HOW THE SOUTH-EAST WAS HELD:

ASPECTS OF THE QUADRIPARTITE INTERACTION OF

MOUNT GAMBIER, PORTLAND, ADELAIDE AND MELBOURNE

1860 - 1917

by

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VOLUME I

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School of History, University of Melbourne,
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ERRATA:

Line 15 on page 105 should read –

than to genuine border merchants. South Australian merchants (especially vigneron) landed goods at Kingston and
While the final responsibility for the contents of this thesis rests in my hands, it would not have eventuated without the encouragement, advice and generous assistance of many individuals and organisations.

The sometimes onerous task of supervision of this study was shared by Professor John Poynter and Weston Bate. Their pertinent comments often proved to be of greater utility than I at first perceived.

Specific assistance was supplied by the following (in no special order): the staff of the LaTrobe Library at the State Library of Victoria; the staff of the State Library of South Australia (in particular the staff of the newspaper section); officers of the Municipalities of Mount Gambier, South Australia, and Portland, Victoria, and of the Shire of Portland, Heywood, Victoria; Mr. Les R. Hill, Mount Gambier; Mr. R.J.R. Watson of the Border Watch, Mount Gambier; and Mr. J. Wiltshire, Portland, Victoria.

Special gratitude must be directed towards my parents, family and friends at Mount Gambier. Their unflagging faith in my research was a bulwark. My Melbourne environment was not as generous. It was left to another alien to come to my aid. For being there at the critical times, and for giving without expectation or reward, Maureen reduced the terminal problems of this thesis to manageable proportions. Her positive influence was immeasurable. It will not be forgotten.

(BRUCE A. FERGUSON)
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ABBREVIATIONS

In pursuit of brevity the following abbreviations have been used in this thesis, sometimes in the text, but normally in the footnotes.

A.D.B. Australian Dictionary of Biography.
B.W. Border Watch.
Mt. Gambier Mount Gambier.
Mt. G. Std. Mount Gambier Standard.
P.C. Portland Chronicle.
P.G. Portland Guardian.
P.M. Mirror and Portland Advertising Guide.
P.O. Portland Observer and Normanby Advertiser.
S.A. South Australia or South Australian, depending on context.
S.A.A. South Australian Archives.
SAPD(LC) South Australia. Parliamentary Debates. Legislative Council.
SAPP South Australia. Papers presented to Parliament.
S.A. Advertiser South Australian Advertiser.
S.A. Chronicle South Australian Chronicle.
S.A. Gazette South Australia. Government Gazette.
S.A. Register South Australian Register.
S.E. Star South-Eastern Star.
ABBREVIATIONS

VPD(LC) Victoria. Parliamentary Debates.
Legislative Council.


V.R.B. Board of Main Roads for the District of Victoria.

W.T. Western Times and Portland Chronicle.

Yeoman Yeoman and Australian Acclimatiser.
INTRODUCTION
In June 1862 the Melbourne weekly, The Leader, published an eye-witness description of the Mt. Gambier district of South Australia. The assessment was one of qualified optimism:

...the visitor to Mount Gambier will be surprised at the extraordinary fertility of the country around this neighborhood. Wheat, barley, oats, potatoes and all ordinary agricultural produce, yield abundantly in this district, which wants but some cheap and convenient means of transport to render it the very granary of Australia [my emphasis].

Despite the advent of Australian Federation, it appeared that little change had occurred almost fifty years later. In 1909 the second volume of The Cyclopedia of South Australia prefaced its section on Mt. Gambier district residents with, inter alia, this comment:

... While the productiveness of the Mt. Gambier country was never in doubt, its relative isolation was a serious drawback, and for a long period progress was comparatively slow. This difficulty has not yet been fully overcome, and the best method of dealing with it has been a perennial theme of discussion for over fifty years [my emphasis]. Adelaid [sic] is 305 miles away on one side and Melbourne 300 on the other. Taking the outports from east to west, Portland has the best harbour, but it is in Victoria [my emphasis], and seventy miles distant. Port MacDonnell, eighteen miles to the south, is much the nearest, but MacDonnell Bay is an open roadstead; vessels are obliged to anchor far out in an exposed position, where the sea is often rough, and freight cannot be conveniently handled. Beachport has its advocates, but it is fifty miles from the Mount, and Rivoli Bay, on which it is situated, is neither deep nor well sheltered. Of the South Australian harbours, Guichen Bay has the best natural features; but Robe is eighty-five miles off, and at present there is no rail communication. Quick transit is a necessity for stock, especially for lambs consigned to the freezing works, and cheap transit for such commodities as potatoes, onions and cereals. When these are supplied more adequately producers will be relieved of the hardships which their industry has always endured.

This thesis examines aspects of the "perennial theme of discussion", acknowledging the involvement of four participants, viz., Mt. Gambier, Portland, Adelaide and Melbourne.
The assertion of regional generality was supported by the fact that between 1866 and 1921 the Mt. Gambier district rarely contained less than 39% of the total population of the South-East of South Australia. Indeed, in 1911, over 48% of the region's population lived in the vicinity of Mt. Gambier. Furthermore, as Hirst noted, Mt. Gambier was the only old South Australian country town to maintain a steady rate of growth between 1870 and 1917. These facts contributed to the belief, to be longheld by both Adelaide and Melbourne, that Mt. Gambier was the key to the South-East of South Australia. The holding of Mt. Gambier was then thought to be a necessary precursor to the holding of the South-East.

Learmonth and Logan have each produced very useful studies of the Victorian port of Portland and its hinterland. Their perceptions, however, remain essentially "Victorian". While the proximity of the border between Victoria and South Australia was acknowledged, no rigorous attempt was made to study historically its regional influence. This thesis also aims to remedy that situation.
INTRODUCTION - FOOTNOTES

1. Leader, June 14, 1862, p. 11.


3. The South-East of South Australia can be taken as an approximation which consists of the Counties of Grey, Robe, and MacDonnell combined. In a similar fashion the Mt. Gambier district can be taken as an approximation which consists of the Districts of Mt. Gambier East and Mt. Gambier West (since 1932 the District of Mt. Gambier), and the Municipality of Mt. Gambier combined. The official census statistics between 1866 and 1921 provided the percentages (after suitable calculation).


CHAPTER 1

OPPORTUNITY LOST: DISSOLUTION OF THE PORTLAND AND MT. GAMBIER CONNECTION AND THE ASSERTION OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY 1860-1867
Portland Bay is situated between Capes Nelson and Reaumud on the south-west coast of the State of Victoria. In 1834 this area was formally part of the Port Phillip Bay district of the colony of New South Wales. In that same year the Hentys, an entrepreneurial family with a penchant for commercial pastoralism, arrived at the Bay from Launceston, Tasmania. Their action was not authorised, and was soon a source of grievance to the distant colonial administration in Sydney. Nevertheless, under the aegis of the Hentys the settlement of Portland quickly assumed the role of entrepot for a fertile, but relatively distant, pastoral hinterland. In contrast with the situation of the later, neighbouring Victorian ports of Belfast (Port Fairy) and Warrnambool, the land immediately adjacent to Portland was too infertile to sustain a closely settled agricultural population. Consequently, the outport function became Portland's raison d'être, and the settlement's economy became dependent on the fortunes of commercial pastoralism.

In 1839, however, a mere five years after their arrival at Portland Bay, the brothers, Stephen and Edward Henty, ventured west in search of land suitable for new cattle-runs. Unwittingly, they crossed the unmarked border between the colonies of New South Wales and South Australia. Ten miles further west the Hentys came upon Mt. Gambier. They became the first white men to stand upon it and view its fertile surrounding district. Impressed by what they had found, the
Hentys returned to Portland Bay. Later in the year, Stephen returned to Mt. Gambier and established a cattle-run. Less than five years later the South Australian Administration forced Stephen to abandon this holding. It had never been authorised. The experience left some bitterness in its wake.\(^6\)

Nevertheless, in general Adelaide was not greatly interested as yet in the south-eastern portion of its domain. Mt. Gambier was situated some 300 miles from the capital. Moreover, the demand for land suitable for agricultural settlement had not yet outstripped the adjacent supply. Hence the Mt. Gambier district was settled mainly from the east, from the Port Phillip Bay district of New South Wales. Like the adjacent Portland Bay district of the latter region, the main expression of rural settlement in the Mt. Gambier district was thus commercial pastoralism. Many squatters held runs on both sides of the colonial boundary.\(^7\)

The fertile, volcanic soils of the immediate Mt. Gambier district were capable of sustaining usage far greater than that demanded by pastoral activities. Isolation was the factor which prevented such usage. Mt. Gambier was situated almost equidistantly 300 miles from the two closest major markets, Adelaide and Melbourne. Portland lay about 70 miles to the south-east. Mt. Gambier was bounded by extensive swamps to its immediate north and west. About 20 miles southward lay the rugged coastline and Cape Northumberland. The Glenelg River and the Portland Bay district lay to the near east, but these were separated from the Mt. Gambier district by a band.
of mediocre scrub country in the vicinity of the colonial boundary. Consequently in 1857 the Mt. Gambier district could muster but a few hundred hardy settlers. Portland, in contrast, was by then a busy port with a population of about 2,700.

So far the social and economic connection between Portland and Mt. Gambier had escaped serious challenge. A coastal port had existed at Rivoli Bay South (Grey) between the mid 1840s and the early 1850s. From its birth, however, this potential rival to Portland had suffered chronically from unreliable links with its hinterland, and had succumbed finally in the face of the superior lure of the Victorian gold rushes. Robe had become the first official port on the south-east coast of South Australia in 1855. Yet it was no closer to Mt. Gambier than was Portland, and the intervening territory was subject to inundation during winter. Hence Portland's connection with the Mt. Gambier district persisted because it was the least unreliable of those available.

Since the early 1850s, however, small boats had been landing cargo on the beaches east of Cape Northumberland. The latter had gained a lighthouse by January 1859. Dissatisfaction with the Portland connection now became evident at Mt. Gambier. The high transport costs entailed through the use of Portland as an outport was now viewed by many Mt. Gambier district residents as a hindrance to local advancement. Mt. Gambier produce was not competitive in the city markets. Aware of this sentiment, and desirous of
diverting south-east trade away from Portland, South Australia sought a solution. In 1859 a survey was made of a possible route for a tramway between Robe and Mt. Gambier. Yet it would have been a major capital undertaking as the intervening distance was about 68 miles. In early 1860, however, an official sounding was made of MacDonnell Bay, about 16 miles south of Mt. Gambier. The sounding showed that the Bay could operate as a coastal port. Opinion at both Adelaide and Mt. Gambier was favourable to the idea. Consequently, in April 1860, Port MacDonnell became the second official port on the south-east coast of South Australia.

Although Mt. Gambier did not have its own newspaper at this time, regular news columns concerning events in its neighbourhood were published in the Portland press. The Mt. Gambier correspondent for the Portland Guardian was quick to note that the trading connection between Mt. Gambier and Portland was the target of the South Australian plans to open MacDonnell Bay for shipping. Nevertheless, his exhortations for appropriate action went unheeded by the Portland mercantile community. In fact, it was here, at the crisis, that the disadvantages concomitant with the narrow base of Portland's commerce were revealed. The continued dominance of commercial pastoralism had ill-prepared the Portland mercantile community for the diverse, burgeoning market it would soon face at Mt. Gambier. It was given no time to develop such capacities. Port MacDonnell was in full operation by the close of 1860. In December it saw the passage of prospective buyers to the first land sales held at Mt. Gambier. It seemed that with
the breaking of Mt. Gambier's isolation an era of unrestricted agricultural expansion lay ahead of the district.

Yet the opening of MacDonnell Bay had opened a Pandora's Box at Mt. Gambier. Expectations of further public improvements ran ahead of Government performance. Hence, by August 1860 the local correspondent for the S.A. Register was forced to note:

There is scarcely anything [here] but grumbling at the manner in which this place is treated.9

The local correspondent for the Portland Guardian now revived his suggestion that the Mt. Gambier district seek annexation by Victoria. His adduced grievances would become archetypal. He claimed that the South Australian Government was bleeding the Mt. Gambier district in order to fill the coffers of the Adelaide Treasury. Moreover, whenever such revenue was utilised the beneficiary was Adelaide and not works much needed in the south-east.20 These assertions were not without foundation (see below). The suggestion of Victorian annexation, however, was deprecated by a Victorian contributor to the Portland Guardian. This new voice declared that Mt. Gambier would discover that Melbourne's administration was no better than that performed by Adelaide. Citing evidence of Melbourne neglect of the Portland district, this writer concluded:

...We [residents of Portland] should rather pray for annexation to South Australia, and so escape red tape and a set of niggardly and conceited impotent officials?1
Economic decline was the basis for this sentiment. During the preceding decade Portland's economic significance and growth had diminished. A real decline in its entrepot activity resulted in the town's population reaching its 19th Century peak in 1861 (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3). The discovery of gold north-west of Port Phillip Bay in the early 1850s advantaged the closest ports, viz., Melbourne and Geelong. Under the diverse demands of a burgeoning market, these two latter ports not only developed a multi-faceted function but also gained self-generating demographic momentum. Portland was denied this experience not only because of its comparative isolation from the main goldfields, but also because of its rigid pastoral orientation (see above). Hence, with the extension of the Victorian electoral franchise in the late 1850s, the more densely populated Port Phillip region inevitably gained the dominant influence in shaping legislation. Portland's call on public funds was thereby weakened.

The onset of 1861 saw a pruning of the Victorian public works estimates. Proposed works at Portland were among the casualties. Local ire was intensified, however, by the discovery that, in comparison with the neighbouring, but then smaller coastal ports of Belfast (Port Fairy) and Warrnambool, proposed public works at Portland had suffered disproportionately. The Portland press reacted divergently to this discovery. The Portland Chronicle recommended the formation of a Country Party. The Portland Guardian, however, suggested that a
separation from Victoria of the Western District was the only sure escape from Melbourne's mal-administration. Public interest favoured the second suggestion. It was soon given broader manifestation:

The South Eastern District of South Australia will, it is to be hoped, agitate for Separation from the oppressive chains of the servitude she has always borne. It has always been her desire to be annexed to Victoria, which, if done, will advance that "garden of Australia" to what it ought to have been years ago.

Such sentiment, however, was not readily apparent at Mt. Gambier. In fact the growing settlement now possessed its own voice. On April 26, 1861, the publication of the town's first newspaper, the Border Watch, commenced. Significantly, its proprietorship, the brothers Andrew Frederick and James Park Dawson Laurie, were of Portland origin. The Border Watch's opening observations regarding the local district were sanguine. Port MacDonnell, for instance, was perceived quite uncritically:

...We believe that the comparative safety of MacDonnell Bay is no longer an open question. Its success has already equalled the most sanguine expectations. It has been open for a short time, but for a period amply sufficient to prove its adaptation to the requirements of the district. We think it can be proved that with the exception of Guichen Bay [Robe], it is better sheltered from violent gales, or from the quarters whence these gales blow, than any other port from Kangaroo Island to Port Phillip Heads.

Two points stand out. Firstly, MacDonnell Bay had yet to experience its first winter of operation. Secondly, the merits of Portland, the recent home to the Lauries, were clearly dismissed. Despite this rosy picture, however, the notion of
Separation would soon be manifested in the correspondence of the *Border Watch*. The adduced reasons for its appearance followed the model set in late 1860 - but with one significant addition. A new grievance involved the South Australian Government's rejection of the case for the establishment of local government at Mt. Gambier. In other words, even at this very early stage Mt. Gambier interests saw the threat of Separation in a different light from their Portland counterparts. The former perceived it as a means of obtaining new and greater local autonomy and importance. The latter perceived it as a means of checking, if not reversing, an apparent diminution in similar and already existing autonomies. These perceptions were inherently divergent.

Meanwhile at Portland the local press had consolidated their opposing positions regarding the issue of Separation. The *Portland Chronicle* reiterated its suggestion that a Country Party be formed, as it saw little likelihood that Separation would attract much political support outside Portland. In contrast, the *Portland Guardian* confirmed its support for Separation. Its proprietor/editor, Thomas E. Richardson, was the main advocate for Separation at a public meeting at Portland on May 10, 1861. He also became a founding member of a provisional committee appointed to forward the idea. No pastoralists were among its initial membership. Despite continued misgivings by the *Portland Chronicle*, Separation continued to gain public support at Portland. A second public
meeting on June 17 attracted over one-fifth of the town's population. The local pastoralist interest now came to the fore. Edward Henty chaired the meeting. The West Victoria Separation League was formed. A new central committee was elected. At least one-third of its members were local pastoralists.\(^3\) Thus, as White perceived correctly, the Separation agitation had been transformed. Squatting interests had seized control.\(^4\) In the short term their social and economic influence would supply considerable momentum to the League (squatting interests would provide 59% of the League's funds - see Appendix 4). In the long term however, the clear association between the Separation agitation and the politically unpopular side of the looming "Selector vs. Squatter" conflict provided an obvious and very effective avenue for marshalling opposition to Separation. Indeed, through their own machinations, the Hentys would soon cause a manifestation of this power (see below).

The June 17 meeting at Portland also produced public acknowledgement of the important place Mt. Gambier held within the Separation scheme. Edmund Dacombe, a Portland merchant, admitted that the support of Mt. Gambier for Separation was a necessity if it was to succeed. He was confident, however, that such support existed. William Learmonth, a local pastoralist with shipping interests, dared to display a potentially divisive issue - the question of the location of the capital of any new colony. Learmonth asserted that the question would be shelved to facilitate Mt. Gambier support
for Separation. Nevertheless, this action was probably a bad tactic. It merely brought the issue into public view (see below).

In Melbourne the Argus was roused by these stirrings in the West. It was not amused. The Argus saw the West Victoria Separation League as being little more than a vehicle for Portland's ambition of becoming the capital, metropolis, and main seaport of a new colony. The suggestion that the South-East of South Australia would participate in this plan was noted with a liberal use of exclamatory signs. Certainly, the Border Watch, although now a willing participant in the criticism of Adelaide neglect of the district, was distinctly cool towards the notion of Separation. The Mt. Gambier paper offered its own solution:

a Federal Government ...we believe, will alone provide a complete remedy for the hardships we complain of. But until a Federal Government is established, we conceive that the duty of the inhabitants of the South-Eastern District and of Mt. Gambier in particular, is to agitate for public improvements; and to give the government with which they are connected no rest until it has done a measure of justice to this locality.

Hence Harris was correct when he asserted that two main paths of expression for South-Eastern dissatisfaction became distinguishable after 1860. One included vocal complaints, pamphlets, memorials, petitions, increased and more effective political representation, and deputations. In this case Harris firmly believed that the prominent role was played by the local press. The second path of expression involved policies of self-help, threats of separation, the convening of secession meetings, and a strengthening of social and
business ties with Victoria. As indicated by their order, Harris believed that the first path of expression became the more potent. Furthermore, while he did not develop the point, it appeared that Harris connected the comparative impotence of the second path as caused, at least partly, by the peripheral role played by the local press.\textsuperscript{38} In other words, the local press (i.e., the Border Watch in this instance) was of great influence in shaping the local politic.

Harris' interpretation seemed sound when applied to the South-East of South Australia. Its intercolonial generality, however, was unproven. Hence, when in a subsequent study Harris extended his argument to include the West Victoria Separation Movement, it became unconvincing.\textsuperscript{39} In the first place, the Portland press and body politic were much older than their Mt. Gambier counterparts. Furthermore, the Portland Guardian did some violence to Harris' extended argument by being the virtual core of the Separation agitation. In his pursuit of generalisation Harris too lightly dismissed the importance of individual participation in the Separation agitation.\textsuperscript{40} June 1861 illustrated this point. Thomas Richardson, proprietor and editor of the Portland Guardian and staunch advocate of Separation, wrote to the Border Watch. He enclosed the case for Separation, and requested the assistance of the Mt. Gambier paper in promulgating the notion throughout the local district. The Border Watch complied by publishing Richardson's letter on July 5, but no editorial comment was attached.\textsuperscript{41}
Some Mt. Gambier residents responded. A small Separation meeting occurred at the town on July 20.\textsuperscript{42} It appeared to cause some alarm in Adelaide. The current Speaker in the Adelaide Assembly, George C. Hawker, was also the district representative.\textsuperscript{43} He hastened to write to his constituents via the Border Watch. Hawker repudiated claims that Adelaide was indifferent towards the needs of the Mt. Gambier district. Evidence was adduced. In particular it was pointed out that under the new Electoral Act (No. 20 of 1861) the district would be given a second representative in the Adelaide Assembly. The Border Watch was impressed favourably by Hawker's assurances.\textsuperscript{44} Not all Mt. Gambier residents shared this interpretation. A second Separation meeting occurred at Mt. Gambier on August 22, 1861. It was attended by two representatives of the West Victoria Separation League, the pastoralist, John N. McLeod, and a man by the name of Miller.\textsuperscript{45} Discussion at the meeting revolved about the claimed Adelaide neglect of the district. A small committee, comprised mainly of Mt. Gambier publicans, was appointed to pursue liaison with the Portland League. Andrew Laurie, from the Border Watch, was persuaded to act as a corresponding secretary.\textsuperscript{46} No evidence was found, however that would suggest that such liaison ever occurred. In fact, even before the occurrence of this Mt. Gambier meeting, the Portland League had suffered a major reverse in its "home" territory.

In June 1861, the Separation agitation at Portland had been flushed with enthusiasm. The Portland Guardian the
ignored all criticism and made Separation an issue in the current election campaign for the Victorian Assembly. William Haines, the Portland incumbent, refused to state a personal opinion on the matter, but asserted a willingness to accept the dictates of his constituents. Edward Henty was the Normanby incumbent. The Portland Guardian saw no quandary there:

...In the country election E. Henty and Separation ought to be the cry.47

Nevertheless, Edward Henty was defeated. The Portland Guardian was incredulous. "There is no lack," it asserted, "of rumours of such a character that we cannot mention them."48 An examination of the returns from individual boxes is illuminating. Edward's losing margin at the Hamilton box, 90 votes, equalled his losing margin for Normanby as a whole. In fact, Edward's support declined in relation with the distance from Portland of each box.49 A main cause of this phenomenon was Edward's close identification with the sectional and unpopular administrative performance of the Portland Road Board.50 In the specific case of Hamilton, however, Edward's great unpopularity was almost certainly a product of his arrogant machinations at the local land-sales.51 White concluded that Edward Henty's high-handed activities were perhaps the single most effective stimulant for anti-Separation sentiment in the Western District.52 Certainly, the election campaign and its aftermath had deepened the divisions within the Portland politic. The main voice of cogent anti-Separation sentiment at Portland, the Portland Chronicle, was subjected to threats of retribution if it did not desist from criticism of the notion.53 Yet this att could not reverse Edward Henty's
irresistible image of Separation was shattered, and the Separation League delegation to Mt. Gambier in late August 1861 (see above) was hamstrung by a weakened credibility. No further manifestations of indigenous Mt. Gambier interest in Separation would occur after the August 22 meeting.54

The West Victoria Separation League now underwent re-organisation at Portland. Amidst some controversy, Thomas Richardson, from the Portland Guardian, was appointed as salaried secretary to the League. He prepared for publication a pamphlet which would outline the case for Separation. The Portland Chronicle was stimulated to make a prophetic observation. It wondered why the Separation League would not heed the lesson supplied by the Duke of Newcastle's rejection of the separation movement in northern New South Wales. The Duke had based his rejection of the separation petition on the argument that it bypassed the proper avenue for political agitation which was via the elected legislatures.55 Nevertheless, the Separation League pamphlet was published in January 1862.56 It was little more than a collection of arguments previously used in Portland Guardian leaders. Included were a brief history of the League, statistics relating to the alleged government neglect of the region involved, the text of the Separation petition (see Appendix 7), and a map of the proposed colony of Princeland. Yet the case for the inclusion of the Mt. Gambier district in the scheme was, to say the best, thin. It was based on the claim that, as Mt. Gambier would be situated closer to the capital of the new colony (unspeci
but presumably Portland) its just grievances would receive
swifter attention than had been Adelaide's practice. On the
other hand, no attempt was made to conceal the fact that
Portland pastoral or mercantile interests dominated the
Separation League. A varied reception awaited the Separation
pamphlet. The Portland Guardian was (naturally) self-congratulatory. The Portland Chronicle was annoyed. The Border
Watch did not acknowledge the pamphlet's publication. In
Melbourne, however, the weekly Yeoman and Australian
Acclimatiser was furious:

> Of all the abortive movements and foolish projects
that a perverted human intellect ever devised this is
the chief. The proposal to cut up the small colony
of Victoria into two colonies is about the most absurd
suggestion that ever any man, or body of men, not
absolutely insane, has propounded.

Nevertheless, the Separation League now initiated the
second stage of its re-organised campaign. Richard H. Horne,
a man of diverse talents, was employed as the official League
lecturer. Accompanied by Richardson, Horne would tour the
Western District of Victoria and the South-East of South
Australia. At each significant settlement, Horne would lecture
on the merits of Separation, and Richardson would collect both
subscriptions to the League and signatures to the copies of
the Separation petition he carried. The tour commenced with
a lecture at Portland on February 10, 1862. A large crowd
attended. The large number of juveniles present, however,
indicated that Horne's performance may have been perceived more
as an entertainment than as an instructive experience.
Twenty-five settlements were visited by Horne and Richardson during February and March 1862. Mt. Gambier was the twenty-first. According to the Portland Guardian, the lecture at Mt. Gambier on March 17, 1862 was a resounding success. People had crowded up to sign the Separation petition. The Border Watch apparently attended a different meeting. It admitted that about 200 had attended Horne's lecture. It added, however, that many of the audience had been badly affected by the concurrent St. Patrick's Day celebrations. After no one else had volunteered, George D. Wyatt had reluctantly chaired the meeting. James Unpherson had voiced severe criticism of the Separation notion, and had charged the League of being representative merely of "the aristocracy of Portland". Finally, the Border Watch claimed that only about fifty had subsequently signed the Separation petition. There was an ominous delay between the return to Portland of the League deputation and its public report on March 31. Yet it was then claimed that 1,107 signatures on thirty to forty lists were at hand for the Separation petition, and that a further thirty-five lists were outstanding. Moreover, in response to the thrust of local criticism of Separation considerable effort was made to portray the Movement as a working-man's cause. It was noticeable, however, that this public report failed to receive the same degree of attendance as given the earlier meetings.

Meanwhile, Mt. Gambier had manifested active opposition to Separation. The arrival of the League deputation in 1862 had in fact been preceded
urge for local government at Mt. Gambier. As in 1861, rival petitions to the South Australian Government had been forwarded, and had again been ignored. Mt. Gambier was therefore in the process of developing an independent body politic when the Separation League deputation reached the community. The same issue of the Border Watch which carried the report of Horne's Separation lecture also bore an advertisement for a public anti-Separation meeting on March 26. It attracted a good attendance. James Umpherston maintained his status as the chief public critic of Separation. His claim that Separation was merely a vehicle for Portland's desire to become a second Melbourne met with applause. Edward French was seconded by Edward Wehl in the claim that Separation would destroy Port MacDonnell. Mt. Gambier, it was implied, was in danger of losing its recently-acquired ready access to market. French also asserted that about one-half of the signatures gained by the Separation petition at Mt. Gambier were actually those of men who had left an economically-troubled Portland and had come to Mt. Gambier in search of employment. Finally, the meeting appointed a committee which was to compose and circulate an anti-Separation petition for ultimate despatch to the South Australian Governor (see Appendix 8).

The Portland Guardian, noting that the main activists in the anti-Separation movement were either S.M.s or J.P.s, dismissed it as being merely the tool of "the minions of the Adelaide Government". Moreover, the gathering of 245 signatures by the anti-Separation petition was answered by a claim that the
same area had supplied almost 500 signatures to the Separation petition. It was feared, however, that the official opponents of Separation would make the fullest use of the anti-Separation petition. This fear was justified. Governor Daly of South Australia hastily dispatched a copy of the anti-Separation petition to the Duke of Newcastle on May 26, 1862. His covering statement emphasised the genuineness of the memorial's sentiments (see Appendix 9). Furthermore, examination of the adverse covering despatch to the Separation petition forwarded by Governor Barkly of Victoria on June 23 reveals that Daly and Barkly had corresponded on the matter. Certainly, Barkly ranked Mt. Gambier's rejection of the Separation League second only to Victorian Executive Council opposition in his list of objections to the Separation proposal (see Appendix 10). It is thus difficult not to conclude that the advent of the Mt. Gambier initiated anti-Separation petition was a godsend to the colonial Governments of South Australia and Victoria. It manifested, in probably the most advantageous fashion, firm evidence that a significant proportion of the affected population were satisfied with the existing forms of political communication. All that Adelaide and Melbourne were then required to do was to ensure that the anti-Separation petition reached the Duke of Newcastle before its stimulant. Such an occurrence would diminish the possibility that the Duke of Newcastle might diverge from the precedent he had earning by his rejection of the northern New South Wales 1860 (see above). This scenario had apparently
forseen by the Portland Guardian. Consequently it was enraged when Governor Barkly delayed the passage to London of the Separation petition by referring it to the Victorian Cabinet for consideration. Some bitterness was exhibited when it was noted that the anti-Separation petition was already on its way to London.75

News of the Duke of Newcastle's rejection of the Separation reached Portland in December (see Appendix 11). The Portland Chronicle was pleased by this justification of its stand. The Portland Guardian was disheartened. A basis for further agitation, however, was perceived in the qualifying clause of Newcastle's rejection. This was "or the proof of an intolerable hardship amounting to political necessity for separation". Hence on December 18, 1862, Edward Henty addressed a communication to the Duke of Newcastle which attempted to argue such a proof. The Portland Chronicle decided that Edward Henty deserved the epithet of "body-snatcher".76 The Border Watch had meantime published the text of the Duke of Newcastle's rejection of the Separation petition, but had attached no editorial comment.77 The Separation agitation had failed. Edward Henty's letter was ignored, and a change in proprietorship saw the Portland Guardian lose its Separationist fervour.78 The closing scenes of the agitation, however, were played out by John Hogan, a publican and one of the founders of the movement. In July 1863, Hogan made an unsuccessful public plea for a revival of the agitation. Consequently he announced his intention of making a public resignation from the Separation League. Few
attended his first attempt on July 28. Hogan therefore held over his resignation, but took the opportunity to list his grievances. One was the inactivity currently manifested by the League. Another, significantly, was the ignorance in which even he, a founding committee member, had been kept regarding the finances of the League. Pointedly:

...he had not the slightest idea of the way in which the funds were disposed, or whether the man who had set down his name for £100 [Edward Henty, Appendix 4] had paid 100 pence?  

A "considerable number" attended the follow-up meeting on August 3. Nevertheless, a chairman could not be found. Regardless, however, Hogan spoke concerning the history of the Separation Movement. His criticism was again directed at recognisable targets:

...He was sorry that the Central Committee had permitted the movement to dwindle to its present dimensions and hoped the working men of Portland who had originally started the idea, would come forward and take it from the hands of those who had either strangled it, or were doing their best to do so.

The audience did not respond to these thinly disguised criticisms of the local pastoralist interest. The meeting was therefore abandoned. The West Victoria Separation League thus left the public stage at Portland. Not only had it failed to arrest Portland's decline (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3), but it had also alienated the Victorian Government. Between November 1861 and June 1863, William Haines, the Portland MLA, had been the Victorian Treasurer. It had been a situation pregnant with possibilities of an easy access to public funds. The then dominant elements in the Portland politic, however,
had chosen to overlook these possibilities in preference for the glamour and anti-selection thrust of Separation. Many years would pass before Portland would again have such an opportunity (see below).

Yet if the substance of Separation had dissolved by mid 1863, its spectre remained, if only as a dramatic mode of expressing discontent.\(^ 82\) The Separation agitation had attracted South Australian Government interest in the South-East. A team of government officials visited the region during April 1863. They were to report on the condition of public buildings and road communications, and to suggest improvements.\(^ 83\) One resultant recommendation was that a new telegraph station and post office be built at Mt. Gambier. The Proposal answered a long-standing local grievance.\(^ 84\) Official hopes of an expeditious solution, however, were dashed when the Border Watch reported adversely on the proposed plans for the new buildings. Umbrage was taken because it was considered that the plans placed the toilets too near the bedrooms and pantries. The paper warned that Separationist sentiment might revive if this error was not swiftly corrected. The response of the Adelaide Government to this threat is not clear. The South Australian Weekly Chronicle, however, was derisive:

Now, was the like of this ever heard of before? Was there ever such a casus belli since the world began? The dismemberment of an empire because certain what-d'ye-call-'ems are not arranged in the most aesthetical style? We must go to Mount Gambier, for a people that could look upon such trivial grievances as necessary reasons for separation must indeed be a highly enlightened community. We wonder whether the Duke of
2. Main Intersection, Mount Gambier, South Australia, circa 1960. Look in background. Buildings (left to right):- Foreground, Post Office (old Telegraph Recorder Station); background, new Telegraph Office (subsequently Post Office); centre, National Bank; and right, the Mount Gambier Hotel.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
Newcastle reads the Border Watch, and whether Prince Alfred, when he visits Australia, will go and inspect the Mount Gambier outbuildings?

