amity*" worked her way up under Moreton Island. On reaching a sheltered situation and a strong ebb tide having set in against the brig, the anchor was dropped for the night.

At 6 a.m. on Saturday, with a wind blowing fresh from the south, the "*Amity*" weighed anchor and worked around the spit projecting from the north-west point of Moreton Island. After lunch, the whaleboat was lowered and Oxley and Cunningham proceeded to the northern shore of the Bay near the entrance of Pumice Stone Passage to ascertain whether Parsons had discovered the message left when Oxley had been exploring the Bay in December 1823. The well-known account of Parsons' rescue needs no reiteration. About 4 o'clock the party returned to the brig.

The sailing barge was sent to the Pumice Stone Passage on Sunday to obtain fresh water and the whaleboat was lowered to sound the channel. By sunset the brig had manoeuvred to between one-half and one mile of Redcliffe Point.

SETTLEMENT AT REDCLIFFE POINT

At about 7 a.m. on Monday, 13 September 1824, Oxley, accompanied by Lieutenant Miller, landed on the shore of Redcliffe Point to fix upon the site of the new settlement, but being unable to find a supply of fresh water adequate for the settlement's needs, they returned to board the brig.

Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane's instructions to Oxley, dated 20 August 1824, concerning the selection of a suitable site, were as follows:

"The spot which you select must contain three hundred acres of arable land, and be in the neighbourhood of fresh water. It should lay in the direct course of the mouth of the river, be easily seen from the offing, and of ready access. To difficulty of attack by the natives, it ought to join difficulty of escape for the convicts. " (10)

After breakfast Cunningham accompanied both Oxley and Miller in the tender in a south-easterly direction towards the

(10) N.S.W. State Archives—Governor's Letter Book 2/1623.

“Head of Moreton Bay” to examine the low mangrove islands where, it had been suggested to Oxley prior to his quitting Port Jackson, an appropriate site for the new settlement might be found. However, none of these islands was suitable, although the excursion afforded Cunningham the opportunity of examining these islands for flora.

Returning to the brig at nine o'clock in the evening, they learnt that during their absence a party had landed at Redcliffe Point and upon exploring the forest land in different directions and beyond the points explored by Oxley and Miller earlier that day had discovered a chain of fresh-water holes connected with some boggy land by which they appeared to be supplied.

On the following morning, on Mr. Oxley's examination of the particular spot where fresh water had been discovered, it was found to be about a quarter of a mile from the immediate beach and the site of the new settlement was staked off.

The timbers on the site and immediate circumjacent forest were eucalypts from sixty to eighty feet high, as well as other varieties of small dimensions.

INSTRUCTIONS TO MILLER

Miller had been instructed that once a site had been selected “not a moment is then to be lost in constructing huts for the soldiers and convicts. Those for the troops are to be placed in a commanding situation three hundred yards distant from the huts intended for the others. The former should be enclosed by a strong palisade and ditch to secure them from assaults. As soon as this has been effected a store, a guard house and a gaol ought to be erected. . . Shortly after your disembarkation you are to establish a Signal Station on some height seen from the offing. . . ”⁽¹¹⁾

The buildings recorded as having been staked out were the Commandant's house, the soldiers' barracks, the prisoners' barracks, and the site of the intended homes—presumably for the married officers of the settlement.

On the same day, tents were erected for temporary accommodation and the long task of unloading the stores from the brig and replacing them with ballast began. The natives in considerable numbers visited the place where the stores were being unloaded, but gave no trouble. It became necessary to anchor the “*Amity*” about two miles from the shore, and this further delayed the unloading of stores.

The land considered to be most eligible for cultivation was

(11) N.S.W. State Archives. Colonial Secretary's Office Letter Book to Moreton Bay, p. 1.

on the north side of the creek and to the north of the settlement.

The field notes of Assistant Surveyor Hoddle show that the site for public buildings commenced at Redcliffe Point (the anchorage), being the reef of rocks immediately south of the present Redcliffe Pier and near the junction of Anzac Avenue with Redcliffe Parade. From here, it extended along the shore northward towards Humpybong Creek. The water track bore south-westward from the centre of the encampment to a pond of fresh water.⁽¹²⁾

PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION

By the end of two weeks, the Commissariat store was under construction and it was expected that it would be roofed in within a week. The erection of the Commandant's house, which had been brought from Port Jackson in frame, was under way, but progress was hindered by the absence of some of the parts and those at the settlement not fitting. This necessitated the cutting of new material by the sawyers, who were already fully occupied in cutting weather-boards, rafters, etc., from the blue gums located within the vicinity of the settlement.

