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**James Thomas Walker:
Banker, Federation Father, Australian Senator**

**Thesis submitted by
Dorothy Mary Gibson-Wilde BA (Hons) *JCU*
in May 1992**

**for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the Department of History and Politics at
James Cook University of North Queensland**

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(D. M. Gibson-Wilde)

..... (date)

Abstract

Australian history offers few biographies of Federation Fathers other than those of outstanding figures such as Edmund Barton or Alfred Deakin; biographies of conservative politicians in early Federal Parliament and of middle-class white-collar workers are also scarce. Nor is there a study of the history of William Walker & Company and Walker Brothers & Company, influential firms in the wool industry and mercantile affairs of early New South Wales.

Based on the diaries and papers of James Thomas Walker, which have been virtually ignored by scholars to date, this study contributes new knowledge on these topics. Walker was a prominent banker and financier—indeed the last outstanding member of a family prominent in Australian commercial history for a century—and a Federation Father, now virtually forgotten, who served as an Independent Free trader in the first Federal Parliament. The thesis traces Walker's background and identifies the influences that shaped his career.

Born in Leith (Scotland) in 1841, he died in Sydney in 1923, a few weeks before his 82nd birthday. He came to Australia first at the age of four years in a sailing ship; he died only twelve years before British Imperial Eastern Airways instituted a regular service from Britain to Australia.¹ In 1859 he joined the staff of the Bank of New South Wales in London; returning to Australia in 1862 he was appointed Accountant at the Rockhampton Branch. In 1866 he received instructions to leave immediately to open and manage the first branch of the Bank at Townsville, then barely eighteen months old. Subsequently he served in managerial positions with the Bank at Toowoomba and Brisbane, but resigned in December 1885 after twenty-five years service, to become General Manager of the newly-established Royal Bank of Queensland.

In 1886 his cousin Thomas Walker, one of Australia's wealthiest men at the time, died leaving a daughter lacking both the experience and the training to manage her father's extensive interests. In 1887, bowing to family pressure, Walker resigned his position and moved to Sydney to become Managing Trustee of the Thomas Walker estate. There he became a well-liked and respected figure in the world of finance and economics, a board member of a number of companies, notably the Australian Mutual Provident Society, Burns Philp & Company, and the Bank of New South Wales of which he served as President from 1899 to 1901. He was also a noted philanthropist with a keen interest in education and health; he served on the Councils of both St Andrews College and Women's College of the University of Sydney and of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, and supervised the building and management of the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital at Concord.

Long a supporter of Federation of the Australian colonies, he was elected in 1897 one of the ten delegates from New South Wales to the Federation Convention; he was in fact the only member of the Convention who was not a politician. He was responsible for ensuring that the Upper House of Federal Parliament should be called 'The Senate' and for devising the plan that formed the basis for solution of the fiscal problems that had impeded agreement on Federation. Elected as a Senator in the first Commonwealth Parliament, Walker was particularly notable for his staunch opposition to racist legislation; he was the first man to state in Federal Parliament that the Aboriginal people had owned the land before the arrival of European settlers.

¹ Alexander Frater, *Beyond the blue horizon*, London, 1986.

Contents

	Introduction	1
Chapter 1	Family history and Australian connections	9
Chapter 2	An Edinburgh boyhood	19
Chapter 3	At work in Britain	27
Chapter 4	North Queensland years	39
Chapter 5	Toowoomba years	61
Chapter 6	Success in Brisbane	79
Chapter 7	Sydney financier	102
Chapter 8	Depression, strikes and Federation	118
Chapter 9	Australian Senator	146
Chapter 10	Life after politics	178
	Conclusion	193
	Appendix 1: Walker family tree	204
	Appendix 2: Waterston family tree	209
	Appendix 3: Palmer family tree	210
	Appendix 4: Itinerary of James Thomas Walker as Inspector, Bank of New South Wales, 1882	211
	Appendix 5: Analysis of shareholders, Royal Bank of Queensland Limited	213
	Appendix 6: Directors of the Royal Bank of Queensland	214
	Appendix 7: The Walker manuscripts	215
	Bibliography	218

Illustrations

James Thomas Walker in Court Dress, 1902	8
Cartoon of J. T. Walker by Will Dyson	203

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Introduction

...unlike the Americans, Australians hold their Founding Fathers of the 1890s, or all their achievement, in no special reverence or affection. Many of them are already forgotten: few are quoted.¹

L. F. Crisp in this brief statement highlights a regrettable feature of our history; Australians know little of the men who founded the Commonwealth. Few have attracted biographers; those published to date are of leading figures such as Edmund Barton, George Reid or Alfred Deakin. Of those who continued into Federal Parliament, studies are of Members of the House of Representatives rather than of the Senate. James Thomas Walker, Federation Father and member of the first Australian Senate, is one of the forgotten majority. As Australia approaches the 100th anniversary of Federation, it seems appropriate to study one of the less known, but nevertheless intriguing, delegates to the Federal Convention of 1897–98 who went on to serve in the Senate.

Apart from a short entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, which contains inaccuracies, and a brief mention of his career as a banker in R. F. Holder's *Bank of New South Wales: A history*, James Thomas Walker is scarcely mentioned in Australian history.² In Federation and Federal political history Walker is virtually ignored. His contemporaries Bernhard Wise and G. H. Reid do not mention him in their reminiscences. Of the New South Wales delegates to the Federal Convention, only five continued campaigning for Federation. In his accounts, Alfred Deakin mentions four of these, omitting Walker's name:

...the Federalists headed by Mr Barton...maintained a most gallant and spirited conflict. Mr R. E. O'Connor, Mr Wise and Mr McMillan spent themselves heroically in the cause...³

Deakin dismisses Walker, claiming 'Brunker and Walker were practically ciphers' and describes him condescendingly as 'a mere commercial man'.⁴ In his biography of Edmund Barton, though Walker's name appears in only one sentence, John Reynolds is a little more informative:

¹ L. F. Crisp, *Australian national government*, Melbourne, 1965, p. 39.

² John Ritchie (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (hereafter *ADB*), vol. 12, Melbourne, 1990. The entry states that Walker was deeply interested in the Constitutional aspects of Federation whereas his interest and expertise were in financial and economic aspects. It states also that he was educated at Edinburgh Institution and Kings College and went back to Scotland for two and a half years to obtain commercial training, whereas he attended Kings College after training in Edinburgh. Also he is stated to have sailed for Queensland in 1866 to manage the branch of the Bank of N.S.W. at Townsville, when in fact he arrived in Queensland first at Rockhampton in 1862 as a clerk in the bank. See also R. F. Holder, *Bank of New South Wales: A history*, 2 vols, Sydney, 1970.

³ Alfred Deakin (ed. J. A. La Nauze), *The Federal story*, 2nd ed., Melbourne, 1963, p. 99.

⁴ Deakin, op. cit., pp.66–67.

One delegate, J. T. Walker (New South Wales), was not a politician, but an eminent citizen of his colony.⁵

J. A. La Nauze pays him more attention, noting that his election to the Federal Convention of 1897–98 was ‘one of the few examples of public recognition of a man who appeared to be simply an expert in a relevant field’. La Nauze also gives Walker credit for having developed the basic plan on which fiscal agreement was finally reached.⁶

R. Norris characterises him as ‘one of the black labour supporters’, but a thorough study of the debates in the Australian Senate reveals Walker to have been the first Senator in the Australian Parliament to voice the belief that the Aboriginal people had owned the land before European settlement.⁷ Both his speeches and his records indicate that he was strongly opposed to racial discrimination and was a sincere supporter of women’s rights. Indeed Walker sounds more a radical of the 1970s than a nineteenth century politician regarded by contemporaries as Conservative.

But who was Walker? Was his concern genuine or was his opposition to the deportation of Kanakas merely the voice of sugar growers anxious to retain cheap labour? Was he just an ordinary businessman dabbling in politics perhaps for personal aggrandisement? What kind of politician was he? What motivated his political stance? This thesis attempts to answer these questions.

Walker attracted my attention because he was one of the founders of banking in Townsville. Johns’s *Notable Australians* indicates that Walker had a more distinguished career than others after he left Townsville.⁸ However, it seemed improbable that he had left any records when a search of bibliographies relating to Federation and Federal politics revealed no reference to J. T. Walker papers; further, no reference to any documents relating to Walker appeared in Holder’s history of the Bank of New South Wales.⁹ It was therefore surprising to discover in Bowen, copies of several pages of an 1866 diary kept by James Thomas Walker. The whereabouts of the original diary was not known, but with the assistance of Walker’s grand-nephew, it was eventually traced to the Mitchell Library, Sydney. The flush of success turned quickly to amazement as the existence was revealed, not of one diary, but 119 diaries dating from 1856 (when Walker was fifteen years old) to 1922, six months before he died aged 82 years. There were also several boxes of correspondence, family documents and memorabilia, ninety volumes of press clippings, and a collection of cartoons.

No thought was given at that time to the writing of a biography of Walker. The immediate need was to read the two volumes relating to Townsville; Walker’s account proved the best ever discovered of the fledgling city in the 1860s. The

⁵ John Reynolds, *Edmund Barton*, Australian Lives edition, Sydney, 1979, p. 102.

⁶ J. A. La Nauze, *The making of the Australian Constitution*, Melbourne, 1972, p. 101 and p. 212.

⁷ R. Norris, *The emergent Commonwealth*, Melbourne, 1975, pp. 79–80.

⁸ Fred Johns, *Notable Australians*, Adelaide, 1906.

⁹ Holder, op. cit.

diaries were written fluently by a young man with a lively mind and a wry sense of humour; he revealed himself to be well-organised, active and optimistic with a strong romantic streak, a keen interest in everything about him, a well-developed sense of responsibility and a serious-minded interest in improving his knowledge. It seemed impossible that such a remarkable collection relating to a Federation Father, albeit a minor one, should not have attracted attention from other historians. The most obvious reason for this appeared to be that others might have found the remainder of Walker's papers of lesser quality than the Townsville sections. However, the author's curiosity had been aroused; the personality of the Townsville diaries was so vivid, one was almost compelled to peruse the remainder of the papers. It soon became abundantly clear that the collection added valuable knowledge to a number of areas of Australian history and politics.

Walker was born in Leith, the port of Edinburgh, in 1841, and died in Sydney in 1923. His lifetime spanned most of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901), the reign of Edward VII (1901–1910) and nearly half of the reign of George V (1910–1935). It was a period of unprecedented change that, in Australian history, bridged the years from convict colonialism through goldfields prosperity to Federation and the trauma of world war.

For most of his working life Walker was a banker and financial manager but, far from insulating him from change, his career brought him intimately into contact with every aspect of the economies of the colonies. He witnessed great changes as wheat fields spread inland, irrigation opened the Murray–Darling River system to agriculture, and mining settlements denuded their surroundings of trees to spawn a forest of poppet heads. His Queensland years encompassed the growth of the colony from three years after separation from New South Wales to the boom years of the 1880s. During that time he saw new ports opened (and some closed) along the coast north of Rockhampton; westward he watched the growth of most of the inland townships. He saw the opening of gold, wolfram, tin and copper mines throughout the colony. When he arrived, the sugar industry was in its infancy with a few farms along the Brisbane River; when he left, sugar cane spread as a green fringe with only a few interruptions along the coastline from the present Gold Coast to Mossman. Later he inspected coal mines in Victoria, gold mines in Western Australian, shipbuilding works and pearling ventures. One may well ask whether any other member of the early parliament possessed as remarkable a range of practical experience.

Walker's papers give a fascinating account of the life of a banker, a white-collar worker, both as a bachelor and as a married man with family, in raw new ports on the edge of the wilderness, in rural townships and at head office in Brisbane. Hours worked, social life, sporting interests, community interests, frustrations—Walker provides as informative a coverage as one might wish to find. Later, in Sydney, his records allow a remarkable insight into the life of a financier and of a well-to-do middle-class family progressing from the Victorian Age through the Edwardian to the 20th century Georgian Age. Holder remarked that 'the life of a banker is an essential and constructive part of social as well as economic history'.¹⁰ Yet few studies have been undertaken of Australian bankers and, as Michael Roe

commented, few studies exist of white-collar workers in general.¹¹ Study of Walker enables better understanding of this comparatively neglected area of Australian history.

Though certainly not a professional politician, Walker did not enter politics by accident; his diaries show him as keenly following political events and contemplating entry into politics at a time when the prospects of doing so were very remote. As a middle-class politician, he was a notable Freetrader. Though clearly more Liberal than British conservatives of the time and certainly more so than Australian Conservatives such as Sir Normand Maclaurin, he was not unhappy to be regarded as a Conservative in Australian politics. Both Cameron Hazlehurst and John Rickard have noted the dearth of studies of Conservatives in Australian political history while Stuart Macintyre noted that 'the Free Trade side of national politics is in need of attention'.¹² Study of Walker's career and views therefore throws light on a number of aspects of Australian history which leading historians have identified as in need of attention. The study particularly emphasises the slippery nature of labels such as 'liberal' and 'conservative' and the folly of assuming that when a man is tagged with such a label, the entire range of his views and opinions can be assumed without enquiry.

Walker's political career also throws useful light on early political issues in the Commonwealth such as the rise of Labour¹³ and the Fusion of Protectionists and Anti-Socialists; that he was not a 'professional' politician and sat in the Senate allowed him a certain aloofness from political hurly-burly that makes his views the more valuable.

What was particularly remarkable was the discovery that Walker's anti-White Australia views were of long standing, and motivated by humanitarian concerns rather than a desire to perpetuate cheap labour. Nor was Walker alone; he was part of a small group in the first Federal Parliament who opposed racist legislation.¹⁴ No studies appear to have been made of this group to determine if their motivation was sincerely humanitarian rather than reflecting the interests of capitalism. Study of Walker indicates a need for further investigation of members of this group.

Furthermore, though the Walker family and its full ramifications appears to have escaped detailed examination by Australian historians, James Thomas Walker was a member of a wide-spread, important and successful clan with Australian connections dating from 1813. In tracing the family history and business interests, his biography adds previously undiscovered information to the history of early New South Wales.

¹⁰ Holder, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

¹¹ Michael Roe, '1830-1850' in F. K. Crowley (ed.), *A new history of Australia*, Melbourne, 1974, p. 123.

¹² Cameron Hazlehurst (ed.), *Australian Conservatism: Essays in twentieth century political history*, Canberra, 1979, p. xiii; John Rickard, *Class and politics*, Canberra, 1976, p. 1; Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford history of Australia*, vol. 4, 1901-1942, Melbourne, 1986, p. 347.

¹³ In this work the spelling of 'Labour' used by Walker and his contemporaries will be adopted, rather than the more modern usage 'Labor'.

¹⁴ Others were Senators Gould, Pulsford and MacFarlane.

That he was a Federation Father and early parliamentarian who left such a rich documentary record of his life is ample justification for a biography of James Thomas Walker, but study of Walker's life and career is even more amply justified in the new knowledge it provides in a number of aspects of Australian history.

* * * * *

The writing of a biography is a daunting task. Lytton Strachey concluded, 'It is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one'. Bernard Crick believed that no one can enter into the mind of another, no matter how comprehensive the material on which one works—and the Walker papers were far from complete, particularly for 1896 when the only missing diary would have provided information on Walker's early involvement with the Federation Movement.¹⁵ A Walker biography undoubtedly presented many challenges.

Walker's records in the Mitchell Library were uncatalogued. Diaries other than Walker's were included in the collection; it was necessary to discover the identities of their owners. The letters were unsorted, various pages of multi-paged letters in different boxes, the writers unidentified. Their sorting and identification was a challenging task indeed. The names of hundreds of friends, acquaintances, writers, politicians, etc. are mentioned throughout the letters and diaries; some were well known, but most required identification—not an easy undertaking.

The papers were all hand-written, a large proportion over a century old; deciphering them was an onerous task. Handling of the documents themselves was problematical since all were fragile and none then microfilmed. Eventually a system was devised of studying the letters and documents in Sydney while the diaries and volumes of newspaper cuttings were microfilmed. This has made their access easier not only for the author but also for other researchers.

Having read the documents, it was necessary to consider their reliability. None of Walker's contemporaries were living; his grandchildren and other relatives had only hazy memories of him, though they could recount information handed down in the family. It was therefore necessary to assess Walker's accounts against those of others—where any existed—and against newspapers of the time. Walker proved to have been almost painfully truthful, admitting faults with remarkable frankness.

The diaries were kept mainly as a record of events and of people he met rather than an intimate account of thoughts; only occasionally does he pause to analyse his feelings. For most of his life they were maintained merely as reminders for himself and perhaps for family interest; it was only in later life that he realised that historians might one day find them interesting, and left their disposal to his family. They are undoubtedly genuine contemporary records: there is no editing or re-writing at a later date either by him or by his family.

¹⁵ Lytton Strachey, quoted in Meyers, *op. cit.*, p. 8; Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A life*, Boston, 1980, p. xxiii.

The length of Walker's life and the extent of his movements and of his multifarious activities and interests also posed a problem. It necessitated the study not only of a wide range of issues in Australian history, but also of Scottish and English history, in order to achieve an understanding and appreciation of the world in which Walker lived.¹⁶

In a number of areas very little reference material existed. On Walker's mother's family, the Waterstons, useful published material was located in Edinburgh, but on the Walkers and their wide-spread kinship network, very little could be found. No analysis could be found of early settlers who returned to England disillusioned, or of those who returned wealthy, to assist in assessing whether the Walker families were unusual or whether Walker and his brothers were unusual in returning to Australia as the children of disillusioned early settlers. No history of William Walker & Company or of Walker Brothers & Company could be located, though they were among the most successful mercantile firms in early Sydney and one of the most successful importers of wool to London. One thesis by B. H. Crew entitled 'The history of the Walker and Archer families in Australia 1813–1868' was found to deal mainly with their pastoral interests (particularly in northern New South Wales), following the Archers to Queensland.¹⁷ It was necessary to construct the family history from references in Walker's papers and in the Archer papers, and from the family records of Archie Walker of Wolgan.

In his banking career it was difficult to assess whether he was typical or more professional in his approach. His experiences as a banker appear to have been similar to those of W. E. Southerden and somewhat more pleasant than those of the French family, but reminiscences of banking in Queensland are very few.¹⁸ No history of the Royal Bank of Queensland existed and there are few documents regarding its founding.

Similarly no records of Coerwull Academy could be located in the archives of the Presbyterian Church, no history of the Thomas Walker Hospital existed, nor of other institutions and organisations with which Walker had connections.¹⁹ No detailed and professional history of the A.M.P. Society existed. No history of the Freetraders could be located. It was therefore necessary to complete a considerable

¹⁶ Some of the studies undertaken in this endeavour are reflected in D. M. and B. C. Gibson-Wilde, *A Pattern of Pubs: Hotels of Townsville 1864–1914*, Townsville, 1988 and D. M. Gibson-Wilde, 'Entertainment in Townsville' in B. J. Dalton (ed.), *Peripheral visions*, Townsville, 1991, pp. 197–222. The latter paper studied visiting troupes of entertainers, many of whom Walker saw in other centres, assessing whether his tastes in theatrical entertainment were typical of the period or not. He emerged from this study as having shared the tastes of his day to a great degree.

¹⁷ B. H. Crew, 'The history of the Walker and Archer families in Australia 1813–1868', M.A. thesis, A.N.U., 1963.

¹⁸ W. E. Southerden, *Reminiscences of fifty-one years service in the Bank of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1928; Dorothy French, *To Queensland in 1867*, n.p., n.d.

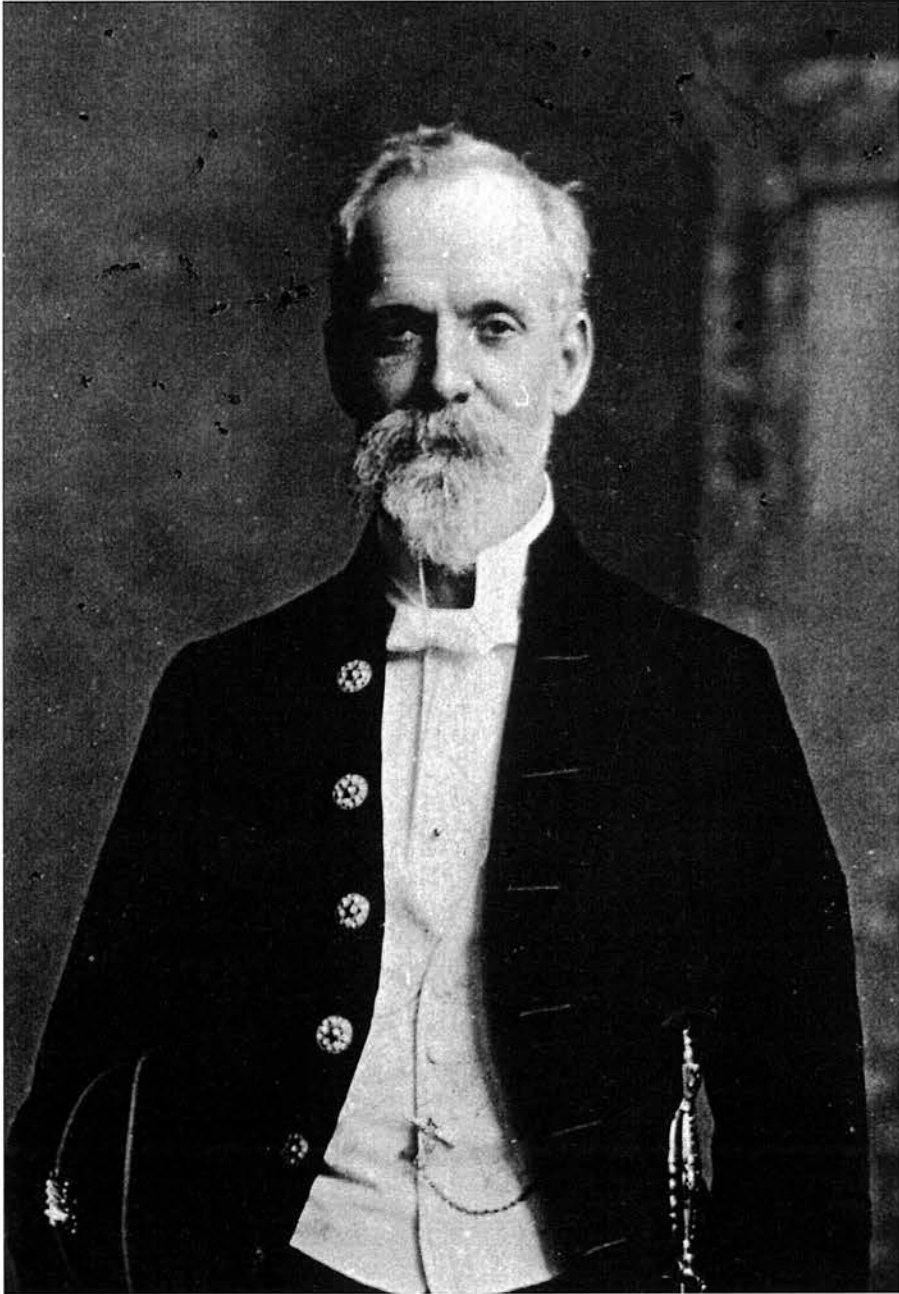
¹⁹ Since work on this thesis commenced, some attention has been paid to Thomas Walker's home 'Yaralla'. Its present owners, the New South Wales Government, proposed to sell it and it appeared that the house and its surrounding estate would suffer in the hands of developers. Judging from the misinformation regarding the history of the house and the Walkers purveyed in a recent (1992) television interview, it seems that a thoroughly documented history can not exist even now.

body of original research in order to fill in the background of Walker's life and to supplement the diaries and letters.

In assessing his parliamentary career, it was discovered that Walker's closest friends left few records; a search for the papers of his closest parliamentary ally James Macfarlane resulted in a complete blank. It was necessary to scan a vast body of newspapers, documents and records merely to glean a few comments. One of the greatest disappointments was that access to the papers of Josiah Symon, a notable early Australian Senator and correspondent of Walker, which are held in the Australian National Library, is still restricted.¹⁹

A further difficulty in writing James Thomas Walker's biography is the nature of the man himself. Not sanctimonious, though on occasion a little wowserish, Walker seemed too good to be true. A thorough and sceptical investigation, involving a search of contemporary documents and newspapers, revealed few criticisms, and those of political creed rather than personal character. Even the editor of the *Bulletin*, while railing at him as a Tory, admitted he was one of the fairest minded of Senators. Throughout his career he preserved integrity and honour to a remarkable degree, remaining consistent in his behaviour and political creed through the changing patterns of politics of the early years of Federation. Yet he was a sympathetic character with human weaknesses; he revealed himself to have been a little vain on occasions, hasty and sometimes sarcastic, and an indifferent speaker with a dry and didactic style; though reserved and highly serious he was blessed with the saving grace of a wry and often droll sense of humour. He was, by intent, a good man.

¹⁹ One cannot scan through the documents to complete a search but must nominate those one thinks might be useful. This of course may result in missing valuable evidence.



James Thomas Walker in Court Dress, 1902

Chapter 1 Family history and Australian connections

James Thomas Walker¹ was a descendant of the Walkers of Leith whose migratory expansion began with the arrival in Leith about 1650 of Robert Walker or Wauker. According to family tradition he was a tradesman or a mechanic, possibly a wheelwright. Whatever his occupation, he was successful enough to enable his son James (born 1676(78?)) to become a lawyer and, eventually, Procurator Fiscal of Leith. At that time Leith, the port for Edinburgh, was the major port of Scotland and centre of Scottish trade with the West Indies, the North Sea ports of Europe, and in particular Bordeaux in France where a lucrative wine trade established in the Middle Ages still thrived.²

Thomas (1727–1810), James Walker's middle son, great-grandfather of JTW, entered the wine trade at Leith about 1740. His brothers moved away from Leith; Robert, the eldest, and the youngest, James, studied medicine, becoming Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, and pursued distinguished careers as surgeons in the British navy.³ Thomas Walker prospered, acquiring his own wharf; his success may have been fostered by marriage to Ann Hume, daughter of another merchant with interests in the West Indies.⁴

Thomas Walker's sons continued in the wine trade; the elder son John (1753(57?)–1837) succeeded to the management of the Leith headquarters at 3 Springfield Place, Leith Walk. In 1778 he married Katherine Lyon (1757–?)⁵, a grandniece of John Glas, founder of the Glasite Church, whose teachings were to have a considerable influence on JTW.⁶ To the beginning of the nineteenth century John Walker's business prospered; he apparently improved his social position, acquiring a country seat with the lease of Castlesteads Farm near Dalkeith from the Duke of Buccleuch. Business increased to such a degree that his younger

1 For the purposes of clarity the subject of the biography will be identified in this chapter and elsewhere as "JTW" in order to distinguish him from his uncle James Thomas Walker who will be identified as James Walker of Leith.

2 J. D. Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, Harmondsworth, 1966, pp. 254–5; D. S. Macmillan, *Scotland and Australia 1788–1850*, Oxford, 1967.

3 See Appendix 1, Table 1(a), Walkers of Leith family tree. Robert treasured a letter of appreciation from Admiral Lord Howe and a Malacca cane presented to him by Admiral Sir Charles Knowles (Walker diary, vol. 51, 15 May 1892). On retirement he returned to Edinburgh where he served as Treasurer and later President of the Royal College of Surgeons, became a Burgess and married a baronet's daughter (Walker diary, vol. 103, 5 December 1914). He wed in 1758 Charlotte, daughter of Sir John Jardine, Bart, of Applegirk. James remained in the navy ending his career as Surgeon in Charge of the Royal Naval Hospital, Portsmouth. Despite a Presbyterian background, James joined the Church of England and Robert became a Baptist. Some of his descendants were Presbyterians; one, Dr William Brown, had a strong influence on young JTW.

4 Evidence in the diaries of George Walker, uncle of James Thomas Walker, suggests that they may have extended their interests later to the United States.

5 Daughter of Robert Lyon of Dundee, a descendant of the Lyons of Cossens and Wester Ogle, related to the Lyons of Glamis from whom Elizabeth (nee Bowes–Lyon), the Queen Mother of Britain, is descended.

6 See Appendix 1, Table 1(b), Lyon family tree.

brother Thomas (?–c1840) was sent to open a branch in Bordeaux.⁷ Margaret (1751–1832), their only sister, married Dr G. O. Sandeman, a Scottish physician working in London, establishing the family's first association with that city.

Leith declined as the trade of the port slowed with the outbreak of war with France after the French Revolution, and the development of the Clyde ports that usurped the West Indian trade. The merchants of Leith then turned their interest to the colony of New South Wales. Founded only twelve years previously, it offered a welcome new outlet; from 1800 to 1823 all but one of the vessels leaving Scottish ports for New South Wales sailed from Leith.⁸ In 1822 several Leith merchants established the Australian Company of Edinburgh and Leith to invest in the colony. Though one of their Sandeman connections was among the investors, the Walkers of Leith were not;⁹ they had already established their own connection with New South Wales via marriage with the Walkers of Perth.

John and Katherine (Lyon) Walker of Leith, had a large family but only three of their children are relevant to this thesis: James Thomas, Senior (James Walker of Leith) (1779–1854), Anne (1782–1857) and John William (1799–1875). James Walker of Leith appears to have entered the family business, though he may have spent some time in India.¹⁰ In 1801 he married Ann Walker of Perth (1801–1857) uniting the Walkers of Leith with the Walkers of Perth, who were apparently unrelated. Ann's father was another successful merchant, Archibald Walker of Perth, Laird of Edenshead. He married twice; Ann was a child of his first marriage. Her eldest brother David became a banker; one of his daughters, Julia, married in 1810 William Archer, a timber merchant of Perth, who eventually transferred his interests to Larvik in Norway. Thus the Archers of Larvik and the Walkers of Leith were linked by marriage with the Walkers of Perth.¹¹ Members of all three families settled in Australia and influenced the career of JTW.

The first to arrive in Australia was William (1787–1856), half-brother of Ann Walker of Leith.¹² He was employed by Fairlie, Ferguson & Company with offices in London and Calcutta; they were country traders who financed Australian merchants, in particular Robert Campbell & Company. By 1813 the Campbell accounts were causing such consternation that William Walker was sent to Sydney to investigate. In the volatile social milieu of Sydney at the time he pursued his business with considerable tact, winning the friendship of Robert Campbell. He arrived just as the crossing of the Blue Mountains opened up new horizons for pastoral expansion and Governor Macquarie had commenced the reforms that, as S. J. Butlin noted, would turn the colony from a penal settlement into 'a free market–capitalist economy'.¹³ In 1814 the exclusive privileges of the East India

⁷ He settled there, married a Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Dumaine, and joined the Roman Catholic Church. His son James further extended the family's migratory pattern by going to India; JTW maintained a correspondence with and assisted financially his French cousin Gabrielle Valette, granddaughter of Thomas (junior).

⁸ Macmillan, *op. cit.*, Appendix A.

⁹ Macmillan, *op. cit.*, Appendixes C and D.

¹⁰ See Walker diary, vol. 46, 12 August 1890.

¹¹ See Appendix 1, Tables 1(c), 1(d) and 1(e).

¹² Younger son of Archibald Walker of Perth by his second marriage with Isabella Walker of Falfield.

¹³ S. J. Butlin, *The foundations of the Australian monetary system 1788–1851*, Melbourne, 1953, p. 139.

Company over trade from the Cape of Good Hope to Cape Horn ended, except for the tea trade to China; restrictions on colonial shipping entering the London to Sydney trade were also lifted. William Walker had ample time to have 'carefully sized up the prospects for economic advancement' before his return to India and possibly London in 1817.¹⁴ He resigned from Fairlie Ferguson & Company and in 1820 returned to Sydney to become a junior partner of Riley & Jones, then leading Sydney merchants¹⁵, with whom he apparently continued his association until 1831 when a family consortium, William Walker & Company, was clearly independent.¹⁶ The company appears to have been formed in the 1820s; its origins are obscure but it is clear that the partners were chiefly members of the extended Walker family.¹⁷ All the members who came to Australia were well educated and arrived with substantial capital according to a report in the *Sydney Gazette* of 7 July 1828.

They acquired a number of interests including a substantial investment in whaling in partnership with Richard Jones.¹⁸ William Walker was also a major shareholder in the Bank of New South Wales, founded in 1817. However, it was in the wool industry that they appear to have concentrated their major efforts. In 1823 William's older brother James arrived.¹⁹ He obtained a grant of 2000 acres at Wallerawang in the Western foothills of the Blue Mountains; William had already received a grant of 1000 acres. The Walkers were not among those gentlemen settlers to whom A. G. L. Shaw described as 'ex-soldiers arriving with letters of introduction but without means, ignorant and "with military habits of idle laziness"';²⁰ James brought with him Andrew Brown whose farming experience in Scotland was invaluable. Brown became the manager of James Walker's properties; his good husbandry contributed largely to their successful development.²¹

¹⁴ John Rickard, *Australia: A cultural history*, London, 1988, p. 35.

¹⁵ D. R. Hainsworth (*The Sydney traders: Simeon Lord and his contemporaries 1788-1821*, Sydney, 1972, p. 100) states that he joined in partnership with Alexander Riley and Richard Jones in 1816, but this partnership does not appear to have been formed until 1820. See also Crew, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

¹⁶ Robert Brooks & Company records (National Library, Canberra) contains records of freight shipped until 1829 and one entry as late as 1831 for Jones & Walker. From 1831 entries appear for William Walker & Company only.

¹⁷ Crew (op. cit., p. 11) indicates that the partners were William, his brother James (henceforth identified as James Walker of Wallerawang) and nephews Thomas and Archibald, sons of their brother-in-law James Walker of Leith. However, other family members appear to have been involved, chiefly James Walker of Leith, and possibly his sister Ann, and Joanna, daughter of James Walker of Leith and sister of Thomas and Archibald Walker. There were at least two other partners outside the Walker family: R. H. Browne and Captain John Moore, whose son David later managed the Melbourne office of William Walker & Company. (See Holder, op. cit., p. 199; newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 66.)

¹⁸ According to Holder (op. cit., vol. 1, p. 106) in 1827 they were employing 140 men on their vessels and another thirty on shore, with running costs at an estimated £7000 per annum.

¹⁹ See Appendix 1, Table 1(c). He had obtained a commission in the Royal Marine Artillery in 1805, serving through the Napoleonic Wars but asthma had forced his retirement on half pay. Crew (op. cit., p. 24) states that the reason for his retirement was the cut back in forces following the Napoleonic Wars, but John Dunmore Lang (*An historical and statistical account of New South Wales*, London, 1875, vol. 1, p. 212) notes that the cause of his retirement was asthma.

²⁰ A. G. L. Shaw, *The story of Australia*, London, 1962, p. 50.

²¹ Andrew Brown (1797-1894), born Tibbermoor, Perthshire, took up land near Wallerawang, at Bowenfels and Coerwull, and later acquired extensive properties along the Castlereagh. He married in 1841 Christina Henderson, daughter of a Presbyterian minister, at Tranent, Midlothian. Founder of Coerwull Academy; founder and benefactor of St Andrews College, Sydney University.

James Walker settled at Wallerawang in 1824; W. J. Dumaresque described the area three years later:

Wallerawang district lies to the right going from Collet's to Cox's River and is said to be a fine valley for sheep and cattle and a much shorter road to Bathurst than the one at present used over Mount Blaxland. There are some very respectable settlers in the valley of Wallerawang, whose ample scope of pasture is not likely to be curtailed for many years...²²

However, the country was not entirely suitable for sheep raising, and in 1825 James Walker acquired another grant of 1000 acres in the Wolgan Valley near Mudgee, an area more suited to sheep. There they founded a stud, stocked with Saxon merino sheep purchased by William in 1826 on a journey to Britain and Europe. By 1831 it was apparent that the most profitable management of their wool interests was to maintain control from breeding to marketing; by growing, processing, handling and marketing wool themselves. They formed their own London importing firm, Walker Brothers & Company. William and James returned to England where William apparently joined his brother-in-law, James Walker of Leith, in management of affairs in London. William also acted as London agent for the Bank of New South Wales. James Walker of Wallerawang remained in Britain until his return to Australia in 1838, marrying in 1832 his cousin Robina Walker daughter of the Laird of Falfield and distantly related to the Walkers of Leith. Meanwhile, the affairs of Walker & Company in Sydney were left in the hands of the sons of James Walker of Leith. Thomas, the elder, arrived in Sydney in 1822 aboard the vessel *Active*; his brother Archibald appears to have arrived in Australia in the late 1820s.

Throughout the 1830s another branch of the Walker clan arrived—the Archer brothers, grandsons of David Walker of Perth and second cousins of Thomas and Archibald. The Archers, who eventually settled in Queensland founding the city of Rockhampton in 1855, were in turn to assist other cadets of the clan.²³ Though their family resided in Norway, the Archer sons completed their education in Scotland. The first brother to arrive appears to have been John Archer in 1833; he joined the Walker whaling fleet.²⁴ His brothers David, William and Thomas preferred pastoral life; David was joint superintendent at Wallerawang in 1836 when Charles Darwin visited the property. Darwin's description provides a splendid picture of the extent of the holding: as well as running cattle and horses in swampy areas, 15 000 sheep were depasturing, and 7000 had just been shorn.²⁵ A few months after Darwin's visit William Walker's eldest sons, Edward (1815–1899) and William Benjamin (1820–1875) arrived in Sydney. Edward soon returned to England where he eventually joined the family firm in London but William Benjamin remained in

²² Anon. [Capt. William John Dumaresque], 'A Ride to Bathurst, 1827', in George Mackaness (ed.), *Fourteen journeys over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales 1813–1841*, Sydney, 1965, p. 180.

²³ Including the young JTW and his brothers Thomas and William Henry. See ch. 4.

²⁴ By 1839 he was captain of the coastal vessel *Essington* trading between Sydney, Launceston, Port Phillip, Port Fairy and Sydney. See Patricia Clarke (*The life and times of a colonial woman, Mary Braidwood Mowle*, Sydney, 1986, p. 151).

²⁵ Charles Darwin, 'Journey across the Blue Mountains to Bathurst in January 1836', reproduced in Mackaness, op. cit., p. 233.

Australia later joined by his brothers James Sydney (1822–1881) and Archibald (1823–1868), and perhaps Thomas (1832–1896).²⁶

William Walker & Company profited greatly from the Squatting Age. In addition to increasing their own land holdings to an enormous extent, they financed many other squatters including the Murrays at Yarralumla and Sylvester Browne in Victoria.²⁷ Their ready access to capital also allowed them to invest in urban land as new towns servicing the pastoral industry developed. In 1837 Thomas travelled overland to Port Phillip; the trip resulted not only in an anonymous publication in 1838 entitled *A month in the bush of Australia*, but also in heavy investment by Thomas in land in the new township of Melbourne, where he acquired extensive interests.²⁸

The Company was, as Barrie Dyster noted, 'obviously an exceptional rather than average firm and it excelled in raising and shipping wool'.²⁹ Their other business activities were also managed with considerable expertise; Robert A. Morehead, colonial manager of the Scottish Australian Company regarded William Walker & Company as 'the first house in Sydney'.³⁰ By 1840 the company also controlled its own whaling interests; though probably reaching their peak in that year, profits from whaling continued substantial into the next decade.³¹ Walker Brothers & Company of London were also thriving; in 1842 they headed the list of importers of wool into London from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.³² By that time, however, the pastoral industry had slumped and the government was moving to restrict the land-holdings of pastoralists. In 1844 James Walker of Wallerawang was one of the largest land-holders in New South Wales; Governor Gipps reported that he held twenty-seven stations covering five million acres under a single license.³³ The new squatting regulations forced James to relinquish some of these holdings, but he retained a substantial portion, and William Archer took over the leases of three runs on the Castlereagh which the Archer brothers then worked.³⁴

Though the pastoral slump of the early 1840s and land legislation affected the Walkers, the diversity of their interests and the fact that they had not indulged in the extravagances of many land-holders enabled them not only to survive but to recover quickly. According to William Archer, Thomas Walker considered concentrating the company interests at either Twofold Bay or Yarralumla but this did not become necessary.³⁵ Edward Walker was complaining in 1843 that his cousins Thomas and Archibald were mismanaging his father's income, but when

²⁶ Alfred Sandeman and Gordon Sandeman, other Walker relatives, also came to Australia in the 1830s but they have no relevance to JTW.

²⁷ Gwendoline Wilson, *Murray of Yarralumla*, Melbourne, 1968; T. A. Browne ('Rolf Boldrewood'), *Our family chronicle*, MS, Mitchell Library; T. A. Browne ('Rolf Boldrewood'), *My autobiography*, MS, Mitchell Library.

²⁸ 'Rolf Boldrewood' [T. A. Browne] (ed. C. E. Sayers), *Old Melbourne memories*, Melbourne, 1969.

²⁹ B. Dyster, 'The discrete interest of the Bourgeoisie before the Age of Gold', in Max Kelly (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Sydney*, Sydney, 1978, p. 1.

³⁰ R. A. A. Morehead to Alexander Stronach, 14 December 1840, quoted in Macmillan, op. cit., p. 350.

³¹ Holder, op. cit., pp. 106–7.

³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1843.

³³ Governor Gipps Despatch, 17 May 1844, MS A1234, Mitchell Library, p. 186.

³⁴ Later they moved northward to what would become Queensland, to Durundur and Coonambula eventually trekking further north to establish Gracemere and to found the city of Rockhampton.

³⁵ William Archer, letters quoted in Crew, op. cit., p. 91.

William Walker visited Australia to see for himself, he found that the company's affairs were much sounder than he had hoped.³⁶ In fact Edward Walker believed that his father's 'enormous capital had bolstered New South Wales'.³⁷

In the longer term the Walkers emerged from the slump well. They had financed the Imlay brothers at Twofold Bay where they took over the properties when the Imlays failed and then improved the investment nearly fourfold.³⁸ They also took over management of the properties of Sylvester John Browne in Melbourne though once the debt on 'Hartlands' (the Toorak property) was discharged, the Brownes retained the remainder of the estate.³⁹ William Benjamin Walker married Corientia Browne at this time thus linking the Walkers not only with 'Rolf Boldrewood' but with Sir Frederick Darley, later Chief Justice of New South Wales.⁴⁰

By the 1840s Thomas appears to have been the dominant partner in Australia. He took a keen interest in education, serving on the Council of the Australian College established by John Dunmore Lang in 1832. Elected to the first elected Legislative Council of New South Wales in 1843 as one of the representatives of Port Phillip, he was, in 1845, one of the petitioners requesting the formation of a new colony in that region. However, he retired from politics soon afterwards pleading pressure of work. Though supporters of the Tory party and decidedly conservative, the Walkers do not appear to have been part of the Pure Merino push that surrounded the Macarthurs. They employed convict labour, but encouraged free immigration; one of the objectives of James Walker of Wallerawang in going to Britain in 1831 was to encourage emigration to New South Wales.⁴¹ Thomas, though a quiet retiring man, was well known; Lady Stawell remembered that her family liked him very much and recalled his kindness in giving them introductions to many families in Victoria where they intended to settle. Her brother, William Pomeroy Greene, described Thomas in 1842 as 'a bachelor well-informed and very agreeable with a perfect knowledge of the country we are going to'.⁴²

Therefore, when JTW arrived in Australia for the first time in 1845, a widespread network spanning two generations of the Walker clan was already well respected and well connected and its members had amassed considerable fortunes; they had established an almost legendary reputation as astute, successful and trustworthy businessmen, investing wisely and managing their affairs with expertise. They were perhaps the most successful of those Sydney merchants described by Michael Roe:

³⁶ Letters of Edward Walker, quoted in Crew, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁷ Crew, op. cit., pp. 90-1; Edward Walker to David Archer, 12 July 1843, Archer papers, Mitchell Library.

³⁸ By 1848 William Walker & Company were applying for leases for 240 440 acres in the Maneroo District, mainly at Candelo and Kameruka, 40 000 acres on the Murrumbidgee and 56 000 acres at Thologolong, Tangambalanga and Portpunke, as well as for five lots of land near Bungonia. *N.S.W. Government Gazette*, vol. 2, 1848, pp. 1104-5, 1376, 1399, and 1835.

³⁹ Browne, *My autobiography*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Darley married Lucy Browne. Other Browne sisters were Mrs Cockshot, Mrs Massie, Mrs Molesworth Greene, Lady Scratchley and Miss Browne; the younger brother was Sylvester Browne.

⁴¹ Crew, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴² M. F. E. Stawell, *My recollections*, London, 1911, pp. 21 and 29. When Thomas Walker and his sister Joanna returned to Australia in 1842, William Pomeroy Greene and his family and William Stawell were migrating on the same ship. Lady Stawell's daughter Nancy married Sylvester Browne, brother of Mrs William Benjamin Walker.

'A Sydney merchant', wrote one of them S. A. Donaldson in 1838, 'must be a very acute financier—a complete man of figures—a constant observer and watcher of our fickle and changeable markets—a judge of goods—a proficient in foreign exchanges—a close calculator of discount and interest; moreover must be a good salesman; as we have no brokers in whom we can trust, and no clerks who take a lead in our affairs...' Often they were themselves investors in primary industry, and normally were intermediaries between banks and squatters.⁴³

JTW was four years old in 1845; born on 20 March 1841, he was the eldest surviving son of John William Walker (the youngest brother of James Walker of Leith) by his second wife.⁴⁴ Though of the same generation as his cousin Thomas, he was thirty-seven years younger.⁴⁵ He had taken over management of the family business at Leith on the death of his father in 1837. By 1844 he had six children, the eldest aged nineteen, the youngest only a few months. What motivated him to migrate to Australia is uncertain; he appears to have been in reasonably comfortable circumstances.

Whatever the reasons, on 23 October 1844 the family departed on the *General Hewitt*, under command of Captain Hart, from Gravesend.⁴⁶ With them was the widowed Anne Miller, John William Walker's older sister. JTW recalled little of the journey in later years but grew up listening to the reminiscences of his parents and his eldest sister Kate and of the nursemaid Margaret Espie, who accompanied the family to Australia.⁴⁷ During the first weeks of the voyage the vessel encountered extremely rough weather; JTW was rescued by the First Mate just as a wave was about to suck him through a porthole. His head was cut on this occasion and he carried the scar for the rest of his life but the experience does not appear to have dampened his enthusiasm for travel in later life.⁴⁸

After three months in Sydney John William took up a freehold property of 1280 acres near Burrowa⁴⁹ which was named Castlesteads after the former family property in Scotland; further land was apparently held under Crown Lease. There, they lived simply in a bark hut; the fact that it had four rooms suggests that it was rather more palatial than most bark huts. With the women present it was undoubtedly much cleaner than many described by Michael Cannon and by Derrick Stone and Donald Garden.⁵⁰ A large shearing shed and other buildings and yards were erected and a regular pattern of station life established. Three outstations

⁴³ Roe, in Crowley, op. cit. The quotation from S. A. Donaldson is from B. Dyster, 'Prosperity, prostration, prudence', in A. Birch and D. S. Macmillan (eds), *Wealth and Progress*, Sydney, 1967, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Waterston, daughter of an Edinburgh businessman (see Appendix 2). John William Manning Walker, the only surviving child of his first marriage, was the eldest of the family.

⁴⁵ His father was only five years older than Thomas, his nephew, having been born twenty years after his brother, Thomas's father.

⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 1845.

⁴⁷ Margaret Espie married John Pounsberry, one of the stewards on the boat. Her reminiscences are recorded in Walker diary, vol. 58, 31 December 1894; vol. 71, 24 January 1900. His father's reminiscences are recorded in James Thomas Walker, 'Reminiscences of boys', 1903, Walker MSS, Mitchell Library; James Thomas Walker, 'A birthday retrospect', 1903, Walker MSS.

⁴⁸ J. T. Walker, 'A birthday retrospect', op. cit.

⁴⁹ The modern spelling is used here rather than the original 'Borrowa'.

⁵⁰ Michael Cannon, *Life in the country (Australia in the Victorian Age, vol. 2)*, Melbourne, 1973, chs 2 and 3; Derrick I. Stone and Donald S. Garden, *Squatters and settlers*, Sydney, 1978, chs 3 and 4.

were operating by December 1846⁵¹ and a Sydney builder had been contracted to erect better accommodation for the family; by late 1846 they had moved into the substantial stone house that still forms part of the Castlesteads homestead.⁵² The property was mainly devoted to sheep raising but some crops were planted; John William appears to have occupied the role of gentleman overseer. The eldest daughter Kate found it remarkable that her father had actually held the plough himself.⁵³ The eldest son John William Manning took an active role in management. Kate⁵⁴, aged 14, was responsible for many household tasks as well as teaching the younger children who started to learn to read about the age of three years.

There were few household servants; Margaret Pounsberry appears to have been the only woman apart from Mrs Walker. All were fully occupied with household chores and the younger children appear to have roamed fairly freely, with only minimal supervision, mixing with the assigned convict servants. JTW recalled learning to chew tobacco. Later he was to admit:

I fear I had the makings of 'a first class larrikin'. I scarcely knew what physical fear was and did not hesitate to romance to get out of trouble...⁵⁵

Despite their comparative isolation, the family had regular social contact with their neighbours, the Broughtons of Broughtonsworth. JTW's particular friend was George Broughton, a regular companion in mischief; on one occasion they received a thrashing for chalking graffiti over one of the station outhouses. Yet he developed a love of the novels of Sir Walter Scott that continued throughout his life, after Aunt Miller visited the family bringing as a present a set of the Waverley novels from which John William Manning and Kate read a chapter aloud to the family each evening.

No evidence suggests they found the country hostile. As Kate described it, the landscape had a peaceful rural quality:

It is a pleasant sight to see the sheep feeding on the plain and hillocks which we see from one side of the cottage as also the cattle and horses from between the trees in the paddock. We have such beautiful sunsets and there is a very pale bright planet that sets about an hour after the sun.⁵⁶

Kate noted that the winters were beautiful; though there was frost on the grass and they felt cold, it was refreshing and 'everything looks so much better than when burnt up with the hot summer sun'.⁵⁷

The station prospered and the life apparently agreed with the children. JTW, called by the family 'Jamie', was 'very short for his age but perhaps his stoutness takes away from his height as Tommy from his slighter make looks much taller

⁵¹ Station ration book, in Walker MSS.

⁵² Authenticated by the author on a visit to the homestead, December 1986.

⁵³ Catherine Walker to her grandfather George Waterston, 8 May 1847, copied into Walker diary, vol. 79.

⁵⁴ Catherine Walker was referred to almost invariably as 'Kate'. Henceforth the most common usage will appear in this work.

⁵⁵ J. T. Walker, 'A birthday retrospect', op. cit.

⁵⁶ Catherine Walker to George Waterston, 8 May 1847, copied into Walker diary, vol. 79.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

than him though not so in reality'.⁵⁸ By 1847 John William was considering making arrangements to return to Edinburgh; it is not clear whether he intended leaving John William Manning to manage the property or employing a manager, but John William Manning was killed in a riding accident on 22 March 1848. Within four months the youngest daughter Annie died after a fall.⁵⁹ John William and his gentle wife could stand no more. Like the Broughams of Currabunganung in similar circumstances, they decided to return to Britain.⁶⁰

Castlesteads was sold to Hamilton Hume on 13 September 1848 for £1300, apparently at a loss.⁶¹ The family returned to Sydney by mail coach⁶², and on 24 September 1848 embarked on the barque *Tasmania* bound for London via Rio de Janeiro. More trials and tribulations awaited them on the voyage; after a very rough Pacific crossing the vessel barely limped into harbour at Rio de Janeiro where it was immediately condemned. While stranded there, another child, Elizabeth, was born but died soon afterwards. Another vessel, the *Ben McDui*, was sent to rescue them, but the return voyage to London was not completed until March 1849, seven months after leaving Sydney. Unlike the enterprises of his kinsmen, John William Walker's Australian venture had ended, not in success and increased wealth but in tragedy and comparative poverty.

As the property at Springfield Place had been sold John William Walker and his family lived for a time with his wife's brother George and his family at the Waterston family home.⁶³ Eventually they moved to a 'flat'⁶⁴ at 23 London Road where they lived frugally while John William re-established himself in business. His attempt to become an Australian pastoralist had apparently proved financially crippling, but with the sturdy independence that he passed on to his sons, he refused to borrow money to live in greater style believing in 'cutting his coat according to his cloth'.⁶⁵ By this time JTW was eight years old, old enough to have distinct recollections of the voyage home and changed circumstances; it might be expected to have been a disturbing experience, with the death of his brother and sister, moving from the freedom of station life to the cramped confines of a heaving ship and then back to the more formal and circumscribed life of an Edinburgh household. Yet he barely mentions this period in later reminiscences; perhaps he may have found it too disturbing to recall even many years later. It certainly did not deter him from returning to Australia.

The phase of comparatively severe poverty lasted for a few months only, until in 1850 circumstances improved with the return of Anne Miller from Australia; she purchased or leased a house at 5 Picardy Place where John William Walker and his

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Annie died on 18 June 1848 aged 5 years. Dates of death of John William Manning and Anne Miller are as inscribed on the headstone in the cemetery near Castlesteads Station, transcribed by the author in December 1986.

⁶⁰ Cannon, *Life in the country*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶¹ C. S. Morriset, Bank of New South Wales, Corowa to James Thomas Walker, in Walker diary, vol. 94, 30 December 1910. The property was later taken over by Rawdon Hume, the brother of Hamilton Hume. It is currently owned by the Mason family.

⁶² They stayed overnight with the Humes at Yass, probably at Cooma Cottage.

⁶³ St John's Hill, Edinburgh.

⁶⁴ James Thomas Walker's description.

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 81, 23 November 1904.

family moved in with her. A similar house to many in Edinburgh, it was tall and narrow with five floors including basement and attic; John William's office was on the ground floor. It was a decided improvement on their previous residence, and life became easier as John William's fortunes improved, though their circumstances were never apparently more than comfortable; in comparison with other members of the Walker clan, they were comparatively poor. JTW never forgot this period; many years later he wrote, 'our own comparative poverty always made me sympathetic with others in even worse position'.⁶⁸

Childhood experience may have influenced JTW's later philanthropy. Ancestry most certainly placed him firmly in the middle class, but not among the 'nouveau riche'. With family position well and long established, he may not have felt the need later to assert that position as strongly as men of more recently acquired affluence. Long family ties with Australia undoubtedly influenced his decision to migrate, but, though success in Australia might have been equated with wealth and material progress, the materialism of the Victorian Age was tempered by family teaching and example.

⁶⁸ J. T. Walker, 'Reminiscences of boys', op. cit.

As James Thomas Walker¹ remarked later, 'environment in early years often makes or mars a man's career', and he acknowledged the debt he owed his parents for their care in his youth.² The Walkers were a conventional close-knit and pious Victorian family. The accounts in his recollections from later life fit the conventional stereotype so exactly that scepticism would be inevitable but for the abundance of contemporary documents which support it. Both John William and Elizabeth Walker were Glasites³, and their teachings had a considerable influence on James Thomas though he later became a Presbyterian.

The Glasite Church, an offshoot of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was founded about 1730 by John Glas (1695–1773), a graduate of the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews. Charged with the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Tealing near Dundee in 1719, Glas became disenchanted with the strict administration of the Presbyterian Church. He developed an independent belief in congregationalism holding that a congregation should be subject to no jurisdiction under heaven.⁴ He was dubious of 'the Scriptural basis of the Presbyterian civil polity' and held that 'secular and political weapons were unlawful instruments of reformation and that a National Church was unscriptural'.⁵ He was suspended in 1728 and deposed in 1730, though not before he had gathered a following. He then established a body of like-minded independents at Dundee, writing several volumes explaining his views.⁶ His followers took the name of Glasites. One of Glas's daughters married Robert Sandeman who established congregations in England and in the United States where his followers were known as Sandemanites.⁷ Though Glas's deposition was rescinded in 1739, he did not return to the Presbyterian Church but established Glasite Meeting Houses in a number of centres. The Glasites remained a distinctly separate and somewhat clannish group, tending to intermarry. Consequently one finds Imries married to Bells, Bells to Walkers, Walkers to Sandemans, Buchanans to Bells, Walkers to Millers, Glases to Walkers, Millers and Sandemans, Walkers to Waterstons, and Waterstons to Imries, and so on, in a complicated pattern of family relationships.

They placed particular emphasis on the teachings of the New Testament but, over the years, James Thomas thought they had become much more exclusive than

¹ In Chapters 2 and 3 Walker will be referred to by his Christian names James Thomas.

² Walker diary, vol. 115, 20 March 1915.

³ James Thomas Walker uses the spelling 'Glassites', but the spelling used here is according to L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., London, 1974.

⁴ John Glas Sandeman, *The Sandeman genealogy*, Edinburgh, 1950, p. 100.

⁵ Cross, op. cit., p. 577.

⁶ John Glas, *The works of Glas*, quoted in Sandeman, op. cit.

⁷ Dr Sandeman, who married Margaret Walker referred to earlier, was a relation of Robert Sandeman. The family is also noted for their association with the famous London house of port wine shippers.

John Glas had intended. Based on what one can glean from the Walker diaries and family letters, they do not appear to have insisted on abstinence but favoured temperance in all things; their teachings placed much weight on brotherly love. As Geoffrey Williams noted, they were concerned more 'with the day to day living out of Christian principles of conduct than with matters of dogma or Church organisation'.⁸ Particular stress was placed on care of the needy among the congregation; at all services a special retiring collection was made to provide assistance to less well-off members of the congregation. Distribution of this fund was made anonymously to avoid embarrassment to recipients and surplus funds were donated to the needy of other faiths. The Glasites were unusual in that they did not believe in proselytising to spread their beliefs, arguing that only the Apostles had been ordained for this purpose.

Adhering to this belief, John William and Elizabeth never forced the children to accept Christianity, encouraging them only to study the Bible in the hope that they would be guided to discover Faith for themselves.⁹ However, the parents set an example by trying sincerely to live Christian lives; family prayers were conducted daily, the Sabbath was observed as a day of rest and reflection, and the children appear to have accompanied their parents to meetings regularly. Since the Glasite Church encouraged lay preachers, John William sometimes preached at the Glasite Meeting House in Edinburgh. Christianity of the kind that sought to follow sincerely the teachings of the Bible, in particular of the New Testament, motivated both the Walker parents.

John William Walker was clearly the head of the household; the children never acted without his permission and abided by his decisions. He appears to have been a fond and caring parent though James Thomas stood in awe of him and he clearly believed in the adage 'Spare the rod and spoil the child'. James Thomas recalled with distress the beatings he received, but these appear to have been in earlier childhood for none are recorded in the diaries which he commenced at age fifteen. He was certainly not a model child; on two occasions he ran away in order to escape beatings. Once when he cut down a particularly beautiful creeper in Thomas Walker's garden at Balmain, he threatened to throw himself down the well before absconding.¹⁰ On the other occasion, aged about twelve, he and two friends, under the influence of *The Swiss Family Robinson* left to run away to sea. Their spirit of adventure soon flagged however, when a constable apprehended them and escorted them home. On this occasion, his father was so pleased to see him that he did not receive the expected beating; but it was his mother's obvious concern for him and joy at his return that made up his mind never to cause her pain again, a resolution he seems to have kept.¹¹

His mother was the major influence on him. Her nephew John William Waterston recalled that Elizabeth was 'such a quiet, gentle, patient lady',¹² she appears to have

⁸ Geoffrey Williams, 'The forgotten genius', *The Scot's magazine*, vol. 134, no. 1, October 1990, pp. 53-59.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 106, 20 March 1916.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 80, 31 December 1904.

¹¹ J. T. Walker, 'Reminiscences of boys', op. cit.

¹² John William Waterston to Janette Walker, 4 February, 1923, Walker MSS.

been meek but not down-trodden and, though submissive to her husband, retained an independent mind. She was, as her son described, 'essentially a domestic woman and her little world was her family and her church'.¹³ James Thomas made frequent references to her influence throughout the diaries, as in 1880: 'Her influence over me to this day is wonderful...how patient she was...how submissive, how beautifully god-confiding'.¹⁴ It is clear in both James Thomas Walker's diaries and his later reminiscences that she ruled her family with love and kindness. James Thomas could recall her chastising a member of her family only once; the transgressor had been himself when, aged ten, and addicted to practical jokes, he reduced his sister Jane to hysteria by hiding under her bed to make 'ghostly' noises when the candles were extinguished. Their mother smacked him soundly. Memories of his mother acted as 'a restraining and sustaining influence'¹⁵, though in later life James Thomas realised that many of his father's strictures had been good for him and that he had, in fact held him in deep affection;

...my dear old father during our younger years was far from being well off and believed in 'cutting his coats according to the cloth'—very sensible and I doubt not we have been all the better for the wholesome discipline...¹⁶

Apart from the two occasions quoted above, he did not rebel. He accepted his position in the family hierarchy obediently and cheerfully, apparently enjoying visits to and from their many relations. Among his siblings, Thomas¹⁷ was close enough in age to be a rival, and was assertive in character. Quarrels were common enough for their mother's mediating 'Bear and forbear' to remain in his memory.¹⁸ Being taller, Tom was often taken for the elder to James Thomas's indignation; he recalled Tom Wilkinson, the Penicuik saddler's consoling remark, 'all the trees of the forest dinna grow alike'.¹⁹ Despite differences James Thomas regarded Tom as his closest companion in the family. With William Henry, five years younger, he was friendly and somewhat paternalistic encouraging him with his school studies and taking pride when he did well. His sister Kate, ten years older, remained a close friend; unmarried, she relieved her mother of many household duties and stimulated James Thomas to extend his knowledge; it was her letters that kept him in touch with family affairs in years to come. He regarded her as one of the most intelligent women he had met. With his sister Jane, closer in age, his relationship tended to be rather teasing; she was the butt of some of his practical jokes. Red-headed, her temper was less equable than Kate, but James Thomas still held her in affection.²⁰

The family atmosphere, though pious, was not unduly puritanical. Singing and dancing were a part of family entertainment though none of the family were

¹³ James Thomas Walker to his son George Walker, 11 September 1900, Walker MSS.

¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 32, 20 August 1880.

¹⁵ J. T. Walker, 'A birthday reminiscence', op. cit.

¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 81, 7 March 1905.

¹⁷ Referred to henceforth as Tom to avoid confusion with their cousin Thomas Walker.

¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 16, 16 February 1865.

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 33, 6 June 1881.

²⁰ In later years that affection extended to her children and grandchildren. He was particularly fond of his niece Elizabeth Strachan nee Bell, and very proud of his nephew Tom Bell, later Sir Thomas Bell who became General Manager of John Brown & Company Ltd, Clydebank.

particularly musical, the mother and Jane being only moderate performers on the piano; the music played comprised chiefly hymns, Scottish airs and a few popular songs. All of the children attended dancing classes where they learned not only social dances such as the Lancers or Quadrilles, but Scottish reels and country dances. While such training may have been influenced partly by desire to inculcate useful social skills in the children, it is obvious that the Walker family enjoyed these pastimes; music and dance were a much enjoyed part of family social life. Such an early introduction within the family circle, to the enjoyment of music influenced him throughout his life; he remained an enthusiastic social dancer, making him a welcome social asset in later life on the frontiers of civilisation in Australia.

He was trained to treat women of all stations with respect, courtesy, care and consideration; visiting lady friends of his parents or sisters had always to be escorted to their residences. Such habits, ingrained early, remained throughout his life. Nor was his courtesy confined to women, he treated everyone of whatever rank with equal courtesy:

I was brought up to have great respect for a good, faithful servant and I have never forgotten what I then learnt. In this matter my parents practised what they preached.²¹

Socially, the family mixed mainly with members of their extensive family circle. On the Walker side of the family, their father's elder brother, James Walker of Leith, had returned to Lasswade near Edinburgh about 1850, and the family continued to reside with Ann Miller in Edinburgh. Members of the Sandeman and Morison families were regular visitors and Australian connections were maintained with visits from the Archer brothers and other relatives. After the death of James Walker of Wallerawang in 1856, his widow returned to Scotland with her family; they appear to have established a close relationship with John William Walker's family. The young James Thomas grew up therefore, well aware of the extensive wealth and Australian interests of his cousins and kinsfolk.

By 1856, when he began his diaries, the partnership of William Walker & Company had been dissolved; of the original Walker partners, only Thomas Walker and his brother Archibald remained in Australia. During the 1850s the company profited greatly from the gold rushes²² but William Walker of Perth and James Walker of Leith both died in 1854. William Walker's sons disposed of the properties at Twofold Bay in 1853; then comprising over 400 000 acres extending into the Maneroo District, they were sold for £75 000.²³ Edward and James Sydney returned to England soon after the sale and never returned to Australia. William Benjamin

²¹ Walker diary, vol. 92, 22 February 1910.

²² One of the earliest shipments of gold from the Bathurst mail was a parcel of sixty-two ounces consigned to William Walker & Company. Holder (op. cit., p. 178) noted that banks were originally unwilling to buy gold directly so the gold was purchased from the diggers by individuals or by representatives of merchant firms with resources of their own.

²³ P. Clarke, op. cit., pp. 186 ff.

and his brother Archibald remained in Sydney, living in considerable style.²⁴ They were original shareholders in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and William Benjamin was one of the first directors of the company but he, too, returned to England in 1855.²⁵ Profits from their Australian assets and investments continued to keep William's family in considerable comfort in England and France. Of the Perth Walkers, only James Walker of Wallerawang then remained in Australia; he was nominated to the Legislative Council of New South Wales in May 1856 but served only six months before his death at Wallerawang in November, leaving a considerable estate.

The combined wealth of the Walkers of Perth, the Walkers of Wallerawang, and Thomas and Archibald Walker must, by the late 1850s, have been enormous. Despite their wealth, members of the extended family always treated the children of John William Walker with kindness and concern. Though at times one suspects they may have been a little condescending, the family relationships do not seem to have been tainted with jealousy. However, the image they presented was one that equated success with worldly wealth.

James Thomas seems to have found his mother's family, the Waterstons, more congenial:

In a worldly point of view my Father's side of the house seems the best, but I should not be surprised if there is more ability and less worldliness on my dear mother's side.²⁶

Geoffrey Williams described the Waterstons as

typical of middle-class Edinburgh society of the time—educated and cultured, and with the independence of mind that gave it a character of its own.²⁷

Elizabeth Waterston Walker had five brothers; all were sincere Glasites. Four provided James Thomas with a background of business and of migratory expansion; only one, George, remained in Edinburgh where he ran a publishing company. Two were bankers: Charles was General Manager of the Caledonian Bank at Inverness for forty years, and William was Secretary or Manager of the Bank of Australasia in London. Also he wrote a text much consulted at the time, *A Cyclopaedia of Commerce, Mercantile Laws, Finance, Commercial Geography and Navigation*.²⁸ Robert established a connection with Australia and New Zealand, joining in the 1840s the trading firm Brown, Campbell & Company of Auckland. Another brother, John, was a Civil Engineer employed as naval instructor to the East India Company at Bombay. He has been described as

²⁴ Archibald lived at 'Buckhurst', a mansion on Point Piper. After living for a time in another Point Piper mansion, 'Glenyarrah', William Benjamin built 'Redleaf', now the premises of the Woollahra City Council. See Glynde Nesta Griffiths, *Point Piper: Past and present*, Sydney, 1947, p. 65. 'Redleaf' later featured in the life of James Thomas Walker; in 1921 it was the town house of the family of his future daughter-in-law Violet Mackay.

²⁵ It seems that William Benjamin formed another company: the list of original shareholders in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited refers to 'Walker, W. & Co., Jr.' purchasing shares to the value of £12 000 in 1855. A further parcel of £3000 was purchased by his brother Archibald. See Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited, *South Pacific enterprise*, Sydney, 1956.

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 20, 7 November 1869.

²⁷ Williams, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 23, 21 January 1873.

...one of the most astute and original scientists of the last century, and by rights should be placed above his fellow-Scots Kelvin and Joule as founders of the modern kinetic theory of heat.²⁹

John maintained a small laboratory in his Edinburgh apartment where the young Walkers and Waterstons were allowed to view insects and other objects through his microscope and where he entertained them by giving them shocks from a galvanic battery. John certainly had an influence on the young James Thomas, encouraging a lasting interest in science and observation of the world around him.

Apart from kinsfolk, the Walker's main social contacts were made through the Glasite Church. James Thomas later found this narrow social circle something of a disadvantage from a worldly point of view, but he recognised that his parents and kinfolk were 'homely, kindly, Christian people' to whom he owed much.³⁰ They inculcated in him a strong sense of duty, love of his fellow men, tolerance, forgiveness, a sense of caring for those less well off and gentleness towards women together with a sturdy independence of mind and a keen interest in the world around him. Reflecting much later, he felt that environment in early years had benefited him greatly in later life.

His schooling reinforced family training. Despite comparative poverty on their return from Australia, Scottish respect for education prevailed and James Thomas started school at the Circus Place School, a preparatory school for boys.³¹ Circumstances were evidently not so bad that John William was forced to send his son to one of the overcrowded burgh or sessional schools that provided educational opportunities for the poor.³²

In 1852, aged eleven, James Thomas began studies at the Edinburgh Institution. Both the Circus Place School and the Institution were day schools so he did not experience the bullying, brutality and other terrors of life away from home in a boarding school recorded in *Tom Brown's School Days* and other 19th century descriptions of school life, which might have warped his personality. He remained very much under the influence of family rather than peer group. Established in 1832, the Institution was regarded as one of the best schools in Edinburgh.³³ It provided a good all-round education; James Thomas studied English, Latin, French, Arithmetic, Algebra, Writing (which encompassed written expression, grammar and hand writing) and Book-keeping. The school curriculum clearly reinforced Victorian values with emphasis on religious and moral principles, on patriotism, and 'gentlemanly' conduct; stress was placed on developing 'character' as well as

²⁹ Williams, op. cit., pp. 56-7.

³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 103, 20 March 1915.

³¹ Even had he been able to afford to do so, the idea of sending his sons to a boarding school was abhorrent to John William. One of his nephews, probably Archibald, wanted to send James Thomas to school in Germany with Pastor Pessler, but his father refused, as he 'held strong views about young people living with their own parents'. (Walker diary, vol. 74, 8 March 1902.)

³² Schools such as this one are discussed in some detail in P. D. Wilson, *The political career of the Honourable Arthur MacAlister C.M.G.*, B.A. Hons thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, ch. 1.

³³ J. R. S. Young (ed.), *Edinburgh Institution, 1832-1932*, Edinburgh, 1933. The Edinburgh Institution was incorporated with Stewart Melville College, still existing in Edinburgh.

producing reasonably educated men.³⁴ Sport does not seem to have been particularly encouraged though James Thomas played in the school cricket teams; he was not a particularly good player but developed a love of the game that lasted throughout his life.

He was happy and carefree. Though reasonably conscientious, he was not particularly studious; he admitted neglecting his studies to play cricket but a retentive memory enabled him to maintain his place in classes.³⁵ In his spare time he enjoyed long walks exploring Edinburgh and the surrounding country. With his friend David Burns³⁶ and others he went bird-nesting, swimming and on occasion rowing, in summer, and skating and curling in winter. It was not until he started his last year of school in 1856 that he began to take life more seriously. He held the Reverend Alexander Reid, Headmaster of the Institution from 1850 to 1858, in high regard; Reid impressed on his senior students that they should be thinking of the future. It was he who encouraged them to begin keeping diaries recording their daily activities and thoughts, so on his fifteenth birthday, James Thomas commenced the record of his life that he continued with few breaks until he was 80 years old. At this time he started seriously to develop a more orderly study plan:

- 1 Rise at 6 o'clock.
- 2 Go out till 8 o'clock.
- 3 Look over my lessons till breakfast.
- 4 Go to school at the latest by quarter to nine.
- 5 In my leisure hour do something to further my studies for the following day.
- 6 Go home directly from school.
- 7 And occupy myself until dinner preparing my lessons.
- 8 Assist my brother in his studies. After dining go out and amuse myself the best way I can until half past seven at the latest.
- 9 If in class to attend then go on with my lessons.
- 10 Take tea at 8 o'clock.
- 11 From half past and till about a quarter to 10 in reading or employing myself in some other intellectual recreation.
- 12 Go to bed and try to be in it by 10 o'clock at the latest.

These rules for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Exceptions are allowable on certain occasions.³⁷

The resolutions were broken, but they marked the dawning of recognition that success in life might best be achieved by concentrated effort and orderly management of working time. Thus, he started early to develop the methodical habits that enabled him to sustain a demanding business career together with political interests in later life. Though not a brilliant student, his progress was more than satisfactory and he gained a number of prizes, ending his schooldays with credit if not distinction.³⁸

³⁴ Essay topics included 'Love of one's country', 'The faithful dog', 'Personal courage', 'Magnanimity of a British sailor', 'Goodness', 'Friendship', 'The worthy soldier', 'Filial duty', 'Love of order', 'Patriotism' and 'Education'.

³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 1, 15 May 1858.

³⁶ Older brother of James Burns the founder of Burns Philp & Company; David Burns embarked on a career in banking but died in his twenties of tuberculosis.

³⁷ Walker MSS.

³⁸ A list of fifteen prizes for 'Arithmetic, Writing, Latin, English, Algebra, Geometry, German and French' appears among the Walker MSS.