Stung by this reaction, the Border Watch promptly published a satirical history of the Separation agitation. "Miss Gambier" was courted by both "Timothy Adelaide" and "John Princeland". The former's suit was successful, but the groom swiftly betrayed the trust of his new bride. This piece was followed by a leader which not only replied tersely to the S.A. Chronicle, but also added further criticism of Adelaide's policies in the Mt. Gambier district (see Appendix 12). It was apparent, however, that the main stimulus for the Border Watch's chagrin was its belated recognition that in rejecting Separation, it had also thrown away its strongest instrument for extracting Government largesse. This rueful perception was clear by October 1863:

...It is of course yet fresh in the recollection of the public how, when the Separation agitation extended to our locality, many of whom we highly esteem rushed in hot haste to pay their court to Adelaide, decanted on the felicities of their existing connection with that illustrious individual, and deprecated very strongly the threatened disturbance of that connection. The result is precisely what might have been anticipated, human nature being what it is. Though at first the foolish proceeding was apparently flattering to Adelaide, and elicited many plausible and specious acknowledgements, yet soon the blossoms of the fatal tree came out in rapid succession. Our leading gentlemen, in reminding Adelaide of his promised benefactions, were unceremoniously snubbed. Matters have proceeded from bad to worse, for their representations are now treated with contempt.

Nevertheless, Adelaide had now virtually admitted guilt to the long-standing charge that it had neglected the South-East. A
Paper tabled in the Adelaide Assembly on August 24, 1863 revealed that between 1857 and 1862 the South-East had been a nett source of Government revenue (see Appendix 13).\(^8\)

Knowledge of this situation was apparent in Adelaide before the Paper was tabled. On June 1, the S.A. Register managed to offer this excuse:

...Neither Corporations nor District Councils have aided the general government in this part of the colony, and we hope the settlers will consider this when they compare the state of their roads and the progress of their towns with other neighbourhoods.\(^9\)

This assertion ignored, or was ignorant of, the fact that from as early as January 1861, residents of the Mt. Gambier district had been petitioning Adelaide for the establishment of local government.\(^9\) This deficiency was not the fault of the district. On June 4 however, the District Council of Mt. Gambier was proclaimed. It would administer an area embracing both the Hundreds of Gambier and Blanche. Although it would prove to be an unstable creation - the Hundreds separated to form the independent District Councils of Gambier East and West respectively in December 1864 - the significance of this development was unaltered.\(^9\) From June 1863, Mt. Gambier was assigned an acknowledged position within the body politic of South Australia. From that point separation or secession notions endangered existing channels of political dialogue and positions of local status and privilege.

Hirst described the Separation agitation as "the greatest threat the South-East ever posed to Adelaide;\(^11\) albeit with the qualification that it had been the promotion of outsiders.\(^9\)
This interpretation was an exaggeration based on incomplete and biased information.\textsuperscript{93} In fact, the West Victoria Separation Movement was, at no point, a viable threat to Adelaide's developing hegemony in the South-East. In the first place, the agitation was mistimed. By March 1862, when the Separation League would make its strongest overture to Mt. Gambier, Port MacDonnell had replaced Portland as the district's outport. Moreover, an ongoing agitation for local government at Mt. Gambier had spawned rival factions. Each sought official favour, and neither wished to have the moral thrust of their objective weakened by a Mt. Gambier flirtation with Separation. Secondly, the agitation was compromised. By March 1862 the Separation League had become openly and closely associated with Victorian Western District squatting interests. Hence opponents of Separation were able to indicate with foundation that the aims of the Separation League went beyond that of restoring Portland's former regional dominance. A further aim was the prevention of Government-sponsored sub-division of pastoral holdings in Victoria's Western District (and, potentially, the South-East of South Australia). At Mt. Gambier, where the Separation League came upon a community exhibiting burgeoning ideas of "local progress" (the furtherance of closer settlement, the retention of ready means of market access, and the achievement of local government), such criticism fell on highly fertile soil.

At all times, therefore, the Adelaide and Melbourne Governments had held the initiative. In South Australia a
political nexus had already begun to develop between Adelaide and Mt. Gambier, with the latter as the more eager participant. In Victoria, Portland was in decline, it lacked major significance within the Victorian economy as a whole, and its political elite were isolated, both within the colony and within Portland itself.\(^9\) Hence Melbourne was free to ignore its representations or threats. An important move, however, was the apparent collusion of Governors Daly and Barkly. Their actions minimised the Duke of Newcastle's receptiveness towards the Separation petition. Yet it must not be forgotten that it was Mt. Gambier's eagerness to manifest its satisfaction with the Adelaide nexus which supplied this important weapon to the official armoury.\(^9\) Mt. Gambier's repudiation of the Separation agitation thus played a significant, if not vital, role in its failure. That in doing so Mt. Gambier had played into the hands of Adelaide was soon realised by local interests, but the damage appeared irreversible.

Nevertheless, although Adelaide had checked Portland's influence in the Mt. Gambier district, it was still faced by Melbourne's commercial dominance in the region. A contemporary report asserted in early 1864 that for every vessel that arrived at Port MacDonnell from Adelaide, two vessels arrived from Melbourne.\(^9\) Certainly, South Australian customs receipts at Port MacDonnell were burgeoning. During the first quarter of 1863, they had been £338. Now, one year later, £1,453 (see Appendix 14). It seemed that
main beneficiary of South-East trade. William J. Browne, a wealthy Mt. Gambier pastoralist, offered his explanation for this situation in a letter to the *S.A. Register* in June 1864. Melbourne's trading dominance was a direct result of the poor communications currently in existence between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide. The overland trip between Adelaide and Mt. Gambier then took two days longer than the equivalent and almost equidistant trip between Melbourne and Mt. Gambier. Browne claimed that a continuation of this situation would result in Melbourne becoming the effective capital of the South-East. The *S.A. Register* accepted Browne's argument and commended the matter to the attention of the Government. Two months later the Adelaide to Mt. Gambier mail was expanded from a weekly to a bi-weekly service.

Meanwhile, Adelaide had not acknowledged that Portland was no longer a significant participant in the matter of South-East trade. Despite deprecation by the *Border Watch*, the South Australian Government continued to assert that its South-Eastern integrity was being violated by unregulated border trade (see Chapter 2). The *Border Watch* finally concluded that the cause of Adelaide's misinterpretation of the situation was the inadequacy of the local parliamentary representation. The district suffered from having insufficient and "absentee" representation. Hence the paper advocated the return of local residents in the approaching South Australian elections. The subsequent nomination of John Riddoch and Adam Lindsay Gordon was given the paper's full support. Both were elected, and brought about the fall of
the current Ministry. It was a dramatic way for the South-East to gain ready access to the Adelaide Parliament. Thus early 1865 saw Mt. Gambier's position in the South Australian body politic, which had been initially sketched by the establishment of local government in June 1863, achieve greater definition.

It was immediately tested. Early 1865 also saw the publication of a pamphlet which advocated the annexation by Victoria of all that portion of South Australia south and east of the Murray River. The work cited a number of grievances. Condensed, they amounted to a claim that through its attitude and policies, the Adelaide Parliament (and, in particular, the Assembly) had forfeited the confidence of South-Eastern residents. Copies of the pamphlet had reached Mt. Gambier by February 1865. Its arguments did not convince the Border Watch. The paper did not believe that annexation by Victoria was a practical solution to the problems faced by the South-East. It saw no guarantee that Melbourne's administration would be any more responsible than Adelaide's had been. Furthermore, while the Border Watch admitted that criticism of Adelaide's rule often elicited calls for "separation" or "annexation", it was confessed that such calls eventuated more "to bounce the Government into doing something for us", than to suggest a practical solution to local grievances. It therefore constitutes a comment regarding the current state of communication between the South-East and Adelaide that three months would need to pass before the
S.A. Chronicle evaluated the pamphlet. That paper then noted tartly that the pamphlet was "the production of a Melbourne printer, and published by a Melbourne publisher". The S.A. Chronicle's main thrust, however, was directed at the pamphlet's grievance concerning the Adelaide Government's proposal to revalue pastoral runs. Naturally, such a revaluation would endanger the profitability, if not security, of the often large, South-Eastern pastoral holdings. Hence the S.A. Chronicle dismissed the pamphlet as nothing more than "a squatting tract", and concluded that it could be ignored with impunity because it was not representative of South-East public opinion as a whole. The soundness of this conclusion casts doubt upon Harris' belief that this pamphlet had some connection with the "Princeland" agitation of 1861-63. In fact, while it was true that both agitations were fueled by pastoralist insecurity in the face of Government land administration, the aggrieved groups had been different. In 1861-63 the aggrieved group had been essentially pastoralists from the Western District of Victoria. Now, in 1865, the aggrieved interest was on the other side of the colonial boundary, pastoralists on holdings probably north of Mt. Gambier. Neither group supported the other's agitation, despite their apparent common interest. Again, sectionalism debilitated the threat to central Government authority.

The impotence manifested by such South-Eastern grum did not solve Adelaide's commercial inferiority in Although the introduction by Victoria of
earlier in 1865 had undermined Mt. Gambier's export trade with Melbourne via Port MacDonnell, Melbourne continued to enjoy dominance of Mt. Gambier's import trade.\textsuperscript{108} South Australian customs receipts at Port MacDonnell reached an all-time high in the fourth quarter of 1865 - £2,134 (see Appendix 14).

Not surprisingly, the issue of communications between Adelaide and the South-East again returned to the fore. As the Border Watch then noted:

...Time is money, and to commercial men especially this is most emphatically the case. The trade of Adelaide has suffered much through the apathy of the Government in regard to our postal affairs.

In 1861, Mt. Gambier had been within 5 days of Adelaide and 4½ days of Melbourne by mail. Now, in early 1866, the corresponding times were 4½ and 2½ days.\textsuperscript{109} Awareness of this situation was soon forced upon the Adelaide Government. After a visit to Mt. Gambier in May, the S.A. Treasurer, the Hon. Thomas Reynolds,\textsuperscript{110} sought to return to Adelaide. He discovered that the overland journey would take 6½ days. The alternative was that Reynolds could embark upon a coastal steamer at Port MacDonnell enroute for Melbourne. On arrival at Melbourne, Reynolds could then catch an inter-capital steamer back to Adelaide. This alternate, circuitous method would have Reynolds in Adelaide 3½ days after leaving Mt. Gambier, or 3 days sooner than if he had chosen the direct, overland route!\textsuperscript{111} Adelaide merchants were concerned regarding this situation. Hence the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce communicated with the S.A. Postmaster-General on the state of the South-East mail service. They suggested that the Government terminate the
existing mail contracts and call for new tenders, giving greater priority to speed. The S.A. Postmaster-General rejected this suggestion. He asserted that the South-East mail service was already the beneficiary of a high Government subsidy which would not be extended. Dissatisfied with this reply, the Adelaide Chamber thereupon appointed a sub-committee. Its task would be to inspect future tenders for the South-East mail service with a view of communicating its findings to the Government.\textsuperscript{112} No record of any activity by this sub-committee was discovered. No changes were made to the bi-weekly Mt. Gambier and Adelaide mail service.

The struggle over the South-East trade intensified. Over the border both Hamilton and Portland produced competing schemes for railway construction. A "tapping" of the Mt. Gambier district was postulated in both cases (see Chapter 3). The \textit{Mount Gambier Standard}, the town's second paper,\textsuperscript{113} forecast that these railway schemes would exacerbate Adelaide's anxieties regarding South-East trade. The paper noted that the recent increases in the Victorian tariff had ended Melbourne's previous ten-to-one commercial dominance of Mt. Gambier trade. Nevertheless, most local produce was still forwarded to the Victorian capital. At best, therefore, Adelaide had only a "slender hold" on the South-East. Hence, the spectre of revitalised Victorian competition carried by these railway schemes plus "the consciousness of a rich prize to be gained or lost" was causing Adelaide to adopt greater commercial and legislative receptiveness towards the Mt. Gambier district.\textsuperscript{114}
Indeed, on September 4, 1866, S.A. Chief-Secretary Blyth had moved in the Assembly that a parliamentary select committee be established to report on the need for further public works in the South-East. Citing evidence of the considerable Victorian influence in the area, Blyth asserted that the investigation was necessary "to retain the goodwill of that part of the colony". Despite claims of favouritism by some representatives from other electorates, an eight-man committee was appointed. Both South-Eastern members, John Riddoch and Adam L. Gordon, were included. The Border Watch was not enthused:

...while we do not question the proprietory or the wisdom of the desire to win for Adelaide what has so long gone to Melbourne, we may point out the futility of any attempt, no matter how expensive or radical, to divert the trade from its natural outlet.

The report of the Select Committee was published on December 5. As Chairman, John Riddoch had prepared a draft report for the Committee, but this was cast aside in preference for one prepared by Thomas Reynolds. Not only was the latter the shorter of the two, but it also failed to make specific recommendations. It was "a flabby report that left all the decisions to the Government". A favourable evaluation by the S.A. Register was therefore balanced by unanimous criticism from the Mt. Gambier press. Significantly, Adam Lindsay Gordon had resigned as a representative of the Victoria constituency two weeks before publication of the contentious report.
The Adelaide Assembly now began to hear assertions that Lacepede Bay (Kingston) would be a better "South Australian" port than Port MacDonnell. The Border Watch treated such sentiment with contempt. Indeed, the course of events would justify its belief that South-East trade conducted via Lacepede Bay "would be as much Victorian as that of MacDonnell Bay now". The thrust of the evidence elicited by the earlier Select Committee was the probable basis of this parliamentary disillusionment with the Mt. Gambier district. A number of facts inimical to Adelaide commercial aspirations had come to light. While it was confirmed that Port MacDonnell had replaced Portland as the entrepot for the Mt. Gambier district, the orientation of local trade had remained in favour of Melbourne. The opening of Port MacDonnell had merely resulted in many Melbourne merchant houses moving their agencies from Portland to the new port. Their business had continued to thrive. Mt. Gambier's Victorian sympathies were also portrayed as a virtual inevitability. It was pointed out that a majority of the local business community and many of the general populace were either of Victorian origin or were long-acquainted to social and economic intercourse with that colony. Moreover, although some witnesses asserted that these Victorian sympathies could be checked by a better Adelaide and Mt. Gambier mail service, it was suggested that only an influx of settlers with inherent South Australian affiliations would provide a lasting solution to this problem. It was therefore easy for the Adelaide Government to develop the
conclusion that Mt. Gambier's Victorian sympathies were too well entrenched to be expeditiously and cheaply countered by immediate legislative or administrative action. The encouragement of closer settlement elsewhere in the South-East was more attractive. Such development would challenge, if not neutralise, the regional dominance of the Victorian-contaminated Mt. Gambier. This motive can be discerned in the growing political favour for a Lacepede Bay and Naracoorte railway (also see Chapter 3), and in the creation of Millicent on the drained lowlands between Mt. Gambier and Rivoli Bay. In fact, the latter process had now commenced. One week before publication of the Select Committee's report on South-Eastern needs the administration and development of South-Eastern drainage was transferred to the office of the S.A. Surveyor-General. Hence, the emphasis of South-Eastern drainage now "changed from the piece-meal improvement of communications to a more comprehensive policy of land settlement over a large region".

Nevertheless, when Chief-Secretary Blyth visited Mt. Gambier in April 1867, he did not display indifference to the district's needs, but acknowledged that Port MacDonnell needed improvements. The port had not been able to sustain the Border Watch's sanguineness of April 1861. The South Australian Marine Board now began an official inspection of the South-East ports in preparation for a report to the Government. The latter's publication, however, was preceded by the appearance in the Adelaide press of a series of articles...
regarding the South-East. Initially written anonymously, their author was the noted journalist and subsequent politician, Ebenezer Ward. These personal impressions of the South-East would be published as a book in 1869. Ward's conclusions were either prophetic or influential, as many were reflected in the rhetoric and actions of the Adelaide Parliament. Inter alia, Ward believed that Adelaide was the proper outlet for South-East trade, that Mt. Gambier's claim to represent South-Eastern interest was geographically and politically inappropriate, and that Port MacDonnell was unsuitable to be the main South-Eastern port. Such sentiments were soon given parliamentary manifestation. Despite Mt. Gambier protestation, the South Australian legislative programme for 1867-68 did not include an expected Bill for the construction of a railway northwards from Port MacDonnell. A strange proposal - an inland railway joining Naracoorte and Mt. Gambier - was offered in exchange, but nevertheless met parliamentary opposition. The absence of a Port MacDonnell connection was not sufficient to quell fears that the proposed railway would merely facilitate a Victorian commercial annexation of the South-East. It was claimed that Melbourne would benefit either directly through its control of Port MacDonnell trade, or indirectly through the leakage of South-East trade (especially from the Naracoorte district) across the border to Portland. Clearly, opinion was forming that the "safest" South-East railway would be one between Lacepede Bay and Naracoorte.
The formation of that opinion was soon given great assistance. On October 9, 1867, the report by the S.A. Marine Board on the South-East ports was tabled in the Assembly. Lacepede Bay was praised as "the best place of refuge on the coast line between Encounter Bay and Portland". Port MacDonnell, in contrast, received short shrift:

...in the opinion of the Board, Port MacDonnell is a very exposed roadstead; and that a very large expenditure would have to be increased before any additional facilities would be likely to be afforded to the shipping frequenting it^34

Hence Adelaide could now justify neglect of Port MacDonnell on ostensibly apolitical grounds. Adelaide could hinder Melbourne access to the Mt. Gambier market by a policy of omission. Other parts of the South-East could be captured for Adelaide commerce by a judicious developmental policy which connected nodes of closer settlement to the South Australian capital through means of commerce controlled by Adelaide interests.

An era had ended. The opening of Port MacDonnell in 1860 had marked the exclusion of Portland from the potential market of Mt. Gambier. Now, in 1867 the negative evaluation by the Marine Board of the developmental possibilities of Port MacDonnell marked the end of Mt. Gambier's singular call on public expenditure on transport in the South-East. Mt. Gambier would now be forced to compete for public funds with settlements or associated schemes pertaining to other parts of the region. Moreover, the latter would often be assigned equal, if no higher, legitimacy by the Adelaide legislators. Ne the Mt. Gambier district would continue t
regional demography. Consequently, it was most unlikely that the Mt. Gambier district would be satisfied by such a situation.

The reactionary nature of the ideology underpinning the West Victoria Separation Movement and the subsequent annexation pamphlet had obscured the rationality of their implicit transport proposals. This mask could not be expected to remain stable while the problem of Mt. Gambier's isolation from major markets was, at best, temporarily or incompletely solved.
CHAPTER 1 - FOOTNOTES

1. This study is not concerned with the continuing controversy regarding the relative merits of the claims by Edward Henty and William Dutton for the status of "first settler" at Portland.

Only three members of the original Henty family will receive attention in this study, viz., Edward (1810-1878), Stephen George (1811-1872), and Francis (1815-1889). More information concerning the family is available in:
A.D.B., 1.


5. The first survey of the Victoria-South Australia boundary was not performed until 1847-48. Commencement of closer settlement in the 1860s revealed that the border had been inaccurately demarcated. It lay about two miles inside intended South Australian territory. Stimulated by this discovery, a protracted dispute regarding this matter occurred between South Australia and Victoria until 1914, when the Privy Court legitimised the Victorian occupation. Hence it is possible, even perhaps probable, that the concurrency of this dispute influenced the subject of the study. If so, however, it was too well concealed, or too pervasive, to gain perception by the author.


6. Stephen Henty would later relate his experiences to Governor LaTrobe of Victoria. Moreover, after Stephen Henty's expulsion, Victorian squatters in the vicinity of the Glenelg River began to call the South-East of South Australia, the "disputed territory", a term later conferred to the strip of country between the surveyed boundary and the 141st E. meridian. Nevertheless, no clear link was found between this sentiment and the ambition of the subsequent squatter-dominated West Victoria Separation League to have the Mt. Gambier district included in its proposed new colony of Princeland. On the other hand, the action of the South Australian Government must have appeared as hypocritical to the Hentys. Contemporary to Stephen's establishment of a cattle-run at Mt. Gambier,
financial difficulties induced South Australia to ask, unsuccessfu lly, that it be given the western districts of the Port Phillip Bay area. The Hentys had been quite aware of these activities.

ibid.

Bassett, M., op. cit., p. 480. Letter from Francis Henty to Mary Anne Lawrence in late 1841.


9. ibid.


11. Hill, L.R., op. cit.

12. S.A. Register, March 7, 1860.

Hill, L.R., op. cit.


13. SAPP, No. 38 of 1859.

14. The S.A. Register was delighted because the opening of a port at the MacDonnell Bay would mean that South Australia would now obtain the customs revenue concomitant with the Mt. Gambier trade. Such customs revenue had so far gone to Victoria because of its passage through Portland. In other words, the fact that such trade was, by definition, non-South Australian in origin, did not yet elicit concern. Mt. Gambier pleasure was stimulated by the expectation that the new port would grant local producers greatly improved access to major markets.

S.A. Register, February 10, March 7, 1860.

15. S.A. Gazette, April 5, 1860.

16. Portland Guardian: In existence for full period of the study. Proprietorship/Editorship during that period - Thomas E. Richardson, January 1860 - January 1862; T.E. Richardson and William Cooper, February 1862 - March 1863; W. Cooper, April 1863 - July 4, 1876; W. Cooper and C.N.F. Badnall, July-December 1876; W. Cooper, January
1877 - January 1878; W. Cooper and James J. Martin, February 5, 1878 - January 3, 1879; W. Cooper and James J. Martin, February 5, 1878 - January 3, 1879; W. Cooper, January - June 19, 1879 (died); Mrs. Mary Cooper, June 1879 - September 1880, remarried; Andrew Semple, September 14, 1880 - July 1886; Thomas A. Pettit (prop.) and A. Semple (ed.), July 6, 1886 - August 1886; H. Goldsmith and E. Harvey, August 3-10, 1886; James J.R. Kean, August 10, 1886 - December 1917.

17. P.G., February 27, March 2, 21, 1860.
21. ibid., August 3, 1860, p. 3.
22. The democratisation of Victorian Assembly electorates saw Portland's representation shrink from an existing two in sixty members to one in seventy-eight.

23. Portland Chronicle. 1855-1865 Proprietor/Editor was Edward Francis Hughes, sometime poet and staunch opponent of the West Victoria Separation Movement:

...far and away the brainiest man in the Portland of his time, but I think he was about the worst editor I have ever known.


26. ibid., April 15, 19 (p. 2), 29, 1861.

Andrew F. (1843-1920) and James P.D. (1846-1928) were sons of the Rev. Alexander Laurie, Portland's first Presbyterian Minister (1842). Alleged improper conduct was instrumental in Alexander's replacement by Thomas E. Richardson (notably, later proprietor/editor of the Portland Guardian). After this crisis the Laurie family was apparently supported by Mrs. Alexander Laurie. A number of unsuccessful attempts to set up another Portland newspaper followed.
Finally, in 1861, Mrs. Laurie, now widowed, assisted her two young sons (17 and 15 years respectively) in establishing the Border Watch at Mt. Gambier. Andrew remained part-proprietor of the paper until his death at Mt. Gambier in 1920. He was Mayor of Mt. Gambier in 1883-84. James terminated his interests in the paper in 1870 and took up grazing properties near the Victorian border at Naracoorte. He was a member for the Victoria and Albert constituency in the South Australian Assembly between 1870 and 1875, and Chairman of the Naracoorte District Council between 1895 and 1924.

Moreover, Andrew Laurie apparently learnt the trade of compositor at the Portland Guardian before the family moved to Mt. Gambier. Together with the fact that Thomas E. Richardson had replaced his father as Portland's Presbyterian Minister, this indicates a high degree of personal acquaintance between the Lauries and Richardson.


28. B.W., April 26, 1861, p. 2.

Because of the young age of the Laurie brothers at this time, the question arises as to who was the author of such leaders. John Watson, who would determine much of the paper's editorial output in the future, did not join the firm until 1863. Further investigation of this matter is clearly required.

29. ibid. May 24, 1861.

During the first third of 1861, Governor MacDonnell of South Australia had received five petitions regarding the notion of a Mt. Gambier district council. All five, together with signatories, had been published in the S.A. Gazette. The first had requested the proclamation of a Mt. Gambier district council with an administrative territory of about 1,000 square miles. Messrs. Joseph Smith, William Paltridge, Caleb Fidler, James Cock and William Sinclair were suggested as the founding council. (All were engaged in agricultural activities, except Caleb Fidler, who was a storekeeper.) This petition had 155 signatories. The remaining four petitions opposed the first. They either expressed an unwillingness to submit their land exploitation to local control, or revealed an aversion to the suggested council. Hence this urge for increased local autonomy came to naught.


30. P.C., May 6, 10, 1861.
31. The public meeting was convened by Mayor James Trangmar at the request of Joseph Marriott (merchant), Neil McLean (pastoralist), Samuel Hutchinson (merchant), R.B. Cook (na), George G. Crouch (merchant), and Duncan McEarchen (merchant). The provisional committee comprised Messrs. T.E. Richardson (Portland Guardian), G.G. Crouch, Francis H. Row (jeweller), and John Hogan (publican).

P.G., May 13, 1861.
P.C., May 13, 1861.

32. *ibid.*, May 13, June 17, 1861.

33. The new committee: Edward Henty (pastoralist), Thomas Must (merchant), John N. McLeod (pastoralist), James Hawkins (schoolmaster), Neil McLean (pastoralist), William Clapham (na), William Learmonth (pastoralist/merchant), P. Scott (solicitor), Edmund Dacomb (merchant), J. Fethers (merchant), John Hogan (publican), Charles Croaker (merchant), George G. Crouch (merchant), Thomas E. Richardson (Portland Guardian), Duncan McEarchern (merchant), and Francis H. Row (jeweller). A later press report claimed that Thomas Finn (merchant) and J.B. Fitzgerald (pastoralist) had been added to the committee. This assertion was not acknowledged by the Separation Pamphlet of January 1862. That publication instead noted the later addition of James Browning (schoolmaster), E. Barsby (gardener), and H. Smith (carrier).

P.G., June 19, 21, 1861.

West Victoria Separation League, *West Victoria Separation Movement for the Union of Western Victoria and the South Eastern District of South Australia into an Independent Colony, Portland (1862).*


35. P.C., June 21, 1861.


37. Local grievances focused on the inadequate facilities of Port MacDonnell, the state of district roads, inadequate legal facilities, inadequate postal and telegraph facilities and so on. It is probable that these were the complaints of a community experiencing growth pains. Nevertheless, the weather of 1861 was also exceptional, for over 55" of rain fell - the highest figure on record. Indeed, over 26" fell at Mt. Gambier between April and July 1861 (see Appendix 5). This precipitation brought predictable results. Mt. Gambier's main thoroughfare, Commercial Street, became a bog, and the road to Port MacDonnell was rendered almost impassable. It is noteworthy that the
sole public, indigenous manifestation of Separation sentiment would occur at the end of July.

B.W., May 31, June 7 (p. 2), 14, 1861.


40. Harris, however, was hampered by limited sources. He was obviously unable to examine the Border Watch between April 1861 and September 1863. Until late 1973, the only known collection of those issues was held by the paper itself at Mt. Gambier. Microfilm copies are now held by the State Library of South Australia.

41. B.W., July 5, 1861.

Was this evidence of a personal acquaintance between Richardson and the Lauries? See footnote 27.

42. Noted participants at this meeting were: Messrs. B. Andrews (na), ? Spencer (perhaps G.F. Spencer, a Dartmoor publican/storekeeper), G.D. Wyatt (a former Portland wheelwright, later Mayor of Mt. Gambier, 1878-79), Edward Pepper (probably a former Portland shoemaker - see Victorian Assembly roll for Portland, May 1859), and John McPadyen (butcher).

ibid., August 2, 1861.

Hill, L.R., op. cit.

43. For more detailed biographical material see: A.D.B., 4.

44. B.W., August 9, 1861.

45. John Norman McLeod would become a partner with Hastings Cunningham on the Compton Run near Mt. Gambier in July 1865.


He also fathered Donald Norman McLeod, MLA for Portland between July 1894 and October 1900 (see Chapter 3).

46. The committee: Messrs. Alexander Mitchell (Mt. Gambier Hotel), Robert Long (South Australian Hotel), Alfred South (Farmers' Inn, now Federal Hotel), and George D. Wyatt.

B.W., August 23, 1861.

S.A. Register, August 30, 1861.

47. The Portland Guardian would also suggest that the constituency
manifest its discontent with the Melbourne rule by refusing to return a representative.

P.G., June 28, July 24, 26, August 5 (p. 2), 1861.
P.C., July 5, 19, 1861.

48. P.G., August 12, 1861 (p. 2).

49. The detailed returns were Forest Inn (E. Henty 71, G. Levey 49), Heywood (Henty 59, Levey 53), Digby (Henty 92, Levey 99), Branxholme (Henty 34, Levey 55), and Hamilton (Henty 28, Levey 118).

50. The Portland Road Board had long been dominated by the same pastoral interests as had now taken control of the Separation Movement (see Appendix 6). The Board had attracted much approbrium from peripheral areas of its authority because of an alleged bias towards Portland and its general unresponsiveness. Indeed, the current chairman of the Road Board was Edward Henty. July 1861 saw an anonymous Dartmoor resident make the connection:

...Now sir, if we obtain the boon of Separation, who will be intrusted [sic] with the public purse? Will our affairs be managed with the same cleverness as ever? Or will there be the turning over of another leaf?

ibid., July 23, October 19, 1860; July 8, 1861 (p. 3).

51. The Nicholson Land Act of 1860 threatened the security of the pastoral holdings of Edward and Francis Henty in the fertile Wannon country. Hence both brothers indulged in blatant manipulative practices at the pertinent land sales at Hamilton. Considerable ill-feeling towards the Hentys (Edward, in particular) was thereby engendered amongst frustrated would-be selectors.


52. White, H., op. cit.

53. P.C., July 5, 15, 1861.

The social divisions produced within Portland by the Separation Movement came to a head in April 1862. Mt. Gambier had just blighted the future of the agitation by giving birth to an anti-Separation petition. Unable, in this context, to endure further the persistent criticism of the Separation cause by the Portland Chronicle, the Portland Guardian charged its competitor with disloyalty to the "real interest of the Western District". Edmund Dacomb, a fervent Separationist, promptly withdrew his advertising custom from the Portland Chronicle. His action
was copied shortly afterwards by "another Portland mercantile firm", which the latter paper declined to identify.

ibid., April 8, 11, 18 (p. 2), 1862.
P.G., April 15, 1862 (p. 2).

54. It is noteworthy that Mt. Gambier's experience with extreme precipitation ceased, albeit temporarily, after August 1861 (see Appendix 5).

55. ibid., September 20, 23, November 11, 29, December 16, 31, 1861.

56. West Victoria Separation League, West Victoria Separation Movement for the Union of Western Victoria and the South Eastern District of South Australia into an Independent Colony, Portland (January 1862).

57. ibid., pp. 8, 21, 4, respectively.

58. P.C., January 21, 1862.
P.G., January 23, 1862.


60. Biographical material is available in:


A.D.B., 4.

61. P.C., February 11, 1862.


64. B.W., March 21, 1862 (pp. 2, 3).

65. The Portland Chronicle was not convinced by Horne's report regarding the tour. The "facetious style" of its presentation was seen as indicating Horne's perception of the Separation Movement's futility. Moreover, the assertion that the League was a working man's movement was deprecated.

Edward Henty, Edmund Dacombe, Thomas E. Richardson, and
John N. McLeod did not fit into that category.

P.C., April 1, 4, 1862.

66. The local petitions now divided on the issue whether a Mt. Gambier District Council should administer both the hundreds of Gambier and Blanche, or whether each Hundred ought to have its own separate council. (A Hundred was a measure of area. It correspondence approximately to 100 square miles.) In other words, residents of the Mt. Gambier district now agreed on the need for local government, their disagreement now occurred over its appropriate form. "Conflicting interests" were supplied as the reason for this division. The nature of such "interests", however, becomes clear when it is noted that, at this time, the bulk of the urban area of Mt. Gambier lay within the Hundred of Blanche. Consequently, this division within the developing body politic of Mt. Gambier can be perceived as an example of the urban-rural tension noted in other studies of the development of an Australian country town.

S.A. Gazette, February 20, April 2, 1862.

For examination of similar tensions see:

67. The advertisement was taken out by J.C. Lyon, S.M., in response to a letter addressed to him by Messrs. J. Umpherston (farmer), T. Newton (farmer), A. Johnson (farmer), Peter McArthur (farmer), Duncan Smith (na), E. Wehl (miller), James Smith (farmer), Peter Hay (farmer), William Sinclair (farmer), William E. Burton (solicitor), H. Brown (pharmacist), John Johnston (farmer), William Hay (farmer) and D. Potter (farmer).

68. This claim may have been soundly based. Five months earlier the Portland Chronicle had chided the Border Watch after the latter had boasted that Mt. Gambier had become the new home for many disgruntled ex-residents of Portland.