Temporary huts for the soldiers and convicts were completed as well as a temporary store for the repositing of ironmongery shipped from Sydney.

It is concerning these stores that Allan Cunningham made some jovial comments. It appears that one of the items of the cargo of the "*Amity*" was 150 nine-gallon iron pots—"from which extravagant supply," says Cunningham in a letter (located in Reverend J. D. Lang's papers in the Mitchell Library), "one would infer the new colonists would have naught to do but to eat, drink and be merry."⁽¹³⁾ With this letter, Cunningham included a sketch showing the staking out of the town and the location of the various buildings, which sketch unfortunately is now missing from the original letter.

FRUIT TREES PLANTED

Young plants, including pineapples, mangoes, oranges, lemons, loquats, bananas and grapes, which were forwarded from the Colonial Botanist's gardens in Sydney, also had been unpacked and committed to the soil.

Cunningham mentioned the necessity for showing the soldiers the way "not to lose themselves" in going from the beach to the fresh-water holes 400 yards distant which, he

(12) Mitchell Library—Field Note Books, Hoddle and Oxley Ref. C261.

(13) Mitchell Library, Papers of Rev. J. D. Lang, Vol. 6, Ref. A2226.

adds, with their own ideas of bushranging, they assuredly would have done if trees on both sides had not charitably been marked for them.

Cunningham does, however, give full credit to the soldiers for their industrious gardening at the settlement. In his journal he writes:

"I must not neglect to remark on the laborious but optional activity of the private soldiers of the Detachment of the 40th Regiment stationed here, who at every period, when relieved from duty, had employed themselves in breaking up a portion of the ground and had sown the seeds of cabbage, lettuce, turnips, french beans, pumpkins and others . . . and it was with pleasure I pointed out to them the descriptions of vegetables upon whose growth they will certainly rely in a climate whose summer I conceive to be equal to that within the tropic."

REPORT ON SETTLEMENT

After a sojourn of about a month—two weeks of which were spent by Oxley and Cunningham in exploring the Brisbane River—the brig "*Amity*" left the Redcliffe Settlement and returned to Sydney. The return of the brig gave rise to the following comments in the Sydney "*Gazette*" on 21 October 1824:

"In our shipping intelligence we have noticed the return of His Majesty's brig *Amity*, Captain Penson, from our New Settlement in Moreton Bay, after a passage of only four days, touching at Port Macquarie. The Surveyor-General (John Oxley, Esq.) and the King's Botanist (Mr. Cunningham) have returned to headquarters. The New Settlement is formed on Red Cliff Point, no island being found fit for that purpose. Red Cliff Point was deemed peculiarly eligible, from its central situation; the anchorage, however, is not very good off it, nor is it in fact properly sheltered until within a few miles of the heads of the Bay.

A new and valuable species of pine was discovered on the banks of the river, growing to a very large size, and in great abundance. Sanguine expectations are formed that this tree will prove of great advantage to the shipping interests; more especially if it should prove, on trial, to be well adapted for the masts of ships, as, hitherto, no timber of that description has been found in the Colony. Several fine specimens were brought up in the *Amity*, and are now in His Majesty's Dockyard."

This species of pine was subsequently found to be totally unsuited for use in the construction of vessels.

"The Settlement was left in good health and spirits and they were rapidly proceeding in erecting comfortable huts, and the formation of little gardens. The site of the Settlement was dry and open to the sea breeze—an indispensable advantage in that hot climate."

PIONEER PUBLIC SERVANTS

Thus, albeit in a most restricted and limited field, began Civil or Public Service in Queensland with Redcliffe as the site for its first operations.

Lieutenant Miller as Commandant, although in receipt of a military pension, was paid a salary of 400 Spanish dollars for the first year of his service and as Commandant of the new settlement can therefore be regarded as the first resident Civil Servant in Queensland. His son, Henry, who was employed upon clerical duties at the settlement, was the first Junior Clerk in the Civil Service in Queensland. Walter Scott, who was in charge of the Commissariat, and his assistant were the forerunners of officers of the State Stores Service which was to develop over the years.