James Thomas Walker's schooldays were fortunate indeed; sheltered in a stable family in comfortable circumstances, yet not so well off that he was spoiled by overindulgence, he retained simple and unsophisticated tastes. Both within his family and at school, the virtues of honesty, fairness, tolerance, steadfastness, obedience, loyalty and manliness were positively inculcated. There was, too, much stress placed on good manners and respectability. Though of a religious family, he had not received the indoctrination into his family's beliefs that young members of other faiths might have received, so may have been more open to scepticism than otherwise, but for the moment, he appears to have accepted family worship and church attendance without question, as he accepted uncritically his family's commercialism. Though a degree of independence and self-reliance was fostered, he remained dependent on and subject to his father, not questioning his authority and abiding by his decisions. He was gregarious and sociable, enjoying the company of his relatives and school friends and participating happily in family parties and dances. He was already methodical and responsible, with a lively mind interested in the world around him. He had both the training and ability to succeed in a number of fields as his Headmaster, Dr Reid, noted:

...his moral conduct has been unexceptionable. As he possesses good natural abilities and considerable powers of application, I think he is likely to do well in any profession or occupation to which his time and attention may be devoted.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Dr Alexander Reid, reference for James Thomas Walker, 23 May 1856, Walker MSS.

James Thomas Walker completed his formal education in May 1856¹, but there was no pressure for him to decide immediately on a career. In the same month his father leased Ravensneuk Farm at Penicuik, which then became the family home though they continued to share the Edinburgh house with Ann Miller. The Ravensneuk property consisted of 250 acres of arable land and 300 acres of moorland used as a sheep walk. Several labourers were employed on the farm including a grieve, shepherd and at least two ploughmen.² The boys helped with the work. Though James Thomas does not seem to have taken farm work very seriously, he was absorbing the techniques of farming and management of employees, observing country life generally, and gaining experience in riding and in handling guns, knowledge that proved useful later in Australia.

Over a year elapsed before he started work in September 1857, aged 16.³ In the meantime he studied Geometry at the Edinburgh Institution and German and French with private tutors.⁴ He also started drawing classes and in April 1857 enrolled at the Edinburgh School of Design and attended the annual course of winter lectures held in the parish school at Penicuik, investing in a reserved seat for two shillings. Experience of simple accounting was acquired helping his father to balance the farm books. He was seldom idle.

He did not need to find work; his father arranged for him to go into the office of Alex. Cowan & Sons, Paper Manufacturers, at Valleyfield near Penicuik. As a learner he received no remuneration; the hours were from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on weekdays, and from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays, though he seldom got away on Saturdays before 2.00 p.m. The work involved routine office work, copying correspondence, running messages, etc. and occasionally assisting with carrying to the factory the heavy box of coins required to pay the workers. He discovered that he enjoyed the orderly routine of office work.⁵

After six months his father decided that James Thomas needed wider experience of office procedures and directed him to give notice to Cowans. Again his father arranged for him to go into the office of Allan's Phoenix Insurance Office; the hours were shorter—10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.—and he was paid £10 per annum.⁶ The work involved gathering insurance premiums and keeping accounts. Allan was a benevolent employer, allowing his clerks to leave at half past four or earlier in summer and arranging for them to take alternate Saturdays off. They were also

¹ Walker diary, vol. 1, 15 May 1856.

² Walker diary, vol. 1, 15 to 28 May 1856.

³ Walker diary, vol. 1, 1 September 1857.

⁴ Dr Nachot and Mons. Espinasse.

⁵ Accounts of work, hours, etc. are in Walker diary, vol. 1, 1 September 1857 ff.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 2, 11 March 1858.

allowed holidays. The situation was not a sinecure, but he was not overworked or exploited. Allan also encouraged his staff to extend their knowledge, giving James Thomas a copy of *The Life of Havelock* on one occasion.⁷

James Thomas moved to the house in Edinburgh with his sister Kate.⁸ In his spare time he continued study of French and German as well as commencing private study of Latin. He escorted Kate to art exhibitions and attended the theatre, but only on a few occasions to see a pantomime or a Shakespearean play.⁹ He further broadened his knowledge by attending lectures presented by the Royal Scottish Society of Arts and by the Philosophical Institution where Kate gave him a Member's Ticket that allowed him to use the Library and Reading Room as well as attend lectures.¹⁰ There was also a news room where members congregated to hear a reader deliver the evening news sent by telegram from London; there James Thomas developed an interest in world events. Although obviously intrigued, he felt sensibly that he did not know or understand enough of politics to enter into discussion: 'As I do not understand Politics I may as well leave them alone'.¹¹ He was particularly impressed when John Bright delivered a lecture on Parliamentary reform but he found that he did not understand some of Bright's ideas: 'I am not sufficiently old nor yet am I at all versed in politics'.¹² Nevertheless, he obviously found listening to and reading about political developments of interest, and no doubt listened carefully to the discussions of his Waterston uncles with whom he had greater contact after his removal to Edinburgh. Most importantly, he visited Dr William Brown¹³ more frequently. Brown discussed with him many matters, opening his mind to facets of Christianity that his parents did not discuss with their children. In later life he acknowledged that Brown's advice and teaching were a major influence on him. At the same time he continued to enjoy outings with former school friends and with his fellow clerks with whom he became friendly.

Not living under his father's roof, he had more freedom to choose his own past times; he learned to play billiards, though he confined his efforts to a private room where he believed he was less likely to encounter rowdy companions.¹⁴ Learning to play *vingt et un* was another discovery though 'we of course never play for money and quite disapprove of doing so'.¹⁵ He was also proving himself adept at his work; Allan was pleased with his ability. Nevertheless he remained very much under his father's authority, and was financially dependent upon him. Though reasonably contented with his situation for the moment, he was beginning to feel the need to spread his wings. In May 1859 Edward Walker, eldest son of William Walker of Perth, came to Edinburgh to marry as his second wife, Elizabeth Buchanan, a particular friend of Kate, James Thomas's elder sister. As a result Kate was invited

⁷ Walker diary, vol. 2, 16 April 1858.

⁸ In October 1857 Ann Miller died leaving her estate to her brother; the family then had both the house in Edinburgh as well as Ravensneuk Farm. Kate and James Thomas remained mainly in the Edinburgh house while other members of the family moved back and forth.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 1, 31 December and 2 January 1858; and vol. 3, 21 August 1858.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 4, 22 March 1859.

¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 2, 22 February 1858.

¹² Walker diary, vol. 4, 15 December 1858.

¹³ Grandson of Robert Walker. See ch. 1.

¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 2, 19 May 1858.

¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 4, 4 February 1859.

to visit London and James Thomas, too, was finally allowed to achieve a long-desired goal of visiting London in September 1859.

His father obviously realised that the time was approaching when James Thomas needed to leave home; London offered possibilities of more extensive commercial experience. However, his family were uncertain how he might react to the life of London. The trip south, lasting six weeks, allowed him not only to familiarise himself with the city, but to become better acquainted with relatives there. He was surrounded by family, staying with his uncle, William Waterston and his family and visiting the Edward Walkers and other relatives.¹⁶ The kinsfolk were also looking James Thomas over; his cousin Archibald Walker, 36 years older than James Thomas, who had returned from Australia in the late 1850s¹⁷, took him into his office for a time, giving him a number of tasks, obviously testing his arithmetical and book-keeping skills. For most of the time, however, he explored London, visiting sites that still attract tourists, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, Hampton Court Palace and others, finding his way by bus and on foot; he was greatly intrigued with the Crystal Palace. London in 1859 was not a particularly beautiful city, the buildings begrimed with smoke from coal fires and manufactories, the streets heavily polluted with the dung of the horses who pulled the thousands of buses, carts, cabs and private vehicles needed to service a metropolis. James Thomas was not critical. He found it exciting, enjoyed his visit enormously and returned to Edinburgh in October more determined than ever to pursue his career in London. He wrote immediately to Archibald Walker:

I am still desirous of entering into a merchant's counting house in London, as the office in which I am...engaged does not afford me the opportunity of acquiring that general knowledge of mercantile affairs which is necessary and which is my wish to possess. I shall therefore feel obliged if you will kindly interest yourself on my behalf and mention my name should you hear of any suitable opening...it shall not be for any want of exertion on my part if I do not succeed...¹⁸

This letter was written only after his father gave his approval, however, and he was dependent on family patronage in order to secure a reasonable position in London; as Reader noted, it was practically impossible for an outsider to enter the higher management of virtually any established and prosperous business activity such as banking or even brewing without some form of patronage or a substantial capital.¹⁹ James Thomas Walker was most fortunate in having relatives happily placed to assist him, though it is doubtful whether their support would have been so willingly provided had he not shown himself well-mannered, capable, keen and conscientious both in his job in the Phoenix Insurance Office and on his visit to London.

¹⁶ The trip to London is described in detail in Walker diary, vol. 6, 17 September 1859 to 11 October 1859.

¹⁷ According to Andrew Brown (Brown MSS, Mitchell Library) Archibald Walker was still in Australia in 1856. He later retired to Germany, marrying late in life Henriette Pessler, sister of his friend Dr Pessler, the medical practitioner he had known in Sydney. He died at Grosse Winingstat in Germany.

¹⁸ James Thomas Walker to Archibald Walker, 13 October 1859, Walker MSS.

¹⁹ W. J. Reader, *Life in Victorian England*, London, 1964, p. 125.

A severe bout of scarlet fever delayed his departure so it was several weeks before he left Edinburgh by train on 13 February 1860, just over a month before his nineteenth birthday. With him went not only the well wishes of his family but of his fellow workers with whom he had established excellent relations and of his employer, Mr Allan, who wrote:

...he has invariably acted uprightly, diligently and satisfactorily... He leaves me with regret on my part beyond the hope that his doing so is to lead to a higher position in which it will ever be gratifying to me to learn that he is successful.²⁰

In his youth, energy, enthusiasm, self-confidence, hope and belief in the future he personified many of the attributes that helped to create the British Empire. If hasty in temper he was deeply conscious of good manners and respectability, and reasonably self-reliant though still deferring to his father and dependent on family support. He remained boyish and somewhat thoughtless, not questioning the values of his family or the commercialism of the world about him. If he considered difficulties and dangers or the possibility of failure, he did not record his misgivings in his diaries; it seems unlikely that he did so. In more mature years he wrote:

How full of confidence I was and how satisfied that such things as failure and disgrace were not in the category of experience ahead of me.²¹

In two years in London, James Thomas changed little. He remained tractable, attended Glasite church services regularly and in general he behaved in a fashion that pleased his elders. He became more self-sufficient, but retained a boyish outlook, perhaps trying to appear more of a man of the world among his peers. Later he recalled that the years 1860 and 1861 'were amongst the happiest of my life. I felt welcome wherever I went and I liked my work'.²²

He was certainly not alone and friendless. He lived with his Uncle William Waterston who acted *in loco parentis*; a letter of introduction to his father's relative, George Glas Sandeman, secured him two weeks experience in the office of Sandeman & Sons to acquire further knowledge of procedures in a larger office. Archibald Walker, too, instructed him in book-keeping with the assistance of the ledgers of the defunct firm Walker Brothers & Co.²³ Rather than provide him with an account of his own, his father arranged for him to draw what he required for expenses from Archibald Walker.²⁴ James Thomas raised no objections; at last he was in London. He noted happily: 'I feel perfectly at home in London! Kind friends and what not!'²⁵ From home came a flow of letters, concerned, reassuring and helpful; James Thomas could not doubt that he was loved and missed. His father wrote with affection: 'We continue to miss you very much.' He also proffered good advice: 'Pay as you go—a good rule to be strictly observed'.²⁶ It was advice that James Thomas tried to follow for a lifetime.

²⁰ Robert Allan, Phoenix Office, Edinburgh, 9 February, 1860.

²¹ Walker diary, vol. 39, 9 March 1887.

²² J. T. Walker, 'Reminiscences of boys', op. cit.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 8, 15–29 February 1860

²⁴ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 19 February 1860, Walker MSS.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 8, 15 February 1860.

²⁶ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 27 February 1860 and 28 April 1860, Walker MSS.

Work was not as easy to find as he had hoped. He replied to an advertisement in *The Times* for a situation as Junior Clerk at Messrs Brown, 40 Old Broad Street but was unsuccessful.²⁷ It was rumoured that Robert Towns might establish an agency in London where a position might be available but the month ended without success. His father consoled him: 'Don't fret yourself if a berth should not cast up soon but go on with French and German'.²⁸ However, family again came to the rescue; on 2 March 1860 Archibald Walker informed him that a position was available in the London office of the Bank of New South Wales.²⁹ The family connection with the Bank had been established by William in 1820;³⁰ William was a Director from 1820 to 1824 and acted as an agent for the Bank in London before the establishment of the London office. In 1846 Donald Larnach, William's son-in-law, joined the Board in Australia, becoming President in 1852.³¹ When he moved to London in 1853 to become Manager of the new London office his place on the board in Australia was filled by his brother-in-law, William Benjamin Walker, who remained a director until 1855 when he too departed for London where he remained in 1860. James Thomas Walker's cousin, Thomas, after an hiatus of three years in Walker representation, joined the Australian Board in 1859.

It was Donald Larnach who offered James Thomas a situation; in future years he and James Thomas were to develop a strong mutual respect. The offer was not accepted immediately; James Thomas discussed it with his Uncle William who then wrote at length to his father. He accepted the position only when his father's consent was received. He commenced work on 12 March 1860, beginning an association with the Bank of New South Wales that was to last with only a brief hiatus, until the end of his life in 1923. The salary was £60 per annum to 31 December 1860, rising to £80 per annum for 1861, considerably more than he would have earned had he remained in Edinburgh. The hours were 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. or 2.00 p.m. on Saturdays. Initially his work involved only the copying of colonial letters, which he enjoyed, but thought he 'could easily manage more difficult'.³² He felt at home in the office, for the Bank of New South Wales seemed almost a Scottish institution; all of the staff except the messenger, Bennett, were Scots. Alexander Gunn, next above him in seniority, had been a fellow-student at Monsieur Espinasse's French Classes in Edinburgh.³³

The Bank required the sum of £2000 as a guarantee for good behaviour; John William Walker's love for his son, despite James Thomas's awe of him, is most evident in his reply to this request: 'I have such confidence in your good conduct that I will at once give the guarantee to the bank'. Once earning, his father encouraged him to become more independent, by moving into a boarding house:

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 8, 20 February 1860.

²⁸ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 19 February 1860, Walker MSS.

²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 8, 20 February 1860 to 8 March 1860.

³⁰ Holder, op. cit., p. 40.

³¹ According to Holder (op. cit., p. 135 and pp. 499–500) Larnach's name was almost legendary in the Bank.

³² Walker diary, vol. 8, 12 March 1860 and 14 March 1860.

³³ Alexander Gunn transferred from the Bank of N.S.W. to the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India. He died in Singapore in 1918.

In a respectable house...clearly no bugs...for I often was tormented with such in London...if you get settled in the Islington quarter, join the Scots Volunteer Corps and the debating club if you choose... Don't take up with other lodgers...be prudent.³⁴

As Anthony Trollope found, London offered many temptations and pitfalls for a young man; clearly James Thomas's father realised the dangers.³⁵ 'Cousin Archie' also acted as a mentor, cautioning him against early marriage which James Thomas found amusing. However, life was progressing satisfactorily. On his nineteenth birthday he wrote:

I hope that if spared I may be a more useful member of society... I should be very ungrateful indeed if I did not feel happy and contented with my present situation.³⁶

However, serious thoughts were subordinated in the novelty of setting up his bachelor diggings at Mrs Brissenden's Boarding House at 3 Belinda Terrace, Canonbury³⁷, but he started studying book-keeping under the supervision of his Uncle William.³⁸ As he showed himself reliable he was given a variety of work, though he does not detail precisely the nature of his tasks; he found it interesting as 'to me variety is charming'.³⁹ He had obviously an active and alert mind and was anxious to improve himself. Once settled he enrolled 'with the sanction of my father' in the English Language and Literature department at King's College, to study English Composition and Style and Precis Writing, Indexing and Grammatical Composition.⁴⁰ This not only improved his writing, but allowed him, later in life, to claim King's College among his educational institutions in *Who's Who*. Later, in 1861, he also commenced further studies of German. He continued deferential to his father and appears never to have considered ignoring his advice.

Following that advice, he joined the Scottish Rifle Volunteer Corps North Division. Volunteer activities certainly allowed him little time for other activities; he attended drill for two hours every Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday evening, marching to the skirl of the bagpipes. At weekends, too, he attended the rifle range practising shooting. The popularity of volunteer service was at its height as fear increased of Louis Napoleon and the growing strength of France. The volunteers attracted a high percentage of the lower middle classes who, in uniform, behaved with considerable pretension.⁴¹ James Thomas called them 'a Lilliputian vulgar set of 3rd and 4th rate English shop keepers'. He was obviously aware of his status in society, but rarely expresses class prejudice. This was one occasion when his consciousness of position is clear, but it was as much racist as classist, as he averred that he would have been 'very happy to co-operate with respectable, able-bodied artisans and in the circumstances *Scotch ones*'.⁴² Nevertheless, he

³⁴ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 25 March 1860, Walker MSS.

³⁵ Anthony Trollope, *The three clerks*, London, 1862.

³⁶ Walker diary, vol. 8, 20 March 1860.

³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 8, 29 March 1860. This address no longer exists.

³⁸ Walker diary, vol. 8, 27 March 1860.

³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 9, 9 April 1860.

⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 10, 24 October 1860.

⁴¹ Information regarding the volunteer movement is gleaned from L. C. B. Seaman, *Life in Victorian London*, London, 1973, ch. 7; Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1870*, Bungay, 1979, p. 223.

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 10, 13 October 1860.

continued to attend drills regularly, enjoying the companionship of friends in the corps. He considered that membership of the volunteers had been worthwhile in

...the many friendships formed, happy hours spent, health enjoyed and the knowledge of military duties acquired so that if ever called on to take up arms, I would rub up more easily than a mere recruit...⁴³

Socially, he visited numerous relatives of both his father and mother, many associated with banking and with the colonies.⁴⁴ Edward Walker invited him to his country house at Oxted where he made friends with Edward's family, particularly his eldest sons, William and Edward⁴⁵ with whom he maintained a life-long friendship in Australia. Mrs James Walker of Wallerawang had moved to London and James Thomas was a welcome visitor at her lodgings. He never expressed a desire, nor showed any inclination to escape from family ties; indeed he visited one set of relatives or another almost nightly. It was not an unwelcome chore; he appears to have enjoyed the company of his relatives whose ages ranged from new-born to the seventies. His own lodgings became a meeting place for young male relatives including Frank Morison of Perth who eventually moved in with him, John Tbdd of Dundee⁴⁶ and some of his contemporary Sandeman relatives. He appears to have been courteous, at times a little priggish, talkative and gregarious, though contented with his own company on occasion. Wherever he went he was well liked and made firm and loyal friends. His mother was pleased to receive letters from friends praising his agreeable manner but reminded him: 'I trust you will remember the old caution of leaving the most of the conversation with older people'.⁴⁷ Dr Brown, too, delivered a brief homily:

You are indeed well off with youth, health and a cheerful mind, full employment and fine prospect before you in life—one cannot have these always. Time makes changes about us but a cheerful disposition and a 'mens conscia recti' will work wonders in any situation.⁴⁸

It was sound advice that James Thomas took to heart.

He showed no inclination to return to life in Edinburgh. In September 1860 he thoroughly enjoyed a holiday at home, but returned happily to London.

I really believe since coming south I appreciate home more than I ever did...at the same time I remain thoroughly convinced that it is good for young men to see the world and not be always at their mothers' apron strings notwithstanding that mothers are those for whom we feel the strongest affection.⁴⁹

⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 12, 11 December 1862.

⁴⁴ His second cousins William Barnard and Marianne Barnard married members of the Cummins family whose father was the General Manager of the Union Bank of Australasia in London. George Edward Barnard, James Thomas's particular friend, worked for the Mercantile Chartered Bank of India, London and China.

⁴⁵ Known familiarly as Willie and Ted.

⁴⁶ Great-grandson of David Walker of Perth, step-brother of William Walker and James Walker of Wallerawang and second cousin of the Archer brothers.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Walker to James Thomas Walker, 2 August 1860, Walker MSS.

⁴⁸ William Brown to James Thomas Walker, 4 August 1860, Walker MSS.

⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 10, 29 November 1860.

James Thomas gives little indication of a desire to migrate to Australia. On only one occasion, in all the diaries of this period, does he provide a hint of his thoughts: on saying goodbye to Mrs James Walker he noted, 'I think it not the most improbable thing in the world that I shall see them some day at Wallerawang'.⁵⁰ Many friends and relatives had gone to Australia. Mrs James Walker and her daughters Wilhelmina and Georgina, his uncle and aunt, Robert and Lizzie Waterston, William Archer and Willie and Ted Walker, Edward Walker's sons, left for Australia on the *Dover Castle* in December 1860. His brother Tom had already left on the *British Merchant* on 25 April 1860. Arrived in Australia by August, Tom went on to Gracemere, the Archer brothers' property near Rockhampton. Letters which started arriving in early 1861, portrayed something of the rapid development of the frontier settlement: 'Two years ago Rockhampton was two or three slab huts or humpies. Now it has 800 inhabitants'.⁵¹ The Archers were running about 30 000 sheep and about 5000 head of cattle. Colin Archer was then managing the property with James Archer and Simon Jorgensen. Life sounded much more free and adventurous than in an office in London which was beginning to lose its charms.

This London is really an overgrown place and the poverty and wretchedness are beyond description. I am sure I wish some one had the means (or better still I wish I were so circumstanced) to improve the lower classes... Education and immigration are the two grand means... the sights that one sees, more especially on a Saturday night in walking about London confirm me in that opinion... Oh that I were an active and unselfish philanthropist with the means of doing immense good to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, the needy, the widow and the fatherless... The great mistake is there is more theory than practice in these matters... of the immense good that might be done, we omit to do even what little is in our power. Self-denial is one of the greatest of virtues and therefore one that is very difficult to practise [*sic*]... it is not always the wealthiest who do most good... true charity... is hidden from the world and it is only the false article that is blazoned about...⁵²

One might dismiss this as the conventional reaction of a callow youth did one not find an echo in a letter to his younger daughter Nita, extolling the charms of Australia in 1907:

...people generally on average have better times than at home—you do not see so much abject poverty as in London and other large cities.⁵³

One must conclude that James Thomas Walker was dismayed by the squalor of London. It is interesting to note that he had already formed the opinion that true charity was self-effacing; he was recognised later for his habit of doing good by stealth. It is clear, too, that, though ambitious and surrounded by wealthy relatives as he was, he was developing the philosophy that the amassing of wealth in itself was not an end in life. At least it would have offered some consolation to a lowly bank clerk. In addition to noting the poverty, he notes frequently the gloomy weather in London, noting during the winter that 'the streets presented a

⁵⁰ Walker diary, vol. 11, 8 December 1860.

⁵¹ Thomas Walker to John William Walker, 23 September 1860, Walker MSS.

⁵² Walker diary, vol. 10, 13 October 1860.

⁵³ James Thomas Walker to Nita Walker, 12 May 1907, Walker MSS.

wretchedly filthy appearance'.⁵⁴ Remembrance of Australian warmth in early childhood may have provided an added incentive for migration.

In 1861 he returned only briefly to Scotland, spending more time on a walking tour of the Portsmouth–Winchester district and the Isle of Wight, seeing more of England. In September he farewelled his sister Jane who journeyed to India to marry Imrie Bell,⁵⁵ it was the last time he ever saw her.⁵⁶ He appears to have made up his mind to venture to Australia by this time, though his diaries give little hint of his intention or indeed of his reasons. He had sought the advice of Archibald Walker who wrote to Thomas on his behalf, regarding the possibility of obtaining work in Australia. A reply came from Thomas in November 1861, but it gave no more encouragement than to inform him that with a recommendation from Mr Larnach, he would get a position in the Bank of New South Wales according to his merits.⁵⁷ The lukewarm response did not discourage James Thomas; after ensuring that his Father was agreeable he decided to migrate.

On 12 December 1861 he finished work at the London Branch of the Bank of New South Wales. Donald Larnach who had been a benevolent employer, regretted his departure but provided him with an excellent reference:

I regret very much to part with him for I have always found him most efficient in every duty entrusted to him... I trust however he may find employment in this Bank with you and with my cordial recommendation of him.⁵⁸

In the next month he returned to Scotland where he journeyed by coach and rail to visit his nearest relatives in Dunkeld, Inverness, Perth and Dundee, taking a last look at his homeland. Perhaps realising that he might never see Scotland and members of the family again, he recorded this journey in rather more detail than usual. He waited to celebrate the traditional Scottish Hogmanay, too, before bidding his parents a last farewell on 2 January 1862. Five days later he boarded the *Swiftsure* bound for Melbourne. His twenty-first birthday was still two months away.⁵⁹

The boyish streak of daredevilry of his early childhood had not been stifled by his rather narrow and circumscribed existence in Britain. The voyage to Plymouth was slow and boring. Young James Thomas took satisfaction in evading capture in climbing the mizzen mast and the main mast.⁶⁰ It seemed that he was breaking out of the confining net of exemplary behaviour imposed on him by family presence but this mild outbreak of lawlessness was as much a response to peer group pressure as he notes that his brother Tom had achieved a similar feat on the *British Merchant* and 'I shall not like to play "second fiddle"'.⁶¹ Nevertheless he attempted this feat before arriving at Plymouth where he was once more in the company of kinfolk

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 11, 30 December 1860.

⁵⁵ Nephew of Mrs Robert Waterston. An Engineer engaged in building bridges in India.

⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 12, 6 September 1861.

⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 12, 17 November 1861.

⁵⁸ Donald Larnach to the President of the Bank of N.S.W., Sydney, 31 December 1861, Walker MSS.

⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 11, 19 March 1861; vol. 12, 6 September 1861 and 17 November 1861 to 10 December 1861.

⁶⁰ Passengers were not allowed to ascend the masts on sailing vessels.

⁶¹ Walker diary, vol. 13, 13 January 1862.

when Mr and Mrs William Benjamin Walker and their six children and Mrs Walker's sister Mrs Darley and her husband Frederick⁶² boarded the vessel.

At first the voyage was slow; the vessel ran into almost continual gales and on one occasion made only 27 miles (43 km) in the day. Passengers engaged in fishing, rope quoits, reading, backgammon and dominoes and occasionally card games, chess and draughts. James Thomas, a 'new chum', with a hasty temper, and perhaps trying to appear more mature than his years, found himself the butt of a practical joke engineered by a number of colonials. He considered not relating it in his diary, but his innate honesty convinced him that 'this would not be a faithful narrative if I did not tell the affair'.⁶³ On the slightest of pretexts, he was challenged by another passenger to a duel. The Captain eventually enlightened him that he had been the victim of a well-organised hoax, but he did not enjoy this experience. Though taking it in good part and joining in the general laughter, thenceforward he maintained a low profile among the colonials on board. It taught him a lesson in colonial attitudes to young British migrants, most valuable in his future life on the frontiers of settlement in Queensland; in future he was careful not to leave himself so open to colonial pranksters. For the most part the sea voyage held much of interest; he recorded seeing a school of humpback whales and a variety of birds. The enforced inactivity gave him time to read more than he had done for some time: several of the plays of Shakespeare and two plays by Smollett, *Great Expectations* and *Roderic Random*, White's *Universal History*, the Third Volume of *The Spectator*, *Manners and Customs of the English Nation* and *Paradise Lost*. In addition, he studied *Elements of Banking* by Gilbert, an indication that he was giving more serious thought to his career in banking. He read thoroughly as well, a bundle of back issues of the *Sydney Morning Herald* given him by Archibald Walker in order to familiarise himself with events in the Colonies. He concluded, interestingly, though without particular reference to his own future, 'Whatever a person might be in politics at home, Conservatives in the Colony all wise men should be'.⁶⁴ Once the ship reached the southern hemisphere and the influence of the south-east trade winds, the vessel increased speed; on 19 March, it made a record run of 359 miles (574 km). Next day James Thomas turned twenty-one though he did not make the fact known to the Walker family, unwilling perhaps to admit to his youth. Pondering his life, he found it good, but he was beginning to question his religious beliefs:

I find every succeeding year affords a more agreeable retrospect than the year immediately preceding that and that I have had more than my average amount of happiness in a worldly point of view...but my only fear is that as I enjoy the world more I like religion less. I am most unsettled in that respect. I am afraid of appearing hypocritical and yet from what I have seen and read of True Religion I should extremely like to be a real Christian and that is what I am afraid I never will be.

He found religion a bore, in fact, but thought he

⁶² Later Sir Frederick Darley, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 13, 3 February 1862.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 13, 4 April 1862.

should always have a respect for it, would bow to moral precepts and try and not outrange anyone's feelings... I don't pretend to be any more than what I really am and that is a young man wholly engrossed in what Bunyan would truly designate 'carnal delights'.⁶⁵

This should not be interpreted that he enjoyed a life of debauchery. He was in fact very reticent regarding sexual matters; the inhibiting narrowness of his Victorian upbringing no doubt labelled even thought of sex as the blackest of sins, unhealthy and not at all 'respectable'. He also shunned gambling and in London had not frequented 'pubs'.

At last on 19 April 1862, 17 years after his first arrival, James Thomas Walker returned to Australia, landing at Sandridge Pier, Melbourne. He did not arrive friendless and unknown; once again, as in London, he was among friends, though not so closely related and fewer in number. He was the guest of David Moore, former partner in William Walker & Company, his friend Ted Walker was visiting Melbourne and the Brownes also made him welcome at Hartlands where the William Benjamin Walker family and the Darley family were staying. Even travelling to Sydney on the *Wonga Wonga* he was in the company of William Benjamin Walker and his sons.

He arrived in Australia a well-mannered if somewhat diffident young man, hasty in temper though cautious and somewhat more reserved than he had been, but still boyish and adventurous. At twenty-one he remained immature, following the behavioural patterns established at home and at school and deferring to his father, uncles and other relatives for guidance. Apart from dim memories of his own childhood, he had grown up surrounded by family and friends reminiscing about Australia and had acquired a reasonable knowledge, in particular, of the eastern colonies. He was singularly well equipped to embark on a banking career on the frontiers of Queensland. He had experience of managing his life in bachelor 'diggings', was well educated with a first-hand knowledge of many areas of England and Scotland, had already diverse experience of clerical work, but was acquainted with country life, able to swim, handle a boat, ride well and to handle guns. He was not typical of the ambitious young men such as Robert Philp⁶⁶, who arrived in this era virtually unknown, but the latest scion of what was already one of Australia's oldest and best known families, 'a family of Australian merchant princes'.⁶⁷ Though on the fringe of the family, James Thomas was accepted and his career was certainly fostered by family connections. On the threshold of a new and perhaps uncertain career in Australia, he had no misgivings. He certainly did not feel Australia to be an alien land or think of himself as approaching a hostile environment, despite the unfortunate experience of his own family. John Rickard has noted that the belief that Europeans found 'the Australian environment hostile, alien, oppressive, and that they had great difficulty in coming to terms with it aesthetically' is a 'cultural myth'.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 13, 20 March 1862.

⁶⁶ See Harry C. Perry, *Memoirs of the Hon. Sir Robert Philp 1851-1922*, Brisbane, 1923.

⁶⁷ Holder, op. cit., p. 499.

⁶⁸ Rickard, *Australia...*, op. cit., p. 44.

In the case of James Thomas Walker, the young man whose family were so well known and who had known the country in early childhood, this was most certainly true; the Australian environment was a place of adventure, excitement and opportunity.

James Thomas Walker spent only a month in Sydney. He was 'delighted with what I have seen and the beauties of the spot surpassed my expectations'; walking about Parramatta, he 'rather liked the general appearance and the dwelling houses all having verandahs'.¹ Best of all, 'since I arrived at Melbourne I have only seen two wet days...who could wish for finer weather? If it continues I shall be inclined to say which indeed I might well do at once "this is the climate for me"'.² In his pleasure in the new land, he did not forget the old; walking around Glebe Island and Pyrmont he noted:

It is as pretty a walk as any I have seen about here and the appearance of the water between the Glebe and Pyrmont reminded me of the Compensation Ponds in the Pentlands.³

His comparisons were neither derogatory nor condemnatory but reflect willingness to accept the Australian scene.

Though comparatively independent, boarding at Mrs Drewe's Boarding House, Churchill Street, he was still within the family fold. Thomas Walker was in Europe, but Mrs James Walker of Wallerawang was at her town residence, William Archer was down from Gracemere with news of his brother Tom, and William Benjamin Walker had leased Roslin Hall at Woolloomooloo. In Sydney, too, Walker had friends from the past. Though memories of childhood were dim, one of the first people he visited was Mrs Weaver nee Fanny Broughton, sister of his childhood friend of fourteen years before at Castlesteads. This was an early example of a characteristic that endeared him to many; he seldom forgot friends, took a sincere interest in what happened to them and made positive efforts to maintain contact, helping those in need where he could.

He arrived on 27 April 1862, presented his credentials the following day at the Bank of New South Wales, and was engaged next day to start as a clerk on 1 May 1862 with a salary of £150—this was £50 more than he might have expected had he remained in England. As his Cousin Thomas had said, a reference from Donald Larnach virtually guaranteed him a job. The bank staff must also have been aware of his relationship to Thomas Walker and to William Benjamin Walker⁴, who was

¹ Walker diary, vol. 13, 27 April 1862 and 24 May 1862.

² *ibid.*

³ Walker diary, vol. 14, 25 May 1862.

⁴ William Benjamin Walker served on the Board from 1862 to 1866. He was nominated a member to the Legislative Council of N.S.W. in June 1863 but served until April 1867 only, when he returned to England (see C. N. Connolly, *Biographical register of the New South Wales Parliament 1856-1901*, Canberra, 1983.) In 1866 Woodhouse, the General Manager in Sydney, wrote to Larnach in the London Office: 'I regret to say that we have lost William Walker from our board for a time. I consider it a loss both to the Bank and myself though I hope only a temporary one. (Copies and extracts, General Manager to Managing Director London, 1861-1867, 23 January 1866).

about to resume his seat on the board; he, too, was highly respected in the colony.⁵ Apart from the rapidity of his employment, Walker appears to have received no other preferential treatment, and may well have received an appointment without family connections as young well-trained bank staff were in short supply at that time. Honestly, however, he acknowledged that his rapid employment was due to the recommendations of Cousin Thomas and Mr Larnach as much as to his own ability and determined to live up to their expectations.⁶ Though he may not have needed family influence, he could not have obtained employment in the Bank had he come from a less affluent family; the Bank required payment of a £2000 Fidelity Bond which his father paid willingly, admonishing him to be both faithful and abstemious:

Had I not every confidence in you I would not have become security...
You are in a fair way to succeeding in life. Be faithful... It gives me
much pleasure that my sons eschew strong drink... Keep to the tea.⁷

His father warned him, too, to be careful whom he trusted, and to be prudent, wise advice Walker certainly heeded:

Take care in the colony what intimacies you form. The Mr B. about
whom you write is a man of considerable address. I don't reckon him
A1—keep this to yourself.⁸

Though happy with his job in Sydney, he wanted to be closer to his brother Tom at Rockhampton. Tom was not encouraging, already exhibiting some of the scorn of the bushman for the urban worker:

I would not try to come to Rockhampton if I was you as it is a horrid
hole for clerks or people in that kind of employment on account of the
heat and the mesquitos [*sic*] then again it might be very little that
you would see of me... I am seldom in town, never in fact, unless
sent...⁹

Walker was not deterred. On 29 May 1862 when offered the position of Accountant in the Rockhampton Branch of the Bank of New South Wales, he was only too happy to accept the promotion. Though regretting his departure from Sydney so soon he sailed the following day on the *Eagle*, the earliest steamer on the Queensland coastal route. Sydney and Sydney friends were left behind as he set out for the wilderness and the frontier port of Rockhampton; a quarter of a century would pass before he returned to reside in Sydney.

As the vessel ploughed northward, his enthusiasm for the country continued; he remarked on the picturesque coastline always in sight during the day. As civilisation retreated further, signs of settlement along the coast diminished. Fraser Island was thickly wooded with multitudes of Aborigines many of whom could be seen along the shores; Gladstone, though beautifully situated, was in its infancy with only 400 residents many of whom were Aborigines or Chinese. He listened readily to the tales of the older settlers aboard; among them were Mr and Mrs John

⁵ Walker diary, vol. 13, 27 April to 24 May 1862; and vol. 14, 25–29 May 1862.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 13, 29 April 1862.

⁷ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 25 August 1862, Walker MSS.

⁸ *ibid.*, 17 July 1862.

⁹ Thomas Walker to James Thomas Walker, 8 May 1862, Walker MSS.

Scott of Palm Tree Creek Station, who remained lifelong friends.¹⁰ Everything was new and exciting to the young Walker; the Fitzroy was ‘a most beautiful and wide river with luxuriant growth on its banks and fine hilly country around’.¹¹ The river was not navigable to the site of Rockhampton but Walker went up in the mail boat which leaked like a sieve. Despite the ever-present possibility of sinking in crocodile-infested waters his enthusiasm did not flag; he enjoyed the eight mile row and could not imagine ‘anything more picturesque’.¹²

He arrived on 5 June 1862, buoyant and optimistic, maintaining that ‘cheerful mind’ advocated by Dr Brown, intent on making the best of his situation and interested in everything about him. Rockhampton did not live up to his expectations: ‘considering that it has a population estimated at from 1200 to 1500 it did not look as important a place as I expected’.¹³ In fact, Rockhampton had grown and improved considerably since the Governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, described it in 1860, ‘a small hamlet of wooden huts with scarcely 500 inhabitants’.¹⁴ By the time Walker arrived, it was a comparatively busy centre boasting a municipal council, a temporary hospital and court house, a church and school, two banks, two saw mills, a weekly newspaper, a number of public houses and stores, and, though the original bark and shingle buildings remained, many new buildings of milled timber or pisé had appeared. The beginnings of what would become four main arterial routes radiated from the township to Canoona, Gladstone, the Dawson, and Peak Downs¹⁵, and pastoralists were spreading rapidly to the west and to the north. Already copper had been discovered at Peak Downs and a more northerly port had been founded in 1861 at Port Denison (Bowen). Rockhampton was the centre of most of this mining and pastoral expansion, but it still lacked the comforts of longer settled centres. Walking beside the river, Walker discovered the slaughter house close to the settlement, where pigs ran wild in all directions; he does not mention the smells. When rain fell he was compelled to keep the house as the street was an impassable quagmire while the mosquitoes were so bad that he could not get a good night’s rest. In addition, when the rain stopped, a loud chorus of frogs croaked all evening.¹⁶

Walker found it a distinct shock but was prepared to suffer the discomforts; it is quite amusing the contrast between this and London...everything on such a very different scale, but “never say die”’.¹⁷

¹⁰ John Scott (1821–1898) settled Palm Tree Creek Station 1855–1865 (D. B. Waterson, *A biographical register of Queensland Parliament 1860–1929*, Canberra, 1972). Ada Frances, one of Scott’s daughters, married George Neville Griffiths (see Connolly, op. cit.). On the death of Griffiths many years later, Walker helped his children to settle his estate. They held Walker in the greatest affection, so the friendship he established aboard the *Eagle* extended through three generations of the family.

¹¹ The descriptions are in Walker diary, vol. 14, 30 May 1862 to 5 June 1862.

¹² Walker diary, vol. 14, 15 June 1862.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Quoted in Lorna McDonald, *Rockhampton, A history of city and district*, Brisbane, 1981, p. 334.

¹⁵ Modern highways (Bruce Highway, Capricorn Highway and Burnett Highway) follow roughly these early routes.

¹⁶ The brief description of Rockhampton in 1862 is gleaned from McDonald (op. cit.), the Archer papers, the Walker diaries and letters, and the *Rockhampton Bulletin*. Walker diary, vol. 14, 9 June 1862, 15 June 1862 and 18 June 1862.

¹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 14, 17 June 1862.

In all fairness he continued: 'To do the place justice, however, it is a most pushing and thriving town'.¹⁸ His diaries recording his day-to-day activities, commenting on events from time to time, add significantly to knowledge of the life and growth of the developing town in the four years of his residence.

The Bank of New South Wales was a small timber building in Denham Street on the fringes of the commercial centre of the town. Walker enjoyed the work though the manager, Alexander Buchanan, a consumptive bachelor, was not particularly effective. Only three officers were employed, John Tobin being the exchange clerk and bookkeeper. Walker was originally the accountant but in October 1862 took over the duties of teller, dealing directly with the public.¹⁹ Office hours were from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with the office open to the public from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.; lunch was an hour from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Business fluctuated with the fortunes of Rockhampton. Walker had arrived as the town was expanding. In the following four years he witnessed its decline from boom to comparative stagnation, only to boom again before sliding into a decline exacerbated by the drought of 1866 and the financial crisis in Britain that caused the Queensland government financial embarrassment. In the first few months of his residence, two churches appeared²⁰ and the first Circuit Court sittings took place.²¹ Swimming baths were opened making it possible to swim in the Fitzroy River without fear of crocodile attack, an important improvement in a township where bathrooms were rare. To the north the town of Mackay was founded²², and the small steamer *Murray* arrived to service trade between Rockhampton and Bowen where settlement was spreading west and north towards the Gulf of Carpentaria.²³ Rockhampton was obviously progressing rapidly with numbers of steamers and other vessels arriving and departing. There was ample business to sustain both the Bank of New South Wales and the Australian Joint Stock Bank, and, when the Union Bank opened in October 1862, further competition was not resented.²⁴

Though the town expanded and its survival was assured, it remained an insignificant straggle of buildings. From the top of the Berseker Range it appeared even less significant:

...the country appeared one vast scrub, the winding of the river Fitzroy being the most attractive feature in the landscape and as for our great Rockhampton, the future capital of a yet unnamed and undefined colony separate from Queensland, all that could be seen of it was the smoke.²⁵

By mid-1863 trade was diminishing. It was at that time that Walker first tasted the pleasures of managership; when Buchanan departed on leave in June he was appointed Acting Manager. He felt confident and elated, 'for the first time in my life

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 14, 15 October 1862.

²⁰ The Presbyterian and the Church of England.

²¹ Walker diary, vol. 14, 27 July 1862 and 15 March 1863; vol. 15, 6 April 1864.

²² G. C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, Canberra 1972, p. 29.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 14, 2 October 1862 and 4 October 1862.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 14, 9 October 1862.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 15, 16 May 1863.

in temporary charge of a Branch Bank'.²⁶ His reign was brief as Buchanan returned within a fortnight; however, he had coped with the situation without difficulty.

Trade improved dramatically with the discovery in September 1863 of gold at Peak Downs; the town was agog with the news that 300 ounces of gold had arrived in the township and another gold rush started.²⁷ A fourth member, Robert Stirling, was appointed to the staff of the Bank of New South Wales as business expanded.²⁸ Rockhampton grew; the Rockhampton Provident, Building and Investment Society, of which Walker was an early member, started in October 1863, and development continued apace into 1864.²⁹ To the north the townships of Cardwell, Burketown and Townsville were founded and a settlement established at Somerset; Walker watched his acquaintances Frank and Alick Jardine start on their epic overland journey from Rockhampton to Somerset, wishing them luck and remarking 'they are fine fellows and their parents may well be proud of them'.³⁰ In June 1864, one of the busiest days ever was recorded at the Bank.³¹ New hotels opened and the first brick buildings appeared.³² By the end of 1864 the electric telegraph connected the township to the rest of the world, and plans were afoot to start a third newspaper.³³

Walker was himself partly responsible for one major improvement: the School of Arts opened in 1865. He served as an enthusiastic committee member and collected a substantial percentage of the money required for the building.³⁴ By that time trade was 'very stagnant'.³⁵ Only the discovery of the comparatively small Crocodile Creek gold field improved matters, and business continued slack.³⁶ Walker attributed the slackness to overspeculation in land and to the failure of the Peak Downs diggings, though it must also have been influenced by the growing awareness that current methods of sheep rearing were not suited to the tropical climate and that sheep were not suited to large sections of the country that had been opened.³⁷

However, in the years of his residence Rockhampton developed from a rough collection of bark and timber buildings to a comparatively thriving township of neat buildings and formed streets; the *Rockhampton Bulletin* could remark with satisfaction:

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 15, 16 June 1863.

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 15, 7 July 1863 and 3 September 1863.

²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 15, 9 October 1863. Stirling remained a lifelong friend.

²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 15, 6 October 1863.

³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 16, 14 May 1864.

³¹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 20 June 1864.

³² *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 1864. Walker was one of the first customers in the dining room of the new Leichhardt Hotel (Walker diary, vol. 16, 9 October 1864). Tenders were called for a two-storeyed brick Post Office in February 1865 (McDonald, op. cit., p. 147).

³³ Walker diary, vol. 16, 20 December 1864. This was *The News*. Other papers were *The Northern Argus* and the *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*.

³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 16, 17 March 1865.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Crocodile Creek was discovered in 1865; though it yielded moderate returns it suffered from lack of water in the dry season and floods in the wet season. According to McDonald (op. cit., p. 253) many of the diggers had moved away to the new field at Morinish by 1867.

³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 16, 27 July 1865. See also Beverley Kingston, *The Oxford history of Australia*, vol. 3, 1860–1900, Melbourne 1988, p. 3.

The wooden shanties so common hitherto in Rockhampton, for business premises, are rapidly giving way to more substantial buildings of brick and stone.³⁸

Its future development was assured; before Walker departed he witnessed the final recognition of Rockhampton's role as a regional centre, with the turning of the first sod of the railway which would connect it to the vast hinterland.³⁹

Though determined in part by the local economy, the amount of work in the office was also influenced by the sailing schedule of the mail steamers and by half yearly balance days. The mail boats brought not only mail but replenishment of coin and notes from Brisbane, the Head Office for Queensland, and Sydney, Head Office for the Colonies; on their departure dispatches and reports had to be sent and cancelled notes returned. Every six months the staff had to complete a half-yearly balance, an intricate, lengthy and painstaking exercise in the era before calculators and computers. Once a year the Inspector arrived from Brisbane or from Sydney to conduct an external audit of the books and ensure that the branch was working efficiently; his findings were then reported to the General Manager in Sydney. At times Walker worked late; at other times, particularly in the wet season, when flooding frequently kept customers indoors and vessels could not enter the Fitzroy River, business was so slack that he could occupy his time reading. It was a monotonous but not unpleasant life; he gained much experience of country banking and learned the perfidy of a number of his fellows. Buchanan was threatened with a horsewhipping merely for trying to check the credentials of a customer, and on a number of occasions, Walker was called to appear as a witness in forgery and embezzlement cases before the first Circuit Court in Rockhampton.⁴⁰

In four years Walker served under three managers. Buchanan died in 1864,⁴¹ he had been ill for some time and Ebsworth from Sydney had arrived, first as an extra hand and then as acting manager when Buchanan was forced to retire to the south in February 1862.⁴² In April 1864 Ebsworth was replaced by a permanent manager, R. H. D. White.⁴³ Walker found all agreeable and worked well with them. He obviously proved satisfactory; his salary increased from an initial £150 to £300 per annum by 1865 so that he was better off. He was not satisfied though, particularly when he learned that his cousin William Waterson had obtained a job as Accountant with a financial corporation in Bombay at a salary of £800 per annum.⁴⁴ Nevertheless he had purchased a share in a small boat and had made some capital gains buying and selling land, so one might conclude that he was making reasonable progress.⁴⁵

He lived initially at the Bank, in a small verandah room, but moved to more comfortable quarters at Willmet's Boarding House, taking meals at the Alma

³⁸ *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 28 February 1865. McDonald identified the brick premises as the brick stores of D. T. Mulligan (McDonald, op. cit., p. 499).

³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 14 November 1865.

⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 14, 16 September 1862, 8 April 1863 and 13 May 1864.

⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 15, 29 March 1864.

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 15, 11 December 1863 and 15 February 1864.

⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 16, 15 May 1864 and 29 May 1864.

⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 16, 6 December 1865.

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 15, 1 March 1864; vol. 16, 1 February 1866.

Hotel. When Ebsworth arrived, he returned to the Bank quarters, but with the arrival of White and his family, moved to The Agapemone No. 1⁴⁶ on the Athelstane Range in company with Rees Rutland Jones, Lenchen, Robinson, Bell and Gardener. He was 24 years old, with considerably more assurance and self-confidence than when he arrived in Rockhampton in 1862, and was accepted and well liked in both the business circles and society of the town.

Though taking an interest in local affairs and politics, reading the papers regularly, he remained essentially an observer. At times, he was critical of local political figures. Listening to speakers at the Separation Meeting, he noted:

...one cannot help thinking that if we should get Separation from Queensland we would require a very considerable influx of talent to carry on a Government as what few public or would be public men we do possess are of a very mediocre stamp.⁴⁷

It was a man's world. Apart from a few servants, women were in a decided minority; in his first five weeks in the town, Walker met only two 'ladies' and he did not attend the Bachelors Ball as he was a stranger to the town and ladies were so scarce he would not have found a partner.⁴⁸ He made friends easily among the banking and mercantile fraternity and with a number of the young squatters in the district, in particular, his distant cousin Thomas Gabriel Walker of Leura.⁴⁹ Walker was of that sector of society Ada Cambridge designated 'really the backbone of country society...smart young bank clerks...the natural complement of the young Bush-town ladies'.⁵⁰ In the isolation of frontier settlement they relied on one another for company and for entertainment, visiting one another when ill, sharing books and papers from home and from the southern states, and walking, boating, riding or playing cricket, cards or billiards in their spare time. Walker was remarkably uncritical of his acquaintances for one with his background; he seldom commented on faults, and when he did, tended to do so kindly. Of one, Lestrangle, for instance, he remarked, 'I am afraid he is, poor fellow, a confirmed drunkard'.⁵¹

The interaction of members of the banking and mercantile fraternity recorded by Walker indicates clearly that 'mateship' was not the sole prerogative of bush workers.⁵² Though not exclusive, they maintained a certain class consciousness, not mixing socially with bullock drivers or tradesmen; nor did they mingle with those who laid claim to being the aristocracy of the town: G. E. Dalrymple, E. N. U. Morriset, and others—though Walker and his friends mixed freely with members of the squatting fraternity and with W. I. Brown, the Collector of Customs and John Jardine, the Police Magistrate. Rockhampton taught Walker much of frontier

⁴⁶ Walker diary, vol. 16, 8 September 1865 to 14 November 1865. Several bachelors of the town had set up residence in a number of houses, known collectively as The Agapemone (The Abode of Love); to distinguish them the houses were known as 1, 2 or 3.

⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 15, 20 May 1863. The speakers referred to were: Howard St George, squatter; Feez, Bertram and Shaw, merchants; Ranken and Rea, station agents; Palmer Wood, merchant; and Bourcicault and Hodgkinson, newspaper editors.

⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 14, 12 July 1862 and 19 July 1862.

⁴⁹ Thomas Gabriel Walker was one of the Walkers of Strathmiglo, a second cousin of Mrs James Walker of Wallerawang.

⁵⁰ Ada Cambridge, 'Thirty years in Australia', quoted in Cannon, *Life in the country*, op. cit., p. 242.

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 15, 9 October 1863.

⁵² See Russel Ward, *The Australian legend*, Melbourne, 1958.

society; he deplored the snobbery of some sections of the community. At the Subscription Ball in honour of the visit of His Excellency, Governor Bowen, he noted:

...the company was what is called pretty 'mixed'—they did not keep disagreeably apart as is sometimes the case—but if I may use the expression 'heartily fraternised' as they ought to do.⁵³

He was also critical of the arrogant behaviour of a number of the town's magistracy. On the occasion in 1863 when G. E. Dalrymple, J.P. attacked John Jardine, the Police Magistrate, Albrecht Feez J.P. assaulted Arthur Francis Wood J.P. and Lieutenant Morisett called Arthur L. Bourcicault a liar, all in defence of the honour of Mrs Albrecht Feez, Walker remarked:

...so much for the peace of the town and the respectability of its magistracy and gentry...a certain clique have hitherto arrogated to themselves a position they had no right to and as 'The Bulletin' truthfully remarked, if they neglected what may be called the proprieties of life they must expect the consequences.⁵⁴

Walker himself was most careful to maintain proprieties when visiting the houses of his married friends and at social functions when ladies were present. As he became known and more settlers arrived, bringing their families, the number of ladies increased and he enjoyed attending balls and parties, visiting the Browns, Rankens and others. With a strong streak of romanticism, his mind was turning to matrimony. His diaries make few references to women other than his immediate relatives though he was mixing with a number of eligible young women including the daughters of W. I. Brown and John Jardine. He was obviously considering his ideal woman, finding Marion Halcombe, heroine of *The Woman in White*, a 'divine creature'.⁵⁵ Both his father and Dr Brown were urging him to consider marriage, and the prospect of settling into married felicity was one that pleased, more particularly after his friend Rees Rutland Jones married Matilda, W. I. Brown's elder daughter:

Oh for a competence and a nice little wife...my disposition seems changing—I am becoming quite domesticated in all my aspirations.⁵⁶

Realistically, however, he concluded, 'after all, a Bank Clerk with salary of only £275 is such a nobody that I feel inclined to despise myself...'⁵⁷

He filled his time with strenuous and regular exercise, enjoying long walks and rides on horseback, exploring the surroundings of Rockhampton. The 'black's camp' fascinated him, particularly when they painted themselves for corroborees;⁵⁸ after a fight between the natives of Rockhampton and those of Yaamba, he purchased a number of weapons.⁵⁹ He thought little of riding 30 miles (48 km) through territory

⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 14, 17 October 1862.

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 15, 1 December 1863. Jean Farnfield (*Frontiersman*, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 63–5) has an account of this affair which is more sympathetic to Dalrymple. 'The Bulletin' refers to the *Rockhampton Bulletin*.

⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 14, 24 June 1862.

⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 16, 7 December 1865 to 18 December 1865.

⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 16, 22 November 1865 to 6 December 1865.

⁵⁸ Walker diary, vol. 14, 6 September 1862.

⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 15, 5 August 1863. John Todd took the collection back to England with him; most of the weapons were stolen on the voyage.

still subject to aboriginal attack to visit his brother Tom on Oro Oro, the Archer's cattle station. Closer to town he visited the gardens of Antheleme Thozet and Bernard Pene, Frenchmen whom he noted with interest were experimenting with growing both exotic and native plants.⁶⁰ One is conscious in the descriptions of his excursions, that he possessed an abounding energy and enthusiasm for life, coupled with an active mind interested in all that was going on around him.

His interest in cricket had not diminished. He joined the Central Queensland Cricket Club, and played in a number of matches, but there was little interest in outdoor activities except in the cooler months.⁶¹ His enthusiasm for early morning swimming in the river declined after sighting several crocodiles and a close encounter with a marine stinger, from which he was lucky to escape with only minor effects.⁶² However, when the baths opened he swam frequently, particularly in the steamy summer months. For a time, he also belonged to the Voluntary Fire Brigade, but resigned in 1864.⁶³

Boating was his most exhilarating exercise; on a number of occasions he rowed with friends several miles along the Fitzroy River, camping out and shooting wild duck for food. He joined the Fitzroy Boat Club, of which he eventually became Secretary in 1864, acquiring a small boat of his own, the *Fairy Kate*.⁶⁴ Before he left Rockhampton, he accomplished an adventurous, perhaps foolhardy voyage that indicates that urban workers in frontier societies could lead lives equally as dangerous and venturesome as those on the land. On 3 June 1865 with Arthur Ranken and John Hicks he embarked on a cruise to Gladstone. Neither wind nor weather were favourable so they rowed most of the way, camping at night and shooting wildfowl for meals. To relieve boredom the resting oarsman read aloud from *Great Expectations*. They arrived at Gladstone two days later and after two days started the return journey running into a heavy gale, a terrifying experience in a small boat, but they survived and arrived safely in Rockhampton on 12 June; it was a remarkable feat.⁶⁵

Rockhampton offered little evening entertainment apart from balls and private dancing parties. A choral society and a dramatic society had apparently been formed but Walker exhibited no interest in joining. He attended performances, however, describing the first performance of the Dramatic Society, *Nine Points of the Law*, in 1864 as 'very creditably performed'.⁶⁶ Occasionally visiting performers ventured north; though some were third rate, he patronised all performances.⁶⁷ An indifferent player, he particularly enjoyed billiards, and also played chess and card games. Reading remained a favourite pastime. He read an eclectic mixture of fact and fiction, ranging, among others, from the works of Dickens, Macaulay, Defoe, Scott, Charles Kingsley, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Dumas, Harrison Ainsworth,

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 14, 2 March 1863; and vol. 15, 24 October 1863.

⁶¹ Walker diary, vol. 14, 22 October 1862. The name of the club was changed to Rockhampton Cricket Club in December 1863.

⁶² Walker diary, vol. 14, 28 October 1862.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 16, 12 September 1864.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 15, 28 January 1864.

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 16, 3–12 June 1865.

⁶⁶ Walker diary, vol. 15, 28 March 1864.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 14, 19 July 1862; and vol. 16, 3 November 1864, 17 March 1865 and 5 May 1865.

and George Eliot to Kinglake's *Crimea*, Byron's *Don Juan*, Plato's *Divine Dialogues*, Pope's translation of *The Iliad*, L. F. Bungener's *Voltaire and his Times*, G. H. Lewis's *Life of Robespierre*, Herschel's *Natural Philosophy* and D'Aubigny's lengthy *History of the Reformation*. In addition he read regularly a wide range of colonial and home papers and magazines, keeping informed on current events in the world at large.

With a number of friends, he formed the Fitzroy Debating Club.⁶⁸ Although enjoying a good argument in private, he was a somewhat hesitant speaker, afraid of derision. The Debating Club gave him useful experience as well as encouraging consideration of a number of topics that were to loom larger in later life.⁶⁹ However, with the advent of hotter weather, most activity ceased as residents kept indoors, venturing out only in the cool of the morning or evening. The Club was reformed as a debating class in 1865 after the opening of the School of Arts class; again many topics he was later to debate in his political career were discussed.⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that he felt, at this early stage that railways were not adapted to the present state of the Colony as it was not populous enough and increased taxation; they could be much better managed he believed, by private enterprise. He also argued that the Queensland Government was justified in encouraging the importation of Coolie labour. He did not believe that the Australian colonies had any reason whatever for desiring a change in their relations to the Mother Country, but felt that the Southern States of America had a right to be recognised as an independent confederacy. On the subject of whether Napoleon I of France or Napoleon III would be considered the greater man by posterity, he favoured Napoleon III because 'former history shows mobocracy [*sic*] to be worse far worse than the present despotism', an interesting indication of his future political stance.⁷¹ Apart from training in debate and directing his thoughts to study problems of the colony, his membership of the debating club and of the other groups and societies with which he was involved provided him with excellent experience of duties as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, invaluable in later life.

Walker found the climate trying at times; indeed the heat of summer proved almost unbearable. Then he found swimming in the river or in the 'mere' at Gracemere a cool escape. He tried to remain indoors venturing out only in the mornings and evenings when temperatures were cooler. When the wet season arrived the township virtually came to a standstill; creeks flooded, roads were cut and vessels could not come up the river as flood waters swept down. The 'wet season' of 1864, one of the heaviest on record, left most of the surrounding countryside under water, and inundated much of the town. It was not a climate to be treated lightly. Two of his young male friends, Beeston and Eagleton, died of

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 15, 5 August 1863.

⁶⁹ Topics debated included 'The Superiority of Chinese as Diggers over Europeans'; 'Whether the British Government should grant Universal Suffrage'; 'Should Britain recognise the Southern States of America as an Independent Confederacy'; 'Should Railways be undertaken by the State or left to Private Enterprise'; 'Is single or married life more desirable'; 'Whether Democracy is a beneficial form of government to a State or Nation' (Walker diary, vol. 15, 5 August 1863 to 17 October 1863).

⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 16, 17 March 1865.

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 17 March 1865 to 1 June 1865. Walker records both the arguments he supported in debate and his own views on the topics.

diphtheria; others died of tuberculosis and sunstroke.⁷² Walker remained remarkably fit, taking care to follow Dr Brown's advice:

The most effective way of preserving health is to observe temperance in eating and drinking to secure free perspiration straight through the skin and to maintain full exercise of the limbs.⁷³

Though not a total abstainer, he drank only moderately and maintained a meticulous attention to cleanliness. Though not unduly conscious of his looks, he nevertheless gives the impression that he took care to maintain a neat and well-kept appearance. He was 5 ft 7 inches (167 cm) in height and, on arrival in Rockhampton, weighed over 10 stone (64 kg), a pale faced and chubby new chum whose appearance contrasted sharply with that of his deeply tanned brother Tom, a sturdy 5 ft 11 inches (177 cm).⁷⁴ With regular exercise, boyish chubbiness vanished, outdoor activities in the sun developed a tan and with the acquisition of a cabbage tree hat, he must quite soon have been barely distinguishable among the colonials with whom he mixed. One gains the impression that despite lack of stature, he had become a wiry, robust young man, strong in constitution, hardy and vigorous.

Life jogged along in lotus-land fashion; weeks frequently elapsed before his diary was brought up to date. He made the best of life, but though often bored, only occasionally expressed dissatisfaction:

My monotonous life has lost its attraction and I would like a change of some sort. I only wish someone would leave me £20 000 and I would clear out of this blessed hole.⁷⁵

He found diversion at Gracemere. As James Walker of Wallerawang had fostered them, the Archers fostered a number of young relatives. On Gracemere, while Walker was a regular visitor, he saw their own nephew Simon Jorgensen; John Todd, their second cousin; Willie and Ted Walker, sons of Edward Walker, and also second cousins of the Archers; and his own younger brothers Tom and William Henry, as well as a number of other young 'swells'.⁷⁶

By the time Walker arrived, the property had been settled seven years with a comfortable homestead, set in an established garden overlooking the 'mere'.⁷⁷ The atmosphere was cultivated and friendly; the Archers kept open house, extending hospitality to all, with generosity and grace. Walker found a warm welcome; William Archer even provided him with a horse for a time before he could afford to buy his own. The world of Gracemere in the early 1860s was essentially male where one might strip to bathe in the 'mere'—three times on a hot day—enjoy boating, play cricket with the Aboriginal children fielding, or smoke, play chess or backgammon, or sing to the accompaniment of a guitar; often they just sat and

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 13, 28 February 1862; vol. 15, 3 January 1864 and 29 March 1864.

⁷³ William Brown to James Thomas Walker, 2 January 1862, Walker MSS.

⁷⁴ Walker diary, vol. 14, 7 June 1862.

⁷⁵ Walker diary, vol. 16, 8 July 1864.

⁷⁶ The term 'swells' was applied to sons of well-to-do families gaining colonial experience on properties around Rockhampton.

⁷⁷ For descriptions of Gracemere see the diaries of Thomas Walker 1859–1862, Walker MSS.; Australian Council of National Trusts, *Historic homesteads of Australia*, vol. 2, Melbourne, 1976; Clem Lloyd, *The National Estate: Australia's heritage*, Sydney, 1977; and Terence Lane and Jessie Serle, *Australians at home*, Oxford, 1990.

talked. A wide variety of topics were discussed, and Walker absorbed much knowledge of the colony and of the pastoral industry listening to the conversations at Gracemere.⁷⁸

The Archer brothers were excellent role models for a young man. They influenced the young Walker, though to what extent it is difficult to estimate; he certainly admired them greatly and spent much time at Gracemere, including every Christmas Day while in Rockhampton. They were a remarkable family, upright and generous;

...no member of the Archer family made any pretence to exceptional ability. Yet they were all capable men; all possessed an unusually large fund of common sense, all led a blameless life, and an Archer was never known to be guilty of a mean action.⁷⁹

Perhaps the most important influence of the Archers on Walker was their attitude towards the native population. They were recognised for their friendly relations with the Aboriginal tribes in every area they settled, and their kindly treatment of the native people.⁸⁰ There were many problems with Aboriginal-European relations on the frontier; in late 1862 Thomas Gabriel Walker's superintendent on Leura, John Leslie, disappeared, assumed killed by the Aborigines.⁸¹ Despite such incidents the Archers maintained a tolerant, perhaps paternalistic, attitude to the native people; they objected to the methods of the Native Police. Walker relates one instance when an Aborigine was saved from certain slaughter. On 8 April 1863 Richard Hill of Planet Downs was hailed before the District Court for obstructing the Native Police in carrying out their duties; William Archer was the foreman of the jury that acquitted him. As Walker put it:

...the fact was the boy in question was his [Hill's] black boy and as he knew that without any further enquiry as to his guilt he would be shot he assisted him at any rate to escape.⁸²

Walker almost certainly began to develop that sympathy for the Aboriginal people he exhibited so strongly later in Federal Parliament under the influence of the Archers.

The strongest attraction at Gracemere was, however, his brother Tom with whom he spent many hours relaxing or helping to muster the cattle on Oro Oro. If they had disagreed as children, they now became firm friends. Their mother died on 10 May 1863, a sad blow that Walker found difficult to comprehend; 'how hard it is to believe that we shall never meet again on earth'.⁸³ It was not their father, but their sister Kate and Dr Brown, who wrote to tell of her death, and to offer comfort. Within twelve months came the news that their father had married on 21 March 1864 Catherine Bell, the elder sister of their brother-in-law Imrie Bell.⁸⁴ Walker

⁷⁸ Walker diary, vol. 14, 7-8 June 1862 ff.

⁷⁹ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 62, 30 March 1896.

⁸⁰ In *Bulletin*, Sydney, 12 November 1991, reference is made to Amalie Dietrich's visit to the property soon after Walker had left Rockhampton. She wanted an Aborigine shot for her collection. The Archers ran her off the property.

⁸¹ Walker diary, vol. 14, 26 December 1862.

⁸² Walker diary, vol. 14, 8 April 1863.

⁸³ Walker diary, vol. 15, 31 July 1863.

⁸⁴ Married to their sister Jane in India.

liked Catherine, whom he had known in Edinburgh, but was unhappy at the haste with which his father entered into matrimony again. Kate, who had cared for her mother until her death, left the household, going to Germany, and Walker mourned: 'Our family is indeed in one sense of the word broken up'.⁸⁵ In November 1863 their younger brother William Henry (Willie) arrived to work at Gracemere so at least the three brothers were together again.⁸⁶ They were making plans to enter business together, acquiring station properties with Tom and Willie handling the practical side, Walker financial matters; but in October 1864 Tom fell suddenly ill. Initially he was thought to be suffering from sunstroke, but when he continued to suffer further attacks in following weeks it was apparent that he was more seriously ill. Thomas Walker of 'Yaralla' invited him to Sydney to recuperate; there Archibald Archer took him to Dr Nathan who diagnosed epilepsy. Unfortunately Tom suffered another attack while swimming alone at 'Yaralla' and drowned on 23 January 1865. The loss effected Walker even more deeply than that of his mother; dreams of future ventures together suddenly vanished, and he was without his best friend and confidante. However, having witnessed the suffering of his friend Joe Morison, also an epileptic, he realised how little Tom would have enjoyed life under the circumstances.⁸⁷

The years 1863 and 1864 brought Walker many personal losses; in addition to family, his friend Ramsden died suddenly and news came that his old friend in Spain, Joe Bellechasse had died.⁸⁸ He might have been forgiven for leaving the isolated township, but he refused to do so. His father wanted him to seek a more salubrious climate in the south or to return to Britain where he offered to set him up in business, but Walker refused.⁸⁹ This marked a decisive stage in his maturity; it was the first occasion on which he records ignoring his father's advice or his wishes. It marked also his definite commitment to Australia; he was firmly determined to make a future by his own effort in his new country.⁹⁰ He had also decided to remain a banker. W. I. Brown, recognising his ability, had offered him the post of Third Officer in the customs office at Rockhampton, but Walker had rejected the offer; apart from other considerations, the pay was not as good.⁹¹

In his own opinion, by far the most important thing that happened to him in Rockhampton was his acceptance of Christianity.⁹² Since his arrival in Rockhampton he had been questioning the beliefs he had been brought up with and considering ideals of manliness. On reading *The Iliad* he concluded that he preferred the gentleness and bravery of Hector to the sternness of Achilles, finding 'gentleness in place of bravery in war is so pleasing to the imagination'.⁹³ He was not, as Alfred Deakin, attracted to spirituality or indeed to other religions, but

⁸⁵ Walker diary, vol. 16, 21 May 1864.

⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 15, 18 November 1863

⁸⁷ Entries concerning Tom's illness and death are in Walker diary, vol. 16, 17 October 1864 to 16 February 1865.

⁸⁸ Walker diary, vol. 16, 20 December 1864.

⁸⁹ John William Walker to James Thomas Walker, 24 May 1865 and 25 July 1865, Walker MSS.; Walker diary, vol. 16, 30 April 1864.

⁹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 16, 2 July 1864.

⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 15, 5 April 1864.

⁹² Walker diary, vol. 16, 12 July 1865.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 14, 17 July 1862.

queried the keeping of the Sabbath and aspects of Christianity such as, what seemed to him, the punishment of Jesus by the Crucifixion.⁹⁴ At Gracemere he noted that the Archers, though they observed the first day of the week, did not think it a Sabbath—in other words a day of rest devoted simply to reflection and worship. His own views, he noted were unsettled, like his religion. He continued:

I am not religious and I feel consequently that it would be hypocritical on my part to appear so and more especially when others were enjoying what they consider innocent amusements, to stand apart disapproving of same. If I have a belief it is that I cannot be really religious until by Divine Grace I have Faith and until that is the case my religion is not Christianity... Although such is the case I would by no means condemn reading the Bible and attending Church—either may be the means of bringing me to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. I imagine perhaps erroneously I know the theory of Christianity but not the practice... I have a great horror of hypocrisy and I am afraid I am only a hypocrite if I say I am a Christian.⁹⁵

Although continuing to attend Presbyterian Church services regularly, on occasion he worshipped at the Anglican Church and sometimes missed Sunday services in favour of boating excursions. For a period of two months he did not attend church at all but he was not straying far from the straight and narrow path.⁹⁶ While enjoying himself boating and in other amusements on Sundays, it clearly worried him. 'I think if I go on at this rate I should no longer hesitate to call myself a separatist—I certainly didn't keep the Sabbath in the Scotch fashion!' He debated whether it was worse to go boating and play cricket on the Sabbath than to go riding, which was an accepted Sunday activity in the colony, deciding that his former views on the Sabbath were in fact influenced by custom rather than belief:

...custom is to such an extent law to me that I don't exactly feel comfortable in going on as I do on Sundays but when I investigate my feelings I discover that it is not so much religion as custom that I am rebelling against.⁹⁷

He discussed his feelings in a long exchange of letters with Dr Brown.⁹⁸

Meanwhile he moved further away from some of the teachings of his parents, gambling at cards; though he played Limited Loo for only 3d stakes, he lost 22s 6d at Vingt-et-un on one occasion, not a great amount, but something that would not have happened at home in Edinburgh.⁹⁹ He also applied to the Australian Mutual Provident Society for a life policy, which his parents had opposed as wrong and unscriptural, but he believed that it was responsible and, if he married, would ensure his wife would not be left destitute.¹⁰⁰ Dr Brown appears to have encouraged him to consider more orthodox, less narrow, Presbyterianism, but one of the main

⁹⁴ J. A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: A biography*, Melbourne, 1965, ch. 3.

⁹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 14, 8 June 1862.

⁹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 14, 21 December 1862.

⁹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 14, 13 July 1862. In using 'separatist', Walker does not define whether he means one who separates himself from an orthodox religion or whether the word has another meaning for him.

⁹⁸ These letters do not seem to have survived.

⁹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 14, 21 December 1862; and vol. 15, 17 October 1863.

¹⁰⁰ Walker diary, vol. 15, 15 February 1864.

influences was the Rev. A. C. Smith who took over the charge at Rockhampton in March 1864. Walker was greatly impressed by the earnestness and sincerity of his sermons.

Though attending church services more regularly, he was still doubtful of his ability to live honestly a Christian life. Smith involved him in the Committee of the Presbyterian Church though his participation was based on the understanding that the Committee would deal only with secular matters; George Ranken and William Brown assured him that he need have no scruples in the matter.¹⁰¹ The catalyst for his 'conversion' seems to have been the near disastrous end of the boating excursion to Gladstone. On the return journey, in waters they knew to be infested with sharks, they encountered extremely rough weather with strong winds against them. The *Diamantina* came close to them but failed to see their signals for assistance. The strength of the wind increased as darkness fell and the small boat was tossed around alarmingly, but they managed to keep rowing, keep the boat afloat and make some headway; they eventually made land near Raglan Creek. Walker wrote: 'Despair I believe gave us strength', but he had prayed desperately at the same time, though he felt his prayers were 'those of a coward afraid to die; not of a Christian who could say in the sincerity of his heart "Thy will be done"'.¹⁰² It was only a month later that he made the announcement in his diary:

By far the most important thing that has happened to me—I say it in all humility—is that I have at last discovered the blessed consolation of Religion. I trust I am not deceiving myself but I thank God that it has seemed good to him to make me appreciate his Revealed Will—the Bible—somewhat more than I ever did before. Long, long, have I felt that as to the future it was a source of disquiet to my soul—amid the whirl of business I have often felt that I could not put off the consideration of my soul's welfare till a 'convenient season'. Now 'is the accepted time—now is the Day of Salvation'. God preserve me from Hypocrisy from Self-Righteousness (which is abomination in his sight) but make me fully to comprehend his Scheme of Salvation. The Apostle says, 'Now we see him through a glass darkly, but then (referring to the next world) we shall see him face to face'.¹⁰³

He acknowledged that had he followed his parents he might have made the discovery earlier, and

Dr Brown and the Reverend Alex C. Smith have long been impressing me one by letter the other by his preaching and both by their examples, that Christianity is not the dead thing many take it for but a real living active principle...that ought to pervade every thought, word and deed. Oh how far short do we fall of what ought to be the standard of our Faith. God grant that my failings may not be those of enthusiasm in the mind worked up to a pitch of excitement— but rather that we may be spared to hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast with the end knowing that He who hath begun a good works within us still carry it on till we are no longer inhabitants of this transitory world...¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 15 June 1864.