P.C., November 11, 1861.


B.W., March 28, 1862.

70. P.G., May 1, 31 (p. 2), 1862.

71. South Australian Governor's Office.

Governor Barkly refers to information supplied to him by Governor Daly of South Australia (see emphasised section, Appendix 8). This communication must have been private as it does not exist in the official records.

73. An examination of the anti-Separation petition (see Appendix 8) revealed that at least 35% of its signatories were residents of the Mt. Gambier district, 10% were residents of the upper South-East, 11% were residents of Robe and 6% resided near the Murray mouth (the main overland route between Adelaide and the South-East then crossed the Murray River by a punt at Wellington). About 35% of the signatories could not be placed. (The Mt. Gambier district was taken to include Mt. Gambier and vicinity, Port MacDonnell and Allendale. Mosquito Plains, Naracoorte, Kintraig and Penola comprised the upper South-East. The Coorong, Wellington, and Goolwa were categorised as the Murray mouth.) A wide range of occupational groups supported the anti-Separation petition. In order: commercial interests, 21%; pastoral interests, 16%; agricultural interests, 15.5%; labourers, 15%; building trade, 12%; government employees (excluding J.P.s), 7%; banking interests, 4.5%; miscellaneous, 2.5%; plus unavailable or indecipherable, 6.5%

Additional comment can be focused on the anti-Separation sentiment of South-Eastern pastoralists. While many had runs on both sides of the colonial boundary, South-Eastern pastoralists were assisted by geography in their efforts to counter the threat posed by Government selection policies. A singular feature of South-Eastern geography is the existence of old coastlines running almost parallel to the current shoreline. Poor natural drainage was the product of this situation. In the early 1860s, therefore, only the high ridges provided all-season occupation. Hence, all that was required of the local pastoralist in order to protect his holding was purchase of the high ground at the pertinent land sales. Until the institution of effective drainage programmes the low-lying land was useless by itself. Edward and Francis Henty did not possess these natural weapons in their efforts to retain control of their Wannon region holdings. By 1862 therefore, many South-Eastern pastoralists had discovered that the threat of selection, at least in its present form, was insubstantial. Moreover, some South-Eastern pastoralists also manifested concern lest Separation cause them to become subject to a Victorian-level tax of 8d. per head.
on sheep instead of the current South Australian rate of 2d. per head. It seemed that Separation offered little advantage to South-Eastern pastoralists in 1862.

P.G., March 25, 1862.
Anonymous, Petition to Sir Dominic Daly, Governor of South Australia, Expressing Opposition to Aims of the "Princeland" Movement, S.A.A. GRG 24/6, 1862, 478 ½.
Blundell, J.J., Squatters' Directory and Key to the Squatting Map of Victoria, Melbourne (1862).
Cockburn, R., Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia, 2 vols., Adelaide (1925, 1927).

The high proportion of Mt. Gambier district signatories to the anti-Separation petition can be explained on demographic grounds. By 1866 almost 44% of the total population of the South-East would reside within the Districts of Mt. Gambier West and Mt. Gambier East combined (see Appendix 20). Moreover, no clear association was noted between Mt. Gambier's rejection of Separation and the concurrent agitation for local government by competing factions. Neither faction appeared to play an undue part in the anti-Separation response. Both seemed to combine freely in this manifestation of satisfaction with South Australian rule.

74. Of the known studies of the West Victoria Separation Movement, only that by White perceived significance in the Government handling of the Separation petition before its despatch to Westminster.
White, H., op. cit.

75. P.G., June 28, 1862.

76. P.C., December 9, 26 (p. 2), 1862.
P.G., December 11, 23, 1862.

The holdings of the Portland Chronicle at the LaTrobe Library, Melbourne, end with the issues for December 1862. They do not resume until the issues for August 1865 onwards, when the paper became the Western Times and Portland Chronicle. No copies of the missing issues were located.

77. B.W., December 26, 1862.

78. Thomas Richardson took William Cooper into partnership on February 1, 1862. Possibly motivated by Richardson's desire to accompany Richard Horne on the Separation
League tour, this arrangement was continued after the latter's conclusion. The partnership was dissolved on March 28, 1862, and William Cooper became the sole proprietor of the Portland Guardian.

79. P.G., July 2, 30 (p. 2), 1863.
80. ibid., August 6, 1863 (p. 3).


83. Williams, M., op. cit.

84. B.W., May 31, 1861.

It is noteworthy that the land on which the new telegraph station was finally built was a gift to the South Australian Government by Alexander Mitchell, who had been a local advocate of Separation in July 1861. Hill, L.R., Mount Gambier, Leabrook, S.A. (1972).

85. S.A. Chronicle, May 23, 1863 (p. 4).
86. B.W., May 29, 1863 (p. 2).
87. ibid., October 16, 1863 (p. 2).

88. SAPP, No. 102 of 1863. Revenue and Expenditure, South-Eastern District, 1857-1862.

89. S.A. Register, June 1, 1863 (p. 2).

90. It is noteworthy that on June 5, the Border Watch ranked the need for a district council first in a list of local wants.

B.W., June 5, 1863.

91. The big-council faction had triumphed. Messrs. William Paltridge (farmer), Joseph Smith (farmer), George Fannell (na), Andrew Attiwell, sen. (farmer), and Edward Wehl (millier) became the first council for the District of Mt. Gambier. Disgruntled residents of the F Gambier, however, met at Mr. J. Newton's far, James Umpherston reported that he had arrived too late to prevent the Government's deci
A committee was formed immediately to pursue the separation of the Hundred of Gambier from the new District. The war of petitions began anew. Finally, in December 1864, the South Australian Government succumbed, and the separate Districts of Mt. Gambier West and Mt. Gambier East were proclaimed.

_S.A. Gazette_, June 4, September 10, November 26, 1863; January 7, June 2, December 22, 1864.

Shepherdson, A., _Local Government at Mount Gambier..._, Mt. Gambier (1937?).


93. On the other hand, however, three reasons can immediately be offered in explanation for this error:

(i) The Separation Agitation fell outside the main focus of Hirst's study, viz., 1870-1917;

(ii) Hirst himself admitted that the South-East did not follow his model of rural dependence upon Adelaide;

(iii) As in the case of other pertinent studies, Hirst did not have access to the issues of the _Border Watch_ during its first 28 months (see footnote 40).

94. This characteristic of Portland's body politic is examined at greater length in succeeding Chapters of this study.

95. There is, however, a possibility that Mt. Gambier's repudiation of Separation in 1862 was contrived. Messrs. Lyon and Scott, both S.M.s, may have used the established telegraphic link between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide to confer with the central Government regarding the matter. Certainly, the anti-Separation meeting at Mt. Gambier seemed to be expeditiously arranged and conducted. Examination of the subsequent public careers of Lyon and Scott might prove illuminating.

Hirst has made pointed reference to the often-overlooked role of the telegraph in establishing centralised Government control over rural Australia.

Hirst, J.B., "Distance in Australia - Was it a Tyrant?" _Historical Studies_, Vol. 16, No. 64 (April 1975), pp. 435-447.

96. B.W., March 18, 1864.

97. The brothers, William James and John Harris B— David Power's Mount Gambier run in 1862. W— subsequently renamed the property the Mc

Situated immediately south-west of t<
Moorak Estate was probably the best property in a fertile district. Moreover, preceeding his coming to the South-East, William Browne had been a member of the South Australian Parliament between 1860 and 1862. This fact possibly gave his opinions greater import in the eyes of the S.A. Register.

Hill, L.R., op. cit.

98. S.A. Register, June 8, 11, 1864.
99. ibid., June 21, 1864.
B.W., October 15, 1864.

Such sabre-rattling may have been displayed for the benefit of domestic Adelaide politics (see Chapter 2).

100. Although the number of South-Eastern representatives in the Adelaide Assembly had been increased from one to two in November 1862, the Border Watch believed that the region needed four. Two could represent County Grey, while another two could represent Counties Robe, MacDonnell and unnamed county in combination. Moreover, the area had in fact earlier enjoyed the services of true "local" Assembly representation. The pastoralist, Robert Rowland Leake, had briefly been the member for the Victoria constituency in 1857. He had resigned, however, because of the associated problems of the distance of his pastoral holdings from Adelaide and the problem of obtaining adequate management of his runs during his absence in Adelaide. To cap this, members of Parliament in South Australia would not receive public remuneration for their services until 1888. By that time it had become almost a tradition that rural seats would be represented by "absentee" Adelaide men. The Mt. Gambier district diverged from that custom in 1865.

ibid., August 19, 1864.
Yelland, E.M., op. cit.
Hirst, J.B., op. cit.

101. B.W., December 10, 1864, January 7, 1865.

For biographical material concerning Adam L. Gordon and John Riddoch see:
A.D.B., 4.
Hill, L.R., op. cit.
Melano, J., op. cit.

102. ibid.

104. The main grievances were:

(i) The arbitrary nature of South Australia's eastern boundary, which separated the South-East from its natural geographical region.

(ii) The South-East was separated from the remainder of South Australia by a "desert".

(iii) The South-East, by virtue of its substantial trade with Melbourne, was obliged to pay taxes and customs duties to both South Australia and Victoria.

(iv) The South-East lacked a good port.

(v) The South-East did not receive its "fair" share of Government attention from Adelaide.

(vi) The South-East, even with the two members, was inadequately represented in the Adelaide Parliament.

(vii) Victoria, unlike South Australia, possessed the financial strength to administer adequately South-Eastern affairs.

(viii) Victoria deserved to rule the South-East in payment for the energy and funds that colony had expended upon Australian exploration - from which other colonies such as South Australia, had benefited.

(ix) The Adelaide Government's proposal to revalue pastoral holdings was "the last straw which has broken the camel's back".

ibid., p. 15.

105. B.W., February 4, 1865, (p. 2).

106. S.A. Chronicle, May 20, 1865 (p. 10).


Harris was perhaps deceived by the fact that both proposals saw South Australia losing the lands south and east of the Murray River. Nevertheless, such a division was the most logical if a natural geographical feature was to be used as a new boundary. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that the annexation pamphlet of 1865 accepted its contemporaneity. It displayed no awareness of the Separation Agitation of 1861-63.


109. B.W., February 17, 1866 (p. 2).

110. For biographical details see: A.D.B., 6.
111. B.W., May 16, 1866.


   The sub-committee was appointed on July 5, 1866. It comprised Messrs. John H. Clark (from the S.A. Register) as chairman, George A. Bartlett as deputy chairman and John Acraman.

   S.E. Star, January 29, 1892.

114. Mt. G. Std., September 13, 1866 (p. 2).

   Other studies have noted the adverse influence that the adoption of protectionist tariffs by Victoria from 1866 had upon the trade between the South-East and Melbourne:

115. Blyth asserted that if a Mt. Gambier resident was requested to produce the latest paper, the Melbourne, Argus, was always supplied.
   SAPD (HA), September 4, 1866, Col. 294.

   ibid.

117. B.W., November 7, 1866 (p. 2).


120. B.W., December 15, 1866 (p. 2).
   Mt. G. Std., December 20, 1866.
   S.A. Register, December 27, 1866.
121. SAPD (HA), November 20, 1866.

Gordon had invested in land in Western Australia. Indeed, on December 11, he landed at Bunbury with 5,000 sheep. Melano suggests, however, that Gordon's resignation was brought about by his revulsion from the Adelaide political atmosphere. The machinations which surrounded the activities of the Select Committee may have been instrumental in forming this sentiment.

Melano, J., op. cit.
A.D.B., 4.

122. SAPD (HA), December 14, 1866.

123. B.W., December 15, 1866 (p. 2).

Victorian firms would control much of Kingston's trade during the 19th Century.


124. Evidence given by the Rev. Julian E.T. Woods, September 21, 1866; and that by Messrs. J.D. Sutherland and W.J. Browne, October 9, 1866.

SAPP, No. 65 of 1866-67.

125. Dunn, E.M., op. cit.


127. Mt. G. Std., April 19, 1867.

128. Three vessels were blown ashore at Port MacDonnell during 1861. Many shipping firms and ship's masters began to treat the port with suspicion. Winter months often was ships bypass the port if bad weather was present or suspected as imminent. Hence by November 1863, the Border Watch was compelled to retract its initial optimism regarding the port. It was now described as being "indifferent". The S.A. Marine Board would be less tolerant in its 1867 evaluation (see text).

B.W., November 27, 1863 (p. 2).

129. Ward's articles were published by the S.A. Advertiser and the S.A. Chronicle.

130. Biographical material is available in:

A.D.B., 6.

132. Following a large protest meeting at Mt. Gambier on July 23, a deputation was despatched to Adelaide, but without success.

*Mt. G. Std.* July 26, 1867.


133. **SAPD (HA)**, August 13, September 26, October 3, 1867.

CHAPTER 2

ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE THE BORDER:
MODE ONE - ROADS
There have always been two roads between Portland and Mt. Gambier. Both were opened by the Henty incursion into South Australia in 1839. One branches off the Portland to Hamilton Road at Heywood and crosses the Glenelg River at Dartmoor. The second, more southerly route crosses the Glenelg near its mouth at Nelson. Poor natural drainage caused the first to be impassable during wet weather, while the second transversed sandy, inhospitable country between Nelson and Portland. The cost of transportation between the two settlements was therefore high. Neither route would sustain a regular coach service during this period, and inter-settlement mail was channelled through Casterton. Nevertheless, before 1860, the Mt. Gambier district lay within Portland's socio-economic domain. Until that year there were no competitive South-Eastern ports (see Chapter 1). Consequently, in the absence of checks on border traffic, South-Eastern and Western District squatters mingled at the Belfast (Port Fairy) and Portland horse-races, and a condition of free trade existed between Portland and the Mt. Gambier district.

During the 1850s, however, the interests which dominated the Portland region assigned the Mt. Gambier connection a low priority. This situation was not caused by an awareness of the absence of viable competition. Greater influence was held by two other factors. One was the comparative insignificance of the existing Mt. Gambier market. In fact, as late as mid 1860, the population of the Mt. Gambier district was probably no more than one-third of that currently resident in the
3. Victorian Mail Coach at Ardno on the Mount Gambier to Casterton Road, circa 1916.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
Municipal District of Portland. The Mt. Gambier trade was therefore not viewed by Portland commerce as being of any particular importance. Secondly, Portland's commerce was biased in favour of pastoralism - as was most apparent in the pastoralist/mercantile/shipping pursuits of the prominent Henty family. This bias was also present in the composition and policies of local government (see Appendix 6). From inception, the Portland Road Board was dominated by pastoralists.

Since wool, an essentially non-perishable summer crop, was the main commodity of traffic, the Portland Road Board had little incentive to establish reliable, all-weather road links between Portland and the peripheral sections of its hinterland. The Mt. Gambier district was one such section.

Consequently during the 1850s, Mt. Gambier consumers became dissatisfied with the cost and inadequacies of the Portland outlet to major markets. This dissatisfaction was answered by the South Australian Government through the opening of Port MacDonnell in April 1860. Portland seemed to ignore this threat. Indeed, one year later a local contributor to the Portland Guardian raised the issue. The writer requested unsuccessfully, that the Road Board provide a public explanation for the continued delay in a promised survey of a new Dartmoor road. The delay was said to be adversely affecting the Mt. Gambier trade. Farmers in the latter district were so ill-disposed towards the existing Dartmoor road that they willingly accepted five shillings per bushel of wheat at Port MacDonnell instead of a probable seven
shillings per bushel at Portland. In fact, the Portland Road Board was then still dominated by pastoral interests (see Appendix 6). Under contemporary challenge by Victorian closer-settlement legislation, many members of the Road Board were, or soon would be, involved in the abortive Separation agitation (see Chapter 1). Neglect of the Dartmoor road was not surprising in such a context. No evidence was indeed found to suggest that the promised survey ever eventuated.

In December 1863, the Portland Road Board District became the Shire of Portland. It thereby gained complete control of road administration within its territory. One month before this transformation, however, the Portland Road Board had successfully arranged the inclusion of the Dartmoor road on the Victorian Main Roads Schedule. If intended as a move to assist a revival in Mt. Gambier trade, it had come too late. By the close of 1863, Port MacDonnell was well established as the entrepot for the Mt. Gambier district (see Chapter 1). Moreover, the existence of pleuropneumonia in the Western District of Victoria had now caused South Australia to institute border checks on all potentially infected stock. Working bullocks came under this category. Hence bullock teams from Portland could not enter South Australia until they had been inspected and certified free of disease. Yet South Australia had appointed but one ranger to check 125 miles of South-Eastern boundary. Long delays were thus often experienced if the ranger was not immediately
at hand. This situation brought trade between Portland and the South-East to a virtual standstill during 1864.\textsuperscript{10} In addition, a regular steamship service began to operate through Port MacDonnell, increasing that port's utility and consolidating its entrepot function.\textsuperscript{11} The Portland Shire tacitly admitted defeat in April 1865. It sought the annulment of the main road status of the Dartmoor road. This was achieved in June.\textsuperscript{12} Clearly, there was no longer a significant overland trade occurring between Portland and Mt. Gambier. Indeed, despite metropolitan claims of widespread smuggling, neither South Australia nor Victoria made any move to regulate such traffic.\textsuperscript{13}

Nearly two years would pass before a regulatory interest was manifested. In January 1867, Victorian police officers raided the Portland premises of two local merchants, C.F. Crouch and Co., and George G. Crouch.\textsuperscript{14} A quantity of South Australian wine was seized in each case.\textsuperscript{15} It had been brought overland from Mt. Gambier without payment of customs duty. The first of its kind, the raid took the mercantile community of Portland by surprise. The local press (and subsequently the \textit{Mount Gambier Standard}) reacted with indignation.\textsuperscript{16} Nevertheless, the raid had made a haul of a mere ten quarter casks of wine. There are no reports of subsequent raids. Moreover, South Australia made no attempt to ape the Victorian action. The incident had perhaps indicated to the Victorian Government that the unregulated border trade in this region was not yet significant enough to summon profitable attention.
Meanwhile, the administration of roads in the South-East of South Australia was now in the hands of a Board of Main Roads for the District of Mount Gambier. Its formation in May 1866 was part of a devolution of South Australian road administration which had occurred during 1865-66. The Mt. Gambier Road Board would exist unaltered until 1875. No border roads would receive attention during that period (see Appendix 15). This fact indicates firstly, that there was probably little local demand for improved border roads, and secondly, that the central government had no strong interest in seeking their improvement. While the local Board administered actual road operations, its activities and overall financing policy remained subject to direction from Adelaide. In sum, therefore, overland traffic between Portland and the Mt. Gambier district was a rare occurrence by the late 1860s. Indirect support for such an interpretation was supplied in April 1868. The Portland Guardian then criticised the fee-structure charged by Andrew Brown for use of his punt at Nelson. Brown's high charges were portrayed by the paper as a major cause of the noticeable decline in through traffic from Mt. Gambier. The Portland Shire was requested to force their reduction. The possibility that Brown's high charges were themselves the product of declining custom and fixed operating costs was not apparently considered. Certainly, neither the Portland press nor the Minutes of the Portland Shire indicate that the advice of the Portland Guardian was heeded.
5. Glenelg River at Nelson, circa 1870.
Displaying Horse-drawn Ferry (left under gum tree), and Nelson Hotel (on bank, right perimeter).

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
It was soon clear that Brown was indeed in trouble. In February 1869, he informed the Portland Shire that he intended to terminate his ferry service at Nelson within six months. Brown softened this blow by suggesting that the Shire investigate the possibility of constructing a bridge over the Glenelg River north of Nelson. As noted by Shire President Trangmar, however, such a project required the opening of a new road. From the existing possibilities Trangmar personally recommended one which had originated through correspondence with William A. Crouch of Mt. Gambier. Crouch was a member of the Mt. Gambier Road Board (see Appendix 15). Nevertheless, no evidence was found to suggest that the communication was anything other than personal. Concluding that the matter was one "of the first importance", the Shire Council concurred with Trangmar's recommendation. Shire Engineer Griffin was instructed to inspect the proposed route at the first opportunity, and to then report to the Council.

The Portland Guardian welcomed the proposal. A new Mt. Gambier road was perceived as facilitating the trans-shipment of South-Eastern wheat to Melbourne through Portland. At present, all such traffic went through Port MacDonnell. Moreover, since there were still no border customs checks, South-Eastern wheat forwarded through Portland would avoid the Victorian duty. The paper further anticipated that the opening of a new Mt. Gambier road would encourage a resumption of the former practice of shipping wheat direct to England. In that eventuality, South-Eastern wheat growers could use
Portland and so avoid both the Victorian duty and the costs of transshipment to Melbourne. Hence Portland would become "the great outlet for the surplus produce, not only for the Western District of Victoria, but [also] for the South-Eastern District of South Australia". Both Mt. Gambier papers reprinted the Portland Guardian's leader. Only the Border Watch attached editorial comment. It declined to support the Portland optimism. Firstly, the Border Watch believed that the extra cost of cartage to Portland rather than to Port MacDonnell more than outweighed the savings obtained through avoidance of the Victorian wheat duty. Secondly, the Mt. Gambier paper pointed out that South-Eastern wheat shipped to England through Melbourne was not subject to the Victorian duty. The latter applied only when such wheat was entered for domestic Victorian consumption. Nevertheless, the Border Watch wished its "Portland cousins" every success in their venture.

Shire Engineer Griffin presented his report in early May 1869. The proposed new Mt. Gambier road was favoured. Before further local action, however, a request was forwarded to the Victorian Surveyor-General that Griffin's survey be adopted officially. Meanwhile, both Mt. Gambier papers reprinted Griffin's report. Only the Mount Gambier Standard (this time) attached editorial comment. Not only was the notion of a new Portland to Mt. Gambier road granted approval, but the Mount Gambier Standard added that a closer connection between the two settlements would be even better facilitated if Portland
would initiate an agitation for a connecting tramway or railway.\(^2\) The cause of this sudden enthusiasm for a closer Portland connection was easily discernible. Mt. Gambier (and, in particular, the Mount Gambier Standard) was still aggrieved by what it perceived as Adelaide backsliding regarding the matter of railway construction in the South-East (see Chapter 3).\(^3\) Apparently struck by this response, the Portland press in turn reprinted the Mount Gambier Standard leader. The Portland Guardian added:

...There was never a more opportune time in the history of Portland and Mount Gambier to combine their interests, and to secure to Melbourne a trade, which has through official blundering been allowed to be diverted to Adelaide. The Portlandshire Council will best study the general interests, by a speedy connexion with Mount Gambier, which is of ten times greater importance than Hamilton under any circumstances can ever be [my emphasis]. The sympathies of the Mount Gambier people and the Mount Gambier Press have ever been with Portland, let the Portland people, the Portland Press and public bodies reciprocate the feeling and do all in their power to combine their interests. The Victorian Government if fully aroused to the importance of the alliance would soon construct a short line of railway, that while promoting the interests of Portland and Mount Gambier would concentrate the trade of both places on Melbourne. The people of Portland must continue their efforts for the breakwater, and short railway line and despite the late political blunder, we have reason to believe their efforts ultimately will be successful.\(^4\)

The cause of Portland's growing enthusiasm for the proposed new Mt. Gambier road is contained in the concluding sentence. The "late political blunder" was the unopposed re-election of James S. Butters as MLA for Portland.\(^5\) The preceding April, the Victorian Parliament had expelled Butters on the grounds of bribery. His subsequent re-election thus devalued
Portland's parliamentary representation. From Portland's viewpoint, however, the adverse effects of the affair were exacerbated by the concomitant implication and parliamentary expulsion of the then Victorian Minister of Railways, the Hon. C.E. Jones. As Bartlett has noted, the Portland advocates of a railway northwards from the port based the future of their scheme less on obtaining widespread local support than on currying Jones' favour. The latter's fall from power meant the end of that particular Portland railway scheme. Hence by mid 1869, the prospect of a new Mt. Gambier road seemed to offer Portland an alternate avenue to the grand future it continued to aspire towards. Indeed, the Western Times was so taken by the scheme that it advocated a revival of the defunct Separation movement. The Portland Guardian urged the Portland Shire to force the Government's hand by unilaterally beginning work on the new Mt. Gambier road. In addition, the Mt. Gambier Council was urged to "do its part" and construct the South Australian section of the proposed new road. Neither local body heeded this advice. There was some early confusion as to whether the Victorian Government would accept Griffin's survey, but by July a firm negative response had been received. On the other hand, however, the Victorian Government raised no objection to an opening of such a new road by the Shire itself. The main road status of such a route could be left for later conference. The Portland Shire accepted these conditions. Nevertheless, it would be early December 1869 before actual work on the new road was commenced. During the interim the Portland Shire
had concluded (erroneously, as events would show) that Melbourne would be forthcoming with financial reimbursement on completion of the work. Commencement of construction was followed shortly by a visit to Mt. Gambier by Shire Engineer Griffin. The Border Watch was prompted to re-appraise the scheme:

...Portland may become a serious competitor to Port MacDonnell for the produce raised to the east of Mount Gambier; and should the Border Traffic question not be settled, the facilities for "smuggling" will be largely increased.

The Portland Shire did not waste time. The new Mt. Gambier road was ready for traffic by mid January 1870. The Nelson punt (now operated by a Mr. Westendorff) was moved up-river to the new crossing. The event went unreported by the Mt. Gambier press.

Mt. Gambier interest in a closer road link with Portland was now waning. The South Australian Government had alleviated the town's postal isolation during 1869. Moreover, in November of that year a Bill had been introduced into the Adelaide Parliament for the construction of a railway between Lacepede and MacDonnell Bays. Although the Bill clearly attempted to encompass the diverse, if not divergent demands for railway construction in the South-East, it did appear that Mt. Gambier's commercial advancement was more secure. As in earlier cases, however, the spectre of Melbourne reared its head. While, in general, the proposed Bill met with parliamentary approval because of its facilitation of Adelaide trade with the South-East, some trepidation was also evidenced regarding the Port MacDonnell connection. It was feared that
6. Mount Gambier, circa 19/0. Looking westwards along Commercial Street from South Australian Hotel (left). Note Border Watch office and Fidler and Webb store on left-hand side of street.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
the latter would merely benefit Melbourne. South Australian customs receipts at Port MacDonnell were currently running in excess of £2,000 per quarter (see Appendix 14). The Bill therefore met strong opposition in Committee. Consequently, sentiment in the lower South-East was mustered to counter the growing parliamentary favour for concentration on a Lacepede to Naracoorte railway. John Riddoch presented the Adelaide Assembly with a local petition concerning this issue in January 1870. The petition was ignored. Further Committee discussion of the contentious Bill therefore saw Riddoch advise Parliament of the nearing completion of the new road from Portland to Mt. Gambier. He obviously hoped that the spectre of Portland's competition would attract support for the Port MacDonnell section of the proposed Bill. His warning was dismissed. Riddoch was informed that Port MacDonnell was "to all intents and purposes a Victorian port". The lesson was clear. Because of what was perceived as a hopeless Victorian contamination, the Mt. Gambier district was to be assigned a diminished legislative priority (see Chapter 1).

This evaluation may have been excessively pessimistic. Certainly, the spectre of a Portland re-entry into Mt. Gambier's trading pattern lacked substance. By April 1871, it was known that the "new" Portland to Mt. Gambier road became impassable during wet weather. Not only had the work cost more than was first anticipated, but the Victorian Government had not provided financial reimbursement as expected.
The financial health of the Portland Shire could not sustain further attention to this work in the face of competing Shire responsibilities. These seemed to be multiplying. The growth of a wattle-bark industry had completed the ruin of the already poor Dartmoor road. Hence, in November 1871, the Portland Guardian would cite "bad roads and other preventible causes" as the reason for the diversion of Mt. Gambier trade away from Portland. It is thus difficult to evidence the belief, then current in both Adelaide and Melbourne, that considerable smuggling was occurring on the still open South-East border of South Australia. Victoria did institute tighter border controls, but was reported subsequently to have relaxed its attention. Moreover, despite isolated, albeit well-publicised, customs prosecutions, it would be September 1875 before South Australia deemed it profitable to permanently station customs officers in the South-East. Significantly, Penola, not Mt. Gambier, was then chosen as the base station. Consequently, it appeared that not only was the border trade insignificant in real terms (an assessment supported by border customs receipts, see Appendix 14), but that the least amount of such trade occurred in the Mt. Gambier district. As the Border Watch would itself remark in September 1875:

Very exaggerated ideas prevail in some quarters as to the amount of overland imports from Victoria. An intimate knowledge with the District enables us to assert that the trade which it is proposed to regulate is virtually nil... Our traders neither like high duties, high cartage rates, nor long overland journey. They therefore do their business by sea - as being cheaper, safer, and more expeditious.
During the preceding three years the road-system within the Portland Shire had approached the point of utter collapse. This development had largely been caused by factors outside the control of the Shire administration. Not only was the Portland Shire the largest in Victoria's southwest, but it also received the second lowest annual revenue (see Appendix 17). The Shire was legally responsible for the administration of roads within its territory. Through traffic to the independent Borough of Portland made this responsibility of an onerous task. The Shire therefore requested special assistance from the Victorian Government, but their request was rejected. Early 1874 found the Shire propose the introduction of tolls on certain routes. Public outcry, from both Shire and Portland interests, caused its hasty retraction. Hence Shire roads were "in a frightful state" by mid year. Efforts to raise special public loans for Shire road construction were also ineffective. Finally the Portland Shire appeared to give up the struggle, and pinned its hopes of an amelioration of its transportation problems on the approaching construction of a Hamilton to Portland railway. This obviously offered no improvement to Portland's western road links with the South-East of South Australia. The rapprochement between Portland and Mt. Gambier seemingly promised by the opening of a new connecting road in 1869-1870 had therefore faded in the face of Mt. Gambier indifference and, more decisively, in the face of physical obstructions which exceeded the powers of the Portland Shire administration.
Since neither Melbourne nor Adelaide stood to gain significantly from such a rapprochement between Portland and the Mt. Gambier district, both central governments were, at best, indifferent to its progress. Hence Portland and Mt. Gambier remained wedded to the discrete transport systems of their pertinent colonies.

Yet new developments were afoot. Mt. Gambier had now begun to aspire to regional socio-economic significance, with a subject territory which included Victorian border settlements. This vision was concomitant with a proposal that a railway be built from Mt. Gambier to a new South-East port at Rivoli Bay North (later Beachport). Not only did the proposal promise (yet again) a solution to Mt. Gambier's hindered advancement - Port MacDonnell was now viewed as inadequate - but it also held strong promise of Government approval because it would greatly assist the settlement of the drained Millicent flats. Much to Portland disquiet, however, Mt. Gambier commercial interests urged an extension of such a railway past Mt. Gambier to the Victorian border near Casterton. The South Australian Government was indifferent to this idea (see Chapter 3). Consequently, local interest was returned to road communications. In mid 1875, the administration of main roads in the Mt. Gambier district had become the responsibility of a new body, the Board of Main Roads for the District of Victoria (hereafter referred to as the V.R.B.). It would exist until 1887. Unlike its predecessor, the Board of Main Roads for the District of
Mount Gambier (see above), the V.R.B. would oversee the upgrading of border roads. Inter alia, the V.R.B. immediately sought an upgrading of the Mt. Gambier to Casterton road.\(^{57}\) By the close of the 1870s, this eastwards interest had expanded to include the Mt. Gambier to Nelson road. No interest was displayed towards the Mt. Gambier to Dartmoor road (see Appendix 15). In both cases of interest an achievement of the desired upgrading required participation by the local Victorian shires. Critical sections of both roads were then the responsibility of the Portland Shire. The latter was quite approachable in the case of the Nelson road, but repeatedly rejected V.R.B. and Glenelg Shire requests for co-operation in the case of the Casterton road.\(^{58}\)

Work by the V.R.B. on the Mt. Gambier to Nelson road revived signs of a rapprochement between Mt. Gambier and Portland. In September 1880, the Border Watch expressed a desire that "the Portland Shire Council will take up the work where the Victoria Board leaves it, and carry it on to Portland".\(^{59}\) This desire was not fulfilled, probably because the Portland Shire was unable to finance such a work without Government assistance (see Appendix 17). Certainly, later in 1880, the Portland Shire gave official support to an unsuccessful attempt by Nelson residents to have the Victorian Government declare a new Portland to Nelson road.\(^{60}\) In March 1882, the South-Eastern Star, a recent addition to the Mt. Gambier press, manifested little awareness of the Portland Shire's predicament:

...If the [Portland] Mirror\(^{61}\) and the Portland people
would wake up the Portland Shire Council and get them to make the road from Nelson on the Glenelg to their beautiful bay, they might ... see some Mount Gambier faces occasionally. What is known here as the Punt is such a delightful spot that we are sure many wealthy Victorians would make it a resort in the summer months if they could get to it comfortably; but the road is at present to execrable that they would risk their lives in attempting it, and the consequence is that the Punt, though in Victoria, is principally used by Mount Gambier people, who have a fairly good road to it.62

Clearly, at this point an improved Portland to Nelson road was viewed at Mt. Gambier less as an alternate access to market for local produce than as a possible avenue for a profitable tourist traffic.