In the circumstances some remarks concerning Lieutenant Miller would not be inappropriate. On 31 December 1825 his son Henry applied to Governor Darling for a grant of land with "intention (with Your Excellency's permission) to become a settler in this Colony." He describes himself as "the son of Lieutenant Henry Miller who has been upwards of seventeen years in his present 40th Regiment and served with it in the Peninsula, America and at Waterloo and was never absent from it but for the recovery of severe wounds."⁽¹⁴⁾ After his service at Moreton Bay as Commandant, Miller was transferred to Hobart Town, remaining there until his death in 1866. His son Henry when nearly 20 years of age was appointed Accountant to the Audit Office. Although very successful in Tasmania, tales were told of fortunes made across the Strait. The Bank of Victoria was founded by him in 1852 and he was chairman of its directors until his death in 1868. In Victoria he became Minister of Trade and Customs in 1858 and Minister of Railways in 1866. Popularly known as "Money Miller," he well earned the name.

VISIT BY GOVERNOR BRISBANE

On Tuesday, 9 November 1824, the "*Amity*" again left Sydney for the new settlement at Moreton Bay, this time bearing His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane and other distinguished persons.

Upon the return of this expedition, the Sydney "*Gazette*" of 9 December 1824 described the visit in the following terms:

"On Saturday morning last H.M. Colonial brig *Amity* returned from the Northern Settlements, last from Moreton Bay, with His Excellency the Governor in Chief, His Honour the Chief Justice, the Surveyor-General, Captain McArthur and Mr. Francis Stephen, all in excellent health.

"His Excellency the Governor is amazingly gratified with the excursion, and, from the knowledge he has been able personally

(14) N.S.W. State Archives—Governor's Letter Book Memorials for land, etc., 1820-1826. Ref. 4/1845.

to acquire, there can be little doubt but that Australia will, at no distant period, derive considerable and lasting benefit. The Amity entered by the Northern and returned through the Southern entrance. . . As the natives were particularly troublesome to the New Settlement at Red Cliff Point, by purloining the tools and other useful articles, at every opportunity, the Commandant had been constrained to keep them at a respectful distance owing to which very few were to be seen by the party.

“NATIVES VERY FRIENDLY”

“Up to the day preceding that of the departure of the Amity, only three natives had been descried, and they were at some distance. On the morning of Amity’s weighing anchor, however, a small party came around a point of land. The Governor, the Chief Justice, and other gentlemen, presently landed. One of them quickly recognised Finnegan (the partner of Parson who had been so many months with them), and evinced extraordinary pleasure. In a few moments the party had increased to 15, men and boys, but no females were to be seen. Two of the Hunter’s River natives had attended the expedition, and were on shore with His Excellency but they failed in making themselves understood, other than by gestures—they seemed quite ignorant of each other’s dialect. They were very friendly, and betrayed no symptom of fear; indeed one was inordinately gratified, as to roll himself in the sand—from pure pleasure. They were in a state of nudity, with the exception of curiously wrought nets, which were worn round the neck for the purpose of carrying fish and other food; these were gladly bartered away for tomahawks, etc. They were armed with no destructive weapons. His Excellency regretted that the expedition had not earlier fallen in with the aborigines, that some degree of confidence might have been commenced upon, if not established, between them and the Europeans. They are evidently of a superior order to those in the more southern parts of this continent.

“His Excellency and the gentlemen of the expedition remained one night up the River Brisbane, having encamped on Peel’s Island, so named in honour of the Right Honourable Secretary of State for Home Department.”

SHIFTING OF SETTLEMENT

In February 1825 it was decided that the settlement should be moved from Redcliffe to the banks of the Brisbane River upwards of about nine miles from its mouth. Actually the settlement was not removed until some months later.

It seems reasonable to assume, however, that developmental work on the settlement would have practically ceased in February and one cannot but fail to be impressed by the great amount of work which was performed in the few months of its operation.