¹⁰² Walker diary, vol. 16, 11 June 1865.

¹⁰³ Walker diary, vol. 16, 12 July 1865.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

Apart from this single diary entry, there is little evidence of any change of conduct. His diary entries remained irregular and he continued to enjoy an active social and outdoor life. He still questioned his own worthiness, writing in December:

I have the highest respect for conscientious and consistent Christians. I fear my faith is very infinitesimal and that I am after all only one of those who have just sufficient Religion to make them uncomfortable.¹⁰⁶

He deplored spurious 'Christianity and Religious Profession', meditating on scepticism and 'fire and brimstone' Christianity, deciding that 'a consistent Christian must lead a life of self-denial... In future, let us show our Faith, feeble as that is more by our life than by our *talk*'.¹⁰⁶ Worldliness he felt was his worst enemy; he feared ridicule and realised in himself a sad lack of self-esteem. He also admitted to a tendency to snobbishness, judging men by birth and position rather than respecting them for their good qualities.

But at last he resolved on the faith that would guide him in the future.

God is good—His ways are inscrutable—We may be sure that if we do our best to act up to the Golden Rule 'Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you'—he will have mercy on our shortcomings. He has sent us into the world for some purpose. Trust in him even in direst adversity. Acknowledge his sovereign right to do with us as it pleases him—seek humbly to discharge all the duties of life conscientiously—not trusting to any good works of your own but rather to the Sovereign Mercy of Our Creator. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Trust in God.¹⁰⁷

It was a significant moment. Hitherto, his beliefs and actions had been largely influenced by the teachings of his parents and preceptors; henceforth he was guided by the principles he had discovered for himself after much doubt and consideration. Honest and determined effort to live according to the Golden Rule, seeking humbly to do his duty conscientiously and trusting in God without self-righteousness—all were notable characteristics of his long life. Though not entirely satisfied, many of his doubts were cast aside and he seemed happier with himself. He appeared, too, to be settled in Rockhampton, until a telegram arrived on 3 March 1866 advising that he had been appointed Manager to open a new branch of the Bank at Townsville, the new settlement 400 miles further north.

That he had earned both respect and affection in Rockhampton is attested by the testimonial that accompanied a parting gift of a gold watch and chain. Signed by the Mayor and most of the leading citizens, it read:

We cannot allow you to leave Rockhampton without expressing to you in some tangible shape our appreciation of your many good qualities whilst residing in Rockhampton...all have observed the zealous manner in which you have done your part in forwarding every movement for the social wellbeing and moral advancement of the community.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Walker diary, vol. 16, 20 December 1865.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Address to James Thomas Walker from Subscribers to a Testimonial on leaving Rockhampton for Cleveland Bay, in Walker MSS.

As he had seen Rockhampton develop from a raw frontier town to a settled entrepôt in four years, so he too had developed from callow boyhood to manhood. For the first time in his life, he was independent, making his own decisions without one of his older relatives virtually in daily contact, and had moved away from the dominance of his father. In the Rockhampton diaries, Walker emerges for the first time as a distinct personality; he fits perfectly Malcolm Prentis's description of the Scots national character:

...canny and parsimonious but never mean, hard working and desirous of 'getting on', fond of debate and theological disputation, with a dry humour, dour but with a strong streak of sentimentality and romanticism and above all strongly family minded and clannish.¹⁰⁹

Circumspect and reserved, though friendly, he was more confident in dealing with his fellows and in his ability to confront problems of life on the tropical frontiers of Australia. His mind was easier, as earlier doubts were cast aside; he had firmly decided to follow a career as a banker in Australia and had become a committed Christian. He had gained much experience and made friendships which would prove of considerable value in the years to come. He left with much optimism to enter into his first managership.

He left Rockhampton on 7 March 1866 aboard the S.S. *Williams*.¹¹⁰ For the first time in his life, at age 24, he would be truly alone and independent; no family members or kinsfolk resided in Townsville. The voyage from Rockhampton took ten days. The journey north allowed him to become acquainted with both the burgeoning sugar industry at Mackay and the growing township of Bowen. At Mackay he visited the plantation of T. H. Fitzgerald, whom he had met previously in Rockhampton¹¹¹ and visited several sugar plantations in the vicinity. He thought Mackay 'a very insignificant place but the soil in the vicinity is of such very superior quality that the people are very sanguine of growing any Tropical plant...'¹¹² He was delighted with the scenery of the Whitsunday Passage, while Bowen 'quite eclipsed my expectations'.¹¹³ He remained there three days awaiting the *Rangatira* from Sydney, as the *Williams* did not continue to Townsville. He noted:

The population is estimated to be between 1500 and 2000 and as there are a few very respectable buildings, such as the Hotels, and the streets are beautifully wide, the Town is by no means a shabby looking place. There is also a fine sandy beach and as the Jetty is now about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long, the Town looks remarkably well and imposing when approaching it by water.¹¹⁴

His accountant, Robert Maughan, arrived from Sydney on the *Rangatira*; although he had not previously met him, Maughan had been a fellow student at the

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia*, Melbourne 1987, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 16, 7 March 1866.

¹¹¹ T. H. Fitzgerald not only pioneered sugar growing at Mackay but also established later the first sugar estate at what is now Innisfail.

¹¹² Walker diary, vol. 16, 7-13 March 1866.

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 16, 13 March 1866.

Edinburgh Institution.¹¹⁵ They sailed together on 16 March for Cleveland Bay, arriving that evening.

Townsville he found 'a picturesque spot with a fine bold hill in its rear known as Castle Hill—the Town is not much at present and the population cannot be much over 200'.¹¹⁶ The town was even less developed than Gladstone had been in 1862. Founded only 16 months earlier, it boasted few buildings of any size. The two-storeyed Criterion Hotel, where Walker and Maughan found accommodation, dominated the townscape; it was a much more impressive building than the Court and Customs House. The main settlement clustered along the Strand and Wickham Street, straggling along Flinders Street until it came to an abrupt halt at a rocky outcrop of the hill then unnamed.¹¹⁷ On the other side of the rocky outcrop, one wharf and warehouse and an hotel stood in clearings amid the scrub at what would become the intersection of Flinders Street and Denham Street. Ross Creek was lined with mangroves, some of which had been cut down, leaving muddy banks that smelled unpleasantly in the hot sun. Hardly any settlement existed in what is now North Ward, apart from a clearing by the lagoon where the first house in the township had been erected. Bush extended to the limits of the distant mountains.¹¹⁸

The main road to the hinterland and to Bowen, over Hervey Range, was then under construction; Walker inspected it in company with A. C. Macmillan, the District Inspector of Roads, whom he had known in Rockhampton, staying overnight at 'Roe's [sic] Eureka Hotel'.¹¹⁹ Alternative routes to the south existed, one following Ross River and across the plains to Woodstock, the other through the saddle between Mounts Stuart and Elliott; these were mere tracks barely discernible through the scrub. Walker and his friend, the town's first solicitor John Ranken Cowan, were lost when, venturing to Woodstock Station, they took the wrong track and headed for the cattle camp to the south of Mount Elliott. The scenery in that region was magnificent with 'lagoons covered with wild fowl, the first one we came to beautifully situated at the immediate foot of the mountain with splendid scrubs of tropical plants surrounding it...'¹²⁰ Soon, however, they were in coastal swamp with mangroves and one of the horses bogged. Sensibly they retraced their steps to Woodstock where the overseer Andrew Ball provided overnight accommodation. They had a lucky escape as Walker noted: 'Had we been out all night without food we should have been very miserable not to mention the danger of the Blacks who are very thick there'. The following day they managed to find the gap across Mount Stuart and arrived safely in town. This incident increased his awareness of the perils of the bush.

¹¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 16, 13 March 1866 ff. Maughan was the older brother of John Maughan, Accountant in the Bank at Sydney, and father of the barrister David Maughan who married Edmund Barton's daughter.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Later named Melton Hill.

¹¹⁸ For an account of the growth of early Townsville see D. M. Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to a golden land: Townsville to 1884*, Townsville, 1984.

¹¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 15–25 May 1866. The road to Bowen turned south from Dalrymple the incipient township on the Burdekin of which little now remains. The Eureka Hotel was run by Charles Seville Rowe. See D. M. and B. C. Gibson-Wilde, *A pattern of pubs: Hotels of Townsville 1864–1914*, Townsville, 1988, p. 154.

¹²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 17, 23 July 1866.

Townsville gave him other experiences of the dangers of the area. Sharks and crocodiles abounded; his friend Greaves's dog, Nellie, was taken by a crocodile while crossing Ross Creek. Other dangers lurked; his faithful companion Pirate, a black retriever, barely twelve months old, and given him by his brother Willie, died from snake bite while walking on Castle Hill.¹²¹ It was a land where one did not take unnecessary risks. Yet, he was to remember his nine months in the township as 'probably my happiest time as a Bank officer in Australia. We were all good friends and it was my first managership...'¹²² His diaries provide the only known personal record of life in Townsville in 1866.¹²³

There was much to be done on his arrival. He had to find rented premises, to furnish the office and to establish all of the procedures and functions of the branch. Robert Towns, after whom the town was named, was making his only visit to the town. Towns, a director of the Bank of New South Wales, was extremely annoyed that his advice to establish a branch sooner had not been followed and the Australian Joint Stock Bank had already opened. He was an irascible old man, but Walker appears to have got on with him quite well, merely saying that he 'naturally takes a great interest in the opening of this Branch of the old establishment'.¹²⁴ The branch opened four days after Walker arrived, on Tuesday, 20 March—coincidentally his twenty-fifth birthday and the tenth anniversary of the commencement of his diary.¹²⁵ The premises he secured were owned by Black & Co., in Flinders Street opposite their recently constructed wharf. It was an insubstantial and cramped structure of timber and iron, infested with cockroaches. Walker and Maughan slept on the premises, taking their meals at the Criterion Hotel.

Business in Townsville was even slower than at Rockhampton:

All the people here are very sanguine as to the prospects of the place but as the supposed Gold Fields have as yet been rather disappointments and the squatters will in all probability be the main stay of the place, the material progress of the Town cannot be expected to be very rapid. Overtrading should be avoided.¹²⁶

Having arranged the office, he found that there was no need to open longer than three hours a day; he had more spare time than he had ever had much of which he devoted to reading. His daily routine was almost idyllic:

...bathe before breakfast, open the Bank to the public at 10—close at 1—dine at 1.30—spend the afternoon reading principally—bathe again about 6—tea at 6.30—spend the rest of the evening the best way possible.¹²⁷

Things did not improve and Walker, an energetic and active young man, did not enjoy a lazy life; he noted: 'Privately Maughan and I have little to complain excepting want of work...'¹²⁸ A fortnight later the slump in business was 'almost disheartening'.¹²⁹ The town was suffering from 'the crisis'; as Walker explained:

¹²¹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 29 March 1866 and 14 May 1866.

¹²² James Thomas Walker, memoranda, Walker MSS.

¹²³ Some newspapers exist but issues are missing and for a time no newspaper existed.

¹²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 16, 16 March 1866.

¹²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 16, 20 March 1866.

¹²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 16, 19 March 1866.

¹²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 16, 21–23 March 1866.

Owing to the failure of the Agra Bank, the government of Queensland has been considerably inconvenienced as they were negotiating the sale of debentures through them. All Public Works were suspended for a few days, cheques dishonoured at the Union Bank (as Agents for the 'Agra') and a change of Ministry had taken place.¹³⁰

Drought, too, was grasping the hinterland;

...great want of grass and water, so that many squatters have had to delay shearing operations and some even intend bringing their sheep down to the coast country to shear. The country on this side of the Burdekin, not so bad as on the other side.¹³¹

Walker was finding the lack of work increasingly irksome with 'not sufficient variety for my taste'.¹³² He appears to have been becoming disenchanted with his Australian life, exhibiting some rare signs of homesickness. On ascending Hervey Range, he was rather more critical of the Australian scene than he had been at Rockhampton, though his comment was probably fair since the country was quite dry by May of 1866.

From the top of the Range one has an extensive view—but, like all Australian landscapes, with a sad want of variety—miserable looking country—although certainly there were many bold peaks and the sea not far off.¹³³

At times he sounds utterly fed up:

This Townsville after all is an out of the world hole—it seems already an age since we had even Rockhampton papers, and I have been unable to get a decent book for these jottings. All books seem intended for purely mercantile transactions! How we wish at times we could transport ourselves even for a short week to the dear old country never so dear to us as now.¹³⁴

This mood did not last long and, as at Rockhampton, he occupied his time as best he could, finding companionship among the other clerks and bankers and with John Cowan. There were six regular diners at the Criterion Hotel: S. F. Walker, Clerk to J. M. Black & Co.; Boston, Clerk to Carter, Fryer & Co.; W. B. Grimaldi, Auctioneer and Commission Agent; Greaves of the Joint Stock Bank; and Walker and Maughan—of the six, four were Scots. A. C. Macmillan, Superintendent of Roads, whom he had known in Rockhampton, was a regular visitor to town, and he played chess and billiards with merchants Abraham Brodziak and Anton Blitz, and others such as James Hann or R. B. Leefe of Cardwell who visited the town from time to time. No church existed, nor was there a resident clergyman; James Gordon read the service and a sermon each Sunday morning. Walker attended regularly but he was not enamoured of the Anglican service.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 16, 7 May 1866.

¹²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 14 May 1866.

¹³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 17, 8 August 1866.

¹³¹ Walker diary, vol. 17, 16 November 1866.

¹³² Walker diary, vol. 17, 18 November 1866.

¹³³ Walker diary, vol. 16, 25 May 1866.

¹³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 17, 12 July 1866.

¹³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 17, 30 September 1866.

There were fewer 'ladies' than at Rockhampton; when he arrived only Mrs Gordon and Mrs Carter were in residence but within the next few months his friends Greaves and Josephson of the Australian Joint Stock Bank were married so the number of 'ladies' doubled. Walker was a regular visitor in the households of his married friends. Matrimony remained much on his mind; he mused that he should like his wife to resemble Marcia Denison, the heroine of *Sir Jasper's Tenant* by Miss Braddon.¹⁸⁶ However, Townsville presented few opportunities to alter his bachelor status.

He continued to enjoy walking, swimming, boating and riding; one regular walk took him along the beach to Kissing Point, known derisively as 'Bobby's Nob' among the locals. On other occasions he went kangaroo hunting, galloping over the plains behind the township, and sailing to Magnetic Island.¹⁸⁷ He again joined a committee to form a School of Arts and helped to raise money for an hospital. He read more taking an interest in more serious works, obviously thinking deeply on their content. He noted that as he grew older he was more interested in biography and history and was taking more interest in current affairs and politics.¹⁸⁸ Among works read at this time were: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Macaulay's *Essays*, Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, *Civil Disabilities of the Jews*, Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, Hallam's *Constitutional History*, Southey's *Colloquies on Society*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*, *The War of the Succession in Spain*, Sir William Temple's *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*, *Frederick the Great*, *The Life and Writings of Addison*, George Augustus Sala's *My Diary in America in the Midst of War*, and Grace Aguiler's *The Jewish Faith*. Of particular interest was *The Life of Edward Irving* by Mrs Oliphant; he felt 'a strong sympathy for Irving in his trials of Faith'. *On representative government* by John Stuart Mill captured his interest:

Mr Mill gives his views very explicitly and many of them I believe will some day be adopted. Like Thomas Hare he believes in the Representation of Minorities by making the whole country (Great Britain) one large constituency, the number of voters to be divided by the number of members... *In time* he believes in universal suffrage (including women) subject however to restrictions—tax-paying and educational—and also in plurality of votes subject to an educational standard. He made no allusion, however, to the manner in which a vacancy caused by death or resignation is to be filled up, but as he refers for minute detail to Mr Hare's work *Treatise on the Election of Representatives* I must go to it for further information...¹⁸⁹

So, thirty-three years before he debated such matters as a Federation Father, he was studying the work of John Stuart Mill and studying the Hare System with great interest.

It was at Townsville that he first evinced a particular interest in the British Liberal Party; after reading Earl Russell's *An Essay on the History of the English Government and Constitution* that he first decided that his sympathies were 'all

¹⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 16, 1–11 July 1866.

¹⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 16, 30 March 1866.

¹⁸⁸ Walker diary, vol. 16, 9 May 1866 and 11 July 1866.

¹⁸⁹ Walker diary, vol. 16, 30 June 1866.

with the Liberal Party'.¹⁴⁰ Local politics, were however, very much of the backwoods variety, the election meetings with 'the usual amount of coarse fun'.¹⁴¹

At Townsville, too, he first describes personal encounters with Kanakas and Chinese. On 8 July 1866 he witnessed the arrival of between fifty and sixty New Hebridean workers for the sugar plantation. Among them were

... 15 mere boys amongst them some such fine intelligent little fellows—their merry laughing eyes inspire one with a strong liking for them.¹⁴²

By then there were about eighty Kanakas in Townsville with, according to Walker, many more in the beche-de-mer and trepang trade. The Chinese numbered about sixty-five; they lived close to the lagoon in what is now known as Belgian Gardens. According to Walker their gardens were splendid, and they furnished the township with excellent vegetables. One of their number he described as

... a most intelligent man having been in London, New York, California and almost all the towns in Australia along the coast from Melbourne to Townsville as well as at several of the Gold Fields. All honour to the Chinese!¹⁴³

They gave him tea, which was 'capital stuff' and he found their accommodation clean and tidy, the beds with mosquito nets. With both Kanakas and Chinese, he was obviously friendly and tolerant.

He makes little mention of the European population apart from those of his own class, though he must have known the maids at the hotel and various carriers and tradesmen who came to the Bank; in both Rockhampton and Townsville it seems that he had little knowledge of or interest in the lives of less affluent workers.

The quiet days of Townsville came to an end for Walker, however, on 4 December 1866 when the *Boomerang* arrived with another Accountant, Mr James, and an appointment for Maughan as Acting Manager. After four and a half years in central and northern Queensland, Walker had been appointed Manager of the much larger Toowoomba Branch. He was directed to leave on the steamer the following afternoon so once more he hurriedly said goodbye to friends, fifteen of whom arranged a supper party in farewell. Despite isolation and the occasional complaint, he had enjoyed his months in the township and felt 'it would be long before I forget friends and acquaintances'.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, he maintained friendship with many of his Townsville friends for the rest of his life, but his sojourns in Rockhampton and Townsville had provided other experiences and knowledge that would influence him in years to come. Happy encounters with Aborigines, Chinese and Kanakas and the tolerant attitude of the Archers laid the foundations for future opposition to White Australia Policy. He had adopted sincerely a Christian philosophy of life and developed an admiration for English Liberal political principles that placed him firmly on the path to Australian conservatism in later years.

¹⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 17, 4 November 1866.

¹⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 17, 1 September 1866 and 9 September 1866.

¹⁴² Walker diary, vol. 16, 11 July 1866.

¹⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 17, 21 July 1866.

¹⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 17, 4 December 1866.

At Toowoomba the transition occurred from Walker's comparatively carefree youth to the responsibilities of mature manhood, both in his career and in private life. What appeared to be another stage in a rapidly advancing career seemed later to be developing into a dead end, for reasons he could not have foreseen and which do not seem to reflect on his capabilities, though he refused two opportunities for transfer. Marriage brought personal fulfilment and happiness in private life, despite growing financial burdens. Despite occasional complaints he remained optimistic, accepting his situation in the bank as he had accepted his position in the family hierarchy in earlier life. Though pressure of work and increased responsibilities occupied his time, he became more involved in religious affairs and community service, and developed a keener interest in politics.

In transferring from Townsville to Toowoomba, he moved from one of the most recently settled regions in Queensland to one of the oldest. Toowoomba, was the regional centre of the Darling Downs, the area that attracted the first free settlers to the future colony of Queensland. Developed from the original settlement at Drayton, established in 1843, it was at the heart of rich agricultural and pastoral land, astride what Duncan Waterson described as 'the natural gateway to Brisbane', near Cunningham's Gap in the Great Dividing Range.¹ No longer a pioneering settlement, Toowoomba was a well-established municipality by 1866² with an hierarchy of influential squatters and storekeepers.

In the late 1850s land sales had boomed; land sold in 1853 for £4 an acre brought £120 an acre in 1858. By 1866 boom had turned to bust as the effect of drought and financial crisis that Walker had already witnessed in the north combined with other factors to cause the failure of a number of pastoralists and businessmen and a sharp decline in land values. The Bank of New South Wales was forced to foreclose on some of its creditors but the value of property held as security had declined to such an extent that the Toowoomba Branch was proving a liability. For months Shepherd Smith, the General Manager in Sydney, had been corresponding with Alexander Archer, Inspector for Queensland and Manager at Brisbane, regarding problems at Toowoomba.

I am beyond measure annoyed with the present position of our Toowoomba business. McAlpine has not only exhibited utter incapacity and wilful disregard of instructions but he appears to have been allowed to escape the check and supervision which we chiefly depended on you to apply... I hardly know what steps to adopt towards him but meanwhile I trust you will endeavour to get back a

1 D. B. Waterson, *Squatter, selector, and storekeeper*, Sydney, 1968, p. 80.

2 *ibid.*, p. 81. Proclamation, 24 November 1860.

large portion of our funds and render the remainder as secure as you can.³

The following month Smith warned Archer: 'Nothing but extreme caution and sound discretion can save Toowoomba', but the situation deteriorated further.⁴ John Ranken Peebles, the Bank Inspector from Sydney, was dispatched to Toowoomba; in October he reported that the staff were 'chiefly comprised of incapables.' After receipt of Peebles's report, Smith took matters into his own hands, informing Archer: '...in the course of a few days I shall arrange for permanent changes of a radical nature'.⁵

The major change was the appointment of a new Manager, James Thomas Walker, who Smith apparently thought possessed the necessary capability, caution and discretion required; it may have been flattering to be considered the only officer in Queensland capable of undertaking the task, but as months extended to years the demands of the Toowoomba managership undermined his relationship with Smith and the Bank, and, to a degree, his enthusiasm for a banking career.

Walker was catapulted from the quiet pace of banking in a frontier port into the turmoil of disentangling a situation that eventually resulted in writing off bad debts totalling over £11 000. As Maughan, who had taken over as Manager in Townsville, remarked:

...the state of affairs at Toowoomba is startling. Surely Macalpine lost his head. It will require you to keep a stout heart while righting the business.⁶

It was both a challenge and an outlet for his remarkable nervous energy. He had the assistance of Peebles who remained in Toowoomba until May 1867, but at times he worked all night to reduce the chaos to a point where the affairs of the Branch were even comprehensible. In June Smith himself arrived on inspection. Walker found his visit an ordeal.

I cannot say that I like Inspection...it seems as if somehow or another even if you do your best and deprive yourself of much relaxation you are bound to do something in conduct of a Branch in such a manner as to lay yourself open to reproof, not cautious enough here and too liberal there although too the whole time outsiders are looking upon you as a regular *screw*.⁷

He survived Smith's visit and continued the rescue of Toowoomba Branch, buoyed by the philosophy 'Nothing like working with a will when there is something to be done'.⁸ By early 1868 Archer was able to write, 'I believe Walker has done his part well'; the Branch by then was showing an increase in deposits of over £4000.⁹ However, Archer noted:

the bulk of our money is sunk in landed securities and the process of realisation must be slow. There is not much to encourage the

³ Shepherd Smith to Alexander Archer, 25 August 1866, Westpac Archives.

⁴ *ibid.*, 10 September 1866.

⁵ *ibid.*, 18 October 1866.

⁶ Robert Maughan to James Thomas Walker, 30 December 1866, Walker MSS.

⁷ Walker diary, vol. 18, 7 June 1867.

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 18, 29 March 1867.

⁹ Shepherd Smith to Alexander Archer, *op. cit.*, 14 March 1868 and 24 April 1868.

expectation of any speedy revival in the prospects of Toowoomba. It is the depot of a district in which farming has been carried on in a small way for some years, but hitherto with but feeble results...¹⁰

Archer's prediction proved correct; improvement was slow indeed. For the next ten years Walker carried on resuscitating Toowoomba Branch. When he had left Townsville, Toowoomba was considered a promotion, but by 1873 the reverse applied as Townsville 'has gone ahead so greatly that business there is brisker and more profitable...than poor old Toowoomba'.¹¹ Townsville then had a staff of four while Toowoomba had only three; when he arrived the staff had numbered eight.

Problems arose, not only with short staffing but with the lack of experienced staff. The late 1860s and early 1870s was a period of rapid expansion as new branches opened on the goldfields discovered in the late 1860s and 1870s in various parts of Queensland, and to service expanding settlement in other areas. The Queensland National Bank, founded in 1872, with less conservative policies than the Bank of New South Wales, expanded rapidly, enticing both staff and business from the Wales. Staff shortages were exacerbated as the more enterprising young officers seized opportunities for advancement outside banking. Experienced officers were transferred to open new branches or to fill vacancies in other branches and the staff at Toowoomba became younger and less experienced. The work of the manager increased with the constant need for supervision; 'after all when one has such youngsters it is very necessary to look personally through their work as one cannot expect old heads on young shoulders'.¹² As Walker noted: '...a want of accuracy in Bank officers is almost unendurable as one mistake engenders so many', and the incompetence of some of the junior officers added considerably to his work load.¹³ In 1874 a fourth staff member was employed, but the standard of officers appears to have improved little; in 1878 he was still complaining: 'Two of my staff are simply mechanical machines distinguished by an amazing amount of inaccuracy'.¹⁴

Apart from staff problems, as business continued slow in Toowoomba and land values remained depressed, his attempts to find buyers for properties on which the bank had foreclosed met with rejection from Sydney. Archer understood some of the problems but Smith railed at both of them:

The only thing that makes me hesitate about accepting the offer of £1075 for the Toowoomba 'White House [or Horse]' is my general disbelief in Walker's and your own estimate of the value of Toowoomba lands. He has sent us so many offers that he has considered 'good' and we have had such little cause to regret our refusal of them that I doubt whether he has yet fully shaken off the depressed views that his experience of prolonged bad times and 'no values' naturally enough impressed him with. The site of the Hotel is of course first class and property will rise in Toowoomba as it has in Brisbane and meanwhile the rental is a good interest but having said this much you may accept the £1075 if on full consideration you think

¹⁰ Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, op. cit., 24 April 1868.

¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 24, 25 January 1873.

¹² Walker diary, vol. 24, 17 April 1874.

¹³ Walker diary, vol. 24, 8 June 1874.

¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 28, 8 March 1878.

it desirable. I admit that you do not find a buyer for such a property every day and I may of course be more out in my estimate of value than either Walker or yourself.¹⁵

Walker found such criticisms most galling. Smith was a workaholic, frequently chided by Donald Larnach and others for overworking.¹⁶ He appears to have expected similar commitment from the officers, in addition to a high standard of behaviour and obedience to the rules he laid down.¹⁷ Walker seldom worked fewer than 35 hours a week, sometimes as many as 69 hours; at half yearly balance it was often necessary for staff to work very late and Walker himself worked all night on many occasions. As Holder notes, no organised holiday arrangements existed, though the staff of the Bank were able to take time off for illness, family matters or social commitments.¹⁸ There were occasions when Walker worked only 32 hours in the week and was able to take an afternoon off to enjoy a cricket match or some other relaxation, but from the time he entered the Bank in Australia in 1862 until June 1876 the only extended holiday he enjoyed was the week of his honeymoon in 1868, while his salary remained £500 with no bonuses until 1874 when he received an increase of £25 per annum.

He grew discontented, particularly at the restrictions on the behaviour of officers. As staff problems increased in mining towns¹⁹, Smith issued more directives. In 1873 officers were prohibited from investing in mining ventures without the permission of head office. Walker had formed a small and not particularly successful partnership to invest in tin mining at Stanthorpe with Westby Palmer and others the year before. He was particularly incensed at this directive: 'My very blood boils at this interference with personal liberty...'²⁰ There was little he could do other than express mild disagreement, for fear of losing his job.

Faced with ever mounting problems with staff in goldfields branches, Smith introduced further restrictions:

It is most annoying that when everything is going on pretty satisfactorily in the office up comes a new book of 'Rules and Regulations to be observed by the officers' of the most ultra red-tape and arbitrary character... They perfectly stink of Shepherd Smith's domineering autocratic system. It is actually now as much as an officer's appointment is worth to go to a game of billiards in an hotel!²¹

Walker found it particularly frustrating that he was not in a position to resign in disgust; he failed to consider that not all officers were as honest and dependable as he, and Smith might have been justified in his directive. He was obliged to accept the situation, but 'red-tapeism' continued to annoy him; in 1878 he again complained, 'My life gets burdensome with the monotonous regularity of red tape instructions and duties. Oh, contentment! Wither has thou flown?'²²

¹⁵ Shepherd Smith to Alexander Archer, op. cit., 5 March 1873.

¹⁶ Holder, op. cit., p. 397.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 405.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 405–06.

²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 24, 8 December 1873. Correspondence and a notebook regarding the Canning Tin Mining Company are in Walker MSS.

²¹ Walker diary, vol. 26, 3 October 1876.

His position was all the more galling as concern for his family forced him to decline offers of transfers which would take him away from the problems of Toowoomba. In 1875 William Villiers Brown, the Manager at Townsville, suffering health problems in the tropical climate, suggested a swap but Janette did not wish to go and his cousin Thomas Walker, by that time President of the Bank of New South Wales, advised against the exchange though he sent a cheque for £100 to assist.²³ In 1876 family considerations again caused him to decline a transfer, on this occasion to Rockhampton, while in view of his circumstances he found almost amusing the offer from his old friend James Lawrie, to return to Edinburgh to join him in the stockbroking concern he had taken over from their old employee Mr Allan.²⁴

That he was trustworthy and effective is attested by the fact that he was called on to act as substitute for Archer on a number of occasions; in 1870 he was sent to inspect the branches at Gympie and Warwick when problems arose.²⁵ In 1871 when Alexander Archer took leave to return to Scotland to marry Mary Louisa (Minnie) Mackenzie²⁶, he had no hesitation in recommending that his position as Manager of Brisbane and Inspector for Queensland should be shared by McCarthy of Brisbane and Walker.²⁷ After McCarthy's sudden death in September, Walker continued alone with no obvious difficulty in coping with the work.²⁸ His time in the Brisbane office expanded his banking experience and introduced him to many of the business identities of Brisbane. However, for the twelve months he received only £75 remuneration for the additional work. In October 1875 he again filled in for Archer inspecting Warwick Branch and in January 1877 drove his own buggy to Goondiwindi, a journey of three and a half days, to open a branch there.²⁹

He appears to have fulfilled his duties admirably, but he was passed over for promotion, William Villiers Brown receiving an appointment to Head Office.³⁰ Walker might have considered Brown a rival, but he did not, admiring him for his equable temperament, so different from his own. Their friendship lasted until Brown's untimely death in 1915.³¹ He was, however extremely disappointed. He was again disappointed, though the actual cause is not stated, in November 1877 when he reacted bitterly,

There is scarcely anything more galling to certain temperaments than to see personal preferences supersede faithful services... At my time of life and having been at all events moderately successful as a

²² Walker diary, vol. 28, 8 March 1878.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 26, 18 September 1875.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 25, 29 January 1875, and 14 February 1876 to 20 March 1876.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 26, 7 October 1875; Shepherd Smith to Alexander Archer, op. cit., 11 December 1873.

²⁶ Murdoch Wales, 'Colonial banker: The lives and times of Alexander 'Sandy' Archer and Mary Louisa 'Minnie' Archer', copy of MS in National Australia Bank Archives, Brisbane, n.d.

²⁷ Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, op. cit., 12 January 1871.

²⁸ James Thomas Walker to Shepherd Smith, 22 September 1871, Westpac Archives.

²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 25, 7 October 1875; and vol. 27, 5 January 1877 to 22 January 1877.

³⁰ In 1876 Brown was transferred to Brisbane as Assistant Manager to Archer though not before his health had nearly broken down in the tropical climate of Townsville. (Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, op. cit., 27 January 1876.)

³¹ Walker diary, vol. 104, 26–29 April 1915.

manager this is not encouraging. I try to be philosophical and humble but it is a hard struggle. However we must avoid getting soured.³²

By early 1878 after twelve years in the ailing Towoomba branch, which his hard work had undoubtedly improved, he was almost desperate.

I think between incompetent officers and the Bank's treatment of myself I find it hard very hard that I cannot afford at present to 'cut the painter'. Unless things take a turn for the better shortly I shall be surprised if I do not resign before six months are over—in pure disgust. I preach contentment and patience—but it is very difficult to practise it. One must try and avoid personal pettiness but I begin to understand how it is that some people become soured and crabbed.³³

But his unfailing optimism prevailed as he ended, 'Cheer up!'.³⁴ The following month, however, he discovered careless mistakes in the balance and once again seemed in despair,

It really is high time a change should take place either in the personnel of the staff or else of myself. My life gets burdensome with the monotonous regularity of red-tape instructions and duties.³⁵

Yet, despite his own problems, he was a fair and kindly 'boss'. At half yearly balance when working late, the staff dined with the Walkers in the Manager's quarters. If they worked past midnight, as on one occasion, he closed the bank on the following day, not believing it right to keep staff so late.³⁶ When staff were absent, ill, he visited them. All seemed to recognise that they could approach him with problems and receive a fair hearing, despite his hasty temper, and many remained his friends for the rest of their lives. None doubted his honesty and integrity.

The long-desired change came in July 1878 when Walker was appointed Acting Assistant Manager at Brisbane. He was relieving Brown, on leave at the time, but Brown had decided to resign.³⁷ Archer informed Smith of Brown's resignation on 19 September 1878, with the rider that Walker was in his opinion 'the most suitable man in my district for the position'.³⁸ In his next letter Archer expanded further, 'a hand with the pluck and energy of a J. T. Walker will be to our advantage here at the present time'.³⁹

Archer's recommendation was followed only in part. Walker became Assistant Inspector, but he did not become Assistant Manager of Brisbane Branch. As part of a programme to relieve his senior staff of some of their responsibilities, Smith appointed Henry Bowen Stiles to manage the Brisbane Branch. Stiles was in fact being demoted from Melbourne where he had created a number of problems. His career at Brisbane Branch did not improve his reputation and he was removed in 1880 when Alexander Archer again resumed responsibility for Brisbane Branch as

³² Walker diary, vol. 27, 24 November 1877.

³³ Walker diary, vol. 28, 22 February 1878.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 28, 8 March 1878.

³⁶ Walker diary, vol. 26, 31 March 1876.

³⁷ He became a partner in the Townsville mercantile company Clifton & Aplin, thenceforth known as Aplin, Brown & Company.

³⁸ Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, *op. cit.*, 19 September 1878.

³⁹ *ibid.*, 20 September 1878.

well as continuing in the role of Queensland Inspector; Walker was then Assistant Manager, Brisbane Branch, as well as Assistant Inspector, second-in-charge of Queensland operations.⁴⁰

From a business point of view, Toowoomba was an education indeed. Private loan agents charged extortionate interest rates, taking advantage of the simple German settlers developing farms in the region, while it was necessary to take legal action in many cases respecting mortgaged properties. Walker disliked intensely these aspects of the Toowoomba commercial scene;

...if a man after having a few years in the commercial morality of this place is not tainted I begin to think he must have something of the saint in his composition.⁴¹

Generally, his years in Toowoomba expanded his knowledge of problems of banking he had not previously encountered, and afforded him an excellent opportunity to observe the development of south-eastern Queensland. He knew Roma, Dalby, Goondiwindi and Stanthorpe from their earliest years, had the opportunity to see sugar plantations in the Maryborough district from their foundation, viewed mining ventures at Gympie and other areas and observed fluctuations in the fortunes of major pastoral properties such as Glengallan, Clifton, Callandoon and many others. He also became acquainted with many of the men who helped to shape the colony's destiny: Oscar de Satge, Sam Hodgson, W. H. Walsh, Samuel Walker Griffith, Pope Cooper, Hugh Nelson, Ratcliffe Pring and many others. In fact his Toowoomba years added considerably to a superb knowledge of the history of Queensland and its public men, that, enhanced by succeeding years in Brisbane, was a major asset in his later political life.

Despite the demands of his career, he maintained his interest in politics and continued his involvement with community service and the Presbyterian Church. He was prevented from active participation in politics by express Bank policy; he discovered that he could not even sign a requisition for James Taylor to stand for parliament without retribution. During the election of 1870 his support for Taylor resulted in letters to the editor of the *Queensland Express* on the subject of 'Political Bank Managers'. Though careful not to name him, one was particularly derogatory: 'The Manager...is one of those fussy individuals who is never easy unless he is poking his nose into everybody's business...'⁴² James Taylor opposed the Mayor of Toowoomba, W. H. Groom; when Groom won, his supporters shattered the bank windows.⁴³ Thus Walker discovered early that politics was not a gentle game.

He was refining his own views. By 1870 he was already an enthusiastic supporter of 'Free Trade'; at the Toowoomba Agricultural Show, representing the Commercial interests of the town, he responded to the speeches of the Governor and of W. H.

⁴⁰ Holder, *op. cit.*, pp. 401-02.

⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 18, 3 June 1867; and vol. 19, 5 June 1869.

⁴² *Queensland Express*, 29 July 1870 and 15 August 1870.

⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 21, 29 July 1870 to 18 August 1870. Groom was elected to the first Federal Parliament of Australia in 1901 but died soon after election. See anon. [possibly Groom himself], *A life's work: 34 years in Parliament: What Mr Groom has done for Toowoomba, Toowoomba, 1895(?)*; and Joan Rydon, *A biographical register of the Commonwealth Parliament 1901-1972*, Canberra, 1975, p. 95.

Groom, making his opposition to Protective tariff measures clear.⁴⁴ By then he had become an admirer of W. E. Gladstone in British politics though his mother-in-law dismissed Gladstone as a Jesuit and his father rather snobbishly denigrated him as he was descended from one 'Meal Tom' whom he had known in Leith.⁴⁵ Walker, however, maintained his independence, admiring Gladstone for his

...transcendent ability and his willingness to follow up connections.
The more I study the man and the reasons he gives for his more
mature judgements on many matters the more I do admire him.⁴⁶

He continued to ponder Free Trade, believing protection placed a country in a state of blockade, and was more likely to lead to war than Free Trade.⁴⁷ So, twenty-six years before he joined the Freetraders in Federation politics, he had embraced Free Trade principles and considered himself 'a Liberal in Home Politics and what is called a Conservative (by the other side) in Australia!'.⁴⁸ He remarked somewhat cynically that to be popular with the masses in Australia one ought:

- 1 to be a Protectionist.
- 2 to go in for extensive public works, keep the money in circulation and trust to the chapter of accounts—let posterity take care of itself!
- 3 to oppose Immigration and especially coloured immigration.⁴⁹

He ended this discussion with a conclusion that perhaps sums up his later political philosophy most succinctly:

Preserve us from popularity hunting—let us do what is right using discretion and caution and in the long term we shall have our reward.⁵⁰

He had, too, begun to formulate his stand on immigration. He was particularly impressed with Archibald Archer's views on Kanaka labour; with fourteen years experience in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands, Archer was well acquainted with the Polynesian and Melanesian peoples. He did not believe, rightly as it proved, that they were suited to station life, but were more adapted to agricultural labour. They were, he noted, 'a very social and affectionate people and liked to live together very much'.⁵¹ Walker developed his own views, extending his knowledge of Rockhampton and Townsville days, observing Kanaka workers at 'Range View' and on sugar plantations in the Maryborough region. For a time he employed Kanaka workers himself. One in particular, Charley Waliba, who had paid his own passage to work in Australia, he found admirable; Charley had money in a Savings account and was most anxious to learn to spell and to read.⁵² A lecture given by J. C. White at the School of Arts, on 'The Aborigines of Australia', appears to have reinforced the attitudes he had absorbed from the Archers regarding the Aboriginal people; White espoused the cause of the Aborigines, deploring their slaughter.⁵³

⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 20, 20 January 1870.

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 20, 1 January 1870.

⁴⁶ Walker diary, vol. 20, 20 January 1870.

⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 21, 13 June 1870.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 18, 12 January 1868.

⁵² Walker diary, vol. 26, 10–21 November 1876.

Relieving in Brisbane enabled Walker to attend sessions of Parliament. Archibald Archer had entered parliament by 1867; Walker went with William Archer to hear the debates in the Upper House on the Second Reading of the Crown Lands Alienation Act. It was his first experience of Queensland Parliament and he was disgusted at the low calibre of the debate; 'more illogical and childish speeches I never wish to hear'.⁵⁴ With Archibald Archer he met other members of Queensland Parliament, A. H. Palmer and W. H. Walsh, and renewed acquaintance with T. H. Fitzgerald.⁵⁵ During 1867, too, Walker wrote his first major political article—a commentary *On the Bill to Consolidate and Amend the laws relating to Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes and Cheques*; judicious and sensible, it appeared in the *Darling Downs Gazette* on 16 November 1867.

It was not until 1871, however, that he evinced the first sign of political ambition. Reflecting on the debates in Parliament, he commented: 'I daresay I should prefer taking a part in them! Perhaps not, had I a trial!'.⁵⁶ For the time being he remained an observer.

His banking career did not exclude him from participation in social and charitable activities. Conscientious and methodical he devoted many hours to voluntary community work. As life grew busier he had less time to devote to extraneous activities, but even as late as 1874 he noted that in one day he had spent an hour on School of Arts business, half an hour on the books of the Caledonian Society, and three hours on church work.⁵⁷ The interest in Schools of Arts he had developed in Rockhampton and Townsville continued in Toowoomba; he was elected to the School of Arts Committee on 23 October 1867 with Dr Nelson as President. The jealousies and squabbles rife in Toowoomba came to the surface as Walker then found himself accused of 'packing the meeting and voting for a clique', accusations which were unfounded and somewhat ridiculous.⁵⁸ Undaunted he immediately set about drawing up improved Laws and Bylaws for the Society and working to raise money to improve the services, particularly the library and the lecture courses.

The School of Arts Committee continued a major interest; he was most regular attending meetings and was elected President for the year 1873–1874, retiring only because he had promised Janette to do so and 'of course I had to keep my word'.⁵⁹ Meetings were frequently boisterous, particularly when Walker and W. H. Groom were present. As he noted: 'Mr Groom and I are both hasty and once ignited we can both speak plainly'.⁶⁰ Despite differences, he worked with a will collecting subscriptions, assisting in fund raising, and helping to ensure the continuing success of the School of Arts.

⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 19, 25 August 1869.

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 18, 18 December 1867.

⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 18, 30 December 1867. For biographical information on members of Queensland Parliament see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 21, 15 April 1871.

⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 25, 7 October 1874.

⁵⁸ Walker diary, vol. 18, 23 October 1867.

⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 24, 8 October 1874.

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 20, 5 November 1869.

His interest in education extended to support for the founding of National Schools in the suburbs developing around Toowoomba and at 'Highfields' where Mrs Palmer donated £50 to the Government to start a school. He also supported strongly the founding of a Grammar School at Toowoomba, but caused a disturbance by proposing that higher education opportunities should be provided for girls as well as boys. James Taylor ridiculed Walker and those who supported him for entertaining such notions. Walker and another proponent of education for women, J. W. Abrahams, carried the debate into the newspapers with letters to the Editors of the *Darling Downs Gazette* and the *Brisbane Telegraph*. The matter was debated further in the *Brisbane Courier Mail* but Toowoomba remained without a Girls Grammar School. It was a principle on which Walker stood firm and was prepared to lose the friendship of Taylor and others for 'it will never do to sacrifice an important principle even for friendship—the thing is to be sure a principle is involved'.⁶¹ This was the first example of his support for better education for women that culminated with his long service on the Council of Women's College of Sydney University and animated his championship of women's rights in Federal Parliament.

He remained a member of the Cricket Club, continuing to enjoy playing and occasionally umpiring. He also joined the committee of the Caledonian Society, preserving Scottish identity and associations, and helped to establish the Toowoomba Building and Investment Society.⁶² In addition he was appointed a Trustee of the Drayton and Toowoomba Cemetery.⁶³

The religious convictions he had formed in Rockhampton remained unshaken; in Toowoomba he established even stronger ties with the Presbyterian Church, though the Glasite emphasis on concern for the sick and needy remained a strong influence. In one of few instances of direct criticism of his father, he noted: 'I often think his Glasitical views of life have largely impaired his usefulness to Society at large'.⁶⁴ He attended Church services regularly both morning and evening, generally ensuring that he attended at least one Presbyterian service, though sometimes attending the evening service at the Church of England as he particularly enjoyed the music of the Anglican Evensong. On one occasion he attended service at the Roman Catholic Church in order to expand his Christian experience. The subjects of sermons were often noted in his diary—sometimes with comment and query. Dr Nelson persuaded him to join the Committee of Management of St Stephen's Presbyterian Church; he accepted the invitation clearly in a sense of doing his Christian duty, not because it might have been expected of him as a bank manager.⁶⁵ Had he undertaken commitments in a Church to improve his chances of success, it was far more likely that he would have joined

⁶¹ *Darling Downs Gazette*, Toowoomba, 8 May 1874; *Telegraph*, Brisbane, 18 May 1874; *Courier Mail*, Brisbane, 8 June 1874; Walker diary, vol. 24, 4 February 1874, and 8 April 1874 to 1 June 1874.

⁶² Walker diary, vol. 25, 5 November 1874.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 23, 10 January 1872.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 26, 21 November 1873.

⁶⁵ Dr Nelson of Gabbinar conducted services at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church. His wife was a sister of Mr Muir who had taught Walker at the Circus Place School. Their son Hugh was later Premier of Queensland. (Janet Kershaw, *Repose with achievement: Sir Hugh Muir Nelson: The story of his life*, Molong, 1974.)

the Church of England, regarded as the church of the establishment.⁶⁶ He did not. For a brief period he considered Freemasonry, reading a publication *Masonic Mysteries*, but he found it 'humbug' and deplored the inordinate influence of Freemasonry in Queensland government.⁶⁷

After much soul-searching regarding his non-proselytising Glasite upbringing, he decided to become a Sabbath School teacher. In addition he became a regular hospital visitor, noting in his diary concern for patients with incurable diseases. He devoted much time to collections for the Minister's stipend and generally earned the respect of the Elders of the Church, though he declined a call to become an Elder himself.⁶⁸ In 1874 he was consulted by the Elders and contributed his views on formulating rules and forms for the Presbyterian Church in Queensland in which he strongly espoused the cause of temperance over abstinence.⁶⁹ During the years 1869 to 1880 he studied seriously many aspects of religion and politics, noting that 'to me theology and political economy seem the most interesting of all subjects at the present time'.⁷⁰ He found little to agree with in a popular Rationalist text of the day, *Ecce Homo*, and was highly critical of William Buchanan's *Observations on the Book of Revelations*; he was revolted at Buchanan's narrow-mindedness, particularly in the spirit in which he alluded to non-Glasites.⁷¹ The vision of an avenging God was unpalatable:

I believe that God's sovereignty ought to be a matter of comfort in place of uneasiness, as God we are told, is love, and desireth not the death of a sinner.⁷²

He appears not to have been influenced by Darwinism; one must conclude that his firm Christian belief that God had created all men equal would have provided a strong antidote to Darwin's theories.

Though not a pacifist, he could not reconcile war—unless strictly defensive—with Christianity. His meditations ranged to reincarnation and predestination, but he could not accept that certain people might be pre-ordained to woe; this did not agree with his interpretation of a loving God. At the same time he could not imagine 'that anything does take place without the pre-knowledge of God', but he concluded that 'if we are lost eternally we have ourselves alone to blame'.⁷³ He considered aspects of the teachings of the Roman Catholic church, even drawing into his discussions the Roman Catholic servant, Margaret Garvie.⁷⁴ Finally he decided that his views were 'Modern Calvinistic'. It was a far cry from the days of Rockhampton as he pondered whether it was right even to write letters on the Sabbath.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ David Hilliard, 'Anglicanism', in Peter Spearitt and David Walker (eds), *Australian popular culture*, Sydney, 1979.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 18, 2 December 1867; and vol. 26, 17 December 1875.

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 26, 1 February 1876.

⁶⁹ Walker diary, vol. 24, 25 March 1874.

⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 21, 15 April 1871.

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 20, 30 March 1870.

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 20, 29 March 1870.

⁷³ Walker diary, vol. 20, 3 April 1870.

⁷⁴ Walker diary, vol. 20, 15 March 1870.

⁷⁵ Walker diary, vol. 20, 15 March 1870 and 3 April 1870.

Despite his upbringing in a narrow sect of Protestantism, he was remarkably tolerant, though fettered by Victorian sensibilities. He did not care for raffles, but was prepared to condone them if they served a 'commendable' object.⁷⁶ On purchasing the works of Fielding, he noted that they were 'considered very unfashionable nowadays and are very coarse', but he believed that no library was complete without them. His stated intention was to pick out the good and leave the bad, as Sir Walter Scott had considered Fielding and Smollett the fathers of English novel writing. He opposed censorship:

I think it becomes parents to be very particular what books they allow their children to peruse but surely grown-up people and children are not always to be placed in the same category.⁷⁷

His musings were perhaps prompted by the fact that, by this time, he was married and contemplating his own future as a parent. The greatest change wrought by his transfer to Toowoomba was his meeting with the young woman he married and with whom he shared his life for nearly fifty-five years.

On arrival in Toowoomba he was very much the young man about town, for Toowoomba offered more opportunities for gaiety than either Rockhampton or Townsville. As Manager of the Bank of New South Wales and an amiable if somewhat reserved bachelor, he received many invitations to entertainment; parties at the home of James Taylor, and dancing parties and picnics hosted by other prominent Toowoomba-ites.⁷⁸ The bachelor quarters at the bank provided hospitality for many acquaintances passing through Toowoomba, including barristers Cooper and Paul (both of whom later became Judges on the Queensland Bench), Ratcliffe Pring, Edmund Morey and many others.⁷⁹ Walker enjoyed the social whirl remarking: '...this Australia is a great place for dancing and late hours'.⁸⁰

Life was full and busy. Despite earlier musings on marriage and though now surrounded with a selection of eligible young women, he remained single, his world essentially masculine. The diaries give no clue that his interest might have been captured. However, in August 1867 he wrote to Smith enclosing a letter of introduction from Sir Daniel Cooper that had been presented at the bank in Toowoomba by Mrs Thomas Palmer, a widow living on the Highfields Road seven miles from Toowoomba.⁸¹ Mrs Palmer, of the Irish gentry, was a charming but feckless woman with no business sense, a domineering matriach.⁸² Accompanied by her husband Thomas, his brother William and ten of their twelve children (seven daughters and three sons), she had arrived in Brisbane on 6 January 1865 aboard the *Elizabeth Ann Bright*. Initially they lived on Gregory Terrace, but Thomas died;

⁷⁶ Walker diary, vol. 24, 2 June 1874.

⁷⁷ Walker diary, vol. 19, 2 July 1869.

⁷⁸ For information on Taylor, see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.; and Waterson, *Squatter...*, op. cit..

⁷⁹ For information on Cooper and Pring, see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.. For information on Paul and Morey, see H. J. Gibbney and Ann G. Smith, *A biographical register 1788-1939*, vol. II, Canberra, 1987.

⁸⁰ Walker diary, vol. 18, 25 May 1867.

⁸¹ For information on Cooper, see Connolly, op. cit.

⁸² This aspect of Mrs Palmer stands out very clearly in Thomas P. Palmer to James Thomas Walker, 18 September 1882, Walker MSS.

Emily and William then invested in 450 acres and a house, which they named 'Range View', near Toowoomba. Walker commented facetiously: 'A lady with seven daughters ought to be an acquisition to our little society'. He gives no indication of having met the family, though he notes that 'a brother-in-law also dwells with the family and their servants consist of a man and maid and they keep a trap'.⁸³

The Palmer children were particularly good-looking, fun-loving and gregarious with considerable Irish charm; Janette, aged nineteen, was the acknowledged beauty of the family. Walker was bewitched. By November he mentions that he has been invited out to 'Range View' several times and that he has enjoyed himself with the young ladies. He did not trust his own judgement, however, inviting his friend, the Police Magistrate, Gilbert Elliott, to visit with him. Elliott thought them 'the nicest and most polished family he has met in or near Toowoomba'.⁸⁴ By January 1868 Walker records that he had been caught in a storm and sheltered at 'Range View' for the night, admitting coyly that he has had occasion to visit the Palmer family frequently of late. He was not, however, uncritical:

Physically, I believe one seldom meets a finer family but I cannot help feeling that the old lady (not very old either, only 49) is not wise in bringing them up as she is doing. It seems to me that the education of the young ladies and boys is being neglected in many essentials more is the pity. The family remind me more of the Swiss Family Robinson than of any I can think of. For the last two years they have been left almost to their own resources, seeing no one. The consequence is, they are two years behind the fashion in many respects, not that that is any heinous fault but it is a drawback. I cannot help thinking that much excellent material is being wasted, all for the want of proper systematic teaching. The mother's fondness seems to blind her to the fact that her children are not getting a 19th Century education and as for those charming little fellows Willie and Frank their sisters pet them too much for them ever to learn their lessons.⁸⁵

Though attracted by the Palmers he was not blind to the fact that 'a sensible governess would be a great acquisition to the family'.⁸⁶ He was greatly concerned that, should the girls be left on their own, they would have no means of earning their livings in respectable positions as they had no qualifications to work even as governesses.

Walker, however, could not resist the charms of Janette and on 28 February 1868, while on a riding party, finally proposed. Janette accepted; it was a red-letter day in his life, marked in his diary with a string of large crosses symbolising kisses. It is interesting that he should have been attracted to a young Irish woman, only three years in Australia, rather than the Australian born and bred young women with whom he had been mixing. One wonders whether Janette was less independent than her Australian-born sisters, more akin to the young women he had known in Scotland and in England. The diaries provide no answers to these questions. All that one learns is that the ardent and romantic Walker had found the girl of his

⁸³ James Thomas Walker to Shepherd Smith, 16 August 1867, Westpac Archives.

⁸⁴ Walker diary, vol. 18, 9 November 1867 and 14 December 1867.

⁸⁵ Walker diary, vol. 18, 4 January 1868.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

dreams; the strictures of Cousin Archie against early marriage, were ignored along with any advice to prolong the engagement.⁸⁷

Just over two months later, on 16 April 1868, Walker and Janette were married by Dr Nelson in the parlour of 'Range View', his brother Willie (down from Rockhampton) acting as best man. Janette was nineteen years old, Walker twenty-seven. He was to admit later that the engagement was too short, though he did not think so at the time, but it was a step he never regretted.⁸⁸ Apart from the mention of a red-letter day, he gives little indication of his feelings for Janette. He appears to have been too inhibited to discuss their relationship even in the confines of his diary. It is only later that one discovers the extent of his affection:

Ah she is a dear little wife, may the blessing of the Almighty rest upon and abide with her—I often think I am not sufficiently grateful for the great treasure I have in her—Dear girl, she has my whole heart...⁸⁹

For nearly a year after the honeymoon, which was spent at Sandgate, the diary is blank. As Walker remarked, with hard work in 1867 and marriage in 1868: 'I never seem to have settled down to my old methodical self'.⁹⁰ The process of settling down to married life had been sweet but traumatic. Janette had no experience of running a household and, as he had already remarked, had received very little training to fit her for the social demands on the wife of the manager of a bank. She lacked Walker's Scottish sense of economy and application, and strong sense of responsibility. At times his hasty temper was sorely tried. On his part, he continued to enjoy the activities of his bachelor days. Janette complained that he did not spend enough time with her, so he kept a log of time worked for some months—deciding that she was probably right!⁹¹ Chivalrously Walker blamed himself for their disagreements: 'I have frequently more zeal than discretion'.⁹² At other times he remarked that 'she [Janette] is so loving and forbearing—I seem to be all "take"'.⁹³ Without any record of Janette's reactions, it is impossible to judge whether he was indeed so difficult to live with, or whether Janette resorted to tears in order to achieve her own ends. Despite all problems, they continued to love one another loyally. Though reticent on the subject in his diaries, evidence from early letters attests the strength of his passion:

It seems an age to think it will probably be five weeks before I kiss your bonnie face again. Ah lovie, absence truly makes the heart grow fonder. At least I can scarcely think of you without feeling a great yearning to be beside you... Ah love, let us ever love one another as we now do—if I can possibly afford it you will go with me in future.⁹⁴

A few days later he again wrote, in answer to three letters from Janette that awaited him at Gympie:

⁸⁷ See ch. 3. Archibald Walker cautioned him against early marriage on his arrival in London. Both Archibald and his brother Thomas did not marry until over 50.

⁸⁸ Walker diary, vol. 18, 28 February 1868 and 20 April 1868; and vol. 33, 26 December 1882.

⁸⁹ Walker diary, vol. 20, 14 December 1869.

⁹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 19, 12 July 1869.

⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 23, 7 January 1873.

⁹² Walker diary, vol. 19, 5 June 1869 and 12 July 1869.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 22, 15 April 1871.

⁹⁴ James Thomas Walker to Janette Isabella Walker, 12 October 1870, Walker MSS.

May we be spared to one another for many long years...you are very dear to me, darling, and I scarcely think I could refuse you anything if I could afford to gratify your wish.⁹⁵

They lived in the quarters at the bank with two servants, two dogs, two horses and, during the week, Janette's brothers William and Frank. It was a comfortable if not luxurious existence. Both agreed to establish the habit, maintained for a lifetime, of conducting family worship morning and evening. Together with an undoubted mutual attraction and Victorian respect for marriage, this contributed greatly to the understanding, tolerance and spirit of forgiveness that enabled the nervous and at times melancholy young Irish woman and the energetic often impatient and impetuous young Scot to form a warm and enduring relationship.

For three years they enjoyed life together until, on 20 December 1871, Janette bore their first son, Archibald Lyon Walker; while a proud and indulgent father Walker soon discovered the difficulties of working long hours in the Bank and coping with a baby who kept him awake at night. His irritability increased much to his dismay. Just over a year later on 12 January 1873 John Perceval was born, a delicate child who lived for five months only, dying on 20 June 1873. Both Janette and Walker felt greatly the loss of this gentle little son.⁹⁶ The family continued to grow; on 4 April 1874 Emily Perceval (Sissie) arrived, followed on 4 February 1876 by Alexander Fitzjames (Alec). The three surviving children were healthy and outgoing and Janette appears to have had little trouble in pregnancy or childbirth, though she suffered a mild attack of puerperal fever after the birth of Sissie. However, her next pregnancy ended sadly; in January 1877 she suffered a severe bout of typhoid fever and was delivered prematurely of stillborn twin girls.⁹⁷ She remained ill for some months, recovering only very slowly. Walker's sisters grew concerned for him; Jane wrote to Kate regretting the lack of prospects for promotion but very pleased that 'his wife is nearly in her usual [*sic*] again—she has been very ill, poor girl...'⁹⁸ Janette lost another child by miscarriage in February 1878; she had then borne seven children in under eight years.⁹⁹

Despite the presence of a nursemaid and assistance from Janette's mother and sisters from time to time, their expanding family and health and financial worries were a considerable strain on both Janette and Walker. By 1873 they had discovered that they were living beyond their means, and it became a continual struggle to balance the family budget; Walker borrowed money from his father at low interest in order to keep afloat.¹⁰⁰ After his father's death on 30 November 1875 Walker inherited a share of his estate—about £3500—but distribution was not completed for nearly three years.¹⁰¹ Financial worries continued to plague him.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 30 October 1870.

⁹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 23, 21 June ff.

⁹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 27, 26 January 1877. It would seem that Janette suffered severe hair loss during this fever; her hair never regrew properly so that she thenceforward wore a wig. (Information from Mrs Joscelyn Thorn, James Thomas Walker's granddaughter.)

⁹⁸ Jane Bell to Kate Walker, 13 May 1877, Walker MSS.

⁹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 28, 12 February 1878.

¹⁰⁰ Walker diary, vol. 23, 28 January 1873; and vol. 24, 20 July 1874.

¹⁰¹ Though saddened, Walker was not as distressed at the loss of his father as he had been on hearing of his mother's death. He had been upset at the speed with which his father had entered into his third marriage with Catherine Bell, though he greatly admired his young step-mother.

By mid-1876 his health was apparently deteriorating severely. His diary was not written up systematically from February 1876 to August 1876 so does not enlighten us as to the actual nature of his illness, but he was granted two months leave of absence from the bank. Janette did not apparently wish to leave the children but generously agreed that Walker should take a holiday.¹⁰² He visited Sydney, went to Burrowa where he arranged for headstones to be placed on the graves of his sister and half-brother, to Melbourne, and finally to Tasmania, returning about 8 August 1876.¹⁰³ He may have been refreshed but he was no less frustrated—and family problems continued.

However, in future, he took holidays more frequently. In 1877 the Walkers discovered the house that was to become their holiday retreat for the next ten years; in partnership with his sister Kate, Walker purchased the small timber dwelling he named 'Ravensneuk Cottage'.¹⁰⁴ Overlooking Raby Bay at Cleveland, it occupied a charming site; after the family removed to Brisbane, weekends and school holidays were frequently spent enjoying the sea air. It appears to have provided an escape from worries during the remainder of his career with the Bank of New South Wales.¹⁰⁵

It was not only the problems of his immediate family that Walker shouldered; he assisted members of his own and Janette's extended families. Though his own time was heavily committed, he never hesitated in assisting them. With his mother-in-law, his relationship was sometimes thorny. He was forced to 'agree to disagree' with her views on a number of topics, particularly on the subject of religion where Mrs Palmer's Anglican sensibilities were disturbed by Walker's Presbyterian tendencies, but he never stopped Janette attending the Church of England with her sisters and brothers—and on occasion escorted them himself.¹⁰⁶ Another source of friction was his objection to Mrs Palmer's excessive family pride; though impecunious she laid great stress on her aristocratic background.¹⁰⁷ The property at 'Range View' became so heavily encumbered that no alternative could be found to retain it as a family residence; the only method of saving it was to lease it and remove to another property, 'Haremar', which one of the daughters, Harriett, drew in a land ballot. Mrs Palmer could not be persuaded even to let 'Range View'. Eventually she moved to 'Haremar' but not without considerable recrimination, most of her complaints being directed unfairly to Walker.¹⁰⁸

The Palmers benefited greatly from his advice and assistance. The youngest sons were taken into the Walkers' household and for the first time in their lives received regular schooling. William was too old to benefit greatly, but the younger, Francis,

¹⁰² It is possible that he took the opportunity to explore employment prospects, but there is no evidence to show it.

¹⁰³ Confusion arises in regard to the date of this trip. Walker filled in the missing section of the diary on two occasions much later, on one occasion noting the dates as 1876, the other as 1877. However, he mentions in both accounts visiting the Bartons at Wallerawang. As Edwin Barton died in October 1876 (according to his tombstone) the trip must have been made earlier that year.

¹⁰⁴ After the farm in Scotland.

¹⁰⁵ Walker diary, vol. 28, 3 June 1877.

¹⁰⁶ Walker diary, vol. 26, 1 October 1876.

¹⁰⁷ Walker diary, vol. 19, 7 September 1869.

¹⁰⁸ Walker diary, vol. 26, 31 October 1876; and vol. 27, 21 January 1877.

obtained an education he would not have had otherwise.¹⁰⁹ Walker managed the family affairs and on occasion provided financial assistance, though his advice was not always appreciated by his mother-in-law. Above all he introduced to the household his friend and distant cousin Thomas Gabriel Walker and his brother William Henry. They married, respectively, Janette's sisters Emmeline (Emmie) and Georgiana (Georgie); they, too, assisted the Palmer household financially from time to time. However, the Palmer affairs remained principally Walker's problem; he had married Janette, he had the capability to help them retain their property, and his highly developed sense of responsibility dictated that he should shoulder the burden of her family's economic woes. Though for the most part he untangled their affairs without complaint, there were occasions when his patience wore thin: 'I will back a certain stamp of Irish people for being the most fustionless lot of financiers...in the world'.¹¹⁰

He also managed trust accounts for his sister Kate and for Thomas Gabriel Walker and his brother David, who sent him funds to invest on their behalf. He journeyed to Tenterfield to assist his brother William with the purchase of Tenterfield Station in 1878; his cousin Thomas Walker appears to have purchased the property for £38 724, with William as a partner becoming Manager.¹¹¹ Trips to Tenterfield Station became annual events as he continued to assist William with the station books. He also helped Thomas Gabriel Walker who was managing the Wallerawang and Wolgan properties for Georgina Barton.¹¹² It was Walker who mediated a settlement with Georgina whereby T. G. and Emmie would live at Wolgan until 16 November 1881. Not for the first time Walker noted how little he envied his wealthy relatives; 'Poor Georgie! With all her wealth, how little is she to be envied!'.¹¹³

It would seem that, despite continuing financial problems and occasional outbursts of discontent, Walker regarded the trials of his years in Toowoomba philosophically. They had wrought many changes and were certainly not easy but he had matured considerably. Above all, he had found his life's companion and progressed from bachelorhood to fatherhood; if his family was a mixed blessing, he was immeasurably happier, enjoying the company of wife and children. Already he exhibited strongly the traits that marked his political career: tolerating the views of others, but willing to espouse views he believed right even if unpopular; and standing firmly on his principles in the face of determined opposition. Though hasty of temper, he studied all aspects of political and religious questions carefully before espousing a decided opinion. He adhered to the religious faith he had discovered in Rockhampton; though more involved with the Presbyterian Church, his involvement was with practical affairs of finance, education and hospital visiting

¹⁰⁹ Apart from the eldest son Thomas (a soldier and later a Customs Officer) he was the only Palmer son to obtain and retain a steady job throughout his life.

¹¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 34, 16 January 1883. 'Fustionless' is an old Scottish word which had the sense of not only being without worldly goods, but also without business acumen to acquire them.

¹¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 28, 4 April 1878.

¹¹² Walker diary, vol. 28, 19 April 1878 to 25 June 1878. See also ch. 2. Georgina Walker married, first Edwin Barton, Engineer for the building of the Zig Zag Railway at Lithgow, and second, K. K. Abbott.

¹¹³ Walker diary, vol. 28, 25 June 1878.

rather than with preaching or scriptural debate. Though standing up for his beliefs when confronted by his mother-in-law, he appears to have been remarkably tolerant, trying sincerely to discover 'true Christianity'. Still strongly influenced by English Liberalism, he was falling increasingly under the spell of William Gladstone, and Free-trade. The interest he had evinced in coloured people remained strong while a new interest in fostering education for women had emerged. As he matured and his career developed the future politician was clearly emerging.

He left for Brisbane in some ways a sadder and wiser man, but still meeting life squarely with enthusiasm. His departure, he felt, would not be mourned; he had crossed swords with the powerful James Taylor and W. H. Groom. However, he was pleasantly surprised to receive a letter of thanks from the Sunday School staff and later a gift of a silver tea service.¹¹⁴ He was aware that his new job, though taking him away from Toowoomba, would involve considerable responsibility and travel, and might be no less frustrating, but Scottish caution and concern for the welfare of his family bound him to a career in the Bank of New South Wales, which at least provided a steady and assured income.

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 28, 24 July 1879.

The Walkers moved permanently to Brisbane in November 1878. James Thomas Walker was Assistant to Alexander Archer as Queensland Inspector, and from 1880 Assistant Manager of the Brisbane Branch of the Bank of New South Wales; he remained in that position for the next seven years, only to escape by resigning to become the first General Manager of the Royal Bank of Queensland in 1885.¹ His position in the Bank of New South Wales brought increased status and salary, but it also brought increased responsibility with few prospects for further advancement; frustration and the sense that his services were not appreciated by the Bank hierarchy in Sydney remained. Others, however, were impressed by his ability; he was the first choice of the Directors of the Royal Bank of Queensland to head the new bank. His lengthy journeys as Inspector enhanced his knowledge, providing him with a thorough understanding of the physical problems and economic potential of the colony. Increasing social status enabled him to mingle on intimate terms with leading politicians and businessmen of the time, a number of whom were to become allies in the Federation movement at a later date. In his personal life, family problems continued as his family grew with the addition of twin sons in 1881, the increasing age of the older children and a greater number of social commitments.² He had less time for community service, but maintained his association with the Presbyterian Church and his interest in politics. It seemed in 1886 that he had achieved much that he desired in his banking career and that he might be happily settled in Queensland. The death of his cousin Thomas Walker in Sydney, brought a new, unexpected and not entirely welcome change. After twenty-five years in Queensland and only one year in the Royal Bank of Queensland, he returned to Sydney and the inheritance not only of management of Walker assets but of a long and respected reputation for business acumen and success.

With the removal to Brisbane, the family finances improved. Walker received £3100, the major portion of the disbursement from his father's estate, by July 1878; though his salary was only £700, he now had some capital to invest.³ In partnership with Thomas Gabriel Walker he purchased the Assembly Rooms at Toowoomba; he had already purchased, in partnership with his sister Kate, 'Ravensneuk Cottage' at Cleveland. The latter property was not acquired consciously as a 'country house', symbol of middle-class advancement, but as an investment, and because the family found Raby Bay a beautiful and relaxing holiday retreat.⁴ It also provided an escape when the expenses of town living threatened the family budget, particularly after

¹ Archer resumed Managership of Brisbane on the departure of Stiles.

² Egmont Perceval Walker and George Waterston Walker, born 2 June 1881.

³ Miller and Neland, Solicitors (Edinburgh) to James Thomas Walker, 5 June 1878 and 7 July 1878, Walker MSS.

⁴ This is clear in diary entries from 1878 onwards.

Alexander Archer and his wife moved from the bank residence to 'Arley', the house they purchased at Toowong, and the Walkers took over the accommodation above the banking chamber at the corner of Queen Street and George Street. Then it was expected that Walker would entertain important customers and other visitors, and attend numerous social functions.⁵ At the seaside one could live casually, Janette acting as cook; in town it was necessary to keep up appearances, employing servants.⁶

Walker's new job was no sinecure. Alexander Archer seems virtually to have retired from inspecting by 1879, handing over most of the travelling to Walker who spent weeks away from his family trekking literally from one end of Queensland to the other on horseback, by buggy, coach, train and boat. Every branch in Queensland was inspected at least once a year, more frequently if something was amiss. Though the manager at Townsville was responsible for some inspecting in the north, it was usual for the inspector at Brisbane to make at least one inspection tour north per annum. The duties involved carrying out audits of branch accounts and assessment of staff performance. At times the inspector carried boxes of coin to restock branch supplies; on occasion he acted as a gold escort. In addition the inspector surveyed mining developments, pastoral properties, sugar plantations and other developments in which the bank was interested, assessing their progress or potential. He also reported on the prospects of newly settled districts and towns, estimating potential development and considering when new branches might be opened. It was a responsible situation requiring mature judgement; it provided Walker the opportunity to observe a wide cross section of Queensland's population, to develop a thorough knowledge of Queensland industries and of the problems and possibilities of the various regions of the large and diverse colony.

The journeys Walker was required to make were often long and gruelling. His itineraries reflected the development of the colony as he inspected pastoral and farming properties, tin, silver, antimony and gold mines, mineral processing plants, sugar plantations and mills, and vineyards and orchards.⁷ Inspecting in all seasons, he experienced at first hand the vicissitudes of life far from the developing cities along the coast. He was lost on the western plains during the wet season when the country was so saturated that the road between Tallwood and Mungindi was obscured.⁸ At the opposite extreme, beyond Winton in the north-west his travels took him through country so dry that water had to be carried for the horses.⁹ Sometimes the thermometer registered 109°F (42°C) in the shade; then the dust was so thick that he arrived looking like a chimney sweep, but unable to shower properly because of water shortage.¹⁰ Dangers were many and diverse; at St George it was almost a requirement to wear nets to cover the face as protection from sandy blight, while in north Queensland, traversing the track down the Barron Gorge on

⁵ Initially the Walkers rented 'Brewsterfields', a roomy, but not particularly grand cottage at Milton. It was apparently very similar to 'Lucerne'. See Janet Hogan, *Historic houses of Brisbane*, Brisbane, 1979, p. 62.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 32, 5 March 1882; vol. 33, 26 March 1882 and 6 April 1882.

⁷ See Appendix 4.

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 36, 27 February 1885.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 36, 20–23 August 1884.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 37, 22 November 1885.

horseback, it was necessary to carry rifles at the ready in case of attack by Aborigines.¹¹ At Charters Towers he descended 700 feet (210 m) underground to inspect the Day Dawn Prospect Claim.¹² Staying overnight at Callandoon Station he was called on to assist in the setting of a broken leg.¹³ Throughout all, he maintained the spirit of adventure and enquiry that characterised his days in Rockhampton and Townsville which, though tempered by age and experience, remained strong.

Travel was at times neither easy nor comfortable; he experienced practically every standard of accommodation from sleeping under the stars to the superior service of Queen's Hotel at Townsville. Taylor's Hotel at Homestead was 'very rough and not overclean' while the standard of Burke's Accommodation House on Katandra Station may be judged from the description that Walker was writing up his diary 'seated on an empty brandy case in a calico cum canvas humpy at a rough bush table'.¹⁴ The Killarney Hotel on Sesbania Station, proved 'a regular lambing-down bush "pub" ... a very rough place', while on a night spent at the Barcaldine Hotel, the landlord was drunk and the customers were drunk and rowdy. Walker could not get to sleep so 'did not hesitate to speak my mind'.¹⁵

He had a remarkably diverse experience of life in both town and bush. It is particularly notable that in all his travels, Walker rarely disparages the Australian landscape. Others, like W. S. S. Tyrwhitt, might remark of the Queensland bush: 'To an Englishman it is ugly and uninteresting to a degree'.¹⁶ Walker found interest in the country no matter how dry or barren; passing through the Mitchell grass country beyond Hughenden, he noted: '...it is very nutritious but at present at somewhat of a distance resembles wheat stubble in colour'.¹⁷ The flocks of pink and grey galahs so common on the western plains and the strange effect of the mirage fascinated him. He absorbed and treasured much bush lore, recording the slang of the coach drivers:

... a swagman is called a 'Waltzing Matilda' or 'an Irish Tandem Driver', and 'the Cloncurry amble' is a definition for a certain quasi-dancing style.¹⁸

After nearly twenty years in the colony, Walker had come to regard himself as a Queenslander, in spite of occasional nostalgic thoughts of 'Auld Lang Syne'; he resented the patronising attitudes of some British visitors to 'colonials'. Of Captain Burke of the *Chyebassa* he commented: 'He puts on too much "side" for us colonials'.¹⁹ His interest was broad, not only in Australian history and politics, but in the native flora and fauna; he noted with interest the Aboriginal names of trees.²⁰

¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 32, 16 March 1882; and vol. 33, 23 June 1882.