Additional import is given to these inconclusive Mt. Gambier overtures by their contemporary environment. The early 1880s also produced a period of liberalised border trade between South Australia and Victoria. The fruit of protracted intercolonial negotiations, the successive agreements sought to minimise hindrances to normal economic intercourse by genuine border settlers.63 In operation in various forms between 1881 and 1886, this arrangement was terminated finally amidst Government assertions of financial stringency and extensive subversion of the spirit of the arrangement.64 Two factors undermined whatever possibility this period may have held for a real rapprochement between Portland and Mt. Gambier. Firstly, the connecting roads remained bad. Secondly, revision of the arrangement from 1882 restricted the permitted area of operation to a twenty-mile zone on each side of the border.65 Portland lay outside the Victorian zone.
Nevertheless, the permit agreements of the early 1880s did have one effect of long-term significance to Mt. Gambier and Portland relations. Mt. Gambier's already strong socio-economic influence at Nelson was consolidated during this period. The inadequacies of the Nelson punt became striking. Not only was it a constant hindrance to ready border intercourse, but it now also began to display an inclination towards sinking. Sporadic local pressure for the construction of a Nelson bridge commenced in mid 1882. Until mid 1887, however, the notion received only lukewarm support from the Portland Shire. Mid 1887 saw the Borough of Portland reveal interest in the matter. In fact the issue had now become complicated by the advent of an associated agitation. Portland interests now sought the institution of a direct mail service between their town and Nelson. (The existing mail service came via Mt. Gambier.) As the Portland Guardian noted, however, the issue of a direct Portland to Nelson mail was inseparable from the existing issues relating to the poor state of the connecting road and the need for a Nelson bridge. Attention to any one of these issues would, in the paper's opinion, inevitably expand to embrace the others. This comprehension aroused an old dream:

...we trust and believe the time is not far distant when Portland will be used as the outlet for no inconsiderable amount of agricultural produce raised between here and the "Punt", if not even so far as Mt. Gambier.

This vision was premature. The notion of a direct Portland to Nelson mail was rejected by the Victorian Government on the grounds of cost.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
This setback, however, was not sufficient to counteract the general tendency. As had been the case in the late 1860s (see above), revived Portland interest in rapprochement with the Mt. Gambier district was stimulated by a contemporary perception that the hinterland of the port was lagging in growth, if not even contracting.\textsuperscript{71} Logan and Richmond have shown that the advent of the Portland to Hamilton railway in 1878 did not bring the anticipated expansion of Portland's outport function. Portland stagnated during the 1880s.\textsuperscript{72} Consequently, by the end of the decade, agitations were afoot to have Portland connected by railway with the Wimmera, with Port Fairy, and with the Glenelg region at or near Dartmoor (see Chapter 3). A Nelson bridge would facilitate an alternate mode of western expansion. Certainly, the agitation for that project now gathered momentum. The Portland Shire obtained a Government subsidy for the project. Plans were prepared, and tenders were called in early 1889. All were rejected as too high, and the project began to flounder.\textsuperscript{73} Nevertheless, the first of three fortuitous sinkings of the Nelson punt stranded two Mt. Gambier visitors on the wrong side of the river. Revived local agitation for the bridge thus forced the Portland Shire to persist in attempts to extract additional financial grants from an indifferent Victorian Government. The Nelson punt remained in service. Now, however, no one was willing to accept liability for its use.\textsuperscript{74} Impasse appeared to have been reached. Yet, as a Portland source noted cynically, the residents of Nelson had probably adopted
the correct stand because if they were "fortunate enough to drown a bishop or a member of parliament, then a bridge is assured".\textsuperscript{75} Neither eventuality was necessary. After continued Shire representations during 1891, the Victorian Government finally pointed out that, as the Portland Shire would soon have its general grant increased from £2,864 to £7,794, requests for additional assistance should cease.\textsuperscript{76} Brief consideration of this situation caused the Shire to begin construction of the Nelson bridge under the existing offer. Construction work was well advanced by mid 1892. Completion was expected in November of the same year.\textsuperscript{77}

Two developments brought temporary insecurity to the project's future. Tariff relations between Victoria and South Australia reached a low ebb during 1892. Local opinion feared that the retaliatory policies assumed by both colonies might bring all border trade to a standstill.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover, the Port MacDonnell District Council moved to have the main road status of its portion of the Nelson to Mt. Gambier road revoked by the Adelaide Main Roads Commission.\textsuperscript{74} Neither threat achieved substantiality. The Nelson bridge was opened by William Hanlon, Portland Shire President, on February 8, 1893. The official ceremony was attended by local residents, members of the Portland Shire and the Borough Councils, and a number of Mt. Gambier residents (see Plates 9, 10 and 11). After the opening, and subsequent celebration, part of the Portland contingent (including, notably, Thomas E.C. Henty, Portland Town Clerk, and Edward M. Harvey, reporter for the Portland Guardian) accepted an invitation to come on to Mt. Gambier.
C. Glenshy River at Nelson, 1882. The first Nelson bridge undergoing construction, the horse-drawn ferry on left, and the Nelson Hotel in background on eastern bank.

By courtesy of Rev. R. Hill.
There, to their surprise, they were feted by both the Corporation and notable town and district residents. This experience was immediately serialised in the Portland Guardian. The potential of the Mt. Gambier district was eulogised. It was also noted, however, that considerable attention would need to be directed towards the Victorian portions of the connecting roads before Portland could reasonably expect to share in Mt. Gambier's grand future (see Appendix 18).

Nevertheless, important elements from both the Mt. Gambier and Portland communities had been brought into contact by the opening of the Nelson bridge. Moreover, this contact had elicited mutual hopes that it marked the start of an era of closer association between the two towns. Such a development appeared to be in process by the following May. The Portland Guardian report has merit:

...During the past week Portland has been visited by several Mt. Gambier residents, and judging by the opinions expressed by Messrs. Scott, Laurie and Gaillard when the vexatious border duties are removed Portland will not only receive visits from many S.A. residents, but will do a considerable business with their neighbors. Over a social glass at Mac's Hotel on Friday [May 19, 1893] Mr. Pile, in proposing the health of Mr. Gaillard did not fail to expatiate on our beautiful harbor, and impress on our visitors the advisability of shipping their produce from here. Mr. Gaillard in responding stated as soon as intercolonial free trade was established Mt. Gambier and the South-East in general would do a big business through this port.

Such business would not be facilitated that year. Two months later the new Nelson bridge was inundated by winter floodwater. All through traffic ceased.

The same conversation, however, had also contained reference to an on-going South-Eastern agitation for the formation of a
9. Official Opening of the First Nelson Bridge,
8 February 1893.

By courtesy of Capt. R. Hill.
regional meat-freezing company. Sheep farmers in the South-East were now experiencing the local manifestation of an Australia-wide fall in wool prices and surplus stock (see Appendix 16). Local problems were exacerbated by the deficiencies of the Adelaide railway. The break of gauge at Wolseley often caused stock deterioration and consequent devaluation before the Adelaide markets were reached (see Chapter 3). New Zealand had developed a practical method of freezing mutton for overseas sale.\textsuperscript{85} Utilisation of this new technique by South-Eastern producers offered the prospect that all these problems could be overcome simply. Hence, at Portland on May 19, 1893, Gaillard had expressed regret to Pile that South Australia's current stock tax would prevent Western District sheep farmers from participating profitably in the South-Eastern scheme.\textsuperscript{86} The former, of course, were also pressed by similar problems. Moves were therefore initiated to have a Western District meat-freezing works established at Casterton.\textsuperscript{87} This proposal caused not only the premature birth of the South-Eastern District Frozen Meat Company,\textsuperscript{88} but also the appearance of a rival, but more attractive, Portland scheme. Victoria would permit the importation of stock under bond for export freezing.\textsuperscript{89} Consequently, the Portland meat-freezing scheme not only absorbed its Casterton precursor, but also planned openly to include the Mt. Gambier district in its hinterland.\textsuperscript{90} This objective was an invasion of the natural territory of the South-Eastern Company. Thus, on June 6, 1894, the \textit{Border Watch} evidenced this partial
10. Residents of the Portland and Mount Gambier districts in attendance at the Opening of the first Nelson bridge, 3 February 1903. Most unidentified, but Andrew Brown, long-time operator of the Nelson ferry, is fifth from the left.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
Mr. T. McCourt, the canvasser for the South-Eastern Frozen Meat Company, spent Saturday [June 2] at Mount Gambier interviewing gentlemen who should, in their own interests, be shareholders in the Company, and met with encouraging of [sic] success...

Mr. MacLennan [sic], one of the canvassers for the Portland Company, was also in Mount Gambier on Saturday, but was forbidden by his Company to canvass in South Australian territory, as they were trying to form a company for themselves, and an intrusion on their district would only cause ill feeling.

Not only was this report blatantly mischievous, it was also untrue. MacLennan had been at Lake Mundi on June 2, i.e., 25 miles from Mt. Gambier.

MacLennan made an official visit to Mt. Gambier in mid July. He claimed a favourable response to his canvass for share subscriptions to the Portland Company. The latter's prospectus followed a few days later. It portrayed its planned Portland meat-freezing works as the natural and cheapest outlet for fat stock from the Mt. Gambier district. Nevertheless, despite MacLennan's public confidence, there was only one South Australian subscriber to the first share issue of the Portland Company on August 29, 1894. MacLennan's failure was apparently experienced also by McCourt and the rival South-Eastern Company. Fulminations by the Border Watch proved to be futile. The South-Eastern Company suspended its operations in May 1895, and was wound up a year later. The Portland Company fared better. Yet, although construction of the works was commenced for anticipated completion during the summer of 1895-96, negative influences did appear. Seeking
II. Panoramic View of New Bridge over the Glenelg River at Nelson, circa 1893.

By courtesy of Lieut. R. Hill.
to establish South-Eastern capacity as a hinterland for the works, a representative of the Portland Company visited Mt. Gambier in November 1895. His findings augured poorly for the Company. Like the adjacent Western District of Victoria, the South-East of South Australia was in the midst of a dry season. Consequently, there were few surplus sheep available for freezing (see Appendix 16). It was thus feared that the opening of the Portland works might need to be postponed. Moreover, Portland harbour did not have the facilities for berthing the deep-sea vessels used in the direct export of frozen mutton. This deficiency had been perceived almost immediately, and, concomitant with the moves to establish a Portland Freezing Company, the Victorian Government had been subjected to local pressure for the construction of a Portland deep-water pier. Legislative action did not succeed the early Government favour of the notion. The carrot of the South-Eastern stock trade proved to be insufficiently appetising. Hence the Portland Company was forced to commence operations using an ad hoc system of lighterage.

Meanwhile, during March 1896, a Victorian stock-buyer had purchased 5,000 wethers in the South-East for treatment at the Portland works. The first consignment, a mob of 1,500, reached Portland on April 12, via Dartmoor. Their processing on April 13 marked the beginning of operations at the Portland works. An "infinitesimal" number of rejects was noted. The first consignment of carcasses was despatched to the London market in the S.S. Gulf of Siam. A London report
dated July 23, revealed that this initial shipment had been well received. The Portland Observer was generous in its pleasure at this result:

Those stockowners in the South-East who supplied the sheep will no doubt share in the gratification of this [sic] whose efforts to successfully launch the produce of the company on the market have met with a result so coincident with their wishes, and who are entitled to the hearty thanks of the shareholders for their zeal.103

Apparently emboldened by this result, two representatives of the Portland Company again visited the Mt. Gambier district. One was William Hanlon, a Director of the Portland Company, current Mayor of Portland Borough, and a former Portland Shire President (e.g., at the time of the opening of the Nelson bridge). Two objectives were sought. Firstly, further South-Eastern subscription to the shareholding of the Portland Company. Secondly, further consignments of South-Eastern sheep.101 The mission failed on both accounts. Only twelve residents of the Mt. Gambier district purchased shares in the issue of March 3, 1897. Most resided to the south or east of the town.105 Moreover, the third annual report of the Portland Company was released on May 31, 1897. It revealed that the advent of a bad season had restricted the sheep-treatment operations of the Portland works to only three of the preceding twelve months. In particular, an abnormally dry season in South Australia's northern districts had caused the diversion of most surplus South-Eastern sheep to the Adelaide market (see Appendix 19). In fact, the solvency of the Portland Company had been ensured only through the fortuitous existence of a
contract to freeze 60,000 rabbits.\textsuperscript{106} The remaining years of
the decade would not bring a revival in the Portland Company's
fortunes.\textsuperscript{107} More pointedly, South-Eastern sheep farmers
would not again patronise the Portland works until the summer
of 1899-1900.\textsuperscript{108}

Significantly, the summer of 1899-1900 also saw the
commencement of construction of a deep-water pier at Portland.
This step stimulated William Hanlon, again Mayor of Portland
Borough, to forecast that, together with the coming federation
of the Australian colonies, a deep-water pier at Portland would
enable the port to achieve its natural function as the outlet
for surplus South-Eastern stock.\textsuperscript{109} Hanlon's assertion, though
widely accepted at Portland, was not soundly based. The
Federation Referenda of 1898 and 1899 had caused conventional
wisdom at Portland to embrace a belief that all that lay
between Portland and its long-anticipated "natural" destiny
as a major regional port were the "artificial" tariff barriers
then existing between the Australian colonies. Federation
would affect their removal, and the path to Portland's manifest
destiny would thus be open.\textsuperscript{110} Dissent from this position had
but one advocate. A contributor to the Portland Observer
noted that, because of the atrocious state of the connecting
roads, Australian Federation would not by itself cause a
"natural" gravitation of Mt. Gambier trade to Portland.
Federation was in fact more likely to cause the trade of
Victorian border settlements to gravitate to Mt. Gambier.\textsuperscript{111}
This interpretation gained little support at the time of its
utterance. Nevertheless, the facility with which the notion of a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway was taken up during 1900 constituted a belated recognition of its accuracy (see Chapter 3).

Hence, the opening of the first Nelson bridge in February 1893 had facilitated the first real communication between Portland and Mt. Gambier for some decades. It clearly had had the direct result of some South-Eastern participation in the initial operations of the Portland Freezing Company. Yet the possibilities of this bridge had been diminished by the limitations of the existing road connections, especially those on the Victorian side. In real terms the Nelson bridge, while a physically imposing structure, had not caused a significant reduction in the costs of transport between Mt. Gambier and Portland, greatly assisted South Australian efforts to have Mt. Gambier's export traffic borne by the Adelaide railway. During the 1890s, South Australia introduced very low "up" freight rates on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide railway. These rates so lowered the cost of the Adelaide rail outlet that for the most part Mt. Gambier consumers of the service were able to endure its inherent limitations concomitant with both the break of gauge at Wolseley and the length of the journey. Only the bridging of the gap between Mt. Gambier and Portland by a similar mode of transport would undermine this South Australian cost advantage (see Chapter 3). The situation, however, was certainly finely balanced. Thus, in 1906, when the Victorian Railways Standing Committee
condemned a proposed railway from Heywood to the South Australian border near Mt. Gambier, it largely based its adverse conclusion on the calculation that such a line would not be competitive for the Mt. Gambier trade. As long as potential Mt. Gambier consumers of such a rail service were compelled to cart their produce to a border railhead, they would prefer the cheaper outlets offered by both, the South Australian railways and coastal shipping.\textsuperscript{113}

After 1900, the emphasis in the urge for better connection between Mt. Gambier and Portland moved from road to rail. The Portland Shire remained relatively poor (see Appendix 17). A combination of these two factors was largely instrumental in producing insignificant improvement in the state of the connecting roads during the first decade of the new century. In fact, the hardwood industry brought about further deterioration in both the Dartmoor and Nelson roads.\textsuperscript{114} Furthermore, once it became clear that a Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway was to be built in the near future, the newly formed Victorian Country Roads Board (it assumed control of all Victorian main roads in 1913) was able to justify postponement of major road works in the affected area.\textsuperscript{115} Nevertheless, the construction of the said railway placed heavy demands on the Heywood to Dartmoor road. Much to the disquiet of the Portland Shire, the road's poor condition deteriorated further. Various trouble spots caused a stream of correspondence between the Portland Shire and the Victorian Railway Construction Board between mid 1914 and mid 1916. In most instances, the latter body responded by
affecting good repairs. Hence mid 1916 found the Heywood to Dartmoor road in a state superior to that it had manifested for many years.\textsuperscript{116} Indeed, that construction of a Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway would cause the contemporary improvement of one of its most damaging future competitors, the Heywood to Mt. Gambier road, is an ironical twist to the achievement of a reliable transport mode between Mt. Gambier and Portland.\textsuperscript{117}

Portland's position in regard to road communications was tragic inasmuch that not only was its outport function very much dependent on reliable connections with a distant hinterland, but also that for fifty years the main financial burden of maintaining such extended links fell upon the debilitated, but enclosing, Shire of Portland. The latter received insufficient revenue from its relatively infertile and sparsely occupied domain to properly shoulder its road administrative responsibilities (see Appendix 17).\textsuperscript{118} Thus Portland's outport function became subject to the variable performance of the Victorian Government. A combination of geographical and historical circumstance gave Portland transportation needs which were insoluble without substantial central Government financial, and, inevitably, directorial involvement. Mt. Gambier's chronic isolation from major potential markets for its produce had made relative cost, and not custom or sentiment, the main determinant in its choice of outlet. Portland, however, had largely no control over the relative cost, and hence attractiveness, of its various attempts at improved road connection with Mt. Gambier during
the study period. Interest in the matter by the central Government in Melbourne, the repository of superior financial and technological resources, and a probable, if not necessary, loss of local influence in the policy of amelioration comprised the price for achievement of such a rapprochement.
CHAPTER 2 - FOOTNOTES

1. In June 1879, Messrs. Smith and Stewart commenced a twice-weekly mail and passenger coach service between Mt. Gambier and Heywood, via Dartmoor and Spring Creek. Costing 30s. one way, the service connected with the Melbourne train at Heywood. It apparently lasted no more than 1½ years. From 1882, the Mt. Gambier to Heywood coach was rerouted via Casterton. Cobb and Co. now operated the run, and the fare had been reduced to 25s. one way.

S.E. Star, June 3, 1879. (Also see footnote 62.)
B.W., June 4, 1879.
P.G., July 12, 1879, January 2, 1882.
P.M., August, 1882. (Also see footnote 61.)

2. Boldrewood, R., Old Melbourne Memories, Melbourne (1969 edit.)

3. The Mt. Gambier district had an estimated population of about 800, while Portland's population was about 2,700.
Bonwick, J., Western Victoria, Melbourne (1970 edit.)

4. Edward, Stephen and Francis Henty all maintained both a Portland residence and pastoral holdings during this period. Edward was the MLA for Normanby between 1856 and 1861, and Stephen represented South-West Province in the Legislative Council between 1856 and 1870. Moreover, Stephen, together with William Learmonth, another major local pastoralist, entered the coastal shipping trade via Henty, Learmonth and Co. By 1860 that firm not only held a virtual monopoly of southwest Victorian coastal shipping, but had also entered the intercolonial trade between Melbourne and Adelaide. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that an apocryphal story relates how a Portland schoolboy once began his answer to some historical question with "God made the world, and then He made the land, and then He made the Hentys".


A.D.B., 1, 5.


5. The first Portland Road Board (1856) comprised: Edward Henty (pastoralist), chairman; Samuel P. Hawkins (pastoralist); Joshua Black (pastoralist); Thomas Finn (merchant); Francis Henty (pastoralist); William Learmonth
(pastoralist); T. Huxley (na); J. Findlay (na); and Thomas E. Richardson (Portland Guardian).


6. Nevertheless, while wet wool fleeces did not necessarily experience permanent damage, their market value depreciated because of extra handling costs. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the unresponsiveness of the Portland Road Board may have been partly the result of the then prevailing practice of holding its meetings in or near Portland. Poor roads ironically prevented outlying interests from adequately informing the Road Board of the extent of the problem. This problem would be inherited by the Shire of Portland in 1864. Partial solution would come when Heywood was made the base of the Shire's administration after 1878.


Learmonth, N.F., op. cit.

7. Evidence appears, however, to indicate some awareness by the Portland Road Board of communications problems in its western authority. The following was contained in the annual report of the Board in 1860:

The remainder of the grant for the Dartmoor Bridge has been allowed to lapse, notwithstanding the repeated applications of the Board for its expenditure; but the Government has promised to replace it on the estimates; the proper application of this money will greatly facilitate the traffic from the western side of the Glenelg.

Nevertheless, the source of this traffic is unclear. While Mt. Gambier lay to the west of the Glenelg, so did some Victorian territory occupied by Victorian squatters.

Portland Road Board, Minutes, March 12, 1860.


Significantly, the Border Watch, which commenced publication at Mt. Gambier on April 26, 1861, began by regularly quoting three market prices for wheat. The three markets involved were the Mount Gambier Steam Mills, South Australian Wholesale Produce and Portland. The third was no longer quoted after July 12, 1861.

9. Until the alteration in road authority during the summer of 1863-64, main roads within the Portland Road District
were the responsibility of a Central Roads Board in Melbourne. The local Board dealt only with parish roads.

Vic. Gazette, November 17, December 8, 1863.


10. In one sense Portland was now paying for a past mistake. Pleuro-pneumonia was first introduced to Australia via the importation of diseased stock at Portland in 1858. The chief transmitters of the infection were, significantly, working bullocks. By May 1863, the disease was virulent in the Western District of Victoria. South Australia had proclaimed import restrictions in December 1861. These would be maintained until April 1866. Nevertheless, it was early 1864 before their enforcement was noted by the local press. Moreover, as predicted by the Border Watch, the border checks were ineffectual. By mid 1865 pleuro was rampant in the Mt. Gambier district. Carriers were reported to be experiencing great difficulties in mustering a single team of healthy bullocks. A major overland trade between Portland and the Mt. Gambier district could not be sustained under such conditions.

S.A. Gazette, December 12, 1861; April 26, 1866.

B.W., January 1, November 26, 1864; March 4, July 20, October 14, 1865.

P.G., April 21, 1864.

Kiddle, M., op. cit.


11. B.W., June 10, 1864.

12. Portland Shire Council, Minutes, April 10, 1865.

Vic. Gazette, June 20, 1865.

13. Similar claims had been voiced by Adelaide sources early in 1864. These were followed in September of that year by South Australia's rescission of the existing agreement with Victoria concerning Murray River duties. It was asserted that this action had been taken in response to Victorian smuggling on the South-East border. In fact, the seeming divergence between the actual situation and the Adelaide version gives rise to a suspicion that the issue of South-Eastern commercial intransigence had then been, as it would be later, inflated chiefly for domestic political purposes.

B.W., March 18, 1864.

S.A. Chronicle, March 26, 1864.
S.A. Register, May 27, June 2, 21, 1864.
Argus, October 5, 1864.
Allin, C.D., A History of the Tariff Relations of the
Australian Colonies, Minneapolis (1918).

14. Charles F. Crouch was brother and former partner to
William A. Crouch in the latter's early activities at
Mt. Gambier. In turn, the removal to Portland of Charles
seemed to grant William ongoing contacts in that town
(see text).
Hill, L.R., op. cit.

15. Six quarter casks were seized at the premises of C.F.
Crouch and Co. while G.G. Crouch lost four quarter casks.
P.G., January 14, 1867.

16. The Portland Guardian later asserted that the only real
solution to problems of this ilk would be a federation
of the Australian colonies.
ibid., January 14, 31, 1867.
W.T., January 24, 1867.
Mt. G. Std., February 8, 1867.

17. Regional Main Road Boards were also established to serve
Eyre Peninsula and the area north of Port Augusta.
Anonymous, "Road Policy 1839-1933," Public Service
Review (January 1934), S.A.A. Newspaper Cuttings, Vol. 2,
pp. 22-23.
Hirst, J.B., op. cit.

18. ibid.
Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain a clearer
view of the Mt. Gambier Road Board's administration. The
Minutes of its meetings do not appear to have survived.
According to reliable family sources, these Minutes were
probably once among the personal papers of John Watson
(the Border Watch). John Watson's personal papers were
almost totally destroyed after World War II.

19. Andrew Brown had originally come to Nelson as overseer
for the Leake brothers on their Lake Monibeong and
Kentbruck runs. Brown would own and operate the Nelson
punt from the early 1850s until 1891 (with brief
interruptions - see text).
Learmonth, N.F., op. cit.
Yelland, E.M., The Baron of the Frontiers..., Melbourne
(1973).
20. Brown charged footpassengers half-a-crown per crossing and a two-horse buggy ten shillings per crossing, "about double what it should be" while all other fares were said to be "proportionately extortionate".

P.G., April 16, 1868 (p. 2).


22. Portland Shire Council, Minutes, February 5, 1869.

23. By the latter half of the 1860s, County Grey had reached its peak of wheat production for grain for the period of the study (see Appendix 16). In 1866, however, Victoria imposed a protective tariff on wheat. This measure caused a significant contraction in the Melbourne demand for South-East wheat.


24. Portland's outport function degenerated during the 1860s from one of overseas/coastal mode to one of mere coastal operation. This development occurred virtually concomitant with the withdrawal of the Hentys from its shipping/mercantile interests at Portland between 1866 and 1868 (see Appendix 1). As Logan noted, the departure of the Hentys robbed Portland of its main entrepreneurial impetus. Indeed, the succeeding five years would see the politic of Portland reach its nadir (see later sections of the study). Little explanatory evidence for this phenomenon seems to be available.

Logan, W.S., op. cit.

25. P.G., February 8, 1869, (p. 2).


B.W., February 24, 1869, (p. 2).

27. Portland Shire Council, Minutes, May 7, 1869.

28. B.W., May 15, 1869.

Mt. G. Std., May 18, 1869.

29. The South Australian Government admitted that it had no intention of enacting the Mt. Gambier to Naracoorte Railway Bill which was now on the Statutes.

SAPD (HA), January 8, 12, 1869.

30. W.T., May 24, 1869.

P.G., May 27, 1869, (p. 2).
31. The Portland press fell out over the issue. The Portland Guardian had opposed the re-election of Butters, the Western Times had favoured it. ibid., April 26, May 17, 1869. W.T., April 29, 1869.

32. Butters supplied ample justification for the antipathy of the Portland Guardian. He resumed his parliamentary duties in October, but only after serious attempts had been made to have him again removed from the Portland seat. In June 1870, Butters departed for Fiji for (ultimately) four years. His resignation as a Melbourne City Councillor was tendered in late 1870, but he annoyed his Portland constituency by failing to grant them the same honour. The seat was finally declared vacant early in 1871. Hence, it must be concluded that Butters did not fulfil his parliamentary duties as far as his Portland constituents were concerned.

This affair, however, was symptomatic of the political debilitation which befell Portland during the late 1860s. The Henty embrace of Separation in the early 1860s facilitated a political estrangement between Portland and Melbourne (see Chapter 1). Then, in early 1866, internal divisions became apparent when the Portland Guardian opposed openly, but unsuccessfully, Edward Henty's nomination of Butler Cole Aspinall for the Portland seat. The factionalism thereby revealed persisted during the incumbency of James Butters. Consequently, while payment of Victorian parliamentarians became the norm after 1870, the lack of unified purpose in the Portland politic remained such that Butters' successor, the barrister Howard Spensley, was able to renege upon his promises to his Portland electorate with the approval of the Melbourne, Argus.

P.C., January 4, February 1, 1866; July 22, August 16, 26, 1869; November 7, 1870; August 21, 1871. Argus, August 24, 1871.


34. W.T., May 31, 1869.

35. P.G., June 3, 1869 (p. 2).
In fact, the District Council of Mt. Gambier East (the Municipality of Mt. Gambier was not formed until 1876) did not administer main roads within its territory. That authority was held by the Mt. Gambier Road Board. That had not, and would not finance work on border roads (see Appendix 15).


37. B.W., September 11, 1869.

Through traffic at Nelson had meantime ceased when the punt was removed from service by Brown as forewarned. Hence, in June the Portland Shire approved an application by a Mr. Westendorff to commence a new ferry service. Two conditions were imposed by the Shire. Firstly, the new punt would be required to move up river to serve the proposed new Mt. Gambier road when the latter was opened. Secondly, the Shire would oversee all charges for the ferry's service. A concurrent application by Andrew Brown that he be permitted to resume his ferry service was rejected.

Portland Shire Council, Minutes, June 4, 1869.

38. B.W., December 18, 1869 (p. 2).


40. A South-Eastern grievance deputation travelled to Adelaide in December 1868. Only one of its representations was received favourably. It was supported by the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce and concerned the need for an improvement in mail communications between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide. Consequently, January 1869 saw the offending service altered from a twice-weekly to a thrice-weekly operation. Moreover, during the same month the S.A. Postmaster-General accepted a petition from Mt. Gambier business interests. The arrival time of the Melbourne mail at Mt. Gambier was so altered so as to allow a same day reply. These improved mail arrangements had enjoyed a year's operation before the new Portland to Mt. Gambier became available for use.


41. SAPD (HA), November 18, December 9, 1869.

Mt. G. Std., December 7, 1869.

B.W., December 11, 15, 1869.
42. **SAPD (HA)**, January 12, 19, 1870.


44. **P.G.**, January 10, 1870; April 13, 1871.

Given the Portland Shire's perennial struggle to gather finance sufficient to support its road administrative responsibilities (see later text and Appendix 17), it is probable that the new Mt. Gambier road was hastily and superficially constructed. Nothing more is heard of this route after this point. In fact, by the late 1870s, Andrew Brown had resumed his ferry service at Nelson (see later text).


46. **Leader**, December 11, 1869; September 2, 1871.

**S.A. Register**, December 13, 22, 1869; February 28, 1871; June 4, 1872; March 30, 1874; September 4, 1875.

**S.A. Chronicle**, December 18, 1869.

Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Committee, **Minutes**, July 26, August 26, November 15, December 13, 1871; January 10, 1872.


These allegations and counter-allegations may well have been more a manifestation of domestic metropolitan political expediency than a genuine apprehension.

47. In May 1872, a Mr. Wheeler, a traveller for the Melbourne firm of Messrs. Patterson, Ray, Palmer and Co., was prosecuted at the Mt. Gambier Court on a customs charge. Much to the satisfaction of the local press, the case was dismissed. Two years later, in March 1874, Alexander Mitchell's widow, possibly the wealthiest woman in the district (see Chapter 1, footnotes 46, 84), found herself in the Port MacDonnell Police Court on a similar charge. Mrs. Mitchell had purchased a buggy in Victoria but, desirous that the unreliable Port MacDonnell be avoided, had had the buggy landed at Portland and driven overland towards Mt. Gambier. It had, however, been waylaid by a contingent of police, and, despite an offer by the driver to pay the necessary duty, all had been taken into custody at Port MacDonnell. The sympathy of the local press was again with the defendant. This time, however, the case was heard and Mrs. Mitchell was obliged to pay the minimum fine of £25. The confiscated buggy and pair were later returned on payment of a further £35.


**B.W.**, June 1, 1872; September 10, 1973; May 13, 1874.

**SAPD (HA)**, August 13, 1872; September 10, 1873; May 13, 1874.

**Mt. G. Std.**, March 24, 1874.

49. *B.W.*, September 8, 1875 (p. 2).

50. In 1875, the Shire of Portland, which covered about 1,600 square miles, received an annual revenue of £7,650. The next two largest southwestern shires, Dundas and Glenelg, each of about 1,400 square miles, then had annual revenues of £14,998 and £12,960, respectively. Moreover, although the Shire of Minhamite then received a smaller annual revenue than did the Portland Shire, viz., £7,000 as contrasted with £7,650, it was faced by an administrative territory of a mere 450 square miles (see Appendix 17).

51. This grievance also formed a basis for political opposition to concurrent moves by the South Australian Government to amend that colony's Main Roads Act.

Hirst, J.B., *op. cit.*

52. *P.G.*, June 27, September 9, 1873; April 21, May 8, June 23 (p. 2), 1874.

53. *Vic. Gazette*, June 26, 1874; March 12, April 23, 1875.

*P.G.*, December 14, 1875; May 23, 1876.

54. *ibid.*, July 21, 1876.

55. By October 1873, discontent with the deficiencies of the shipping service through Port MacDonnell had grown to such a level at Mt. Gambier that it was suggested that a direct coach service be initiated between that town and Portland. Appraised favourably by the Portland Guardian, the notion nevertheless quickly died. High cost was the probable cause. Evidence tendered to the S.A. Royal Commission on Railway Construction during 1875 revealed that the current cost of a trap from Portland to Mt. Gambier one way was £5.

*ibid.* October 21, 1873.

SAPP, No. 27 of 1875. *Report of Commission appointed to inquire into the subject of Railway Construction.*

56. By the close of 1873, it had become very clear to Mt. Gambier interests that the South Australian Government had no intention of affecting major improvements to Port MacDonnell. A location for another South-Eastern coastal outlet was sought. Rivoli Bay was chosen, and it was proposed that Mt. Gambier be joined to it by a railway. At Mt. Gambier an agitation began for that end. Amenable to the Government's concurrent settlement programme on the intervening Millicent flats, the proposal was made part of the commission of, and was recommended by, the 1875 inquiry into Railway Construction.