In addition to the buildings and gardens which have been described, it is known that a brick kiln was built and operated. Until recently there were relics of convict brick construction on the Peninsula, one being the oven of a bakehouse which was situated in the vicinity of Anzac Avenue. In his book,

"In the Early Days," published in 1895, J. J. Knight recounts an incident in which a visitor mentioned that a hotel* about 100 yards northward of Anzac Avenue was on the original site of Humpybong. It is reported that a search was made for relics and the remains of a brick floor of what was declared to be the kitchen and a ring of bricks forming the top of a brick shaft to a well were found.

RELIC OF FIRST SETTLEMENT

Although all evidence of former buildings seems now to have gone, there is one piece of construction by the convicts which still remains. This is a weir which was built on Humpybong Creek and is situated about 100 yards upstream from the intersection of the creek by Anzac Avenue. It is a sturdily built structure of concrete in which use was made of beach sand and rock. Although time has broken two sections of the weir, its main section is now as solid as the day on which it was constructed—truly the convicts built it better than they knew. It would be a great historical pity if this one surviving structure of our first settlement and our oldest weir, although generally unknown, is to be lost through the eventual and inexorable march of progress.

REASONS FOR NEW SITE EXAMINED

Four reasons have been given for removing the settlement from Redcliffe—these being:

- (i) Lieutenant Miller and his soldiers were most dissatisfied with the existing site and considered it unhealthy.
- (ii) The blacks were troublesome.
- (iii) The anchorage was unsatisfactory and navigation difficult.
- (iv) The settlement was not fulfilling the purpose for which it was formed.

The genuineness of the first of these reasons is not borne out by the records of the settlement. There were no cases of serious illness and all reports indicated that the settlement enjoyed excellent health.

Whilst their pilfering would have been troublesome, there is no evidence of hostility by the blacks. In fact, the report upon Sir Thomas Brisbane's visit to the settlement indicates that the Governor saw but few natives and that these were unarmed and very friendly.

Navigational difficulties and the changing of the shipping route between Sydney and the settlement do, however, appear to be the cogent reasons for the removal.

* "Ambassadors."

SOUTH PASSAGE "SUPERIOR"

When Oxley returned to the settlement after his two weeks' journey up the Brisbane River and set sail for Sydney, the brig "*Amity*" passed through the South Passage. The Sydney "*Gazette*" records of the South Passage that it was "superior to the original Northern one; this discovery of this channel will doubtless be productive of many advantages to the new settlement and facilitate the loading of timber that may be procured in the Brisbane River, the anchorage in this part of the Bay being infinitely superior to that in the vicinity of Red Cliff Point; it shortens the passage considerably and vessels can now proceed with a northerly wind to sea, which was not the case until this passage was explored; it cuts off, in consequence, between 50 and 60 miles."

Reference is also made in the Sydney "*Gazette*" to the fact that "the anchorage (off Redcliffe), however, is not very good off it, nor is it in fact properly sheltered until within a few miles of the heads of the Bay."

Miller also in reporting to Sir Thomas Brisbane on the progress made at the settlement stated that the conveying of stores from the brig to the settlement had taken considerable time, especially as the vessel had been obliged to moor two miles further off from the shore.

The Sydney "*Gazette*" stated: "We are creditably informed that His Excellency intends either the removal of the present temporary settlement, or the establishment of another about nine miles from the mouth of the Brisbane, which will be more desirable for the purposes of navigation. The site fixed was designated by His Honour the Chief Justice, "*Eden-glassie*."

From the evidence, it would seem that the navigation problem was a factor contributing to the shifting of the settlement.

What sort of a settlement was Redcliffe supposed to be? In the light of our understanding of this, I feel we shall see the situation more clearly.