¹² Walker diary, vol. 36, 13 August 1884.

¹³ Walker diary, vol. 36, 25 February 1885.

¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 36, 10 August 1884 and 13 August 1884.

¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 36, 27 August 1884. The Barcaldine Hotel was five miles beyond Barcaldine head station. The town of Barcaldine had not then been developed.

¹⁶ W. S. S. Tyrwhitt, quoted in Cecil Hadgraft, *James Brunton Stephens*, Brisbane, 1969, p. 59.

¹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 36, 16 August 1884.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 31, 20 July 1881.

²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 30, 4 June 1880.

The calophyllum trees, native to coastal areas of north Queensland, particularly attracted him; at Cardwell he collected seedlings which he later planted at Cleveland.²¹

Despite promotion, more varied work, a salary rise and more comfortable circumstances generally, he continued to find banking life frustrating. The Victorian banker has been described as 'so thoroughly average that he offends you by no singularities; he wounds your pride by no pre-eminent and overshadowing abilities. He is a gentleman, generally of quiet habits, has some intelligence, does a moderate day's work, has a moderate income and moderate expectations, is suave, cordial, unambitious, and placid'.²² Though undoubtedly a gentleman, Walker was obviously very different from the average banker of the time if such a description was indeed accurate; he was both ambitious and possessed of considerable business acumen. As the above article asserted, 'men born with business instincts are better outside the sphere of banking', but for Walker there seemed no escape.

He was trapped in his situation. The shortage of reliable junior officers that had occasioned his early rise from Accountant to Manager persisted, but at the senior level, promotion depended on the death or resignation of more senior officers, all of whom were their forties or fifties and in good health. Further promotion for Walker appeared therefore a very distant possibility. The constraints of his position irked him; he noted unhappily: 'I cannot say that I am getting fonder of Bank life. I still yearn for personal freedom'.²³ As the years progressed, his discontent increased; he felt that 'the whole style of treating senior officers under the existing regime is simply indefensible'.²⁴ However, he realised that in his situation it was virtually impossible to resign, exhorting himself to regard his tribulations as 'a spiritual discipline' and to cultivate 'meekness, learn contentment, pocket my pride': but 'preaching is one thing—practising is another'.²⁵ He remained frustrated;

I am so irritable nowadays. I am thoroughly dissatisfied with my position! Contentment! How often I preach it to myself but I have a rebellious and proud spirit I daresay. Mr Sandy Archer can testify even he (ultra passive conservative that he is) finds the yoke hard to bear, so what must it be with a radical like myself!²⁶

He admired Alexander Archer, the only Archer to remain in commercial life in Australia, as he had admired his brothers earlier in Rockhampton. He held the 'boss', in great affection, finding him 'the pink of honour and everything that is honourable and straightforward' and later noted that Archer had been one of his role models.²⁷ His respect and his own honourable and honest character is well illustrated in 1879 when Alexander Archer was responsible for involving his brother's company, Johnson & Archer of London, and the Bank, with Berens Ranniger & Company, which failed after one of the partners (Berens) committed suicide when defalcations were discovered. Archer, always a most honourable and

²¹ Walker diary, vol. 33, 1 July 1882.

²² 'Ex-Banker', 'Banking reminiscences', in *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 30 August 1888.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 30, 5 March 1880.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 34, 24 June 1883.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 33, 1 November 1883.

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 118, 3 February 1898.

honest man, felt that his career was ruined. Walker did not stand back, hoping to achieve promotion by displacing Archer, but came to his aid, contacting Smith:

I think it only right to tell you that Mr Archer is fretting greatly over the Berens Ranniger Co.'s matter so much so that his night's rest is interfered with and if the strain continues he will become seriously ill... Might I take the liberty of suggesting that a private reassuring note from yourself before you sail would be better than a whole medicine chest...²⁸

As a result Smith wrote to Archer, greatly relieving his mind.²⁹ It would seem that Archer was never aware of the discreet intervention of Walker.

What few opportunities for initiating improvements came his way were seized with alacrity. When Alexander Archer visited England, Scotland and Norway in February 1883 Walker was appointed Acting Inspector in his place.³⁰ Financial affairs in the state were booming; as Walker remarked: 'The year ending 31 March 1883 was by long way the best we have (apparently) ever had in Queensland'.³¹ He felt that such an excellent result warranted a bonus to officers but did not expect any reaction, 'so long as the Board is constituted as it is (all over 60)'.³² Never one to indulge in unresisting submission, he decided to take matters into his own hands, writing directly to Thomas Walker, the Bank President, regarding the inadequacies of salaries.³³

It was gratifying indeed to receive notification a month later that salaries would be increased; '...about the first letter that I have received for some time that showed my recommendations carried any weight!'.³⁴ Walker received a bonus of £100 and increase in salary from £700 per annum to £800 per annum. In December the Bank paid a bonus of 10% to all officers, the first in over twenty-three years.³⁵ While these benefits to staff may have been influenced by other factors, it would seem that the strong letter from his younger cousin had a decided effect on Thomas Walker's attitude in the matter. Consideration for staff welfare was a marked characteristic of Walker's service; he performed many kindnesses such as his visits to Flaherty, the Bank Messenger, when he became ill and his concern that his widow was cared for when he died.³⁶ His kindness extended, too, to bank customers and others of his acquaintance; discovering the pastoralist Donald Gunn of Pikedale, an old customer of the bank at Toowoomba and Warwick, bedridden at his lodgings at Kangaroo Point and without nursing attention, Walker went to some trouble to obtain a nurse.³⁷ On other occasions he helped one of the sons of the Troys, the family of the lighthouse keeper at Cleveland, to obtain an apprenticeship, and formed an alliance with James Tyson to procure an

²⁸ James Thomas Walker to Shepherd Smith, 15 January 1879, Westpac Archives.

²⁹ Shepherd Smith to Alexander Archer, 21 January 1879, Westpac Archives.

³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 34, 5 February 1883.

³¹ Walker diary, vol. 34, 9 April 1883.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Walker diary, vol. 34, 17 June 1883.

³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 34, 10 July 1883.

³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 34, 10 July 1883 and 21 September 1883; and vol. 35, 1 December 1883.

³⁶ Walker diary, vol. 36, 20 September 1884 and 19 November 1884.

³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 37, 13 September 1885.

appointment for J. S. Whitchurch in the Treasury Department.³⁸ These were but a few instances of his many kindnesses.

With Alexander Archer's return from leave Walker was again 'on the road'. After having had him at home for nearly twelve months, Janette missed him greatly; 'I am so lonely here that I must go with you next time or else you must ask to be made manager here'.³⁹ He was away for ninety-seven days and on his return was more disgruntled than ever. By 1884 Brisbane was growing rapidly; the noise of traffic around the bank premises at the corner of Queen Street and George Street, one of the busiest intersections in the city, had increased greatly and the managerial quarters had been painted. The smell of the paint made him ill; the noise of the street kept him awake. Personal finances only continued in credit because the 'Growlery', a property he had purchased in partnership with Alexander Archer, sold at profit.⁴⁰ He confided to his diary: 'I yearn to be out of debt and yet economise as we may we seem to be only getting into it more deeply'.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Walker purchased, in partnership with Alexander Archer, a 936th share in the Mount Morgan Mine, an astute investment that brought him a considerable profit some years later.⁴²

When the northern inspection for 1885 was due, Janette and Archie accompanied him on the boat trip to Cooktown, but their departure left him feeling lonelier than ever. He was realising more forcefully the need to escape from such a peripatetic lifestyle with so little opportunity for advancement, and at last there seemed a good prospect of doing so.

The idea had been circulating for some time of forming a new Queensland bank to serve the particular needs of farmers and other small investors. H. L. E. Ruthning published a paper on German banks discussing in particular the *Landscäftliche Credit Verein* of Prussia, an agricultural co-operative bank.⁴³ He suggested that a similar bank might supplement the established banking system of the colony, providing assistance for farmers. A number of politicians and business men were concerned at the opportunistic even reckless policies of the Queensland National Bank. Some may already have become suspicious of its dealings with Sir Thomas McIlwraith; others resented the support given to the Queensland National Bank by the Queensland Government. At the time it seemed that the prosperity enjoyed by the colony could only continue to increase and the prospects for success of a new bank seemed boundless.⁴⁴

³⁸ Walker diary, vol. 34, 18 May 1883.

³⁹ Janette Walker to James Thomas Walker, in Walker diary, vol. 36, 25 July 1884.

⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 36, 25 October 1884.

⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 36, 28 September 1884.

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 36, 14 October 1884. Mount Morgan was developed by among others, Thomas Skarratt Hall and William Knox D'Arcy, old Rockhampton acquaintances of Walker.

⁴³ *Telegraph*, Brisbane, 29 October 1883. Ruthning was a Brisbane Solicitor of German extraction.

⁴⁴ For a further account see Geoffrey Blainey, *Gold and paper: A history of the National Bank of Australasia Limited*, Melbourne, 1958; and D. J. Murphy and R. B. Joyce, *Queensland political portraits*, Brisbane, 1978, chs 2–6. Two of the Royal Bank's strongest supporters, William Miles and J. R. Dickson, were members of the Griffith Ministry of 1883–1888.

By 1885 a definite decision was made to found a new bank in Queensland; the originator, according to the first half-yearly report, was William Henry Kent with considerable support from William Williams.⁴⁶ At a meeting at the Brisbane Stock Exchange on 11 August 1885, chaired by Williams, it was decided to call the new institution the Royal Bank of Queensland.⁴⁶ Provisional Directors were appointed; stockbrokers Edwin G. Goertz, Josiah Mullins and Clarke & Co. were selected to act in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne respectively, and the new enterprise was floated. The prospectus, as Geoffrey Blainey has noted, was very similar if not modelled on that prepared thirteen years previously for the Queensland National Bank.⁴⁷ Fifty thousand shares were offered for sale, paid up to £3; the share list closed at noon on 30 September 1885.

On 4 October the Brisbane *Courier* proudly announced that the Royal Bank of Queensland had been floated independently of southern capital; the first issue was more than taken up by Queenslanders, 'proof both of Queensland enterprise and Queensland resources'. However, an analysis of the list of shareholders published in July 1886 indicates that this was not accurate at that date; a large number of shareholders resided in other states, one in Ireland and one in Fiji, though a large majority were Queenslanders. The greatest percentage of shareholders came from Queensland country areas, most from the south-eastern part of Queensland where agriculture was more viable. Though some prominent names appear in the share list, most appear to have been businessmen, professional men, farmers or tradesmen; the new bank had drawn support from those it hoped to serve.⁴⁸

William Villiers Brown had approached Walker in August with the suggestion that he might consider becoming the General Manager⁴⁹. In early October Walker had an interview with William Miles and, a few days later, with Brown again. On this occasion Brown told him definitely that he intended to propose him for the position of General Manager.⁵⁰ Walker was not overconfident; speculation in the newspapers suggested that the Hon. J. R. Dickson might take the position and there were others in the running.⁵¹ Alexander Archer assured him that he was 'the man for the job', but Walker feared Archer overstated his abilities.⁵² Nevertheless he replied to Brown stating the terms under which he would accept the position and awaited a request from the Board. Punctiliously he wrote to Thomas Walker informing him of the possibility of his resigning from the Bank of New South Wales; Thomas did not reply.

⁴⁵ William Miles, *Report of proceedings at the first half-yearly General Meeting of the proprietors of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited*, National Australia Bank Archives, Brisbane. Kent was a Brisbane auctioneer. Williams was a Brisbane medical practitioner.

⁴⁶ Minutes of Meeting, 11 August 1885, National Australia Bank Archives, Brisbane. The names considered were National Australian Bank, Colonial Bank of Australia, Provincial Bank of Queensland, Brisbane City Bank, as well as Royal Bank of Queensland.

⁴⁷ Blainey, *Gold and paper*, op. cit., p. 201.

⁴⁸ For analysis of shareholders see Appendix 5.

⁴⁹ Brown was formerly a colleague of Walker in the Bank of New South Wales; then a partner in Aplin, Brown & Company, merchants, of Townsville; a member of Queensland Parliament and interested in the new bank.

⁵⁰ Walker diary, vol. 37, 1 October 1885 and 10 October 1885.

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 37, 3 September 1885. For information on Dickson see Waterson, *A biographical register*..., op. cit.

⁵² Walker diary, vol. 37, 10 October 1885.

Walker purchased a number of shares and attended the first meeting of shareholders on 11 November 1885. Twelve directors were elected of whom seven were members of either the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council; William Miles was elected Chairman of the Board.⁵³

On 18 November Walker left for Rockhampton on inspection in a state of expectancy mingled with doubt. Janette was concerned that he had not submitted a formal application for the job: 'You ought to have a "try" for the new bank managership. Do put in today. I am really in earnest'.⁵⁴ Walker preferred to await an offer. It was a considerable relief to receive on 2 December a telegram offering him the position of General Manager of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited with a salary of £1500 per year plus allowances.⁵⁵ He immediately telegraphed his acceptance, at the same time sending a telegram to Alexander Archer informing him that he was forwarding his resignation. The Hon. William Miles, too, had called on Alexander Archer to inform him personally that the Directors of the Royal Bank had unanimously decided to offer the position to Walker. Archer wrote to Smith requesting Walker's release at the end of the month or sooner. Archer continued, not entirely accurately, that neither he nor Walker had any previous knowledge that the offer was coming, adding further that Walker had not 'put himself in the way of inviting it'—which was true.⁵⁶

Smith agreed to release him. Walker believed that Smith was angry, but he was not concerned since he had given Thomas Walker prior warning. After returning to Brisbane he left the Bank of New South Wales on 9 December 1885, ending twenty-five years of service, and commenced duties on 14 December 1885 with the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited, incorporated under *The Companies Act of 1863* with an authorised capital of £1 000 000 and subscribed capital of £500 000.

That he received no acknowledgment of long service from the Bank of New South Wales supports his belief that Smith was annoyed. Alexander Archer wrote in March:

J. T. Walker has more than once asked me whether he is not to have a letter of some kind from the Bank touching his connections with the institution on the occasion of its recent severance...⁵⁷

It was only after this reminder—and then not until over two months later—that Smith responded, his letter ending: '...your services have been marked by the zeal and efficiency which I hope may continue to characterise your career'.⁵⁸ Hardly a cordial parting salutation to an officer who had served the Bank well and faithfully and was leaving to take up a more important post. It is not clear whether Smith actually disliked Walker personally or whether such coldness was characteristic. Walker described him as

⁵³ Minutes of Meeting of Shareholders, Royal Bank of Queensland Limited, 11 November 1885, National Australia Bank Archives, Brisbane. See Appendix 6.

⁵⁴ Janette Walker to James Thomas Walker, 24 November 1885, Walker MSS.

⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 37, 2 December 1885.

⁵⁶ Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, 3 December 1885, Westpac Archives.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 27 March 1886.

⁵⁸ Shepherd Smith to James Thomas Walker, 1 June 1886, Walker MSS.

...an able man but too autocratic to be liked by those under him... I looked upon him as a man who had been spoilt by prosperity and long possession of power.⁶⁰

By contrast Thomas Walker sent a warm letter of congratulations with an invitation to visit him at 'Yaralla'.⁶⁰ Donald Larnach, his former London 'boss', still Manager in London, also evinced pleasure at his progress: 'I regret very much losing your services in this Bank; at the same time I think you have done right in accepting the offer'.⁶¹ Larnach also proposed Walker for 'the highest position in the Institute of Bankers' of which he was subsequently elected a Fellow on 2 June 1886.⁶²

Aged 45, Walker was General Manager of his own bank, a major ambition fulfilled. No longer constrained by the rules and regulations of the Bank of New South Wales and no longer subservient to the directions of Smith, he was also free from the influence of the Walker family. Given the long association of the Walker family with the Bank of New South Wales and the fact that his cousin Thomas Walker had been President since 1866, outsiders might have wondered if his advancement had been entirely on merit. His position in the Royal Bank of Queensland was achieved without any suspicion of family influence and decidedly on his own merit. In his new position family influence would count for nothing. For better or for worse he would be writing a new chapter in the long history of Walker business activities.

Financially he was much better off. The salary he requested was modest—only £1500 per annum. By contrast Smith had been receiving £3500 since 1882, as General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales.⁶³ The Bank of New South Wales was, of course, a much larger and well-established business; by now it had established branches in all colonies except Tasmania, and boasted a London office and board. The Royal Bank of Queensland was a local institution in its infancy. It was characteristic of Walker, however, that his demands should be modest and fair; even so, the Royal Bank salary was £700 more than he had been receiving in the Bank of New South Wales, and though the position was a more responsible one, it involved little more work. A higher salary could be negotiated when the business was firmly established.

He commenced work with confidence, and that energy and enthusiasm so characteristic of his approach to life. Anxious to establish sound policies, he consulted George Rae's recent (1885) publication *The Country Banker*; Rae had written other texts which Walker had read when he first entered the banking profession and he had 'never forgotten much of the wise counsel therein contained'.⁶⁴ There was much to do. The most urgent need was to find premises in which to open; a building owned by M. D. Benjamin & Company at the corner of

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 38, 13 September 1886.

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 37, 19 December 1885.

⁶¹ Donald Larnach to James Thomas Walker, recorded in Walker diary, vol. 38, 25 March 1886.

⁶² Donald Larnach to James Thomas Walker, 25 May 1886 and 3 June 1886, Walker MSS.; and Walker diary, vol. 38, 15 July 1886.

⁶³ Holder, op. cit., p. 409.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 37, 21 December 1885. George Rae was Manager of the North and South Wales Bank from 1845 to 1865. See Blainey, *Gold and paper*, op. cit., p. 202.

Elizabeth Street and Creek Street was leased.⁶⁵ On 26 December 1885 he departed via Tenterfield, Glen Innes and Newcastle for Sydney where he negotiated to secure agency agreements with established banks.⁶⁶ Interviews were held with the Managers of the English, Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank, Commercial Bank of Australia, Mercantile Bank, Bank of New South Wales, Bank of New Zealand, and Bank of Australasia. He also interviewed prospective staff and made arrangements with the Australian Steam Navigation Company to transport to Brisbane two safes purchased from W. McDonnell & Co., and gold scales and other equipment supplied by Holdsworth & Company.⁶⁷

Business completed in Sydney, he departed for Melbourne where he again made a round of the banks to consolidate agency arrangements with a Victorian institution. A visit was made to Mr Thodey, Editor of *The Australasian Insurance and Banking Review*, to inform him regarding the Royal Bank. By 8 January he was again in Sydney spending the afternoon with Thomas Walker who was obviously very pleased with his cousin's success.⁶⁸

Returning to Brisbane by the *City of Melbourne* on 9 January, he had achieved much; in four weeks he secured premises, safes, scales and other necessary equipment and had established friendly relations with all other banks; within a few weeks arrangements would be finalised for Agencies in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and London.⁶⁹ His former employer, the Bank of New South Wales, acted as Agents for the Royal Bank only in London and New Zealand; it is not clear whether this was influenced by the unfriendliness of Smith or whether other banks offered better terms. Whatever the reason, Walker did not regret the resulting signal that there was to be no special relationship with the Bank in which his entire career had been spent and with which his family had such long and close ties.

Arrangements were already under way to establish a branch at Townsville when on 18 January the first staff appointments were made: Duncan MacDiarmid as Chief Accountant, and A. D. Hardaker and Richard Ryland. Both MacDiarmid and Hardaker had been with the Bank of New South Wales, MacDiarmid managing the Warwick Branch and Hardaker as Accountant at the Ipswich Branch. On 1 February J. Gordon Rose, whom he had interviewed in Sydney, and A. J. Charker joined the staff and the following advertisement appeared in the *Courier*:

The new Royal Bank of Queensland will commence business tomorrow in the fine premises occupied and leased from M. D. Benjamin & Co. at the corner of Creek and Elizabeth Streets.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 37, 15 December 1885.

⁶⁶ At this time the railway was not completed from Sydney to Tenterfield; the journey from Newcastle to Sydney had still to be traversed by boat.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 37, 26 December 1885 to 3 January 1886.

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 37, 3–8 January 1886.

⁶⁹ The English, Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank and the Australian Joint Stock Bank (New South Wales); the English, Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank and the Bank of Australasia (Victoria); the English, Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank (South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania); the Union Bank of Australia Limited (Fiji); and the Bank of New South Wales (London and New Zealand).

⁷⁰ *Courier*, Brisbane, 1 February 1886.

At 10.00 a.m. on 2 February 1886, with the Chairman of the Board, William Miles, and one of the Directors, W. H. Kent, on hand to welcome customers, the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited commenced trading. Alexander Archer and Everard Finch, who replaced Walker in the Bank of New South Wales and remained a friend for life, paid their respects as did members of other banks. The directors had champagne and refreshments on tap most of the day to welcome visitors, many of whom opened accounts; deposits at the end of the day exceeded £9 000.⁷¹ Archer informed Smith with some pleasure: 'I think he [Walker] is doing fairly well and that he is adhering to the lines of the school he comes from. We cannot say that of the other local institution'.⁷²

By the end of June the half-yearly balance compared favourably with that of the Queensland National Bank at the same stage of development thirteen years previously, though deposits at the Queensland National had been much larger. Walker took much satisfaction in predicting that in 'twelve months barring accidents we should be in a position to pay a dividend of 6%...'⁷³ Branches were established in Charters Towers, Gympie, Ipswich and Townsville, with an agent at Morven.⁷⁴ Most of the progress was due to the energy and ability of Walker, a fact acknowledged by Miles in the Directors Report of 10 July 1886:

...the Directors also desire to express their high appreciation of the valuable services of the General Manager, and of the zealous co-operation of the other Officers of the Bank.⁷⁵

Walker, with the approval of the Board of Directors, obviously aimed at a steady growth suited to the requirements of the more cautious customers of the Royal Bank. He adhered to classic principles, making provision for bad debts in advance and maintaining a high ratio of liquid assets; his advice to the Directors was to maintain a fifth of its liabilities in the form of coin, bullion and government securities.⁷⁶ He moved away from classic precepts, however, in establishing agencies in Scotland to gather fixed term deposits, thereby increasing the investment capital of the Royal Bank.

The Royal Bank of Queensland catered to farming and small business interests rather than to mining and other development. It contrasted sharply with the other Queensland Bank, the Queensland National as Blainey noted:

...the Queensland National had extravagant buildings in the larger towns, the Royal contented itself with humble buildings of wood and iron... ...the Queensland National was the bank of men who were seen at the Government House balls, the Royal was a bank of humbler men... ...the Queensland National had a reputation for

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 38, 2 February 1886.

⁷² Alexander Archer to Shepherd Smith, 27 March 1886, Westpac Archives.

⁷³ Walker diary, vol. 38, 1 July 1886.

⁷⁴ G. R. Ogg was Acting Manager at Charters Towers; George Ranken, Manager at Gympie; A. E. Hardaker, Acting Manager at Ipswich; W. H. Laidlaw, Manager at Townsville; and F. W. Allpass, Agent at Morven. Royal Bank of Queensland Limited, Report of proceedings of first half-yearly General Meeting, 30 July 1886, National Australia Bank Archives, Brisbane.

⁷⁵ National Australia Bank Archives.

⁷⁶ James Thomas Walker to William Miles, 25 January 1887, National Australia Bank Archives.

erratic lending, unstinted overdrafts one month and parsimony the next, the Royal established a smoother and more cautious policy.⁷⁷

The Royal Bank had among its shareholders in fact a fair number of those who attended Government House balls, and the smoother and more cautious policy obviously reflected the philosophy of the General Manager. Perhaps the greatest contrast was between the general managers of the two Queensland banks. Edward Robert Drury of the Queensland National was a flamboyant character who cut a resplendent figure in the colourful uniform of commander of the Queensland defence forces; Walker, despite his earlier experience in the London Scottish Regiment, did not seek office in the volunteer forces of Queensland. He was modest with a neat beard and spectacles, a slight figure in sombre conventional business dress, speaking quietly with a Scottish burr and with a dry sense of humour. Drury, as Blainey describes him, was

...an autocrat, who sought no advice and who ridiculed advice that came unsolicited. He fed his three directors only fragments of information... Drury not only concealed many accounts from the directors but he also brooked no meddling from his subordinates.⁷⁸

Walker was considerate of the opinions of the directors, punctilious in behaviour and co-operative with both staff and board members. Blainey characterises him as 'scholarly and cautious' but in assessing his abilities fails to take into account his long experience and personal influence.

His theories were sound by English canons, but if he had practised them to the letter in Queensland his bank would have probably become no busier than a pawnbroker's shop.⁷⁹

Blainey appears to have based this judgement on the letter of 25 January 1887 cited above. He overlooked the fact that the letter contained recommendations to the Directors because Walker was leaving; he was not laying down a policy for all time, but writing in a particular context, counselling caution at a time of boom when reckless decisions could lead to disaster in later downturns. The Royal Bank of Queensland was but one year old—not established long enough to build up reserves. His advice was proffered in the knowledge that the new General Manager, Edward Griffith, was a more political appointment with a reputation for pig-headedness who might well turn out to be another Drury.⁸⁰ The advice in the letter to Miles was to pursue a more cautious policy than Walker himself might have adopted had he remained; in practice, had he continued at the helm of the Royal Bank, he might have resolved what Blainey saw as the 'inherent contradiction of his ideals' even more effectively than his successors.⁸¹ His advice was not followed. It is impossible to judge whether the Royal Bank of Queensland would have weathered the depression of 1893 better had his policies been adhered to more closely; as it was, it was forced to close for a time for reconstruction.

⁷⁷ Blainey, *Gold and paper*, op. cit., p. 202.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 206–07. While there are other accounts of the Queensland National Bank (notably that of Tony Gough, 'Tom McIlwraith, Ted Drury, Hugh Nelson and the Queensland National Bank 1896–97' in *Queensland Heritage*, vol. 3, no. 9, November 1978), Blainey's account is the only one which contrasts so succinctly the Q. N. Bank and the Royal Bank.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 203.

⁸⁰ Edward Griffith was the brother of Sir Samuel Walker Griffith.

⁸¹ Blainey, *Gold and paper*, op. cit., p. 203.

Walker did not have the opportunity to fulfil his ambitions for the Royal Bank of Queensland. Thomas Walker died on 3 September 1886. Telegrams arrived immediately, requesting Walker to hasten to Sydney. Thomas had named his sister Joanna, Thomas Buckland and Walker as his executors, but Buckland telegraphed that his health was broken and he could not administer the estate. Such a large estate required full-time management; the most desirable arrangement was for one of the executors to become Managing Trustee. Buckland told Walker bluntly that since he was not able to undertake the task, Walker must make up his mind to move to Sydney and manage the trust estate. He was not enthused;

...to me it will be a great wrench as I like my present position and prospects, and, after 24 years in Queensland have no wish to go away.⁸²

However, under the circumstances, Walker had virtually no choice; there was no one else in the family capable of managing Thomas Walker's estate and carrying out the instructions of his will. The only alternative was to employ an outsider. Walker therefore decided to transfer to Sydney, but he also owed loyalty to the Royal Bank; he felt it his duty to complete the year with the Royal Bank of Queensland.

In the last months of 1886, branches of the Royal Bank were opened at Normanton and Toowoomba so that six branches and an agency had been opened in addition to the head office. By the end of the year the balance sheet showed assets of £440 908 and a profit of £4362 3s 8d; reserves exceeded one-fifth of the liabilities as recommended by Rae—a solid, if not brilliant result, achieved honestly and honourably and in a straightforward manner that contrasted sharply with Drury's management of the Queensland National.⁸³ Walker could state with some satisfaction:

In retiring from your service I am pleased to think I can say the Royal Bank of Queensland is without a skeleton in its cupboard and that I believe, with careful management, it has a magnificent career before it.⁸⁴

At the second half-yearly meeting of shareholders, Miles acknowledged the contribution Walker had made to the success of the Bank:

The Directors...desire to place on record their high appreciation of Mr Walker's loyal and valuable services from the initiation of the Institution until the present time. All those interested in the progress and welfare of the Bank are to be congratulated on the fact that, in laying down its foundations upon a broad and solid basis, the Directors have had the assistance of an officer of Mr Walker's ability and experience. The Directors feel sure that the Shareholders will cordially join them in wishing Mr Walker prosperity and happiness in his future sphere of operations.⁸⁵

⁸² Walker diary, vol. 38, 10 September 1886.

⁸³ Second Report, Directors of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited, 31 January 1887, National Australia Bank Archives.

⁸⁴ James Thomas Walker to William Miles, 25 January 1887, National Australia Bank Archives.

⁸⁵ Second Report, Directors of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited, 31 January 1887, op. cit.

Miles endorsed these remarks further in a personal letter:

...we desire to thank you for the very enthusiastic manner in which you have considered the bank's interests in your advice as to its future guidance and operations... The Board desire to place on record your faithful services, great experience and the universal respect in which you have been held while General Manager and they further acknowledge that the so far success the Bank has attained is due in great measure to your industry, tact and diligent attention...⁸⁶

The Directors entertained him to a farewell dinner at the Queensland Club with adulatory speeches; Walker could not have wished to leave on a higher note. His fondest memory, however, was of the presentation from the staff of a silver salver and a framed photograph. They drank his health in champagne ending with the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne'. He felt 'he had attained the zenith of his career', and that 'parting from such comrades is very trying to me'.⁸⁷

His years in Brisbane had after all brought achievement, success and greater financial security. The transfer to Brisbane undoubtedly improved his social status, particularly when Archer took leave, and Walker became 'first fiddle' for Queensland.⁸⁸ For instance, he was then introduced to Sir Thomas McIlwraith who, in the formal dictates of Victorian social etiquette had previously been only a 'bowing acquaintance'.⁸⁹ Walker also became a member of the Queensland Club in 1879.⁹⁰ He was somewhat reluctant to join, considering the joining fee of 15 guineas and yearly subscription of £10 rather extravagant. However, all of the bank managers in Brisbane were members and it was 'the correct thing', though he bridled at 'pandering to conventionalities'.⁹¹ Certainly he would not have been regarded as part of the Brisbane 'establishment' had he not joined. The Club provided not only a meeting place for business men, but also reasonable and comfortable boarding accommodation for out of town visitors to Brisbane; many politicians resided at the Club while parliament was sitting. He met there many of the men who influenced greatly the development of the colony.

However, most of the social life of colonial Brisbane revolved around Government House. The Walkers had attended levees and morning teas during the inter-regnum before the arrival of Governor Musgrave in 1883, but were drawn more closely into the circle of Government House when the Musgrave sons selected Archie Walker and Fitz Bernays as particular friends.⁹² Initiated first by written invitation from the Musgraves, visits were arranged on Wednesday afternoons when Archie went to play regularly at Government House.⁹³ Later both Archie and Sissie attended dancing classes supervised by Mrs Newman at Government House.⁹⁴ The Walkers

⁸⁶ William Miles to James Thomas Walker, 3 February 1887, Walker MSS.

⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 39, 29 January 1887 and 11 February 1887.

⁸⁸ From February 1883 Walker was Acting Queensland Inspector and Manager of Brisbane Branch.

⁸⁹ Walker diary, vol. 34, 21 May 1883.

⁹⁰ Joshua Peter Bell, *Queensland Club 1859-1959*, Brisbane, 1966. List of members shows him as joining in 1875 but the Walker diary (vol. 28, 4 March 1879) is quite clear on the date.

⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 28, 21 December 1878.

⁹² Fitz Bernays was the brother of C. A. Bernays, author of *Queensland politics during the last sixty years 1859-1919*, Brisbane, 1919.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 36, 19 November 1884.

⁹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 37, 7 May 1885.

did not exploit the friendship of the children for their own ends but maintained a polite distance, though they were welcomed to morning teas and dinners at Government House. Janette appears to have been more impressed by Viceregal recognition than Walker, who was more concerned with Archie's dismal scholastic record than his social successes.

Brisbane offered more opportunity to enjoy the theatre; not unexpectedly Walker enjoyed oratorio but found the programme offered by Mademoiselle Olga Dubois, a singer of mediocre talent, 'too classical for my uncultivated musical taste'.⁹⁶ Operetta was more to his liking, though he objected to any scenes that offended his sense of decency; the drunken scene in *Perichole*, for instance, met with disapproval.⁹⁶ Attendance at the theatre in colonial Brisbane might be considered an essential element in maintaining social prestige and social contacts but it is clear that Walker devoted his attention to the performances he witnessed. Of a performance of *Norma* he remarked: 'I must confess to disappointment...the chorus was very weak, singing rather "shrieky"', but he commented that the orchestra was excellent and the singing improved after the first act.⁹⁷ On the numerous occasions throughout the diaries when reference is made to visits to the theatre or to concerts it is obvious that Walker for the most part attended for pleasure and entertainment rather than prestige. He was honest in admitting that he neither understood nor enjoyed overly 'high-brow' presentations but liked 'to hear songs I am acquainted with!'.⁹⁸

Cricket remained a particular interest; he taught both Archie and Alec the rudiments of the game. Though still playing occasionally, he now enjoyed cricket matches as a spectator rather than a participant. He was present when the Hon. Ivo Bligh's Eleven played a team of eighteen Queenslanders in 1883, finding the wicketkeeper, Tylecoats, 'a treat to see'.⁹⁹ However, family and business commitments left little time for such interests.

The circle of friends the Walkers developed was not particularly wealthy or notable in the Brisbane social scene, but genuine and kindly. Some, like the John Scott family, they had known previously; others, like Dr and Mrs Bell and Mr and Mrs C. E. Bernays, were parents of friends of the children.¹⁰⁰ Still others, like Captain and Mrs Claudius Whish, were friends of Alexander and Minnie Archer who took the Walkers under their wing.¹⁰¹ One of the Whish daughters married Reginald Heber Roe, the Headmaster of Brisbane Grammar School.¹⁰² Walker and Roe established a mutual respect that continued for many years. They also became firm friends with W. H. Walsh and his family.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 31, 11 May 1880.

⁹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 34, 31 May 1883.

⁹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 33, 27 November 1882.

⁹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 35, 19 March 1884.

⁹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 34, 2 February 1883.

¹⁰⁰ Dr Bell was a prominent Brisbane medical practitioner; the family lived at Milton House.

¹⁰¹ For information on Whish see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.

¹⁰² See Keith Willey, *The first hundred years: The story of Brisbane Grammar School 1868-1968*, Melbourne, 1968.

¹⁰³ For information on W. H. Walsh see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.

Social activities included parties and dances and, enjoyed most of all, boating parties on the Brisbane River, often commencing from Newstead Wharf and rowing to 'Arley' at Towong where they enjoyed picnics or a 'corroboree', dancing around a fire in the garden.¹⁰⁴ Weekends and school holidays were spent mostly at Cleveland, though during longer vacations the children were often at 'Range View' or 'Haremar' with their grandmother and aunts; if he was not on holiday himself, Walker journeyed to Cleveland at weekends when the family were in residence there. He had invested in a bathing enclosure at Raby Bay where he taught the children, including Sissie, to swim. With the boys he enjoyed fishing, and undertook some gardening with the assistance of Sissie and Alec. The interests of parents and children were simple; Walker prized the fact that Sissie was thoroughly unsophisticated and natural.¹⁰⁵

Though happy to promote the needs of the state school at Cleveland and not particularly well off, Walker elected to send his children to private schools. It does not seem that this was to keep them from associating with children of other classes, but because he felt that private schools offered better tuition and stricter discipline.¹⁰⁶ He certainly cherished an ambition to enable his children, both boys and girls, to attend university if they so desired and proved themselves capable. By this time his cousin Jane Waterston had returned to London from her missionary work in South Africa to become one of the earliest women students in medicine in order to expand her work as a missionary.¹⁰⁷ For Walker, her achievements provided further proof of the capability of women to succeed in higher education, though it is not clear whether education was intended to improve women's capabilities as wives or whether he might have approved of women competing for places in the business world. He certainly had a strong belief that girls should receive an education that might allow them to earn their living honestly if left on their own and in straitened circumstances, being somewhat sceptical of the fortunes of marriage for women:

I always feel sorry for lassies getting married! I suppose it is partly because it makes one feel getting older and partly because one sees that marriage is a kind of lottery in which there are not a few blanks.¹⁰⁸

It would seem therefore that, though sending the children to private schools may have been partly motivated by social considerations, the greater emphasis was on providing better educational opportunities.

Walker was far from the lordly Victorian husband, insulated from household problems. While away on banking inspections, he heard from Janette: 'The cook came home quite tipsy last night... this morning she is quite unable to cook dinner or do any work... you must sack her when you come home'.¹⁰⁹ His efforts to escape from household responsibilities never succeeded. In 1886 he decreed: 'I think if the

¹⁰⁴ Walker diary, vol. 36, 14 March 1885.

¹⁰⁵ Walker diary, vol. 34, 27 June 1883.

¹⁰⁶ Archie was enrolled at A. J. Boyd's Eton School; Sissie attended Miss Jardine's Girls School.

¹⁰⁷ Walker diary, vol. 38, 3 September 1886.

¹⁰⁸ Walker diary, vol. 32, 21 January 1882.

¹⁰⁹ Janette Walker to James Thomas Walker, 2 February 1881, Walker MSS.

husband is the breadwinner of the family he should be absolved from all house shopping and house worries generally!—only to discover Janette had overspent extravagantly on some trifle for the house.¹¹⁰ Janette had no money sense; Sissie summed up her mother's helplessness much later:

Mum is just like a child, she has absolutely no idea of the value of money and has no sense of proportion. She is the soul of generosity by nature and when she tries to be careful sends me into fits of laughter by her efforts at economy.¹¹¹

As the older children matured, it became obvious that they were not interested in learning. Walker accepted this philosophically, though he was disappointed:

I fear Sis will never be a scholar. She takes after her mother in having a lump of application very feebly developed—a source of considerable disappointment to me! There is always a cross in every lot. So be it.¹¹²

But he would not allow her teachers to slap her for carelessness and inattention since he believed it might sour her sunny nature. Archie he found 'volatile and wanting in steadfast application'.¹¹³ In 1886 he was twenty-third in a class of twenty-three at Brisbane Grammar School—to the despair of his father. Walker found it hard to discipline his children, recalling his own fear of beatings. Janette refused to administer any discipline so he was left to the role of disciplinarian and educator. However, he accepted the responsibility, trying to mete out justice with mercy; his ideal was 'to exercise the happy medium between the stern and the foolishly indulgent father'.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless his regular lengthy absences compounded family problems.

In spite of the demands of work and family, he continued to involve himself in the affairs of other members of the family. The finances of the Palmer family remained a source of concern. He had also the additional responsibility of assisting Janette's sister Emily in managing her affairs. On 16 March 1882 while at St George he was informed by telegram that Thomas Gabriel Walker had died at Wallerawang.¹¹⁵ He continued to hold trust accounts for relatives in Britain that necessitated the remittance of six-monthly statements and dividends; in addition he had agreed to replace Andrew Brown as a Trustee under the marriage settlement of Alison Sidey, which brought 'no little trouble and anxiety but of course no pecuniary advantage—all the other way!'.¹¹⁶ The responsibility lasted into the twentieth century and taught him a salutary lesson—not to accept a trusteeship again without remuneration, except for a brother or sister. Thomas Walker of 'Yaralla', too, departed for a year in Britain in 1882 leaving Walker and his brother William in charge of 'Tenterfield', so the extraneous business of family affairs added

¹¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 38, 12 February 1886 and 15 February 1886.

¹¹¹ Emily P. Walker (Sissie) to Nita Walker, 14 March 1923, Walker MSS.

¹¹² Walker diary, vol. 36, 16 October 1884.

¹¹³ Walker diary, vol. 37, 12 October 1886.

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 45, 20 March 1890.

¹¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 32, 16 March 1882. An obituary for T. G. Walker is at the beginning of Walker diary, vol. 33.

¹¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 36, 21 April 1884. See also ch. 2. The settlement guaranteed a life interest in Manangeroo Station and other property.

considerably to his responsibilities. Apart from family affairs he had become involved with Ralph Gore in management of the estate of E. I. C. Browne.¹¹⁷

The demands of his job no longer permitted him to undertake so many community services. It might be considered a requirement of the job that he belonged to the Chamber of Commerce and was gazetted a Justice of the Peace. He continued his association with the Presbyterian Church, helping to establish the fund for the augmentation of stipends in weaker charges and attending annual General Assemblies.¹¹⁸ Discussion regarding the federation of Presbyterian Churches probably first alerted him to some of the difficulties associated with federation of the Australian colonies.¹¹⁹ On his departure for Sydney the Presbyterian Church recognised his assistance by a special vote of thanks at the General Assembly for his 'valuable and long-continued services'.¹²⁰ He also assisted with the founding of the Caledonian Society, which was subsequently called the Queensland Scottish Association, and was elected Chairman of its Provisional Committee.¹²¹ His interest in the School of Arts was restricted to borrowing books from the library and attending lectures occasionally. During Archer's absence Walker took over the Treasurership of the Children's Hospital, an institution that Archer and his wife had helped to found; it was in fact during Walker's term as Treasurer that the Children's Hospital opened.¹²² At Cleveland he served on the Committee of the National School but declined nomination for a place on the Divisional Board, though he joined a delegation to press for a jetty at Cleveland.¹²³

Walker was remarkable in managing successfully such diverse interests, more than fulfilling his commitment to the Bank, administering the affairs of family and friends with skill and integrity, participating in family life and still maintaining his interest in church and community work. Reading his records one feels almost tangibly the enormous energy, enthusiasm and dedication he brought to the many responsibilities he accepted. Withal he maintained a keen interest in politics. He continued to attend debates in parliament, absorbing the form and ritual of parliamentary proceedings, admitting: 'I must plead guilty to having a desire to be on the floor of the house myself someday...'¹²⁴ However, the Bank frowned on officers engaging in politics. Nevertheless his position in banking brought him into more frequent contact with politicians. If he was not involved directly in politics, his advice was sought by those in power and his situation enabled him to proffer criticism on occasion, though, if he passed on to Sir Samuel Griffith the following advice from Donald Larnach, it appears to have had little effect:

If you have the ear of your Prime Minister Griffiths [*sic*] you will do his government and your colony good by advising him to come less

¹¹⁷ Gore (later Sir Ralph Gore) was a son of St George Gore of Lyndhurst Estate near Warwick. Ralph Gore married the only daughter of E. I. C. Browne. For information on St George Gore and Browne see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, op. cit.

¹¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 33, 20 April 1882.

¹¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 36, 26 May 1884.

¹²⁰ The Secretary, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland to James Thomas Walker, 27 May 1887, Walker MSS.

¹²¹ Walker diary, vol. 35, 22 April 1884 and 25 April 1884.

¹²² Walker diary, vol. 34, 3 July 1883; vol. 35, 6 December 1883 and 21 April 1884.

¹²³ Walker diary, vol. 33, 28 October 1882 and 8 November 1882; and vol. 34, 16 September 1883.

¹²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 30, 7 September 1880.

often to the market for loans. It may be grand to adopt a bold borrowing policy and by which the Ministers of the day are made popular, but when you have to provide your interest at this end of the world every six months, you will find the drain tremendous...¹²⁵

This was a turbulent period of Queensland politics with Sir Thomas McIlwraith and Sir Samuel Griffith vying for power.¹²⁶ Walker was known and liked by most of the major political figures though he was frequently in disagreement with their policies. Sir Samuel Griffith, Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, Boyd D. Morehead, William Miles, Hugh Nelson, and many others were either acquaintances or friends.¹²⁷

But it was the more Liberal Sir Samuel Griffith who attracted Walker, whose sentiments certainly echoed those of Griffith:

What we desire in this colony is...not to see the aggregation of wealth or the aggregation of great estates in the hands of a few, but a general diffusion of wealth and property and especially a diffusion of that wealth and prosperity among agricultural settlers.¹²⁸

There were points, however, on which he disagreed with Griffith, notably the imposition of Poll Tax of £20 per head on Chinese which elicited a cynical comment:

It is evident the great body of the electors approve of some restriction on Chinese Immigration and as Politics seems to consist in being politic, I suppose Members feel qualified in trimming their sails to the popular breeze.¹²⁹

Walker found no group with whom he could form an alliance so decided to remain 'neutral' in Queensland politics as 'I c'd not be an extreme man on either side'.¹³⁰ He remained an ardent supporter of Gladstone, rejoicing in 1880 at Gladstone's election as British Prime Minister:

I really believe that Gladstone and John Bright are Christian Gentlemen if it is possible...I like think that such a thing is possible and that patriotism is not a thing of the past.¹³¹

In May 1880 the *Courier* published four articles written by Walker discussing Gladstone's financial policies, supporting Free Trade.¹³² During this period he enjoyed reading history, moving from Carlyle's *French Revolution* to McCarthy's *History of our Times*. He also read John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* with interest but found the greatest interest in the work of Henry George, reading both *Progress and Poverty* and *Social Problems*. He noted in particular: 'I am certainly a convert to the idea of the nationalisation of land but I do not believe in anything approaching confiscation. If we resume, we must compensate'.¹³³ Friends such as Donald Gunn of Pikedale, who had known him since his arrival in Towoomba,

¹²⁵ Donald Larnach to James Thomas Walker, 27 April 1886, Walker MSS.

¹²⁶ For accounts of this period see Murphy and Joyce, *op. cit.*; and Bernays, *op. cit.*

¹²⁷ For information see Waterson, *A biographical register...*, *op. cit.*

¹²⁸ S. W. Griffith, in Queensland, Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 43, 6 August 1884, p. 272 (quoted in R. B. Joyce, 'Samuel Walker Griffith', in Murphy and Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 164).

¹²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 35, 10 January 1884.

¹³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 34, 2 August 1883.

¹³¹ Walker diary, vol. 30, 26 April 1880.

¹³² Cuttings in Walker diary, vol. 30, 11–13 May 1880.

¹³³ Walker diary, vol. 36, 26 December 1884.

though continuing to enjoy his company, regarded him as 'a fearful radical'; Walker called himself 'a Gladstonian Liberal or a Philosophical Radical'.¹³⁴ He was deeply critical of the high Tory views of some of his contemporaries such as William Pinnock who

... 'ashored' [sic] me that he had pleasure in informing me that he was not in a single bank in England or Scotland where Gladstone was not looked on as a scoundrel! He believes that Gladstone is a liar, is a Republican and hopes to be President of the British Republic.¹³⁵

Though preserving great affection for her, he differed with his sister Kate; 'a conservative to the backbone and does not appreciate my favourite W. E. Gladstone'.¹³⁶ However, Walker maintained his independent views, preserving a staunchly liberal philosophy.

In the meantime he considered many matters that impinged on the future development of Queensland, and on the future Commonwealth of Australia, including among others the Transcontinental Railway and the Bills of Exchange Act, on which Hugh Nelson invited him to suggest improvements.¹³⁷ Clearly Walker had earned considerable respect from his friends and acquaintances in parliament.

Irish Home Rule was frequently a topic of discussion; Walker opposed the suggestion that Ireland should be a republic and, although supporting federation of the Australian colonies, added the rider: 'I hope Australasia will remain a dependency of the Mother Country as long as I have breath in my body'.¹³⁸ This opinion, though undoubtedly reflecting the staunch British patriotism engendered by his family background and schooling, was also greatly influenced by his contempt for the calibre of Queensland politicians. He regretted their lack of the high principles he believed motivated Gladstone, Earl Derby, the Marquis of Hartington and others. The low calibre and bad behaviour of Queensland parliamentarians he found deplorable, and he criticised the pettiness and backbiting of political life, even penning a letter to the Editor of the *Telegraph* urging those involved to suppress their political rancour.¹³⁹

Though supporting federation, he was not so strongly supportive of the separation movements to establish new states in the central and northern regions of Queensland.¹⁴⁰ His friend and former colleague William Villiers Brown was deeply committed to the formation of a new state in north Queensland, but Walker noted:

I doubt not Separation will eventuate in time, probably subsequently to Federation of the Colonies. I cannot say I am an Anti-Separationist but I fail to see disinterested patriotism in the cry. It is so far as I can judge undisguised selfishness.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 36, 3 January 1885.

¹³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 35, 3 January 1885.

¹³⁶ Walker diary, vol. 31, 21 December 1880 and 13 June 1881.

¹³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 34, 3 July 1883; and vol. 35, 9 February 1884.

¹³⁸ Walker diary, vol. 34, 19 August 1883. He discussed federation at the Queensland Club and elsewhere, and on 27 September 1883 attended a lecture by Mr Jeffries on 'Australasia Federating'.

¹³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 33, 30 October 1882; and vol. 35, 25 October 1883.

¹⁴⁰ See Christine Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, Townsville, 1981.

¹⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 36, 22 November 1884.

However, his views did not interfere with his long friendship with Brown.

On the subject of New Guinea his views were more temperate than most at the time. He deplored the jingoistic attitude of many at the Queensland Club and felt that fear of German aggression was unfounded.¹⁴² Though undoubtedly a British patriot, he was not blind to Britain's own expansion in the Pacific:

Some folks begrudge the Germans the portion of New Guinea alleged to have been annexed by the Germans. I for one, cannot say I do, although from an Australian point of view there is something to be said in favour of the Monroe Doctrine, from a Cosmopolitan point of view I fail to see what right Great Britain has to gobble up every island in the South Pacific to the exclusion of other European powers.¹⁴³

He did not, however, reflect that the islanders might have preferred to remain independent.

His lengthy and wide-ranging journeys as Bank Inspector brought him into contact with a wide cross section of the community, from millionaires such as James Tyson, mine owners, plantation owners and managers, to coach drivers and swagmen. All received the same courtesy and interest; he particularly enjoyed the tales of coaching life recounted by the drivers. His observations provided a broad knowledge of workers and working conditions though he never seems to have considered himself of the working class. As early as 1875 at the inaugural meeting of the Queensland Shearers Union in Tbowoomba, he was surprised to find, though the speeches were loud, some were most practical and all were temperate.¹⁴⁴ His respect for the working class increased as he watched workers in mines and mills. At Gympie he remarked: 'What a fine body of men miners are, from a physical point of view'.¹⁴⁵ Viewing an 8-Hour Day demonstration he was 'particularly struck with the manly bearing and superior appearance of the carpenters and joiners'.¹⁴⁶ It was a shock, however, to discover the former teacher of the Cleveland State School working as a wharf lumper because 'he made a much better income by "lumping" than he could by teaching'.¹⁴⁷

Though an urban worker Walker developed sympathy with and understanding of rural Australians. He sympathised with the Asian and Pacific Island labourers who were by the 1880s the subject of much controversy. The question of coloured labour concerned Walker greatly. He observed keenly men of many races on his travels, describing with sympathy the Chinese, Kanakas and Aborigines he encountered. Of a South Sea Islander playing the concertina on the coach to Cleveland, he commented: 'I doubt whether anybody else on the coach could vie with the much despised darkey in his accomplishment'.¹⁴⁸ In 1882 he visited a farm on the Endeavour River where the Chinese owner, Lee Lye, was experimenting successfully with rice growing. In the Chinese quarter of Cooktown, he noted that

¹⁴² Walker diary, vol. 33, 19 December 1882.

¹⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 36, 26 December 1884.

¹⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 25, 18 March 1875.

¹⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 38, 30 March 1886.

¹⁴⁶ Walker diary, vol. 38, 1 March 1886.

¹⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 36, 11 February 1885.

¹⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 35, 9 November 1883.

Fan Tan was being played 'in a business like manner' and discovered for himself, though not indulging, how opium was smoked, making no condemnatory remarks.¹⁴⁹ He was familiar with many sugar plantations where Kanakas were employed, and in 1884 inspected sugar estates at Innishowen and Mourilyan, where he saw large numbers of Chinese, Malays and Kanakas at work.¹⁵⁰ At James Gordon's Cluden Park estate near Townsville he commented on the mixture of races among the tenants of Gordon's orchards and farms, one of which was tenanted by Chinese and the others by South Sea Islanders.¹⁵¹ His observations convinced him of the many fine qualities of these people.

The labour question was frequently a topic of discussion with friends; A. C. Macmillan, now on a plantation in the Burdekin Delta, experimented with employing Maltese workers, but found the project expensive when they insisted on bringing with them their own Roman Catholic priest for whom they demanded £250 per annum. Macmillan favoured Coolie labour but opposed the employment of Chinese; he infinitely preferred the employment of Kanakas 'if they could be procured honourably'.¹⁵² William Miles wanted Australia to be 'a white man's country' while Hugh Nelson favoured the importation of Coolies under indenture: Walker wanted 'a fair field and no favour irrespective of colour, class, creed or country'.¹⁵³ He reiterated his views publicly in a letter published in both the *Courier Mail* and the *Daily Observer*:

The inherent rights of man and a citizen should be respected irrespective of colour, class, creed or country...there should be free trade in labour as in all other merchantable commodities.¹⁵⁴

Nor was he suggesting exploitation of 'cheap' labour; he believed that Kanakas and Chinese should be paid a fair wage. Commenting on Boyd D. Morehead's election campaign, he remarked: 'I suppose it did not strike him that if £39 a year lodging and rations is too little for a white man, £6 a year and rations is surely barely sufficient for a Kanaka'.¹⁵⁵ He agreed with Ashdown of the Commercial Bank, Mackay:

...if planters cannot get cheap labour, they will have to partition their estates and let them to farmers to grow for their mills, a far better state of affairs for the colony, but not so profitable an arrangement for the planters.¹⁵⁶

He continued to oppose the idea of a 'white' Australia despite the growing popularity of the concept.

Adversity, maturity, work and family responsibilities had tempered the hasty young man who sailed for Rockhampton twenty-five years earlier. Reminiscing in 1902 he looked back with considerable satisfaction to his twenty-five years in

¹⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 33, 9 June 1882.

¹⁵⁰ Walker diary, vol. 36, 1 August 1884. Innishowen was near the present Innisfail.

¹⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 37, 16 August 1885.

¹⁵² Walker diary, vol. 33, 19 December 1882.

¹⁵³ This discussion at the Queensland Club is recorded in Walker diary, vol. 35, 23 January 1884.

¹⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 34, 31 July 1883 and 11 August 1883.

¹⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 34, 3 August 1883.

¹⁵⁶ Ashdown was brother-in-law to the planter James Ewan Davidson. These remarks were in a letter from Ashdown to James Thomas Walker (Walker diary, vol. 34, 5 September 1883).

Queensland; he thought he had done his best work in that time and it was the most interesting period of his life. There is no doubt that most of his future political views were formed during his career in Queensland. He had become a firmly convinced Christian but moved away from the narrow and sometimes intolerant confines of his Glasite family background. However, the strong Scottish respect for education and staunch Glasite belief in caring for the needy remained with him. Though his reading was neither systematic nor rigorous, he had studied the political writings of the time in some depth, espousing Liberalism wholeheartedly, with particular emphasis on Free Trade. His Christian views challenged Darwinian theories of racial superiority or inferiority leading him to oppose the racist view of most of his contemporaries. He had, too, supported the cause of equal educational opportunities for women. Above all he was an ardent supporter of the federation of the Australian colonies.

Leaving Queensland was indeed a wrench for both Walker and his wife. They were firmly settled at 'Greylands', a charming villa residence at Indooroopilly, overlooking the Brisbane River which had been their home since he became General Manager of the Royal Bank. Though not of the magnificence of 'Fernberg'¹⁵⁷, it was much grander than 'Brewsterfields', the house at Milton they had rented previously. Janette was thoroughly enjoying her situation. In addition Brisbane was within easy travelling distance of 'Range View' so that Janette and her mother and sisters visited each other regularly, and the children spent holidays with the Palmer family. Walker was well known, liked and respected throughout Queensland, with an established social position. To leave for a new situation in another colony in a city where they were virtually unknown, possibly with a lowering of status, was indeed daunting.

Yet the diaries record few regrets; entries at this time appear to have been written hastily and one has the impression that, in completing his duties in the Royal Bank of Queensland at the same time as putting in train legal and other requirements necessary for the administration of Thomas Walker's estate and arranging the departure of the family, Walker was too preoccupied with other affairs to consider his own sentiments. Nor did his departure sever all his links with the colony; the Thomas Walker estate included property in many parts of Queensland and Walker himself still owned property in the colony. He was to return to the colony at least annually for the next thirty years.

¹⁵⁷ Originally the home of Walker's acquaintance, J. C. Heussler, now Queensland Government House.

Twenty-five years after he had left Sydney as an untried and comparatively inexperienced bachelor, James Thomas Walker returned, a family man of 46, well seasoned in financial matters, responsible and hard working. Frustration had not embittered him; rather he had developed a wry sense of humour. An energetic man, yet thoughtful and studious, who enjoyed a good discussion, hasty but quick to apologise, he was a man on whom one could rely, whose word was his bond.

Life both public and private changed considerably if not dramatically with removal to Sydney. Privately, for the first time in eighteen years of marriage, he had made a decision with which Janette did not concur. Janette did not wish to go to Sydney regardless of the fact that Walker would earn £1000 per annum more in salary and could provide greater security for herself and better opportunities for the children; Joanna and Eadith suggested a salary of £2500 per annum which offered him a chance to escape his constant worry of falling into debt. His greatest concern in earning a higher salary had always been to provide for Janette and the children should he be incapacitated or die; he had dutifully made a will and maintained as much insurance as he could afford but the needs of a growing family seemed always to absorb a large percentage of his income.¹ The prospect of providing greater security for Janette and better opportunities for the children must have influenced his decision very strongly.

In making his decision he was undoubtedly influenced, too, by the strong sense of kinship and what might be called clan responsibility that characterised the Walker family; he had respected Thomas Walker and had therefore a sense of obligation to both his sister and his daughter. In addition, though enjoying the role of General Manager of a bank, management of the Walker estate offered even greater independence; though Eadith was the beneficiary of the fortune during her lifetime, the Managing Trustee would control an estate of approximately £1 000 000, twice the subscribed capital of the Royal Bank of Queensland. Apart from such worldly concerns, Walker had always cherished a desire to assist those less well off, helping generously when he was able. He could not understand Tyson and others who seldom donated money to charity:

I do think friend Tyson and other disgustingly rich folks lose much pleasure in not distributing their riches more than they do. A £100 here and there would make the wheels of life go more comfortably for all concerned and would never be missed. A queer world or rather queer folks in it.²

¹ Throughout the diaries (e.g. vol. 39, 6 October 1886) there are references to upgrading of his insurance. Walker's will is in Walker MSS.

² Walker diary, vol. 36, 26 January 1885.

Administration of the estate of Thomas Walker would enable him to become a benefactor on a scale he could not otherwise have attained. In his will Thomas had devised £20 000 for distribution to charities and directed that £100 000 be provided to erect a convalescent hospital. Here was a golden opportunity for Walker to serve his fellow men.

Yet, despite all considerations, Janette complained. Before long Walker was exclaiming:

I really wish I had never left 'Greylands' and my comfortable congenial billet in the Royal Bank! The extra emoluments are to me no equivalent for the upsetting of my life plans—I do wish however that we could learn to be contented!³

No house affordable on his income suited Janette and eventually he was forced to make a unilateral decision to lease 'Salisbury' at Harris Park, by no means an insignificant villa.⁴ Janette, however, was not satisfied; they moved to 'The Priory' at St Leonards where their second daughter and last child, Janette Chevieria Hamilton, known as Nita, was born in 1889. Janette was still dissatisfied, desiring an even larger house in a more fashionable area; in 1892 they moved to 'Rosemont', a stone mansion, the former home of Alexander Campbell at Woollahra. Finally in 1908, though most of the family were no longer at home, they moved to the massive Gothic mansion 'Wallaroy' at Ocean Street, Woollahra. Walker would have been quite happy to remain at 'the dear old Priory';⁵ both 'Rosemont' and 'Wallaroy' he regarded as white elephants, but he had long adopted the philosophy, 'Least said, soonest mended', so acquiesced to Janette's wishes.⁶ There is little doubt that his occupancy of increasingly larger houses, his connection with the Walker estate, and the glittering social events at 'Yaralla' where Eadith entertained in lavish fashion, coloured opinions of contemporaries; his anti-racist and anti-socialist stance in politics appeared more a defence of capitalism and his own status rather than the result of principles.

For the first time, the two older Walker sons were sent to boarding school in an endeavour to improve both their discipline and their academic attainments. This was a decided break with the past for Walker whose father had refused to allow his sons to leave home for education.⁷ It was a response to the continuing problems of Archie, but also perhaps an acknowledgment that the family was now of that privileged Australian class whose sons attended boarding school in Australia or Britain, frequently ending their educational careers at English universities. Walker did not, however, elect to send his sons to one of the acknowledged 'elitist' schools, but to Coerwull Academy, a Presbyterian college established with the aim, not only

³ Walker diary, vol. 39, 11 March 1887.

⁴ In three-quarters of an acre with a tennis court, gravel walks, fruit trees, and vegetable and flower gardens, the house was of brick on stone foundations, surrounded by wide verandahs and balconies. It comprised six rooms on the ground floor with china pantry, kitchen scullery, laundry and bathroom. The first floor contained seven bedrooms, a dressing room and bathroom with hot and cold running water. A further two bedrooms were located in a tower at one corner of the building. Water and gas were laid on, and the windows were shaded with Venetian blinds. The rent was £250 per annum.

⁵ Walker diary, vol. 52, 23 November 1892.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 32, 22 January 1882.

⁷ See ch. 2.

of providing a Presbyterian education, but also of providing better education through scholarships for the sons of Presbyterian clergy who could not otherwise afford such luxuries. It appears never to have attained other than a mediocre reputation. The motives for this decision are unclear. He was later a most enthusiastic member of the committee that administered the school and may well have cherished an ambition to improve the school enrolment and its standards. On the other hand he may have wished to isolate his sons from the city life of Sydney.

Removal to Sydney brought changes in his private life far more disruptive than those in his public life, but there too his status had changed completely. Ironically, he had escaped the Walker fold for a year, only to be enmeshed more completely than ever in family affairs. For the first time he was directly dependent on family business for his income, but at the same time enjoyed greater personal freedom to pursue his own interests; he was no longer a junior member of the clan, but virtually the leader. That he was the third generation of a remarkably successful family with a long and respected reputation in the Sydney business community guaranteed him acceptance into the Sydney 'Establishment'; for instance his entry into the Union Club was virtually assured when Sir Frederick Darley proposed him for membership.⁸ However, it is doubtful if such acceptance would have come as readily, or have continued indefinitely, had Walker not already established a good reputation in Queensland or proved other than able and honest. He was the guiding force in control of an enormous fortune, for he administered not only the estate of Thomas Walker but also assisted both his daughter Eadith and his sister Joanna with their considerable personal estates, while remaining as Trustee of the Sidey Trust and of the E. I. C. Browne estate.⁹ Over the next decade Walker also transacted business for other members of the Walker family, in particular the Australian estates of both Thomas and William Benjamin Walker, and for the Archer family, and held a Power of Attorney to oversee the Australian affairs of Stanley Grantham Hill.¹⁰ His main occupation was, however, the estate of Thomas Walker.

In the years since Walker had arrived in Australia, Thomas had earned an awesome reputation as a businessman and as a philanthropist. He was a member of the boards of the A.M.P. Society and of the Australian Steam Navigation Company and President of the Bank of New South Wales from 1869 to 1886. In business he was somewhat austere, secretive and extremely cautious, though Shepherd Smith, the manager of the Bank in Sydney, thought him 'one of the most active and painstaking Presidents we have had'.¹¹ Though he lived in some luxury he donated a substantial portion of his fortune to charity, assisting institutions such as the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Ashfield Infants Home, Bathurst Hospital and many others. In 1882 he gave £10 000 to benevolent institutions and in his will, left

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 39, 7 December 1886. Darley was brother-in-law of William Benjamin Walker. He was, by this time, Chief Justice of New South Wales. See chs 2 and 4.

⁹ See chs 5 and 6. The Sidey Trust was the marriage settlement of Alison Sidey, daughter of James Walker of Wallerawang.

¹⁰ Thomas and William were sons of William Walker of Perth. Hill was a wealthy pastoralist who inherited an estate in England where he returned leaving James Thomas Walker to attend to his affairs in Australia.

¹¹ Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

£20 000 for a similar purpose as well as devising £100 000 to build and endow a convalescent hospital for the needy. He also took a keen interest in education, serving on the Council of the Australian College established by John Dunmore Lang in 1832 and making donations to the University of Sydney.

Though not actively involved with politics Thomas strongly opposed the land acts that threw open all land for selection, preferring a system of setting aside special agricultural areas. His objections were not merely those of the landowner protecting his own interests; his aim was to foster farming while reducing opportunities for abuses such as 'peacocking'.¹² His views were sensible and well expressed. Though he had amassed an enormous fortune, he remained modest and retiring; it was said of him that 'he never spoke evil of any man', a remarkable reputation in one whose career in Australia extended from the convict era to the 1880s.¹³

Despite his reputation as a businessman Thomas had not trusted the making of his will to a solicitor, but wrote it himself. The bulk of his fortune was left in trust as a life interest for his only daughter Eadith. At her death half of the remainder was left to charity, the rest to be divided among next of kin. Thomas named three trustees in his will: his sister Joanna; his fellow director on the board of the Bank of New South Wales, Thomas Buckland; and James Thomas Walker. When Buckland refused to accept the responsibility and resigned as a trustee, he was replaced by Alexander Archer, but the major responsibility for the everyday management of affairs fell to Walker. It was a situation for which he appears to have been fitted uniquely with his previous experience in banking, excellent understanding of book-keeping and accounting and interest in economic problems.

Thomas had established virtually a private mortgage and investment company, advancing finance to selected applicants and accumulating a widespread portfolio of investments distributed in four states.¹⁴ The major holdings were five pastoral properties: Winton station in Queensland; and Borongo, Coolatai, Killoola and Tenterfield stations in New South Wales, the last held in partnership with William Henry Walker, Walker's younger brother. Other smaller properties included Barrabool near Geelong and Craigieburn near Melbourne, as well as inner-city properties in Melbourne and Sydney; suburban properties at Teneriffe, Brisbane; Concord (Maryborough, Queensland); Riverstone Park, Sydney; and his residence 'Yaralla', Concord (Sydney). Other interests included a quarry at Glen Osmond near Adelaide, the Gundagai Slate Works, Gore Hill Brick Works (Sydney) and interests in coal mines at Bulli and Newcastle. The remaining properties were scattered in various centres from Deniliquin to Rockhampton, apart from extensive share holdings in a number of companies, in particular the Bank of New South Wales and

¹² Thomas Walker, *Letters to Members of the Parliament of New South Wales on the subject of the Land Laws*, Sydney, 1883.

¹³ *Sydney Mail*, 18 September 1886.

¹⁴ A total overview of the Thomas Walker interests over the years is not possible. The summary here is not exhaustive but derives from the diaries of James Thomas Walker, obituaries of Thomas Walker, and details of the estates of Thomas Walker, Joanna Walker and Eadith Walker in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. W. D. Rubenstein ('The top wealth-holders in New South Wales, 1817-1939', in *Australian economic history review*, vol. XX, no. 2, September 1980, pp. 136-52) estimates Thomas Walker's fortune at his death at £929 000, but this was apparently based on records in New South Wales only.

the Australian Steam Navigation Company. In addition to administering the estate, Walker succeeded Thomas as a trustee of the Ashfield Infants Home and of the Model Lodging House Company Limited.¹⁵ He had also to oversee the distribution of £20 000 left under Thomas's will to public, charitable and benevolent institutions in New South Wales; this was completed by August 1887, a large portion going to the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, in consequence of which Walker subsequently became a Life Governor of the Society.¹⁶

Management of the Walker interests was a challenging task; relations with Joanna and Eadith were not always easy. No man, one feels, could have dominated either of these formidable women. Joanna, the youngest and only surviving daughter of James Walker of Leith had grown up in a wealthy family; her brothers had greatly increased the family wealth and had ensured that Joanna herself was wealthy. Though she could be kindhearted and gave generously to charity, she was imperious and something of a snob and a prig. Joanna had brought up Eadith from the death of her mother in 1870 so that many of her attitudes had passed to her niece. Eadith could be kind-hearted and generous but she was extremely conscious of her wealth and position. Walker remarked:

Money to her is a burden, not a pleasure. Sometimes I pity her with her peculiar disposition—so full of prejudices and little pretentiousnesses... She is inclined to be needlessly secretive, an inherited quality from her father and which her Aunt Cousin Joanna had not!¹⁷

He considered that Eadith had been greatly disadvantaged as the only child of a wealthy old man:

...her intentions may be excellent but her idio-syncretacies [*sic*] and mannerisms are deplorable. As her Aunt once said to me: 'Eadith is never satisfied.'¹⁸

Walker in fact may have been one of the few people who never fawned on Eadith, whom she was quite certain she could trust and from whom she took advice, though she occasionally ignored the advice to her cost, as when she purchased 'Cheverells' at Potts Point for considerably more than it was worth according to Walker.¹⁹ He always treated her kindly and certainly acted as a watchdog, protecting her from importunate beggars, confidence tricksters and others who coveted her wealth, for which she was not ungrateful, though Walker refused all gifts or attempts to increase his stipend.²⁰ Eadith's disposition, however, did not make his position as Managing Trustee easier.

In the first three months of his Trusteeship, he travelled to inspect the various properties for himself. Management was then rationalised with Eadith purchasing from the estate the 'Yaralla' property together with the adjoining Yaralla Cottages, a retirement home for less affluent gentlewomen. The estate then bought out

¹⁵ A home for visiting seamen and others.

¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 40, 28 July 1887; and vol. 102, 24 July 1914.

¹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 54, 1 September 1893.

¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 54, 6 September 1893.

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 45, 6 November 1889.

²⁰ Eventually Eadith expressed her gratitude by settling £4000 each on Sissie, Montie, George and Nita which relieved his mind somewhat of providing for their future.

William's share of Tenterfield station to enable him to become manager of all pastoral properties, with headquarters at Tenterfield. Walker then turned his attention to the planning and building of the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital. The site selected was on part of Thomas's estate near 'Yaralla' on the Parramatta River: '32 acres of land, a broad, roomy stretch with a large frontage to the river'.²¹ It was a formidable task; work started in July with a survey of the site at Concord.²² With no previous experience of the requirements of a convalescent hospital, Walker consulted a number of authorities for advice, in particular Dr Normand MacLaurin and Sir Alfred Roberts.²³ With Dr MacLaurin, Dr Mackellar and W. T. Rowe, President of the New South Wales Institute of Architects, he inspected Little Bay Hospital and later visited the Carrington Convalescent Hospital.²⁴

Tenders for designs were advertised in May 1888, closing in August.²⁵ Dr Mackellar agreed to advise on selection of the most suitable design but it was not until April 1889 that the final selection was made, of an Italianate design by John Sulman.²⁶ In November 1889 a contract for construction of the building for £69 578 was signed with Mr Coleman. The project was financed by Eadith and Joanna Walker making a contribution of £33 500, and the estate £44 000, leaving £77 000 as an endowment so that patients recommended to the hospital would not be required to make any contribution to their expenses. It was an extensive undertaking that took four years to complete, all the more remarkable as work continued throughout the depression of the 1890s. Though Eadith Walker took a considerable interest, Walker was responsible for overseeing the whole project including selection of furniture and fittings and employment of staff. The first matron was appointed on 1 June 1893 and the hospital was officially opened on 21 September 1893; it was one of the most modern convalescent hospitals in Australia at the time, by 1899 treating over 900 patients annually.²⁷

The hospital was most commonly approached by steamer from Circular Quay; passengers arrived via a Dutch Water Gate, an unusual and striking small tower of red brick, with a red tiled roof. It was not merely a wharf and entry point but contained a boat house and a smoking room where patients might smoke if they wished. The gate led into an extensive landscaped garden leading to the hospital at the top of a gentle rise. It had more the appearance of 'a lordly mansion' than of a hospital; of brick with stone facings, obviously Italian in inspiration, it was adjudged 'the handsomest, most complete, and convenient building in New South

²¹ *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1893.

²² Walker diary, vol. 40, 17 July 1887.

²³ For information on MacLaurin (later Sir Normand MacLaurin) see Connolly, op. cit. Roberts was largely responsible for establishing the Prince Alfred Hospital of which Thomas Walker had been a benefactor. He donated £1000 in 1868. A ward at the hospital was named in his honour. For information on Roberts see G. Serle and B. Nairn (eds), *Australian dictionary of biography*, vol. 6, Melbourne, 1976, p. 34.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 41, 10 December 1887; vol. 42, 14 September 1888; and vol. 46, 20 September 1890. For information on Mackellar (later Sir Charles Mackellar) see Connolly, op. cit.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 41, 21 May 1888; and vol. 42, 10 August 1888.

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 42, 23 August 1888; and vol. 43, 3 April 1889.

²⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 22 September, 1893; *Australian Christian World*, vol. 6, 28 September 1893; *Review of Reviews*, vol. IV, January–June 1894, pp. 156 ff.; *Town and Country Journal*, 11 November 1899; and Walker diary, vol. 55, 21 September 1893.