SAPPD (HA), September 10, 1873; September 16, 1874.
This expenditure must have received Government approval. Both the funds made available and which roads were to be main roads were decided ultimately by the South Australian Government and Parliament. Unfortunately, as far as this point is concerned, the Minutes of V.R.B. meetings appear to have suffered destruction in a similar fashion to those of their predecessor, the Mt. Gambier Road Board (see footnote 18).

Hirst, J.B., op. cit.

Indeed, it would be mid 1884, when control of the pertinent section of the Casterton road was transferred from the Portland to the Glenelg Shire, before Mt. Gambier could look forward confidently to significant improvements occurring in their road connection with Casterton.

Portland Shire Council, Minutes, May 11, June 8, 1876; June 11, 1879; January 11, March 8, April 12, July 19, 1881. B.W., August 2, 1879; September 4, 1880; June 7, 1884. P.G., August 1, 1884.

According to the available records of these negotiations, the discussion included no specific mention of either Mt. Gambier or Portland.

In general, the intercolonial movement of goods was recorded through the issue of permits. No duty was paid by the applicant. Periodically, however, the records were examined, the balance of duty calculated, and the colony thus shown to be enjoying the trading advantage during that period would reimburse the other for loss of duty-revenue. South Australia's payments to Victoria between February 1, 1882 and December 31, 1884 totalled £3,565 13s. In other words, although South Australian traders held the advantage, their success was subsidised by the Adelaide Treasury. This situation elicited Government dissatisfaction, which was exacerbated by the discovery that the benefits of the arrangement were apparently going more to unscrupulous city merchants (especially vigneron) landed goods at Kingston and Beachport for overland transport into Victoria, while Victorian cheesemakers were apparently the worst offenders on the other side. Hence attempts were made to check such practices by restricting both the size of permissible parcels and the zone of operation of the agreement (to twenty miles on each side of the border, much to the anger of Mt. Gambier traders, because it thereby placed Casterton outside the region of permissible trading). These moves were ineffectual. Consequently, asserting financial problems, South Australia withdrew from the agreement in late 1885. Outcry from South-Eastern interests, however, caused a reconsideration of this decision. Secretive intercolonial negotiations were held at Mt. Gambier in March 1886. Nevertheless, Victoria, alleging widespread South Australian smuggling, refused to renew the agreement. South Australia was therefore able to return to its position of opposition. In 1887 the opening of a rail link between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide was followed by the imposition of a protectionist tariff by South Australia. Mt. Gambier did not protest.

SAPP, No. 34 of 1881. Arrangement Between Victoria and South Australia.

ibid., No. 38 of 1882. Arrangement Between Victoria and South Australia.

ibid., No. 55 of 1886. Cancellation of Customs Arrangement with Victoria.

S.A. Gazette, May 12, 1881; February 2, 1882; December 30, 1885.

B.W., June 8, September 28, November 30, 1881; January 28, February 1, March 8, April 29, 1882; September 23, October 7, 17, 24, 28, November 4, 1885; March 3, 17, April 7, 1886; August 24, 1887.

SAPD (HA), July 7, September 21, 1881; August 7, 1883; July 28, 1887.

S.E. Star, November 29, 1881; February 7, 1882; October 27, 1885; March 12, April 9, 1886; August 28, 1887.
Municipal Council of Mt. Gambier, Minutes (Special Meeting), December 1, 1881.

S.E. Star Almanac, 1882, Mt. Gambier (1882).


S.A. Register, March 9, 20, 1886.


65. Customs/permit officers were appointed at Mt. Gambier (Mr. Jacob, Clerk of the Local Court), Nelson (Mr. C. McL. Shugg, schoolteacher), and Dartmoor (Thomas G. Henry, schoolteacher) during 1881. Police officers, Luke Woodcock and William Kelly, assumed the duties of customs/permit officers at Mt. Gambier from February 1882. Their work load seems to have been minimal. Only two instances of pertinent Portland and Mt. Gambier traffic were reported. On June 5, 1881, the Nelson permit officer, following official instructions, refused to permit a consignment of Victorian cheese to enter South Australia. One year later, 180 fat hogs from Warrnambool were unloaded at Portland for transfer overland to Mt. Gambier. It appeared that after treatment at Mt. Gambier, they were to be sold in Adelaide. The high cost of transport between Portland and Mt. Gambier seemed to limit such traffic to that of high-duty commodities. No evidence of a Mt. Gambier to Portland traffic was discovered.

B.W., March 5, 1881; June 7, 1882.

Vic. Gazette, May 6, 1881; February 10, 1882.

P.G., June 6, 1881; June 3, 1882.

S.A. Gazette, February 2, 16, 1882.

66. Consistent with its attitude of June 1869 (see footnote 37), the Portland Shire had rejected an application from Andrew Brown in February 1870 for a ferry licence at Nelson. Furthermore, in August 1875, the Shire registered opposition to a recommendation by the Victorian Lands and Survey Department that Brown's persistence be rewarded. Nevertheless, it seems that Brown reintroduced his Nelson ferry surreptitiously during 1876-77. Certainly, the Portland Shire appeared surprised to find his service in operation in early 1878. It was fait accompli. Brown was permitted to continue his Nelson ferry, but the Shire asserted control over his fares and extracted an annual license fee of £5.

Portland Shire Council, Minutes, February 18, 1870; August 17, 1875; February 7, April 4, 1878.

67. B.W., July 26, October 4, 1882; February 14, 1883; June 17, 1885.

Portland Shire Council, Minutes, February 13, May 8, 1883; June 9, 1885; June 16, August 16, 1887.

P.G., August 3, 1887.
68. A daily mail had commenced between Mt. Gambier and Nelson on May 3, 1884. 

    ibid., May 10, 1884.

69. ibid., October 5, 7 (p. 2), 1887.

70. A new petition seeking a direct Portland to Nelson mail was prepared in 1888. It suffered the same fate as its 1887 predecessor. 

    ibid., June 29, 1888. 
    B.W., July 4, 1888.

71. The belief thatPortland's future lay with an expanded hinterland became a tenet of the town's leit-motiv. As well as its occasional manifestation in the Portland press, the assertion that Portland was the "natural" outlet for a large tract of Victorian and South Australian territory found regular exposition in the annual Portland Guardian Almanac after 1871, and later in the Borough of Portland entry in the Victorian Municipal Directory and Gazetteer after 1879.


73. Portland Shire Council, Minutes, December 13, 1887; January 10, April 9, June 11, September 11, 1889.

    B.W., December 17, 1887; June 15, 1889. 
    P.G., July 3, 1889.

74. Portland Shire Council, Minutes, July 16, August 13, November 19, 1889; January 14, May 13, June 10, 1890. 

    P.G., July 22, August 9, 1889; January 15, 31, February 19, June 11, July 16, 1890. 
    B.W., July 27, August 14, 1889; January 18, February 5, June 15, 1890. 
    P.O., June 23, 1890.


75. Leader, July 19, 1890 (p. 13).

76. P.G., February 11, October 16, 23, 1891.

77. B.W., October 24, 1891. 

    P.G., February 10, March 9, 1892.

78. After 1887, both South Australia and Victoria operated protectionist tariffs. Support for the removal of such hindrances to border trade thus grew at Mt. Gambier. A number of "incidents" occurred. From Victoria's viewpoint however, the final straw was the corruption of their customs officer stationed at Dartmoor. It was discovered in early 1891 that he had colluded with a number of Western District graziers in smuggling sheep into Victoria. Together with the onset of economic depression, this discovery stimulated Victoria to tighten its checks on border trade, to institute a stock tax, and to provoke South Australia to adopt a retaliatory policy.

P.O., February 5, April 6, 1891.
B.W., June 10, 1891; February 17, May 21, July 16, September 21, October 1, 26, November 30, December 7, 10, 17, 21, 1892.
P.G., July 1, 1892.
S.E. Star, August 9, October 25, December 9, 20, 1892; January 17, 1893.

79. South Australia abolished its system of regional Road Boards in 1887. The administration of main roads became the responsibility of local government bodies. Annual grants of assistance were made by the central Government on application. Consequently, after 1887, the Mt. Gambier to Nelson road was no longer administered as one entity. It was shared by the District Councils of Mt. Gambier East and Port MacDonnell. The latter would now cause trouble.

A meeting of Port MacDonnell District ratepayers occurred in early August 1892. Work on the Nelson bridge was now well advanced. By a narrow vote, the meeting requested that that portion of the Mt. Gambier to Nelson road which lay within their district be struck from the S.A. Main Roads Schedule. In exchange the meeting requested the inclusion of those roads leading to Port MacDonnell from both O.B. Flat and Nelson. It was clearly intended that Port MacDonnell's trade be protected at the expense of a possible Mt. Gambier and Portland connection. Naturally, Mt. Gambier manifested outrage. The local press argued that the Mt. Gambier to Nelson road was part of an intercolonial route between the district and Portland. It ought therefore, to be immune from such petty local considerations. This outrage was echoed by the Municipal Council. Indeed, Mayor Francis Davison carried a personal petition concerning the issue to Adelaide. He interviewed the S.A. Main Roads Commission. His mission was successful.
The Port MacDonnell vote was overruled.

B.W., August 6, 13, 20, 1892.

Municipal Council of Mt. Gambier, Minutes, August 10, 19, 1892.

S.E._Star, August 16, 1892.

Anonymous, "Road Policy 1839-1933," op._cit.

80. S.E._Star, February 10, 1893.
     B.W., February 11, 1893.


The author of these articles used the nom de plume "Viator". The latter was almost certainly Edward Harvey. It is noteworthy that Harvey resigned from the paper one month later.

ibid., March 31, 1893.

82. ibid., February 22, 1893.

83. ibid., May 22, 1893 (p. 2).

Concerning the participants: Mr. Scott, no information was available; Mr. Laurie, probably Andrew F. Laurie from the Border Watch. His mother (Mrs. Joshua Black, 1822-1903) resided in Portland; Mr. Gaillard was a Mt. Gambier storekeeper; Mr. (William T.) Pile was a commercial agent and former Mayor of Portland, 1880-81 and 1886-87.

84. ibid., July 14, 1893.


The South-Eastern scheme had been first mooted a year earlier. Its progress, however, had been hindered by local apathy.

S.E. _Star, May 3, August 12, 1892.

87. ibid., March 2, 1894.


S.A. Gazette, June 14, 1894.
89. **Vic. Gazette**, July 5, 1895. **Border Regulations**.

90. The following settlements were to be canvassed for possible support for the Portland scheme: Mount Gambier, Coleraine, Casterton, Harrow, Merino, and Hamilton.

   *P.G.*, April 18, 1894.
   *Leader*, April 21, 1894.

91. **B.W.**, June 6, 1894 (p. 2).

92. *ibid.*, June 27, 1894.

93. *ibid.*, July 18, 1894.

94. **P.O.**, July 26, 1894.

   The Portland Company was registered on August 29.


95. Henry Pick, sheepfarmer, Mt. Gambier, 20 shares.

   Portland and Western District of Victoria Freezing Company Limited, *Share Register*, Folio 322, Old Town Hall, Portland.

   William T. Shanasy, Dentist, Mt. Gambier or Stawell, Victoria. also purchased 20 shares in the August 29 issue.

   *ibid.*, Folio 359.


   **S.E. Star**, November 12, 1895; January 21, 1896.


97. **B.W.**, October 9, 1895.

98. *ibid.*, November 20, 1895.

99. **Leader**, April 21, 1894.

   *VPD (LA)*, January 22, 1895; January 28, February 6, 1896; August 26, 1897.

   *P.G.*, June 29, 1898.


   Logan, W.S., *op. cit*.

100. One month later it was reported that two more Victorian agents were in the South-East seeking a further 4,000 sheep for the Portland works.

   *B.W.* , March 21, April 22, 1896.

The Nelson to Portland road was not then in a fit condition for heavy use. At least 24 miles of its way were badly affected by sand-drift.

S.E. Star, February 14, 1896.


The second representative of the Portland Company was Mr. H.N. Reid, the general manager for its Portland works.

B.W., September 5, 12, 1896.

These were:

- Buchanan, Mrs. C. Widow O.B. Flat 20 shares
- Blume, Carl A. Grazier O.B. Flat 20 shares
- Davis Bros. Graziers O.B. Flat 20 shares
- Kennedy, John Grazier Peweena Stn. 100 shares
- Livingston, John Grazier Mt. Gambier 20 shares
  (his application lapsed because of non-payment)
- McArthur, Donald Grazier Greenvale Stn. 25 shares
- Paltridge, Wm. A. Grazier Mt. Gambier 25 shares
- Spehr, A.C. Grazier Carlsruhe Stn. 20 shares
- Spehr, Christian O. Grazier O.B. Flat 10 shares
- Schinckel, J.P.L. Grazier O.B. Flat 20 shares
- Vause, Harvey T. Grazier Mt. Gambier 20 shares
- Williams, Thomas Stn. Manager Moorak Stn. 20 shares

Portland and Western District ..., op. cit., Folios 450-455.

One year earlier the Victorian Government had accepted the need for a deep-water pier at Portland. Shortly afterwards it was reported that Mt. Gambier district graziers were examining a proposal that an official stock route be opened between Nelson and the Portland freezing works. The report was not substantialised.
111. The anonymous contributor also pointed out that there was no suggestion that Australian federation would be succeeded by an abolition of differential rates on local railways. Moreover, while there were two anonymous contributions, the similarity of their contents indicates the same source.

P.O., March 31, June 2, 1898.

112. S.E. Star, July 6, 1888; February 4, 1890; February 19, 1892; March 20, 1894; February 5, 1897; March 4, 11, 18, 1898.

B.W., July 7, 1888; January 29, February 1, March 26, June 28, November 12, 1890; January 21, 1891; January 16, February 24, 1892; March 21, 1894; October 12, 1895; May 20, 1896; February 6, 1897; January 15, March 9, 1898; March 20, August 2, 1899.

Municipal Council of Mt. Gambier, Minutes, February 14, 28, March 14, October 10, 24, 1894; August 12, 26, October 21, 1896; February 10, 26, March 24, April 7, 21, 1897.

SAPD (HA), July 19, September 7, 1899.

113. VPP, No. 4 of 1906. Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on the question of the proposed Railway to Dartmoor and Towards Mount Gambier.

The cost of road transport between Mt. Gambier and Portland was apparently so high that the suggestion in both 1902 and 1903 that a system of road-teams be established between the two towns failed to pass into substantiality.

S.E. Star, April 8, 1902.

P.G., April 2, 1902; April 24, 1903.


B.W., May 25, 1910.

115. VPP, No. 32 of 1914 (p. 33).


117. Matthews, W.H., They Blazed the Track: A Story of the Pioneers of Heywood and District (nd).
118. The evolution of the Portland Shire and its responsibilities is given a historical examination by:

CHAPTER 3

ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE THE BORDER:
MODE TWO – RAILWAYS
1866–1906
Adelaide's interest in the South-Eastern portion of its domain grew during the early 1860s. This was partly the result of the discontent revealed by the abortive West Victoria Separation Movement (see Chapter 1). More pertinent, however, was the need for land to answer popular demand. Various legislation attempted to facilitate the breaking up of the often large South-Eastern pastoral holdings. They were only partly successful. Nevertheless, and as an intimation of unused potential, agricultural production in the region expanded rapidly during this period (see Appendix 16). Up to this point Melbourne and Portland had been the chief Victorian cognoscenti of this situation. They were now joined by Hamilton. A communications centre of regional significance, Hamilton was swiftly overtaking Portland as the main settlement in Victoria's South-West (see Appendix 2). Its aspirations grew accordingly. May 1866 therefore saw George C. Levey, the victor over Edward Henty in the 1861 contest for the Normanby seat, rise in the Victorian Assembly. He suggested the construction of a railway linking Melbourne with the Western District. Levey's notion was favourably received. Moreover, it was perceived that such a railway could facilitate a Victorian tapping of the Mt. Gambier district of South Australia. At Mt. Gambier, the Border Watch greeted the idea with enthusiasm:

...If ever Mount Gambier is to be connected with the outer world by railway it must first be via Victoria. And should Victoria go seriously into the project of connecting her Western Province with the capital by rail, Mount Gambier would be the natural terminus of the line.
The fact that Mt. Gambier was located ten miles inside South Australia, a colony separate and independent of Victoria, was conveniently overlooked! The scene now became more complicated. Alarmed by this Hamilton proposal, Portland interests revived the old notion of a tramway northwards from the port. It also envisaged a tapping of the Mt. Gambier trade. Nevertheless, the Portland proposal failed to attract either local or Government favour. Its consequent floundering were exacerbated by bitter rivalry with its Hamilton competitor.

Both Western District railway proposals were appraised warmly by the Mt. Gambier press. The town was becoming disenchanted with what it perceived as Adelaide's indifference to its transport needs (see Chapter 1). Interests at Mt. Gambier and Penola sought rail connection to the closest South-Eastern port, viz., Port MacDonnell. This aspiration was opposed by Lacepede Bay interests and a growing swell of Adelaide commercial and parliamentary opinion. The latter combination favoured the construction of a Lacepede Bay to Naracoorte railway. Not only was such a railway thought likely to facilitate closer settlement in the Naracoorte area, but it was also perceived as a probable counter to the Victorian commercial penetration of the region. Faced by such divergent demands, the Adelaide Government proposed in late 1867 that an inland Naracoorte to Mt. Gambier railway be constructed. The idea pleased neither of the rival South-Eastern groups. Little progress on the issue was achieved. Frustration grew at Mt. Gambier. Finally, in August 1868,
Dr. Thomas Graham wrote to the *Mount Gambier Standard*. He suggested that Adelaide's neglect of the district's needs could be countered by a two-tiered programme. Firstly, a local mercantile league or union could be formed to seek the exclusion of Adelaide commerce from district trade. Secondly, if the first action failed to elicit Adelaide receptivity, Graham recommended an agitation for a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. The host paper supported the spirit, if not the message, of Graham's communication. The *Border Watch* bore a further manifestation of this sentiment. An anonymous contributor claimed that Mt. Gambier's isolation from market could be overcome by a railway to Melbourne via Hamilton - an obvious perception of the probable winner of the two competing Western District schemes. Indeed, although the *Portland Guardian* reprinted Graham's letter to the *Mount Gambier Standard*, it was cited perversely as evidence that South Australia was serious in its proposed South-Eastern railway construction. As with their Hamilton rivals, the advocates of Portland's railway scheme chose to portray the proposed South-Eastern railways as a threat to the existing trading pattern of the Victorian border areas. Nevertheless, as Richmond noted, Melbourne did not respond to this trade diversion argument. Firstly, Victoria stood to win only minor commercial prizes in the affected region. Secondly, the rivalry between the South-Eastern railway proposals undermined the danger they allegedly posed. Thirdly, and perhaps decisively, South Australia displayed growing reluctance to join battle with Victoria for the border trade (see Chapter 2). It was clear,
however, that a desire for a closer association between Mt. Gambier and Portland was not the main stimulant for the various railway proposals. Mt. Gambier desired better access to market. Portland desired an improved hinterland connection. Government favour was now accepted as being necessary for viability in railway schemes. Hence if the railway aspirations of the two settlements were to be answered, it was therefore necessary to activate the parochialism of the colonial Governments of South Australia and Victoria. Thus both towns manifested a preference for a trade diversion argument. Indeed, when in May 1869 the Mount Gambier Standard responded in part to ongoing Portland Shire moves to construct a new Portland to Mt. Gambier road by suggesting that attention might more profitably be directed towards achievement of a connecting tramway or railway, little enthusiasm was generated\(^{16}\) (see Chapter 2). It seemed that if such a connection was deemed desirable, a railway was not yet the major favoured mode.

Incompatibility between the economic aspirations of Mt. Gambier and Portland became striking in late 1876. Both towns now faced the prospect that their communication needs would soon be answered by their pertinent Governments. On April 27, 1876, the turning of the first sod of a Portland to Hamilton railway had promised a solution to the port's isolation from a hinterland\(^{17}\) (see Chapter 2). In 1875, a South Australian Royal Commission had recommended the construction of a railway between Mt. Gambier and a new port at Rivoli Bay North (later Beachport). There was little doubt that this line would become
a reality.\(^{18}\) Hence Mt. Gambier's long-standing isolation from major markets - only partly overcome by the limited capabilities of Port MacDonnell - appeared close to significant amelioration. Optimism flowered at Mt. Gambier. An ill-fated local steamship company was formed (see Appendix 21). Much to Portland's discomfort, however, some Mt. Gambier voices now advocated that a Rivoli Bay railway not terminate at Mt. Gambier but be continued on to the Victorian border near Casterton.\(^{19}\) The trade of Victoria's rich Wannon region seemed to be at threat.\(^{20}\) The Melbourne Argus therefore suggested that the danger would be checked by construction of a Branxholme to Casterton spur of the Hamilton line.\(^{21}\) The Border Watch dismissed these anxieties:

Our Portland contemporary is somewhat alarmed at our proposal to invade Victorian territory with the iron horse. Our scheme is set down as a daring attempt to tap the Western District, and to divert the traffic that ought to find its way to Portland to Rivoli Bay. We may at once assure our contemporary that the promoters of the Border railway do not urge its claims with any view of tempting Victorian produce to come to Rivoli Bay for shipment. We hold that it is the duty of the various Governments to give facilities to their subjects to ship their produce to and draw their supplies from the port at which they can do so most profitably. Should that be Portland, then we can say by all means, let them have facilities for going to Portland. But we hold it is foolish for any Government to waste its means to prevent traffic running in its natural groove. Stripped of its evocation of nature, this statement appears suspiciously similar to opportunism, i.e., when the Government changes to open its purse it's every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost! To its credit, the Portland Guardian was contemptuous of such sentiment:

...The generosity of some journals is remarkable particularly when they have all to gain and nothing
to lose. People with short memories can remember the stand the Border Watch took against the Narracorte line lest traffic, we presume, should be directed from the Mount into other channel, and now the Watch gives a philosophic lecture on any dog in the manger action on the part of Portland or the Argus desirous of keeping our own trade when there is positive danger that it may be diverted by superior activity to South Australia. If the Government only does its duty, Victoria has nothing to fear from the competition of Lacepede or Rivoli bays, but it will be a disgrace to Victorian legislation if the trade is diverted without giving Portland Bay a fair chance in the competition. This is all we ask, and this is no more than we have a right in the interest of our own commerce to demand.  

Portland's fears were groundless. Not only was Adelaide indifferent to Mt. Gambier's imperial aspirations, but the Portland to Hamilton railway was opened in January 1878, sixteen months ahead of its alleged competitor, the Rivoli Bay and Mt. Gambier line. Nevertheless, at the latter's official opening on May 19, 1879, Governor Jervois of South Australia mischievously played upon this estrangement between Mt. Gambier and Portland. Jervois claimed that the Rivoli Bay railway would not only bind the South-East more closely to South Australia, but it would also facilitate a tapping of Victoria's Western District. The response of the Portland Guardian was almost a conditioned reflex:

...For the last twenty years the people of Portland and the district have been harping on the same chord, i.e., to connect the interior - the Glenelg and Wannon - with the nearest Victorian shipping port, and secure not alone the trade of the Victorian border lands, but annex Mount Gambier and the little colony on the west side of the 141st degree of longitude, separated from Adelaide by eighty or ninety miles of desert [my emphasis]. The policy was repudiated, Melbourne at that time, and since, had other fish to fry, and now we find that Adelaide is before us ... 

Again, such an interpretation was overstated, if not hysterical. Thus, by the end of the 1870s the estrangement between Portland
and Mt. Gambier had developed almost to the point of divorce.

It developed no further. The discrete communications policies of South Australia and Victoria did not fulfil local expectations. Less than one month after its opening, the Rivoli Bay (Beachport) railway became the target of Mt. Gambier criticism. Its freight rates were deemed to be too high. It was therefore predicted that Port MacDonnell, despite its known limitations, would continue to be Mt. Gambier's port. Indeed, such was the case. Shipping activity at Port MacDonnell would regularly exceed that at Beachport for another thirty years (see Appendix 22). Thus Mt. Gambier's access to its main market - still Melbourne - remained deficient. The beginning of the 1880s, however, produced the prospect of an intercolonial railway between Melbourne and Adelaide. Mt. Gambier interests therefore advocated a southern route for the line. Nevertheless, the Intercolonial Railway Bill of 1882 had the line passing through Bordertown, north of Naracoorte. In reply Mt. Gambier now requested the construction of a southern branch of this intercapital line. It could come to Mt. Gambier through Naracoorte:

...we may look at the project from a local point of view. Unfortunately the geographical position of Mount Gambier does not fit [sic] in with that of Adelaide. Politically we are part and parcel of South Australia; geographically we ought to have belonged to Victoria. In that case we should long since have had a railway to Melbourne, and our still struggling industries would have been stimulated and developed by the demands made upon us by the large town population there. However, we are not disposed to quarrel with the chance that cast in our lot with Adelaide. But we would say to Parliament - "It is your duty to do what you can to break down the obstacles which create the feeling that we are only nominally South Australians, and thus recoup us
for the loss sustained through being such." What we now ask are reasonable facilities for doing business with the rest of South Australia, and in making this demand we feel satisfied that we and the colony at large will be mutually benefited if we get them.\textsuperscript{29}

This notion, however, was condemned by a special meeting of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce.\textsuperscript{30} Hence no political support for Mt. Gambier's wish was forthcoming until 1884. The South Australian elections of that year saw both parliamentary groupings promise an early introduction of the necessary legislation.\textsuperscript{31} Significantly, Victoria had commenced construction of a Branxholme to Casterton railway. This would place a Victorian railhead within 25 miles of the Mt. Gambier district. Consequently, elements within the Mt. Gambier Railway League attempted to direct its activities towards achieving connection with Casterton. Majority opinion, however, preferred the more probable Adelaide rail connection.\textsuperscript{32} Their loyalty was rewarded in November 1885. Construction of a Mt. Gambier to Naracoorte railway commenced\textsuperscript{33} (see plate 12). The opening of the line in June 1887 revived local optimism\textsuperscript{34} (see plate 13). Disenchantment with the Beachport railway had therefore brought signs of revived Mt. Gambier interest in a Victorian rail connection, but the advent of an Adelaide railway had quelled, at least for the present, such stirrings. The South Australian transport system had obtained a second chance.

Disenchantment had meantime also become Portland's dominant response to the Hamilton railway. It had not fulfilled
12. Turning of the first sod of the Mount Gambier to Naracoorte (and, hence, Adelaide) railway at Mount Gambier by John RiCKCOCH, 19 November 1875.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
expectations that it would enable the port to overcome its problems with road communications (see Chapter 2). As Logan and Richmond noted, the Hamilton railway arrested Portland's previous decline, but it failed to bring its reversal (see Appendices 2 and 3). Portland's outport function remained dependent on the wool season and, added to the ongoing centralisation of Victorian railways on Melbourne, this situation saw Portland stagnate during the 1880s. Belatedly, Portland interests perceived that salvation might lie with the inclusion of their needed connections in one of the prevailing "octopus" Victorian railway bills. For almost a decade such bills had been symptomatic of the influence of political factors in the construction and administration of Victorian railways. Clearly, however, there was a danger that by associating Portland's railway aspirations with the prevailing thrust of Victorian railway construction, the leit-motiv of the former could become contaminated by metropolitan considerations.

Nevertheless, the onset of 1889 found Portland in pursuit of three extensions to its existing feeder network of railways. One was a branch of the Hamilton line westwards to the Glenelg region at or near Dartmoor. It was not at first clear whether its objective was a facilitation of adjacent settlement, a tapping of the Mt. Gambier district, or both. However, it attracted widespread support, including that of the Shire of Portland and from the Hon. H.J. Wrixon, then not only MLA for Portland, but also the current Victorian Attorney-General. An official survey of the proposed Heywood to Dartmoor route of the line was performed later in the year, but ominously,

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
only after further local agitation. Portland expectations revived, but were dashed when this proposal shared the fate of its two companions. It failed to gain inclusion in the Victorian Railway Construction Bill for 1890. Portland protestation was finally answered by Wrixon's claim that the Government had not been able to find economic grounds sufficient to justify construction of the line. A notion that the Portland Shire initiate construction of a tramway along the same route did not achieve substantiality. Strapped by financial debilitation (see Appendix 17), and burdened by concurrent efforts to obtain a Nelson bridge (see Chapter 2), the Shire was not in a position to favour such a suggestion.

This westwards rail thrust therefore died.

General economic trends were influential in bringing an end to this potential rail link between Portland and the Mt. Gambier district. The onset of economic depression was a major cause of the severe pruning of the Victorian Railways Construction Bill of 1890. It is also true, however, that the proposed line did not elicit enthusiasm at Mt. Gambier. This situation persisted even after July 1889, when Portland interests indicated to the Victorian Government that railway connection with the Mt. Gambier district was the ultimate aim of the proposal. Mt. Gambier indifference towards the scheme may have facilitated the Victorian Government's adverse assessment of its merits. Two factors encouraged Mt. Gambier's indifference. Firstly, its rail link with Adelaide was only two years old, insufficient time for the extent of its
limitations to become fully apparent (see below). Secondly, South Australia was concurrently holding a Royal Commission into Intercolonial Free Trade.\textsuperscript{45} Hence 1889-90 was a time when Mt. Gambier's perennial grievances concerning its communications and trading problems were at a low ebb. Perception of deficiencies in their discrete communications facilities had not yet synchronised at Mt. Gambier and Portland.

Synchronisation would be approached during the 1890s. Continuance of economic depression saw the introduction of new rating schedules on the Victorian railways from 1893. Highly competitive, these rates struck directly at other modes of intracolonial transport. One such mode was coastal shipping on which Portland's prosperity was now dependent. Consequently the port's stagnation of the 1880s was now followed by a real decline during the 1890s\textsuperscript{46} (see Appendix 23). Meanwhile, at Mt. Gambier the opening of the Adelaide railway in June 1887 had been succeeded by a decline in both shipping activity at Port MacDonnell and district trade with Melbourne\textsuperscript{47} (see Appendices 14 and 22). Nevertheless, the Adelaide rail service was soon perceived as less than a panacea for Mt. Gambier's transport problems. The journey was long, time-consuming, and, because of a break of gauge at Wolseley, often detrimental to the market value of commodities carried through wastage and damage during transshipment\textsuperscript{48} South Australia, however, also fell victim to economic depression during the 1890s. Hence, from 1891 these problems caused South Australia to institute special, low rates on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide rail service.\textsuperscript{49}
Special concessions for specific purposes often augmented this policy.\textsuperscript{50} Nevertheless, these actions ameliorated rather than solved the break of gauge problem at Wolseley. The close of the decade therefore produced an assertion that the break of gauge was the factor most likely to prevent the Mt. Gambier district from reaping the full benefits of the nearing federation of the Australian colonies.\textsuperscript{51} The eve of Federation thus found both Portland and Mt. Gambier again disenchanted with the performance of their existing trading connections. December 1899, however, had also marked the commencement of construction of Portland's long-desired deep-water pier (see Chapter 2). The event was catalytic. On December 10, 1899, Donald McLeod, MLA for Portland,\textsuperscript{52} addressed the Drik Drik Agricultural Show. After modestly claiming credit for the commencement of the Portland deep-water pier, McLeod envisioned a new great task - a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway.\textsuperscript{53} The Portland Guardian reacted enthusiastically. In combination with a deep-water pier and Federation, such a railway was thought likely to return to Portland its natural share of South-East trade long since lost through the imposition of border customs duties.\textsuperscript{54} The paper clearly lacked the faculty of hindsight. The critical influence of comparative transport costs remained unacknowledged (see Chapter 2).