In Oxley's report on the 1823 expedition to Moreton Bay, dated 10 January 1824, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, he stated:

"Should a settlement be formed at Moreton Bay, the country in the vicinity of Red Cliff Point offers the best site for an establishment in the first instance. It has an easy communication with the sea, there is not that difficulty experienced in effecting a landing which other situations in the bay present, and the country to the west of the point will communicate with the interior. It is about ten miles to the north of the entrance into Brisbane River, and must be passed by all vessels intending to enter it. Red Cliff Point must, however, be viewed more in the light of a naval base

or depot for stores than as being well adapted for a principal settlement. *The Brisbane River presents so many superior situations that, although a port at Red Cliff Point may in the first instance be indispensable, yet the country on the west side of the river at the termination of the Sea Reach appears to me a much better site for a permanent establishment.* The river is not fresh there, but there is plenty of fresh water; the country is open and no obstacles exist from swamps or hills to prevent a ready communication with the interior, either by the banks of the river, or at a distance from it. The water is deeper closer to the shore and vessels of considerable burthen could load or unload close to the bank. From a hill near this last station, the entrance of the bay can be seen; and by clearing a few trees, communication by signal may be held with Red Cliff Point. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Hence, this report of Oxley alludes to the possibility of a settlement at Redcliffe being either of a tentative nature, a naval post or depot for stores rather than being well adapted for a principal settlement.

Undoubtedly, Oxley's great interest was in the Brisbane River which he discovered and explored in 1823. One can almost sense his impatience upon his arrival at Redcliffe in September of the following year to be away again upon a voyage of exploration of this river. Spending but three days at the Redcliffe Settlement in which he determined general principles as to siting and gave over-all supervisory instructions, he left the detailed surveying of the settlement and its seaboard to Assistant Surveyor Hoddle, and with Allan Cunningham and Lieutenant Butler left to complete his survey of the river.

DESCRIPTIONS OF RIVER

The descriptions of this river and its upper reaches were such as to fire the imagination. Take this description from the Sydney "*Gazette*" in 1824 of its characteristics twenty miles upwards from its mouth:

" . . . At this extent the breadth of the river is about half a mile. The river preserves its character the length of this distance. The scenery on each side was truly picturesque; on one side high open forest land would present itself, whilst on the other, a comparatively low country, covered with close vegetation, was to be seen: these views were alternate, and from the striking contrast, were of the most engaging description. The pine, with which the country seems to abound, holds out prospects of a truly promising kind. Some of the trees measured from 8 to 10 feet in circumference, and in height might be from 90 to 100 feet, without the intervention of a branch to injure their symmetry. . . "

Oxley, it will be remembered, thought that the Brisbane River was connected with inland waterways.

In advising Oxley of the "*Amity*" being placed under his orders, Governor Brisbane told him that it was for the pur-

(15) N.S.W. State Archives—Surveyor-General's Letter Book to Colonial Secretary 4/6906.

pose of crowning his late discovery of a large river flowing into Moreton Bay with the formation of a new settlement in its vicinity. It could well be that, at the outset, the river was visualised as the ultimate place of settlement—not necessarily penal settlement—with Redcliffe serving as an outpōst, a function which subsequently the passage of ships through the South Passage rendered unnecessary.

INSTRUCTIONS TO OXLEY

This thought is supported by the letter of instructions which the Governor gave to Oxley on 30 August 1824. This reads:

“Being desirous of gaining a further knowledge of Moreton Bay, the River Brisbane and the country adjacent I request you will hold yourself in readiness to proceed by her on an early day. I have directed that the vessel be well found in every necessary; and on your embarkation she will be placed under your orders.

- 1st On your arrival at Moreton Bay examining the coast as you pass along (wind and weather permitting) I have to request that you do make a very particular survey of it and a strict examination of the islands therein, and their conveniences in case it may be considered necessary to form a Penal Settlement on any of them.
- 2ndly To ascertain the securest place for vessels to anchor within the islands and in the bay.
- 3rdly To survey the river running into the bay, stating the depth of water in mid-channel, when it empties itself.
- 4thly To proceed up the river in the ship as far as you can with safety—afterwards in boats, taking care to observe the rise and fall of the tide, and tracing it on its banks as far as you conveniently can—remarking the direction from when it comes.
- 5thly To make a minute examination of the features of the country about, making little excursions from the extreme of your journey up, to ascertain the same.
- 6thly On returning down the river every pains to be taken to ascertain the character of the country around, the nature and quality of the soil on its banks, and the properties of the timber thereon.
- 7thly To be careful to observe where it would be most desirable to establish a settlement on the river, in case such may be considered necessary, and the best position for forts or ports for the defence of same. ”⁽¹⁶⁾

As these instructions were issued ten days after Oxley’s commission to form a new settlement in the vicinity of the river and thereafter to return to Sydney with the greatest expedition, one wonders to what extent Oxley himself might have influenced the additional instructions urging further exploration of the river.