Wales'.²⁸ The central building was two-storeyed; a clock tower supported by large stone goddesses crowned the main entrance at the centre of the building, and arcaded verandahs shaded the upper floor. Two wings, joined to the main building by colonnades, extended on either side, one for male and one for female patients. The grounds contained a gardener's cottage, laundry, stable, mortuary and, at the landward entrance, an ornate gateway with gatekeeper's lodge—all in red brick with red tiled roofs. The interior of the main building contained an entertainment hall designed to seat 200, a library, day-room, wide verandahs, and offices. Separate dining rooms were located in each of the wings for men and women, with a special room in the women's section for children; bathrooms were supplied with hot and cold water and electric bells to summon assistance, and the kitchen contained the latest equipment. The furniture was Australian, nearly all of red bean, solid and imposing. Newspapers of the day and later almost invariably used words such as 'magnificent', 'splendid', 'handsome' or 'princely' when describing the hospital. It was indeed beautifully laid out and as perfect as extensive study and consultation could make it.

It was designed to house sixty-four patients, each of whom might stay four weeks, or longer if necessary—free of charge.²⁹ It was not a home for incurables or consumptives, but a rehabilitation centre for those convalescing from serious illness or surgery. The only requirement for admission was recommendation from one of the Honorary Physicians to the hospital. Even passage to and from the hospital accompanied by a trained nurse was free. The first Matron, Miss Spencer had trained at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London; under her were two Sisters trained at Prince Alfred Hospital and two trained nurses with a staff of servants, both male and female. The management committee, which met regularly, consisted of Eadith Walker, Annie Sulman nee Masefield, Walker, his brother William and Arthur J. Mackenzie, but the work of convening meetings and carrying out decisions of the committee devolved on Walker.³⁰

The whole project was a magnificent gift to the people of Sydney. The reporter of *The Illustrated Sydney News* was almost puzzled at the munificence of the Walkers:

the lovely views from every window are suggestive of luxurious restfulness and it is strange to think that all this has been done for the poor, the sick, the friendless, and the helpless of our young colony.³¹

According to W. Joy, in seventy years more than 50 000 patients benefited from its services.³²

In addition Eadith Walker and Annie Masefield determined to establish a Children's Convalescent Hospital in memory of Joanna Walker. Walker, John Sulman (who subsequently married Annie Masefield as his second wife), and James Littlejohn examined a number of possible buildings and sites, but it was finally

²⁸ *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1893.

²⁹ Thirty-two men, 24 women and 8 children.

³⁰ Mackenzie was a former employee of the Bank of New South Wales, who became Manager of the Perpetual Trustee Company. See Gibbney and Smith, op. cit., vol. II, p. 59.

³¹ *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1893.

³² D. Pike (ed.), *Australian dictionary of biography*, Cambridge, 1964, vol. 2, p. 565.

decided to erect a new building at 'Yaralla' near the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital.³³ Though Walker bowed out of this scheme, which was not financed by Thomas Walker's estate, it occupied a little more of his time.³⁴

In the meantime the co-trustees of Thomas Walker's estate, Joanna Walker and Alexander Archer, died.³⁵ New trustees had to be appointed to fulfil the directions of Thomas's will; E. O. Smith, a Sydney businessman, and Walker's brother William Henry Walker were appointed, but Smith died and Arthur Mackenzie of the Perpetual Trustee Company took his place.³⁶ Joanna Walker left £30 000 in trust until 1903 for her ward Annie Masefield with Walker as trustee; he had a great fondness for Annie who had a portrait of him painted by Sydney Long when the trusteeship ended. On his death she wrote:

I, too, have lost one of the kindest, truest friends—one who always looked for and found the brightest side of life, so that his life and example were inspiring to others!³⁷

There were also a number of bequests to servants and friends and family.³⁸ Walker and Eadith were named Executors of Joanna's will, but it was Walker who handled most of the business arrangements.

The affairs of the Walkers kept Walker well occupied, but the Browne estate also was proving troublesome. One of the major assets was a large share holding in the Brisbane Newspaper Company which was experiencing management and financial difficulties in respect of a debt owed the architect Richard Gailey. The problems of administering the estate were exacerbated because Mrs Browne had retired to England and Sir Ralph Gore, Browne's son-in-law and a fellow trustee, died prematurely in 1887.³⁹ During the next seven years, until he could relinquish his trusteeship in 1894, the Browne estate necessitated Walker making several trips to Brisbane.⁴⁰ He also continued to assist with the Palmer family finances and, with his brother William, was executor of Mrs Palmer's will after her death on 29 December 1891.⁴¹ In addition when his friend, the pastoralist Stanley Grantham Hill returned to England, he left Walker in charge of the management of his Australian affairs.⁴²

³³ For information on Littlejohn see Gibbney and Smith, op. cit. vol. II, p. 29.

³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 47, 1 December 1890; vol. 48, 17 May 1891; vol. 56, 21 March 1894; and vol. 72, 16 August 1900. The Trustees when it was finally erected were Eadith, Justice Stephen and Cecil Griffiths.

³⁵ Archer and his wife together with the Whishes and other friends perished in the disastrous sinking of the *Quetta* in 1890, a very sad personal loss to James Thomas (Walker diary, vol. 45, 2 March 1890). Joanna Walker died just over a month later on 23 April 1890, after suffering a stroke (Walker diary, vol. 45, 16 February 1890; and vol. 46, 23 April, 1890).

³⁶ The Perpetual Trustee Company eventually succeeded to management of the estate and of the estate of James Thomas Walker on his death in 1923.

³⁷ Annie E. Sulman to Janette Walker, 19 January 1923, Walker MSS.

³⁸ £4000 each was left to James, William and their sister Kate, £2000 to each of the eight surviving children of the first marriage of Edward Walker and £1000 each to the late Ted Walker's only daughter and William Archer, the only son of John Archer. In addition £1500 was left to Dr Barnado's Home and £6750 to the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital.

³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 41, 18 October 1887.

⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 46, 14 July 1890; vol. 48, 13 July 1891; vol. 50, 15 July 1892; vol. 53, 12 April 1893; vol. 56, 24 April 1894 and 25 May 1894. The problems of the Brisbane Newspaper Company were finally solved by the retirement from the board of C. H. Buzacott and Richard Gailey and the election of E. J. Stephens, H. L. E. Ruthning and William H. Walker.

⁴¹ Papers in the estate of Westby Perceval Palmer and Emily Palmer, in Walker MSS.

His reputation and connection with the Walker estate made it almost inevitable that he was invited to join the boards of several companies, mainly involved with banking and insurance, but also including one of Australia's largest mercantile companies and a wool-broking firm. Soon after his arrival in Sydney, Alexander Campbell requested that he stand for election for one of the vacancies on the board of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, another institution that Thomas Walker had served; in May when the election results were declared Walker topped the poll.⁴³ Previous boards had apparently been weak, leaving important decisions to the staff; with Joseph Abbott in the Chair, supported by J. R. Hill and Walker, the Board re-established its transcendancy.⁴⁴ By 1890 Walker could say with satisfaction: '...it can no longer be said that the officers of the Society boss the directorate'.⁴⁵ By 1890 he was Deputy Chairman and was re-elected to the Board for the next 31 years.⁴⁶ The A.M.P. Society also moved to establish an Officers Provident Fund of which Walker was a Trustee; on his interstate travels he explained the details of the fund to local boards.⁴⁷ He was also one of the originators of the movement to extend the sphere of the Society to London, a battle he waged without success into the twentieth century.⁴⁸

Donald Larnach, visiting Australia in 1887, discussed with him the possibility of accepting a seat on the Board of Directors of the Bank of New South Wales when a suitable vacancy arose.⁴⁹ It seems that Larnach was ensuring a continuing Walker presence on the board but Walker was particularly touched by the offer as Larnach was both a protectionist and a noted Tory who knew him to be a Freetrader and a Liberal.⁵⁰ He was later offered a position on the Board of the Commercial Banking Company of Australia Limited, but declined, preferring to wait to serve the Bank of New South Wales.⁵¹ Acting in accordance with the wishes of Donald Larnach, on the resignation of Thomas Cadell in 1888, Thomas Buckland invited Walker on to the Board of the Bank of New South Wales, an invitation he accepted with much pleasure.⁵² He remained on the Board of the Bank until his death in 1923, holding office as President from 1898 to 1900 when he resigned to enter Federal Parliament.

In 1889 with James Burns, Dugald Thompson and James Anglers(?), he founded the Australasian New Hebrides Company. Concerned at the lack of British interest in the islands, though they did not expect 'to rival either the Hudson's Bay Co. or the Honourable East India Co.', they hoped to establish a trading presence with the purchase of the New Hebridean interests of Scott, Henderson & Company, then

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 42, 28 July 1888.

⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 39, 9 March 1887; and vol. 40, 5 May 1887.

⁴⁴ For information on Abbott see Connolly, *op. cit.* Hill was formerly Inspector of the Bank of New South Wales Staff in New Zealand, but then administering the Wentworth interests in Sydney. He was related to the Wentworth family and a nephew by marriage of Sir Daniel Cooper. He replaced Thomas Walker on the Board of the Bank of New South Wales. See Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 501.

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 45, 17 April 1890.

⁴⁶ Walker diary, vol. 46, 2 June 1890.

⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 42, 25 May 1888.

⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 49, 29 July 1891; and vol. 72, 25 October 1900.

⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 39, 14 February 1887.

⁵⁰ Walker diary, vol. 41, 20 December 1887.

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 41, 4 October 1887.

⁵² Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 438; Walker diary, vol. 42, 6 June 1888, 13 June 1888 and 15 June 1888.

more interested in the pearl shell industry on the Torres Straits.⁵³ It was a brave, but vain effort, that failed for a number of reasons, not the least the opposition of the missionary, Rev. Dr Paton; the company was wound up in 1897, much to the chagrin of the partners; 'we have dropped some thousands of pounds in trying to maintain British supremacy in the face of great odds'.⁵⁴ Walker also became a member of the board of Burns Philp & Company Limited, by that time one of Australia's leading mercantile companies.⁵⁵ In succeeding years the board presided over the expansion of the company in New Guinea and the Pacific and its extension to London, sitting on the Board until his death.⁵⁶

He was appointed a local director of the Indemnity Mutual Marine Insurance Company, on the recommendation of Donald Larnach, who was a London Director, and from 1898 served on the Board of the Norwich Union Insurance Company.⁵⁷ In 1895 he accepted a directorship of Harrison, Jones & Devlin, Woolbrokers and Stock and Station Agents, later becoming Chairman of the Board until the company amalgamated with Goldsborough Mort in 1921.⁵⁸

In addition to his directorships, in 1892 he was appointed, together with C. H. Myles and G. A. Murray, a liquidator of the Bulli Coal Mining Company; the estate of Thomas Walker was heavily involved with the company.⁵⁹ Attempts to sell the assets failed and its affairs became very involved in 1896 when it was discovered that the company's workings had encroached on those of the Bellambi Coal Company; a court case ensued in which Walker found himself in the unfortunate situation of being a shareholder in the Bellambi Company and liquidator of the Bulli Company. His straightforward and honourable attitude to his business dealings is nowhere better expressed than in his reaction to this situation: 'My duty is clear. I must ignore my own private interests and am doing so'.⁶⁰ The case was settled in favour of Bellambi, but the affairs of the Bulli Coal Company were in fact not finalised until 1903 when creditors were paid in full but without interest.⁶¹

The land owned by the Bulli Coal Company bordered upon some of the loveliest scenery in south-eastern New South Wales below the beautiful Bulli Pass. Walker was gravely concerned that this area would be ruined if the company sold the land for development. In December 1892 he suggested to the then Treasurer of New South Wales, Sir John See, that the Government should purchase part of the land as a National Park. It was a very early attempt to ensure conservation of an area of natural beauty but the suggestion appears not to have been acted upon.⁶²

Walker accepted many charitable appointments. He was a member of the Committee of the Carrington Convalescent Hospital from 1891 to 1893 and of the

⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 44, 16 September 1889.

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 65, 31 September 1897.

⁵⁵ The founder, James Burns, was the brother of Walker's boyhood friend David Burns.

⁵⁶ See K. Buckley and K. Klugman, *The history of Burns Philp*, Sydney, 1981; and K. Buckley and K. Klugman, *The Australian presence in the Pacific, Burns Philp 1914-1946*, Sydney, 1983.

⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 48, 15 April 1891; and vol. 67, 19 July 1898.

⁵⁸ Walker diary, vol. 59, 16 February 1895 and 11 March 1895.

⁵⁹ For information on Myles and Murray, both Sydney businessmen, see Gibbney and Smith, op. cit.

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 52, 20 October 1892; vol. 57, 13 June 1894; and vol. 62, 29 April 1896.

⁶¹ Walker diary, vol. 78, 30 November 1903.

⁶² Walker diary, vol. 52, 6 December 1892.

board of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Regarded as the 'most influential board in Sydney', it numbered among its members Sir Alfred Roberts, Sir Alfred Stephen, Sir William Manning, Professor Anderson Stewart and James Fairfax.⁶³ Walker was responsible for rescuing the Thirlmere Hospital for Consumptives, which had been established by J. H. Goodlet in 1876.⁶⁴ Goodlet maintained the hospital himself until losses in the depression of 1893 left him unable to continue. Walker approached Lady Duff, wife of the Governor of New South Wales, who established a Ladies Committee to raise funds to keep the home open, and Goodlet arranged for it to be leased for one shilling per annum—thus the home remained open.⁶⁵

Walker maintained his association with the Presbyterian Church; he became Chairman of the Treasurership Committee in April 1889, continuing in the position until 1919. He was considered

... a great acquisition to the committee manifesting a deep interest in its affairs, regularly attending the meetings and conducting the business with much ability and marked courtesy towards the members.⁶⁶

He was also elected to the Committee of Management of his local church at St Leonards in 1890.⁶⁷ Later he was appointed to the Theological Hall Committee and the Building Committee of the Woollahra Presbyterian Congregation.⁶⁸ He had sought none of these positions.

In addition, in 1890 Andrew Brown⁶⁹, one of the founders and chief benefactors of the Presbyterian St Andrew's College within the Sydney University, sounded him out regarding the possibility of joining the college Council; this gave Walker great pleasure.⁷⁰ He attended his first meeting of the Council on 18 February 1891, immediately immersing himself in the affairs of the college. In June the Council determined to undertake a major extension to the buildings but it was necessary to raise £5800 in order to secure a Government pound-for-pound subsidy. Walker, Dr Kinross and the Honourable A. Dodds were appointed to an Appeal Committee which proved successful.⁷¹ He wrote to many of his acquaintance in the business community to secure donations, canvassing Sir Daniel Cooper and Donald Larnach in London as well as many others. Walker, his brother William and Andrew Brown contributed 100 guineas each.⁷² By 30 November 1893 the College extensions were opened, a remarkable effort considering that the appeal and construction were carried out during a period of deepening recession and depression.⁷³

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 49, 26 August 1891; vol. 54, 21 August 1893; and vol. 55, 13 December 1893. For information on Stephen see Serle and Nairn, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ For information on Goodlet see Pike, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 54, 28 July 1893, 25 August 1893 and 30–31 August 1893. The home eventually became the Queen Victoria Home.

⁶⁶ *The Presbyterian*, 2 May 1891.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 43, 4 April 1889, and vol. 45, 10 February 1892.

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 65, 25 December 1896.

⁶⁹ See ch. 2.

⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 47, 1 October 1890.

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 48, 17 June 1891. Kinross was Principal of St Andrew's College. For information on Dodds see Connolly, *op. cit.*

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 48, 26 June 1891; and vol. 49, 14 November 1891.

⁷³ Walker diary, vol. 55, 30 November 1891.

The Council of St Andrew's College also administered Coerwull Academy, a boarding school for boys established by Andrew Brown near Lithgow. One of the aims of the school was to provide free education for the sons of Presbyterian clergy who could not afford their education. The fees of the boarders from better off families subsidised the children of the less comfortably situated. At the wish of Andrew Brown, Walker was appointed to the Coerwull Committee when he joined St Andrew's Council. Apart from his role as a committee member, he regularly donated books and provided funds to catalogue the library. As discussed above, all of his sons attended the school and he took a keen interest in its management, but it closed about 1914 and the buildings were offered for auction in 1916.⁷⁴

Consistent with the views he expressed in Tbowoomba, the educational project dearest to his heart was the founding of a college for women within Sydney University; from February 1890 his support continued until his death in 1923. Enthusiastic as he may have been regarding the project, he was not impressed at the suggestion from Sir Alfred Stephen that Eadith Walker might donate the full amount of £5000 required. Walker advised Eadith to provide £1000 if eight or ten others donated the remaining £4000. Though recession was beginning to have an effect, the funds were raised. Walker was elected one of the first Councillors of the college in 1891, though he acknowledged modestly that Eadith's generous donations would have influenced votes in his favour.⁷⁵ The college opened the following year in temporary premises while a permanent building was being erected in the grounds of the Sydney University.⁷⁶ As the project proceeded he undertook the duties of Treasurer, and, with G. C. Rich and Richard Teece, organised the calling of tenders for plans for the permanent college building.

With Mrs Woolley, Professor Walter Scott and Sir William Windeyer, he was responsible for the appointment of the selection panel appointed in England to choose the first head of college.⁷⁷ Some sections of the Sydney press, notably the *Australian Star*, were highly critical of the appointment of a 'foreigner', Louisa MacDonald, a graduate of London University, as first head of college. The criticism was probably unjust, as few Australian-born women at the time could boast the qualifications of Louisa MacDonald. Walker attacked the criticisms on the basis that the word 'foreigner' was inapplicable to any subject of the British Empire an integral portion of which the great majority of us hope Australia will continue to be'.⁷⁸ The college opened in 1892; the first bursary was donated in Janette's name.⁷⁹ The permanent building was opened on 5 May 1894 by Lady Duff, wife of the Governor of New South Wales. The first collegian to graduate was Miss Madelaine Whitfield; Walker recorded with much satisfaction that she was the 'highest honours candidate for the Bachelor of Arts degree'.⁸⁰ He worked with dedication to

⁷⁴ Walker diary, vol. 107, 13 October 1916.

⁷⁵ Walker diary, vol. 48, 20 April 1891, 30 May 1891 and 1 June 1891. The twelve Councillors elected were Mrs Windeyer, Mrs Woolley, Mrs Gurner, Mrs Cargill, Miss C. B. Fairfax, Miss Russell, Professor Walter Scott, Professor Mungo MacCallum, Richard Teece, G. E. Rich, Dr Sly and Walker.

⁷⁶ Walker diary, vol. 49, 5 August 1891. Temporary premises were leased in Dr Garran's former residence 'Strathmore'.

⁷⁷ This committee consisted of the heads of Girton and Newnham Colleges and Sommerville Hall with the New South Wales Agent General in London, Mrs Garney and Eadith Walker.

⁷⁸ Walker diary, vol. 50, 25 December 1891.

⁷⁹ Walker diary, vol. 50, 3 March 1892.

foster the college and to encourage women to continue their education to tertiary level. In 1900 he was elected to the Chair of the College Council, an honour he prized above many others.

That his involvement with the Councils of the University Colleges was from genuine interest rather than self-aggrandisement, is attested by the fact that he refused the offer of nomination for a vacancy on the Senate of the University, a position of some prestige. Professor Anderson Stuart, Head of the Department of Medicine, approached him, but Walker pointed out that he was not a university graduate and that Edward Knox was also a nominee. Knox, Chairman of Directors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, was a personal friend whom Walker thought had superior claims to the position as 'a much older Sydneyite and is an excellent man when finance has to be discussed'.⁸¹ Walker's association with both colleges continued: St Andrew's until his retirement in 1922; and Women's College until his death in 1923—remarkable periods of service in both cases. He made one valiant but unsuccessful attempt to assist the founding of a university in Queensland, suggesting to James Tyson that he might emulate Francis Ormond by founding a Tyson College in the proposed university at Brisbane as Ormond had founded a college in Melbourne. Tyson, who was wealthy enough to have financed the whole university, was not over-enthusiastic, but said when the time came he would 'lend a hand'. However Tyson was dead by the time the University of Queensland opened in 1911.⁸²

None of the positions Walker accepted were sinecures; he attended weekly and monthly board, Council or committee meetings regularly. If unable to attend meetings of the Boards of the A.M.P. Society and the Bank of New South Wales in Sydney, he attended local board meetings in the city he happened to be visiting, playing a very active role in policy making. He thoroughly earned the Directors' fees that added substantially to his income.

Despite his multifarious activities he maintained his interest in banking theory. In 1892, together with other leading bankers, Walker was responsible for the foundation of the Institute of Bankers of New South Wales. The first meeting took place on 2 April 1892 when T. A. Dibbs read a paper on 'The codification of the law'.⁸³ By 1894 the Institute had commenced a series of examinations in the attempt to provide bank officers with a means of improving their knowledge and their standing; Walker was an examiner for the Practical Banking section.⁸⁴

One of the most welcome aspects of his removal to Sydney was the opportunity it provided to pursue his interest in economics. Previously his studies had been of necessity confined to reading, but he was now able to attend meetings of the Australasian Economic Association, listening to the papers presented and joining debate. Addresses such as that of Henry Dinning Macleod, 'On the modern science of economics', interested him greatly.⁸⁵ Invited to prepare a paper for the association

⁸⁰ Walker diary, vol. 59, 18 April 1895.

⁸¹ Walker diary, vol. 57, 25 May 1894, 5 June 1894 and 7–8 June 1894.

⁸² Walker diary, vol. 61, 4 January 1896.

⁸³ Walker diary, vol. 51, 21 April 1892.

⁸⁴ Walker diary, vol. 56, 4 May 1894.

in October 1887, he selected the topic 'A few remarks on banking as a factor in Australasian progress'. Intent on contributing a well-prepared account, he devoted his spare time for the next two months to the research and writing of what appears to be one of the first accounts of banking history in Australia.⁸⁶ It was a difficult task that he vowed never to repeat but it gave him a superlative knowledge of the background of colonial banking and of the financial affairs of the various colonies. Never a confident speaker, he approached the date for delivery of the paper with some trepidation, conscious of his lack of academic qualifications. After the first ten minutes, however, the topic absorbed him and he ended to warm applause.⁸⁷ It was an authoritative paper, evidencing the many hours he had spent compiling data. The paper foreshadows some of the fiscal policies he later advocated in the Federation campaign, notably consolidation of the colonies' debts and the promotion of Australian Consols (Consolidated Stock). It is notable, too, for its expression of pride in Australian progress and his vision of the future.

Ninety-nine years have elapsed [since European settlement] and what do we find? What at one time was a penal purgatory is now the home of three and one half millions of free men and women, who enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and who desire to see the priceless blessing extended to all mankind: who find the once-despised land flowing with milk and honey, where each man can literally sit under his own vine and fig-tree, no man daring to make him afraid; who look forward to the future of their country's history with pardonable pride, and, in imagination, see a nation rising that shall reflect honour on the glorious mother country, whose history is our history, but whose mistakes we hope to avoid... [Our] agriculture ...pastoral...mining wealth are earnest of still increasing prosperity. [Our] financial institutions...hospitals...churches and asylums would not disgrace European civilisation and our youth...not alone on the river, in the cricket field is their prowess known... 'Methinks I see in my mind a great and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep...'⁸⁸

The paper received excellent reviews in the press; *The Daily Telegraph* in Sydney was, in Walker's view, 'unduly eulogistic' praising his knowledge and the expertise exhibited in such a lengthy and exhaustive paper.⁸⁹ In spite of pleas that he was overcommitted already he was elected a Vice-president of the Association a week later.⁹⁰

Papers presented at Association meetings covered a wide range of topics including Federation (both Imperial and Australian), labour problems, the theories of Malthus, consumption and the banking crisis.⁹¹ He took every opportunity to extend his knowledge of economics further, attending in 1888 the Economic Section of the first meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and retaining an interest in the association in succeeding years.⁹²

⁸⁵ Walker diary, vol. 41, 17 October 1887.

⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 41, 1 October 1887 to 6 December 1887.

⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 41, 6 December 1887

⁸⁸ James Thomas Walker, 'Some remarks on Australasian banks and on banking as a factor in the progress of Australasia', Sydney, 1888, p. 40. The quotation is from John Milton.

⁸⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 6 December 1887.

⁹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 41, 13 December 1887.

⁹¹ These topics are recorded in Walker diary, vols 41-70.

When it is considered that he maintained an active interest in family life, and escorted his wife and daughters to social occasions, in addition to his business, charitable, educational and financial interests, it is surprising that he found time to retain a keen interest in sport, though, apart from golf, walking and skating, it was as a spectator rather than a participant. Cricket remained a major interest; he rarely missed attending at least one session of an intercolonial match, commenting on scores and players in letters to family members away from home. American baseball, which he found 'an advanced form of rounders', could not compete.⁹³ He accepted Vice-presidencies of the University Sports Union, the Greater Public Schools Athletic Association and the Bank of New South Wales Cricket Club which organised intercolonial matches from time to time between teams of bank officers. His greatest discovery was, however, golf; the gardener, William Hardie, introduced him to 'the mysteries of golf' on the Centennial Park Links in 1896.⁹⁴ It became as great a passion as cricket had been in earlier life; a putting green was established in the garden and he and Janette practised putting regularly, with friendly rivalry, always recording scores of their contests. Never a particularly adept golfer, he played purely for enjoyment; his good sportsmanship gained him considerable popularity. He joined the Australian Golf Club in 1896, was a Vice-president that year and later became President remaining in that position until his retirement in 1919.⁹⁵ Though often very heavily committed to business engagements, and later to political affairs, he maintained his interest in the sporting organisations, attending athletics meetings and aquatic carnivals, and providing trophies for golf competitions; he took a genuine interest in fostering participation in sporting activities.

It is apparent that within a few years of the transition to Sydney, Walker was well established in the Sydney business community. Clearly many of the interests with which he was involved were inherited from Thomas Walker, but he established his own personality. He had clearly a much more 'professional' approach to business than Thomas, being more highly aware of economic theory and banking practice. Though his involvement with the Walker wealth may have initially brought him recognition, his own ability and expertise and his punctilious approach to all of his commitments ensured continuing and increasing respect. He was seldom late for a meeting, always aware of the business in hand, had often studied background material and was always ready to make sensible and useful comment. The change in his status appears to have altered him little. He continued to see himself as part of the banking fraternity, joining the 'Banker's Table'⁹⁶ at the Union Club rather than fraternising with members of the legal fraternity or politicians. Perhaps he became more self-assured, more aware of his station in society, but he was always conscious of the fact that he was merely a Trustee of the Walker estate, that the

⁹² Walker diary, vol. 42, 28–29 August 1888.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 101, 2 January 1914.

⁹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 61, 9 February 1896.

⁹⁵ On retiring he proposed Dennison Miller, first General Manager of the Commonwealth Bank and a former employee of the Bank of New South Wales, as his successor (Walker diary, vol. 113, 12 April 1919.)

⁹⁶ A term used by Walker in his diary for the table at the Union Club where a number of bankers, such as Thomas A. Dibbs, sat together.

interests he administered were not his own. He retained a remarkable simplicity, taking a naive pleasure in opening his own office, and using office paper engraved with his name.⁹⁷ It was also an occasion to note when, for the first time in his life, he drew Director's fees after attending his first meeting of the Board of the A.M.P Society.⁹⁸ Such symbols marked clearly that he had attained some of the independence and worldly success he had so long envied, but they were not the yardstick by which he measured his success as a man and as a Christian.

⁹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 40, 1 April 1887 and 15 April 1887. The office, rented for £125 per annum, was in the Waltham Buildings in Bond Street.

⁹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 40, 10 May 1887.

During his first years in Sydney, Walker established an enviable reputation, as he had in Queensland. The diversity of his activities and the enthusiasm, knowledge and organisational ability he brought to all of them, was remarkable. The retentive memory that had helped him as a schoolboy, and the long years of experience in organising his time profitably stood him in good stead; he never needed to employ more than one clerk in his office and dealt successfully with appointments that might cause a twentieth century business tycoon to complain. Yet only occasionally does he comment: 'I find my multifarious engagements worry me at times'.¹ His new position provided him the opportunity to gain an even wider knowledge of aspects of the Australian industrial, business and financial scene, and of the country. He travelled to Perth where, at Fremantle, he inspected construction of luggers for the pearl shelling industry; to Torres Strait, Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart and New Zealand. His contacts were many and diverse, including most of Australia's leading business identities and politicians. He had, therefore, first-hand experience of the colonies few could equal, but of which he seldom boasted, so that many of his political contemporaries were unaware of the diversity and depth of his knowledge of Australia.

His role in the Depression of the 1890s further enhanced his reputation. Few contemporary reminiscences appear to have survived so it is difficult to assess critically the accounts Walker has left which are far from extensive; much of the negotiation with the New South Wales Government was confidential and he rarely recorded confidential matters regarding the boards on which he sat. However, his accounts in other areas have proved accurate and fair and it is reasonable to accept that Walker, together with the General Manager, George Miller, the President, Thomas Buckland, and fellow Director, J. R. Hill, were more involved than other members of the Board in keeping the Bank of New South Wales steady, and that he was also involved with reconstruction of a number of failed banking institutions, acting as adviser and attending meetings of shareholders. Though it is difficult to gauge now, he seems to have played an important role in a number of bank reconstructions.

The prosperity of the 1880s had begun to wane when Walker took his seat on the board of the Bank of New South Wales in 1888. The board, which could never be described as reckless, appears to have gauged the state of the economy accurately. From 1888 they pursued more conservative policies; care was taken to curtail advances and to order unsatisfactory accounts.² Such careful policies were not pursued by some banks and building and investment societies, particularly in Victoria where a spiral of wild speculation both in land and building was leading to

¹ Walker diary, vol. 67, 1 October 1898.

² Holder, op. cit., ch. 25.

an oversupply of housing and an unhealthy dependence on unsecured credit. Sydney was not so greatly affected; Nathaniel Cork noted the general tone of investment in Sydney in 1888 was much quieter.³ When credit was exhausted and confidence wavered, a number of businesses in Victoria crashed in 1889 and 1890, in particular the Premier Permanent Building Association; but the Sydney market appears to have been affected only marginally. It appeared that the slump might be only temporary and localised; as de Garis indicates, the New South Wales economy 'enjoyed a brief Indian summer reaching a peak midway through 1891'.⁴

Throughout the period to August 1891, the usual weekly Board meetings sufficed. However, the Victorian situation continued to deteriorate and a special Board meeting was called on 5 August 1891 after receipt of a telegram advising of the failure of the Bank of Van Dieman's Land.⁵ Matters worsened as news of the collapse of the Melbourne building societies reached Britain virtually as Baring's Bank collapsed; investors there lost confidence and overseas investment began to dry up.⁶

It was the commencement of two years of banking turmoil, culminating in the depression of 1893 which, as Robin Gollan emphasised, was the 'most severe shock ever experienced by the Australian banking system'.⁷ The greatest problems were still in Melbourne where land prices continued to tumble and building societies to close. By March 1892 Walker was visiting the Sydney office to discover if panic was abating there.⁸ It was not, and the crisis deepened; the effects spread to Sydney. The Bank began to consider economies; by August the board appointed J. R. Hill and Walker, the only members who had worked in the bank, to examine staffing with the view to retiring some of the elderly officers on pension in order to reduce staff.⁹ Away from the Bank, by November 1892 he was daily overwhelmed with applications for relief; Walker, who never hesitated to do a good turn whenever he could, attempted to assist everyone. Anyone in genuine need could depend on him for help; the jobless accountant seeking work received not a mere token but a half sovereign to feed his family.¹⁰ He was also besieged by a stream of callers most of whom had suffered financial loss, seeking his advice on financial problems.¹¹

The crisis deepened further, to enter what Butlin has described as 'its third and worst phase', which appears to have started with the closure of the Federal Bank of Australia in Melbourne. The Commercial Bank of Australia closed in March.

³ Nathaniel Cork, *The Australian banking crisis of 1893*, London, 1894, p. 4. Cork was a contemporary banking expert who read this publication at a meeting of the Institute of Bankers in London.

⁴ B. K. de Garis, 'Australia 1890-1900', in Crowley, *A new history...*, op. cit., p. 218.

⁵ S. J. Butlin, *Australia and New Zealand Bank*, London, 1961, p. 285.

⁶ Controversy has raged over the relative importance of external and internal causes of the 1893 depression. This account draws from T. A. Coghlan, *Labour and industry in Australia*, London, 1918; N. G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian economic development 1861-1900*, op. cit.; Holder, op. cit.; S. J. Butlin, *A.N.Z. Bank*, op. cit.; De Garis, in Crowley, op. cit.; E. O. G. Shann, *An economic history of Australia*, Melbourne, 1930; and Leon L'Huillier, 'Depression and a national economy' in James Griffin (ed.), *Essays in economic history of Australia*, Brisbane, 1967.

⁷ Robin Gollan, *The Commonwealth Bank of Australia: Origins and early history*, Canberra, 1968, p. 27.

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 50, 10 March 1892.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 51, 6 August, 1892.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 59, 31 January 1895.

¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 52, 17 November 1892 and 23 November 1892.

Walker journeyed to Melbourne meeting with Rodney Murchison of the Bank of New South Wales, John Sawers of the Bank of Australasia and David Finlayson of the Union Bank of Australia on 15 March 1893.¹² His diary does not record the agenda for this meeting but it was apparently related to the mutual aid statement made by a number of banks without the consent of Sawers and to which the Bank of New South Wales was not a signatory.¹³ A statement was issued on 14 March, which it was hoped would explain the situation more fully. Walker hoped that the impending panic was 'stayed for the nonce', but in fact further panic ensued.¹⁴

Returned to Sydney, a week later he was attending a 'boisterous' meeting of depositors of the Sydney Permanent Building Society, as the depression deepened in Sydney.¹⁵ On 5 April the Commercial Bank of Australia closed in order to reconstruct. Walker was personally affected in this case, as he had £500 on fixed deposit. The enormity of the disaster was now apparent; 'at the best much misery will be experienced by great numbers of people'.¹⁶ On April 13 the English Scottish & Australian Chartered Bank closed. Sir George Dibbs, Premier of New South Wales, was by this time considering methods of mitigating the effects on Sydney banks; he had been in consultation with the various banks regarding the possibility of introducing legislation, but the banks had agreed on mutual consultation and did not support legislation.¹⁷ Walker does not refer to any consultations with George Dibbs at this time in his diary though they were highly confidential so he may not have thought it proper to mention them—even in a diary. But on 20 April the worst phase commenced in Sydney. Walker was called urgently to a Board meeting at 4.00 p.m. after Francis Adams, General Manager of the Australian Joint Stock Bank, reported a run on his bank and requested the assistance of the Bank of New South Wales, Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, the Bank of Australasia and the Union Bank. Adams required one million pounds immediately, another million later and possibly a third million. Members of the boards of the three banks conferred for two hours attempting to find a solution before they finally decided that they could not guarantee the funds on such short notice; it was an agonising decision as they realised the Australian Joint Stock Bank would have to close its doors the following day. After breaking at 6.15 p.m. for further discussion with the Australian Joint Stock Bank, the directors of the four banks reconvened their meeting at 9.00 p.m. and conferred until 10.40 p.m. Walker found it an 'harassing and eventful' day and concluded: 'I shall not be surprised if tomorrow becomes known locally as Black Friday'.¹⁸ It was indeed a black day with runs on all the remaining banks.

George Dibbs now introduced the Bank Issue Act which passed through Parliament with amendments on 3 May 1893. Since there was no government

¹² S. J. Butlin, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 296 ff.

¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 53, 15 March 1893.

¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 53, 22 March 1893.

¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 53, 5 April 1893.

¹⁷ To distinguish Sir George Dibbs from his brother T. A. Dibbs, General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, the name of the Premier of New South Wales is distinguished by the use of his Christian name.

¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 53, 20 April 1893.

paper currency, all Banks issued their own notes. The Act made bank notes a first charge on the assets of an issuing bank and gave the Government temporary power to proclaim the notes of any bank legal tender for one year, but only if specifically requested by a bank. By freeing banks of the need to exchange notes for gold, the Act preserved the reserves held by the banks and allowed gold to be transferred to other states to offset runs on branches there. T. A. Coghlan, Colonial Statistician of the time, believed 'had it not been for the courageous and discerning action of Dibbs...the effects would have been still more deplorable...' ¹⁹ However, the Act had no immediate effect as none of the banks requested that their notes be declared legal tender.

There was no fear in Walker's mind of the Bank of New South Wales failing though he had felt for some time that it was under capitalised; Thomas Walker had believed that a bank's security was in its good name rather than its capital base. As the crisis continued the Board met daily; country branches telegraphed their situation and constant reviews were made of the coin supplies to the various regions. But on 26 April the London Chartered Bank closed and on 30 April he was again apprehensive: 'Dreading a Bank scare tomorrow', as he learned that the National Bank of Australia would close its doors the following day and the Victorian Government had declared a five day bank holiday. ²⁰ Nevertheless the half-yearly meeting of proprietors that took place on 1 May 1893 seems to have been remarkable for its calm, though it was decided the usual bonus of 2½% over and above 15% interest to shareholders should be omitted in order to strengthen reserves. Reviewing the balance sheet, the *Sydney Morning Herald* pronounced 'its position, as far as all the recognised rules of banking can show, is one of the soundest in the world'. ²¹ However, tension continued; on 15 May the Queensland National Bank and the Bank of North Queensland suspended, and at 4.30 p.m. Thomas A. Dibbs, General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, announced to the Board of the Bank of New South Wales that his bank would close the following day. The Bank of New South Wales was then the only major Australian Bank remaining open. ²² For the first time, Walker showed some alarm: 'Goodness only knows what will be the consequences to its old rival and faithful colleague or competitor the Bank of New South Wales...' ²³ George Dibbs immediately invoked the Bank Issue Act, proclaiming the notes of the surviving Sydney banks legal tender for six months. Before making the proclamation, Dibbs discussed the issue with representatives of all banks involved. The President of the Bank, Thomas Buckland, the General Manager, George Miller, J. R. Hill and Walker were invited to discuss the position of the Bank of New South Wales with the cabinet; satisfied with the result, the Government promised full support. That night however, the board sat late awaiting news from all branches. A run on the bank next morning caused some alarm; Walker estimated that 'if we lost as much during the next three or four days we might have to re-construct'. ²⁴ The Board again

¹⁹ Coghlan, op. cit., vol. III, p. 1268. This passage is also quoted in L. F. Crisp (ed. John Hart), *Federation fathers*, Melbourne, 1990, p. 49.

²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 54, 1 May 1893.

²¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1893.

²² The Union Bank and The Bank of Australasia were British banks.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 54, 15 May 1893.

met from 4.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., monitoring the situation; they continued anxious for the next few days and on 19 May Miller cabled London that the position was extremely critical. That day the Government deposited £300 000 transferred from the Government account with the suspended Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. On 26 May further legislation was passed; the Current Account Depositors Act empowered the New South Wales Treasury to pay depositors in Treasury Notes, redeemable in gold within five years provided they could produce certificates showing their credit balances with suspended banks. The most critical period was over; the Government's action had mitigated the problem but the outcome was, nevertheless, devastating. The price of shares in the Bank of New South Wales had fallen to £31 6s 3d; they stood at £65 two years previously. Walker noted: 'We have been passing through a terrible financial crisis'.²⁵

The Bank of New South Wales had not survived unscathed. As other institutions reconstructed, the board took stock of their own position. Thomas Buckland, aged 79 and partially deaf, had for some time been proving a problem to his fellow directors. Walker complained of his chairmanship on a number of occasions.

Today has emphasised my opinion that *as a rule* gentlemen exceeding 75 years of age should gracefully retire from Directorships! They not infrequently confound obstinacy with firmness.²⁶

Deeply committed to the Bank, Buckland seems to have been unwilling to resign during the worst of the crisis, which was sensible as his withdrawal may have increased apprehension. Once it became apparent that the crisis was abating, he resigned on 30 April 1894, together with the General Manager, George Miller, an old colleague of Walker.²⁷ Walker waged a minor battle with his co-directors in the endeavour to increase Miller's pension by at least £150 per annum; he lost, as 'in these matters compromise has generally to be adopted'.²⁸ They were replaced by James Richard Hill (a good friend of Walker) as President, and John Russell French as General Manager.²⁹

In June Donald Larnach was approached to increase the capital but Larnach did not appear to understand the full extent of the problems.³⁰ By 19 July the price of shares had dropped to twenty-nine pounds. Walker 'felt particularly chagrined at the unfortunate delay in hearing from the London Board re proposed increase in capital'.³¹ It was not until the end of July that he noted preliminary steps had been taken to increase the capital by £750 000. By then the worst of the troubles were over, but recovery was slow and painful. Walker co-operated closely with Hill; in 1894 they apparently decided to regrade the whole of the staff, then consisting of 950 officers.³² When Donald Larnach died in 1896 only Walker remained to carry on

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 54, 16 May 1893.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 54, 22 May 1893.

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 56, 20 March 1894.

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 56, 30 April 1894 and 4 May 1894.

²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 57, 2 July 1894.

²⁹ Holder, *op. cit.*, pp. 498–499.

³⁰ Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

³¹ Walker diary, vol. 54, 22 July 1893.

³² Walker diary, vol. 58, 28 November 1894. Holder (*op. cit.*, p. 502) does not mention the regrading though he refers to increases in salary for lower-paid officers in 1893. It may be that the regrading of staff was postponed.

the family association with the Bank; except for periods between 1824 and 1846, and 1886 and 1888, one of William Walker's family or a close relative had served on the board for 76 years.³³ Walker continued the tradition for another 27 years; thus the Walkers may be said to have had an association with the Board of the Bank of New South Wales for over a century. In 1898, on the death of Hill, he continued another family tradition when elected President of the Bank.

Walker was also involved in the reconstruction of a number of failed banks that sought his advice, though the full extent of his involvement is not apparent from either his diaries or from contemporary accounts. On 4 May 1893 he addressed a meeting of shareholders of the Joint Stock Bank at 11.00 a.m. and of the depositors at 3.00 p.m. The latter meeting was noisy and nerve wracking. Six days later he conferred with Sir Edward Knox and T. A. Dibbs of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney and on 23 May attended a meeting of depositors of that institution. On 27 May he conferred with Sir George Verdon, Alexander Urquhart and Fletcher Dixon of the English Scottish and Australian Bank regarding their scheme for reconstruction. At a meeting of creditors of the Bank of North Queensland on 12 July, Walker took the chair in the absence of James Burns. At nights he lay awake considering solutions to the problems.³⁴ Later he played a role behind the scenes in trying to achieve the amalgamation of the Royal Bank of Queensland and the Bank of North Queensland; J. R. Dickson and James Burns discussed with him the proposal to amalgamate in 1895, but matters rested until 1898 when, visiting Brisbane in July, Walker 'exerted himself to bring about an amalgamation of the two banks'.³⁵ However, the amalgamation did not eventuate until 1917.

The Walker estate and other trusts with which Walker was involved must also have been affected by the fall in land values and in share prices, but he gives little account of these. He appears to have been much more concerned regarding the possible failure of the Bank of New South Wales than with the family trusts. This is understandable; had the Bank and the other remaining major banks, the Union and the Australasia, toppled, the finances of New South Wales, and all of the other colonies would have been in utter disarray. The Walker estate would have been worth even less. Staving off the complete collapse of the banking system was by far the most urgent problem. However, despite financial difficulties work continued on the Thomas Walker Hospital and assistance was provided to many in need. There is no doubt that his integrity and ability during the depression of the 1890s increased respect for Walker's financial ability while his genuine attempts to assist those badly effected by the crash endeared him to many in the community.

The most marked effect of the Depression on Walker was to produce a greater sense of urgency regarding federation of the Australian colonies. The early 1890s highlighted the difficulties produced by lack of integrated financial and monetary policies in the Australian colonies, and the problems of communication and

³³ William Walker of Perth 1820–1824; Donald Larnach 1846–1852 (Larnach then transferred to London where he remained until his death); William Walker, Junior 1853–1855 and 1862–1866; Thomas Walker 1859–1862 and 1864–1886.

³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 54, 4 May 1893, 27 May 1893, 12 July 1893 and 23 July 1893.

³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 58, 2 January 1894; and vol. 67, 8 July 1898.

transport. The difficulty of ensuring coin supplies to bank branches in 1893, the senseless delays in rail travel, the obstacles to transacting business between the colonies, the mounting debts of colonial governments, the withdrawal of overseas funds—all stimulated in Walker a belief that a united Australia was necessary if Australia was to become the strong and progressive nation he envisaged. The Depression above all other causes changed him from the visionary who saw Federation as a great and noble development for the future into a crusader prepared to enter the fight to achieve a Commonwealth of Australia sooner rather than later.

He may also have been influenced by the strikes of the 1890s, but from the evidence of the diaries, that influence was minimal. His reaction to the disruption in the pastoral industry and on the wharves was one of anger, resentment and fear. Though their discontent may have been the result of worsening economic conditions, the strikers had chosen the worst possible time to mount a campaign. As the managing trustee of an estate involved with pastoral enterprises, with many relatives on the land, Walker was keenly aware of the problems being encountered with drought, rabbits and falling wool prices.³⁶ The maritime strike held up the transport of wool and other primary produce to overseas markets at a time when prices were falling and the country was sinking into recession; with even greater possibility of causing catastrophe, it also threatened the transport of coin and bullion not only between branches in Australia, but from Australian banks to their offices in London, weakening the exchange market. At a time when British investors were already withdrawing funds from Australia, the strikes introduced a further element of uncertainty. From his position, Walker could appreciate the dangers of the situation.

Further, the Walkers had always enjoyed good relations with their workers, showing concern for their welfare. Grist, the manager of Killoola station, was retired after fifteen years service with a free house and furniture, and twenty-five acres of land at Peel.³⁷ At Tenterfield some of the workers were second generation members of families who had worked for William Walker who 'with the selectors on his run...lived in perfect friendliness on a give and take, live and let live sort of principle which was fully recognised'.³⁸ The claims of the Unionists, though in other cases perhaps justified, were to both Walker and his brother William almost personal affronts. Neither, therefore, could relate to the claims of the strikers.

On his own part, dissatisfied as he may have been with his position in the Bank of New South Wales, it never occurred to James Thomas Walker to walk off the job or, even more drastically, to burn down the bank; his attitudes were moulded by ingrained loyalty to his employer and desire for stability and reasoned argument rather than violent reaction. That workers could resort to violence smacked to him of that 'mobocracy' he had deplored in Rockhampton many years before. He had left England to seek a better life in a land of greater freedom and less misery, a land he had come to love; the militancy and violence of the 1890 strikes seemed to threaten

³⁶ Sydney Walker, on Neckarboo, was ruined in 1891 by drought and the ravages of rabbits.

³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 46, 1 August 1890.

³⁸ *Tenterfield Star*, 28 March 1900. Cutting in Walker diary, vol. 71, 1 April 1900.

both freedom and stability. They appeared 'more a challenge to the natural order of society than a challenge to the employers'.³⁹ Their violence threatened the vision of the land 'where each man can literally sit under his own vine and fig-tree, no man daring to make him afraid...'⁴⁰ Walker's reaction was not merely a knee-jerk one of capitalist reacting to organised labour, or even of employer to recalcitrant employee. It was the reaction of the man who had long cherished the idea of freedom, who saw the strikers as challenging both the freedom of employers and the freedom of choice of workers.

Walker's brother William Henry, became a leader of the New South Wales Pastoralists' Union, his eldest son Archie joined the Special Constables, Walker purchased a pair of pistols with which to defend his own household from attack and began attending meetings of the Employers Mutual Defence Association of New South Wales where he played a leading role.⁴¹ It was not until 23 August 1890, however, that Walker began to show alarm. Even then, he does not record attending meetings of the E.M.D.A. though that body appears to have been founded in June. On 30 August he noted of a procession of Marine Officers that the strikers cheered the participants, but 'the crowd of onlookers were quiet, thoughtful and if sympathetic certainly undemonstrative. The matter is too serious to be treated lightly'.⁴² It was only after this, on 2 September, that he began recording involvement with the E.M.D.A; at that meeting the employers voted 'No Surrender' and 'to Preserve personal liberty at all hazards'. Walker's account of the timing of events in the E.M.D.A. supports Bede Nairn's view that employers were not united in opposition to unionists before the Strike, or that it was generated by employer aggression as R. Gollan and Brian Fitzpatrick suggest.⁴³ Walker's account suggests that the strike had the effect of uniting employers, of bringing together for the first time, pastoralists, urban employers and members of commercial institutions, but their union, even in September 1890, was not particularly well organised and had limited financial support. Alfred Lamb, James Thomas Walker and Edward Knox had not drafted rules until 10 September and they were not appointed to form a sub-committee for instituting the Employers' Defence Fund until 14 September; it was only after that date that donations of funds were solicited. When Lamb, the Chairman, died on 14 October, Walker was appointed Chairman of the Trustees of the Employers' Defence Fund.⁴⁴ It is clear that Walker was not motivated to unite with other employers until the strikers had demonstrated militancy and appeared to reject conciliatory action. Once it was apparent that the threat of general strike was over, the unity of the employers appears to have faded. In 1895 though the Employers' Defence Fund had a subscribed capital of £50 000, of which £24 000 was paid up, a ballot of members resulted in agreement to disband rather than form their own political action group, a step that annoyed Walker:

³⁹ Rickard, *Class and Politics*, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁰ J. T. Walker, *Some remarks on Australasian banks and on banking...*, op. cit.

⁴¹ Walker diary, vols 46 and 47, August to November 1890.

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 46.

⁴³ Bede Nairn, 'The 1890 Maritime Strike in New South Wales' in *Historical Studies*, vol. 10, November 1961, p. 14; R. Gollan, *Radical and working class politics: A study of eastern Australia, 1850-1910*, Melbourne, 1963; and Brian Fitzpatrick, *A short history of the Australian Labor Movement*, Melbourne, 1968.

⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 47, 1 October 1890 and 31 October 1890.

It will be a long time (I imagine) before they get me to join another! Some people have no backbone and precious little persistency [*sic*]. I feel rather disgusted. For once old Mr Thomas Buckland and I think as one man!⁴⁵

Despite his involvement in opposing the strikers, Walker does not appear to have nourished any particular dislike for the working class in general, and concern regarding unionism and strikes faded in significance in comparison with the disasters of depression. The desire to avert further economic disasters, combined with his long-standing support of Federation were the major stimuli for his active involvement with the Federation movement.

However, the strikes of the 1890s appear to have increased his awareness of class—or perhaps, in the terms of Rickard, awareness turned more to class consciousness—but that consciousness was as much of white-collar worker and blue-collar worker as of middle class and working class.⁴⁶ Indeed when one considers Walker and his confederates, so many appear to have been or to have descended from white-collar workers that one wonders whether class in Australia might be best described in terms of white-collar and blue-collar workers.

One major influence of the strikes was in finally convincing Walker of the possible inequities of 'one man, one vote' without the safeguard of a cumulative vote.

I no longer believe if I ever did in the 'one man, one vote' unless accompanied by the cumulative vote. I fail to see why a youth of 21 or an impecunious bad character should individually have as much voting power as a man of mature judgement, enlarged experience and property acquired in most cases by a long course of self denial and hard work.⁴⁷

The cumulative vote, he believed, protected minorities. He did not, however, revert to advocating a property qualification on the right to vote, but continued to espouse universal suffrage. He might even have been considered radical since he favoured the extension of the franchise to women. In fact it was at the home of Women's Suffrage campaigner, Rose Scott, that he met Catherine Spence and became interested in her 'Effective Vote' system, based on the Hare system he had first encountered in Townsville in 1866.⁴⁸

He became a trenchant opponent of the Labour Party, supporting the movement 'to establish a National Association to put down socialistic tendencies of the least intelligent portion of the community'.⁴⁹ This however, meant little more than organising to register names of supporters on the electoral roll; Walker was one of few opponents to appreciate the organisational methods of the Labour Party at the time and to realise the need to organise in opposition, 'organisation has to be met with organisation'.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 59, 14 May 1895.

⁴⁶ Rickard, *Class and Politics*, op. cit., ch. 11.

⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 48, 9 April 1891.

⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 71, 14 May 1900, 16 May 1900 and 4 June 1900.

⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 49, 6 August 1891.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

However, he did not join any political party, though politics remained a keen interest during the late 1880s and the period of depression. Walker never developed the friendships with New South Wales politicians he had developed in Queensland where his interest still continued; he was always in touch, staying at the Queensland Club when he visited Brisbane, meeting with old Queensland friends in Brisbane and Sydney at his office or at the Union Club, discussing the latest events in the northern colony. Sir Samuel Griffith, on his way to the Federal Council meeting in Tasmania, had a 'long yarn', and Alfred Halloran of the Bank of New South Wales in Townsville 'talked over north Queensland matters'.⁵¹

He became involved gradually in the politics of New South Wales remaining a keen advocate of Liberalism and freetrade as he had been in Queensland.⁵² He attended the address by Sir Henry Parkes on *True Liberalism* at which Bruce Smith, G. H. Reid and B. R. Wise spoke, concluding: 'Queensland could not produce such good public Speakers', and heard Henry George speak on *The single tax and The fallacies of Protection*.⁵³ He was attracted to the idea of a single tax but disagreed with George's tax on land.⁵⁴ During the elections of 1891 he favoured Liberal and Freetrade candidates, voting for supporters of Parkes.⁵⁵ Understandably, given his own honesty and scorn of political gimmickry, Walker did not admire Sir Henry Parkes: 'He is such a crafty politician that one has always to consider to use a colloquialism, "on which side his bread is buttered"'.⁵⁶ Though contributing to defray the costs of his expenses in the 1891 election, which he thought 'only fair', Walker refused to make further donations to support Parkes financially since 'impecuniosity is rather a failing with him', a sharp contrast with his later attitude to Barton.⁵⁷ How far Walker's judgement of Parkes was influenced by moral considerations, as well as scorn for his changeable politics, is not evident in comments in the diaries.

His interest in politics at this time appears to have been purely academic; Robert Burdett Smith, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, broached the subject of his entering parliament in 1890, and again in 1891 Reginald Black, member for Mudgee, asked why he did not enter politics.⁵⁸ Walker replied that he was 'a comparatively new chum in New South Wales and could not expect to be returned if I stood and I certainly would not think of trying unless requisitioned'.⁵⁹ Nevertheless he listened with interest to discussion with G. R. Parkin regarding Imperial Federation, read Bellamy's *Looking backward 2000-1887*, though he thought Bellamy's ideas 'Utopian', and he listened with interest to lectures at the

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 43, 9 February 1889 and 1 April 1889.

⁵² Walker diary, vol. 43, 9 February 1889.

⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 44, 30 August 1889. For information on Smith, Reid and Wise see Rydon, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 45, 10 March 1890 and vol. 46, 31 May 1890. George stated that increases in land value were directly the result of the use of public money for roads, services, etc. Walker was very much aware that improvements in land value were frequently the result of investment in improvements by the owners. He believed that owners should be compensated.

⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 48, 17 June 1891.

⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 49, 11 November 1891.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* Walker was one of the main collectors for the Barton Fund, presented to Mrs Barton, to compensate for loss of income during the Federation campaign. Further discussion is in the next chapter.

⁵⁸ For information on Smith and Black see Connolly, op. cit.

⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 48, 23 May 1891.

Australasian Economic Association on topics ranging from the theory of Malthus to the economics of consumption.⁶⁰

As the paper he read to the Australasian Economic Association (quoted above) clearly indicated, his interest in Federation exercised his mind even before the troubles of the 1890s. On 21 November 1889 he wrote a letter to the editor of *Sydney Morning Herald* advocating Federation:

If the leaders of our respective parties would only lay aside their 'Shibboleths' and if the press would persistently endeavour to allay local jealousies, Australasian federation would be much nearer accomplishment than many imagine... What a splendid thing it would be to have an Australian dominion consolidated debt (consols) carrying 8 per cent interest in place of the present numerous and conflicting issues at rates varying from 3½% to 6 per cent, to have a national military and naval defence force, a uniform railway gauge and customs tariff, intercolonial free trade, an Australasian Court of Appeal with assimilation of bankruptcy and other laws etc. Is it too much to prophesy that the first Australian Dominion Parliament will be composed of the leading statesmen of all these colonies and its personnel will be such as to raise the whole tone of political life in our midst and let us hope for ever consign to a limbo of forgetfulness the narrow bigotry and self seeking so prominent, alas, in our several Legislatures as at present constituted...

He signed the letter 'Z'.⁶¹ Another letter in similar vein appeared in *Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 December 1890.⁶² He read all of the proceedings of the 1890 Federal Conference in Melbourne with great and critical interest, and later apparently discussed some aspects with G. H. Reid whom he encountered at the Union Club, though, once again, the diaries are disappointing in not recording more than a passing reference.⁶³ In 1891 he observed the National Australasian Convention from the gallery taking careful note of Sir Samuel Griffith's draft constitution and the objections raised to Federation.⁶⁴ For the next two years he appears to have been too heavily involved with the depression to involve himself deeply with Federation. Besides, Sir George Dibbs had gained power in New South Wales and he was an anti-Federalist; the fires of Federation dwindled as Parkes, a major Federalist, was now an elderly and sick old man sitting on the back benches. However, Edmund Barton took up the cudgels; Barton was largely responsible for the formation of Federation Leagues in New South Wales in 1893.⁶⁵ Walker attended the foundation meeting of the Sydney Federation League convened by Edmund Barton in Sydney in June 1893; he was concerned that the latter proved very rowdy with those opposed to Federation the better speakers.⁶⁶ However, he appears not to have committed himself to any specific Federation group, though he

⁶⁰ Walker diary, vol. 44, 2 July 1889; vol. 46, 24 July 1890; and vol. 51, 5 April 1892.

⁶¹ The cipher in the Bank of New South Wales code for Tbowoomba.

⁶² Walker diary, vol. 45, 19 November 1890.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 45, 13 February 1890 and 2 March 1890.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 48, 9 April 1891.

⁶⁵ See Reynolds, *Edmund Barton*, op. cit.

⁶⁶ R. R. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth*, Sydney, 1958, p. 102; Walker diary, vol. 54, 3 July 1893 and vol. 55, 19 September 1893.

discussed widely problems relating to Federation such as the possible siting of a Federal capital.⁶⁷

Meanwhile in Victoria the Australian Natives Association took up the Federation banner. Representatives of both the A. N. A. and the Federation League met at Corowa on the Murray River in July 1893. There it was agreed that another convention should be held, this time of delegates elected by the people of the various colonies rather than, as previously, appointed by parliaments. Furthermore the constitution they drafted should be submitted to a referendum in each colony. Such a scheme required parliamentary assent. George Reid, by then Premier of New South Wales, convened a meeting of colonial premiers in Hobart in January 1895 to consider the matter; they agreed that another convention should be held. However, Queensland was wavering; Sir Samuel Griffith, one of the strongest proponents of Federation, had accepted the Chief Justiceship of the colony and retired from Parliament. It was a blow to prospects of Queensland joining a Federation. Meeting him at the Queensland Club, Walker, never one to beat around the bush, informed Griffith 'how much his election to the Chief Justiceship had interfered with the progress of the movement'.⁶⁸ However, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria decided to proceed; later Western Australia decided to participate—so five out of six colonies would be represented.

Reid at this stage appears to have been courting Walker, lunching with him at the Union Club and visiting the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, where Walker summed up the Reids as 'a weighty pair', noting that George Reid weighed 18 stone 4 pounds, a formidable figure indeed.⁶⁹ The details of any discussions with Reid are not noted in his diary. He continued to study the Parliamentary Debates in regard to the proposed Federal Convention, particularly in Queensland, but he does not appear to have joined the Australasian Federation League of New South Wales until June 1896.⁷⁰ At the Annual General Meeting of the League on 24 July 1896, Walker was appointed to the Executive, who represented the League at the People's Federal Convention organised at Bathurst on 23 October 1896, as a forerunner to the Convention arranged for 1897, following the passing of the Federal Enabling Bills in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

Unfortunately the only diary missing from the Walker Manuscripts is volume 63 (dealing with the period of the Bathurst Convention and leading up to the election of delegates to attend the 1897 Federal Convention), so the following account is drawn largely from newspaper reports and from the paper Walker wrote, based on his Bathurst speech, 'A glance at the prospective finances of the Australian Federation or Commonwealth'.⁷¹ Had the diary not been lost it may have offered more information on his immediate reasons for joining the League and attending the conference. His long standing interest is obvious and his growing concern

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 56, 13 April 1894.

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 57, 22 May 1894.

⁶⁹ Walker diary, vol. 60, 19 October 1895 and vol. 61, 2 November 1895.

⁷⁰ Notebook of Subscribers, Australasian Federation League of N.S.W., papers, National Library, Canberra.

⁷¹ This paper was read on 3 December 1896 and published in the *Journal of the Institute of Bankers of New South Wales*, vol. 5, Part XII, 17 December 1896, p. 444.

following the Depression, but he was imbued also with a strong sense of Australian nationalism. For many years he had come to see himself as an Australian. He remarks on 'A beautiful *Australian* Christmas Day' or in New Zealand, 'to our Australian eyes'; trips to Britain may have been to the home country, but it was never envisaged that he would return to live. While, like so many other migrants, he preserved affection for the land of his birth, Australia had indeed become his home.⁷² Though his paper on banking in 1887 revealed his shining vision for Australia, the diaries have few references to his Australian nationalistic sentiment, but in a letter to Nita he disclosed briefly some of his feelings:

...after the novelty of seeing new places is over you may perhaps discover Australia has its beauty spots, its superior climate and sky...and that there is a comparative freedom from conventionality which in itself is (to me) delightful—also people generally on an average have better times than at home—you do not see so much abject poverty as in London and other large cities.⁷³

He was very much aware of the emerging national spirit in literature and art. He attended the lecture given by Ernest J. Robson in 1892: 'Southern Cross and wattle blossom: A literary review of characteristic Australian literature'.⁷⁴ He was familiar, too, with the work of Australian poets, quoting George Essex Evans in his Federation campaigning. A. B. Paterson was a visitor in his household; he was an early admirer of *The man from Snowy River*, sending copies to friends and relatives overseas.⁷⁵ Tom Roberts was a friend; it was Roberts who persuaded him to become a member of the Sydney Society of Artists.⁷⁶ One of his last public acts was to join a delegation to approach the Australian Government to secure the collection of paintings by Ellis Rowan.⁷⁷ T. A. Browne [Rolf Boldrewood] was a friend as well as a distant relative. A. G. Stephens of the *Bulletin* he had known from boyhood in Toowoomba.⁷⁸ An early member of the Australian Historical Society, he read the reminiscences of pioneers, many of whom he had known. History fascinated him; he was friendly with the historian A. W. Jose, whose work he admired. He read a wide range of Australian literature including such works as Therry's *Reminiscences of thirty years' residence in New South Wales and Victoria* and *Among cannibals*, and later the works of Joseph Furphy, Mrs Aeneas Gunn and others.⁷⁹

There can therefore be little doubt that Walker's commitment to Federation was motivated by long standing national sentiment; at the same time he remained a British loyalist. The British Empire was at its peak, sentimental attachment to Queen Victoria intense, *Rule Britannia* and *Soldiers of the Queen* almost anthems. Imperial sentiment ran high with discussion of Imperial federation; Walker, and indeed virtually all Federationists and early Federal politicians saw Australia an

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 53, 25 December 1892 and vol. 55, 29 January 1894.

⁷³ James Thomas Walker to Nita Walker, 12 May 1907, Walker MSS.

⁷⁴ Walker diary, vol. 50, 9 March 1892.

⁷⁵ Paterson was a friend of his son Archie and was later his nephew-in-law, married to Alice Walker, one of William's daughters. He was always known to Walker as Bartie.

⁷⁶ Walker diary, vol. 60, 19 October 1895.

⁷⁷ Walker diary, vol. 117, 22 February 1921.

⁷⁸ Walker diary, vol. 68, 11 April 1899.

⁷⁹ R. Therry, *Reminiscences of thirty years' residence in New South Wales and Victoria*, London, 1863, reprinted Sydney, 1974; Carl Lumholtz, *Among cannibals*, first published London, 1889, reprinted Canberra, 1980.

independent nation but within the framework of Empire, as Biard D'Annet put it, 'practically a sovereign state under the protection but not under the protectorate of England'.⁸⁰ As Fred Alexander remarked: '...willing acceptance of British authority in respect to the Empire as a whole, was reflected in the policies pursued by both Deakin and Fisher (and later, by Hughes)...'⁸¹ Given the Imperial euphoria of the time, expressed perhaps most strongly in the Indian Durbar of 1903, it is difficult to imagine their doing otherwise.⁸² It did not seem wrong or unnatural to Walker to support both Australian nationalism and Imperial loyalty; after all, he had preserved a distinct Scottish nationality in parallel with loyalty to the British Empire. Why could he not be an Australian and a British subject?

The Convention, which met from 17 November 1896 to 21 November 1896, brought together 200 delegates from all over Australia, not only politicians, but also all sections of the community interested in Federation. According to the Premier of New South Wales, William Lyne, it was 'composed of representatives of all shades of political belief. They were willing to sink party considerations for the common good...'⁸³ Garran believed that it had a great educational influence, helping to familiarise both the delegates and the public with both constitutional principles and the compromises required to produce a federal Constitution. He also believed that it helped to dissipate suspicions regarding the Commonwealth Bill.⁸⁴ As a basis for discussion, the Commonwealth Bill of 1891 was resurrected. One of the major stumbling blocks to Federation had been the problem of how to deal with Commonwealth expenditure and the amount of customs and excise duties—the major revenue source of the proposed Federation—which would be returned to the colonies, particularly how to organise return of revenue on a fair and equitable basis. At Bathurst Walker, using fiscal discussions of 1891 as a basis, addressed this problem.

First he defined 'Federation', taking as his definition that of Sir Samuel Griffith:

A Federation may be said to be the union, more or less complete, of States possessing common interests in one larger state, which will act as one body in relation to external affairs, and will secure for its people the advantages of a common citizenship, but without interfering with the domestic affairs of the people of the States so far as they do not affect the common interests of the whole Federation.⁸⁵

Always a realist, he supported the Federal rather than the Unificationist model for union advocated by Sir George Dibbs and Henry Bournes Higgins, realising the entrenched position of the colonial Governments; by this time it was apparent that the Unificationists had lost, but Sir George Dibbs continued to oppose Federation.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Biard D'Annet, 'Societe en Australie' in *Revue du Deux Mondes*, September 1906.

⁸¹ Fred Alexander, *Australia since Federation*, Sydney, 1967, p. 30.

⁸² Eadith Walker attended the Durbar. One of the best accounts from an Australian is Helen Rutledge (ed.), *A Season in India*, Sydney, 1976.

⁸³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 November 1896. For information on Lyne (later Sir William Lyne) see Connolly, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ R. R. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–09.

⁸⁵ James Thomas Walker, 'A glance at the prospective finances of the Australian Federation or Commonwealth', Sydney, 1896.

⁸⁶ Crisp, *Federation fathers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff. For information on Higgins see John Rickard, *H. B. Higgins: The rebel as judge*, Sydney, 1984.

However, Walker did not support Federation without having studied the examples of Canada and the United States; he did not follow blindly the lead of others.

He advocated that the Federal Government should not only take over customs and excise, defence, quarantine, etc., but also the railways, so that a uniform gauge might be introduced; he was one of the earliest and strongest proponents of Federation of railways and a single gauge. Furthermore he advocated consolidation of the colonial debts, as he had done for some time. He had abandoned his views on completely free trade, now advocating intercolonial free trade with a uniform revenue tariff to produce revenue to pay administrative costs. He did not think that the Commonwealth should purchase Customs Houses, since the colonies were relieved of the expenditure of their upkeep. Following one of the suggestions of the Sydney Convention of 1891 he suggested that, pending the imposition of uniform duties, local laws should remain in place, but duties should be collected by Commonwealth officers. Additional expenditure incurred in Commonwealth administration should be charged in proportion to population. The Commonwealth would collect all duties, deduct therefrom Commonwealth expenditure, and return to each state the remainder of revenue collected in that state.

Walker demonstrated that the problem of returning revenue to the States could be overcome by careful book-keeping, taking account of the amounts collected from each colony and of expenses incurred, then after deducting the one from the other, returning the remainder to the colony. The cost involved he estimated would not be astronomical, approximately 1s 10½d [about 19 cents] per head of population in New South Wales. He recommended that figures from the second year of operation should be used as a guide. Any shortfall in Federal revenue might be compensated by a direct tax.⁸⁷

It was a thoughtful address that reflected both his long preoccupation with financial affairs, and his careful study of the proceedings of the 1890 Conference and the 1891 Convention. The scheme provoked much interest; it was discussed at both the Australasian Economic Association and at the Institute of Bankers of New South Wales. He continued to explain the Bathurst scheme, and to propound the benefits to be gained if the Federal Government took over state debts, estimating that income from customs and excise and from railways would be sufficient to pay annual interest in addition to the cost of Federal government and defence. Published in pamphlet form, the paper was circulated in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland.⁸⁸ It formed the basis for much wider discussion of Federal finances than had previously occurred and was eventually the basis of the scheme adopted. It seems not unlikely that with Walker backing the scheme, it received greater consideration and was more acceptable to a number of politicians, particularly in Queensland, than it might have been had it been promoted by a politician such as G. H. Reid.

By this time the date of the election of representatives to attend the Federal Convention of 1897 was approaching. Ten delegates were sought, each State being

⁸⁷ James Thomas Walker, 'A glance...', op. cit.

⁸⁸ Australasian Federation League of New South Wales, papers, National Library, Canberra.

one electorate, each voter selecting ten candidates, the first ten 'past the post' being elected. As G. H. Reid noted, the representatives at the 1897 Convention occupied theoretically a very different position from those of the 1891 Convention; they were elected rather than being chosen by the various colonial Parliaments. Candidates coming forward for election were required to support their nominations with 100 signatures from the electors. Walker had the support of the Australasian Federation League which produced a requisition with signatures from over fifty electorates. He seems to have hesitated, as his name was not in the first published list of candidates on 23 January 1897, but appears in the next list of 30 January.⁸⁹ Again, the missing diary might have provided more precise detail; newspapers provide the main source of information in its absence. His hesitation may well have been caused by the lack of popularity of both Federation and Free-trade among some of his business associates: MacLaurin, later President of the Bank of New South Wales, but already associated with Walker through hospital board work, was the leader of a strong Conservative anti-Federation movement, Mackellar, who joined the Board of the Bank in 1896, was a Protectionist and the climate of opinion at the Union Club appears to have been fairly strongly anti-Federationist. As Scott Bennett noted, the businessmen of Sydney were deeply divided over the issue.⁹⁰ Among other issues New South Wales enjoyed Free-trade as against the Protectionism of Victoria, and many in business feared the loss of their freedom from duties. It was certainly not the most popular cause for one in Walker's position to espouse.

Despite an apparent lack of general enthusiasm noted by historians, the making of the Australian Constitution was a serious, even solemn matter:

...the privilege and duty of laying the foundations of such a federation are among the highest and most patriotic which any citizen can be called upon to possess and discharge. The work can only be done once. It may be amended and patched up as time goes on, but the essentials as they are now about to be decided will probably endure more or less unchanged for all time...⁹¹

Those involved at the time certainly did not see Federation as a foregone conclusion—in fact, were keenly aware of strong opposition and the problems of interstate jealousies. They realised it would be no easy goal to achieve.

Walker certainly viewed the occasion seriously when he opened his campaign in Sydney on 31 January 1897. He gave a lengthy and detailed address expressing his views clearly. As in his pamphlet on finances, he opened by defining 'Federation'. He commended the Bathurst proposals as 'thoroughly fair to all parties'. He further supported federal control of debts and railways, 'as thereby alone great economies of administration might be expected, true freedom of trade secured and favouritism avoided'. He would also 'reduce the proposed allowances to members of the Federal parliament', and would 'locate the capital of the "Federal Territory" within the borders of New South Wales'; further, he believed in the Hare System of representing minorities in Parliament.⁹² He was an indifferent speaker, not

⁸⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 23 January 1897 and 30 January 1897.

⁹⁰ Scott Bennett (ed.), *Federation*, Melbourne, 1975, p. 140.

⁹¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 23 January 1897.

possessing a loud voice or a dominating personality; his speeches tended to be dry and to the point, without the posturing of politicians such as Reid. As one newspaper later put it: 'Mr Walker, like Caesar's eulogist, is no orator but his earnestness is palpable and he is an incarnate cyclopaedia of the finances of Federation'.⁹³ His undoubted sincerity and knowledge invariably impressed his listeners. Several newspaper reporters were impressed, remarking that 'we think the colony is to be congratulated on the candidature of this gentleman' and 'the non-political contingent has strong representatives in the persons of Mr J. T. Walker and Cardinal Moran'.⁹⁴

The Australian Workman was, predictably, less eulogistic; it noted that 'the only "gentleman" candidates for the Federal elections...are Mr Henry Copeland and Mr J. T. Walker'.⁹⁵ It also complained that some of the candidates were spending a lot of money on their campaigns, which may have applied to Walker, but there is no proof. Throughout February he continued electioneering in Sydney and in the last weeks of the month, took his campaign to the country, speaking in Singleton, Tamworth, Penrith, Goulburn, Yass, Wagga Wagga and Albury.⁹⁶

In the meantime a bitter controversy was raging. Another of the nominees was Cardinal Moran; his nomination stirred much bigoted sectarian opposition. Consequently, a United Protestant Conference was called. The leading Anglicans boycotted it but the Presbyterian moderator attended; it was decided to support a Protestant 'bunch' in order to defeat the Cardinal. Walker had little to do with the Conference, stating later that he had not sought inclusion in the 'bunch'.⁹⁷ It certainly would have been completely out of character with his tolerant religious views which are more likely to have been those of *The Christian World*: 'If he thinks he can serve his God and his country in this way who are we that we should forbid or even criticise his action'.⁹⁸ Certainly Walker would not have approved the Chairman's remarks regarding the inclusion of the only Labour candidate McGowen, when the Freetraders refused to include See, a protectionist:

...he did not care a brass farthing what the labour party advocated so long as the retention of their leader's name helped to defeat that 'terrible man' the Cardinal.⁹⁹

Walker actually refused to be part of the bunch if it did not include another Catholic; R. E. O'Connor's name was then included, which annoyed O'Connor intensely.¹⁰⁰ In addition the Orange Lodges supported another bunch and the Chinese community decided to publish their list of preferences, supporting Walker because

⁹² *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 1 February 1897 and 20 February 1897.