Unlike some of the previous occupants of the Portland seat, McLeod in this instance was as good as his word.\textsuperscript{55} Not only did he extract a favourable response to his scheme from the Victorian Minister of Railways, but he communicated personally
with the *S.E. Star* in an endeavour to stimulate support for a Portland railway in the Mt. Gambier district. The idea, however, was reported to be opposed by the Victorian Railways Department on the grounds that the unlikelihood of South Australian permission for railway construction in their territory rendered the scheme impracticable.\(^5\) In fact, South Australia rejected a pertinent overture in mid 1900 and initiated a counter-attack.\(^6\) The S.A. Commissioner of Public Works was despatched to the South-East to investigate ways by which the commercial insecurity posed by the looming Australian Federation could be alleviated. The Mt. Gambier press, as yet impartial regarding the merits of the South Australian or Portland offers, hoped that some real benefit would accrue the district from this sudden revival in Government interest.\(^7\) Grievances now existed. The preceding autumn had seen Mt. Gambier's attention focus on the deficiencies of the Adelaide railway. Despite personal petition to Adelaide by Mayon John Watson (*Border Watch*), the South Australian Government had ducked the local request for a reduction in freight tariffs. Later alterations to the administration of the Adelaide rail service had failed to quell Mt. Gambier grumblings.\(^8\)

Portland had collected anxieties of its own. A railway league at Hamilton proposed that the Casterton railway be extended to Mt. Gambier. Alarmed by the spectre of commercial isolation, the *Portland Guardian* advocated a revival of the defunct Portland Railway League. It could be recommissioned to seek a Mt. Gambier railway.\(^9\) Indeed, such was the current
level of local interest in the issue that, subsequent to McLeod's resignation from Parliament, all candidates at the Portland bye-election deemed it politic to profess support for a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway.\textsuperscript{61} Finally, on July 17, 1900, the Portland Guardian's wish was fulfilled. A public meeting at Portland produced a new Railway League.\textsuperscript{62} An examination of its nine-member executive committee reveals its raison d'être. Seven committeemen were shareholders in the ailing Portland Freezing Co. (at least three being former or present Directors), the eighth was manager of the Company's works, and the ninth was an ex-Mayor of Mt. Gambier. Moreover, William Hanlon, the current chairman of Directors of the Portland Co., became the President of the Railway League, and Thomas E.C. Henry (Portland Town Clerk) became secretary to both bodies.\textsuperscript{63} There is therefore little doubt that the urge for a Mt. Gambier railway at this point was a manifestation of the Portland Freezing Co.'s need for better and more reliable sources of sheep for freezing. A connecting railway was perceived as a means of overcoming the cost and wastage problems which had ended earlier attempts to drive sheep overland to Portland from the Mt. Gambier district\textsuperscript{64} (see Chapter 2). Attainment of a Mt. Gambier railway was made the sole platform of the Portland Railway League. It was also proposed that support should be canvassed in the towns of Heywood, Drik Drik, Dartmoor, Strathdownie West, Ardno, Mount Gambier and Millicent.\textsuperscript{65}

Consequently William Hanlon arrived in Mt. Gambier on August 17, 1900. Concurrent discontent with the Adelaide rail
service (see above) gave Hanlon a receptive hearing from the community.\textsuperscript{66} Less than two weeks after his visit, the district had produced a petition in favour of a Portland railway. This was supported by over 2,000 signatories. Two local graziers bore this petition to Melbourne.\textsuperscript{67} They participated in a Portland-organised deputation to the Victorian Railways Commissioner on September 11. The deputation was received sympathetically. Nevertheless, it was pointed out that South Australian approval was necessary for the scheme's consummation.\textsuperscript{68} There was no sign of that being forthcoming. South Australia had in fact now commenced a Marine Board enquiry into the developmental potential of the South-Eastern ports - obviously a response to the threat posed by the Portland railway scheme.\textsuperscript{69} There did appear to be some ground for Adelaide's concern. A branch of the Portland Railway League was formed at Mt. Gambier on October 20, 1900. The majority of the members of its eighteen-man committee were closely associated with agricultural interests.\textsuperscript{70} In other words, commercial interests within the town of Mt. Gambier were not yet sufficiently aggrieved with the Adelaide rail service to seek an alternative. This fact, however, was not of great comfort to Adelaide. Mt. Gambier's value to the colony was in its agricultural productivity. Furthermore, the report of the S.A. Marine Board indicated that it would not be feasible to counter probably post-Federation Victorian commercial penetration of the Mt. Gambier district by expenditure on a South-Eastern port.\textsuperscript{71} It seemed that South Australia faced the prospect of losing the rewards for its recently initiated
programmes of drainage and closer settlement in the South-East.\textsuperscript{72} Not surprisingly, November 1900 saw South Australia reject another Victorian overture regarding a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. This action outraged the Mt. Gambier press. The spirit of Australian Federation had been repudiated on the very eve of its achievement. Another Portland railway petition appeared - for ultimate despatch to Adelaide.\textsuperscript{73} It echoed the opinion of the earlier report of the S.A. Marine Board, i.e., it was inevitable that Federation would bring an increase in trade between the Mt. Gambier district and Melbourne. In addition, however, it argued that, for the sake of consistency, South Australia could not persist in its current desire for a Kingston to Goroke rail connection without seeing merit in Mt. Gambier's desire for a Portland railway (see Appendix 24). Two years would pass before this petition was despatched to Adelaide (see below).

With 1901 came Australian Federation.\textsuperscript{74} Adhering to an earlier promise, the Hon W.A. Trenwith, the new Victorian Minister for Railways, visited in March the area involved by the proposed Portland to Mt. Gambier railway.\textsuperscript{75} He warned local advocates at Portland on the 25th that the prospects of the line depended largely on its estimated profitability.\textsuperscript{76} At Mt. Gambier on the 27th, Trenwith listened sympathetically to a deputation from the local league.\textsuperscript{77} Nevertheless, he refused to be drawn, and returned to Melbourne without releasing his judgement.\textsuperscript{78} A survey was conducted of a possible route for the desired line two months later, but no further activity on the issue was
South Australian political opposition to the proposal had stiffened. Indeed, at Mt. Gambier on March 27, both local members, John Livingston and James T. Morris (S.E. Star), had voiced opposition to a Portland railway when interviewing Trenwith. The genuineness of this opposition was suspect. The South Australian Government had hired a Mr. Lindon Bates, reputedly an overseas expert, to assess the deep-sea potential of the various South-East ports. (The S.A. Marine Board report of the year before was clearly politically unacceptable.) Thus, with the issue of a South-East port again to the political fore, both Livingston and Morris may have deemed it politic not to risk antagonising local constituent who chanced to be advocates of such a proposal. Publication of Bates' report was delayed, and freight tariffs for down traffic on the Adelaide to Mt. Gambier railway were reduced. It was a concession long sought by Mt. Gambier consumers and long rejected by Adelaide. The S.E. Star probably spoke for many local residents:

...We are not alone in the suspicion that the report [by Bates on South-Eastern ports] is not quite as favourable as most people have been led to expect, and that the great reduction in railway freights is offered as an effective substitute for that which is not financially advisable for the South Australian Government.

Bates' report was published one week later. His cheapest proposal entailed an expenditure of £693,000, his most expeditious the passage of four years. Such estimates, in the eyes of the Mt. Gambier press, meant the death of the notion of a South-East port. Both resumed determined advocacy of a Portland railway. South Australia, however, continued to fight.
attended a conference of South-Eastern local government representatives at Naracoorte on September 20. Regional transportation needs was the focus of discussion. Two points of lasting significance were revealed. Firstly, abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley on the Adelaide railway was now widely perceived as the best South Australian solution to South-Eastern isolation from major markets. Secondly, South-Eastern opinion now favoured an interstate examination of the proposal that South Australia obtain a Kingston to Goroke rail connection in exchange for permission for Victoria to construct a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. Nevertheless, two months later, the South Australian Government was able to admit that it had not yet approached Victoria on the matter. At Portland the parent branch of the Portland Railway League had disappeared from the public stage amidst signs of factionalism. At Mt. Gambier, however, the local branch found its support waning. It appeared that six months operation of the reduced rates on the Adelaide railway had drawn the teeth of local grievances.

Indeed, producer interest at Mt. Gambier had now turned towards an abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley. Government interest in the idea was apparent by the close of 1901, but, as in the case of the contentious Portland railway, and for probably a similar reason, legislative initiative was avoided. The issue, however, was kept in the political spotlight through the appearance, in the Adelaide press from the beginning of 1902, of a series of articles by David J. Gordon. Published later that year in pamphlet form, Shall We Hold the South East? A Question for Electors, Gordon's articles
argued that abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley was imperative. It was portrayed as the only effective South Australian counter to Victorian commercial aspirations in the South-East. The Mt. Gambier urge for a Portland railway was mentioned specifically.\(^9^1\) Indeed, an admitted stimulant for Gordon's concern was the completion, after a construction period of two years, of Portland's deep-water pier.\(^9^2\) Opened by Admiral Beaumont in an impressive ceremony on February 13, 1902 (see plates 14, 15 and 16);\(^9^3\) the event was instrumental in causing one of its witnesses, Colin Macdonald, Mayor of Mt. Gambier, to declare his conversion to the Portland railway scheme. His further comments concerning the dishonesty of Adelaide's professions of interest in the district's transportation needs were apparently justified by developments two months later. Citing the ground of financial stringency, South Australia increased the tariff for many commodities on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide railway. The concessions of July 1901 began to appear hollow.\(^9^4\) The Mt. Gambier branch of the Portland Railway League re-appeared on April 25. It attracted an attendance of about 100. The S.E. Star was enthused by this gathering:

"...The wish for rail communication with Victoria is not a phase - a wave of public feeling soon to pass over and be forgotten - but a deep-rooted desire for an outlet for production and a closer acquaintance with the metropolis of the sister State which for many years will also be the federal capital. Not even sentiment, or a mistaken loyalty to South Australia, can turn aside the increasing tide of feeling that self interest must in the end prevail in this matter."

In this instance, however, the paper had misinterpreted the

From The Weekly Times,
22 February 1902.
situation. The agitation remained in the doldrums. Further alterations to the Adelaide rail service minimised limitations to the carriage of goods at the apparent expense of passenger and mail services. Mt. Gambier district producers increased their use of the Adelaide line. In 1901/02, total tonnage forwarded from the Mt. Gambier railway station was 13,427 tons. This increased to 24,853 tons during 1902/03. The corresponding total tonnage received figures were 8,258 and 9,771 tons respectively (see Appendix 19). Who now needed a Portland railway?

Hence with the Mt. Gambier environment infertile, it was perhaps fortunate for the future of the scheme that Portland manifested renewed interest. Thomas Bent, Victorian Minister for Public Works, visited the port on April 16, 1903. Inter alia, he was interviewed by a deputation which requested further Government action on a Mt. Gambier railway. Bent refused to make a firm statement on the matter. He did, however, promise to make a personal inspection of the route of the proposed line. Four months would pass before this occurred. Forewarned by Ewen Cameron, MLA for Portland, the Mt. Gambier branch of the Portland Railway League met on August 22, its first public appearance for almost one year. General sentiment was expressed by the S.E. Star. The promises of Adelaide had been unmasked as being "merely empty platitudes". Consequently, "no further obstacles should be placed in the way of a line of railway to Portland". After hearing submissions at Portland, Bent arrived at Mt. Gambier on the 27th. He was accompanied by Ewen Cameron and William Hanlon. Pleading ignorance that
15. Opening of the New Deep-water Pier at Portland, Victoria, on 13 February 1902. Australian Squadron at anchor in Bay, S.S. Gulf of Siam loading frozen mutton for export at new pier (left), and S.S. Casino loading for coastal trade at old pier (right).  

By courtesy of The State Library of Victoria.
his itinerary had included Mt. Gambier, Bent declined to address a public meeting. Furthermore, he advised local advocates of a Portland railway that it was their responsibility to convince Adelaide that the notion had political merit. Bent returned to Melbourne the following day. No new public Victorian initiative on the matter was evidenced.

The situation had again reached an impasse. The Border Watch therefore exhumed the suggestion of an exchange of border railways between South Australia and Victoria. The paper was angered by the existing situation:

"...It no doubt suits the Government to encourage a division of opinion among the people of the district as to what will best conserve their interests. They have allowed three distinct parties to arise - one favouring a line to Portland, a second seeking the broad gauge, and a third a harbour at Beachport. They can now adopt the role of benevolent neutrality, and tell the people that nothing can be done until they have more information. But that attitude will not satisfy"

John Livingston, MHA for Victoria and Albert, had meantime redirected the attention of the Adelaide Parliament to the question of the break of gauge. He cited Bent's recent visit to Mt. Gambier as evidence of the urgency of the matter. The Government, however, deprecated the alleged threat of the Portland railway scheme, and asserted that the future of the South-East was "wrapped up in the establishment of a well-equipped port". The Assembly received well the subsequent suggestion of Beachport as the best prospect for this purpose. It was not accompanied by suggested means of achievement. Hence, one month later, when the Government deflected a pertinent enquiry from Livingston,
16. Portland, Victoria, from Battery Point, displaying new deep-water pier, February 1902.

From The Weekly Times, 22 February 1902.
the S.E. Star pronounced judgement:

...We candidly believe the Government do not, and never did, intend to ask Parliament to pass estimates containing votes for South-Eastern harbor construction, and every day the case for commercial alienation becomes stronger. The time is not far distant when an increase in railway freights will make the position more acute, because the Government want money badly to square the finances for the current year. Meanwhile public opinion is forming favourable to the scheme for a railway to Portland and should the Victorian Government decide to tap the virgin country between Heywood and the border with a railway, the people in this part of South Australia will quickly determine for themselves the question of a South-Eastern harbor.

Victoria was not interested. The Portland railway agitation disappeared from public view. Economic depression had clasped the Mt. Gambier district by mid 1904. The preceding year had again produced a large commodity flow through the Mt. Gambier railway station (see Appendix 19). The prospects of a Portland to Mt. Gambier seemed to be declining.

Portents improved later in the year. Thomas Bent had become Premier of Victoria. Memory of his professed support for the desired railway elicited local expectations that it had thereby come closer to consummation. Moreover, after sitting for almost two years, a South Australian Commission on Railways delivered its report. Inter alia, it recommended that the conversion of the South-Eastern lines to broad gauge, at an estimated cost of £200,000, not be performed "until the traffic has increased to such an extent as to meet working expenses and interest on present and additional capital necessary to affect the conversion." In addition, the South Australian Government had confessed that it had not been able to find new
evidence in favour of a South-East deep-sea harbour at Beachport. The S.E. Star therefore concluded that the Portland railway proposal could no longer be rationally opposed.\(^{113}\) Its prospects improved further almost immediately. Bent referred the notion of a Heywood to border railway to the Victorian Railways Standing Committee for evaluation.\(^{114}\) It seemed that Victoria had accepted the fact of South Australian intractability and the concomitant unlikelihood of obtaining permission to build the line right up to Mt. Gambier. Nevertheless, there was no sign of swift application by the Victorian Committee. In fact, its investigation would be preceded by highly significant developments. Interstate negotiations ended the border railways rates "war" which had raged since the 1890s. As from March 1, 1905, border railway tariffs were adjusted to conform to normal rating policy within each state. Significantly, however, tapering and differential rates could be retained where competing transport modes (such as coastal shipping) existed.\(^{115}\) In the instance of Mt. Gambier and Portland, therefore, those state railway rating policies supporting divergence were effectively legitimised.\(^{116}\) This fact passed unacknowledged at the time. In August, however, Mt. Gambier learnt that a visit by the Victorian Railways Standing Committee was possibly imminent. The local branch of the Portland Railway League again re-appeared.\(^{117}\) In turn, John Livingston sought Government attention to the break of gauge question. His thrust was deflected when the Government supported the formation of a Royal Commission on South-East Trade. This was achieved in December.\(^{118}\) The Mt. Gambier branch of the Portland Railway
League had meantime gathered momentum. Despite a postponement of the Victorian Committee's visit, correspondence was achieved with representatives of the parent League at Portland. Finally, on November 25, 1905, a new eighteen-member committee was appointed by the Mt. Gambier body. It differed markedly from its predecessor of October 1900. The agriculturalist component had diminished. Town elements, including the proprietors of both local papers, were now prominent. Clearly, the appeal of a Portland railway had broadened in the Mt. Gambier district after five years of Australian Federation.

The extent of this development would be gauged during the sitting of the Royal Commission on South-East Trade. Evidence would be taken from 105 witnesses between January and May 1906. Adelaide was the first venue. An endemic fear of Victorian commercial potency was revealed. A Portland railway was perceived solely as a means by which Melbourne would annex Mt. Gambier trade. Nevertheless, such was the range of economic interests represented, little unanimity was displayed concerning the method by which South Australia could counter this threat. Similar confusion prevailed during the second Adelaide sitting in April/May. In fact, the most sensible evidence was tendered very early, on January 17, by S.A. Railways Commissioner Pendleton. He asserted that Victorian competition in the South-East was already effectively countered by differential rates on the Adelaide line. Pendleton believed that a Portland railway would carry little more than lambs for freezing at the Portland works. Moreover, if South Australia could obtain rail
connection with Goroke in exchange for permission for a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway, then Pendleton claimed that South Australia would be advantaged overall.\textsuperscript{125} The S.A. Commission sat at Portland on March 26, 1906. All seven witnesses asserted that the proposed Portland railway was the best possible solution to Mt. Gambier's chronic isolation from major markets.\textsuperscript{126} Two months passed before evidence was heard at Mt. Gambier. Five of the seventeen witnesses during Mt. 5 and 7 had previously appeared before the Victorian Railways Standing Committee (see below). Two of the remaining twelve were the proprietorship of the local press. These seven favoured a Portland railway. Only three of the remaining ten witnesses shared this sentiment. This division in Mt. Gambier submissions, plus evidence from other South-Eastern settlements, revealed that the Portland railway scheme had limited, if vocal, support. The latter was based on Mt. Gambier, and then mainly among graziers either close to the township, or eastwards towards the Victorian border. Elsewhere in the South-East local residents favoured improvement in those transport modes closest to hand. Hence west of Mt. Gambier a majority favoured a deep-water harbour at Beachport, while north of Mt. Gambier and especially towards Naracooorte most advocated broad gauge for the Adelaide railway.\textsuperscript{127} The South Australian political case for permission for a Portland railway was therefore hardly overwhelming. The Commission's report was published in July. Given the above evidence, it not surprisingly rejected outright the proposed Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. Victoria was portrayed as the only beneficiary of such a line. In preference, the Commission
recommended that the existing South-Eastern narrow-gauge railway network be extended and focused on an improved deep-sea harbour at Robe. It was also suggested that the existing rail service for South-East stock could be improved expeditiously by better administration and the introduction of improved truck designs. Nevertheless, the prospects of a Portland to Mt. Gambier were not completely dashed. Tacit Parliamentary support was displayed for the Commission's further suggestion that such a railway could eventuate if Victoria would allow South Australia to obtain a Goroke railway.\textsuperscript{128}

Meanwhile, the Victorian Railways Standing Committee had visited both Portland and Mt. Gambier during March.\textsuperscript{129} At the latter on the 21st, evidence was submitted in public, before an audience which often approached 100. Most of the eight witnesses were farmers or graziers. The Committee returned to Melbourne on March 22.\textsuperscript{130} Seven months would pass before its verdict was known, during which the S.A. Royal Commission on South-East Trade would vehemently repudiate the idea of a Portland railway without an exchange (see above). Victoria greeted the suggestion of an exchange with silence. Finally, in November the Victorian Parliamentary Railways Standing Committee released its report. It was negative:

After viewing the matter from every aspect, the Committee has unanimously come to the conclusion that the suggested railway from Heywood to the Victorian border would not, so long as its terminus remained there, be able, owing to the keen competition of the steamers, and also of the South Australian railways, to secure sufficient of the Mount Gambier traffic to justify the construction of the line. It therefore considers it is not expedient to build a railway from Heywood to the border.\textsuperscript{131}
The cost of road cartage from Mt. Gambier to the border terminus of the proposed line was perceived as the main factor tipping the situation in South Australia's favour (see also Chapter 2). Nevertheless, Francis Davison, the President of the Mt. Gambier branch of the Portland Railway League, was also affronted by the implicit assumptions of the Victorian Committee's deliberations. He had always argued that the purpose of a Portland railway was that of granting the Mt. Gambier district direct access to world markets. The Victorian Committee had assumed that the purpose of the line was a facilitation of trade between the district and Melbourne. Davison disagreed:

...the only reason for compelling us to send our goods to Adelaide or Melbourne when we can send them direct, is the curse of centralisation, which I think we have tolerated long enough.

Centralisation, however, was an intrinsic thread of the Australian political fabric. The demographic power of the major cities made such a situation almost an inevitability within a society which favoured rule by majority interest. Of course, there was no necessary connection between such majority interest and either political morality or statesmanship. Australian Federation was too young to challenge the well-established parochialism of South Australia and Victoria. A Portland to Mt. Gambier railway would not eventuate through a mutual acknowledgement of the spirit of federalism, but rather when South Australia and Victoria could each perceive that its achievement need not be concomitant with a reduction in the commercial empires of Adelaide and Melbourne.

Mt. Gambier and (especially) Portland would need to manifest
greater political resolve if the desired connecting railway was to be achieved in any form. As in earlier cases, this latest attempt at a trans border rail connection had been debilitating by indecision and difference concerning the scheme's real significance and aims. In particular, the Portland promoters of the idea had not maintained their initial enthusiasm, and had allowed Mt. Gambier advocates to become the main ginger, believing perhaps that this would facilitate Melbourne interest in the proposed line. Indeed, the Victorian Railways Standing Committee had noted, with some disapproval, that despite their profession of great interest in a Mt. Gambier railway, Portland advocates had not offered to bear financial sacrifice to ensure its construction. The adoption of a passive role by Portland had the real effect of granting Melbourne interests almost total freedom in the determination of the agitation's Victorian raison d'etre. This was the fly in the ointment. The Portland and Mt. Gambier railway scheme was by the end of 1906 seen in different lights by the participants in the quadripartite interaction. Both Adelaide and Melbourne saw the scheme as a misnomer. They perceived the proposed railway as essentially a means of facilitating trade between the Mt. Gambier district and Melbourne. It was an interpretation partly, and ominously, supported by the Mt. Gambier press and many of that district's advocates of the connection. Of the latter, only Francis Davison seemed to share Portland's interpretation that the desired railway would raise the port to the role of doorway to the world for the produce
of the Mt. Gambier district, if not the whole South-East of South Australia. That Portland's interpretation was not shared by those who possessed the power of reification augered ill for the true achievement of a Portland and Mt. Gambier railway.

The essential division within the quadripartite interaction was thus highlighted by the railway issue. Despite the thrust of the border mentality manifested by the separate colonial bureaucracies, the central dichotomy did not occur between South Australia and Victoria. The basic cleavage occurred between metropolis and country. In other words, the relationship between Melbourne and Portland differed from that between Adelaide and Mt. Gambier more in form than in substance. Both were relationships which involved the subordination of local needs to the requirements of the metropolitan appetite. More so than roads, the construction of railways and their administration epitomised this subordination. The story of a Portland and Mt. Gambier railway would not deviate from this model.
CHAPTER 3 - FOOTNOTES


2. VPD(LA), May 21, 1866.


4. During 1857, an agitation was begun at Portland for construction of a horse-drawn tramway between the port and Heywood. Government interest was obtained. Progress, however, was dilatory. The scheme was finally abandoned in 1865 after persistent litigation between the contractors and the Victorian Government. No rails had ever been laid. The revived 1866 version proposed a Casterton terminus - probably because of the proximity of the Henty pastoral holdings.


5. W.T., May 22, June 29, 1866.

P.G., May 23, 1866; February 7, March 21, June 27, July 8, September 16, 30, October 28, 1867.

Local apathy to the Portland scheme may have been partly caused by the public hostility concurrently manifested towards some of its promoters. The directorship of the proposed Portland and Northern Tramway Company, Limited, comprised Messrs. S.G. Henty and S.P. Lord of Melbourne; H. Scott of Hamilton; C. Croaker, E. Dacomb, G.G. Crouch, E. Henty, T. Must, J. Trangmar, H.E. Brewer and T. Finn of Portland; and W. Learmonth of Heywood. Many of these men had been involved in the abortive Separation Movement of 1861-63 (see Chapter 1 and Appendix 4), while the Hentys were also now the target of particular local hostility (see Chapter 2).


6. Moreover, for over half of 1867 the Mount Gambier Standard bore advertisements seeking local share subscriptions to the Portland Tramway Company.

B.W., December 29, 1866; April 24, 1867.

Mt. G. Std., January 11, 18, April 12, 1867.
7. Dunn argued that the battle between the promoters of closer settlement in the South-East and the existing pastoral interests was a significant, if not the major, determinant of the urge for South-Eastern railway construction between 1868 and 1872. A "Penola faction", led by John Riddoch was portrayed as having used the Border Watch to voice opposition to the Government's South-Eastern policies. This study indicates that Dunn may have over-stated his case.


8. SAPD(HA), August 13, September 26, October 3, 1867.

9. Graham, Thomas, Surgeon. A notable resident of Mt. Gambier between 1856 and 1870. A competent surgeon, but more widely known for his newsworthy acts.


10. Mt. G. Std., August 18, 1868.

A measure of the political impact of Graham's suggestions was supplied the following day. The telegraphic column of the S.A. Register made prominent mention of Graham's suggestions, and asserted that they were "entertained by influential parties".

S.A. Register, August 19, 1868, p. 2.


12. B.W., August 22, 1868.


14. ibid., October 28, 1867; August 3, 1868; December 15, 1869. W.T., August 31, 1868; December 29, 1870.


17. Turton, K.W., op. cit.


South Australian Government approval of the idea was greatly facilitated because of the fact that such a railway would also serve the new agricultural settlement now appearing on the drained lowlands around Millicent.

19. B.W., February 5, December 16, 1876.
20. P.G., December 12, 1876.
22. B.W., December 20, 1876, p. 2.
23. P.G., December 26, 1876, p. 2.

24. The contract for the construction of the Rivoli Bay to Mt. Gambier railway was not let until November 1877. Plate-laying did not begin until August 1878.

Melano, J., op. cit.

25. B.W., May 21, 1878.
27. B.W., June 11, 21, 1879.
28. S.E. Star, July 22, November 11, 1881.
   B.W., July 30, 1881.
29. ibid., July 19, 1882, p. 2.

The obstruction of this desire was probably made more painful to Mt. Gambier interests because of the concurrent death throes of the local steamship company (see Appendix 21). Indeed, early in September 1882, Robert Gardiner, lessee of the rich Mt. Schank Station south of Mt. Gambier, and Louis G. Ehret, a noted Mt. Gambier entrepreneur, travelled to Portland. They interviewed Thomas Must, current Chairman of Directors of the Portland and Belfast Steam Navigation Company (formed in 1877). Significantly, a Border Watch report in its issue of February 12, 1881 indicated that Must had been a major shareholder in the Mt. Gambier Company. Gardiner and Ehret requested that the Portland Company extend its service to include Port MacDonnell. Nevertheless, while the Portland press favoured the idea, a subsequent Directors' meeting of the Portland Company did not bring approval. No reason for this decision was made public.

P.M., September 6, 13, 1882.
P.G., September 7, 1882.
B.W., September 9, 1882. A reprint of the P.M. article of the 6th.
S.E. Star, September 12, 1882.
The latter was printed entirely in vermilion ink because, as it later explained, the opening of the Adelaide connection on June 16 had been "a red-letter day in the history of the district". A further indication of the import ascribed the event locally is found in Mayor William Thurston's invitation to the Victorian Governor, Premier and Railways Commissioner to attend the opening. Thurston's invitation was not accepted.

Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, *Minutes*, May 18, June 1, 1887.

*S.E. Star*, June 21, 1887, p. 2.


Richmond, J.M., *op. cit.*


37. The other two railways sought by Portland interests at this time were connections to the Wimmera and to Port Fairy.

P.G., January 25, 30, 1889.

38. The Portland Guardian portrayed the main aim of the proposed Dartmoor railway as the facilitation of agriculture and forestry in the Glenelg River region. In contrast, the Melbourne Leader and the Border Watch saw it as a step to railway connection with the Mt. Gambier district of South Australia.

*ibid.*

Leader, January 26, 1889.

*B.W.*, February 6, 1889.

39. Meetings in favour of the project were held at Drik Drik (February 17), Dartmoor (February 20), Heywood (March 1), Condah (March 2), and Myamyn (May 11). Moreover, the meeting at Dartmoor on February 20 saw the formation of a Railway League. Secretary to this body was Thomas G. Henry, father of Thomas E.C. Henry, Portland Town Clerk. Both father and son would subsequently become prominent
participants in the post Federation agitation for a Portland and Mt. Gambier railway.

P.G., February 15, 20, 25, March 1, 4, 8, April 1, 10, May 15, 1889.

Leader, March 2, 1889.

40. P.G. September 25, October 11, 1889; January 24, 1890.

B.W., December 18, 1889.

41. P.G., June 23, 25, July 9, August 15, 1890.

VPD(LA), July 8, 1890.

P.O., August 18, 1890.

42. Leader, July 19, August 9, 1890.

P.G., August 15, 1890.

Two years later construction of a Nelson bridge had commenced. The Portland Shire re-examined the idea of a horse-drawn tramway between Heywood and Dartmoor. Preliminary investigations, however, revealed that the line would probably bring an annual profit of only £800. The idea again died.

Leader, July 2, 1892.


44. B.W., July 13, 1889.


Examined in some detail by:


46. Logan, W.S., op. cit.

47. SAPP, No. 153 of 1891.


48. S.E. Star, July 6, 1888.

B.W., July 7, 1888.

49. ibid., December 10, 1890.

Adelaide Chamber of Commerce, 42nd Annual Report, Adelaide (1892).
50. SAPP, Quarterly Reports by the Railways Commissioner. 
Section on special rates.

51. Almost legion, a listing of the instances of local 
grievance concerning the Adelaide rail service during the 
1890s would soon become boring:

B.W., January 29, February 1, March 26, June 28, November 
12, 1890; January 21, 1891; January 16, February 24, 1892; 
March 21, 1894; October 12, 1895; May 20, 1896; 
February 6, 1897; January 15, March 9, 1898; March 25, 
August 2, 1899.

S.E. Star, February 4, 1890; February 19, 1892; March 20, 
1894; February 5, 1897; March 4, 11, 18, 1898.

Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, February 14, 28, 
March 14, October 10, 24, 1894; August 12, 26, October 21, 
1896; February 10, 26, March 24, April 7, 21, 1897.

SAPD(HA), July 19, September 7, 1899.

52. McLeod, Donald N., 1848-1914. Pastoralist. Son of John 
N. McLeod (see Chapter 1). Portland Shire and Borough 
Councillor. MLA for Portland between July 1894 and 
October 1900.


53. P.O. December 14, 1899. Reprint of a Hamilton Spectator 
report.
P.G., December 15, 1899. ibid.
B.W., December 20, 1899.


55. McLeod can be compared with the "absentee" members for 
Portland in the late 1860s and early 1870s, viz., James S. 
Butters and Howard Spenseley (see Chapter 2).

56. Argus, January 11, 1900.
P.G., January 12, 1900.
VPD(LA), January 23, 1900.
P.O., February 5, 1900.

Nevertheless, in late April two officers of the Victorian 
Railways Department made an inspection of the probable 
route of a Heywood to Mt. Gambier line.

ibid., April 26, 1900.
P.G., April 27, 1900.

57. P.O., June 7, 1900

58. S.E. Star, July 10, 1900.
B.W., July 18, 1900.
59. **S.E. Star**, March 13, April 24, 1900.
   B.W., March 14, 17, 28, April 25, 1900.

60. **P.G.**, June 8, 1900.

61. *ibid.*, June 29, July 2, 6, 13, 25, 1900.

62. *ibid.*, July 18, 1900.
   **P.O.**, July 19, 1900.
   **S.E. Star**, July 24, 1900. Reprint of **P.O.** report.

63. The Committee comprised:
   
   William Hanlon, Grazier, former Portland Shire President, 1885-87 and 1892-94 and former Mayor of Portland Borough, 1889-92 and 1894-99, Chairman of Directors, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   William Thurston, retired Publican, former Mayor of Mt. Gambier Municipality 1885-89.
   
   Hugh J.M. Campbell, Merchant, Director, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   William P. Anderson, Merchant, Director, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   Mr. H.N. Reid, Manager, Portland Freezing Works.
   
   Mr. J.H. Row, Jeweller/Watchmaker, Shareholder, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   Mr. J.A. Row, Jeweller/Watchmaker, Shareholder, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   Charles C.P. Wilson, Portland Shire Engineer, Shareholder, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   Mr. J.J. Couch, Bootmaker, Shareholder, Portland Freezing Co.
   
   Portland and Western District of Victoria Freezing Company, Share Register, Old Town Hall, Portland, Victoria.

   It is noteworthy that at this point, narrow gauge (3'6") was favoured for the proposed railway. The existing railway system in the South-East of South Australia was narrow gauge. The Victorian gauge was broad, i.e., 5'3". Moreover, Charles C.P. Wilson warned the promoters of the idea that it would be inadvisable to let a narrow gauge line connect with, and cause a break of gauge at Heywood. Wilson argued that a narrow gauge railway from Mt. Gambier should come via Mt. Deception and Lyons, and join the broad gauge Hamilton line about six miles north of the Portland terminus.

   **P.O.**, July 19, 1900.

64. **P.G.**, September 19, 1900.

66. B.W., August 22, 1900.
P.Q., August 31, 1900.

67. Messrs. W.J.T. Clarke (Mount Schank) and A.C. Spehr.
B.W., September 5, 1900.

68. S.E. Star, September 28, 1900.

69. ibid., July 31, 1900.
B.W., August 1, 1900.

SAPD(HA), September 26, 1900.

70. The Mt. Gambier committee: Messrs. J. Buchanan (farmer),
W.J.T. Clarke (sheepfarmer), B. Davis (farmer), F. Davison
(solicitor/sheepfarmer), T. Edwards (farmer), T.C. Ellis
(sheepfarmer), R.M. Gardiner (sheepfarmer), Thos. Haig
(tanner), J. Keegan (machinist), Julius Lange (farmer),
James Paris (farmer), A. MacArthur (farmer/butcher),
William Mitchell (farmer), J. Pick (sheepfarmer), G.A.
Pritchard (farmer), W. Saunders (na), J.P.L. Schinckel
(farmer), and John Watson (Border Watch).
B.W., October 24, 31, 1900.
S.E. Star, October 23, 30, 1900.