(16) N.S.W. State Archives: Governor’s Letter Book 4/1640.

THE BRISBANE SETTLEMENT*

On 28 February 1825 Pilot Gray was issued with instructions to survey and buoy the outer bay and inner channel and remove the settlement from Redcliffe Point to the Brisbane River. Gray was employed from 9 March to 28 October 1825 on this project and the nautical map which he drew up of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River is still in existence.

Boarded as got up with fresh
 breezes, returning in consequence for
 vessels to remain by at Brisbane
 after the discharge of their respective
 cargo ^{Slight hauls} - the backs of the
 Ruler - what - see the ...
 4

Wednesday 29 Sept 1824
 I was fully employed in the shifting
 and preparate of my small collection
 parts of which I saw with to get
 had been completely covered with
 salt water The last evening -
 to the office of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Lieutenant~~ ^{Lieutenant} ~~Sampson~~ ^{Sampson}
 Mr Oaley and Mr Butler there on their
 to the settlement, which we
 found was advancing in a slow but
 progress manner - The Commodore
 here in the reception of the provisions
 for the subsistence of the settlement
 was expecting of to go under the direction
 of Mr Salt to the Mrs Cooper and would

FIELD BOOK OF ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1824

Reproduced by permission of the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

* There is a field for further research into the gradual development of the Settlement and the associated Civil Services.

Gray was paid 200 Spanish dollars for his services and this, with the establishment of a Pilot Station at Amity, constituted another section of Civil Service in Queensland.

Cunningham in a field book stated that the settlement was shifted in May 1825, but no doubt working parties would have begun clearing the site well before this period.

Whilst Gray was here, he also explored part of the Brisbane River, and it would appear that the report he furnished to Governor Brisbane resulted in Major Lockyer being sent up to Moreton Bay for further exploration.

Lieutenant Miller relinquished his position as Commandant in July 1825 and was replaced by Peter Bishop.

BISHOP'S REPORT

In March 1826 Bishop reported on the settlement in these following terms:

"Our present buildings are merely temporary, being constructed of slabs and plastering for want of proper mechanics to erect others. I am happy to state for His Excellency's information that we are on very good terms with the natives. . . A few days ago they brought in two bushrangers that had absconded from the settlement. Tomahawks and blankets will be most acceptable presents for them, but I despair of ever making them useful as stockmen as they will not approach the cattle. If it is the intention of the Government that fresh provisions should be served out occasionally to the people on the settlement I then recommend bullocks and cows, also sheep to be sent here and not pigs for they do not thrive here. . . I find the prisoners can do a great deal more work than their Government task by getting a little reward for it such as the burning-off and clearing of portions. I beg to be informed if I may grant to these people and deserving mechanics indulgences of a little tea, sugar and flour for extra work done as I am convinced it will be very advantageous to the Government." (17)

In March 1825 there were 35 convicts at the settlement and that number was increased to 75 with the arrival of the "*Lalla Rookh*" at the end of May. By the end of Bishop's period as Commandant of the settlement in March 1826 there were 88 convicts at the establishment.

WORKS AT THE SETTLEMENT

In respect of cultivation, Sir Thomas Brisbane's wish that the settlement be able to sustain itself in a very short period was not realised because of the shifting of the settlement. However, a quarterly return of work performed between 25 December 1825 and 24 March 1826 gives some indication of how prisoners at the settlement were engaged.

(17) N.S.W. State Archives: Colonial Secretary's In Letters from Moreton Bay 4/1803.

The schooner "*Talbot*" was constructed, its dimensions were 45ft. with a 10ft. 3in. beam and a 5ft. hold. Twelve acres of ground were broken for cultivation, 25 acres cleared of stumps and 27½ acres of timber felled. The following buildings were completed:

Blacksmith and carpenter's shop covering 10 squares, and the brick forge.

The boat's crew house.

A brick building, separate from the Commandant's house, measuring 18ft. x 14ft., with a tiled floor.

The prisoners' cookhouse, measuring 20ft. x 15ft., which was plastered and shingled.

The overseer's house constructed of slab and plastering, with a shingled roof.