⁹³ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 69, 15 June 1899.

⁹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1897; *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 February 1897.

⁹⁵ *The Australian Workman*, 13 February 1897.

⁹⁶ Newspaper cuttings, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 64.

⁹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 88, 24 June 1908. Walker's term 'bunch' refers to candidates nominated by a specific interest group. Citizens of the United States of America would have called it 'a ticket'.

⁹⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 March 1897.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Walker diary, vol. 88, 24 June 1908.

Mr Walker is a distinguished citizen, and knows high finance, but it is because Mr Walker is a leader of a bank whose notes we know in China and which idealises the magnificent virtue of paying twenty shillings in the pound. An institution like the Bank of New South Wales that teaches this example is as worthy of credit as a parent who gives piety to his offspring, not by means of a ferrule, but by his example.¹⁰¹

Finally forty-nine candidates nominated; Walker was named in all bunches except the Labour Party and Prudent Federationist (Geebung).¹⁰² He honestly did not expect to win election; his involvement was to help secure Federation. On election day, 4 March 1897, he was 'not the least excited and prepared to be defeated'.¹⁰³ It was therefore something of a surprise to finish ninth. Opinions regarding the elected ten delegates varied widely. The *Evening News* believed they were

...a good ten...J. T. Walker's name was the only one whose name came as rather a surprise, but he is an excellent representative, too, the success he had gained being as he is new in public life, apparently a testimony to upright character and sound business ability.¹⁰⁴

The Australian Workman not unexpectedly labelled the delegates 'some of the most conservative and plutocratic who have ever been before the public'.¹⁰⁵ Most agreed with *The Age* that Walker was there 'through his ability as a Federal financier'.¹⁰⁶ Walker was the only member of the New South Wales 'ten' who had not been a politician, and in fact, the only one of the 50 members of the convention not to have served in a colonial parliament. J. A. La Nauze considered that 'his election was one of the few examples of public recognition of a man who appeared to be simply an expert in a relevant field...'.¹⁰⁷ It was a remarkable tribute to his reputation both for financial ability and his popularity.

The Federal Convention of 1897–98 was held over a period of twelve months with meetings in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. Ten delegates each from Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales attended. Queensland was not represented. The delegates, except for Walker, were in fact some of Australia's best-known and most able politicians; a large majority were legally trained. Walker was the most highly qualified and experienced authority on banking and finance.

He was somewhat overwhelmed by the reception in Melbourne when the New South Wales, Victorian and Tasmanian delegates gathered to board a special express for Adelaide. He noted they were 'treated right royally' but does not comment on the statement in *The Age* that the New South Wales delegates were anything but a happy family with two of their number engaging in public argument.¹⁰⁸ The conference opened on 22 March 1897; Queensland did not attend.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 26 February 1897.

¹⁰² There appear to have been at least seven bunches.

¹⁰³ Walker diary, vol. 64, 4 March 1897.

¹⁰⁴ *Evening News*, Sydney, 5 March 1897.

¹⁰⁵ *The Australian Workman*, 6 March 1897.

¹⁰⁶ *The Age*, Melbourne, 14 March 1897.

¹⁰⁷ J. A. La Nauze, *The making of the Australian Constitution*, Melbourne, 1972, p. 101.

Official business was mingled with concerts, dinners, lunches and receptions, but the tone of the discussions was serious. Reid had thought election of delegates would help to obliterate provincial lines, emphasising rather the differences between conservatives and liberals. 'Members... will act and feel bound to combine, not according to their colonies, but according to their declared opinions'.¹⁰⁹ John Quick, however, noted the presence of delegates from both the opposition and the ministry in various states 'seriously interfered with independent and untrammelled consideration of Federal issues'.¹¹⁰ Their views were not expressed freely, but with the knowledge that they had to face elections in their own colonies.

Nevertheless, as Garran noted, 'whatever storms may have been seething below, there was a beautiful spirit of compromise on the surface'; the delegates appear to have realised the need to achieve some consensus.¹¹¹ The task of the Convention was to produce a Constitution for a federated Australia which would overcome all of the objections in the Colonies and fulfil as nearly as possible their vision of a united Australia.

It was decided not to take the Draft Bill of 1891 as the basis for discussion, but to proceed by resolutions. Not all agreed with Edmund Barton in this approach, but 'for the sake of peace many supported him'.¹¹² Walker was overshadowed by the more experienced speakers, and his inexperience of constitutional law was a decided drawback, but he listened keenly and participated when he believed he could contribute to discussion. From the start, he made known his own Christian beliefs in presenting a petition from 2145 Presbyterians of New South Wales, requesting the acknowledgment of God in the Constitution.¹¹³ His main speech on 30 March 1897 was curtailed, as time was running short. He was nervous and he felt it rather tame; nevertheless he covered a number of important issues succinctly.¹¹⁴ He advocated equal representation of the states in the Senate because

... we have no idea what the population of various states will be within the next fifty years... on the face of it, it may look rather singular that New South Wales or Victoria should have the same representation in the House as the less populous States. I think the time will come when we shall be glad that we had adopted the plan.¹¹⁵

With reference to the estimated tariff, he corrected the estimate of Sir George Dibbs from four million pounds to six million pounds, with which T. A. Coghlan (New South Wales Government Statistician) concurred, and went on to advocate Federal control of railways, explaining: 'I do not think goods will have proper and expeditious conveyance from one part of the country to another until there is uniform gauge.' He feared, rightly, that 'if uniform gauge is left to States... we will never have it'.¹¹⁶ He recognised that the house with the broadest franchise should be

¹⁰⁸ *The Age*, Melbourne, 22 March 1897.

¹⁰⁹ G. H. Reid, 'The outlook of Federation', *Review of Reviews*, vol. X, January–June 1897, p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in *Review of Reviews*, vol. X, January–June 1897, p. 661.

¹¹¹ R. R. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth*, op. cit., p. 111.

¹¹² Walker diary, vol. 64, 22 March 1897.

¹¹³ Joseph Abbott presented a similar petition on behalf of the Church of England and Sir William McMillan on behalf of congregationalists. *Official record of the debates of the Australasian Federal Convention* (hereafter *AFC*), reprinted Sydney, 1986, vol. I, p. 203.

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 64, 30 March 1897.

¹¹⁵ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 308.

the predominating chamber and challenged the sense of allowing the Senate to veto a Bill without being able to accept at the same time any amendments to the same Bill. He advocated that it should be clearly stated in the Constitution that the Federal capital should be on Federal territory and must not be one of the existing capitals, though he thought it should be comparatively accessible to Sydney and Melbourne; his reasons for this were that it would remove a bone of contention and provide the opportunity of forming another centre of population. Defence, he thought, ought to be recognised as a very important matter. For the first time, he raised the matter of coloured labour, pointing out that 'had it not been for coloured labour many white people would not have been where they are now'. He suggested that the delegates should visit Queensland to judge for themselves, but met with no support.¹¹⁷

On Federal finance he quoted papers by Mr Owen, Government Actuary for Western Australia, and R. R. Garran's paper, 'The cost of Federal finance', defining the requirements for an ideal system: it should be fair to all of the States, be so far final as to offer no encouragement for constant tinkering or agitation for better terms and be nevertheless so far elastic as to be adaptable to changing conditions. He emphasised one major obstacle to financial integration: the colonies did not end the financial year on the same day. He pointed out that though it appeared equitable to return Customs duties to the colonies on a population basis, investigation indicated this was not the case. There was much to be said in favour of distributing the duties proportionally according to the amount contributed by each state. He had tried to follow out the idea of paying drawbacks on dutiable goods sent across the border but found it practically impossible because when imported into Melbourne and exported in manufactured form it was impossible to estimate what portion of the duty was represented in the value of the manufactured article. He went on to propound his book-keeping scheme from Bathurst, advocating a Federal revenue tariff to offset lost revenue in intercolonial trade. The speech echoed many that he had made previously and foreshadowed many that he would make in future, though he made one rather revolutionary suggestion for reducing state expenditure that was never followed up—that the founding of a Federal parliament might allow reduction of the numbers in State parliaments.¹¹⁸

It appears that some of the professional politicians regarded him as an outsider. The Convention divided into three committees to expedite business: Finance, Constitutional and Judiciary. Members were apparently selected by their own leaders and Reid excluded Walker from the Finance Committee (though he was attending as a financial expert), nominating as the New South Wales representatives William McMillan, James Bruncker and William Lyne—for political reasons.¹¹⁹ Reid and McMillan apologised and Walker believed they were honestly sorry, but it was a particularly pointed move to keep him from deliberations on financial matters. McMillan had been Treasurer in New South Wales but the other two could lay no real claim to superiority in financial affairs. Nor was the solution

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 309 and 311.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 310.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 310–11.

¹¹⁹ For further information on Lyne see Connolly, *op. cit.*

to the financial problem which Walker had put forward at Bathurst considered. Reid, too, despite protestations of friendship, engineered the postponement of the motion on the consolidation of debts which was due for consideration on 21 April 1897.¹²⁰ As a sop to Walker, he made promises of including him in the next list of Legislative Councillors to be appointed in New South Wales; Walker did not believe him, even though he repeated his promise to Josiah Symon.¹²¹ He was righteously indignant and did not accept this slight without comment; during debate of Clause 96 on the taking over of debts he remarked: 'When I came to the convention I thought I might have had the honour of a place on the Financial Committee', and reserved the right 'to move in the matter at the second sitting'.¹²²

Walker found himself on the Judiciary Committee of ten, eight of whom were lawyers. He could have very little input and chaffed at the slowness of progress, complaining on 1 April that they had got through only six lines; he thought the presence of eight lawyers 'may account for it'.¹²³ There was greater interest in attending as an onlooker, meetings of the Constitutional and Finance Committees.

His most remarkable contribution was in securing the change of name of the upper house from 'States Assembly' to 'Senate'. Barton had deliberately chosen the name 'States Assembly', but it was not a popular choice. On 13 April 1897, when debate on Clause 53, Appropriation and Tax Bills, commenced, Walker immediately put a resolution that the name of the upper chamber should be 'the Senate' because it was much simpler and 'we all know what it means'.¹²⁴ Barton was annoyed; La Nauze considered that there had been lobbying and agreement outside the chamber.¹²⁵ However, the diaries do not indicate any organised action, rather that Walker was seizing an opportunity to change something which he did not like, though he must have been aware of a groundswell of opposition to the name 'States Assembly' which Reid regarded as 'Frenchified'.¹²⁶ C. C. Kingston pointed out that the proper time to bring on such debate was when the earlier clauses of the Bill were dealt with, to which Walker replied, 'Oh yes, I know that very well, but the West Australians will be away then and they will support me now', causing much amusement.¹²⁷ The division voted 27 to 21 in favour of 'Senate', which he thought: 'Not so bad'.¹²⁸

As time seemed to be running out rapidly, Walker met with Holder (Treasurer of South Australia), Hurry (Treasurer of Tasmania), Lewis (Opposition leader in Tasmania), William McMillan (ex-Treasurer of New South Wales) and Patrick MacMahon Glynn to discuss financial clauses in order to economise time in the convention. Sir George Turner, Sir Edward Braddon, G. H. Reid and Bernard Wise, although invited, did not attend. Reid, in any case, arranged to defer debate on consolidation of debts.¹²⁹ Walker was disappointed that colonies could not be

¹²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 64, 31 March 1897 and 21 April 1897.

¹²¹ Walker diary, vol. 68, 8 April 1899.

¹²² *AFC*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 1085.

¹²³ Walker diary, vol. 64, 1 April 1897.

¹²⁴ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 480.

¹²⁵ La Nauze, *The making of the Australian Constitution*, op. cit., p. 140.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 64, 13 April 1897.

persuaded to abandon their jealous control of railways; he moved a new clause after Clause 82—which might have provided standard gauge railways throughout Australia, as well as railways crossing both the northern and southern halves of the continent and a central railway from Adelaide to Darwin. It was, however, lost by six votes.¹³⁰

The first sitting of the Convention finished on 5 May 1897. Some months elapsed during which colonial Parliaments considered the Adelaide resolutions. Walker left the Convention dissatisfied. *The Australian Workman* voted him 'the biggest failure New South Wales sent to the Convention with Bruncker a good second'.¹³¹ *The Barrier Miner* was, however, kinder:

Mr Walker was the worst-treated man at the meeting of the Federal Convention in Adelaide. It was his offence, apparently, that he was not a politician. New South Wales sent him to the convention as a finance expert. Not a political finance expert...but a real every day, garden variety of finance expert: a man who manages banks and big insurance companies and large estates and so on. The Convention, however, though it knew perfectly well the circumstances under which Mr Walker had been elected perpetuated something very like a fraud upon New South Wales by excluding him from the Finance Committee and substituting some men whose knowledge of figures takes them very little further than ability to make out what part of the annual parliamentary allowance of £300 is due them monthly...¹³²

That he was still relatively unknown is attested by a query from one of the New South Wales parliamentarians, who asked him who wrote the address he had delivered during the convention elections, apparently believing him incapable of penning it himself.¹³³ Walker was so annoyed at his impudence that he did not even name him in his diary! Meanwhile he wrote a series of articles on Federation for the *Brisbane Courier*, explaining finances and encouraging Queensland to join; though Queensland was not represented at the Convention, he ensured that Queensland views were aired, dictating a letter from Griffith to reporters from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*.¹³⁴ In July he led discussion at the Australian Economic Association on the financial problems of Federation, and discussed Federation with many of his broad circle of friends; as well as promulgating his own views, he was considering those of others.¹³⁵

When the next session of the Convention commenced at Parliament House in Sydney on 2 September 1897, Walker was determined that he was not going to remain on the Judiciary Committee. Speaking on the Finance Clauses on 3 September, he said bluntly:

I was not sent into this Convention to take part specially in the proceedings of a judiciary committee. I am I fear incompetent to offer suggestions worthy of being listened to by that Committee...¹³⁶

¹²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 64, 16 April 1897 and 21 April 1897.

¹³⁰ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. III, p. 1176; Walker diary, vol. 64, 19 April 1897.

¹³¹ *The Australian Workman*, 17 April 1897.

¹³² *The Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, 19 July 1897.

¹³³ Walker diary, vol. 65, 19 June 1897.

¹³⁴ Walker diary, vol. 65, 25 June 1897 and 31 July 1897. Walker had ready access to the *Brisbane Courier* as his brother William was a major shareholder in the Brisbane Newspaper Company.

¹³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 65, 6 July 1897.

Josiah Symon at once nominated him for membership of the Finance Committee, so he finally took his place on the only committee on which he felt truly qualified to serve. La Nauze comments that this suggested lobbying, but the diaries and correspondence give no evidence of this. That is not to say there was not some organisation behind the scenes, but it may be that Symon (and probably others) had realised what La Nauze noted was 'the most obvious individual anomaly' at the Adelaide Convention, 'the omission of Walker from the finance committee'.¹³⁷ His presence on the Finance Committee appears to have made little immediate impact on deliberations; the Bathurst scheme was again barely considered though he spoke for forty-five minutes.¹³⁸ In other discussions he was in a small minority again as he opposed the adoption of the referendum in order to resolve constitutional problems, believing referenda were insupportable as they involved appeal from a well-informed group to a less well-informed group and would be largely unsuccessful.¹³⁹ At Sydney, as at Adelaide, he remained a very interested but minor figure in debates.

At the continuation of the Convention in Melbourne, commencing on 20 January 1898, Walker received more attention, but he remained a minor figure; he was not a gifted speaker in the vein of Barton, Deakin, Higgins and others. The Finance Committee assembled in advance of the official opening; by now G. H. Reid was meeting with him to discuss matters and they 'seemed to be in fair agreement on Federal Finance'.¹⁴⁰ Reid, it seems, was at last listening carefully to the proposals Walker had been advocating. No alternative to the book-keeping scheme could be found, so a scheme, which La Nauze commented was 'near to his [Walker's] original ideas', was adopted.¹⁴¹ No precise limitation on the expenditure of the Commonwealth for the first three years was imposed, as had been suggested at Adelaide. Accounts would be kept of revenue received, expenditure would be charged on a per capita basis and the amount returned to the States would be what had been gathered from each State, less expenditure. Braddon, however, insisted that no less than 75% of revenue should be returned to the States, which effectively limited Commonwealth finances. It was not precisely what Walker had advocated, but close enough to satisfy him for the time being.¹⁴²

The *Argus* commented on the about-turn of the finance committee:

Elected as an eminent financier it was his [Walker's] cruel fate to be left out of the Finance Committee at Adelaide, and set to work on the federal judiciary along with Mr Peacock who shared his blank ignorance on the subject, and on all financial questions, in Sydney, as in Adelaide, Mr Walker was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Now, the Adelaide scheme in which Mr Walker had no share has been set aside and the one which he supported 'from the jump' has been triumphantly accepted. Months and months ago as Dr

¹³⁶ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 11.

¹³⁷ La Nauze, *The making of the Australian Constitution*, op. cit. p. 122 and p. 179.

¹³⁸ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 57-60; Walker diary, vol. 65, 6 September 1897.

¹³⁹ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 690; Walker diary, vol. 66, 26 September 1897.

¹⁴⁰ Walker diary, vol. 65, 28 December 1897.

¹⁴¹ La Nauze, *The making of the Australian Constitution*, op. cit., p. 212.

¹⁴² Braddon's insertion, known as 'the Braddon Blot', was mitigated at the Premier's Conference in 1898, when it was made effective for the first ten years only.

Quick declared yesterday, that very scheme was formulated by Mr Walker, at the amateur convention which was held in Bathurst.¹⁴³

However, in later years, his contribution to solving the financial problems of Federation was either forgotten or ignored.

Apart from financial matters Walker spoke on few occasions. Reflecting his belief on the subject, on 28 January 1898 he opposed anti-Chinese legislation on one of the few occasions when racism appears to have reared its head.¹⁴⁴ He stated clearly: 'I for one cannot understand why, when a man has paid his poll tax..., he should be treated differently from others'.¹⁴⁵ It was not a popular stand, but one that he continued to follow in his Parliamentary career. He also spoke at length on the consolidation of debts, but his pleas that Australian Consols (Consolidated Stock) might supersede existing Australasian Government Stocks (and, if included in the list of Trustees Securities in the United Kingdom, could reduce the annual interest charges on borrowings by up to two million pounds) fell on deaf ears.¹⁴⁶ He was unsuccessful also in introducing a new clause 117 which Barton had drafted, to allow separation of the central and northern parts of Queensland to form two new states. Neither Deakin nor Barton could see that this was necessary as they averred that Federation would not be an impediment to the formation of new states; so Walker withdrew his submission.¹⁴⁷ He was delighted when on 3 March 1898 it was finally agreed, on the motion of Sir George Turner, that the Federal capital should be in Federal territory; he had been one of the most persistent advocates of a Federal Territory for some years and introduced the idea in his speech in Adelaide quoted above.

When the convention closed on 17 March 1898 members looked with some satisfaction on their efforts. Walker thought the constitution was 'not an ideally perfect one', but 'at all events is an honest and painstaking attempt at a fair and workable compromise by men elected for that express purpose'.¹⁴⁸ In participating in its framing he had not played a major role, but he had been responsible for a major change in the title of the upper house, and had most certainly contributed to solving the problem of Federal finance. He remained consistently Liberal, though decidedly conservative on a number of occasions; he favoured, for instance, a minimum age of twenty-five rather than twenty-one for members of Federal Parliament and supported strongly retention of Appeals to Privy Council.

It remained for the delegates to return to their own states and ensure the acceptance of the Draft Bill in the referenda. As John Reynolds emphasised, New South Wales was the key colony in the formation of a Commonwealth and a number of powerful interests were opposed to Federation; their representation in the Colonial Parliament pushed through measures to set the minimum number of votes

¹⁴³ *Argus*, Melbourne, 12 February 1898.

¹⁴⁴ See R. Norris (ed.), *The emergent Commonwealth*, op. cit., pp. 46-59.

¹⁴⁵ *AFC*, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 254.

¹⁴⁶ Various newspapers carry summaries of his scheme, but this summary is from his own article in *Progress*. A copy is in Walker, Newspaper cuttings, vol. 13, Mitchell Library.

¹⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 66, 1 March 1898.

¹⁴⁸ James Thomas Walker, 'A call to Queenslanders to accept the Commonwealth Constitution Bill', in *Progress*, 26 August 1899.

required for assent to the enabling Bill at 80 000—an almost impossible target.¹⁴⁹ Opposition was formidable, led in particular by John Henry Want (well known to Walker) and Dr Maclaurin, an acquaintance and later fellow Director of the Bank of New South Wales—both determined opponents of Federation; the Labour Party was also opposed and there was considerable concern regarding the stand of G. H. Reid who was in a difficult position, relying on the support of the Labour Party in the New South Wales Parliament, and also a political ally of Want. Only five of the Convention representatives (Edmund Barton, William McMillan, R. E. O'Connor, Bernhard Wise and Walker) bore the brunt of the fight.¹⁵⁰

Almost immediately on their return from Melbourne the 'Billites', as they were christened, met with Barton to formulate campaign stratagems. Barton commenced the campaign the next day with an oration on the Australasian Constitution of 1898. A Federal Campaign Association, of which Walker was a member, was formed on 25 March and they waited in some trepidation for Reid to speak at the Town Hall on 28 March. Reid was somewhat equivocal stating he could not support the Bill enthusiastically but felt he could vote for its acceptance. Walker was 'most agreeably surprised'.¹⁵¹ There followed a period of intense activity with nightly meetings in the Sydney region; Walker concentrated mainly on the fiscal question, attempting to counter the opposition claims that New South Wales would lose a large amount in surrendering free trade, though not denying that the colony would lose; the benefits to be gained in having free access to Australia-wide markets, however, balanced the losses. At the Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Australasian National League, another of the organisations formed to foster Federation, Walker proposed the motion: 'In the opinion of the League, the Constitution of the Commonwealth is deserving of adoption'.¹⁵² He spoke, unusually for him, for an hour and a half. However, after discussion extending to a further night, no plebiscite was taken. In Sydney, Walker was one of the minor speakers; in the country he addressed meetings at Lithgow, Cowra, Grenfell, Carcoar, Scone, Walcha, Uralla, Armidale, Tenterfield, Drake, Sandy Hills and Richmond, in a series of one night stands.¹⁵³ Once more his listeners were impressed by his sincerity and gentlemanliness:

He [Walker] carries the suggestion of being, if anything, too generous and chivalric for the rough workaday world of politics.¹⁵⁴

After the poll took place on 3 June 1898, they had gained a majority of over 5000 votes but had fallen short of 80 000 votes. It was in effect a moral victory and Walker felt confident 'we will yet gain our object'.¹⁵⁵

In the meantime he received requests from Tenterfield and Bega to contest the New South Wales elections, which he declined. He was distressed to have to tell his friend John Garland that he could not support him in Woollahra, his own

¹⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 65, 18–26 August 1897. The minimum number in other colonies was 50 000.

¹⁵⁰ Reynolds (op. cit., p. 119) states that Barton was joined by only three of his New South Wales Convention colleagues, but clearly there were four.

¹⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 66, 23–28 March 1898.

¹⁵² Walker diary, vol. 66, 13 April 1898 and 18 April 1898.

¹⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 66, 13 April 1898 to 2 June 1898.

¹⁵⁴ *Grenfell Vidette*, Grenfell (N.S.W.), 11 May 1898.

¹⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 66, 4 June 1898.

electorate, since Garland was a Reid supporter regarding Federation, and Walker felt that, regarding Federation, he was in honour bound to support Barton.¹⁵⁶ Reid defeated Barton on 27 July 1898, and, though Reid had agreed 'that political differences must not interfere with personal friendship', Walker soon discovered the price of his support of Barton.¹⁵⁷ In January 1899 Reid attended the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne where the amendments to the draft constitution required by the New South Wales parliament were accepted. When news of this reached Sydney, Walker was delighted to learn that Queensland had agreed to join in, so pleased in fact that he was 'reconciled to the proposed alterations' and, despite personal feeling, sent a telegram of congratulations to Reid.¹⁵⁸ Reid, however, appears not to have been so generous.

As well as making promises to Walker, Reid had told G. H. Greene of Iandra that both he and Walker would be appointed to the Legislative Council of New South Wales when positions were vacant. Walker reacted to this with a sceptical 'Nous Verrons'.¹⁵⁹ When Reid failed in the attempt to pass the Enabling Bill for another referendum through the Legislative Council, he was permitted to appoint fourteen new members to the upper house in order to break the deadlock. Speculation as to who these might be was rife. *Truth*, the paper whose content so belied its name, considered possible candidates, naming Walker and attacking him as 'a hide bound Tory and a fanatical Federalist to whom popular freedom is of less moment than rates of interest and bank balances'.¹⁶⁰ The statement was a gross distortion, but Reid was apparently influenced by the reaction, and by the opinion of his Labour Party supporters. News of the appointments was 'leaked' at the Union Club Ball on 7 April 1899; Walker was not among them. His friends G. H. Green and Richard Jones and a number of others were appointed, and Walker was embarrassed at having to tell those who confidently expected he would be among the new Councillors that he was not. It came as a severe shock to many of his acquaintance; Mackellar considered it 'a public scandal'.¹⁶¹ It was a vindictive act, almost a public slap in the face. Walker was justifiably annoyed, considering Reid 'the Arch opportunist of Australia'.

When I look back at the treatment of me at Adelaide re the Finance Committee, again on the new Finance Committee after the Sydney session...and subsequently when telling *me* that I had *deserted* him...he having deserted his colleagues on the Convention... I am surprised that I have so long refrained from publicly exposing him—but I can say honestly that I have endeavoured to subordinate private displeasure to the good of the great question of Federation.¹⁶²

Walker was in fact following his own advice: 'Let us not spoil a good cause by unjust and unnecessary recriminations', written so many years before in regard to

¹⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 67, 17 July 1898.

¹⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 67, 22 July 1898.

¹⁵⁸ Walker diary, vol. 68, 3 February 1899.

¹⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 67, 15 August 1898.

¹⁶⁰ Cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 68, 23 March 1899.

¹⁶¹ Walker diary, vol. 68, 7 April 1899.

¹⁶² Walker diary, vol. 68, 8 April 1899.

the separation question in Queensland.¹⁶³ He took comfort that at least he would not enter the Legislative Council with 'a "bunch" of Labour men'.¹⁶⁴

The Bill having been approved by Parliament, a referendum was again held. On this occasion success was virtually guaranteed, as Reid was now supporting the cause and the outcome depended on a straight majority. The campaign, which the Walkers helped to finance, Eadith giving 100 guineas, opened on 1 May 1899 with speeches by Reid and Barton. It was almost an anticlimax after the earlier campaign. On the night of victory, party members gathered to assess the results. Reid, Barton, Wise and O'Connor, now hailed as 'The Federal Leaders' by the press, addressed the crowd amid rejoicing. Walker was forgotten in the euphoria and, characteristically, made himself scarce.¹⁶⁵ Queensland, however, remained undecided. Walker, still retaining a strong bond with the colony, was anxious that it should not be excluded from the Commonwealth. In succeeding weeks, he wrote articles in the *Queenslander*, the *Brisbane Courier* and *Progress*, in which he urged Queenslanders to vote for the Bill.¹⁶⁶ Previously, on a trip to Thursday Island, he spoke to the Separation Council of Central Queensland at Rockhampton, urging them to vote for Federation first and allow separation to follow later.¹⁶⁷ He was pleased when Queenslanders voted to join the Commonwealth.¹⁶⁸ West Australia remained the only colony still to make a decision. Responding to a request from the Australasian Federation League at Kalgoorlie, the Executive of the Australasian Federation League of New South Wales asked Walker, who was about to depart on a tour of Western Australia with Richard Teece of the A.M.P. Society, to speak at the mining towns of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie.¹⁶⁹ He was nervous at speaking, but found it an amusing experience; one of the other speakers was Mr Vale,

...a regular stump orator and I think he got most of the applause. Once or twice he got impatient at the length of my remarks and used to say to me in a stage whisper, 'Give another fellow a show'! At last I did!¹⁷⁰

However, he discovered that the enthusiasm for Federation at Kalgoorlie was not echoed closer to the coast; attending the opening of new Municipal Chambers and the agricultural show at Newcastle, 64 miles from Perth, he found every speech anti-Federationist. It was not until August 1900 that he announced in his diary: 'News today... West Australia to join the Commonwealth'.¹⁷¹ The task, however, had only begun; Federation had yet to survive in practice.

Clark has suggested that the Federation Fathers had some kind of secret agenda to foster employer or middle class interests. No evidence of such a desire can be found in Walker's papers. His interest can be seen to have been longstanding,

¹⁶³ *Cleveland Bay Express*, Townsville, 28 July 1866.

¹⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 68, 8 April 1899. In other places he is always careful to define that by 'Labour men' he meant members of the Labour Party, not men of the working class generally.

¹⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 69, 20 June 1899.

¹⁶⁶ *Queenslander*, Brisbane, 1 September 1899; *Courier*, Brisbane, 8 August 1899; *Progress*, Brisbane, 26 August 1899.

¹⁶⁷ *Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, 25 June 1898; Walker diary, vol. 67, 24 June 1898.

¹⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 70, 2 September 1899.

¹⁶⁹ Minute Book of the Australasian Federation League of New South Wales, 4 September 1899.

¹⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 70, 7 October 1899.

¹⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 71, 1 August 1900.

motivated by strong Australian nationalistic sentiment spurred to action by determination to avert future depression and encourage economic growth, the remedy for which he saw in Federation of the colonies.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Clark, *op. cit.*, vol. 5.

Had Walker been less dedicated and conscientious, he might have abandoned politics with the achievement of Federation. He was 59 years old, an age now considered nearing retirement; the cause he had espoused nearly thirty years previously was won, his youthful desire to participate in politics fulfilled. He was, moreover, 'rather disgusted with my small experience of public men and public life'.¹ Walker, however, was of the breed that considered no duty done until the task was complete; the Federation had yet to be seen to work in practice, its existence guaranteed for the future. He attended the meeting to organise the 'Freetrade Party' in December 1899, and in February 1900 was elected to represent New South Wales at the Australian Freetrade Conference held in Sydney. There he played the part of conciliator, helping to negotiate a compromise among the factions. While maintaining as an ultimate goal abolition of duties on all goods except narcotics and stimulants, they agreed that under the existing circumstances they would support all candidates 'who pledged to keep the Federal tariff as low and restricted as possible, while opposing all duties giving protection'.²

In the meantime Walker had crossed swords with a future Senate colleague, Josiah Symon. In 1899 at a meeting in O'Connor's chambers, Bruce Smith, Dugald Thompson, Atlee Hunt and Walker decided to make a collection to assist Mrs Barton and her family, since Barton had spent so much time on the Federal campaign that his law practice had suffered severely—they believed that it would not be proper to offer such a testimonial to Barton himself. Walker and J. S. Brunton were appointed Treasurers and over £1000 was collected, subscriptions coming from all over Australia. The letter asking Symon to contribute arrived at his office while he was away so his clerk sent £50. On his return, Symon was angry; he wrote, strongly disapproving that 'the hat had been going round for Barton'. Walker returned his cheque.³

He disagreed with Symon again a few months later. Throughout the Convention he had opposed the limitation of the right of appeal from the High Court of Australia to the Privy Council. A number of the banking fraternity in Sydney and others, apparently mainly in the legal profession such as Sir Frederick Darley, also believed right of appeal should be retained. This was Section 74 of the Constitution to which the British Prime Minister Joseph Chamberlain strongly objected. On 17 April 1900, coinciding with the Premiers Conference and at a time when Deakin, Charles Cameron Kingston, Barton and Phillip Fysh were confronting Chamberlain on the subject, Walker wrote letters to the *Daily Telegraph* and other Australian

¹ Walker diary, vol. 71, 2 June 1900.

² *The Beacon*, Melbourne, 1 March 1900.

³ Josiah Symon to James Thomas Walker, 15 December 1899 and 21 January 1900, Symon papers, National Library; James Thomas Walker to Josiah Symon, 20 December 1899, Walker MSS.

newspapers urging retention of appeal to the Privy Council. Symon considered this disloyal and wrote to Walker and to the newspapers saying so very plainly. Walker pointed out that he had never agreed with the majority, and the incident appears to have blown over as events in Britain settled the matter.⁴ It seems there was no collusion between Walker and the Sydney group and Chamberlain, but Deakin and Barton may well have considered a renewal of agitation in Australia at that time, a threat to their negotiations. Symon certainly viewed it as disloyal. This may explain in part why, in *The Federal story*, Deakin gives much credit to four out of the five Convention delegates who carried on the fight for Federation in 1898, but omits the name of Walker, despite his having worked equally as hard.⁵

When the British Government finally agreed to formation of the Commonwealth, a number of his friends urged him to consider nominating for the Senate; he was most influenced by his best friend Reginald J. Black and R. E. O'Connor who told him that he was seriously thinking of standing and that Walker should stand.⁶ Janette, however, was opposed to his continuing in political life and in November he was taken seriously ill for the first time in his life since 1859.⁷ He was still uncertain when he attended the opening of the Freetrade and Liberal Association campaign in December; his views were moderate, agreeing with those of Bruce Smith who, though a Freetrader, was 'not forgetful that a *modus vivendi* must be discovered if the Commonwealth is to progress harmoniously'. In other words Walker could see that concessions might have to be made in order to achieve a workable government.⁸ His views were consistent with the stand he had taken at the Federal Convention and earlier.

Reid virtually appointed himself as leader of the Freetraders and embarked on an interstate electioneering campaign without consulting the Association; at a rowdy meeting a few days later he was severely criticised for his cavalier manner, but retained the leadership.⁹ Nine days later, after Lyne had refused his invitation, the new Governor General invited Edmund Barton to become the first Prime Minister of Australia; Walker heartily approved.

The new century arrived with the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. A week of festivities followed: a Military Tattoo, a Grand Review of over 9000 troops from many parts of the British Empire, an Aquatic Festival followed by a pyrotechnical display, a State Banquet, and the National Thanksgiving for inauguration of the Commonwealth.¹⁰ Walker attended all celebrations. He was requested to become President of the organising committee of the Young People's Industrial Exhibition to be staged in conjunction with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York for the opening of Federal Parliament.¹¹ Nothing suggests that he

⁴ Symon to Walker, 21 May 1900 and 5 June 1900, Symon papers, op. cit.; Walker diary, vol. 71, 17 April 1900.

⁵ Alfred Deakin (ed. J. A. La Nauze), *The Federal story*, Melbourne, 1963, p. 99.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 71, 2 June 1900, 4 June 1900 and 30 July 1900.

⁷ Walker diary, vol. 72, 23 November 1900.

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 72, 10 December 1900.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 72, 14 December 1900.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 71, 1 January 1901 to 10 January 1901.

¹¹ The exhibition featured examples of schoolwork, craft and trade work, as well as hobbies of the children of New South Wales; prizes were awarded in all categories.

accepted this invitation to further political ambition, though he may have thought it an excellent opportunity to ensure favourable publicity. His major motivation was clearly his long-standing interest in encouraging young people to improve their knowledge and skills; any personal publicity was a by-product. He undertook his duties enthusiastically and the exhibition was extremely successful.

By this time he had received requisitions from Toomah, Parramatta, Windsor and West Maitland to nominate for the Senate, but still he dithered.¹² Finally on 22 January 1901 a deputation headed by Sir George Dibbs presented him with a requisition with 6597 signatures. Confronted with such overwhelming support, Walker capitulated though not without some trepidation: 'The Rubicon having thus been crossed, I suppose I must look forward to the usual amount of electoral abuse for my temerity. So be it'.¹³

His strong sense of duty would have made it difficult indeed for Walker to ignore a deputation headed by one as prominent as Dibbs and a requisition endorsed by so many. The twin virtues of loyalty and duty, instilled from childhood, were the main influences on his agreement to stand for election; to Montie in England he wrote:

Your mother is not very happy at the idea of my standing for the Senate and I believe will be quite philosophical (as I shall be) if I am defeated. On the other hand having been in the convention I do not see that I could decently do otherwise.¹⁴

He presented his nomination in March; the signatures of those endorsing it provide an indication of the breadth of his support.¹⁵

Clearly Walker did not put himself forward primarily in a crusade to defeat the cause of Labour. He saw himself as extending his work to establish Federation, ensuring that the Commonwealth of Australia remained united; in a later interview he stated clearly

The idea I had in mind when I entered politics was to further the Federal cause... There are some who may smile at the politician's assurance of disinterestedness, but I am no self-seeking or professional politician. I have tried to do my best all the way.¹⁶

He was one of seven of the ten who had attended the Convention to nominate for election.¹⁷ His address to the electors appeared in the morning papers on 4 February. It was judiciously worded, making no rash promises; he clearly announced his primary loyalty to the Commonwealth, hoping that the electors 'will not expect me to take a narrow view...to assist in building a structure that is

¹² Walker diary, vol. 72, 12 January 1901.

¹³ Walker diary, vol. 72, 22 January 1901.

¹⁴ James Thomas Walker to Egmont P. Walker, 29 January 1901, Walker MSS.

¹⁵ Samuel McCaughey (M.L.C., grazier, and one of Australia's wealthiest pastoralists); William P. Martin (wool buyer), W. J. MacGeorge (ex-banker and an old boy of the Edinburgh Institution), Robert B. Wilkinson (stock and station agent), E. P. Simpson (solicitor), S. E. Laidley (coal mine proprietor), Henry S. Darley (A.D.C. to Sir F. M. Darley—Darley was at the time Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales), Harry I. W. Dean (hall porter, Union Club), C. Herbert Turner (clerk), J. A. Fairfax (newspaper proprietor).

¹⁶ anon., 'Politics as a profession—Is there anything in it?', *Sunday Times*, Sydney, 29 December 1906.

¹⁷ The others were Barton, Lyne, O'Connor, Reid, McMillan and Wise. Brunner, Abbott and Carruthers did not nominate. Of the seven who nominated, only Wise was defeated.

intended to last for all time'.¹⁸ He made his position as a Freetrader clear, and stated his support for federalising railways. A major promise was to ensure an early choice of a site for the Federal capital. It was really rather innocuous.

Reid opened the campaign that evening at the Protestant Hall to a tremendous reception though Walker felt 'his remarks were wanting in refinement; some of the ladies evidently thought so'.¹⁹ Walker posted copies of his own address throughout the State, and attended electioneering meetings in Sydney in the next three weeks but the unity of the Freetrade 'bunch' was threatened when it appeared that Sam Smith, a Labour Freetrader, might be elected to their Senate ticket. Gould and Walker, already elected, favoured the conservative Edward Pulsford and planned secession; Walker wrote Reid that he

...could not join the 'bunch' if it included a Labour man (meaning of course a member of the Labour political party).²⁰

As Pulsford was in the final 'bunch' and Edward Millen's name was substituted for Smith's, the Gould-Walker representations must be adjudged successful.

Gould and Walker took their campaign to the country.²¹ Walker was nervous; throughout his political career he remained a nervous speaker, writing to Sissie even in 1906: 'I do dislike public speechifying and am always relieved when the ordeal comes to an end'.²² He did not, however, consider abandoning what he conceived to be his duty in standing for Federal Parliamentary election. He noted: 'I cannot say I felt at my ease'.²³

They encountered little opposition. The campaign was carried on for the most part in a chivalrous and tolerant manner. At Tenterfield, where the Walkers were so well known, they received a warm welcome; in fact, they were received well throughout the New England Tableland and Northern Rivers districts.²⁴ At Singleton they were in Gould's home country; attendance at the meeting was large and 'a better reception we could not have wished'. One local newspaper, however, was not overly impressed, referring to them and the Chairman as 'three dry dogs'.²⁵

At Goulburn they received an overwhelming reception; a crowd of six to seven hundred gathered in front of the White Horse Hotel so they were forced to speak from the hotel verandah. Walker, conscious that his voice was neither loud nor carrying, was surprised that they managed quite well and ended with a friendly

¹⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 February 1901, in Walker, Newspaper cuttings, vol. 15.

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 72, 4 February 1901.

²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 73, 1 March 1901. A copy of the letter is in the same volume at 31 March 1901.

²¹ Sir Albert John Gould was born at Maitland, son of John Morton Gould, solicitor, and Jeanette Jessie Maitland. A solicitor with offices in Singleton and Sydney, he was a prominent figure in Singleton. He was also one of the developers of the Great Cobar Copper Mining Company, and in Sydney, Chairman of the Sydney Electric Light and Power Supply and a director of the City Bank of Sydney. Not a particularly wealthy man, Gould was a dedicated Freemason and a devout Anglican. He agreed with Walker on many political issues, particularly in opposing 'White Australia' policy; it seems that his opposition, like that of Walker, was honestly on humanitarian grounds.

²² James Thomas Walker to Emily P. Walker, 14 February 1906, Walker MSS.

²³ Walker diary, vol. 73, 1 March 1901.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 73, 9 March 1901 &ff.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 73, 8 March 1901. The newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, is after 17 March 1901.

'shout'.²⁶ Their reception in remainder of the Western and Southern regions, if never attaining the enthusiasm of Goulburn, was encouraging.²⁷ On the evening of his sixtieth birthday, he left for Dubbo to discover that, through an error in arrangements, they were competing with Barton at both Dubbo and Bathurst. They decided to allow Barton to speak first at Dubbo and to abandon their meeting at Bathurst the following night. Both attended Barton's meeting; reciprocating their generosity, in the course of his speech he 'made very kindly allusions to us and told his audience that our meeting would commence about 9 o'clock'.²⁸ It was a nice example of the chivalrous attitude of a number of the politicians of the time; Barton also invited them to share his special carriage on the train returning to Bathurst. When on 26 March the Freetrade candidates addressed a rally at Sydney, Walker spoke only briefly but was reassured to receive congratulations from several friends.

By the evening of the final rally on 28 March he estimated he had travelled 2711 miles by train and buggy on the election campaign. The meeting had almost a festive air; a band played between each speech, ending the proceedings with 'Scots wae hae', 'God Save the King' and 'Auld Lang Syne'. Reid presided, receiving a tremendous ovation. Walker appears to have gained confidence though he remained an extremely nervous speaker; delivering his most emotional speech of the campaign, he compared the election on the following day to the Battle of Bannockburn, hoping that Reid would be their 'Bruce'. Never one to hold a grudge, he supported Reid strongly. At the finish Walker was overwhelmed at the reaction; 'to my surprise I was again congratulated by not a few and found myself shaking hands with people whose names I did not know'.²⁹

He was, however, reconciled to his fate at the polls on 29 March, and sceptical when the earliest results showed him at the top of the poll; 'I daresay in the morning the order will be greatly changed. I am as cool as a cucumber and not the least elated'.³⁰ The situation did not change; Walker remained at the head of the poll—a remarkable feat indeed. Congratulations flowed in from throughout Australia as his many friends heard the news; a telegram of congratulation from Alfred Deakin addressed him for the first time as 'Senator Walker'.³¹ The final figures show him leading the poll by a very clear margin.³² He was pleased that he had attracted 'a most conglomerate vote', drawing support from both socialists and protectionists as well as other sections of the community, though he gives no account of the statistics on which he based his assessment. He noted: 'I look upon that as a compliment to my not being a politician'.³³ Though elated he was disappointed at the result in Queensland where his old friend William Villiers Brown was defeated.

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 73, 11 March 1901.

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 73, 12–19 March 1901.

²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 73, 20 March 1901.

²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 73, 28 March 1901.

³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 73, 29 March 1901.

³¹ Walker diary, vol. 73, 2 April 1901.

³² Walker 79800; Millen 75010; Gould 74253; O'Connor 72858; Neild 70563; Pulsford 70468.

³³ Walker diary, vol. 73, 21 April 1901.

Reaction to Walker's candidacy and victory was mixed. The *Inverell Times* believed:

It is men of Mr Walker's mental calibre and liberal mindedness that we wish to see vested with our national legislative powers...although he is a professed freetrader, we have such confidence in his political integrity...he is a man of such a liberal mind that he will never attempt to champion his free trade views any further than he can justly do without injury to the nation... Mr Walker is a man above all others that is singularly competent to fill the position of a builder of the nation.³⁴

Another paper averred: 'Such men will always subordinate party feeling to the broader interests of national policy and this is exactly what is wanted...'³⁵ *Truth*, whose proprietor John Norton had stood for the Senate election, predictably disagreed. During the campaign Norton branded Walker a 'political nincompoop', playing on his lack of experience and on his essentially un-political approach.³⁶ After the election Norton, who was not elected, continued his attack with allegations that Walker 'did not even pretend...he intended to take the duties of a Senator seriously', and that he wanted to 'stick to his New South Wales directorships'.³⁷ Other allegations claimed that Walker only wanted the position so that he could say he had been a member of the first Senate, and that he had only been elected because of support from the Bank of New South Wales and the A.M.P. Society.³⁸

All of these allegations are demonstrably untrue. As illustrated above, he was not particularly keen to nominate for election; having done so, it was not in his nature to take the position other than seriously. He resigned two of his directorships and the Presidency of the Bank of New South Wales after his election, but managed to fulfil his other commitments with the aid of an excellent memory and that meticulous discipline to which he had been trained from school days.³⁹ Regarding support from the Bank of New South Wales, Sir Normand MacLaurin joined the Board in 1900; MacLaurin had been one of the most entrenched and conservative opponents of Federation. Dr Mackellar, who replaced Walker as President of the Bank in 1900, was a dedicated Protectionist. Others, too, were opposed to Walker's views. One has therefore only to look at the composition of the Board to discover that he received scant support there.

The A.M.P. Society was different in that the Board was decidedly pro-Federation; members in various states included Sir William Zeal, Alfred Deakin, Sir Phillip Fysh, Sir Joshua Abbott and N. E. Lewis. All, in some measure, probably benefited from their membership. The regular election of directors in an institution with such a wide-spread membership meant that their names had been widely known to a fair percentage of the population for some years before Federation; they had therefore a

³⁴ *Inverell Times*, Inverell, N.S.W., 13 February 1901.

³⁵ Walker, Newspaper cuttings, vol. 15.

³⁶ *Truth*, 7 March 1901.

³⁷ *Truth*, 7 April 1901.

³⁸ These accusations were made in newspaper cuttings, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 73, 4 April 1901.

³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 72, 4 February 1901; and vol. 73, 10 June 1901 and 30 June 1901.

long-standing and proven image as experienced and trustworthy businessmen. No candidates in the 1901 election, or any following election, received monetary support; as Walker pointed out: 'The by-laws of the society forbid donations from its funds being given for any outside objects not even excepting charitable institutions'.⁴⁰

Having won a seat in the Senate, Walker, a Liberal for most of his adult life—even branded a Radical—was now considered a Conservative and labelled in the radical press, a Tory. Moreover he was a member of a party led by Reid whom he distrusted, in opposition to Barton, for whom Walker had the highest respect. Both groups were in fact Liberal, with (as Deakin noted) 'little to distinguish their politics, and even on that score the practical difference is magnified deliberately for party purposes'.⁴¹ In the evolutionary period of Australian political parties, old terms gained new meaning. Though Walker might be considered conservative when opposed to the Labour Party, it is arguable that he could be labelled a tory. His review of Burke's *Colonial Gentry*, written under the nom-de-plume 'Kingslander' and published in the *Queenslander* in 1892, was mildly satirical:

...whether the work when completed will be classed as a history or as an historical romance remains to be seen... In Burke's *Landed Gentry*, one knows that county gentry are intended to be historified but it will be no easy matter to draw a line where so-called 'colonial gentry' form the staple of the work... These are not the times, nor is Australia the place, for dwelling too much on ancestry, although in its way, it is a very good thing and not to be despised.⁴²

He pointed out the racist tone of the publication which excluded distinguished Hebrew colonists, noting that hereditary aristocracy in China and Europe resulted in distinguished men 'ennobling their descendants, many of whom prove to be nincompoops and blackguards and consequently much more hurtful to the community than any number of deceased relatives could be'. He concluded: 'Who serves his country well has no need of ancestors'.⁴³ While attending vice-regal occasions, and sometimes finding them enjoyable, he was not greatly impressed or deferential. Eadith Walker's regular demands for invitations to be sent to Governors, Governors-General and other dignitaries to visit the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital were not appreciated; 'Personally I find this sort of thing a bore!'.⁴⁴ Eadith, though kindhearted and generous to Walker and his family, was a snob. Her wealth was legendary and 'Yaralla' was a palatial residence where she entertained royally with lavish balls and garden parties. Walker did not always agree with her lifestyle; 'sometimes I pity her with her peculiar disposition—so full of prejudices and little pretentiousnesses'.⁴⁵

Although he lived at 'Rosemount', one of the grand mansions of Woollahra, it was to placate Janette and his elder daughter Sissie, rather than to please himself; Janette was indeed the 'great silent force' behind the continuing drive to maintain

⁴⁰ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXIV, 12 September 1906.

⁴¹ Deakin, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴² *Queenslander*, 20 February 1892.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Walker diary, vol. 90, 12 May 1909.

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 54, 1 September 1893.

symbols of status.⁴⁶ Though he enjoyed the world of finance, he was always aware of the transitory nature of life and material possessions; on Ralph Gore's death he noted: 'His title and his comparative wealth have scarcely brought him comfort'.⁴⁷ On other occasions he remarked: 'Mere wealth is not an unmixed blessing'.⁴⁸ He was aware of class distinctions, and of his own place in what he called the respectable middle class; he observed polite deference to those he considered above him, but it was not in his nature to grovel, as his relationship with James Tyson illustrated:

I like the man's honesty but as to 'kow-towing' to him, I would never do it, nor to do him justice, would he either like or expect it.⁴⁹

However, Walker kept such critical opinions to himself and seldom discussed his own attitudes to wealth, certainly not in public. Journalists and political contemporaries tended to judge him on position and background, frequently hearsay, rather than on knowledge of the man himself. *The Bulletin*, often highly critical of his political views, as late as 1909 confused him with his deceased cousin Thomas.⁵⁰

Considering himself a Whig, he remained Liberal in his views, trending towards mild socialism. As one contemporary opinion noted:

Even the opponents [of the Labour Party]...classing themselves as Liberals, include few who are individualists of the old school. Practically all parties are socialistic in the sense that each is prepared to utilise collective effort as against reliance upon the individual, though differing radically as to degree.⁵¹

Walker understood the works of Henry George and Edward Bellamy as well as most politicians of the time, and found Christian Socialism a 'beautiful ideal' but believed it unattainable.⁵² He did not believe that the aims of the Labour Party were truly socialistic, particularly when they ignored the brotherhood of man by discriminating against races other than white-skinned. An Empire man, he supported Australian involvement in the Boer War, forming part of the organising committee to send the Australian Bushman's Contingent, but was not excessively jingoistic. He did not, for instance, encourage his nephew Lionel to enlist, advising him against so doing as his father's health was precarious.⁵³

To members of the Labour Party, he represented 'Capitalism', in particular the hated banking sector. He was frequently under attack. *The Argus* quoted one of the Labour Senators who said that Walker 'was the descendant of the original Conservative who walked around on the day of the Creation imploring God to preserve chaos'.⁵⁴ Walker accepted this in good part, firing off a salvo of his own which captured the attention of the *Daily Telegraph*:

⁴⁶ Cannon, *Life in the cities*, op. cit., p. 320.

⁴⁷ Walker diary, vol. 41, 18 October 1887.

⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 54, 6 September 1893.

⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 35, 30 May 1884.

⁵⁰ *Bulletin*, Sydney, 30 September 1909; Walker diary, vol. 91, 2 October 1909.

⁵¹ *The round table: A quarterly review of the politics of the British Empire*, vol. 1, no. 2., December 1910, p. 187.

⁵² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. IV, 20 October 1904.

⁵³ Wise advice as William Henry Walker died within the year. Walker diary, vol. 70, 19 December 1899.

⁵⁴ Undated cutting from *Argus*, Melbourne, in Walker diary, vol. 77, 2 June 1903.

Few men in the Chamber are more popular than Senator Walker, and this is due as much to his charming candour, his absolute indifference to the diplomatic subtleties of political artfulness and to his kindly nature and his unaffected sincerity. 'I have a great personal regard for all the members of the Labour Party', he said, 'but I hate their politics'.⁵⁶

In the year Australia became a nation, Walker turned 60 but he continued to work with a will. The Federal capital was temporarily (for twenty-seven years as it turned out) in Melbourne; he commuted each week between Sydney and Melbourne, catching the night train on Tuesday to commence sittings on Wednesday, returning to Sydney by the overnight train on Friday. In Sydney he continued to fulfil his multifarious business commitments, maintaining an awesome schedule of engagements, while working conscientiously on his Senate papers. Though he retained much of his youthful impetuosity, experience had taught him the error of hasty judgements. He saw himself as an elder statesman contributing the weight of his undoubted knowledge and experience to debate which, in the Senate, he hoped might be conducted on the gentlemanly rules under which he had enjoyed debate in Rockhampton in his youth.

The opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament was a memorable occasion indeed. Walker found the Duke and Duchess of York disappointing—'somewhat stiff in bowing'—but was impressed more favourably on shaking hands with the Duke; he did not enjoy the reception at Government House, though Janette and Sissie had another excellent view of the Duke and Duchess.⁵⁶ Walker himself was more interested in getting down to business in the Senate chamber.

The first Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth was characterised by the quality of its members; as Russel Ward commented, it was 'probably of a higher calibre than any that have succeeded it'.⁵⁷ All had a keen awareness of the task before them; they had to forge the ties that would make the Constitution work and effectively create a new nation. Members of the Senate were determined to play an active role in nation-building; Higgs noted:

I appreciate the desire of the Honourable members to get to business because Upper Houses are not deemed to be bodies which are anxious to do business in a rapid way. I daresay it will come as a surprise to those who have occupied positions in other Parliaments that such a feeling exists...⁵⁸

In the House of Representatives, Protectionists held power, and the Labour Party had achieved an effective representation, but Freetraders were in the majority in the Senate. The Freetraders were, it seems, the least organised of the three groups. Both the disunity of the Freetraders and his own lack of political experience were emphasised in Walker's first speech. O'Connor, perhaps making his own political point, thanked him for his positive statement of a platform, apparently thinking that he was the leader of the Freetraders in the Senate. He commented: 'We are glad to know the attitude of the party...' Walker corrected him; he was not speaking

⁵⁶ Undated cutting from *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, in Walker diary, vol. 77, 2 June 1903.

⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 73, 7 May 1901, 9 May 1901 and 11 May 1901.

⁵⁷ Russel Ward, *A nation for a continent*, Melbourne, 1977, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. I, 22 May 1901.

for the party—‘...we are united on the principle of freetrade. I will never give up my independence on other matters’.⁵⁹

Through all of the changing patterns of party alliances and successive ministries, Walker remained consistent. When Deakin succeeded Barton as Prime Minister, though of the opposition party, he welcomed him generously as the right man for the job.

Le Roi est mort
Vive le roi
Such is life

...in your case as “Mr Prime Minister” the right thing has happened and I heartily congratulate you although I fear in the Legislative Halls we will continue to take opposite sides. However so far I have never found my political differences interfere with private friendships and ‘so must it ever be...’⁶⁰

In the meantime in 1902 he had returned to Britain for the first time since he left in 1862, taking with him the whole family apart from his eldest son, Archie. The trip was planned to meet the twins who had been completing their education in England, and accompany them home via the United States, and he was to represent Australia at the coronation of King Edward VII. However, the ceremony was postponed owing to the King’s illness, so Walker never wore the Court Dress he had obtained for the occasion. It was an opportunity for the Walkers to show their children their respective birthplaces in Scotland and Ireland, and to introduce them to surviving members of their families. Walker, too, took the opportunity to visit Port Sunlight.⁶¹ Their return was marred by news of the death of Archie in New Guinea.⁶² Janette was devastated and never recovered from Archie’s death, but Walker, while deeply distressed and sympathising with his wife, characteristically plunged himself into the panacea of work.

He was unhappy when Labour strengthened its position in the election of 1903, though Gray, Neild and Pulsford (Freetrade Senators) were elected. He remarked: ‘...it looks as if Government and opposition will require to coalesce against the State socialists and leave the Tariff as it is for the present’.⁶³ This was an early recognition of a logical step in party formation at which Deakin appears to have balked in his distrust of Reid; Walker was destined to be disappointed. He was also disappointed in Deakin, who chose to form an alliance with the Labour Party. That Deakin was wooing the Labour Party became obvious in March 1904 when Walker hastened to Melbourne to support Millen for Chairman of Committees, but found that Millen was not standing, leaving the position unopposed to Higgs of the Labour Party. Walker was philosophical;

...it is evident the Government want to placate the Labour Party. There is a good deal to be said in favour of a Senator from another state being appointed...as the additional income may enable him to bring his family to Melbourne.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ James Thomas Walker to Alfred Deakin, 26 September 1903, Deakin papers.

⁶¹ Model village for workers.

⁶² He was a District Officer in the Mambare District. He died of blackwater fever and was buried at Samarai.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 78, 16 December 1903.

Deakin's Ministry was defeated on 21 April 1904 and John C. Watson, leader of the parliamentary Labour Party, formed a government. Reid called all opposition members to Melbourne, but Walker was ill and sent his apologies. He was becoming frustrated at the waste of time.

We shall really do nothing in the Senate as was practically the case last week, and I suspect Reid only wants a free hand to join a coalition with the Deakin-Turner party, sinking the fiscal issue during the present parliament which expires in 1906.⁶⁵

Of Watson, he noted he 'spoke modestly, clearly and forcibly and made a favourable impression'.⁶⁶ By this time the Freetrade Party were better organised; Walker was referring to the weekly meetings of the Party as 'Caucus'. At the meeting of 19 May 1904 he noted that hopes of a coalition were vanishing for the time being. Reid, however, was given *carte blanche* to negotiate with Deakin but Walker remarked: '...it does not look healthy for consummation of a coalition but by next week things may appear differently'.⁶⁷

He presided at a special joint meeting of members of the Australian Freetraders and Protectionists two weeks later at which the opponents of coalition were defeated.⁶⁸ Two months later Watson's Government was defeated and on 17 August, Reid formed a coalition administration, though Deakin refused to join; Walker preferred to give the Reid-McLean ministry 'independent support' as he 'was not going to swallow my free-trade principles'—though he does not define exactly what he meant by this comment.⁶⁹ At the same time he acknowledged generously the abilities of the Labour Party Ministry:

I am no admirer as you, Mr President, know, of the Labour Party; but the late Prime Minister and the Vice-President of the Executive Council discharged their official duties admirably. I think the record of the Labour Government goes to show that the Labour Party has sufficient ability among them to conduct an Administration as well, probably, as could the members of any other party.⁷⁰

It was in a sense an apology for his previously held view that the entry of Labour Party members into Parliament would lower the tone of the house. It illustrates well Walker's willingness to judge impartially and to change his mind when given ample proof that he was incorrect.

Despite his independence, his obvious sincerity earned Walker the respect of the majority of his colleagues. He was criticised for refusing to be political⁷¹, and for lack of imagination⁷², but even his harshest critics were forced to admit his sincerity and seriousness. His closest allies were Gould and James Macfarlane, a Tasmanian Senator; they were known as 'the MacWalker Party' to their fellow Senators. As

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 78, 16 March 1904.

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 79, 23 April 1904.

⁶⁶ Walker diary, vol. 79, 17 May 1904.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 79, 19–20 May 1904.

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 79, 7 June 1904.

⁶⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXI, 24 August 1904.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 73, 15 June 1901

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 75, 21 February 1902.

time passed, some members of the Labour Party recognised his sincerity, kindness and knowledge; James Ronald, a Presbyterian Minister with early associations with Gladstone's party in Britain, joined him at afternoon tea in the Refreshment Rooms. Walker remarked: 'A Labour Member!'.⁷³ Of Henry Bournes Higgins, he wrote: '...a very radical man but privately an exceedingly pleasant and courteous acquaintance...'⁷⁴ He particularly liked David O'Keefe; on his defeat in 1906 Walker and Gould took him to lunch, sincerely regretting his loss to the Senate. Walker was highly critical of very few; he reckoned the most generally disliked in the Chamber was a fellow Freetrader, John Clemons from Tasmania.⁷⁵ Though he remained on reasonably friendly terms with Symon, he did not like him. Opposing him in debate on Clause 2 of the Sugar Bonus Bill, Walker remarked: '...his flattery is too apparent, and as Senator Pulsford remarked privately, reminds one of a serpent licking his victim before swallowing him!'.⁷⁶ His most offensive and rudest detractor was Thomas Givens, but he was in a decided minority. As time passed, although he became obviously more confident in debate, Walker did not cultivate a high political profile; he found more colourful characters such as King O'Malley 'a veritable but amusing windbag', an 'extraordinary "Wild man of the Woods"'.⁷⁷ In debate he abhorred long speeches on points of order. He was not wont to speak merely for the sake of being heard but only when he had something to contribute. Often his speeches were backed by quotations or statistics from relevant documents; sometimes one feels that these were over-lengthy, but this stemmed from an earnest desire to present the best case. He never spoke if unsure of his facts. Givens mounted a particularly offensive attack on bankers and banks in the Chamber in September 1902; Walker was certain that he was incorrect, but would not be drawn into debate until he had checked his facts in the *Banking and Insurance Review*. He then presented Givens with a copy of the material pointing out his error.⁷⁸ He was a dry, sometimes uninteresting speaker who willingly admitted his shortcomings: 'Senator Dobson has said a great many things which I had intended to say, and perhaps in a much better way than I could have done'.⁷⁹ However, he was not without wit and humour; Stewart, debating the Pacific Island Labourers Bill in 1906, remarked: 'I know at one time in north Queensland, two out of every three adult males were coloured'. Walker interjected: 'There was a time when every adult male in Queensland was a blackfellow'.⁸⁰

By June 1905 Deakin was obviously no longer supporting the Reid-Maclean Ministry, and on June 25 he delivered the controversial Ballarat speech.⁸¹ On 4 July, the day on which Reid virtually engineered his own defeat, Deakin met with Walker and 'exchanged views', but Walker's diary does not enlarge further on the discussion. One must assume that Deakin was seeking his support, though it is

⁷³ Walker diary, vol. 77, 24 June 1903.

⁷⁴ Walker diary, vol. 79, 23 April 1904.

⁷⁵ Walker diary, vol. 84, 10 October 1906.

⁷⁶ Walker diary, vol. 77, 25 June 1903.

⁷⁷ Walker diary, vol. 79, 22 July 1904 and 25 July 1904.

⁷⁸ Walker diary, vol. 80, 24 September 1904.

⁷⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XVI, 11 September 1903.

⁸⁰ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXV, 26 September 1906.

⁸¹ Discussed at length in La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin*, op. cit., pp. 387-403.

most unlikely that Walker would support him in alliance with the Labour Party.⁸² That afternoon Deakin formed his second Ministry. On behalf of the opposition Walker congratulated members of the new Ministry in the Senate, using the occasion to deplore newspaper articles that unfairly attacked Reid. The paper in question was the *Age*, published by David Syme, a long-time supporter of Protection, though Walker did not name the paper in the Chamber.⁸³ His remarks were cheered on both sides of the house. He was apparently the only member of the Senate unconcerned enough politically to criticise a powerful newspaper in defence of one whom he did not admire greatly, but whom he would not see treated unjustly.⁸⁴

As the 1906 elections neared, Walker was again in two minds whether to nominate. Janette did not want him to stand, though the sincerity of her opposition must be questioned; she obviously enjoyed the prestige of being a Senator's wife and may well have used her eventual acquiescence to gain her own ends in the home. In addition Walker was somewhat disappointed by the lack of organisation within the Freetraders during the 1903 elections. He noted: 'The political labour party are so well organised that we must follow suit'.⁸⁵ When the Parliamentary Freetraders and the Australian Freetrade League had met in October 1903 to select candidates for the 1904 election, Walker was nominated to the Freetrade Electoral Organising Committee which held daily meetings in November, but he was not pleased

...with the stamp of new men coming out as candidates...mostly men who are standing for the £400 a year as far as I can judge with three exceptions.⁸⁶

Other members of the Committee appear not to have been as enthusiastic as Walker who, by December, was writing:

I am not at all pleased at the mismanagement of the Freetrade League owing to want of proper organisation in procuring friends. A few of us out of loyalty to the party are apparently expected to do much that is unreasonable. Everything is hurry-scurry and there is the greatest difficulty in procuring speakers as indeed there has been in getting suitable candidates... I can understand people retiring in disgust and giving politics a wide berth.⁸⁷

However, much to his surprise, Reid wanted him to stand as he 'carried influence in the Senate and although somewhat independent for party purposes that strengthened my influence in the country!'.⁸⁸ It was Reid's comments to Janette that may have persuaded her to change her mind. Walker was flattered and, though electioneering was a considerable strain at age 65, he continued to enjoy the hurly-burly of Senate debate and took a keen interest in the development of the country—so once again he agreed to stand for election. In March 1905 he had supported Reid in forming an Anti-Socialist League. They now campaigned under

⁸² Walker diary, vol. 82, 4 July 1905.

⁸³ Syme had been one of Deakin's strongest supporters, but had differed regarding alliance with the Reidites.

⁸⁴ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXV, 7 July 1905.

⁸⁵ Walker diary, vol. 77, 23 July 1903.

⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 78, 16 November 1903 and 27 November 1903.

⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 78, 7 December 1903.

⁸⁸ Walker diary, vol. 83, 21 April 1906.

this banner. It was not a wise decision politically; in the parliament of New South Wales, Reid had held power with the assistance of the Labour Party. That he was now campaigning as an Anti-Socialist, which seemed to many a euphemism for anti-Labour, engendered distrust; hecklers at election meetings used the position to advantage. Further, a large proportion of the electorate had no idea of the meaning of Socialism, let alone anti-Socialism and it was all too easy for radical papers to brand them anti-Australian.⁸⁹ The title suggested negative rather than positive forces and gave the impression that they were unsympathetic with workers, playing into the hands of their opponents. The Deakinites were perceived to be more liberal and the continuing schism between the two parties left both open to Labour attack.

The election of 1906 differed greatly from that of 1901. The euphoria of Federation had dissipated. Sectarianism played a greater roll with the Catholic Press supporting strongly the Labour Party, which, having scented success, was much better organised. Strong feeling existed in a number of New South Wales electorates that the Federal Politicians had not always acted in the best interests of the State.

The anti-Socialist campaign opened on 23 October with Reid reading the Anti-Socialist Party manifesto at a gathering of the Australian Democratic Union. The campaign for the Senate was launched on 29 October 1906. Walker, Gould and Millen were the anti-Socialist Senate candidates; the meeting with Dugald Thomson in the Chair was 'very lively, not to say "rowdy" with numerous interjections.'⁹⁰ Walker related with some satisfaction that it was attended by a number of women, of whom eight sat on the platform and the vote of thanks was seconded by Mrs Edwards, a novelty at political meetings of the period. Gould and Walker again campaigned together, sometimes accompanied by Millen; throughout November and December they visited centres west to Wagga Wagga, and the New England and Northern Rivers districts.⁹¹ Their campaign promises in general dwelt on matters that had not been settled in the first Parliamentary terms, notably the introduction of Old Age Pensions, the selection of a site in New South Wales for a federal capital and the inclusion of the Northern Territory in the Commonwealth. Walker also explained the functions of Senators urging electors to regard election of Senators as seriously as that of members of the House of Representatives. He was almost apologetic that the promises made in 1901 had not all been fulfilled, explaining the difficulties that had confronted the new Federal Parliament and the problems that had arisen because no government in power had possessed a clear majority in both houses. He pointed out that although the popular impression was that all liberal legislation came from the Labour Party, in fact most of such legislation had been effected irrespective of Labour members. The main planks of his platform were the need for old age pensions and settlement on the site for the Federal capital, but mainly the necessity of achieving a majority government; it was

⁸⁹ *Lismore Chronicle*, 27 November 1906.

⁹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 84, 29 October 1906; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 October 1906; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October 1906.

⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 85, 14 November 1906 to 10 December 1906.

a case of individual freedom versus caucus serfdom.⁹² More opposition was encountered than in the election of 1901. By this time the gentlemanly tone that had characterised the 1901 elections had dissipated; the Labour Party, better organised, stacked meetings with hecklers at a number of centres. At the Protestant Hall (Sydney) and at Dubbo and Glen Innes, Walker and his colleagues encountered very noisy crowds of the opposition, though he noted 'our people never disturb our opponents' meetings'.⁹³

On election day he was sanguine. Though polling better than Deakin's Liberals, the party did not poll well in the House of Representatives, losing three seats in New South Wales but gaining some seats in Queensland. The desired mandate to rule was not achieved though they continued in the majority in the Senate where Gould came in at the head of the poll in New South Wales with Walker second and Millen third. Once again Walker found himself accused of retaining his seat with the assistance of his business connections. He challenged Charles Gavan Duffy on some rather ambiguous statements he had made. Duffy apologised:

I did not mean that you had no other support [than financial managers]...you got 'considerable unsought support' from the great corporations with which you are well connected and I was far from meaning that you had not the requisite...ability and knowledge of men of experience of affairs to qualify you for the position.⁹⁴

That his political stand might represent the feelings of a large number of the electorate or that a high percentage of the votes he received might have been from the large number of electors who held him personally in affection and esteem because of his dedicated philanthropy and personal kindness in so many areas, was not apparently considered by the radical press and a number of his opponents. The ladies of Women's College, for instance, voted for him 'to a man'.⁹⁵

One senses that some of the urgency that had characterised debate in the first six years of Federal Parliament had diminished. The Federation was established, the Commonwealth Parliament had been made to work and the fragile fabric of 1901 not only remained intact but seemed assured of remaining so into the distant future. As Walker himself put it:

It is very pleasant to think that however much we may differ as to financial policy, and some other matters, a very kindly feeling is arising amongst the people of this country concerning Federation.⁹⁶

James Drake felt that the first five years had been 'the period of initiative, of life and energy. The rest has been a continuous tailing off'.⁹⁷ The concern that Walker had felt regarding the ability of the Labour Party to govern successfully was allayed; he appears to have realised that members of the Labour Party were more anxious to work within the established social and legislative framework than to

⁹² Campaign speeches were reported in a number of papers. This account relies heavily on *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October 1906; *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 23 November 1906; *Bega Budget*, 27 November 1906; and *Lismore Chronicle*, 27 November 1906.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 85, 8 December 1906.

⁹⁴ C. Gavan Duffy to James Thomas Walker, 4 January 1907, Walker MSS.

⁹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 84, 13 December 1906.

⁹⁶ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLI, 21 November 1907.

⁹⁷ *Commonwealth*, vol. 1, no. 1, 6 January 1906.

foster revolution. He was amused when the Labour members initiated the adjournment of the Senate in order to attend a function at Government House; 'it is symptomatic of a certain deference being given by Labour members to the courtesies of life, even in Vice-regal circles!'.⁹⁸

He had learned also to respect and admire a number of Labour Party members, and personal acquaintance had perhaps allayed his fears; of Gregor McGregor he wrote: 'He is a wonderful man, being almost blind and yet the leader of the Labour Party in the Senate'.⁹⁹ George Pearce he found 'one of the most pleasant and intelligent of the Labour members', though he felt that Pearce 'seems to think the Labour Party's principles and actions are infallible'.¹⁰⁰ Fisher and William Higgs consulted him regarding the Commonwealth Bank Bill in 1911 but he says little of Fisher, though he must have held him in considerable regard. In 1909 he praised him and his ministry, ending:

I believe that Mr Fisher has grown in popularity and influence throughout the community as the result of the dignified manner in which he has discharged his duties as Prime Minister.¹⁰¹

On the outbreak of war in 1914 he pleaded for Fisher's re-election unopposed; 'even in parliamentary warfare, old fashioned chivalry should not be altogether forgotten'.¹⁰² However, Billy Hughes defeated Fisher. Of Higgs he remarked: 'I cannot say I dislike Higgs...he was always courteous to me but politically looked upon me as belonging to the objectionable "capitalistic party"'.¹⁰³ Joseph Turley he considered one of the best of the Labour Senators. When he was displaced by Thomas Givens as President of the Senate, Walker was genuinely sorry. He admired him for his modesty and obvious ability:

...a fine manly man...considering that, when not in Parliament, he was a wharf labourer, he deserves credit that he shows no signs of a swollen head. He was a sailor for years and with Senator Guthrie knows more about navigation laws than any of the rest of us.¹⁰⁴

After the 1906 election three parties again contended for power; Deakin prevailed with the assistance of the Labour Party. Walker did not approve and said so:

In private life there is no man in Australia who is better liked than is Alfred Deakin. But to admire the honourable and learned gentleman as a private gentleman is one thing, and to admire his political actions is quite another.¹⁰⁵

He nominated his friend Gould as President of the Senate, once again treading on the toes of Symon. Three years previously Symon had nominated Gould, who had been defeated by R. C. Baker whom both Walker and Gould supported. Now Symon had ambitions of his own, buoyed by support from Clemons who was playing on Symon's disappointment at not attaining a place on the High Court bench. Walker wrote to Symon seeking his support for Gould, but Symon replied that he

⁹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 79, 14 April 1904.