71. SAPP, No. 128 of 1900. Report of Marine Board on South-
Eastern Ports.

72. SAPD(HA), November 7, 1900.
Marsden, J., Closer Settlement in the South-East, 1897-1915
Williams, M., The Making of the South Australian Landscape,

73. SAPD(HA), November 7, 1900.
S.E. Star, November 9, 27, 1900.
B.W., November 14, 17, 21, 1900.

74. Although Australia became a Federation on January 1, 1901,
it was October 9 before a uniform federal customs tariff
replaced the individual, separate colonial tariffs (see
Appendix 14). Moreover, for another two years federal
customs officers were stationed on the state borders. All
interstate traffic was checked to establish whether goods
of overseas origin had paid duty at least equal to the
federal tariff. These checks were a source of inconvenience
during their life.
S.E. Star, February 13, October 8, 1901; September 2, 1902;
October 9, 1903.
Adelaide Chamber of Commerce, 52nd Annual Report, Adelaide (1902).

75. P.O., November 26, 1900; March 7, 14, 1901. VPD(LA), December 18, 1900.

The Victorian Railways Engineer-in-chief, Mt. F. Rennick, had conducted a preliminary investigation of the scheme in late 1900. Mt. Gambier residents had assured him that, even if the line had to terminate at the border, they would forward their produce to Portland via it.

76. P.G., March 25, 27, 1901.

77. The deputation included Mayor John Watson (Border Watch) and Francis Davison.

B.W., March 30, 1901.

78. P.G., April 1, 1901.

79. The flying survey was conducted only as far as the Myora Homestead at the border.

ibid., May 31, 1901.

B.W., June 8, 1901.

80. ibid., March 30, 1901.

John Livingston had made a short visit to Portland in November 1900 in order to acquaint himself personally with the Portland and Mt. Gambier railway proposal. He was guided round the town, harbour and freezing works by William Hanlon, but reserved his opinion.

P.G., November 23, 1900.

81. B.W., April 10, 1901.

S.E. Star, May 17, June 28, 1901.


82. S.E. Star, July 5, 1901.

83. B.W., August 2, 1899.

84. S.E. Star, July 9, 1901, p. 2.

85. ibid., July 23, 1901.

B.W., July 24, 1901.

86. The South Australian Premier, the Hon J.G. Jenkins, and Commissioner of Public Works, the Hon. R.W. Foster, attended this conference. Ewen Cameron, MLA for Portland, was also present.

S.E. Star, September 17, 24, 1901.
B.W., September 21, 25, 1901.
P.G., September 23, 25, 1901.
SAPD(HA), September 24, 1901.

87. ibid., December 5, 1901.

88. ...we can hope for better results from our [Railway] league by strengthening its membership with new blood [Wallace McLeod suggested], and for once deliver this institution from the hands of a clique whose egotism and ideas of indispensability lead them to imagine nothing can move without them in Portland, by whom, I fear, such undertakings as railway leagues, agricultural society, etc., are but a name, and inactivity prevails.

P.O., September 30, 1901, p. 2. By "Pro Bono Publico".

89. B.W., September 25, 1901.

90 In a masterful political manoeuvre, the South Australian Government placed the responsibility for justifying the expenditure on a conversion of the South-Eastern line to broad gauge in the hands of local residents. This of course meant that nothing was done.

SAPD(HA), October 1, 3, 23, November 13, December 19, 1901; October 2, 23, 1902.
B.W., November 20, December 14, 1901.
S.E. Star, November 26, December 17, 1901.

91. Gordon adduced evidence which not only suggested that his thesis enjoyed considerable support in Adelaide commercial circles, but also obtained support amongst notable Mt. Gambier producers and merchants. Views had been obtained from Messrs. T. Yates (auctioneer, Livingston and Yates), May and Morphett (stockdealers), E.H. Stobie (Young Bros.), S.S. Webb (storekeeper, Fidler and Webb.), J.F. Palamountain (general storekeeper), ? Williams (storekeeper, Williams and Daniel, J. Keegan (machinist), W.W. Norton (storekeeper, Norton and Goode), H. Gaillard (draper), Saunders and Begg (house furnishers and harvesting machinery agents), I. Aconley (draper), and F. Davison (solicitor/grazier).

Gordon, D.J., Shall We Hold the South East? A Question for Electors, Adelaide (1902), pp. 35-38.

Nevertheless, a cynic might argue that the Mt. Gambier interviewees had merely manifested prudence. After all, neither broad gauge nor a Portland railway showed signs of an early consummation!

92. ibid.

Although construction of the Portland deep-water pier had
commenced in December 1899, it was not ready for use by shipping until February 1, 1902.

P.O., February 3, 1902.

93. P.G., February 14, 1902.
B.W., February 15, 1902.
Leader, February 22, 1902.

94. In particular, Mayor MacDonald was greatly offended by the attitude of the S.A. Railways Commissioner. As the latter was about to go overseas, he had informed MacDonald that if the district wished to submit evidence in support of an abolition of the break of gauge then such evidence would need to arrive in Adelaide within a fortnight.

B.W., February 22, April 5, 1902.
S.E. Star, April 8, May 5, 1902.

95. B.W., April 30, 1902.
S.E. Star, April 29, 1902, p. 2.

96. The Mt. Gambier branch of the Railway League held only two further public meetings during 1902. After some debate between James Paris (for) and Francis Davison (against), it was finally decided that the November 1900 petition be forwarded to Adelaide (see Appendix 24). It was argued that this action would convince the Victorian Government that the local desire for railway connection with Portland was genuine.

B.W., August 27, September 2, 24, 1902.

97. Much to the annoyance of the local press, it was discovered that a group of unidentified Mt. Gambier residents had undermined the press criticism of the Adelaide rail service. They had secretly advised the Government that the existing service was acceptable. Consequently, in April 1903, the S.A. Railways Commissioner was able to assert that the Mt. Gambier press was the source of that town's grievance with the South-Eastern rail service. The Mt. Gambier press was described as resentful that their communications and distribution had been disrupted by the alterations to the train service.

S.E. Star, July 8, 15, September 9, 16, 1902; April 7, 1903.
B.W., July 9, 12, September 3, 17, 24, 1902; April 8, 1903.
P.O., August 11, 1902.
Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, September 3, 1902.
98. This, indeed, was the thrust of Mt. Gambier evidence heard by the S.A. Railways Commission in April 1903.

ibid.

99. The Portland Railway League had not displayed a public profile since early 1901. Ewen Cameron, however, had suggested to the Victorian Government in August 1902 that a proposed alternative route for a Mt. Gambier railway be examined. The alternative route proposed that the Mt. Gambier line branch off the Hamilton line seven miles south of Heywood. The idea was evaluated, but was found to be inferior to the original Heywood to Mt. Gambier route.

P.Q., July 31, August 4, 14, 1902.

100. P.G., April 17, 1903.

101. According to Francis Davison, the Railway League had remained inactive because of three reasons. The advice to do so by Ewen Cameron, the concurrent inactivity of the Portland branch, and the expectation that the passage of time could do nothing more than point out the insincerity of the Adelaide Government's promises. Davison believed that the impending visit by Bent held great promise for the scheme.

B.W., August 22, 26, 1903.


103. This refusal prompted Mayor MacDonald to complain to the Mt. Gambier Municipal Council that thereby he had missed the opportunity of meeting the Victorian Minister!

Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, September 2, 1903.

104. B.W., August 29, 1903.

105. ibid.

The paper was also much impressed by the action of Col. P.J. Browne, part-owner of the rich Moorak Station. Concurrently on a visit to that property, Browne was so taken with the merits of the Portland railway scheme that he donated £25 to the Railway League. He promised another £75 if his total offer could be matched by other district producers between themselves.

106. ibid., September 16, 1903, p. 2.

107. SAPD(HA), September 9, (p. 419), September 23, 1903.

108. ibid, October 20, 1903.

S.E. Star, October 27, 1903, p. 2.
109. A possible reason for this diminished activity was the loss by the Mt. Gambier branch of its secretary, Mr. T.M. Kennedy. He transferred his business to Hamilton in December 1903. Significantly, Kennedy had also been Chairman of the Mt. Gambier Agricultural and Horticultural Society.

B.W., December 12, 1903.


111. *ibid.*, September 10, 1904.

Support for a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway now came from an unexpected direction. Ebenezer Ward, a notable South Australian political identity (ADB, 6) visited Portland in mid October. Forty years had passed since his last visit to the port (see Chapter 1). His attitudes had become less parochial. Ward could now perceive propriety in a close Portland and Mt. Gambier association as represented by the railway scheme. Nevertheless, one year later Ward appeared to alter tack again. He joined those voices advocating an abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley as a counter to the Portland scheme.

P.G., October 24, 1904.

P.O., October 24, 1904.

*S.A. Register*, July 12, 1905.


113. *S.E. Star*, November 22, 1904.


116. The important role played by discriminatory rates in combating Victorian commercial influence in the Mt. Gambier district was acknowledged by the S.A. Railways Department.


117. Mr. S.J. Norris was appointed the new secretary to the League.

B.W., August, 30, 1905.
118. SAPD(HA), August 30, September 27, October 4, 1905.


119. S.E. Star, October 3, 10, 1905.

B.W., October 4, November 29, 1905.
P.G., October 9, December 13, 1905.

120. The new Mt. Gambier committee comprised: Messrs. F. Davison (solicitor/grazier) - President, S.J. Norris (na) - Secretary, A.J. Wedd (grazier), J. Kennedy (grazier), G.H. Kilsby (farmer/grazier), C.L. Spehr (solicitor), J. Keegan (machinist), A. Kieselbach (coffee-house operator), M. Carter (na), J. Buchanan (farmer), J. Paris (farmer), J. Watson (Border Watch), J.T. Morris (S.E. Star), J. Botterill (na), G.A. Pritchard (farmer), R. MacFarlane (na), T. Preece (farmer) and J. Bowd (na).

B.W., November 29, 1905.

121. Distribution: Portland (7), Kingston (6), Millicent (14), Wolseley (4), Penola (6), Robe (5), Goroke (5), Naracoorte (7), Port MacDonnell (5), Beachport (3), Adelaide (17), Mt. Gambier (17), Bordertown (4), and Horsham (5).

SAPP, No. 20 of 1906.

122. This anxiety permeated the evidence of James Gartrell, representative for G. Wood, Son & Co. Gartrell was also the current Chairman of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce, a body which had continued to manifest apprehension concerning the Portland railway scheme and the extent of Victorian commercial penetration in the South-East.


SAPP, No. 20 of 1906, p. 22, January 24, 1906.

Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Committee, Minutes, February 2, 1906.


123. For example: J. Gartrell (Adelaide Chamber of Commerce), broad gauge and a S.E. port; J. Kendrick (stockbuyer), broad gauge; A.B. Moncrieff (S.A. Railways Engineer-in-chief), broad gauge; F.G. Scarfe (Geo. P. Harris, Scarfe & Co., Ltd.), broad gauge or a S.E. port; A. Searcey (President, S.A. Marine Board), S.E. port at Beachport; G.F. Stewart (merchant), broad gauge; S. Wilcox (export merchant), broad gauge; and A.G. Pendleton (S.A. Railways Commissioner), retention of present arrangements.

SAPP, No. 20 of 1906, pp. 22, 22, 54, 58, 33, 37, 50, 34 & 1, respectively.
124. For example: J. Darling (grain merchant), retention of present arrangements; E.V. Day (Dalgety and Co.), retention of present arrangements; J.W. Sandford (merchant, broad gauge and S.E. port; and Capt. W.N. Thomson (Master Mariner) a S.E. port at Robe.

ibid., pp. 173, 176, 170 and 133 respectively.

125. ibid., p. 1.

Significantly, the year before the Border Watch had itself admitted that a Portland railway would only have a firm advantage in the area of perishable produce.

B.W., July 15, 1905.


SAPP, No. 20 of 1906, pp. 165, 164, 166, 162, 158, 159 and 157, respectively.

An interesting claim was made by Grant. He asserted that his employers, Borthwick and Sons, were not vitally concerned whether the proposed Mt. Gambier railway eventuated. This assertion contradicted an earlier Portland press report and, indeed, the raison d'etre of Borthwicks' original purchase of the Portland freezing works, viz., to ensure continuity of supply.

P.G., March 14, 1906.


127. Namely (May 5): Messrs. E.J. French (shipping agent), a S.E. port at Robe; R. Hetherington (stockdealer), broad gauge; E.J. Locke (farmer), broad gauge and a Portland railway; J. Pick (sheepfarmer), a Portland railway; J. Watson (Border Watch), broad gauge and a Portland railway; A.J. Wedd (grazier), a Portland railway; G.T. Wright (miller), a S.E. port at Beachport; T. Yates (Elder, Smith and Co.), retention of present arrangements.


and (May 7): Messrs. F. Davison (solicitor/grazier), a Portland railway or a deep-sea port at Robe; E. Hosking (ironmonger/plumber), a Portland railway; G.H. Kilsby (farmer/grazier), a Portland railway and broad gauge; D.E. MacLellan (storekeeper/wool and produce buyer), a Portland railway; J.T. Morris (S.E. Star), a Portland railway and broad gauge, or a S.E. port; J.F. Palamountain (storekeeper), broad gauge; A. Walker (accountant/business
manager), retention of present arrangements; and S.T. Webb
(storekeeper, Fidler and Webb), retention of present
arrangements.

ibid., pp. 253, 248, 260, 245, 250, 244, 249, and 242,
respectively.

128. ibid.

SAPD(HA), August 29, October 10, 1906.

The impracticality of the Commission's recommendations
stimulated John Livingston to make yet another parliamentary
foray. He requested an official enquiry regarding the
possible upgrading, with new sleepers and heavier rails,
of the Wolseley to Mt. Gambier railway. The answer
Livingston finally received killed the idea. The
estimated cost of such a work was almost £317,000. This
was over 1½ times as much as the current estimate for a
conversion of the said line to broad gauge (£200,000)!

ibid., July 19, August 8, 21, 23, September 5, 1906.

129. The S.A. Royal Commission had altered its timetable to
avoid a possible clash with the Victorian Committee's
investigations.

P.G., January 15, 19, March 14, 23, 1906.

130. The witnesses were: Messrs. F. Davison, J. Pick,
J. Botterill, G.A. Pritchard, A.J. Wedd, D.E. MacLellan,

B.W., March 24, 1906.

131. VPP, No. 4 of 1906. Report from the Parliamentary Standing
Committee on Railways on the question of the proposed
Railway to Dartmoor and Towards Mount Gambier, p. 11.

132. ibid., p. 10.


134. VPP, No. 4 of 1906, p. 11.
CHAPTER 4

THE SEMBLANCE OF SUCCESS:
ACHIEVEMENT OF A MOUNT GAMBIER AND PORTLAND RAILWAY
1907-1917
The first five years of Australian Federation had not seen the expected re-orientation of the trading pattern of the Mt. Gambier district of South Australia. Coastal shipping had been checked by the retention of differential rates on the Adelaide railway. On the other hand, a vocal Mt. Gambier group had appeared. It sought rail connection with Portland across the border in Victoria. This urge had so far been deflected by the Adelaide Government, but only through sporadic flirtation with the notions of a South-East deep-sea port and the conversion of the Wolseley railway to broad gauge. Finally, during 1906, South Australia held a Royal Commission on South-East Trade. Robe was recommended as the most suitable location for a South-East deep-sea port. Meanwhile Victoria had approached South Australia regarding the Portland railway proposal on a number of occasions, but to no avail. South Australia's intransigence was rewarded in late 1906. After an official examination of the proposal, Victoria decided against the construction of a railway towards Mt. Gambier from Portland as long as it was prevented from taking the line right up to the South-Eastern town. A border terminus was thought unlikely to attract sufficient Mt. Gambier trade to bring profitability to such a railway.

Consequently 1907 brought no significant change to the prevailing situation. The South Australian Government ignored pressure that it enact the recommendations of the 1906 Commission. The parliamentary assertion by Premier Bent of Victoria that the Portland to Mt. Gambier railway would eventuate rang hollow.
The situation now favoured South Australia. A market for Mt. Gambier district sheep had appeared. After three years of decline, the number of sheep forwarded by rail from Mt. Gambier stabilised in 1906/07, and rose sharply in 1907/08 (see Appendix 19). Demand for a Portland railway waned amongst local producers. On the other hand, the increased use of the Adelaide railway again brought its deficiencies into sharp focus. At Mt. Gambier on March 23, 1908, the acting S.A. Premier, the Hon A.A. Kirkpatrick, was approached by a large deputation of local producers and merchants. An assurance was sought that the Government recognised the need for an expeditious abolition of the break of gauge on the Adelaide railway. This was not forthcoming. The Border Watch concluded:

...The position now is that we need a more convenient and cheaper way of marketing our produce. If our own Parliament cannot afford, or is unwilling, to meet us, we will have to look elsewhere. Victoria would be pleased to take us over.

This disenchantment was swiftly noted by the Portland newspapers. Only one, however, concluded that it signalled a revival of the railway agitation. The conclusion was premature. Four more months would pass before significant developments occurred. During July the Portland Guardian serialised five articles by a Mr. M. Morris of Balarat. A notable promoter of decentralisation schemes, Morris argued that Portland was the logical outport for a great hinterland. As the latter was seen as including the South-East of South Australia, Morris supported the Portland and Mt. Gambier railway scheme. Impressed by the calibre of the argument presented by Morris, the Portland Borough Council examined the proposal that the articles be
published as a pamphlet. An exorbitant estimate killed the idea.\(^6\)

Meanwhile, the number of sheep railed from Mt. Gambier declined dramatically between 1907/08 and 1908/09. This tendency would persist until 1912/13 (see Appendix 19). The sheep population in County Grey would also decline during this period, but markedly only after 1908 (see Appendix 16). Local producers again faced the problem of obtaining cheap and expeditious market access. Significantly, regular overland droving of South-Eastern sheep to the Portland freezing works resumed during 1908.\(^7\) The first response to these developments was not a revival in the Portland railway agitation. On September 16, 1908, Donald Campbell, one of the three representatives for the Assembly seat of Victoria and Albert\(^8\), rose in the Adelaide Parliament. He suggested that an introduction of refrigerated coastal ships could overcome the transport problems of stockowners in outlying parts of South Australia. The South-East was cited.\(^9\) Campbell was supported by William Campbell, another of the local representatives. The debate, however, did not resume after adjournment on November 25.\(^10\) Two months later, M. Morris visited Mt. Gambier. He informed local enthusiasts that the prospects of a Portland railway had improved greatly through the replacement of Bent by Murray as Premier of Victoria. Morris believed that the centralist policies pursued by Bent would now be checked.\(^11\) As anticipated, Mt. Gambier interests manifested renewed interest in the scheme.\(^12\) The *Portland Guardian* was beset by Mt. Gambier
requests for copies of Morris' articles (see above). From the flow of these requests and other Mt. Gambier correspondence to the Portland press, it became clear that the Portland railway agitation had revived at Mt. Gambier. On April 3, 1909, a public meeting was held at the town to discuss the scheme. About 200 landholders attended. The gathering was convoked by Mayor G.B. Renfrey at the request of fifty-five ratepayers who had claimed dissociation from the moribund Portland Railway League. As Mayor Renfrey was unable to attend the meeting, Francis Davison took the chair. His sentiments were firm:

He thought everyone now realized that the absurd promises of members in Parliament to provide ports for them in the South-East were all moonshine, and that there was no intention to provide ports in this district. They should, therefore, seek to have a port made available elsewhere.

Two separate petitions were framed for later despatch to Adelaide and Melbourne (see Appendix 25). They differed. That intended for Adelaide despatch differed in turn from its predecessor of November 1900 (see Appendix 24). Mt. Gambier advocates of a Portland railway were now prepared to vote for the South Australian portion of that line upon the guarantee principle, within a prescribed area, in the mode of the Wandilo to Glencoe and Laura to Booleroo Centre Railway Acts. That petition intended for Melbourne despatch asserted that the factors upon which the Victorian Railways Standing Committee had based its adverse 1906 finding no longer applied. The intervening three years had seen closer settlement advance in the South-East of South Australia. The petitioners argued that sufficient traffic now existed to make a Mt. Gambier to Portland
railway a paying proposition. Significantly, however, both petitions of April 1909, like their November 1900 predecessor, revealed that a Portland railway was perceived not only as an avenue to world markets, but also as an avenue to the markets of eastern Australia. The April 3 meeting also produced a committee of 25, later 28, members commissioned to further the agitation. Like its predecessors of October 1900, and November 1905, the majority of the new committee were farmers or graziers. It was clear, however, that support for the railway had spread. The heads of all three local councils were committeeen.16 Moreover, as already noted, the meeting had itself been requested by 55 municipal ratepayers not associated with the Railway League. In contrast, the political soil at Portland was infertile. As officially requested, Francis Davison informed the Portland Borough Council of the current state of the agitation. This information, however, did not elicit Portland participation.17

Adelaide and Melbourne did not share the indifference exhibited by Portland. Speaking at Mt. Gambier on June 25, 1909, the Hon A.H. Peake, a local representative and current South Australian Premier,18 issued a categorical statement. His Government would not permit construction of a Mt. Gambier to Portland railway while it posed a threat to State railway revenue.19 A few days later the Victorian border settlement was visited by the Hon. H. McKenzie, Victorian Minister of Lands. He told a local audience that the South Australian aspiration to a border railway to the Wimmera would be opposed
by Victoria as long as the former State was opposed to a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. In other words, Victoria had come round to the suggestion of the S.A. Royal Commission of 1906 (see Chapter 3). Both states now possessed a bargaining point. Consequently, the Mt. Gambier promoters of the Portland railway scheme decided to forward the petitions of April. It was claimed that they had attracted almost 900 signatures. On the advice of H.J.M. Campbell, MLA for Glenelg, the despatch of the "Victorian" petition was succeeded by a South-Eastern deputation to Melbourne. Delegates from Mt. Gambier, Millicent, and Penola met Premier Murray on July 28. Murray expressed support for the proposed railway. He also promised to raise the matter with Peake, the S.A. Premier, at the coming Premiers' Conference. A separate deputation from Mt. Gambier waited upon Premier Peake in Adelaide on August 10. Peake reiterated his attitude of June (see above). Nevertheless, he professed a willingness to consider a quid pro quo agreement with Victoria on the matter. Peake promised to discuss this possibility with Murray at the Premiers' Conference. In the event however, other issues asserted priority. The border railways question was postponed for later negotiations between the State Premiers. No immediate progress was evident. Nevertheless, Murray assured Campbell that there were good prospects for a quid pro quo agreement on the matter. Finally, on January 27, 1910, Mt. Gambier was the venue for a conference between Premier Peake of South Australia and Premier Murray and Treasurer Watt of Victoria. The border railways question was the only section of the agenda successfully concluded. It
was decided that the States should form a joint Royal Commission on border railway proposals. Evidence would be taken as one body, but the States would receive separate reports. Adelaide sources swiftly indicated that a satisfactory quid pro quo arrangement would be the only way a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway could eventuate.

Only at this point, when both State Governments had entered the agitation, did the Railway League revive at Portland. At the invitation of William Hanlon, Grant Hervey, a notable Casterton resident and agitator, addressed a public meeting at Portland on February 28, 1910. Well attended, this meeting revitalised the Railway League, but was succeeded by a factional dispute concerning the proper composition of a pertinent delegation to Mt. Gambier (see below). On March 18, however, a new nine-man committee of management was elected. Inclusive of the President and Secretary, again William Hanlon and Thomas E.C. Henry, respectively, this committee had eleven members. Five had been members of the July 1900 body. The Portland freezing works, now owned by Borthwick and Sons, were again represented by their current manager. Now included, however, were the current Mayor of Portland, J.R. Woods, and the local member, H.J.M. Campbell. It appeared that the Portland Railway League had at last come of age at Portland. Meanwhile, Mayor Woods and Grant Hervey had visited Mt. Gambier. They had hoped thereby to confront Premier Peake with the strength of the agitation on the eve of the State elections. The Mt. Gambier League had also looked forward to the visit of
Hervey, but for another reason. The public support for the Portland railway scheme had stopped short of financial contribution. On March 12, 1910, the credit of the local League was a perilous £28 9s. 8d. Hervey attracted an audience of nearly 300, mainly farmers, to his address. Nevertheless, League finances did not improve. Despite this disappointment, the Mt. Gambier League began to collate evidence and to select witnesses for the approaching Interstate Royal Commission on Border Railways.\textsuperscript{32}

This body would examine 69 witnesses before delivering its report in September 1911. Seventeen witnesses were heard at Mt. Gambier on June 27, 1910.\textsuperscript{33} (The Railway League had selected twenty, much to the consternation of the Commission since only one day had been assigned for Mt. Gambier evidence.\textsuperscript{34}) Twelve of the seventeen were known members of the Portland Railway League.\textsuperscript{35} Another three came from Victorian border settlements.\textsuperscript{36} All seventeen favoured a Portland railway. Two points stood out in the evidence. Firstly, the bulk of local fat lamb trade had been sent to the Portland works since 1908. Secondly, most witnesses saw the advantage of a Portland railway mainly in terms of facilitating access to the Melbourne market. Only Francis Davison, President of the local Railway League, perceived a Portland railway chiefly as providing Mt. Gambier with ready access to world markets. The singularity of Davison's interpretation elicited incisive questioning from Peake:

510. You look to Portland as the outlet for your produce to the world's markets? - Yes.

511. You know that at present stuff grown comparatively close to Portland does not go there, but comes to
Melbourne? - What do you call "comparatively close"?

517. Much closer than Mount Gambier. Portland seems to lose the trade? - I understand the reason was that they carried goods so much cheaper along the railway.

513. The Victorian Parliament does not seem to favour Portland as a port for the world's markets? - No.

514. If the Victorian people do not favour Portland as a port for the world's markets, how are we going to do it? - It is a thing that will come about. They will have to appeal to the sense of justice of Members of Parliament. The present centralization should be abolished.

515. That is the point that we South Australian members cannot get over - that the Victorian people themselves do not favour Portland as a port for exportation, and yet you are under the impression that we can succeed in making it so. Is there not this aspect of the question: That when you once get the stuff on the Victorian lines it will be diverted straight into Melbourne? - I do not think the evil will go that far.

516. They can do a great deal by their tapering rates? - Yes; but I think if it once got to Portland they would take the lower rate by sea.

517. Your opinion seems to be that by sending our stuff there it will help to make Portland a port of exportation. We have had evidence at Horsham, on the same line, that there is not enough stuff immediately round Portland to make it a port of exportation, but if we could get the Mount Gambier stuff added it would accentuate the importance of Portland? - I suppose it would?

Davison's naivety was regrettable.

The Border Railways Commission then moved into Victoria. Three witnesses were heard at Dartmoor on June 28, 1910, and nine at Portland the following day. All twelve favoured a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. The proposed line was portrayed generally as the key to local advancement. Arthur L.H. Barton, manager of the Portland freezing works, claimed that his employers, Borthwick and Sons, were strongly in favour of a Mt. Gambier railway. They now had a trade in South-Eastern
sheep and, as soon as a Mt. Gambier railway was begun, it was intended that the Portland works would be duplicated.\(^9\) George H. Tulloh, master stevedore, attributed Portland's current state of economic stagnation to the adverse effects of the differential rates operating on Victorian railways and also to the lack of railways feeding Portland from inland. Tulloh's assertions elicited this exchange with one of the Victorian Commissioners, the Hon. W.H. Embling, MLC:

1226. ...I understand you to say that people did not send their produce here for export because there are no ships calling, and there are no ships calling because no produce is sent? - Yes.

1227. Are you going to regulate that with regard to the railway - how will the railway bring a regular service? - If a merchant finds it cheaper to send goods to Portland than to Geelong or Melbourne he will send them here. It is a matter of pounds, shillings and pence.\(^40\)

In this case, however, the "matter of pounds, shillings and pence" was not a product of the free operation of the market place. It was a product of Government railway rating policy. Thus, as in the Mt. Gambier instance, Portland promoters of the railway ignored the vital significance of railway rating policy in shaping the future function of a Portland and Mt. Gambier railway. This ignorance was not shared by the Victorian Railways Department. Two of the witnesses at the Melbourne sitting of the Commission on October 7 were Messrs. M.E. Kernot, Chief-Engineer for Railway Construction in Victoria, and C.H. Barber, Melbourne Goods Superintendent for the Victorian Railways. Kernot supported the proposed Portland to Mt. Gambier railway. He believed, however, that some Mt. Gambier traffic would inevitably bypass Portland for Geelong or Melbourne. On
the other hand, he could not produce a clear estimation of the effect of present and future rating policy on the function of such a line. In contrast, Barber stated bluntly that a Portland to Mt. Gambier railway would not pay because of the existence of very competitive rates on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide line. He argued that the proposed railway should be evaluated in the light of its probable input to rail traffic to Melbourne. Moreover, despite close questioning from a number of the South Australian members of the Commission, Barber followed Kernot's example and was evasive on the issue of special rates. In particular, Barber refused to be drawn regarding the probable destination of Mt. Gambier traffic once it reached Heywood.41

The momentum of the Commission's enquiries now declined. Evidence would be heard at Millicent on November 19, but six months would then pass before the Commission heard submissions at Pinnaroo and Adelaide. A suspected cause of this hesitation was a flare-up in the long-standing boundary dispute between the States. It was also reported that the initial statistics concerning estimated traffic on the line were undergoing revision.42 In July however, the evidence from S.A. Railways officers echoed the pessimism of the Victorian counterparts. Messrs. A.B. Moncrieff, the S.A. Railways Commissioner, and G.J. Smith, the S.A. Railways Goods Superintendent, believed not only that the real effect of a Mt. Gambier to Portland railway would be facilitation of Mt. Gambier to Melbourne traffic via Heywood, but also that such a line would carry insufficient traffic to be profitable.43 The adverse nature of this evidence
elicited anxiety at Mt. Gambier - but because of its apparent threat to the reification of the proposed line rather than because of what it implied regarding its future function. These anxieties were without foundation. The separate State reports of the Commission were released simultaneously in late September. Construction of the Pinnaroo to Murrayville and the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railways was recommended. Both State reports, however, contained a pessimistic evaluation of the amount of traffic likely to be carried on the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line. The South Australian report saw a Pinnaroo to Murrayville railway as being at least an equal exchange for the Heywood to Mt. Gambier connection. Significantly, however, the low rates operating on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide railway were to remain unchanged. Moreover, it was recommended that the decision regarding the final rates on the new lines be left to negotiations between the State Railways Commissioners.

Given the well-entrenched centralising bias of the two State railway systems, this last provision augered ill for the chances of a considerate treatment of Portland's case in the future administration of a Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway. Neither town displayed an awareness of this problem. Local activists were more concerned by what they perceived as an indifferent Government reaction to the Commission's report. They wanted the line built! The States reached a final agreement in July 1912. One month later an initial survey of the proposed route of the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line was authorised.
This advance towards consummation stimulated a flurry of actions by other interested parties. Strathdownie residents agitated to have the Mt. Gambier line pass near their locality. Both Portland and Mt. Gambier opposed this move. The former was alarmed by the prospect that a rerouted Mt. Gambier line would pass within 18 miles of the existing Victorian railhead at Casterton. The Borough Council deputised Mayor Wiltshire and Councillor Wyatt to personally interview the Victorian Minister of Railways on the matter. The Strathdownie thrust was repelled. Mt. Gambier, however, was more concerned by ongoing attempts to relate the issue of a South-Eastern deep-sea port. Indeed, unbeknown to Mt. Gambier, the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce had re-entered the fray. It had appointed a sub-committee which was to investigate and report on the various prospects for a South-Eastern deep-sea port as a means of retaining the South-East trade for Adelaide. Its preliminary enquiries were not followed up. No reason for this cessation is given in the available Chamber records. A possible cause, however, was that, after existing for over 2½ years, a S.A. Royal Commission began to deal expressly with that portion of its commission which involved the break of gauge at Wolseley on the South-East line. The ten Mt. Gambier witnesses were heard on October 14, 1912. All favoured the abolition of the break of gauge. They also made an assertion later supported by the S.A. Railways Department witnesses in Adelaide. Abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley would counter a Portland railway. Two witnesses, however, also admitted that even if the break of gauge was removed the direction of Mt. Gambier rail
traffic would finally be determined by comparative freight costs.\textsuperscript{56} Hence, given the known Victorian capacity for sustaining very competitive railway rates, it was possible to conclude that the best method of containing the threat implicit in a Portland railway would be the retention of narrow gauge on the Mt. Gambier to Wolseley line. Because the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line would be broad gauge, there would be a break of gauge at the latter station. Potential trade to Portland from north and west of Mt. Gambier would be greatly hindered. This point was publically acknowledged in the S.A. Legislative Council during the 2nd and 3rd Readings of the Border Railways Bill.\textsuperscript{59} Despite some localist opposition, the Bill had been introduced into the S.A. Assembly on November 27, 1912. Only minor opposition was met on the way to its third Reading on December 12. The equivalent Victorian legislation raised no dissent at all.\textsuperscript{58} The consequent rejoicing at Portland and Mt. Gambier was swiftly given further justification.\textsuperscript{59} The report of the S.A. Royal Commission on the Break of Gauge was released on December 13. Inter alia, it recommended:

That in view of the proposal to connect Mount Gambier with the Victorian railway system the railway line from Mount Gambier to Wolseley should be converted to the 5 ft. 3 in. gauge as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{60}

Of course, this bound the Government to nothing (see below). December 13 also saw Victoria pass a Public Works Loan Bill that included a proposed expenditure of £226,000 on Portland harbour improvements over a five-year period. Moreover, from the beginning of 1913 the use of differential rates was terminated on the Victorian railways. Tapering rates were retained.\textsuperscript{68}
Nevertheless, it appeared that the road to progress for Mt. Gambier and Portland was at last becoming open.