Two wings of a military barracks, 15ft. x 25ft., and a fence measuring 30 rods of 10-foot slabs enclosing the military barracks.

Four squares and 42ft. of shingling and batting were completed on a military house. Sawpits were erected 50ft. x 24ft. On the settlement, building articles manufactured included approximately 44,000 bricks, 20,000 shingle nails, 3,500 three-inch nails and 1,100 four-inch nails, sundry iron bolts, bars and other implements.

Of the convicts employed, one was engaged on clerical duties, three overseers were in charge of the agricultural establishment, the lumber yard and the various gangs. One constable was in charge of the lime-burners and the other was attending to "police duties"; and one convict was employed as scourger and watchman.⁽¹⁸⁾

Henry Cowper was advised of his appointment as Assistant Surgeon on 1 September 1825 and proceeded to Moreton Bay to relieve Walter Scott of his medical duties. Mrs. Esther Roberts was the settlement's school teacher.

With the return of Captain Bishop to Sydney, the settlement was well under way and ready to receive the large number of second offenders who were to be transported to Moreton Bay during Captain Logan's period as Commandant.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN 1831

A pencil sketch of Brisbane made in 1831 shows the paucity of buildings and by inference that of Civil Services connected with the settlement. The only public buildings apart from houses, soldiers' barracks, the gaol and prisoners' barracks, were the prisoners' hospital and the soldiers' hos-

(18) N.S.W. State Archives: Colonial Secretary Miscellaneous Returns, etc., 4/1917.

pital (on the site of the present Supreme Court), a small store, a Government jetty and store, and a boathouse.

The period between 1824 and 1839 was a dreary one in the State's development; Commandant followed Commandant; Captain Bishop was succeeded by Captain Logan who, in turn, was succeeded by Commandants Clunie, Foster Fyans, Cotton, Gravatt and Owen Gorman—following one another at short intervals.

Brisbane was abandoned as a penal settlement in 1839. Convicts were removed and surveyors arrived to lay out sites for towns and villages.

Free settlement began in 1842 and in December of that year Captain Wickham was appointed first Police Magistrate in Queensland. There were also appointed Dr. Stephen Simpson as Crown Land Commissioner for Moreton Bay and Christopher Rolleston as Crown Land Commissioner for Darling Downs.

NATIVE POLICE FORCE ESTABLISHED

A Native Police Force, superintended by white officers, was established by Governor Fitzroy in 1848 under the leadership of Frederick Walker. This partially solved the problem of keeping law and order in the sparsely settled areas.

The settlement grew rapidly from 1842, resulting in the appointment on 7 April 1853 of Captain Wickham as Government Resident.

Free settlement resulted in an expansion of civil services in the establishment not only in Brisbane but in the provincial centres of Post Offices, Courts of Petty Sessions, and Land Offices, as the necessity arose.

By 1859, in addition to these services, there were those dealing with Customs, Port matters, Immigration, Public Works, Supreme Court business, Insolvencies, and Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

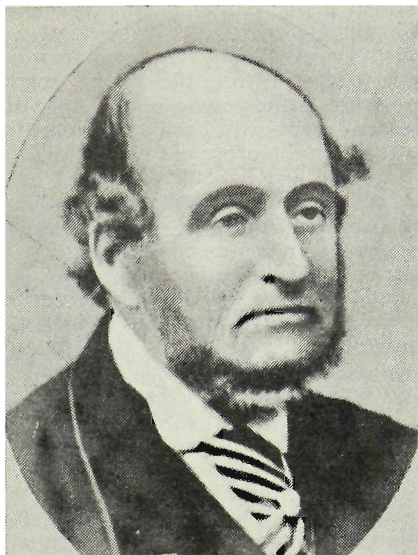
The departments constituting this pre-Separation Public Service were branches of the central Government of New South Wales and were controlled from Sydney. All correspondence had to pass through the Government Resident for noting and comment before being forwarded to the Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney. Plans, alterations and repairs to buildings required the sanction of the Colonial Architect of New South Wales.

Strict supervision over the settlement was kept by the Governor of New South Wales, who was responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. He was

required to notify and explain all appointments and seek approval for the implementing of colonial policy. The whole of the official staff was not much beyond 100.