⁹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 89, 7 October 1908.

¹⁰⁰ Walker diary, vol. 85, 21 February 1907; and vol. 95, 6 September 1911.

¹⁰¹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLIX, 27 May 1909.

¹⁰² Letter to the Editor, newspaper unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 102, 10 August 1914.

¹⁰³ James Thomas Walker to Robert Archer, 28 September 1907, Archer papers.

¹⁰⁴ Walker diary, vol. 98, 25 August 1912.

¹⁰⁵ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXVI, 4 July 1907.

did not think Gould's chances good. Walker interpreted this quite correctly, as the Symon papers show, that Symon wanted the post himself. Indeed Symon was at that time negotiating with Clemons and would not accept nomination unless he was guaranteed the job. Walker, showing more political skill than he was usually credited with, ensured that Gould had support, nominated him, and Gould prevailed, to Symon's annoyance. Walker tried to smooth his ruffled feathers by nominating him as leader of the opposition in the Senate. Symon, however, continued to simmer, and again in September Walker used all of his powers of persuasion to prevent his resignation; Millen was appointed Deputy Leader with Alfred Dobson as Whip. Austin Chapman was highly amused, suggesting that Walker should be an Honorary Minister, Adviser General. He merely laughed and thanked Chapman for the compliment.¹⁰⁶ There is no evidence in the diaries or correspondence that he ever coveted a place in a Ministry or a higher office for himself. Despite all of his efforts to placate Symon he eventually resigned in November when Millen replaced him. The advantage of this reorganisation (according to Walker) was that a number of members of the opposition united with the main plank, anti-Socialism, 'each man at liberty to advocate his own fiscal views and each state's representatives to act as they think proper for their state's interest'.¹⁰⁷ Three or four moderate Protectionists joined them in addition to Senator Mulcahy who had hitherto remained independent. The Senate then numbered sixteen Anti-Socialists and sixteen Labourites, and the Deakinites, Best and Keating, could only muster another two supporters.¹⁰⁸ Walker felt that 'the MacWalker party' had secured a fair share of influence in electing the new President, the new leader of the opposition and the new party whip.¹⁰⁹ It indicated that he was not without guile, but he tried sincerely to placate Symon; he did not deliberately set out to displace him.

In 1908 Walker once again took Janette and Sissie to Britain, this time to bring home Nita, who had been at school in England and France for some years. It was a nice touch, as Senate rose at the close of 1907, that Walker proposed the toast to the President, his friend Gould, but Gregor McGregor, the Labour leader, proposed a toast to Walker, wishing him well for the trip; if they could not agree, McGregor had learned to respect him. It was a sad visit for Walker. Janette became ill and was diagnosed as having a weakness of the heart. His brother-in-law Imrie Bell was dead and Kate, his only surviving family member, was bedridden and not expected to live much longer.¹¹⁰ While in England, too, he represented Australia at the memorial service for the Marquis of Linlithgow, formerly the Earl of Hopetoun and Australia's first Governor-General.

Returned to Australia, he was considering retirement from Parliament. By this time he appears to have been slowing down; though 68 years old he was remarkably alert and active, but his health was beginning to break down. He supported a number of Deakin initiatives, particularly the scheme to establish military cadet

¹⁰⁶ Walker diary, vol. 86, 19 September 1907.

¹⁰⁷ Walker diary, vol. 87, 21 November 1907.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Imrie Bell was the widower of Walker's sister Jane.

corps, but he was not in favour of Australia owning its own battleships, subscribing to the Dreadnought fund for a battleship for the British navy.¹¹¹ He remained consistently pro-British, an admirer of the Empire that was already beginning to crumble though it cannot have been apparent to many at the time. It should be emphasised that his loyalty was to Britain rather than England; one of his pet aversions was the misuse of 'England' (which ignored the Scots and the Irish) instead of 'Great Britain'.¹¹²

The Deakin Ministry, losing the support of the Labour Party, was defeated in November 1908 and Fisher formed a Labour Party ministry. Though opposed on a number of social issues, Walker supported the Fisher Government in its proposal to purchase a site in London on which to erect an Australian headquarters, favouring Trafalgar Square, but the motion was lost in the Senate.¹¹³ The matter was not settled until the Labour Party was again in office in 1911, when the site in the Strand was selected.¹¹⁴

It was apparent by 1908 that both Deakinites and Anti-Socialists might remain in opposition forever if they could not achieve agreement, but no unity could be achieved while Reid remained leader of the Anti-Socialists. In December 1908, after pressure from his party Reid resigned the leadership of the Anti-Socialist Party and negotiations commenced to form a fusion with Deakin's party. Walker does not appear to have been a party to the ousting of Reid; the diaries make no mention of participation. In February 1909 Joseph Cook showed Walker a letter from Deakin about which Walker commented: 'Deakin, like Parkes, is "willin" but must consult his party'.¹¹⁵ However, the following week Deakin made a speech in Hobart which caused some concern; but by May differences were smoothed over and on 26 May, before the opening of Parliament, the parties held a joint meeting at which they agreed that if they gained power they would be known as the Deakin-Cook Party, with Deakin as leader.¹¹⁶ The following day Fisher's Ministry was defeated and on 1 June 1909 Deakin was again Prime Minister heading a coalition government. Walker, influenced by the need to form an effective opposition to the Labour Party, and at last finding himself in broad agreement with a party, abandoned his independence; he was for the first time on the Government back bench though he had misgivings at the alliance with Protectionists. His papers cast little new light on the achievement of fusion; it was a move he had long advocated and he appears to have accepted it as a natural progression, though obviously both pleased and relieved.

The Deakin-Cook alliance appeared to be working very well. Walker spoke in favour of Deakin's financial proposals in October 1909.¹¹⁷ However, in the election of 1910 the Labour Party swept the polls. Walker's friend Macfarlane and Edward

¹¹¹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLVII, 17 September 1908.

¹¹² Walker, letter to the Editor, *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 January 1903.

¹¹³ Walker diary, vol. 89, 25 November 1908.

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 96, 12 December 1911.

¹¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 90, 19 February 1909. This was probably the letter quoted in La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin*, op. cit., p. 538.

¹¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 90, 26 February 1909 and 26 May 1909.

¹¹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 91, 14 October 1909.

Walker Archer (who had been representing Rockhampton in the Lower House) were two of the victims. After his brief sojourn in government, Walker was back on the opposition benches.

In 1911 the Walkers holidayed in Ceylon, meeting Sissie who had been on a tour of the East and farewelled her when she joined Eadith and the twins on another vessel, to tour round the world. By September 1911, however, he had decided that he would not stand for re-election when his term expired; 'I intend to become philosophical. There is one comfort to me: I have seen the Federal Capital site settled...'¹¹⁸ He continued to enter into spirited debate, particularly in regard to the Commonwealth Bank Bill, the Election Bill and the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill, sitting through the night.¹¹⁹

Walker announced his retirement plans in December, giving ample time to select a replacement candidate. Millen remarked,

It is a simple truth to say that no member of either house holds a higher place in the personal esteem of both friends and opponents... Personally I am under considerable obligation to him for consistent assistance and ready advice rendered frequently...¹²⁰

The opposition was by now calling itself the Federal Liberal Association. At a meeting in April, Millen, seconded by Gould and supported by Joseph Cook, moved a motion thanking him for his services; it was passed with such acclamation that it was 'almost too much for me'.¹²¹ If the radical press did not appreciate his efforts, his own colleagues made it clear that his services had been valued. His last session in Parliament was, however, marred by severe illness. Forced to apply for two months sick leave, he wanted to resign but Reginald Black and others opposed his resignation strongly, fearing that the Labour government in New South Wales would appoint a member of the Labour Party to replace him.¹²² Though still in delicate health, he was back in Melbourne in October 1912, again annoyed at waste of time stonewalling. By this time few of those who had been involved in the Federal Convention remained in the Senate. At R. E. O'Connor's death in November, with both Symon and Fraser absent, Walker was the only one remaining to recall his service.¹²³ The age of the Federation Fathers was indeed passing. It moved a little further towards its close in January 1913 when Walker received a telegram from Deakin calling him to Melbourne to select a new party leader as he was retiring. Walker was again very ill and sent apologies.¹²⁴ He was pleased at the election of Gould, Millen and his replacement, Oakes, in 1913 but not unhappy to note on 1 July 1913: 'I am now an Ex-Senator'.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 95, 3 September 1911.

¹¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 99, 20 October 1911, 15 November 1911 and 22 November 1911.

¹²⁰ Quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 December 1911.

¹²¹ Walker diary, vol. 97, 11 April 1912.

¹²² Walker diary, vol. 98, 15 June 1912 to 19 July 1912.

¹²³ Walker diary, vol. 98, 7 November 1912.

¹²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 99, 8 January 1913.

¹²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 100, 1 July 1912.

Walker followed a remarkably consistent line in his political career, maintaining his liberal principles, often in the face of strong criticism from opposition and the press; all too often he was depicted unjustly as

the man who takes a hide bound plutocratic view; who has no ideals and with whom flesh and blood is but a subordinate consideration to profits.¹²⁶

In his maiden speech in 1901 he set out clearly the principles by which he abided during the following years in parliament until his retirement in 1913. Although he sat in opposition he would not criticise unfairly the programme outlined by the Government in the Governor-General's speech. He stated that he intended to oppose Protection, but he would support any good legislation 'whether it comes from the Government or from the opposite side, if it is, in my opinion, for the benefit of the whole community'. Affirming his support for the Commonwealth takeover of Old Age Pensions and the Trans-continental Railway, he advised sensibly that the financial arrangements for the latter required careful scrutiny. Promotion in the Civil Service¹²⁷, he believed, should be based on merit, not patronage. He advocated adult suffrage for the whole of Australia and the acquisition of the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth, also urging an early decision on the site of the Federal capital. He agreed with Senator MacGregor that Supreme Court Judges should receive adequate remuneration.

Up to this point his speech was mild, raising little comment. When he confronted the question of coloured labour, however, his views were controversial in the extreme. He stated firmly: 'I am a free-trader, not only in regard to commerce, but also under proper restrictions, labour'.¹²⁸ He pointed out that the black labour question was much broader than might be supposed:

The British Empire consists of something like two-thirds of persons of coloured races and it is therefore surprising to me that any British subject should wish to deprive another of the right of going from one part of the British dominions to another...¹²⁹

He was not, however, entirely free of racist sentiment.

I am as much in favour of a white Australia as other people. I do not want to see the races mixed. I should like to see this continent peopled by a purely white race. But, at the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that we should do unto others as we would be done by. Why should a person be put under a ban for a fault that is not his?¹³⁰

This provoked a flow of interjections. MacGregor exclaimed, 'The Almighty has done that', to which Walker riposted that 'Adam and Eve, according to Prichard's *Natural History of Man*, were probably red'. Senator Matheson entered the fray:

¹²⁶ *The Australian Magazine*, 1 March 1908.

¹²⁷ Walker's terminology.

¹²⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. I, 22 May 1901.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

I think for an honourable gentleman who says that he advocates a White Australia, he certainly has the most peculiar views I have ever heard expressed...black people should live in their own country.¹³¹

Walker replied: 'This was a blackfellow's country before it was a white man's country'.¹³² Matheson, somewhat heated, responded:

He fails to recognise that we have taken the country from the blacks, and made it a white man's country...there is no earthly use in the honourable gentleman saying that 100 years ago this was a black man's country.¹³³

Walker had an answer to that: 'There are still 100 000 aborigines in Australia', to which Matheson responded:

We are aware of that fact, and it is very regrettable, and the only consolation we have is that they are gradually dying out...large portions of the very best pastoral country in the state [West Australia] are almost barred from pastoral occupation on account of the savageness of the blacks...¹³⁴

But Walker had the last word—'Who own the country'.¹³⁵

This appears to be the first occasion on which any member of the Senate questioned the place of the Aboriginal people in the Commonwealth. C. M. H. Clark claimed that 'the men who had performed the miracle of drafting a constitution for Australia had not so much as dropped a word about the original inhabitants of the ancient continent';¹³⁶ if Walker did not speak out during the framing of the Constitution, he certainly made up for it in the first session of the Federal Parliament. Nor was his concern for human rights restricted to the aborigines; he espoused the cause of the Chinese and the Kanakas, and of women. It was a crusade he carried on for the next twelve years.

In July 1901, debating the Post and Telegraph Bill, in particular the attempt to prohibit the use of black labour on mail vessels, he pointed out that on Thursday Island

...there are many aboriginal natives of Australia who are excellent seamen, and they will be excluded under this provision. All our most generous instincts are outraged by this proposal.¹³⁷

Throughout his first term in office from 1901 to 1906¹³⁸ Walker continued to emphasise that the Aboriginal people had been dispossessed; in 1904, debating the Navigation Bill, he pointed out:

Although Australia's aborigines are black, still it is now called a White Australia, and not a few persons seem to think that by that phrase is meant Australia for the whites in Australia, and for as few others as possible.¹³⁹

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁵ *ibid.*

¹³⁶ C. M. H. Clark, *A history of Australia*, vol. V, p. 176.

¹³⁷ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. II, 10 July 1901.

¹³⁸ As he was elected head of the poll, Walker did not come up for election in the first half-Senate elections in 1903.

¹³⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XVIII, 14 April 1904.

To Walker one of the most objectionable features of the policies of the Labour Party was that, while speaking in socialistic terms of 'the brotherhood of man', it did not treat all men equally:

What is the spirit of Christianity? Is the spirit of Christianity shown by saying that a coloured man is not to be allowed to occupy a bit of God's earth? The spirit of Christianity, as I understand it, is charity and love...it is certainly not exemplified in the differentiation between unionists and non-unionists scabs and blacklegs...¹⁴⁰

In 1905 he focussed attention on the displacement of Aboriginal people previously gainfully employed in the sugar industry; in a question upon notice regarding the Sugar Bonus Bill he asked whether those employing Aborigines in the sugar industry were eligible to obtain the rebate to be given to those employing only white labour. If this was the case, he wanted to know whether it was the intention of the Government to remove the Aborigines, they being 'the original owners of the soil of this country'. Further, he wanted clarification of the definition of 'Aborigine' under the act, whether it included half-castes, quadroons and octoroons. The answer to the first question was in the affirmative, but consideration had not been given to the displacement of those Aborigines gainfully employed. The act included all forms of coloured labour including half castes.¹⁴¹ In 1906 one finds him again trying to direct attention to the Aboriginal population, pointing out that '50000 aboriginals' might be considered a greater danger than 1000 Kanakas. Thomas Playford, in reply, called on a popular contemporary misconception: 'The Kanakas live and breed, whereas the aboriginals are a dying race'.¹⁴²

Others in the Senate, Pulsford and Gould in particular, raised objections to deportation of the Kanakas, but the most impassioned pleas were from Walker. Though his investments in land on the Bloomfield River in north Queensland and at Coombabah in southern Queensland would no longer prove valuable if Kanaka labour required to develop further sugar plantations was withdrawn, and he might have had a personal interest, it played a very minor role in his determined opposition to White Australia policy. As this thesis has shown, his was a long-standing and well considered conscientious objection. Though firmly of the belief that 'Australia did not exist for a handful of people, but for the British race', he could not see why it mattered 'if a few coloured persons come... They were all God's creatures...'¹⁴³ He took up the cudgels again in 1902 when, presenting a Petition to the King from Kanakas of the Bundaberg District, he sought reassurances that the Kanakas would be preserved from mistreatment. By this time the sincerity of his concern had been realised, at least in some quarters. O'Connor remarked:

I am sure we all realise that the action taken by Senator Walker has been prompted by that kindness of heart which we know he possesses and which endears him to every member of this Chamber.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXII, 20 October 1904.

¹⁴¹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXVI, 13 September 1905.

¹⁴² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXV, 8 October 1906.

¹⁴³ *Age*, Melbourne, 10 July 1901.

¹⁴⁴ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. 12, 6 September 1902.

Andrew Dawson accused him of sensationalism but even Symon was prepared to defend Walker on this occasion. Finally Senator Stewart gave an assurance that no married Kanaka or any half-caste Kanaka or Kanaka born in Australia would be deported.

A number of opponents could see him only as the spokesman for capitalism, for the plutocrats of the sugar industry who desired cheap labour. His clearly stated position infuriated Norton of *Truth* and drew harsh criticism from the *Bulletin*.¹⁴⁵ Walker, however, stood his ground, continuing to criticise racist legislation. MacGregor accused him of wanting to retain the Kanakas as servants when Walker pointed out that those who had been in Australia for lengthy periods should be given the option of remaining. Higgs tried to test his sincerity by adding an amendment that the Kanakas should be paid a wage of not less than £1 per week, but Walker had no objection.¹⁴⁶ He believed genuinely that Kanakas were more suited to work in tropical climates, that they worked harder and were more reliable; he was most decidedly not advocating slave labour.

I am speaking on behalf of the Kanakas, and not the planters, and I only want to see justice done between man and man.¹⁴⁷

He persisted with his enquiries, questioning the treatment of deportees and the conditions imposed on those of coloured racial background who remained. In 1904 he pointed out another blatant discriminatory measure. 'The coloured persons who are in Australia are legally here. They are citizens of this country though many of them have not got votes'.¹⁴⁸ In 1906 he was still protesting the inhumanity of treatment in deporting Kanakas but, always ready to give praise when it was due, he registered his pleasure when extensions of time had been granted in some cases, and congratulated the Government on the humane handling of the return of the Kanakas when the system had proved to work well.¹⁴⁹

Debating the Naturalization Bill, he rose to the defence of the Chinese:

I give my testimony to the fact that they were as honourable men in business as any Europeans... I could not conscientiously vote for restricting the power of any man to go to any part of God's earth. I shall not recant from that position, no matter if I lose my seat.¹⁵⁰

This brought the snide comment from Thomas Glassey: 'The honourable Senator...is very enthusiastic in support of the coloured races'.¹⁵¹ Members of the Labour Party accused him of sympathising with the coloured races only because he was not personally threatened by their presence. Higgs pointed out that 'if a few hundred Hindoo bank directors were introduced to New South Wales...[he] might view the matter in a different light'. Walker replied: 'I am an out and out free trader

¹⁴⁵ *Truth*, Sydney, 14 July 1901; *Bulletin*, Sydney, 10 August 1901; Walker diary, 13 July 1901 and 10 August 1901.

¹⁴⁶ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. VI, 4 December 1901.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXIII, 17 November 1904.

¹⁴⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXVIII, 7 June 1906; and vol. XXXV, 8 October 1906.

¹⁵⁰ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XIV, 7 July 1903.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

and probably I should go to India, and be able to earn a crust there'.¹⁵² One wonders if indeed he would have done so had such a threat arisen; it was not improbable.

Though White Australia Policy was firmly in place, Walker continued what sometimes seemed a one-man Human Rights campaign. He opposed sections of the proposed Maternity Allowance Bill, disagreeing completely with attempts to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate children and objecting violently to the insertion of a Sub-clause 2 of Clause 6 which prevented maternity allowances being paid to women of asiatic descent or Aboriginal women and to women from Papua or the Pacific islands. He believed that the population could best be increased by encouraging immigration. His amendments to the Bill were, however, negated.¹⁵³

Walker, as an independent, in a decided minority, could do little to alter the situation but register his concern and disapproval. He, and others such as Pulsford, give a rare touch of humanity to the debates on White Australia Policy. Nor was his defence of human rights confined exclusively to coloured races, but extended to any he considered disadvantaged, and particularly to women of all races. Long a supporter of women's suffrage, despite the opposition of his own wife, and working actively to improve educational opportunities for women, he expanded his interest in the Federal sphere. Remarking on the fixing of a minimum wage for public servants, he was pleased that no distinction was made between the sexes; 'I think it rightly so. It seems to me an extraordinary thing, at the beginning of the 20th Century, that, because a certain person belongs to one sex, that should be cause for permanent disablement...'¹⁵⁴ No other Senator made comment on the status of women. He espoused the feminist cause again in 1909 when he queried whether the High Commissioner in London must necessarily be a man: '...in these days of women's rights is there any good reason why this officer may not be a lady of great intelligence?'.¹⁵⁵ No one seemed to have a satisfactory answer. In one of his last speeches in the Senate he again tried to protect women and children, advocating that some provision should be made to compel married men to insure their lives so that their wives and children might not be left destitute. In this, too, he appears to have been unsuccessful.¹⁵⁶

His disagreements with members of the Labour Party when debating old age pensions, minimum wages, working hours, and conciliation and arbitration were frequently in terms of human rights. His was the view of the British Liberal; he did not object to unionism or arbitration and conciliation as such, but to the fact that the Labour Party desired that they be compulsory. He protested that employers had a moral right to employ the best tradesmen, irrespective of whether they were unionists or not.

Compulsory Arbitration is in my opinion, against liberty, and I have been brought up to think that we ought to be able to do what we like with our own... New unionism...subverts the axiom that all men are

¹⁵² *ibid.*

¹⁵³ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LXVI, 3 October 1912.

¹⁵⁴ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. III, 9 August 1901.

¹⁵⁵ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LII, 8 October 1909.

¹⁵⁶ Walker diary, vol. 98, 17–24 December 1912.

equal in the sight of the law, seeing that it places unionists on a higher plane than non-unionists.¹⁵⁷

Nevertheless he supported an eight hour working day and Commonwealth jurisdiction of old age pensions.

It annoyed him that the Labour Party claimed credit for introduction of many of these measures:

Senator MacGregor does not seem to recognise the fact that long before there was a Labour Party in Parliament, there were public and private men who endeavoured to treat their employees with every consideration...¹⁵⁸

Walker was always kind and just to employees; consequently the accusations made by the Labour Party seemed almost personal insults, though he was aware that all employers were not as considerate.

He remained true to the promise he had made in his first speech, supporting legislation he believed genuinely beneficial, such as Old Age Pensions, but opposing what he considered 'Unionist' legislation such as the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, though his objection was not to conciliation and arbitration as such but to the fact that it was compulsory.

Walker was at his most impassioned when debating matters of human rights. On matters involving Parliamentary procedure and legal issues, he seldom contributed to debate, though he held very definite views on the powers of the Senate. 'As the Senate is a co-ordinate branch of the Parliament, I cannot admit that the other house should have any more power'.¹⁵⁹ His business knowledge and experience were frequently evident. In debating the composition, requirements and employment of the Civil Service¹⁶⁰, he emphasised that payment of higher wages to attract better qualified staff might lead to greater efficiency; the outlay of more expenditure might prove true economy in the end.¹⁶¹ Walker's long experience in banking is clearly evident, too, in debate with MacGregor regarding the necessity of Inspectors to oversee the efficient running of the Public Service: he desired a system of inspection because 'I have not the same faith in human nature'. Of the Post and Telegraph Bill, he advocated conduct of the service on commercial principles.¹⁶² His approach was always a common-sense one: 'The lawyers seem to disagree...but we laymen are the jury, and as common-sense men, must take a common-sense view of the question'.¹⁶³

His most notable common-sense suggestion was that the railways of Australia should be under Commonwealth jurisdiction, with a view to standardising the gauge. He supported strongly the Transcontinental Railway and advocated also a railway across north Australia from Camooweal to Darwin.¹⁶⁴ It is unfortunate that the states and many of those in the Federal Parliament did not agree.

¹⁵⁷ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XVIII, 13 April 1904.

¹⁵⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXII, 20 October 1904.

¹⁵⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXVII, 19 December 1905.

¹⁶⁰ Walker's term.

¹⁶¹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. I, 22 May 1901.

¹⁶² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. I, 12 June 1901.

¹⁶³ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. II, 3 July 1901.

All of his business instincts were offended with the Postal Rates Bill of 1910 when the recommendation of the Postal Commission that postage be levied at 2d per letter was ignored completely. The Ministry and most of the opposition, however, voted for penny postage, an appallingly irresponsible decision. It was estimated that penny postage would involve a loss of £400 000 per annum; Walker thought this should be saved to enable the Commonwealth to pay the interest on the amount of borrowings required to finance the Federal capital, purchase of the Northern Territory and the building of the transcontinental railway. He was supported by O'Keefe and a few Labour Senators, but they were in a small minority.¹⁶⁵ The vote was for political popularity rather than responsible government.¹⁶⁶ It was certainly a popular decision; one paper condemned the opposers as 'a few Labour members who have not reached beyond the bullock dray stage of commercial progress resisted the Bill in conjunction with Senator Walker of New South Wales...'¹⁶⁷ All that Walker could do was to accept with a regretful 'So be it'.¹⁶⁸

His wide and detailed knowledge of Australia's industries was apparent in debate on many occasions, none more so than in the debate on the Bounty on Wool Tops when his amendments were accepted.¹⁶⁹ His long knowledge of the industry and of the markets enabled him to speak with impressive authority regarding the machinery required, the costs involved and the impossibility of obtaining it in Australia. He had realised that to foster Australian industries, some kind of protection was needed, advocating a system of vanishing bounties J. S. Mill described as justifiable.

He took little part in the debate on tariff because he travelled to Britain in 1902. No evidence suggests that he deliberately avoided the debate; on his return to the Senate in September he was pleased to find the Tariff Bill virtually passed. He was pleased, too, with the appointment of the first three judges to the High Court bench, particularly that his long-standing friend Sir Samuel Griffith was appointed Chief Justice. At the same time he regretted the loss to Federal politics of O'Connor and Barton. His sense of fair play was offended when Sir John Downer and Josiah Symon allowed their disappointment at being passed over for the High Court to show all too clearly.¹⁷⁰ He was annoyed when it was alleged that Griffith had engineered his own appointment to the Queensland bench with a substantial salary; both his long knowledge of Queensland politics and his loyal friendship were evident in his rebuttal with the correct information that Sir Hugh Nelson and his Ministry had been responsible for the appointment.¹⁷¹

Both his Christianity and his profession came under attack. Of 119 parliamentarians present at the swearing in of the first Federal parliament, Walker

¹⁶⁴ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXVI, 4 July 1907.

¹⁶⁵ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LIX, 10 November 1910.

¹⁶⁶ Walker diary, vol. 93, 8 November 1910.

¹⁶⁷ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 93, 28 November 1910.

¹⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 93, 28 November 1911.

¹⁶⁹ Walker diary, vol. 86, 9 October 1907; Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XL, 9 October 1907.

¹⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 77, 15 October 1903.

¹⁷¹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XVII, 23 September 1903.

and Symon were the only members who, as Dissenters, chose to make affirmation rather than take the Oath of Allegiance. Higgs later attacked Walker, charging that he attached no importance to the Oath, but Walker rebutted the accusation:

I regard an Affirmation as just as binding as an Oath. But I regard many oaths as absolutely unnecessary; a man does not tell the truth because he swears to do so, but because he believes in telling the truth.¹⁷²

Walker continued to exercise his rights as a Scottish Presbyterian for the remainder of his life in parliament.

He came under attack again when he was selected by the Council of Churches to forward petitions to open proceedings of the Senate each day with prayer, though he felt that this should be done by someone with more parliamentary experience. On 14 June 1901, presenting a petition from members of the Marrickville Christian Endeavour movement, he moved the motion, which was carried, that the request of the petitioners should be enacted.¹⁷³ The *Worker* remarked: 'Senator Walker proposes that the Senate shall be opened with prayer. Some of those Senators need praying for'.¹⁷⁴ Walker no doubt would have agreed, though his list of those in need may not have agreed with that of the *Worker*.

The sincerity of his Christian beliefs was questioned but his opponents could not discredit him, though, on one occasion he was not entirely honest. MacGregor asked him how he would like to work 12 or 14 hours a day, to which Walker replied that he had done so often, which was true, but to McGreggor's query whether he had liked it, he replied, 'I did. I worked from a sense of duty'.¹⁷⁵ He had apparently forgotten, or chose to ignore, his discontent at working long hours for poor remuneration twenty years previously, but he did not oppose the eight hour day. It must be admitted that, though discontented in the later years of his career as a banker, he never thought of striking or burning down the bank, and found his own solution when the opportunity arose.

His most constant and bitter critic was Thomas Givens whom he later described as 'a man of violent passionate nature prone to long and involved speeches, at times unreasonable and unforgiving'.¹⁷⁶ Givens often interjected rudely and ignorantly when Walker was speaking; Walker, however, continued to treat him courteously, even generously. On one occasion, denigrating Walker's Christianity, he asked, 'Why does the Honourable Senator exact usury, and belong to an institution which exacts usury?'. John Gray moved a point of order, questioning whether Givens was correct in saying that Walker belonged to an institution which exacted usury. Walker, however, insisted that Givens was only joking, and that there was no necessity for the motion. On reading the debate it does not sound jocular. Very gently, a little later in the debate, Walker explained that usury was simply 'usual interest', though it could have a different meaning—'one who asks too much interest'. He stated plainly that there was nothing to be ashamed of in a banking career; when Givens

¹⁷² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XV, 4 September 1903.

¹⁷³ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. I, 14 June 1901.

¹⁷⁴ *Worker*, 18 May 1901.

¹⁷⁵ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXII, 20 October 1904.

¹⁷⁶ Walker diary, vol. 99, 10 February 1913.

interjected that it was 'not in accordance with Christian principles', Walker replied simply, 'I think it is distinctly...'¹⁷⁷ Later he spoke even more strongly in defence of banking:

It is a legitimate occupation and why should anyone speak of bankers as if they were frauds? ...banking is one of the blessings of our social system, and but for it, this country would not have gone ahead as it has done.¹⁷⁸

With such a decisive majority in 1910 the Labour Party introduced measures they had long espoused—the Commonwealth Bank Bill and the Land Tax Bill. Walker had previously advocated income tax rather than land tax. He could not agree that if land rose in value a man was not entitled to the advantage. He found the British income tax system fair. Findley of the Labour Party could not see an analogy between land and personal property; the latter he considered the creation of industry, but land was the creation of the Creator. Walker pointed out that land was improved by settlement but the Labour Party determined to introduce a Land Tax.¹⁷⁹ In vain he pointed out the enormous amount given to charity each year by the wealthiest sector of the community, and that Land Tax would decrease the amount available for donation. Using the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital as an example he showed that in the sixteen years to the 30 September 1909 it had welcomed 13 000 patients, none of whom paid fees. An amount of £50 000 had been expended but less than £50 had been returned as tokens of gratitude from patients. He then quoted figures proving that for each £1000 given to charity by those whom the Labour Party labelled plutocrats, other people had not given £1, observing 'a great amount of obloquy has undeservedly been heaped upon the better to do classes in Australia'.¹⁸⁰ It was a spirited defence but not one that was acceptable to the Government. He spent some time in the train travelling between Melbourne and Sydney trying to show five Labour Party members the injustice of imposing what he believed was 'class legislation'; on firmer grounds he pointed out that the breaking up of large estates would not necessarily lead to the opening up of land useful for smaller farming.¹⁸¹ It was more sensible opposition, but once again he was viewed as a capitalist protecting his wealth—which indeed he was—but his opposition was far broader based than on mere personal interest.

In company with others of the banking fraternity, he opposed a monopolistic Commonwealth Bank, though apparently he did not object to a national bank and the issue of a Commonwealth paper currency as a means of stabilising the financial system. In the Address in Reply on 13 July 1910, he objected to the Labour manifesto that sought to bring about gradual extinction of the existing banks without compensation. He asked whether banks were not entitled to some return on the capital invested in their business. However, he accepted the inevitable; the Labour Party held a majority and a Commonwealth Bank was a major plank in their platform. He turned his attention to ensuring that the new bank would be

¹⁷⁷ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXII, 20 October 1904.

¹⁷⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LV, 13 July 1910.

¹⁷⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLIX, 27 May 1909.

¹⁸⁰ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LV, 13 July 1910.

¹⁸¹ Walker diary, vol. 93, 9 September 1910.

established on a businesslike basis. In debate in 1911, though complaining that the Labour Government did not pay much attention to suggestions from the opposition, he launched into a lengthy speech criticising elements of the Commonwealth Bank Bill. No provision had been made for placing the new bank on a sound business footing. He objected to the institution being financed from Commonwealth loan funds arguing that the Bank of England was not a state bank and the Government was not responsible for its liabilities. For the Commonwealth to pay preliminary costs was not a businesslike arrangement; initial finance should come from paid-up capital. He objected also to the proposed control of the bank by the General Manager. He believed a board of management consisting of members with banking experience should be appointed by the Ministry, and that the board should elect its own chairman. The board should not contain public servants and the bank should be treated as a non-political entity. It was a masterly speech summarising the Bank Act of 1844 and discussing the banking arrangements of Belgium, France and Switzerland. All his amendments were negatived but Fisher and Watson had discussions with him, and provision for a board much as Walker had advocated was included in the Act.¹⁸²

A major concern was the need to agree on a site for the Australian Capital Territory. Walker joined every 'Parliamentary pilgrimage in search of a site', raising the matter in questions on notice, but the site and the name for the Federal capital remained unresolved at the end of his first term. The accounts of the parliamentary excursions in his diary bring to life the difficulties and discomforts of some of these tours. Mainly middle-aged, and decidedly overweight, the parliamentarians sometimes presented a comical sight as they travelled in a cavalcade of horse-drawn vehicles of various shapes and sizes throughout the mountainous country of Tumut and Cooma and the plains of Yass, Lake George and Canberra, sometimes in rain, sometimes in blinding dust. Walker, though among the oldest, remained slender and fit; when time allowed he still enjoyed lengthy walks as he had done since boyhood. He found the excursions both interesting and amusing.

He was very satisfied when at last the Yass–Canberra site was selected for the Federal capital.¹⁸³ In March 1909 he attended the last Parliamentary pilgrimage to view the site, walking along the Cotter River to view the site of the proposed dam. All 68 members camped in thirteen tents including a mess tent served by an improvised kitchen of corrugated iron equipped with two stoves, and presided over by the Parliamentary chef. Walker recorded the menu for the 'picnic' lunch.

Soup	Giblet
Fish	Salmon cutlets
Entree	Jugged Hare
Joint	Roast Leg of Lamb
Poultry	Roast Chicken and ham
Sweets	Peaches and Cream, Raspberry Jelly, Pancakes
Cold Meats	Beef, Lamb, Ham
all ending with coffee. ¹⁸⁴	

¹⁸² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LXIII, 13 December 1911.

¹⁸³ Walker diary, vol. 93, 16 September 1910.

¹⁸⁴ Walker diary, vol. 90, 20 March 1909.

Clearly camping out did not entail deprivation. It was Walker who persuaded Senator Russell to support the Yass–Canberra site, and might therefore claim some credit for the final decision on the site of Canberra:

He was the only Labour Senator that took that stand and his vote one way or the other brought matters to a point. I accompanied him...and introduced him to the only miller at Queanbeyan who gave him useful and reliable information as to wheat and other production. Needless to say Senator Russell is an old Scottish farmer and his own judgement when he saw Dalgety clenched the matter.¹⁸⁶

In the habit of utilising his time profitably, Walker was frequently annoyed by long and rambling speeches and by stonewalling. He worked hard and was very annoyed at the waste of time in the Senate:

I think it simply ridiculous, when we have so much business on the paper, that members should come from New South Wales...and travel backwards and forwards and only have 4 hours work on Wednesday and 3 hours work on Thursday!¹⁸⁶

At last in 1909, his patience exhausted, he moved a motion on the limitation of time allotted to each speaker. The motion was lost.¹⁸⁷ His greatest disappointment was his failure to steer the Commonwealth Companies Reserve Liabilities Act through parliament. His desire was to preserve small investors from loss should a company fail; it was a plan he had thought over since the 1893 depression to alleviate some of the suffering incurred by the crash of financial institutions. He therefore initiated the 'Commonwealth Companies Reserve Liabilities Act 1908' which was read for the first time on 17 September 1908.¹⁸⁸ He explained the detail of the Bill with great care. He wished to ensure that reserve funds were set aside under control of trustees so that they might be better prepared to withstand panics. Bank reserve funds were not properly reserves because they were employed largely in current business. He believed that 'we should take advantage of the years of prosperity to provide for the possible years of adversity'. Givens, not unexpectedly, condemned it, stating that it was merely to enable shareholders to relieve their liability, but Walker pointed out that they were doing so from their own funds.¹⁸⁹ Givens, however, refused to acknowledge any merit in the measure.

The second reading of his Bill passed on 26 November 1908, but on the friendly criticism of Best he decided to introduce a new bill. Deakin, whom Walker interviewed, saw no harm in it.¹⁹⁰ The Bill was re-presented in 1910, but Walker was ill with gastritis and Gould arranged its reading in the Senate.¹⁹¹ Givens again attacked him at the Second reading on 4 August. McGregor seconded it, pointing out Walker's lifelong experience in banking business to which Givens responded nastily, 'In taking the public down'. McGregor, in a speech that indicates the extent of the respect Walker had gained from other members of the Labour Party, defended him:

¹⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 95, 1 September 1911.

¹⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 82, 5 October 1905.

¹⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 90, 14 July 1909 and vol. 91, 22 July 1909.

¹⁸⁸ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLVII, 17–24 September 1908.

¹⁸⁹ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XLVII, 24 September 1908.

¹⁹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 89, 5 November 1908.

¹⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 93, 6–8 July 1910.

Knowing the great experience which Senator Walker has in banking business and also the integrity of the man himself, and realising that he would do nothing intentionally to injure a human being, I suggest that we ought to show some little respect to his past experience, his sincerity and the very friendly feeling which exists between him and every other honourable senator.¹⁹²

Despite Givens, the Bill was adopted in the Senate. Fisher supported it, understanding the underlying motive of protection of the weak; it passed through the House of Representatives with the addition of two new clauses, but did not return to the Senate until December 1912 when it was placed at the bottom of the business paper and Givens continued debate on other matters so that the house adjourned without even debating it.¹⁹³ Walker was extremely disappointed.

One must conclude that he was a conscientious Senator who represented his State well. At the same time, consistent with his maiden speech, he placed the welfare of the Commonwealth first, desiring to ensure the success of Federation and the survival of the Commonwealth for generations to come. In this, he and his colleagues must be adjudged extremely successful.

He had, too, the courage of his own convictions and was willing to face harsh criticism in upholding them; for instance, in voting for the Electoral Bill, establishing the format of future Commonwealth elections, he exhibited the independence that Reid and others did not always condone.

I find that a good many of my honourable friends are going to part company with me...for I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. I am looked upon by some foolish persons as a Tory, but whenever a good proposal is made I am willing to support its adoption. I have had the pleasure of seeing a voting machine at work and it seems to me to be a nearly perfect as possible.¹⁹⁴

But there is little an independent politician, sitting in opposition and not holding the balance of power, can achieve apart from voicing his views. Walker certainly did that with courage and conviction, achieving a degree of success on a number of occasions. Above all he acted with remarkable impartiality in both his judgements of issues and of men. He could say truly: 'I am looked upon by some foolish persons as a Tory, but whenever a good proposal is made I am willing to support its adoption'.¹⁹⁵ Although adhering mainly to the Freetrade and Anti-Socialist parties, he remained independent, believing sincerely in placing nation above party. He can be seen as the classic example of an independent politician forced into the ranks of the Deakin-Cook Party by the need to achieve unity in the face of the organised strength of the Labour Party. Yet he was remarkably fair-minded; his impartiality was recognised by most of his colleagues; he overheard John Keating remark of himself to Deakin: 'This is the fairest man in the Senate'—he wondered if Keating really meant it. 'It certainly is my wish to be fair to all parties and not to be too ready to misinterpret the motives actuating our political opponents'.¹⁹⁶ Though he

¹⁹² Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LVI, 4 August 1910.

¹⁹³ Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. LXIX, 20 December 1912.

¹⁹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 84, 24 July 1906; Australia, Senate, *Debates*, vol. XXXII, 26 July 1906.

¹⁹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 84, 26 July 1906.

¹⁹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 82, 19 October 1905.

was regarded as conservative, it did not concern him. He fought honestly for what he believed were the best policies for Australia, retaining dual and intertwining loyalties to Australia and Britain. Such loyalty reflected the sentiments of an overwhelming majority of Australians at the time; as Russel Ward noted:

...most Australians took it for granted that whatever Great Britain did was right and to be supported with all their might.¹⁹⁷

Few reminiscences of parliamentary contemporaries refer to him; Deakin, Wise and others do not mention him. One might have expected Reid to have recalled Walker's service, but he did not. Walker found this not surprising, 'as he thought I was too much of an independent supporter at times. Ah well!'.¹⁹⁸ So Walker, along with a good many other sensible and talented men, faded into obscurity, though his foray into politics from 1896 to 1913 had been eventful indeed. Though secondary to Reid, Barton, Deakin and others, his role was nevertheless one of dedication and ability. He persisted in avoiding political ploy and seldom courted popularity. Though maintaining a steady course of opposition to the Labour Party, he supported all legislation he believed fair and beneficial, but opposed any he considered unfair, regardless of party. He was one of few in the first Federal Parliament whose voice was raised consistently and compassionately in opposition to racist measures. As the wheel of politics in Australia turns, almost a century later, many of the causes for which Walker was castigated may now be seen as enlightened and far-sighted. Sadly, it was not recognised in his own time.

¹⁹⁷ R. Ward, *A nation for a continent*, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 109, 26 October 1917; G. H. Reid, *My Reminiscences*, London, 1917.

Though aged 72 and in indifferent health, Walker retired only from political life. For eleven years he had juggled parliamentary commitments, business activities and church work. In that time he seldom missed a meeting of any of the boards on which he sat and maintained his interests in the Presbyterian Church, other charitable institutions and the two University colleges as well as administering the Walker estate and the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital. It was a remarkable record. Walker continued his business and philanthropic activities for the next ten years, until his death on 18 January 1923, maintaining a timetable many younger men might have considered strenuous. He remained active and alert despite increasingly frail health and though his day now extended only from 9.40 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., he accomplished much in that time.

His major occupation continued the administration of the Walker estate which was becoming more complicated as Land and Income Taxes, both Federal and State, whittled away profits from the properties. After his brother William's death in 1900, Winton and Borongo Stations were sold and in 1907, after threatened resumption by the Government, the Trustees themselves decided to subdivide Tenterfield Station; the blocks were auctioned in November 1907. Old station employees were offered blocks passed in at reduced rates.¹ As Walker noted: '...the Trustees cannot subordinate their duty to their private feelings', so they were bound to secure the highest price; the blocks had to be put to auction before the offer could be made to employees.² Tom Walker, William's eldest son, who had been managing Tenterfield and Coolatai stations, then moved to Coolatai, which was transferred from leasehold to freehold in 1910.³ Land at Concord surrounding the 'Yaralla' estate and the Thomas Walker Hospital was also subdivided and sold between 1912 and 1919; according to the latest techniques in town planning, the subdivisions were provided with sealed roads and tree plantings before sale.⁴ In 1915 the Trustees decided also to sell city properties in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne since the Federal Land Tax was absorbing 50% of the income, making maintenance practically impossible.⁵ A large part of the proceeds from these sales financed the Walker War effort, but Walker noted that the inroads of taxes would oblige curtailment of some of the very generous donations that had previously gone to charitable institutions and the needy.⁶ For a number of years, Walker bore the brunt of most of the estate work as his fellow-trustee A. J. Mackenzie grew progressively more bed-ridden from 1914

¹ Walker diary, vol. 87, 7 November 1907.

² Walker diary, vol. 80, 17 October 1904.

³ Walker diary, vol. 94, 28 November 1910.

⁴ Walker diary, vol. 98, 14 December 1912; vol. 111, 28 September 1918; and vol. 114, 12 July 1919.

⁵ Walker diary, vol. 104, 2 June 1915.

⁶ Walker diary, vol. 107, 1 September 1916.

until his death in 1921.⁷ Walker journeyed to his flat to discuss various matters and to obtain signatures to documents, and, until the day of his death Walker and Eadith ensured that he suffered no pecuniary loss.⁸

During the First World War Walker wealth was directed wholeheartedly to the war effort. The Walker Trust and Eadith, personally, donated ambulances, staff cars and a complete x-ray unit for use of the base hospital being sent to the front from Australia, and the family began investing in War Loans; by the end of the war the Walker Trustees had invested £90 000 in War Loans and Walker himself had invested £2000.⁹ The whole family were involved in one way or another, raising money for the Red Cross and for war funds or serving in the armed forces. Eadith's holiday house, 'Leura' in the Blue Mountains became a rest home for sick and wounded soldiers and a camp was established at 'Yaralla' for others. As a family effort, it was magnificent. After the war a new complication arose in 1919 with the outbreak of the influenza epidemic; hospital space became so scarce that the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital was commandeered as an influenza hospital for some months. By 1920, it had returned to normal; though the brief conversion had caused him some concern, Walker coped remarkably considering he was by then 78 years old. Some of the last remaining Walker Trust properties were sold in 1921; part of Coolatai station known as Old Coolatai was sold and his nephew Thomas Walker purchased the remainder.¹⁰ Yaralla Chambers, Sydney, where Walker kept his office, was placed on the market in March 1921, and by September 1921 all Walker estate pastoral properties had been disposed of.¹¹ Most of the funds were apparently invested in gilt-edged securities. Walker continued as Trustee of the Sidey Trust which was not finalised until 1918; the Trust was worth over £75 000 and he had been a trustee from 1881 until 1912, but never received any remuneration for his work.¹² He also remained the Executor and Trustee of the Palmer estate, continuing to assist his sisters-in-law to maintain 'Range View' alone after the death of his brother William in 1900; the estate was not finalised until 1921.¹³ After the death of his brother William, he administered his estate, continuing to take care of the financial affairs of William's widow¹⁴ and younger children until its finalisation, also in 1921.¹⁵ He also assisted the family of George Neville Griffiths when he died.¹⁶ At the auction of the Griffiths estate, Walker offered bids in the hope of raising prices; articles he acquired at the sale were later given to the Griffiths children, some of whom came to regard the Walkers' as a second home.¹⁷ On the death of James Walker Barton in 1914, he became guardian

⁷ Walker diary, vol. 103, 4 November 1914.

⁸ Walker diary, vol. 119, 24 September 1921.

⁹ Walker diary, vol. 103, 9 October 1914.

¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 117, 19 January 1921 and vol. 119, 12 May 1921.

¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 119, 21 September 1921.

¹² Walker diary, vol. 103, 21 October 1914 and vol. 112, 1 October 1912.

¹³ Walker diary, vol. 119, 20 July 1921.

¹⁴ Janette's younger sister Georgiana.

¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 117, 20 January 1921.

¹⁶ Griffiths had married the daughter of Walker's old Queensland friend John Scott. Mrs Griffiths died on 26 January 1908 and G. N. Griffiths died on 28 April 1905.

¹⁷ Walker diary, vol. 81, 24 May 1905.

to his children.¹⁸ Others entrusted him with their investment income; he always treated it with the greatest care. As late as 1921, though not feeling well, he walked to see Mrs Mein, an old friend of Joanna Walker, to discuss her investments.¹⁹

He never shirked a responsibility; nor does he appear to have turned away from assisting anyone. He found work for old friends like Frank Troup, an old school friend of Thomas Archer, and on his death, paid his funeral expenses; he gave free advice to Robert Gordon, son of his old Townsville friend James Gordon, and to many others—the list of his kindnesses might continue at some length.²⁰ He was held in the highest esteem. Robert Gordon wrote: ‘I place the highest value on your opinion on any subject’; Dulhunty, an old Rockhampton friend and lessee of Killoola, wrote: ‘I am not afraid of the present Trustees (at any rate while you live) taking advantage of me; I would trust my life with you’.²¹

Walker sometimes worried that he was ‘overrated by not a few...someday I fear there will be a fall’.²² Yet he appears never to have failed those who trusted him. His nephews and nieces, however, sometimes found his advice a little annoying as it was often gratuitous; what annoyed them most, was that he was almost invariably right.²³

He remained on the Board of the Bank of New South Wales until his death, though the board continued under the domination of the ultra conservative Mackellar and MacLaurin. Mackellar succeeded Walker as President in 1900. After the death of his youngest son Keith in the Boer War, he appears to have become very embittered. He severed his connection with the Highland Society and the Presbyterian Church because the Rev. John Walker expressed condolences from the pulpit but did not in addition write a letter of sympathy. Walker asked him if he did not believe in returning good for evil; Mackellar did not, which Walker found hard to understand.²⁴ On Mackellar’s departure overseas in 1904, MacLaurin became President; Mackellar decided not to return and resigned from the board, though he was appointed to the London Board. His place on the Sydney Board was taken by his brother-in-law Montie Faithfull; both were sons in law of old Thomas Buckland so it appears that the Buckland family were ensuring continuity of Buckland membership of the Board.²⁵ When Mackellar returned, Faithfull resigned and MacLaurin stepped down as President to allow Mackellar to resume the position. Walker regretted Faithfull’s resignation as Mackellar was ‘not nearly so unselfish or popular’ as Faithfull.²⁶

¹⁸ Grandson of James Walker of Wallerawang. Walker diary, vol. 102, 25 September 1914.

¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 119, 6 August 1921.

²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 49, 19 August 1891 and vol. 83, 28 November 1906.

²¹ Gordon to Walker, 26 April 1917, Walker MSS.; Walker diary, vol. 80, 11 January 1905.

²² Walker diary, vol. 67, 21 March 1898.

²³ Personal communication from Walker’s granddaughter Judith Lord.

²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 83, 25 November 1905.

²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 79, 21 March 1904 and 19 July 1904; and vol. 81, 4 April 1905.

²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 83, 25 November 1905.

The Bank expanded steadily. Its operations extended to Tasmania in 1905, a move Walker had long advocated.²⁷ The years 1911 to 1914 in particular were prosperous and new premises were erected in both Sydney and Melbourne.²⁸ However, Walker and Reginald Black waged a continual struggle with the more conservative members on the matter of staff bonuses.²⁹ Mackellar again visited England in 1911; once more MacLaurin replaced him as President.³⁰ Opposition to staff bonuses continued; Black and Walker fought strenuously in support of granting a substantial staff bonus on the occasion of the 95th Anniversary of the bank. Walker believed it possible to introduce a bonus to officers at least every fifth year, but this was too radical a change. The Board agreed, however, to a 10% bonus to all officers and introduced discussion to increase the capital.³¹

Mackellar returned in January 1913 and MacLaurin once again resigned to allow him to resume the Presidency.³² While abroad he had received a knighthood; Walker found him more vain than ever. At the half-yearly bank meeting Mackellar's address was considered long. Walker remarked:

What amuses me is that Sir Charles Mackellar used to think my Presidential speeches were too long and he now 'out-Herod's Herod'! His weak point is his inordinate vanity since receiving his knighthood—He is always shaking hands with himself!³³

Walker, however, continued to battle on. By September 1915 so many bank staff had enlisted that women clerks were employed, though the jobs of the men were kept open and the bank made up the difference in pay between their Bank salaries and army pay in order to help support their families.³⁴ Walker was keenly aware of the problems of bank officers, not only from his own experience; by 1912 both Alec and George were working for the Bank as well as his nephews, Lionel Walker and Alfred Bell, and two distant cousins, William Buchanan and Archibald Walker. He also maintained friendly relations with young Bank officers he encountered while doing his own banking. He investigated the resignation of Baldry, a young and efficient officer at the Western Branch whom he discovered had been demoted from Teller to Ledger keeper and was working back at least three nights per week despite the bank's policy that except at half-yearly balance and on Thursday night's weekly balance, officers should work only to 5.00 p.m. on week days and 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays. Walker and Reginald Black obtained a bonus of three month's pay for Baldry.³⁵

Mackellar objected to staff bonuses 'on principle'.³⁶ Discussion of the Annual Report continued over two days in 1917 as Walker and Reginald Black argued the

²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 81, 24 February 1905.

²⁸ Holder, op. cit., ch. 30.

²⁹ Walker diary, vol. 95, 26 April 1911 and 23 May 1911.

³⁰ Walker diary, vol. 96, 22 December 1911 and 1 January 1912.

³¹ Walker diary, 7 May 1912 and 21 May 1912. All reference to these discussions is from Walker's diaries; Minutes of the Bank of New South Wales Board Meetings remain confidential.

³² Walker diary, vol. 99, 7 January 1913.

³³ Walker diary, vol. 101, 11 November 1913.

³⁴ By the Annual General Meeting of 1917, 634 officers had enlisted of whom fifty were killed. Walker diary, vol. 108, 15 May 1917.

³⁵ Walker diary, vol. 98, 28 November 1912.

³⁶ Walker diary, vol. 108, 15 May 1917.

case for a centenary bonus of 10% for staff though no bonuses would be paid to shareholders owing to the war. Walker remarked:

Sir Charles is as variable as the wind...he said he did not believe in sentiment and that I had voted for Federation on sentiment: I said that sentiment is the soul of life—and then asked him ‘did you not possess sentiment when you proposed to your wife?’³⁷

Mackellar’s reply is not recorded, but the comment serves to illustrate clearly the difference between the two. Both Mackellar and the General Manager, Russell French, by 1917 were regretting that the Bank Reserve Bill that Walker had attempted to steer through Federal Parliament had failed; Walker remarked wryly:

...they never offered me *any* support...they were influenced by the late Sir Normand Maclaurin’s [*sic*] opposition. Sir Thomas Dibbs was also unsympathetic.³⁸

Walker attempted in vain to persuade Mackellar, who had been president for fifteen years, to stand aside to allow Reginald Black to take the office. Walker felt this to be in the best interests of the shareholders but did not expect success. At the meeting of the Board in 1917 a stalemate was reached when most members refused to nominate Mackellar, but his nephew Dr Robert Faithfull finally nominated him and Black chivalrously seconded the nomination. Mackellar in virtually demanding re-election used Thomas Walker’s long occupancy of the position as a precedent. Mackellar prevailed.³⁹ The Board was, however, united on support of the War effort; the Bank apparently invested several million pounds in War Bonds. On the day designated Belgian Day, the Board of the Bank contributed £1000 to the fund to assist Belgium where civilians had suffered severely as the Germans overran the country.⁴⁰

His advice was again ignored in 1921 when he suggested that the Bank should negotiate and come to a compromise with employees who were taking a wages case to the Arbitration Court; the bank lost the case.⁴¹ Though he was in his eightieth year, he remained remarkably alert, indeed he remained so until his death nineteen months later. When Russell French died suddenly in 1921, Walker welcomed Oscar Lines, whom he had known since his entry into the bank service, as the new General Manager. Lines’s salary remained at £3500, the same as that of Shepherd Smith so many years before; Walker hoped he might receive an increase to £5000. Walker and Hugh Massie nominated Lines for membership of the Union Club and Walker was one of the committee that established a Memorial Fund for French, endowing a number of beds in the Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital, a charity to which French gave much time.⁴²

Walker remained on the board of the A.M.P. Society until 1921, the longest serving member of the board. He considered ‘to be on it was both a pleasure and an

³⁷ Walker diary, vol. 108, 11–15 May 1917.

³⁸ Walker diary, vol. 109, 19 June 1917.

³⁹ Walker diary, vol. 110, 23 November 1917 and 30 November 1917.

⁴⁰ In all £96 000 was collected.

⁴¹ Walker diary, vol. 119, 19 August 1921 and 13 September 1921.

⁴² Walker diary, vol. 119, 30 June 1921, 5 July 1921, 26 July 1921, 27 July 1921, 9 August, 1921 and 21–22 August 1921.

education'.⁴³ At the 1906 election for the board of the A.M.P. Society, he polled the greatest number of votes ever registered for a director; his success was honoured with a poem:

It is not riches that can best express
 That which will bring us happiness
 But, when we realise that we have won
 Men's hearts to beat with ours in union
 And, that as year on year does roll along
 We find that unity becomes more strong.
 This is Life's great reward and does impart
 The greatest happiness into the heart!
 Your name 'mongst Senators gained foremost place,
 And now again a Record Vote we trace
 As linked with it—standing First of these Three
 Chosen Directors of the A. M. P.
 And, knowing this may you not feel a pride
 That with the A. M. P. you are allied
 That Great Society whose Household Name
 Does with each year still garner new fame.⁴⁴

After years of frustration, the agitation to extend the sphere of the Society overseas ended in 1906 with the members giving approval for the establishment of offices in London and South Africa.⁴⁵ This was not accomplished without difficulty; Gerald R. Campbell who had strenuously opposed such a move over the years, took the matter to court. Though unsuccessful, the case caused much concern and expense.⁴⁶

Like the Bank of New South Wales, the company enjoyed prosperity until the outbreak of war in 1914, and invested a considerable sum in War Bonds.⁴⁷ The Society also paid officers their salaries on top of their Army pay, but Walker was doubtful how long this could continue.⁴⁸ By 1917 the cost of living had risen so the Board agreed to pay bonuses to married staff with salaries under £300 per annum.⁴⁹ However, the war effort resulted in a heavy reduction in bonuses that created considerable dissatisfaction once the war was over. Walker had decided in 1921, that if elected, he would not stand again. However, for the first time in many years, the election was contested and Walker was defeated; he suffered mainly because of the dissatisfaction at reduction in bonuses and for the excessive caution of the board, though he alone was not responsible for the whole situation. Though a little shocked, he accepted the result of the ballot.

The blow was strong but I took it philosophically and said 'I have had a long innings of 34 years for which I feel thankful'.⁵⁰

Others were upset and evidence of dubious practice at the poll was produced, but Walker would not appeal against the result; however, he noted 'in future

⁴³ Walker diary, vol. 87, 2 December 1907.

⁴⁴ 'Lines respectfully dedicated to Senator J. T. Walker', inscribed on a scroll in Walker MSS.

⁴⁵ Walker diary, vol. 83, 14 March 1906.

⁴⁶ Walker diary, vol. 84, 29 June 1906.

⁴⁷ By 1918 the A.M.P. Society had £7 million invested in war loans.

⁴⁸ Walker diary, vol. 105, 4 September 1915.

⁴⁹ Walker diary, vol. 108, 19 February 1917.

⁵⁰ Walker diary, vol. 117, 19 April 1921.

precautions should be taken to obviate the danger of a recurrence'.⁵¹ Alfred Jobson, who displaced him, was married to Ruth Macfarlane whom Walker had known since a child; both Jobson and Ruth wrote expressing their admiration for the spirit in which he accepted defeat. 'You have accepted the position in your usual generous and kindly way... a feature in your character which has always stood out very plainly...'⁵² Walker, punctilious as ever, wrote letters of thanks to the Board and to the General Manager for courtesies received.⁵³

He remained on the Boards of the Norwich Union and the Indemnity Insurance companies and of Burns Philp Pty Ltd until his death. The last company expanded its operations steadily, in New Guinea, and in 1912 extended operations to Samoa.⁵⁴ After the outbreak of war, the company expanded further, merging with Robbie Kaad Limited in the Pacific; Walker was also interested in Burns Philp South Sea Company Ltd.⁵⁵ Harrison, Jones & Devlin, of which he became Chairman, suffered severely in the drought of 1919 and from suspension of wool sales from June to September 1920; it was absorbed by Goldsborough Mort later that year.⁵⁶

In addition to business commitments, Walker continued to serve on various charitable and church committees. He was chairman of the Treasurership Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales until his retirement in June 1919, when he received a gratifying and well deserved accolade in appreciation of his services; a resolution was passed at the General Assembly recording his retirement and the many years of service he had given.⁵⁷

He declined a number of invitations to accept offices on various charitable and church committees, including one to become President of the Young Men's Christian Association.⁵⁸ However, in 1910 he joined the committee of one more important Presbyterian Church initiative—to establish an orphanage. James Burns donated to the Presbyterian Church a parcel of land opposite his home, 'Gowanbrae', to provide a site for the project; it was decided not to erect a massive institution, but to build a series of homes with house-parents providing home life for the children. The project became known as the Burnside Homes.⁵⁹ Walker served as chairman for a year, during which the first house was opened by Lady Dudley, wife of the Governor of New South Wales on 17 June 1911.⁶⁰ However, he retired from the chair in 1912, though remaining on the committee at least until mid-1922.⁶¹ Among major donors, in 1913, Burns provided an endowment of £20 000 for the homes and Samuel

⁵¹ Walker diary, vol. 119, 22 April 1921.

⁵² Walker diary, vol. 119, 20 April 1921; Alfred Jobson to James Thomas Walker, 21 April 1921, Walker MSS.

⁵³ Walker diary, vol. 118, 19–21 April 1921.

⁵⁴ Walker diary, vol. 98, 9 December 1912.

⁵⁵ Walker diary, vol. 104, 31 May 1915; and vol. 115, 27 March 1920. For information on Burns Philp see Buckley and Klugman, *The Australian presence...*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Walker diary vol. 115, 15 December 1919; newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 117, after 21 January 1921.

⁵⁷ Walker diary, vol. 114, 18 June 1919; James Cameron, *Centenary history of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales*, Sydney, 1905, pp. 173 and 152.

⁵⁸ Walker diary, vol. 98, 11 November 1912.

⁵⁹ Walker diary, vol. 92, 9 May 1910.

⁶⁰ Walker diary vol. 95, 17 June 1911.

⁶¹ Walker diary, vol. 97, 18 April 1912.

McCaughey, millionaire grazier, donated £2 000 to erect a fourth cottage; the Highland Society financed another cottage and Burns supplemented his gift in 1916 with a further £5 000 and one of his partners, Adam Forsyth provided £250 per annum for the rest of his life.⁶² Before Walker died, at least seven homes and a hospital were completed at Burnside.⁶³

His interest in St Andrews College did not wane. A new residence was built for the Principal in 1905, but by 1908 a new Principal, Dr Andrew Harper, was in charge of St Andrews; he was an opinionated and headstrong man who resented expenditure on Coerwull Academy.⁶⁴ Walker, who devoted much time to Coerwull, attending speech nights and donating library books, was distressed as attendance at the school decreased and little interest was evinced in keeping it open. St Andrews was extended with the addition of an East Wing in 1913⁶⁵ but Coerwull Academy closed and the buildings were eventually auctioned in 1916.⁶⁶ After twenty-five years as Treasurer, Walker resigned after disagreeing with Harper rather than cause dissension when Harper apparently distrusted his accountancy; he remained on the Council, however, until ill health forced his resignation in 1922. The College acknowledged his 'valuable services given so willingly', the faithfulness with which he had attended meetings and the benefit that had been received from his experience and unfailing devotion to all the interests of the College. The then principal, Anderson, felt it a personal loss.⁶⁷

Walker was also nominated one of three Trustees of the Hunter Baillie Trust in 1908.⁶⁸ He resigned from the Trust in 1921, but its members insisted that the Trusteeship was for life; 'I had no idea my fellow trustees entertained such a strong regard for myself'.⁶⁹

At Women's College, the Council gradually became fully female except for Walker who remained President and Treasurer. He was particularly pleased when the first ex-student, Mrs Fitzhardinge nee Rutherford joined the Council in 1915.⁷⁰ In 1911 it was discovered that the Acts that founded the four male colleges of Sydney University had provided for endowments of £20 000 each, but Women's College received only £5000.⁷¹ Walker led a deputation to the New South Wales Government to protest against such blatant discrimination. This was apparently redressed by another Bill in 1916.⁷² The first head of College, Laura MacDonald, resigned in

⁶² Walker diary, vol. 100, 18 October 1913; and vol. 106, 20 April 1916.

⁶³ Walker diary, vol. 99, 9 May 1913; vol. 103, 19 November 1914; vol. 104, 5 June 1915; vol. 106, 20 April 1916; vol. 110, 15 December 1917; and vol. 115, 10 April 1920. Newspaper reports in Walker, Newspaper cuttings, vols 76, 78, 84 and 86.

⁶⁴ Walker diary, vol. 90, 18 March 1909.

⁶⁵ Walker diary, vol. 99, 21 May 1913.

⁶⁶ Walker diary, vol. 107, 13 October 1916.

⁶⁷ Walker diary, vol. 97, 23 April 1912; Anderson to James Thomas Walker, 15 August 1922, and St Andrews College Council to Walker, 25 August 1922, Walker MSS..

⁶⁸ Walker diary, vol. 89, 25 October 1908. This Trust commemorated the first accountant of the Bank of New South Wales and his wife, a sister of Mrs John Dunmore Lang. Both were devout Presbyterians who left most of their estate to fund two professorships at St Andrews College.

⁶⁹ Walker diary, vol. 119, 25 July 1921.

⁷⁰ Walker diary, vol. 106, 14 May 1915.

⁷¹ Walker diary, vol. 102, 24 July 1911.

⁷² Walker diary, vol. 107, 15 December 1916.

1918; her place was filled by Miss Williams 'the best Australian candidate'; an appeal was launched for funds to extend the college with another wing to be known as the Laura MacDonald Wing.⁷³ Apart from canvassing other donations Walker and his wife donated £105, in spite of the fact that his income had been reduced by taxation and the increased cost of living.⁷⁴ In 1920 he handed over the treasurership to George Littlejohn, ensuring continuity of careful handling of the finances, but remained as Chairman.⁷⁵ He was obviously held in great esteem and affection by the lady members of the Council. He was proud to note in his Commemoration speech of 1921 that when he first joined the Council on the founding of the College it served only four students; by 1921 its members numbered fifty-three. On his death, the College wrote:

Mr Walker will be missed by many [indecipherable] and organisations but there are none who have greater occasion to be thankful to him for his help and interest than the Women's College.⁷⁶

In 1924 a plaque in his memory was unveiled at the College commemorating his service from 1891 to 1923, twenty-nine years as Honorary Treasurer and twenty-two years as Chairman.⁷⁷

Though he did not seek re-election as a director of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1902, he was unanimously re-appointed in 1904.⁷⁸ He remained actively involved with the hospital until his resignation, due to ill health in 1913; his services were honoured with the conferral of an Honorary Life Governorship.⁷⁹ Walker was also a Life Governor of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, and continued his association with the Ashfield Infants' Home.⁸⁰

His interest in sport remained strong, though it did not extend to football; in 1903 he noted: 'I like to encourage manly athletic games but have no wish to deify football which is altogether too rough'.⁸¹ He still enjoyed the occasional game of golf and remained President of the Australian Golf Club, retiring only in 1919 when he handed over to Dennison Miller, the governor of the Commonwealth Bank and a former employee of the Bank of New South Wales.⁸² He had been a most popular President; at the Annual General Meeting in 1918 he was given a standing ovation when he left the hall.⁸³ Until 1918 he continued to take long brisk walks, particularly when on holiday at Bowral or in the Blue Mountains. Aged 77, he considered entering a veteran's foot race over fifty yards; only the doctor's flat refusal to accept responsibility for the outcome dissuaded him.⁸⁴

⁷³ Walker diary, vol. 112, 9 November 1918; and vol. 113, 1 May 1919.

⁷⁴ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 114, 8 October 1919.

⁷⁵ Walker diary, vol. 116, 20 May 1920.

⁷⁶ Women's College to Janette Walker, 21 January 1923, Walker MSS.

⁷⁷ Women's College to Janette Walker, 19 August 1924, Walker MSS.

⁷⁸ Walker diary, vol. 74, 16 January 1902; and vol. 80, 17 October 1904.

⁷⁹ Walker diary, vol. 99, 21 February 1913 and 26 February 1913.

⁸⁰ Walker diary, vol. 92, 24 February 1910

⁸¹ Walker diary, vol. 76, 30 March 1903.

⁸² Walker diary, vol. 113, 12 April 1919.

⁸³ Walker diary, vol. 111, 24 April 1918

⁸⁴ Walker diary, vol. 111, 30 May 1918.

He remained a member of the Art Society and of the Australian Historical Society as well as taking a keen interest in the advancement of science. Representing the New South Wales Members of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, he spoke strongly in favour of Douglas Mawson's expedition to the South Pole and took an interest in the progress of the venture.⁸⁵ He also attended lectures by Roald Amundsen and others, keeping abreast of events and discoveries in the world.⁸⁶

Always interested in gardens, trees and landscape, he might be considered an early 'greenie'. In 1914 he joined enthusiastically in the attempt to preserve the fig trees in Macquarie Street, Sydney that the Sydney Council wanted to cut down to widen the road. Walker believed it an act of vandalism to remove trees that had been growing for a century or more; he put forward a scheme whereby he believed they might be saved, pointing out: 'It takes only an hour or two to cut a tree down, but it takes a generation to grow one'.⁸⁷ An appeal went forward to the Privy Council, and an order was issued to prevent the removal of the trees, but the Holman Government allowed them to be cut down before the order could arrive.⁸⁸

Though now as an observer from the sidelines, he remained interested in politics. He kept in touch with Gould and a number of others, but soon dropped from political limelight. As he noted: 'There is no gratitude in politics'.⁸⁹ Some, however, did not forget. In 1914 Joseph Cook wrote:

I was deeply sorry to hear of your illness and hope it may soon pass. We really cannot afford to have you ill. The country needs you always and never more than now in these troublesome days.⁹⁰

Cook appealed to him in 1917 when he failed to secure Gould's re-nomination for the Senate election. Gould threatened to stand as an independent but Walker dissuaded him, thereby saving him from the ignominy of certain defeat.⁹¹

Walker remained firmly opposed to the socialism of the Labour Party. However, he refused an invitation to play a prominent part in starting a Protestant Federation in opposition to the Roman Catholic Political Confederation formed in 1917; his reasons for the refusal were that he was too old and that he had Roman Catholic relations and friends whom he esteemed. 'In the evening of my days, I like to live quietly and at peace with all sections of the community'.⁹² However, he remained a loyal British Australian; the rejection of the conscription referenda and the incidence of strikes during the 1914–1918 War distressed him. He disapproved of Hughes 'throwing the responsibility on the electors' in regard to conscription.⁹³ But, despite his dislike of Hughes, he was incensed when the Labour League 'had

⁸⁵ Walker diary, vol. 95, 13 September 1911.

⁸⁶ Walker diary, vol. 97, 3 April 1912.

⁸⁷ Walker diary, vol. 102, 21 and 29 May 1914.

⁸⁸ Walker diary, vol. 102, 18 June 1914.

⁸⁹ Walker diary, vol. 108, 12 May 1917.

⁹⁰ Joseph Cook to James Thomas Walker, 2 September 1914, recorded in Walker diary, vol. 103, 6 September 1914.

⁹¹ Walker diary, vol. 109, 18 June 1917.

⁹² Walker diary, vol. 109, 17 October 1917.

⁹³ Walker diary, vol. 107, 31 August 1916.

the impertinence to pass a resolution expelling W. M. Hughes, the Prime Minister, from the Labour Party'.⁹⁴ He was still capable of writing a strongly worded letters to newspapers and did not hesitate to criticise those on strike during wartime.

In 1915 he wrote to the *Queenslander* expressing concern regarding 'the growing insolence, selfishness and narrow-mindedness of monopolistic political trade unionism'.⁹⁵ To the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* he wrote in 1916:

Such a thing as labour strikes should be unknown in Australia during wartime at any rate. Manual workers are not the only people who suffer from the rising price of commodities...but...victimised the community.⁹⁶

To the *Brisbane Courier* he addressed another salvo:

A competent tradesman is really a capitalist, his trade at first representing his capital, and, by living within his income, his capital goes on increasing until it includes both his skill as tradesman and realised wealth in landed property, shares in public companies etc.⁹⁷

To the end he remained staunchly Liberal, agreeing with A. D. Kay:

If every Australian would realise that not by any system, not by Governments, organisations and associations, but by his own effort, lies the remedy for the evils that beset him, he would have come to the true realisation of the social problem and its solution. The doctrine of individual effort is the doctrine of salvation.⁹⁸

Along with many others, Walker's life altered drastically with the outbreak of the First World War. War almost crept upon Sydney. News of Britain's declaration of war reached the city on 4 August 1914, but the German Consul, Herr Kiliani, a friend of Walker's, had not received advice of the outbreak of war as late as 6 August and was uncertain what he should do. There was almost an air of disbelief but this soon gave way to distress as news of the fall of Brussels filtered through.⁹⁹ Walker's son-in-law, Ralph Verney, recently on leave in Sydney, had returned to his regiment in India, leaving Nita and the two children with her parents but, on receipt of news of his regiment leaving for England, it was arranged that Nita and the children should go to England, departing the following day and travelling via San Francisco—so the war touched Walker and his family very quickly.¹⁰⁰ The capture of German Samoa and annexation of German New Guinea were events for excitement but by the end of the month, details of casualties were coming through. Sons of Australian friends who had joined the British Army or children of friends who had returned to Britain were among early casualties, in particular Lucas-Booth, son of old Robert of the London Board of the Bank of New South Wales, and the son of Justice Rich who enlisted virtually straight from his English school. By 30 September Walker was mourning: 'This awful war goes on day in day

⁹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 107, 16 September 1916.

⁹⁵ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 103, 3 April 1915.

⁹⁶ Newspaper cutting, unidentified and undated, in Walker diary, vol. 106, 24 June 1916.

⁹⁷ *Courier*, Brisbane, 26 April 1916.

⁹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 117, 21 January 1921. A. D. Kay was President of the Citizens Democratic Association.

⁹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 103, 3–21 August 1914.