SEPARATION IN 1859

On separation from New South Wales by Proclamation of 10 December 1859, Governor Bowen became the first Governor of Queensland.



Mr. (later Sir) ROBERT RAMSAY MACKENZIE
Queensland's First Colonial Treasurer

In the absence of responsible Government in the Colony, it became necessary for Governor Bowen to appoint an Executive Council which was to consist, besides the Governor, of the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Treasurer.

The following appointments were made by the Governor:

Colonial Secretary: Mr. Robert George Wyndham Herbert, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, who accompanied Governor Bowen from England.

Attorney-General: Mr. Ratcliffe Pring, a Barrister of the Inner Temple, who had for four years filled the office of Crown Prosecutor at Moreton Bay.

Colonial Treasurer: Mr. (later Sir) Robert Ramsay Mackenzie, a gentleman of ancient Scottish family and one of the earliest pastoral settlers in North Australia.

GOVERNOR BOWEN'S COMMENTS

In a despatch dated 2 February 1860, which he sent to the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, advising him of these appointments, Governor Bowen had some comments to make concerning the new Public Service of Queensland; it is fitting that this paper should conclude with the following quotation from this despatch:

“ . . . From the peculiar position of the new Colony, the patronage of all the public departments was placed at my disposal on my first arrival. I have prescribed to myself as an inviolable rule, to appoint to public employment here, only persons possessing a claim on this Colony, either from long residence within its limits, or from services directly rendered to it, or to the Colony of New South Wales, before the recent separation. My own relatives and private friends come under none of these categories, and are, therefore, necessarily excluded from my consideration.

“In accordance with the aforesaid principles, I have promoted to the office of Clerk of the Executive Council and Under Colonial Secretary, Mr. Abram Orpen Moriarty, a gentleman who has filled with distinction several important posts in the undivided Colony and who was strongly recommended to me by Sir William Denison, and other competent authorities. It is convenient for the despatch of public business that the permanent offices of Clerk of the Executive Council and Under Secretary should be held by the same individual; and, it is essential that the individual selected should be a man of Mr. Moriarty's ability and experience, seeing that Executive Councils may be expected to succeed each other in Australia, at least as rapidly as Ministries have succeeded each other, of late years, in the Mother Country.

“The office of Surveyor-General and Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands is of pre-eminent importance in a Colony which is to a considerable degree dependent on its land revenue, and which comprises within its boundaries a territory equal to the aggregate area of two of the principal monarchies of Europe. This office has been conferred on the distinguished geographical explorer, Mr. Augustus Charles Gregory, who was the first discoverer of extensive regions in Queensland. The recommendation of Sir William Denison—himself a practical Engineer and Surveyor of no mean distinction, guarantees Mr. Gregory's professional ability; and I confidently expect from his appointment to a sphere which will afford ample scope to his peculiar talents, very extensive and valuable results, as well for the Public Service, as for Geography and Science.

PRINCIPLE OF LOCAL PROMOTION

“In the other chief departments, the principle of local promotion has been followed. Thus, Mr. Thornton, who was Sub-Collector at Moreton Bay, has become Collector of Customs for Queensland; Mr. Tiffin, late principal Clerk of Works, has been named Colonial Architect; Mr. Creyke, late Chief Registrar at Brisbane, has been appointed Registrar-General; and Mr. Morrisset, Commandant of the Native Police Corps, has been promoted to the Inspector-Generalship of the entire Force. But I will not weary Your Grace with details, which will find a more appropriate place in the annual Blue Book of the Colony. . . .

“ . . . I trust that I may be excused if I add, in conclusion, that

my position, though at present arduous and responsible, is, on that account more full of interest. There is here more room for creation and discovery than has perhaps fallen to the lot of many Colonial Governors. Every public department of this great and rising colony has been organised by myself—I might almost say, is the work of my own hands. I hope hereafter to be the promoter of exploring expeditions which while developing the almost unlimited resources of Queensland, will add new conquests to Civilisation, and to Science. . . . ” (19)

Thus was founded the Queensland Public Service, founded in a spirit of expectancy and prediction, the present realisation of which must surely have exceeded all bounds of the imaginations of its early promoters and originators.

(19) Qld. State Archives: Governor's Despatches to the Secretary of State, No. 16.