¹⁰⁰ Walker diary, vol. 103, 28–29 August 1914.

out with terrible slaughter'.¹⁰¹ Soon the casualty lists included the sons of Australian friends: Captain A. W. Macarthur Onslow, killed at Ypres, a nephew of Arthur Allen; a second son of Robert Lucas-Tooth; Percy French, the fourth son of General French, whom they had known in childhood in Brisbane—and so the list continued. His niece Eva Bell was trapped in Germany, visiting Nita von Widdern, daughter of his second cousin, and by November Ralph was at the front.¹⁰²

Walker took pride in the performance of his old corps, the London Scottish Regiment, whose courageous, almost suicidal bayonet charge turned the tide of battle of Messines; but there was little satisfaction in news generally.¹⁰³ His nephews enlisted; Barty Paterson first as a War Correspondent, then Bruce and Harold Walker¹⁰⁴ and Eric Strachan¹⁰⁵; and then his son George left on the *Niagara* via San Francisco to take delivery in London of another ambulance donated by Eadith, entering service as a driver.¹⁰⁶ Ralph was wounded in March 1915; news was sent that he had received a flesh wound in the thigh.¹⁰⁷ Ralph, aged 36, had intended retiring from the Army about this time, and returning to Australia, but his plans were aborted.¹⁰⁸

By 1915 the campaign in the Dardenelles had commenced; on 15 May, Walker commented: 'We have as a community been shocked by the list today of officers in the Dardenelles fighting'.¹⁰⁹ In June 1915 his nephew Lionel volunteered; 'parting with Lionel was like parting with a son. He and I have always been greatly drawn together'.¹¹⁰ Walker did not attempt to dissuade him, however, and continued to support the war effort wholeheartedly. He applauded warmly the Gilgandra March, noting in his diary: 'This ought to be called Gilgandra Day'.¹¹¹ In March 1916 his son Montie enlisted and a month later Douglas Walker, another of William's sons, and Percy Palmer, the eldest son of Janette's youngest brother.¹¹² By July 1916 Lionel and Bruce were wounded and Harold, deafened by shell fire at Gallipoli, had not recovered.¹¹³ Both sons of his sister Jane were serving, Alfred Bell in the artillery and Tom as Deputy Controller for Dockyards and Shipping.¹¹⁴ Only one of his nephews, Douglas, was killed, just two months before the Armistice.¹¹⁵ However, Walker had mourned the passing of the sons of many friends whom he had known since childhood; notices of their deaths are inserted regularly throughout the wartime diaries, attesting that few families of their acquaintance remained untouched.

¹⁰¹ Walker diary, vol. 103, 30 September 1914.

¹⁰² Walker diary, vol. 103, 3 October 1914.

¹⁰³ Walker diary, vol. 103, 5 November 1914.

¹⁰⁴ Sons of his brother William

¹⁰⁵ Grandson of his sister Jane.

¹⁰⁶ Walker diary, vol. 103, 18 October 1914 and 8 January 1915; and vol. 104, 13 May 1915.

¹⁰⁷ Walker diary, vol. 103, 15 March 1915.

¹⁰⁸ Shortly afterwards he was operated on for appendicitis and while invalided, appointed as Military Attache to Lord Chelmsford then proceeding to India as Viceroy.

¹⁰⁹ Walker diary, vol. 104, 5 May 1915.

¹¹⁰ Walker diary, vol. 104, 10 June 1915.

¹¹¹ Walker diary, vol. 105, 12 November 1915.

¹¹² Walker diary, vol. 106, 22 March 1916 and 19 April 1916; and vol. 107, 5 September 1916.

¹¹³ Walker diary, vol. 104, 3 August 1915; and vol. 107, 24 July 1916.

¹¹⁴ Walker diary, vol. 109, 30 July 1917. Tom Bell received a knighthood for his services.

¹¹⁵ Walker diary, vol. 112, 16 September 1918.

He was particularly distressed at news of the deaths of both Jack and Hugh Griffiths, sons of G. N. Griffiths and grandsons of John Scott.¹¹⁶ The death of Geoffrey Sulman, the eldest son of Annie Masefield Sulman, was another sad blow.¹¹⁷ With so many of his family engaged in war, hearing of the death or wounding of so many, Walker did not exhibit animosity or bitterness towards German internees. In fact, though strongly pro-British, his attitude was much milder than many at the time, giving civil greetings to the Germans detained at Berrima.¹¹⁸

Personally, Walker supported the war effort whenever he could. As noted above, he supported investment in War Loans and the Walker Trust financed the war effort. Walker himself donated to funds for soldiers' widows, the Red Cross and others and a small cottage, part of the Wallaroy estate, was turned into a sewing room where women gathered to sew pyjamas and other garments for the troops.¹¹⁹

The Walkers celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in April 1918. He continued to love and shelter Janette, deferring to her wishes. Their letters still commenced 'Darling Jan' or 'Dearest Jamie', and indicate a tender concern for each other. They celebrated the anniversary very quietly; the occasion was not advertised in the papers as was the custom of the day. Family and old friends who were asked to the small gathering were requested not to bring gifts as 'the War drags too much on everybody's pocket'.¹²⁰ By this time the Walkers had six grandchildren who brought life and interest to their lives.¹²¹ However, only Sissie, who remained unmarried at home with her parents, and Alec and his family remained in Australia; Nita and her family were in India and the twins were serving in Europe. The family remained close, corresponding with each other frequently; Walker maintained a warm and caring paternal relationship with his children, though disappointed that none had taken the opportunity to pursue a professional career. When Alec married he subsidised his salary until he was earning £100 per annum more; later he purchased a home for Alec and his family. The twins were assisted to enter business on their own account.

The world, however, was changed. 'Wallaroy' with its thirty rooms, became even more difficult to maintain as the number of servants dwindled from twelve to two or three. With the departure of the cook, their old friend from Brisbane days, Eva Whish, now running cooking classes in Sydney, filled the breach, and Sissie began, at 41, to learn to cook for the first time in her life.¹²² It was not a Walker characteristic to bemoan life when difficulties arose, but to set to with a will to solve all problems. Sissie acquired an egg incubator in order to breed their own

¹¹⁶ Walker diary, vol. 105, 28 September 1915; and vol. 110, 11 December 1917.

¹¹⁷ His career appeared very promising, but on enlistment he became a pilot in the Royal Air Force. Appointed an instructor, he was piloting an aeroplane that capsized and Geoffrey received head injuries from which he never recovered. Walker diary, vol. 109, 22 June 1917.

¹¹⁸ Walker diary, vol. 108, 5 April 1917.

¹¹⁹ Walker diary, vol. 104, 22 June 1915.

¹²⁰ Walker diary, vol. 111, 16 April 1918.

¹²¹ Alastair, Peter and Eileen Walker, children of Alec; and John, Joscelyne and David Verney, children of Nita.

¹²² Walker diary, vol. 104, 1 May 1915.

chickens.¹²³ With increasing cost of living they had already given up keeping a carriage. Janette, however, did not wish to leave 'Wallaroy'. Walker, aged 77 when the war ended, might have wished for retirement, but could not afford to relinquish his position or his directorships as the cost of living continued to rise. The loss of his fees as a director of the A.M.P. caused some financial difficulty, but Eadith Walker insisted that he should pay no more rent for 'Wallaroy', a gift he could not afford to refuse, though he would have preferred to move to a smaller house.

By 1919 Walker was obviously slowing down; his annual visits to Brisbane, Mt Ubi and Toowoomba, ceased in 1917. Though mentally alert, he was suffering increasingly from bouts of illness, relying on the assistance of Herbert Turner, the clerk who had been with him for thirty years and whom he regarded as a friend as much as an employee; 'Turner is proving a great comfort to me'.¹²⁴ From 1919 to 1922 he was obviously winding up many facets of his trusteeships ensuring that, should he die, everything would proceed smoothly.

Many of his friends and fellow Federation fathers were dead. Alfred Deakin's death in October 1919 saddened him; despite occasional differences with Deakin he now noted 'truly a chevalier sans peur and sans reproche'.¹²⁵ Of Edmund Barton he wrote: 'A great Australian has gone from amongst us'.¹²⁶ James Macfarlane died in 1914, Sir Samuel Griffith resigned in October 1919, to be replaced by Adrian Knox, the son of Walker's old friend Edward Knox.¹²⁷ Few remained when he turned 80 on 20 March 1921; some weeks later he decided to finish his diary, finding it too difficult to write. The record of sixty-five years ended with: 'Grateful thanks to God for his providential care all my days'.¹²⁸

He remained alert and reasonably active for another nine months, until he suffered a frightening attack of illness on 20 July 1922, from which he never recovered. The tidy and ordered habits of a lifetime were not abandoned and his mind remained sharp and clear; the nurses thought him 'the most wonderful man'. Typically, his thoughts were of Janette; 'I want to live for your sake. I have made up my mind I am going to try to live'.¹²⁹ He lived for a few months more, but succumbed to uraemia on 18 January 1923. Few Federation Fathers survived to mourn his passing; one, Sir William McMillan recalled:

His long life of disinterested devotion in all matter affecting the higher interest of the community, his high sense of honour, his character as a man as well as a citizen and his administrative ability.¹³⁰

Condolences flowed in from all quarters, recognising his fine character, the dedicated service he had given so many organisations, and the assistance and

¹²³ The household had always relied on its own chicken run to supply eggs and white meat, donating surplus supplies to the local hospital.

¹²⁴ Walker diary, vol. 111, 9 July 1918.

¹²⁵ Walker diary, vol. 114, 8 October 1919.

¹²⁶ Walker diary, vol. 115, 7 January 1921.

¹²⁷ Walker diary, vol. 115, 18 October 1919.

¹²⁸ Walker diary, vol. 119, 10 October 1921.

¹²⁹ Sissie Walker to Nita Verney, 5 August 1922, Walker MSS.

¹³⁰ Sir William McMillan to Janette Walker, 21 January 1921, Walker MSS.

kindness he had given to so many people. The *Pastoral Review* continued at some length:

There has been removed a very notable figure from the financial, political and commercial world of Australia...Essentially a liberal in politics, he was broad in his outlook and possessing the advantage of an early financial and commercial training, he was able to bring to bear upon the many public problems with which he had to deal a sound judgement. A man of high principles and ideals, he did his utmost to improve the political and social conditions of his day.¹³¹

At a more personal level, the son of his long-time friend Troy, the lighthouse keeper at Cleveland, wrote sincerely:

It seems to me that notwithstanding your father's great success commercially, his principle in private life of doing so much good in an unostentatious way endeared him to so many people and established a name for him which I am certain (did he realise it) would be valued by him much more than his high reputation for business integrity.¹³²

Such were the public and private perceptions of the man.

To use the terms of the game he loved throughout his life, he had had a good innings, played in truly honourable and sporting fashion. Awarded no honours and forgotten by later generations, he served his country well and honourably.

¹³¹ *Pastoral Review*, 16 February 1923.

¹³² R. M. Troy to Alec. Walker, 1 February 1923, Walker MSS.

Conclusion

Study of the life of James Thomas Walker provides a remarkable insight into the development and motivation of a middle-class Scottish migrant in the 1860s, a white-collar worker who became a Federation Father and a Conservative Senator.

As a Federation Father Walker deserves better than Deakin's portrayal as practically a cipher and 'a mere commercial man'.¹ He merits the recognition of La Nauze that his election to the Federal Convention was indeed 'one of the few examples of public recognition of a man who appeared to be simply an expert in a relevant field'.² He deserves even greater credit for his important contribution to the solution of the fiscal problems that beset the Federation Fathers and for his influential role in the campaign for Federation, not only in New South Wales but also in Queensland and Western Australia.

His support of Federation was long-standing, inspired by a desire to see a strong Australian nation where 'each man can literally sit under his own vine and fig-tree, no man daring to make him afraid'.³ The major catalyst for his entry into Federation politics was the 1893 Depression. Walker had, too, a well developed sense of Australian nationalism, even an unusual appreciation of the country's history and natural beauty.

There is no evidence that Walker viewed Federation as a method of civilising labour, or of promoting his own personal or class interests. Rather there is a sense of placing country above self. His desire to preserve strong ties with Britain and Empire is understandable given his strong sense of loyalty and that so many of his kin were still living in Britain. Yet, despite his pro-British sympathies, it can now be seen that Walker's actions contributed far less to maintain the British-ness of Australia than those he opposed, who introduced White Australia Policy.

Walker and his fellow Federation Fathers sought to achieve the best possible solution for Australia at that time. For them, as for most other immigrants, Australia offered opportunities that were not open to them in the lands of their birth; few saw the need to change dramatically a society that had allowed so many to improve their circumstances. Walker represented that society well. If the constitution he and other Federation Fathers shaped emerged as conservative and protective of property, it reflected truly the Australia of the time. The lives of Walker and most of his fellow Federationists encompassed an era of almost

¹ Deakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–67. Quoted in the introduction to this work.

² La Nauze, *Australian Constitution*, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Quoted in the introduction to this work.

³ J. T. Walker, *Some remarks on Australasian banks...*, *op. cit.*

continual war and revolution.⁴ It is understandable that they sought to avert the turmoil of other countries in Australia—that they succeeded remarkably well deserves greater acknowledgment.

As a Senator, Walker represented New South Wales well, but he never lost sight of the overall welfare of Australia. He merits attention as an Independent Freetrader. That he was not a professional politician does not indicate a lack of political principles or that those principles were extempore or ad hoc. He was for many years an admirer of Gladstonian Liberalism, who read widely and engaged frequently in political discussion, though his views were tempered by the realisation that some government intervention was required to protect the weak and needy.

Hazlehurst would lump him among Conservatives (where he undoubtedly belongs in modern terms), but he was not in his time strictly a conservative; that title belongs more accurately to Sir Normand Maclaurin and others of Tory sympathy.⁵ Though not as radical as Alfred Deakin and others, Walker was clearly liberal in inspiration; he certainly endorses Russel Ward's contention that

...there were few members of the Fusion or Liberal Party in 1909 who would not have been more at home in the contemporary British Liberal Party than in the Conservative Party...the whole political spectrum stood further to the left than in other countries.⁶

Walker is a classic example of the Liberal-inspired independent constrained by the circumstances of early Federal politics to serve as a Conservative, then forced to abandon independence by the need to unite Liberal forces in opposition to the organisation of the Labour Party. Rickard has suggested that Fusion represented 'a compromise between the requirements of political expediency and the interests of employers as a whole'.⁷ Study of Walker suggests that much greater emphasis should be placed on the former than the latter reason for Fusion. It seems that it was not the policies of the Labour Party (most if not all of which had been advocated by others) nor the character and personality of the leaders (many of whom Walker liked and admired) that forced a realignment of older parties, but Labour's strict discipline. There is no conclusive evidence in Walker's diaries to suggest that the Liberal Party was more class oriented when Fusion was achieved. Nor is there any evidence that Walker represented particular capitalist or bourgeois interests.

Walker is notable for his consistent adherence to his views through the changing Governments in the early years of Federation. Unlike P. O. Fysh he did not forsake the Freetraders in order to join the Barton Government; he never considered

⁴ Walker was seven years old in the year of revolutions (1848); he witnessed agitation for reform in Britain, watched troops depart for the Crimea, knew some of those who fought in the Indian Mutiny, and read accounts of the Franco-Prussian War and of the subsequent turmoil of the French Republic. He witnessed the rise of a unified Germany, the emergence of a unified Italy, the awakening of Japan, and the penetration of Europeans into China, Africa and the Pacific.

⁵ Hazlehurst, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

⁶ R. Ward, *A nation for a continent*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁷ Rickard, *Class and politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

abandoning principle for power. Yet he adhered only loosely to the Freetraders in parliament; in matters other than Freetrade he maintained an independent common-sense stance, supporting both Protectionist and Labour Party initiatives in legislation when he believed it good and fair. Australians today may well regret that more of his colleagues did not heed his pleas for standardisation of the railway gauge, for a scheme of national insurance, and for a less racist immigration policy. But, there was little an Independent sitting mainly in opposition could do to change policies; his career demonstrates that, even at such an early date, there was no secure place, even in the Senate, for a member who was by temperament an independent.

Walker merits particular attention for his anti-racist stance. His opposition to White Australia policy was long standing and conscientious, influenced not only by a philosophy of life based on doing unto others as he would be done by, but also by genuine concern, and a liking and respect for many of the Chinese, Kanakas and Aborigines he had known in Queensland. Though certainly one of a very small minority, Walker was not alone in his opposition to racist legislation; virtually no attention has been paid to the small group of dissenters in the first Federal Parliament, though they must be seen as the harbingers of a more tolerant attitude that culminated in the abandoning of White Australia Policy during the Holt administration in 1966. It appears to have been accepted generally that they represented commercial interests rather than genuine humanitarian concern.

Walker does not appear to support a case for Marxist interpretation of this period of Australian history; though there was decidedly class awareness, there is no evidence of continuing class conflict. His opposition to the Labour Party is couched in terms of political philosophy, on the grounds of misinterpretation of socialism. The brotherhood of man meant, for Walker, of all men and women regardless of colour or whether they belonged to a union; he saw the Labour Party as representing not all workers, but only those belonging to unions. It was a one-class, even-interest group party, not truly directed at achieving equality for all. This argument finds an echo in the work of Humphrey McQueen in the late 20th century.⁸ Though Walker expressed admiration for Christian Socialism, he referred to himself as an anti-Socialist, which creates some doubt regarding his sincerity and his logic; in fact he referred to himself as anti-Socialist to avoid the term 'anti-Labour' with its connotations of being opposed to workers. He distinguished clearly between the Labour Party and the working class generally and exhibits no class antagonism. Indeed he exhibits little antagonism towards those who fought fairly to improve conditions for workers and the needy; his antagonism was for those who sought to incite violence or attacked physically those with whom they disagreed.

Whether dubbed Liberal or Conservative, Walker and his parliamentary colleagues exhibit a strong and genuine concern for social welfare. The Labour Party has come to be regarded as the party of radicalism and receives credit as the

⁸ McQueen, *A new Britannia*, op. cit.

initiator of social welfare legislation.⁹ It would appear that other parties also deserve credit; study of Walker seems to endorse John Rickard's conclusion that

...only in the sense that the Labor Party's emergence was crucial in creating the Australian party system can it be credited with a role of 'initiative' denied to other parties.¹⁰

Walker is demonstrated to have been one of the fairest politicians to grace the Senate, the house he ensured should be known by that title. He took his position seriously, regarding himself as an elder statesman, studying to make himself familiar with aspects of various bills and engaging earnestly in debate. Political opposition never degenerated to personal animosity when debate ended. Prepared to be friendly and helpful to everyone, he tried always to be fair in judgement; that he succeeded to a remarkable degree was attested by opinions of fellow parliamentarians and newspaper accounts.

Why then has Walker been forgotten?

The answer to this lies partly in the general neglect of the Founding Fathers in Australian history. Indeed, as Waterson noted, this neglect is not confined to the Federation Fathers; scant attention has been paid to politicians of the Colonial era.¹¹ There has been also, as Waterson noted further, a tendency by Australian historians to favour 'official society, economic development, the group, the class, and the organisation rather than the individual and his milieu'.¹²

Further, Federation did not immediately provide a colony-oriented people with a sense of nationality. A sense of national pride appears to have developed with participation in war. Thus the great achievement of Walker and his colleagues was overshadowed within fourteen years by the outbreak of the First World War. It is the men of the fighting forces who received acclaim as founders of nationhood, the generals who attracted biographies, rather than the men of Federation who established the nation under whose banner they fought. Yet the name ANZAC may not have existed without an Australian nation; those who fought would have been Colonials.

Apart from these general reasons, Walker sat for most of his parliamentary career on the cross benches and, as Crisp commented:

The histories of political movements and conflicts set down in the wake of events seem most frequently to be written by or for the victors. In that process the victors' real or imagined opponents usually suffer a further, assuredly lasting and perhaps total defeat. So it was during the movement to Australian Federation...¹³

⁹ See Robin Gollan, *Radical and working class politics: A study of eastern Australia, 1850-1910*, Melbourne, 1981.

¹⁰ Rickard, *Australia...*, op. cit., p. 169.

¹¹ Waterson, 'Thomas McIlwraith: A colonial entrepreneur', in D. J. Murphy and R. B. Joyce, *Queensland Political Portraits, 1859-1952*, Brisbane, 1978, p. 119.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹³ Crisp, *George Houston Reid*, Canberra, 1979, p. 1.

Walker supported a number of unpopular causes and, though recognising their abilities, was critical of both Reid and Deakin; he would not join Deakin in office before Fusion and he strongly opposed the Labour Party, distrusting Billy Hughes. It is therefore not surprising to discover Walker passed over in contemporary reminiscences.

It has been all too easy to label him 'a black labour supporter' rather than a human rights campaigner, or to dismiss him merely as 'an eminent citizen' rather than a highly respected financial expert with considerable knowledge and experience.¹⁴ Though his contemporaries realised Walker's sincerity and ability, few were alive at his death; Labour Party politicians who survived were mainly those who had viewed Walker only with suspicion. Their view of Walker as a mere tool of capitalist interests appears to have prevailed. Walker's Liberal contemporaries did nothing to provide an alternative view; Deakin's dismissal of Walker reveals distinct partisanship. As Crisp noted, both Deakin and Wise 'firmly established the Federation movement in the terms and colours of the Federalist "Ultras"'; though Walker might be considered an 'ultra', he did not join them in government, so appears to have been dropped unjustly from their accounts. Of the absence of his name from Reid's reminiscences Walker remarked that he was 'too independent' for Reid's liking.

Walker himself was not prone to self-aggrandisement, but rather modest and self-effacing. His charitable acts, though many, were seldom publicised. He wrote no published reminiscences; his papers lay hidden in England for many years before his grandchildren donated them to Australia where they have remained unrecognised for a further period—so Walker remained a shadowy figure indeed.

He emerges from the shadows an interesting figure. Though it remains entirely possible he is *sui generis*, that he does not conform to any pattern or stereotype, he appears to typify a new breed of migrant of the gold rush era identified by Ian Turner as 'a new kind of men...men of professional and intellectual training and accomplishment', who came to settle not on the land but in the cities. They were, he noted, 'men of considerable energy and vision and, under their impulsion, libraries, galleries, museums, universities, were built...' The starting points for their colonial political discussions were 'Burke, Mill, Carlyle and Arnold'.¹⁵

His career indicates that the 'new men' were not confined to cities, that white-collar workers and professional men were among the pioneers of many country districts, though this may have been more conspicuous in Queensland, a much younger and more decentralised colony than New South Wales or Victoria. His account indicates how rapidly they followed the opening of Queensland frontier ports and mining settlements where they formed cohesive social groups outside the workplace. In these townships they were instrumental in establishing hospitals,

¹⁴ Norris, *op. cit.*; and Reynolds, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Ian Turner, *Room for manoeuvre*, Richmond, Vic., 1982, p. 69.

schools of arts, libraries—in fact in establishing the foundations of cultural life and social services.

At the same time, Walker came into contact in frontier towns with virtually everyone in the community; he appears to have developed a keen appreciation of the lives and problems of a wide cross section of the population. The bush banker established a relationship with his customers and an understanding of their problems that continued on return to the city; this suggests a greater understanding of country people and their problems by at least one group of urban Australians than has been acknowledged.

In Rockhampton and Townsville in particular, Walker's experience suggests that mateship very similar to that described by Russel Ward between bush workers existed among young white-collar workers.¹⁶ This suggests that ideas of mateship in the Australian ethos were not confined exclusively to bush workers nor to rural areas. In Walker's case, it would seem that they derive from his Scottish school background and colonial experience shared with middle-class friends and associates.

Walker was not typical of middle-class Scottish migrants of the 1860s who prospered in Australia. Returning to the land of his childhood rather than arriving for the first time, he was probably much better informed regarding the colonies; he was better off, in that his kinsfolk had long and prestigious associations with Australia and his family were well enough situated to provide him a thorough schooling, to allow him to consider carefully his choice of career, and to equip him well to further that career. Nor can he be regarded as that epitome of success, the completely self-made man. Though nepotism played little or no part in his success as a banker (apart from assisting to obtain his first position with the Bank of New South Wales), Walker cannot be adjudged to have succeeded entirely by his own effort.

Whether typical of middle-class Australians of the period or not, Walker acknowledged cheerfully that he was of the respectable middle class. Study of his life gives the lie to any belief that Australia was classless in the 19th century, but Walker's use of the term 'class' was not in a Marxist sense; it was not as 'structure' or 'category' but, as E. P. Thompson defined, 'something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships'.¹⁷

Walker's sense of class differentiation was based mainly on manners and education; judgements of men and women tended to be made in terms of behaviour rather than class. It is doubtful whether he saw himself as other than a worker; he had no desire to be a gentlemen of leisure. He was conscious that he was not of the top class. That rank was reserved for men of university education, what Walker called 'professional men'. Though he numbered among acquaintance a number of

¹⁶ R. Ward, *The Australian legend*, op. cit.

¹⁷ The claim for a classless Australia is expounded by F. W. Eggleston in Max Atkinson (ed.), *Trade Unionism in Australia*, Sydney, 1915; *Reflections of an Australian Liberal*, Melbourne, 1953; and E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, Pelican, 1968, p. 9, quoted in Rickard, *Class and politics*, op. cit., p. 2.

professional men, few were close friends; he mixed socially mainly with members of the banking and commercial fraternity. MacLaurin, MacKellar, even Deakin and Barton, appear to have treated him with a degree of condescension, the superiority of the professional for the mere commercial man. Walker accepted this for the most part without rancour.

Though on occasion sounding patronising, he appears to have mixed with all classes with ease and for the most part on equal terms. He was neither blindly reverential to those above him nor consciously condescending to those below. Malcolm Prentis remarked on the Scots' 'strong democratic outlook in the sense of refusing to be class-bound and in rejecting English-style deference to one's superiors'.¹⁸ Walker undoubtedly inherited this trait. Though it resembles the 'egalitarianism of manners' Rickard ascribes to a colonial aristocracy, it seems in Walker's case to derive from his Scottish upbringing.¹⁹ His life in the Scottish village of Penicuik, mixing with the villagers and working alongside the farmhands, may have developed in Walker a greater respect for labourers than might have been found in other urban workers.

Walker does not fit the image of the bloated capitalist depicted in the *Bulletin* and the *Worker*. His background of comparative affluence appears to have made him more generous and less greedy, more humane and considerate, than many of the self-made men to whom George Reid referred in his 1906 description:

We did not start with an aristocracy with inherited fortunes. We started with the cream of enterprise of the old world—men who came out here with a few shillings or a few pounds, and who by their own indomitable industry, frugality and sobriety worked their way up to becoming capitalists.²⁰

Walker was not an extraordinarily wealthy man, though he controlled large accretions of capital, and admitted quite plainly to being a capitalist, a term that had not then the overtones of Marxist rhetoric. He was opposed to sweated labour and treated his own workers well; on the Board of the Bank of New South Wales his concern for employees is evident in his initiatives for improved wages and conditions. Walker and other members of his family were paying pensions to employees well before the Labour Party commenced agitation for their general introduction in legislatures, which suggests the idea of such benefits was not generated by socialist doctrine so much as by their introduction by enlightened employers.

Essentially a simple man, though not unworldly, Walker certainly did not believe in accumulating wealth solely for personal aggrandisement and selfish profit. His attitude was stated clearly in an interview published in the *Sunday Times*:

Personally I like moderately poor men better than rich men. Very rich people are apt to be selfish and regardless of others. Poor people are

¹⁸ Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scottish in Australia*, Melbourne, 1963, p. 1.

¹⁹ Rickard, *Australia...*, op. cit., p. 143.

²⁰ G. H. Reid, Official Report of a Public Debate between Rt. Hon. G. H. Reid...and Mr W. A. Holman, Sydney, 1906, p. 25.

kinder to one another. Looking back upon my life, too, I don't think the rich people I have known have been the happiest. The ideal state is that implied by Agur's saying 'give me neither poverty nor riches'.²¹

Material prosperity was important because it enabled him to provide education and comfort for his family, but it was not the absolute measure of success in life. He would undoubtedly have agreed with Manning Clark that material progress will not necessarily make people happier or better.²² Not that Walker disapproved of wealth earned fairly and used honourably; his attitude is probably best described in the quotation: 'make all you can, save all you can, give all you can'.²³ He obviously derived great pleasure that his charitable work assisted so many. Humphrey McQueen has noted that Australian society of the period was competitive and acquisitive, but Walker's life demonstrates acquisitiveness did not necessarily mean irresponsible accrual of wealth for personal pleasure; there was a price to be paid to society, a duty to care for dependents, for family and employees and for those less fortunate.²⁴ Whether Walker differed markedly in this from others of his society or not, one cannot judge, so little information is available regarding philanthropy of the period.

His philanthropy was not a two-faced exercise in buying favour with the world, but was motivated by genuine care and concern derived from the Glasite influence of his childhood overlaid by his own conception of Christian faith. That one should treat all with equal courtesy and kindness, that one should attempt to do good for as many as possible, regardless of race, creed, colour or social class, were clearly inspired by the Christian tenet that all men (and in Walker's view, women) were equal in the sight of God. Walker was not the canting, humbug Christian of whom Manning Clark writes so sceptically nor was he of the fire and brimstone school of Protestantism.²⁵ Unlike a large number of his contemporaries, he seldom missed a Sunday service, and studied a wide selection of religious tracts. He was, unusually for a Presbyterian of his times, an admirer of Cardinal Newman. However, he never became an Elder or acted as a lay preacher in the tradition of forebears.

Though elements of Puritanism can be discerned in Walker, he does not appear to have espoused the rampant puritanism that Anne Summers depicts.²⁶ The conviction that success could be achieved by industry, sobriety and patience, and his continual discouragement at his own impatience, clearly derive from the influence of the Protestant work ethic. It was not, however, carried to extreme; Walker, and for that matter most of his friends, worked hard and with dedication, but they took time out to enjoy cricket matches and other recreations and exercise. In adhering to

²¹ *Sunday Times*, Sydney, 29 December 1906.

²² This is a paraphrase of statements Manning Clark has made on a number of occasions. The last occasion on which the author recalls hearing Clark make a similar statement was during an address in Townsville about 1987. Rob Pascoe, *The manufacture of Australian history*, Melbourne, 1979, p. 60 also quotes Clark on this point.

²³ John Wesley, quoted in Walker diary, vol. 38, 5 September 1886.

²⁴ McQueen, *A new Britannia*, op. cit., p. 125.

²⁵ Clark, *A history of Australia*, vol. 5, op. cit.

²⁶ A. Summers, *Damned whores and God's police*, Melbourne, 1975, pp. 357-70.

his beliefs, he was remarkably forgiving and tolerant of his fellows. Perhaps his experience as a banker had tempered his views; a banker, he believed,

...should have a broad view of things to begin with; he must learn to forget his prejudices if he has any; he should cultivate a sympathetic nature but he must not allow his sympathy to run away with his judgement...²⁷

All his life he was attracted to the vision of a loving God. He believed sincerely in the advice he passed to his children:

You must never allow the hollow friendship of the world to make you 'worldly'... Continue to be kind-hearted and natural and remember the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you'... After all, the great thing if one wishes to enjoy peace of mind is to be contented with one's lot in life... Happiness is subjective...it depends on oneself. Godliness with contentment is great gain...²⁸

The notable characteristic of Walker was that he constantly and consistently lived by that creed. A mere human, he may have failed at times, but, to a remarkable degree, it pervaded his family life, public life and political life. He did not force his views on others. Nor was he a bigot; he deplored the intrusion of Sectarianism into politics, refusing to be a member of a Federation 'bunch' unless it contained at least one Roman Catholic, and also refusing to join a Protestant alliance to oppose Roman Catholic influence in the Labour Party.

His Christianity combined with strong Scottish characteristics and the feminine influence within his family, appears to have produced an unusual Victorian paterfamilias.²⁹ The happiness and welfare of his family came before his own; the women of his family were decidedly not subservient.³⁰ Loving his wife, romantically and passionately, he might even be described as 'henpecked'.

In general, he was contented with his lot in life. He enjoyed the cut and thrust of political debate and he enjoyed his profession:

I like banking — I really do. Of course like most occupations, there is a certain amount of drudgery at the beginning...but I used to like even the so-called drudgery... It is a most interesting profession, you see the whole range of human nature...³¹

This is perhaps the key to Walker's undoubted popularity; his interest in and concern for his fellow men and women was not politically motivated but genuine and humane. He believed sincerely, though acknowledging deficiencies, in man's innate goodness, in his ability to administer his own affairs without overwhelming government intervention.

²⁷ James Thomas Walker, interview, *Australia*, 30 May 1907.

²⁸ This is a pastiche of quotations from letters to Nita Walker (later Verney), dated successively 25 February 1907, 12 May 1907 and 25 November 1907.

²⁹ Accurate judgement on this point is not possible. The picture of the stern overbearing Victorian husband and subservient wife appears, on the superficial information available, not to fit a number of Walker's acquaintance.

³⁰ Turner, op. cit., p. 50.

³¹ James Thomas Walker, interview, *Australia*, 30 May 1907.

When attempting to describe him, the words that spring to mind are 'loyal, honourable, honest, fair-minded, public-spirited, chivalrous, constant, self-effacing, courteous, responsible, dedicated, modest, generous...' They are part of a vocabulary used in many publications to describe the best of those Empire builders of the Victorian and Edwardian era, influenced by what Mark Girouard has perceived as 'The Return of Camelot', that revival of the Age of Chivalry popularised in the works of pre-Raphaelite artists, in the poetry of Sir Alfred Tennyson and in particular, the novels of Sir Walter Scott, one of Walker's favourite authors.³²

He was decidedly a child of the Victorian Age, but also of his Scottish ancestry and family background, a British Australian with strong loyalties to the land of his birth, but dedicated to the land of his adoption.

³² Mark Girouard, *The return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English gentleman*, Yale, 1981.



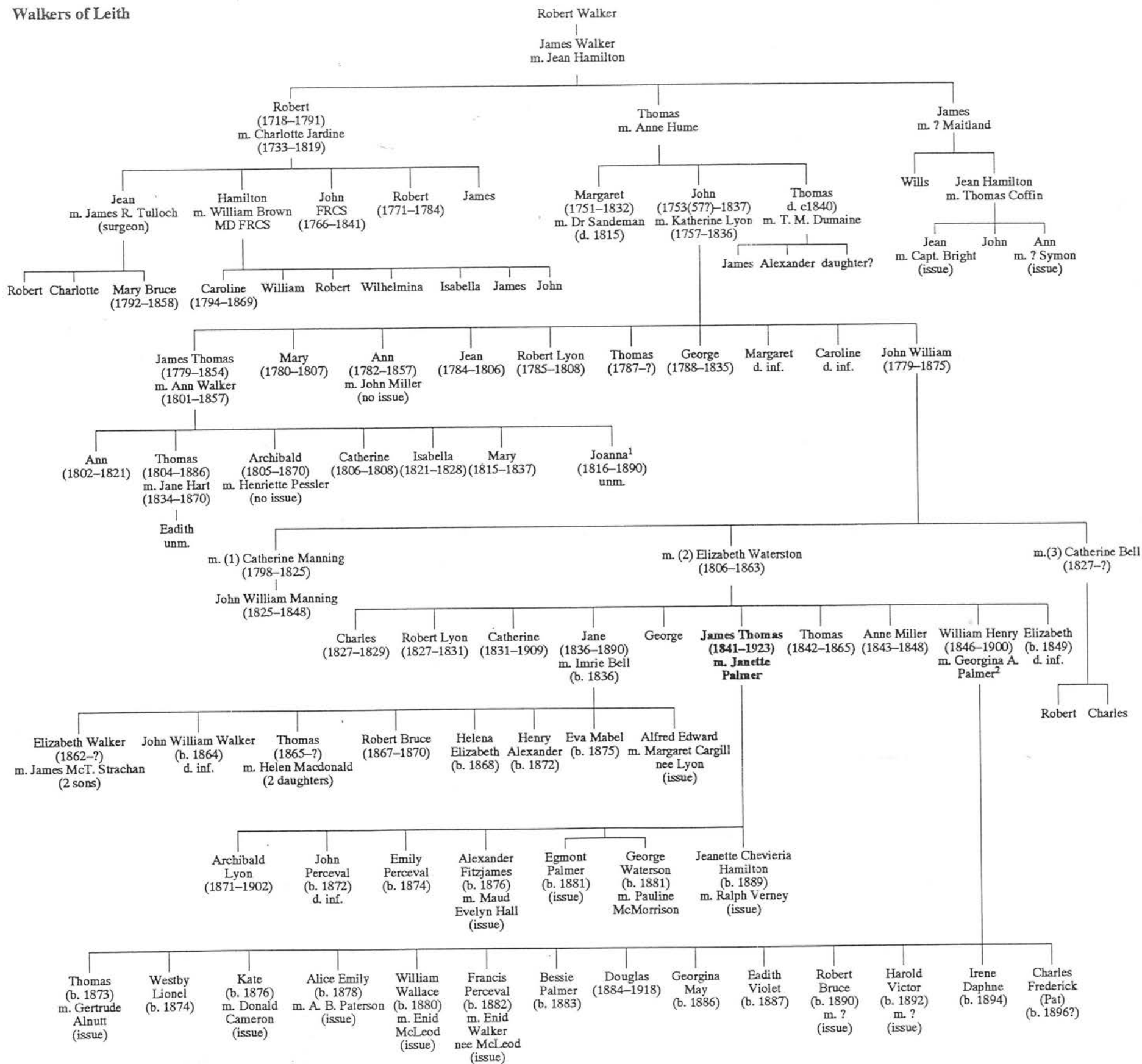
Cartoon of J. T. Walker by Will Dyson.

The cartoon suggests that element of a Don Quixote in J. T. Walker as he tilted at the 'windmills' of prejudice of his time.

Walker family tree

Table 1(a)

Walkers of Leith



NOTES

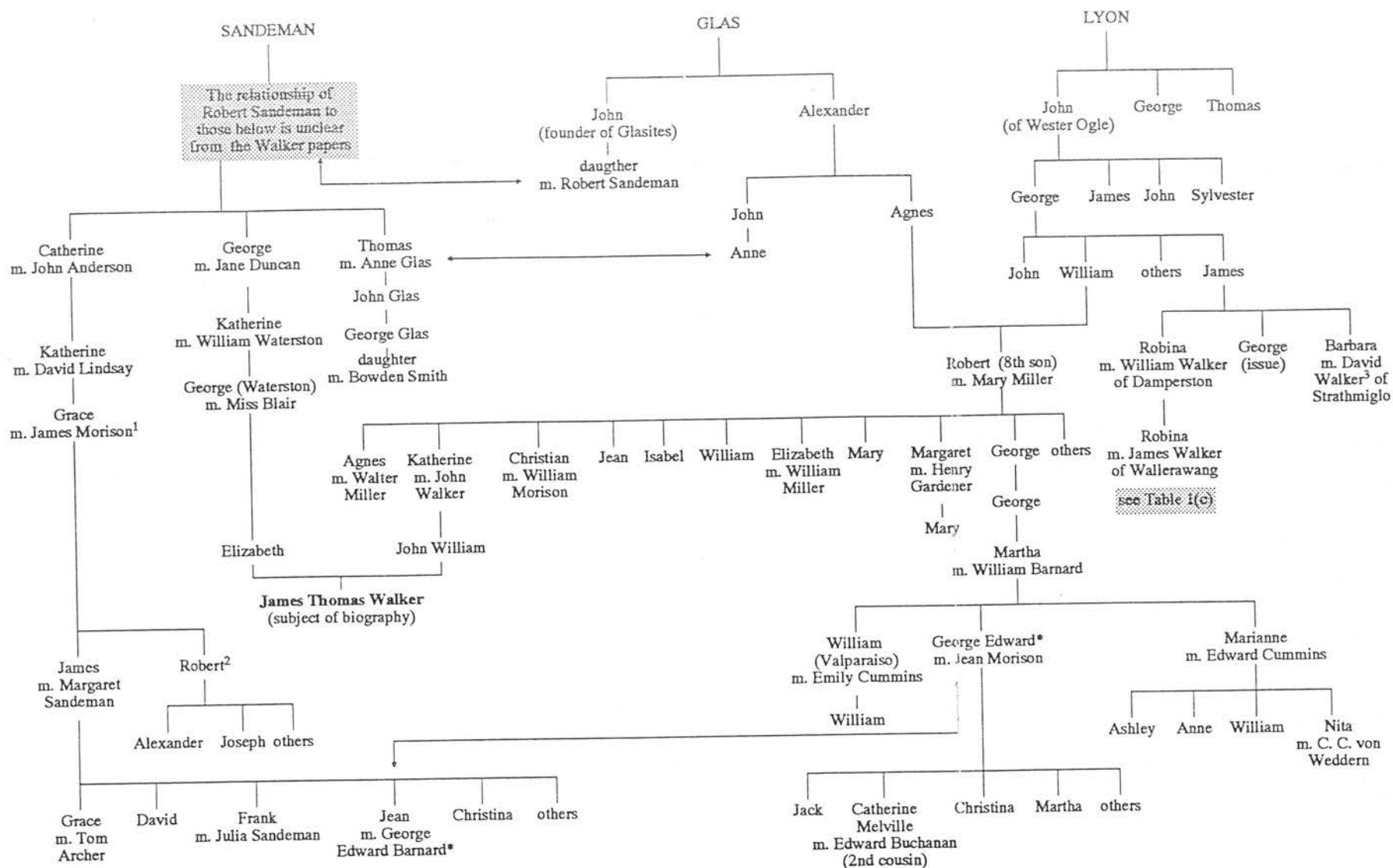
¹ Joanna adopted Anne Masefield who married the architect John Sulman.

² Georgina was the sister of Janette Palmer, wife of James Thomas Walker, the subject of this biography.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from information in the diaries and manuscripts of James Thomas Walker

Table 1(b)

Lyon connections

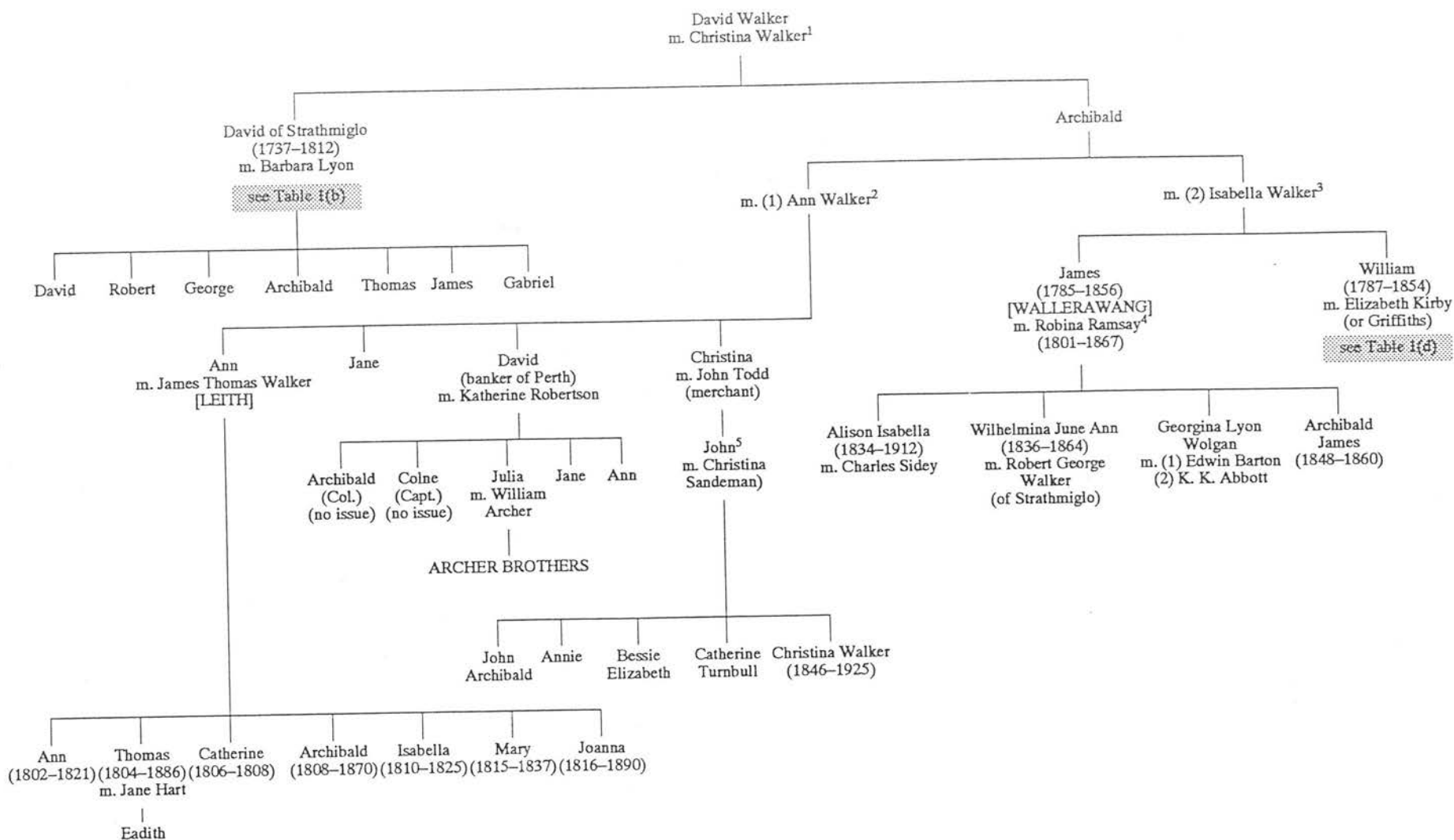


NOTES

- 1 Uncertain if James is related to William Morison (who married Christian Lyon).
- 2 Uncertain if Robert was son of James Morison or of William Morison (who married Christian Lyon).
- 3 Brother of Archibald Walker of Perth.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from information in the diaries and manuscripts of James Thomas Walker

Table 1(c)
Walkers of Perth



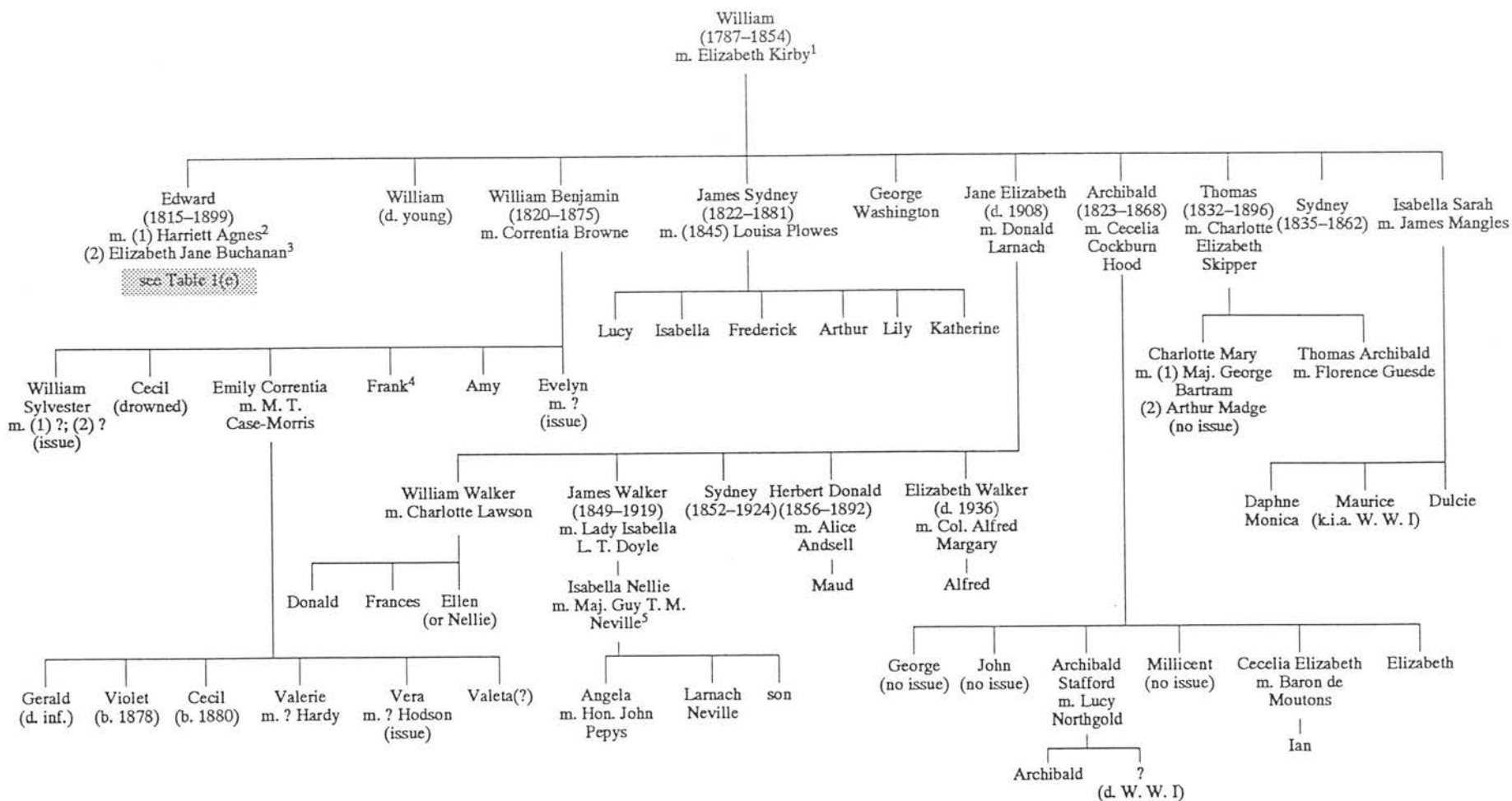
NOTES

- 1 Christina was the daughter of Rev. David Walker of Temple.
Married 1 July 1736.
- 2 Daughter of Archibald Walker who married Elizabeth Carlyle,
a granddaughter of Rev. David Walker of Temple.
- 3 Daughter of the Laird of Falfield.
- 4 Daughter of William Walker of Dampierston, son of the Laird
of Falfield.
- 5 Ink manufacturer of Dundee.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from
information supplied by Mr A. Walker,
'Wolgan', Victoria

Table 1(d)

Descendants of William Walker



NOTES

1 Sometimes referred to as Elizabeth Griffiths.

2 Daughter of John Skipper. Married in 1838 at Dorking, Surrey.

3 Daughter of William Buchanan, Advocate. Married in 1859 at Edinburgh.

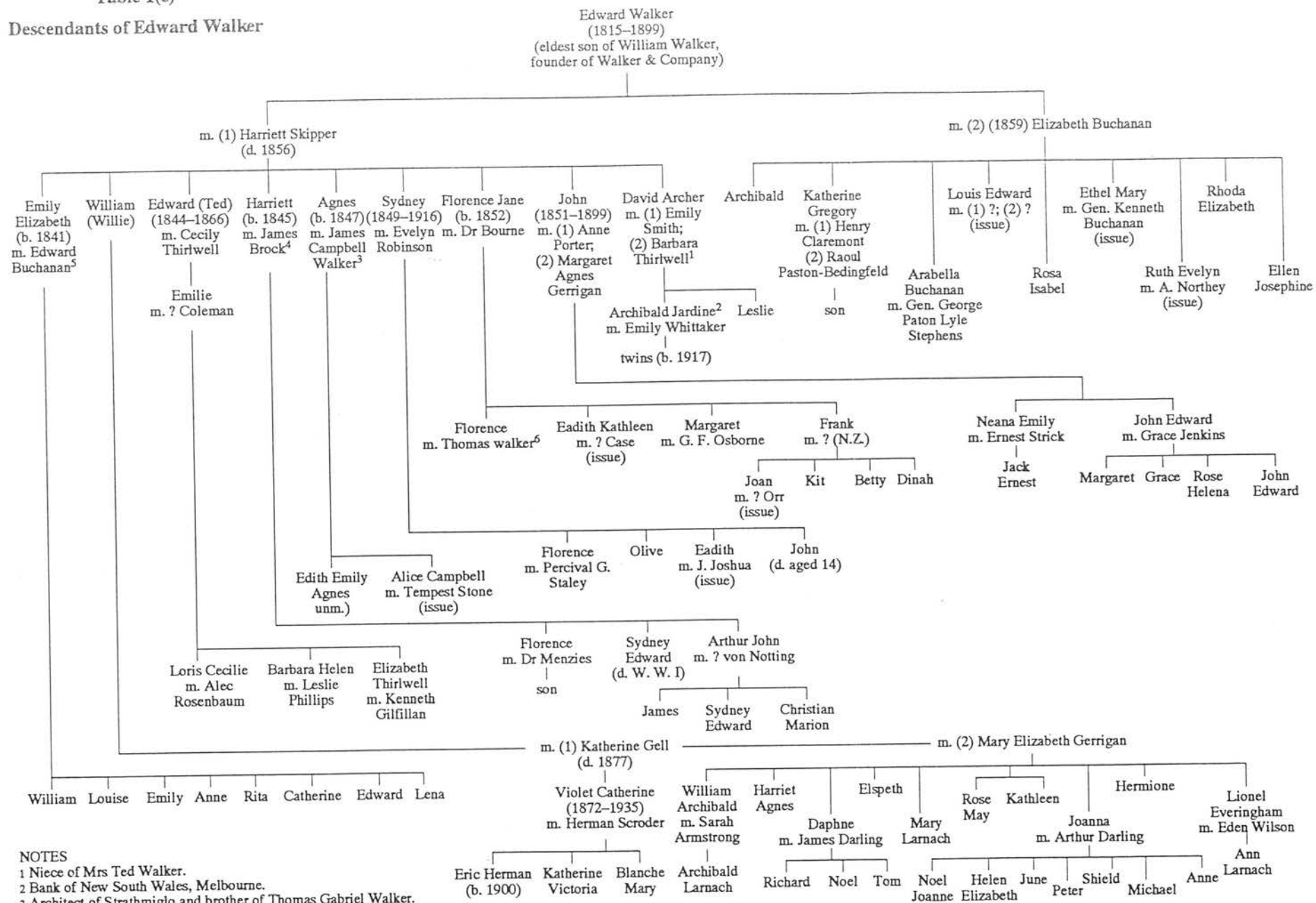
4 Disinherited by his father.

5 Heir to Marquis of Abergavenny.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from
information supplied by Mr A. Walker,
'Wolgan', Victoria

Table 1(e)

Descendants of Edward Walker

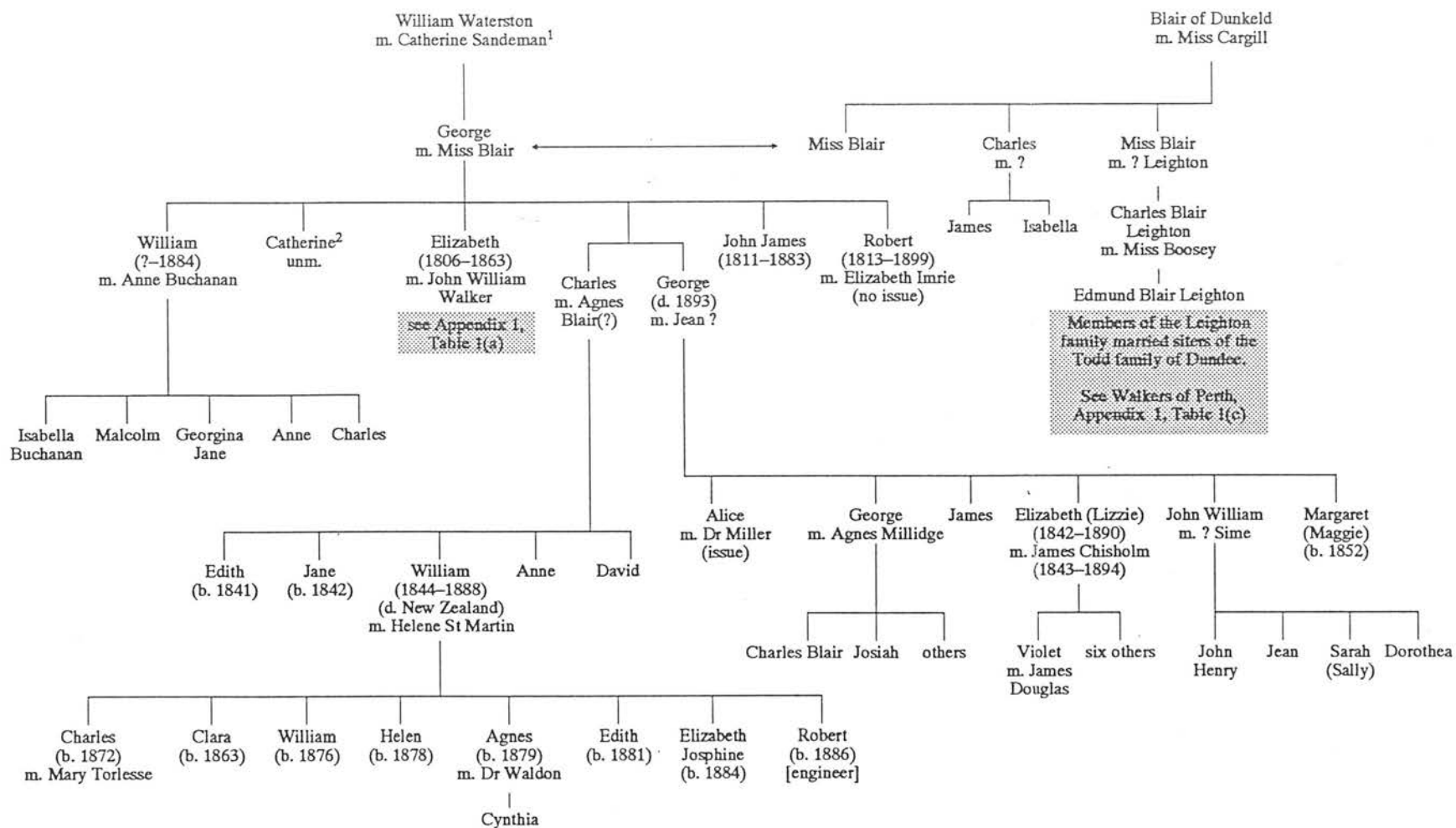


NOTES

- 1 Niece of Mrs Ted Walker.
- 2 Bank of New South Wales, Melbourne.
- 3 Architect of Strathmiglo and brother of Thomas Gabriel Walker.
- 4 Brock was at the Edinburgh Institution with James Thomas Walker and in Rockhampton.
- 5 Brother of her stepmother .

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from
information supplied by Mr A. Walker,
'Wolgan', Victoria

Waterston family tree



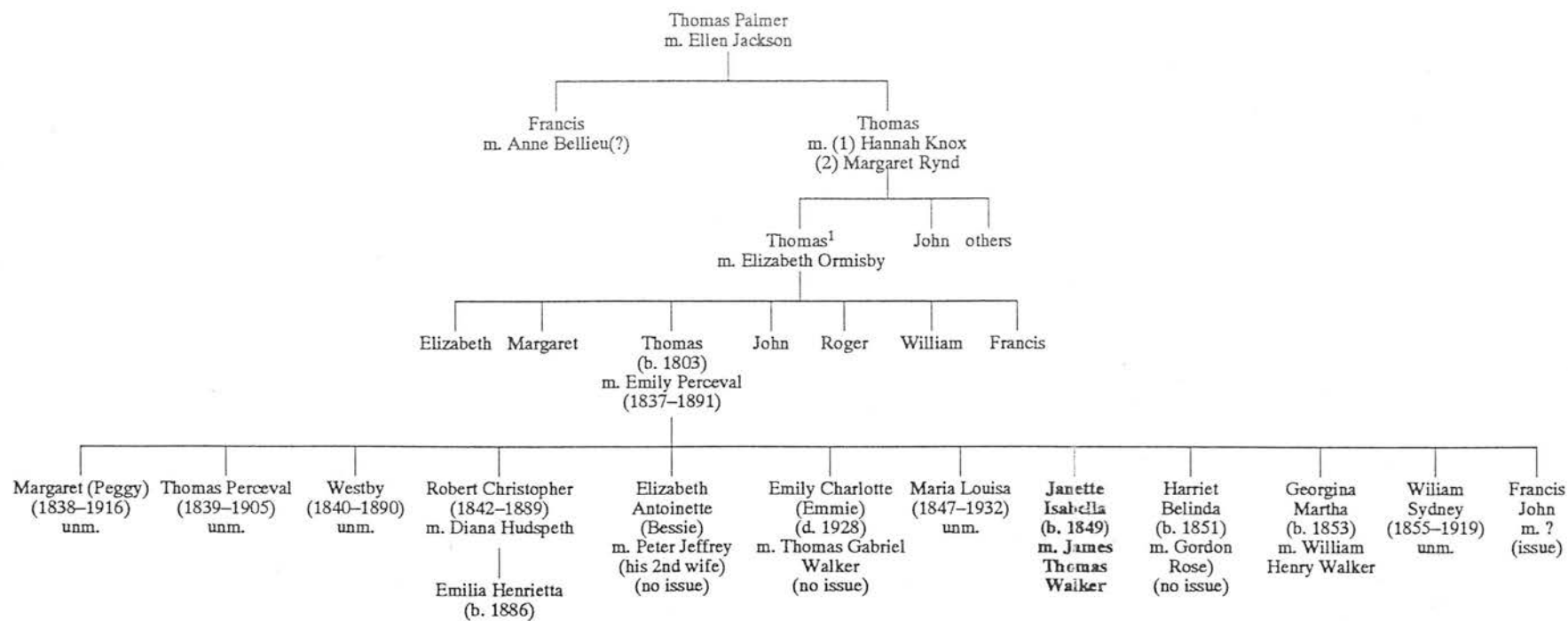
NOTES

1 Catherine later married Rev. Robert Ferrier.

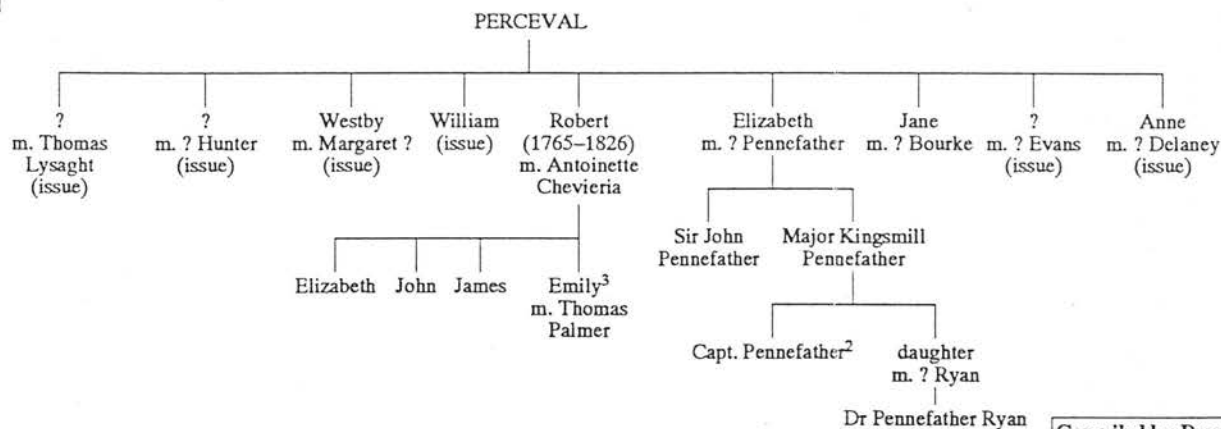
2 Lived at Lasswade.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from information in the diaries and manuscripts of James Thomas Walker

Palmer family tree



THE PERCEVAL CONNECTION



NOTES

- 1 High Sheriff of Co. Mayo.
- 2 Superintendent of St Helena (Old).
- 3 Emily was adopted by Westby Perceval.

Compiled by Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde from
information in the diaries and manuscripts
of James Thomas Walker

Appendix 4

Itinerary of James Thomas Walker as Inspector, Bank of New South Wales, 1882

The year 1882 provides a typical example of the schedule demanded of him, starting on 17 February when he travelled by train to Toowoomba, Warwick and Stanthorpe, arriving on 1 March 1882. His itinerary from then until September is outlined below:

- 6 Mar. Left for Goondiwindi via Greenmount, Leyburn and Ellangowan, taking the mail coach from Ellangowan at 4.00 a.m. to Inglewood, reached at 6.00 p.m. on 9 March.
- 10 Mar. Reached Goondiwindi at 5.00 p.m. Finished at Goondiwindi on 12 March.
- 13 Mar. Continued by buggy to Callandoon and on by horse to Nindy Gully, taking the coach from there to St George.
- 19 Mar. Continued to Surat, travelling from there by Cobb & Co. coach to Yeulbah, then the terminus of the railway from Brisbane; there he caught the train to Roma and then on to Brisbane.

(Seven weeks at home)

- 15–20 May Inspection of the Ipswich Branch.

(Two weeks at home)

- 3 June Boarded the *Katoomba*.
- 7 June Townsville. Departed for Port Douglas.
- 8 June Port Douglas.
- 9 June Cooktown.
- 10 June Departed for and arrived at Port Douglas.
- 11–16 June Port Douglas.
- 16 June Murphy's Coach to Thornborough. Male passengers walked up the main range. Camped over night at 'The Mitchell'.
- 17 June Arrived Northcote 2.30 p.m. Inspected the Marianne Machine.
- 18 June Departed 9.30 a.m. Arrived Kingsborough 1.30 p.m. and Thornborough at 2.30 p.m. Inspected antimony reefs.

- 20 June Returned Northcote. Visited Craig's P. C., No. 1. North (Westby Palmer's mine) and Emily P. C. (belonging to Denny and Moffatt).
- 21 June Joined a party to inspect the Wild River Tin Mines, following the telegraph line up the Walsh River for a few miles to 'The Western', headquarters of the Great Western Tin Mining Company.¹ Arranged purchase of a bank site.
- 22 June Continued to Herberton calling on the way at Bischoff's Herberton Tin Mining Company.
- 23 June Returned to Cairns via the Barron Gorge.
- 24 June Reached Cairns.
- 25 June Departed for Townsville.
- 26 June Townsville.
- 30 June Departed Townsville; arrived Cardwell.
- 2 July Departed Cardwell; arrived Townsville.
- 7 July Departed Townsville. Train to Ravenswood Junction (now Mingela). Coach to Charters Towers.
- 14 July Departed Charters Towers. Coach to Ravenswood Junction. Train to Townsville.
- 17 July Departed Townsville by steamer for Bowen.
- 24 July Departed Bowen by steamer for Rockhampton.
- 26 July Rockhampton.
- 5 Aug. Departed Rockhampton by train for Emerald.
- 6 Aug. Departed Emerald by coach for Clermont.
- 11 Aug. Departed Clermont by coach for Emerald.
- 12 Aug. Departed Emerald by train for Rockhampton.
- 15 Aug. Departed Rockhampton by steamer for Bundaberg.
- 16 Aug. Bundaberg.
- 23 Aug. Departed Bundaberg by steamer for Maryborough.
- 24 Aug. Maryborough.
- 28 Aug. Departed Maryborough by train for Gympie.
- 1 Sept. Departed Gympie by train for Maryborough.
- 4 Sept. Departed Maryborough by steamer for Brisbane.
- 5 Sept. Arrived Brisbane.

¹ The name of the township had just been changed to Watson; it later became Watsonville.

Appendix 5

Analysis of shareholders, Royal Bank of Queensland Limited

The following list was published with the First Half-Yearly Report of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited; of the stated 660 shareholders, only 659 names are listed.

Region	No. of shareholders
Brisbane*	172
Queensland country	268
New South Wales	145
Victoria	56
South Australia	4
Tasmania	12
Fiji, Ireland	1 each

*Toowong, Paddington and Bulimba addresses are included in Brisbane

Queensland country shareholders were distributed as follows:

Region	No. of shareholders
Maryborough	41
Toowoomba	40
Ipswich	28
Rockhampton	20
Townsville	18
Gympie	13
Warwick	13
Roma	6
Sandgate	5
Bundaberg	4
Blackall, Cooktown, Goodna, Yengarie, Lytton	3 each
Aramac, Charleville, Charters Towers, Nudgee, Caboolture, Maryvale, Cleveland, Oxley, Georgetown, Geraldton (Innsfail)	2 each
Hodgson, Howard, Pimpama, Mt Cotton, Jericho, North Pine River, Sugar Loaf, Nebo, Kilcoy, Iindah, Northampton Downs, Mourilyan, Cardwell, Enoggera, Rosewood, Gayndah, Miriam Vale, Tabragalba, Cometville, Lowood, Maranoa River, Cootharaba, Boondoomba, Normanton, Stanthorpe, Tambo, Marlborough, Georgetown, Morven, Gracemere, Redbank, Clermont, Yeulba, Balmoral, Herberton, Mackay, East Prairie, Walloon, Calliope, Miles, Dalby, Jondaryn, Yatala	1 each

Appendix 6**Directors of Royal Bank of Queensland Limited**

The following Directors were elected at a meeting of shareholders of the Royal Bank of Queensland Limited on 11 November 1885:

William Miles M.L.A.
William Williams
Francis Kates M.L.A.
William Henry Kent
William Villiers Brown M.L.A.
John Sinclair
John Donaldson M.L.A.
William Brand Webster
William Kellett M.L.A.
Abraham Fleetwood Luya M.L.A.
Frederick Hurrell Holberton M.L.C.
Acheson Overend

Appendix 7

The Walker manuscripts

The bulk of the papers of James Thomas Walker is held in boxes K54279 to K54292 in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. At his death, Walker willed his diaries and other papers to his two daughters Sissie and Nita and to his daughter-in-law Evelyn Walker, with the provision that they should be closed to public access for at least twenty-five years. They were taken to England by Nita Verney, where they remained until her death; her children Joscelyne Thorne, Sir John Verney and Sir David Verney, decided to donate them to the Mitchell Library. They remained in the library, little used, when the writer re-discovered them while researching the history of Townsville in 1980. By that time, records of the donors had been lost and the library would not allow access to or publication of any of the material until consent of the donors was given. A search then followed to locate the whereabouts of Walker's grandchildren; this necessitated a journey to England when their consent for work on a biography was given gladly.

The collection consists of:

Major items

- **The diaries of James Thomas Walker (1856–1921)**

The set comprises 118 of a known 119 volumes. The missing diary (vol. 63, 1896–97) might have provided interesting insights into his reasons for attending the Bathurst Convention, his activities at and comment on that meeting, and his reasons for nominating for election in the 'Federal Ten'. However, in view of the chequered history of the collection, it is amazing that only one volume is missing.

The diaries were kept mainly as a record of events and people, not as a confessional or a record of his innermost thoughts. At times, however, they take on an element of the confessional and certainly reveal his personal feelings. They vary in quality, sometimes maintained daily in detail, at other times written up from memory or a pocket book after a time lapse.

As a basis for a biography they are not entirely satisfactory, but they do provide an excellent record of day-to-day life of a young man growing up in a Scottish middle-class family, entering life as a banker, and returning to Australia in young adulthood. They record, too, his life as a banker on the Australian frontier, later in a large country town, and still later as the

second-in-charge of the Head Office of the Bank of New South Wales in Queensland. They enable an understanding of his long interest in politics and the forces that shaped his political beliefs. They present comment on many Australian pioneers and politicians and enable an appreciation of the life of Walker's Australia.

The diaries are fragile and are not easy to read. However, as a result of this work the diaries have now been microfilmed; if they are no easier to read, they are more readily accessible.

- **Diaries of members of the Walker family**

The diaries, initially unidentified when work commenced on the biography of J. T. Walker, have been identified by the author of this thesis.

The diaries and their writers are:

Writer	Period	No.	Relation to JTW	Comments
George Walker	1811–1817	?	Uncle (of JTW) and younger brother of John William Walker	Diaries relate to events in Britain, recording his travels to Ireland and Scotland, and to Ostend.
	1828–1835	?		
Thomas Walker	1859–1862	5	Younger brother	Diaries record details of his life at Gracemere Station.
Archibald Lyon Walker	1886–1900	2	Eldest son	Diaries of the children record day-to-day events in their lives; they throw some light on family life in the Walker household, and on the lives of children of the period.
Egmont P. Walker (Montie)	1898	1	Twin sons	
George W. Walker	1898	1		
J. C. H. Walker (Nita)	1902	1	Younger daughter	

- **Family and business correspondence (1819–1948)**

This material is uncatalogued and spread in a number of boxes rather haphazardly. Some letters are crossed and unreadable. The main body comprises letters between family members, mostly between J. T. Walker and his wife. There is also a number of letters of sympathy following Walker's death in 1923. Little correspondence relating to his political life is included.

It is not obvious that this collection has been culled systematically, but it appears that some correspondence may have been lost or destroyed.

Minor items

- Expenses book, Castlesteads Station (1844–1846)
- Menus, invitations and souvenirs of J. T. Walker's public life
- Legal papers relating to the Walker family, comprising birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates and James Thomas Walker's will, etc.

This collection includes documents regarding the estate of William Benjamin Walker and his brother Thomas Walker.

- Legal papers relating to the Palmer family:
including the marriage settlement of Thomas Palmer and Emily Perceval; documents relating to the estates of Westby P. Palmer, Emily Palmer and William Palmer; and other Palmer family matters.
- School exercise books from J. T. Walker's years at the Edinburgh Institution
- Catalogues of J. T. Walker's library
- Documents relating to the collection made to assist Mrs Edmund Barton.

Other items

In a separate area the Mitchell Library holds James Thomas Walker's collection of 90 volumes of newspaper cuttings relating to a variety of people and topics (Mitchell Library, ref. Q049/W), and his collection of cartoons relating to Federation.

Copies of various major addresses delivered by J. T. Walker are held in the Mitchell Library; several other libraries in the eastern states hold copies of most of these publications. The addresses were published in booklet form as follows:

Some Remarks on Australasian banks and on banking as a factor in the progress of Australasia, Sydney, 1888

A glance at the prospective finance of the Australian Federation or Commonwealth, Sydney, 1897

Notes on Federal finance, Sydney, 1897

Speeches delivered in the Australasian Federation Convention, Sydney, 1897

Remarks on Federal finance, Sydney, 1898

The Federation of British Australasia, Sydney, 1898.

Apart from the collection in the Mitchell Library, J. T. Walker's granddaughter Mrs Judith Lord holds some letters, mainly of condolence. His grandchildren in England do not hold any correspondence, but Mrs Joscelyne Thorne has the photograph album of her mother's wedding at 'Wallaroy' with photographs of the house and of other members of the Walker family.

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