Appearances were deceptive. One crack in the facade of Portland's prospects had already appeared, but unacknowledged. During November 1912 it was learnt that Borthwick and Sons had decided not to open their Portland works during the 1912-13 season. More significantly, however, they still intended to purchase sheep in the South-East of South Australia. They were to be railed to Adelaide for treatment. Clearly, Borthwicks were quite prepared to bypass its Portland works if it was found to be cheaper to do so. The pre-eminence of the cost factor was again celebrated. Nevertheless, the passing of the Border Railways Bill by both States was the cause of a major banquet at Mt. Gambier on January 7, 1913 (see Plate 17). The guests, who numbered in excess of 200, included State Parliamentarians (among whom were both State Premiers), Mt. Gambier and Portland district local government representatives, and prominent members of the respective Railway Leagues. The "Federal Spirit" was the main theme of the numerous congratulatory toasts and speeches exchanged. Both States proclaimed the Border Railways Bill on February 17. Shortly afterwards, a survey of the permanent way of the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line was commenced (see Plate 18). The act of survey again precipitated moved for an alteration of the route of the railway. As originally surveyed, the line was to pass north of the Mt. Gambier race-course east of the town. This was not acceptable, either to those producers of the Yahl and O.B. Flat areas who
I7. Banquet Celebrating the Passing of the Border Railways Bill by both South Australia and Victoria, held at Mount Gambier, 7 January 1913.

By courtesy of Loc. R. Hill.
had been the mainstay of the Portland Railway League, or to the Mt. Gambier Racing Club. Both interests requested that the line be re-routed south of the racecourse where it would most benefit their transportation needs. This request was supported by the Mt. Gambier press and by the Municipal and Gambier East District Councils. It was, however, April 1914 before the two State Governments accepted the local position. Commencement of construction work was almost certainly delayed because of this disagreement. Moreover, by April 1914, an associated question concerned with the location of new trucking yards for livestock had appeared, but without resolution. Meanwhile, construction of the line had commenced at Heywood on September 4, 1913. Completion was then put at 2½ years hence. This schedule still held to at the onset of 1914.

Not surprisingly, the commencement of the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway strengthened the demand that the South Australian Government enact the recommendation of the Break of Gauge Commission. Mt. Gambier interests began to grumble at the continued Government disinterest in the issue. This time, however, other South-Eastern centres shared the grievance. Naracoorte was the venue for a regional conference on the issue on May 13, 1914. Following Mt. Gambier's example, a Broad Gauge Extension League was formed. Almost 2,000 signatures were gained by a petition circulated by the League. An approach to the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce was rejected. Nevertheless, the petition was presented to the S.A. Railways Commissioner on July 7, 1914. Nothing followed. It was the eve of the First...

By courtesy of Lieut. A. Hill.
World War (see below). Of the Mt. Gambier participants in this abortive performance, only the Border Watch had manifested, albeit imperfectly, an awareness of the real significance of the issue. The paper had observed that if the break of gauge remained at Wolseley then completion of the Portland line would see another break of gauge occur at Mt. Gambier. Such a condition would obstruct the flow of South-Eastern produce to Portland. Hence the capacity of the Portland railway to facilitate South-Eastern development would be largely negated. This scenario, however, was still perceived more as an accidental than as a deliberate product of South Australian Government policy.

Construction of the railway bridge over the Glenelg River at Dartmoor had meantime commenced during June. Ballasting and line-laying had also begun at Heywood. Progress was swift because of the unseasonally dry conditions. War broke out in Europe in August. Australia followed imperial ties and entered the conflict on the side of Britain. Government expenditures within Australia were reevaluated in this new context. Alterations were made. By October 1914 work on the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway had subsided. Skilled personnel and special equipment had been diverted to higher priority projects. Work nevertheless continued. A weekly goods service was running to Dartmoor by late March 1915. The railway bridge over the Glenelg at that location was on the verge of completion. It was rumoured that the line would reach the South Australian border by July. This rumour was quickly disproved. Progress
of the line was so slow by May 1915 that both the Portland Borough and Mt. Gambier Municipal Councils expressed concern. Wet weather, however, hampered work.\textsuperscript{73} Pointedly, the Pinnaroo to Murrayville railway was opened on July 29, 1915.\textsuperscript{74} South Australia had therefore achieved an advance payment for the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line!

Two other pertinent issues had now begun to approach resolution. These were the location of new trucking yards at Mt. Gambier and the break of gauge question. It was generally accepted that the existing trucking facilities at Mt. Gambier would be quite inadequate when the Portland railway commenced operations. The issue had now remained unresolved for almost a year. The Mt. Gambier branch of the Portland Railway League was dominated by producers from the Gambier East District area. The League therefore believed that the new trucking yards should be located east of Mt. Gambier near Glenburnie. Hence, on January 30, 1915, Francis Davison, W.G. O'Hara and John Livingston, MHR, accompanied S.A. Railways Commissioner Moncrieff on an excursion to Glenburnie. They there inspected Block 356, the desired location for a siding. Although Moncrieff seemed to be favourably impressed, he returned to Adelaide without admitting his attitude.\textsuperscript{75} Two months later it was learnt that Moncrieff was about to return to Mt. Gambier for further examination of this and other matters.\textsuperscript{76} The trucking yards issue now divided the Mt. Gambier press. The \textit{S.E. Star} favoured the placement of the new yards near the junction of the Beachport and Wolseley lines west of the town.\textsuperscript{77} The \textit{Border Watch}, in contrast, favoured their placement near the racecourse at
Glenburnie. Moncrieff and his entourage arrived at Mt. Gambier on May 19. They were met by representatives of all three local councils. Significantly, the event received different reportage. Firstly, the *S.E. Star*:

In answer to the Mayor, the Commissioner said the trucking yards should be out of the town, but he would not go further than that at present.

Ald. Gerloff asked the Commissioner on which side of the town he would put the trucking yards.

The Commissioner replied that he would arrange for them to be put near the junction of the line, across the Moorak road, if possible. He had been offered a piece of land there, and he was making enquiries in reference to it. He was not in favor of trucking yards being placed on the eastern side of the town.

Secondly, the *Border Watch*:

The Mayor introduced the matter of trucking yards. The Commissioner said he did not know what their views were, but in his opinion the yards should be out of the town. (Hear, hear.)

Ald. Gerloff said there had been some talk of asking for the yards to be placed east of the town, but he thought if the Commissioner wanted to retain the bulk of the livestock traffic for South Australia, the yards should be to the west. He thought the most stock came from that direction.

The Commissioner. - I had thought of the yard being somewhere near the junction. We have been offered a piece of land there. This will be taken into consideration.

The group then inspected the proposed western location of the new trucking yards. The proposal would be substantialised. Thus, as long as the Wolseley line remained narrow gauge, South Australia would be able to counter the drawing power of the Portland railway by a judicious rating policy. Consequently, the question of broad gauge for the Wolseley line also returned to the public stage during 1915. Both Government and Opposition promised an abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley during the State election campaign of that year. The promise was not
fulfilled.\textsuperscript{83} By early 1916 the South Australian Government had adopted the position that war conditions prevented the use of either finance or material on such a project. This excuse was reiterated during the remainder of 1916 and well into 1917.\textsuperscript{84} By October 1917, however, the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway was finally approaching completion (see below). The Government then openly rejected the findings of the Break of Gauge Commission of 1910-12. Asserting that abolition of the break of gauge at Wolseley was not a necessary counter to a Portland railway, the Government terminated its interest in the issue.\textsuperscript{85} There would now be a break of gauge at Mt. Gambier.

Meanwhile, the progress of the Heywood to Mt. Gambier line had been slow. Amidst occasional expressions of local impatience, the line had advanced slowly during 1916. A regular goods service was running to Mumbannar by February, and Dartmoor became the terminus for general traffic in late June (see Plate 19). The rails had entered South Australia by August. Kromelite was reached by October. There they stopped. No consignment of rails had reached the work since early 1916.\textsuperscript{86} The Portland railway was hung up eight miles from Mt. Gambier. The Portland Railway League revived at Mt. Gambier. At their request, Mayor Renfrey convoked a public protest meeting on November 30, 1916. Only thirty men, mainly League members, attended. Nevertheless, it was decided that the local representatives should be asked to apply pressure to the State Governments. The Portland Borough Council followed suit. Adelaide seemed to be sympathetic, but work on the railway was
19. Early Train crossing Bridge over Glenelg River at Dartmoor, probably winter 1916.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
not resumed until well into 1917. This situation did not prevent Victoria from opening the line to Kromelite for general traffic from October 18, 1916. On November 9, the first consignment of cattle was despatched on the line. Their destination was Ballarat. One week later, the first three trucks of what was expected to be a steady stream of fat lambs were despatched from Kromelite to Borthwick's works at Portland. Little passenger or general merchandise traffic had yet appeared. On the other hand, the protracted progress of the line allowed the S.E. Star to reflect upon various aspects of its future function. On February 27, 1917, the paper published the results of a survey of the attitudes of local merchants and producers concerning the coming Portland railway. The majority of the interviewees believed that the railway would benefit the district. This sentiment, however, was most strongly held by district producers and least strongly by town merchants. The former spoke of improved access to eastern Australian and world markets. The latter manifested greater interest in the prospects of a choice in sources of supply and in markets rather than in the opportunity of a new commercial orientation. Five months later, and seemingly unconnected with the February survey, the S.E. Star reprinted a Melbourne Age article. The latter had expressed concern at the probability that the existing South Australian differential railway rates would hinder the operation of a Heywood to Mt. Gambier line. It had therefore been suggested that Victoria seek an alteration to the Border Railways Bill which would permit a competitive Victorian rating policy on the Heywood line. The S.E. Star directed the attention of its
readers to the matter. No perception, however, was apparent that the Melbourne anxiety was based on fears regarding future Mt. Gambier to Melbourne rail traffic. That Portland's viewpoint was given but a perfunctory treatment was ignored by the S.E. Star.90 Indeed, apparently unbeknown to local interests, Victorian members of the 1911 Border Railways Commission had now applied themselves to this question. Noting correctly that the determination of final rates on the border lines had been left to the joint discretion of the State Railways Commissioners, they advocated the continuation of normal Victorian rates right through to Mt. Gambier. This step, they claimed, would permit the Heywood railway to compete with coastal shipping between Melbourne and Port MacDonnell.91 How this could be achieved without also undermining Mt. Gambier trade with Melbourne via Portland was apparently not deemed a question worthy of consideration.

Portland interests overlooked the issue of future railway rating policy in favour of a more visible problem. The proposed timetable for the Heywood to Mt. Gambier was unacceptable. The Portland Borough was supported by the Mt. Gambier Municipality in expressing this grievance during August 1917. The Victorian Railways Department was intractable. Consequently a public protest meeting was held at Portland on September 4. The proposed timetable was criticised. Under it a round trip between Mt. Gambier and Portland would take a minimum of 56 hours although the towns were merely 73 miles apart. Correspondence between the two civic councils resulted in the appointment of Mayor G.B.
Renfrey as the Mt. Gambier delegate in a deputation to the Victorian Railways Commissioner on September 25.\textsuperscript{92} The S.E. Star expressed Mt. Gambier's grievance:

...The line was not built solely in the interests of Melbourne, and for the purpose of bringing a big weekend crowd from the South-East to that city, as a glance at the proposed timetable would suggest. It was understood by those who have fought for years for this line that it was being constructed primarily to connect Mount Gambier by rail to Portland, as a deep-sea port and also as a pleasant and convenient seaside holiday resort in the summer months. But in this respect those responsible for the drawing up of the time-table have sadly missed the mark. The line has been nurtured and tenderly reared as the offspring of the combined interests of Portland and this town and district. It has been known from its inception as the Mount Gambier - Portland railway. But what do we find now? The same old centralisation policy forcing itself to the front, to the advantage of Melbourne and the detriment of country interests.\textsuperscript{93}

The deputation, however, was cordially received in Melbourne.

The proposed timetable was altered to improve the passenger service between Mt. Gambier and Portland. This cosmetic action quelled local discontent.\textsuperscript{94}

Bad weather and delays to the South Australian construction works had meantime further postponed completion of the railway.\textsuperscript{95} On August 21, 1917, however, a small impromptu crowd had watched Francis Davison drive the last spike. The event was arranged by the Victorian engineer-in-charge of construction of the final section of the line.\textsuperscript{96} This was William Henty, grandson to Stephen George. Rapprochement had been achieved. On October 9, a ballast engine became the first Victorian rail vehicle to enter the Mt. Gambier station yard (see Plate 20). The Heywood line was now ready for use.\textsuperscript{97} On October 17 a special excursion train ran from Portland to Mt. Gambier. Over 200
20. First Victorian Engine to enter Mount Gambier Station-yard, 9 October 1917.

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
Portland residents were carried to the annual Mt. Gambier Agricultural Show. Regular services, however, were held back pending the arrival of the necessary ironwork for a Mt. Gambier turntable. This material arrived unexpectedly in November. No obstacle remained to the opening of the line:

The official opening of the Mount Gambier to Heywood railway at a quarter past 7 on Wednesday morning [November 28] was attended by no demonstration. The train from Wolseley had been despatched at 7 o'clock, and then the Heywood train, consisting of a locomotive and tender, two carriages, and a guard's van, which had been sidetracked overnight, drew up in front of the new platform, behind which the masonwork of the new station appears to be making good progress. There were seven or eight passengers waiting for it, and perhaps twice as many onlookers. "Go way," directed a porter, and the people walked over the dusty roadway north of the yard, on which the stone for the new building has been carted, and climbed up the rear of the platform. Among those who were thus early out were Mt. J. Livingston, M.H.R., and Hon. P. McM. Glynn, M.H.R., who same [sic] that morning by train from Adelaide. Most of the others appeared to be Victorian railway officers. Mt. Livingston seemed to know everybody, and in his happy friendly way saluted them, and introduced Mr. Glynn to several gentlemen. The passengers took their seats in the carriages, and at a few minutes after the hour fixed the porters closed the carriage doors, the signal was given, and the first regular train by the new line glided away. The people on the platform raised a cheer and wished the line and the passengers good luck.

At 10.30 a.m. Victorian time the first through train from Mt. Gambier arrived at Portland. It brought twelve passengers, one truck of frozen meat, and one truck of wool. The Portland Guardian was enthused:

...This is the commencement of the flow of trade which will, in the very near future, result in the development of Portland into the magnificent port of a magnificent district.

It was nothing of the sort. The only regular rail traffic from Mt. Gambier to Portland would involve the seasonal flow of fat
lambs to Borthwick's. There was very little traffic in the reverse direction. Mt. Gambier trade was divided between the State Railway Systems, i.e., between Adelaide and Melbourne.

This was the situation revealed by the second progress report of the Royal Commission on Victorian Outer Ports. Published in 1925, this particular report dealt with Portland. 103 An examination of its conclusions is illuminating, albeit often unintentionally, in the context of the study. The foremost assertion evaluated by the Victorian Commission was that "South Australia was apparently doing everything possible to keep shipping trade from coming to Portland". 103 Portland interests had cited as evidence of this antipathy the fact that the rates on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide railway were less than one-third the general rate operating elsewhere in South Australia. The Commission, however, countered with the assertion that these low rates had pre-existed the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway. They had originally been introduced to counter coastal shipping, and South Australia had refused adamantly to consider their abolition. Consequently, the two States had finally agreed to the construction of the Heywood railway solely on the grounds that it would allow Portland to become the overseas outport for Mt. Gambier district produce. This argument, however, was seriously distorted. Firstly, the Victorian Commission ignored the fact that much of the coastal shipping attacked by South Australia had in fact been of Melbourne origin. Thus the motivation for the South Australian insistence that the contentious rates be retained on the Mt. Gambier to Adelaide

By courtesy of Les. R. Hill.
line after completion of a Heywood link was not as pure as perceived by the Victorian Commission. The South Australian attack was directed not only at the mode of the traffic, but also at its orientation. Nevertheless, the Victorian Commission was hardly likely to support criticism of railway rating policy which could easily be turned upon the actions of its parent State. Indeed, the Commission claimed secondly that "a new aspect has been imported into the discussion concerning the means of Portland's development".\textsuperscript{104} Surprise, and a little irritation, was the Commission's response to a Portland assertion that the tapering railway rates on the Victorian railways had prevented the port from achieving a stable inter and intra State function. The failure of the Mt. Gambier railway was cited as partly evidence of this situation. The Commission replied:

...There is the clearest evidence that the objective aimed at, in which all interests on both sides of the border acquiesced, was that facilities for overseas shipments through Portland only were to be provided,

Acquiescence is, however, not the same as agreement. At no time during the agitation for, and construction of, the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway was the future function of Portland determined incisively. Local promoters of the railway could not agree whether Portland was to have an overseas, a coastal, or a mixed function, or whether its South Australian hinterland should properly include most of the South-East or be restricted to the Mt. Gambier district. No better illustration of these divergent pressures exists than that provided by the contrast, if not conflict, in pertinent opinion between Francis
Davison, the chief Mt. Gambier advocate of the railway, and the majority of his followers. Davison concentrated on the overseas outlet theme. The remainder, however, also saw the railway as a means of ready access to the Melbourne market. Furthermore, while the Portland promoters of the railway supported the thrust of Davison's interpretation, they did not share his narrow focus. Portland had a history of facilitating trade between Mt. Gambier and Melbourne through its coastal shipping. Consequently, the situation was never as clear cut as the Victorian Commission claimed. The Commission's anxiety to make this claim is quite understandable. Victoria and South Australia had filled the vacuum caused by local sectionalism and myopia. The two central Governments had enjoyed freedom in jointly determining the rates on the pertinent railways. Hence, while Victoria manifested a reverence for the notion of allowing Portland to become an outlet for Mt. Gambier's overseas produce, any traffic which did not rigorously fit that category (and what did?) was regarded as the legitimate target for normal centralising railway rating policy. The Victorian Commission had little difficulty in finding justification for this situation:

After all, the whole situation is dominated by the fact that the only consideration which weighs with producers or commercial men is to take advantage of the cheapest channel for the transportation of their commodities. Needless to say, if it is cheaper, by reason of the operation of the tapering rate, to send agricultural produce to Melbourne, Geelong or Ballarat than to take it by rail to Portland and then ship it, the consignees will exercise their right to do so.

This statement neatly side-stepped the question which related to the morality of the Victorian tapering rates. The aptness of this point is highlighted in Portland's case because the
railway network leading to the port, undeveloped as it was, differed from the State model in not being focused on Melbourne and Geelong. Was there therefore moral justification for forcing the Portland sub-system to conform to the administrative parameters of the Victorian State system? The Victorian Commission of 1925 apparently believed that this question was not relevant to the failure of the Mt. Gambier railway.

On the other hand, the Victorian Commission softened its rejection of Portland's demand for an improved coastal function by offering the prospect that the Mt. Gambier railway would soon fulfill its promise of fueling an overseas trade through the port. The First World War had dislocated the former programmes of drainage and closer settlement in the South-East of South Australia. The intended resumption of these programmes was thought likely to revitalise the demand for export facilities at Portland. This, in turn, would generate pressure for further deep-sea harbour works at Portland. It is true that the advent of the First World War had contributed largely to the collapse of Portland's favourable prospects of 1913-14 (see above). The exigencies of the conflict were not only a major reason for the protracted construction of the Heywood line, but were also instrumental in the shelving of planned harbour improvements and the construction of a wheat silo at Portland. The War robbed Portland of the developmental momentum which may have forced a reconsideration, if not termination, of the centralising thrust of the South Australian and Victorian railway rating policies. As it was, however, the
22. Town and Harbour of Portland, Victoria, early Twentieth Century.

By courtesy of The State Library of Victoria.
social, economic and mercantile dislocation concomitant with
the War and its aftermath pushed Portland's aspirations back
into the category of political unimportance. There was,
however, another reason for the poor agricultural traffic on
the Mt. Gambier line. After the first years of Federation, the
population of horned cattle and sheep in County Grey of South
Australia had begun to decline. This decline was precipitous
in the drought year of 1914. Recovery was still incomplete
ten years later. A similar pattern was evident in the County's
production of wheat for grain (see Appendix 16). Hence, in
a very real sense, the Heywood to Mt. Gambier railway had
been constructed in anticipation of a resurgence in agricultural
production in the lower South-East of South Australia once the
connection had been achieved. This resurgence had not occurred.
The Victorian Commission countered:

It is also believed that the prospective conversion
of the narrow gauge [South-Eastern] line to the
Victorian [broad] gauge should also materially assist
in the shipment from Portland of wool and farm produce
from the Naracoorte district.\[108\]

Supplied its most charitable description, this suggestion was
naive. As the Victorian Commission would have been aware, the
Mt. Gambier district of South Australia had been the main source
of support for a Portland railway. Mt. Gambier was also the
terminus of a narrow gauge spur from the broad gauge inter-
capital line. A South Australian Royal Commission had
recommended conversion of the spur to broad gauge as an apparent
counter to the Portland railway. Further reflection, however,
had brought Government realisation that a break of gauge at
Mt. Gambier would disadvantage rather than advantage the
Portland railway - a line which both States perceived as primarily a connection with Melbourne. There was little prospect that the South-Eastern line would see swift conversion to broad gauge.

Adelaide had discovered that its commercial position in the South-East was much stronger than had been perceived during the transition to Federation. Not only had the long-time, and now legitimised, use of differential rates on the Adelaide railway consolidated South Australian commerce in the South-East, but the agricultural production of the Mt. Gambier district had ceased to outstrip the existing transport facilities. There was little surplus demand upon which the new Portland railway could base its profitability, the persistence of a break of gauge at Mt. Gambier greatly hindered its power to tap the region north of that town, while the application of tapering rates by the Victorian railway administration ensured that the lion's share of any traffic that managed to find its way onto the line went to Melbourne or vicinity in preference to Portland. Mount Gambier had gained improved access to major markets, the two capitals had affected a negotiated alteration to their commercial empires, and Portland had been disregarded.
CHAPTER 4 - FOOTNOTES

1. Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Committee, Minutes, May 24, July 7, 1907.
   Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Shipping and Insurance Sub-Committee, Minutes, June 7, 1907.
   B.W., June 12, 1907.
   SAPD(HA), October 9, November 21, 1907.

2. WPD(LA), December 3, 1907.
   P.G., December 23, 1907.
   B.W., January 1, 1908.

   Ibid., March 25 (p. 2), 28, 1908.

   P.O., March 30, 1908.


Morris was already familiar with the railway proposal. He had visited Mt. Gambier in April 1901 and then expressed support for the idea.
   B.W., May 1, 1901.

6. Portland Borough Council, Minutes, August 5, September 16, October 7, November 4, 1908.


   Melano, J., Walking Tall, Adelaide (1972).

9. Campbell's motion was probably connected with a Millicent aspiration that a freezing works be built at a South-Eastern port such as Beachport.
   Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, March 14, 1908.
   Mt. Gambier East District Council, Minutes, April 4, 1908.
10. SAPD(HA), September 16, October 7, November 25, 1908.

Campbell reintroduced his motion one year later, but did not obtain Government interest.

ibid., September 15, December 8, 1909.


12. P.O., February 1, 1909.

13. P.G., February 8, 26, March 5, 1909.

The momentum of these activities was undoubtedly assisted by fresh evidence of the deficiencies of the Adelaide rail service. A shipment of rabbits from the South-East to the Adelaide market had recently been delayed 5½ hours at Wolseley during a spell of hot weather. As a consequence portion of the shipment had arrived at Adelaide in an unsaleable condition.

S.E. Star, February 23, 1909.

14. B.W., April 7, 1909, p. 2.

15. A narrow gauge spur from the Mt. Gambier to Wolseley railway was opened between Wandilo and Glencoe in August 1904.

16. The new committee comprised: Messrs. F. Davison (solicitor/grazier) - President, W.J. O'Hara (na) - Joint Secretary, E.J. Honan (farmer/grazier) - Joint Secretary, J. Botterill (station manager), F. Holloway (na), F.R. Sassanowsky (farmer), J.P.L. Schinckel (farmer), ? Manser (na), W.H. Kennedy (farmer Chairman East Gambier District Council), J.A. Englebrecht (na), G.B. Renfey (furniture maker, Mayor of Mt. Gambier), P.H. Niquet (na), J. Paris (farmer), J. Buchanan (farmer), C.O. Spehr (farmer), E.J. Locke (farmer, Chairman West Gambier District Council), A.F. Sutton (farmer), W. Lange (farmer/merchant), T. Kerin (na), T. Preece (farmer), G. Bodey (na), H.L. Kennedy (na), G.A. Fritchard (farmer), J. Kenny (na), H. Williams (na), and - added May 8 - H. Gavens (farmer), G.H. Kilsby (farmer/grazier), and N. MacKinnon (na).

B.W., March 20, April 7, May 12, 1909.

17. P.O., November 23, 1908; February 18, April 1, 1909.

Portland Borough Council, Minutes, March 3, April 7, 1909.

18. Archibald Henry Peake was a representative of the upper South-East electorate of Albert. Consequently, he was one of the members for the combined electorate of Victoria and Albert between 1902 and 1912. Peake would be Premier of South Australia in 1909/10, 1912/15 and 1917/20.

Melano, J., op. cit.
P.G., July 5, 1909.


It was claimed that even greater success would have come the way of the Railway League if its activities had not been circumscribed by a lack of funds. Financial support was requested from district producers. Col. P.J. Browne, part-owner of the rich Moorak Station, repeated his action of 1903 (see Chapter 3). He gave £25 to the League, and promised another £75 provided other district producers together matched his total offer. They did not. By the onset of 1910 the Mt. Gambier League was in debt by £2 13s. 4d. Browne promptly donated a further £25 free of conditions.

B.W., July 14, 17, 1909; January 19, 1910.

22. The delegates were Messrs. F. Davison and A.J. Wedd of Mt. Gambier, A.G. Spehr of Millicent and J. Darwent of Penola.

ibid., July 14, 21, 1909.


B.W., July 31, 1909.

24. ibid., August 11, 1909.
P.G., August 13, 1909.

25. ibid., September 29, December 31, 1909.

26. The Premiers were unable to resolve the Murray Waters Question, and the Disputed Boundary Question was judged to be sub judice. The Ministers later attended a public banquet arranged by the local Railway League. About 200 guests were present.

ibid., January 28, 1910.

B.W., January 29, 1910.

27. S.A. Chronicle, February 5, 1910

P.O., March 3, 1910.

29. Supporters of Thomas E.C. Henry, Portland Town Clerk, argued that a place in the Portland deputation to Mt. Gambier was rightfully his. Henry, however, refused to participate. Thus the Portland deputation finally comprised Mayor Woods and Grant Hervey.

ibid., March 10, 14, 1910.
P.G., March 14, 16, 18, 1910.

P.O., March 3, 21, 1910.

31. In the event, however, Premier Peake was able to counter such pressure by the claim that the coming Interstate Royal Commission on Border Railways had removed the issue from the contemporary political arena.

S.E. Star, April 1, 1910.

32. B.W., March 16, 23, April 20, 1910.

S.E. Star, March 18, 22, 1910.


SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12.

VPP, No. 35 of 1911.

34. B.W., June 29, 1910.


37. SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12.

VPP, No. 35 of 1911.

38. Namely: at Dartmoor, Messrs. E. Bucknall (farmer/wattle-grower), J. Donald (station manager), and D. McLennan (farmer); and, at Portland, Messrs. W.P. Anderson (merchant), A.L. Barton (manager, Borthwick's), J.R. Carmichael (retired pastoralist), T.E.C. Henry (Portland Town Clerk), Capt. D.W. Hislop (Portland Harbour Master and Pilot), E. Hutchinson (farmer), R.A. Lightbody (dairyfarmer), G.H. Tulloh (master stevedore) and W.J. Williamson (solicitor/orchardist), Donald McLennan, Farmer of Mumbannar, also appeared before the Commission for a second time, but offered no new evidence.

ibid.
39. ibid., Question 981.
40. ibid.
41. ibid.

The Border Watch was of the opinion that the Victorian Railways officers had adopted a narrow, sectional outlook. Nevertheless, no particular import was assigned these remarks at the time of their utterance.
B.W., November 23, 1910.

42. P.G., April 12, May 31, 1911.
P.O., April 20, 1911.

43. Moncrieff would assert later that the best connection of Mt. Gambier to the Victorian railway system was north of Heywood. It was clearly assumed that the real destination of rail traffic east from Mt. Gambier would or should be Melbourne. Moreover, the pessimism expressed by the S.A. Railways officers was probably also elicited by the concurrent decline in rail traffic through the Mt. Gambier station (see Appendix 19). Mr. McNeil, S.A. Railways General Traffic Manager, had drawn public attention to this development earlier in 1911. The Portland Guardian had countered with the claim that the decline was a reflection less of a real decline in agricultural productivity than of a deliberate run down in production by Mt. Gambier district farmers in the face of continued poor access to market. Such a policy would be reversed once a Portland railway was built. The Portland Guardian was incorrect (see Appendix 16).
SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12, pp. 72-84. July 21, 1911.
P.G., April 12, 1911.

44. VPP, No. 35 of 1911.
SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12.
P.G., September 29, October 2, 1911.
S.E. Star, September 29, 1911.
B.W., September 30, 1911.

45. VPP, No. 35 of 1911, p. viii.
SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12, p. viii.

46. ibid. p. xi.

47. VPP, No. 35 of 1911, p. vi.

48. SAPP, No. 87 of 1911-12, p. xii.
49. VPD(LA), October 11, December 19, 1911.
    SAPD(HA), October 25, November 29, December 6, 13, 15, 20, 1911.
    B.W., November 1, 1911; May 15, July 10, 1912.
    P.G., August 12, 1912.

50. Portland Borough Council, Minutes, August 26, September 4, 1912.
    P.G., August 26, 1912.
    S.E. Star, August 30, 1912.
    B.W., August 31, 1912.

51. ibid., January 31, August 28, September 4, 14, 1912.
    S.E. Star, August 30, September 6, 10, 1912.
    Mt. Gambier East District Council, Minutes, September 7, 1912.

52. Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Committee, Minutes, September 20, October 4, 18, 1912.
    Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Sub-Committee, Re. South Eastern Ports, Minutes, October 11, 1912.


The commission of this enquiry was issued on February 9, 1910. It was, however, June 1910 before Mt. Gambier manifested an appreciation that the commission also involved an examination of the break of gauge situation at Wolseley.

S.E. Star, June 7, 1910.
    B.W., June 8, 1910.
    Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, June 17, 1910.

    SAPP, No. 55 of 1912.

55. Namely: Messrs. J.B. McNeil (S.A. Railways General Traffic Manager), and A.B. Moncrieff (S.A. Railways Commissioner) on October 24; and Mr. J.C.B. Moncrieff (S.A. Railways Chief Engineer) on December 11.
    ibid.

ibid.

SAPD(LC), December 10, 11, 1912.

SAPD(HA), November 27, December 5, 10, 1912.
SAPD(LC), December 4, 10, 11, 1912.
VPD(LA), November 27, December 4, 1912.
VPD(LC), December 5, 11, 1912.

P.G., December 6, 13, 23, 25, 30, 1912.
S.E. Star, December 13, 1912.

SAPP, No. 55 of 1912, p. xiii. Paragraph 17(4).

The first stage of the planned harbour improvement works, a lengthening and widening of the deep-water pier, began in May 1914. It was completed in March 1917. On the other hand, the exigencies of the First World War brought about a suspension of work on the main section of the improvements, a Portland breakwater, in mid 1916. This section of the plan was not resumed.


B.W., November 27, 1912.

The guest list included: Messrs. H. Wyatt (Victorian Premier), J. Murray (Victorian Chief Secretary), A. MacBride (Victorian Minister of Railways), A.H. Peake (South Australian Premier), J.C. Bice (South Australian Chief Secretary), H.J.M. Campbell (M.L.A., Glenelg), W.J. Williamson (Mayor of Portland), R.T. Silvester (Portland Chairman of the Railway League), T.E.C. Henry (Portland Secretary of the Railway League, and Portland Town Clerk), J. Livingston (M.H.R., Barker), and G. Bodey and W. Angus (M.H.A.s, Victoria and Albert).

It must be noted that the presence of T.E.C. Henry was not confirmed. While the Border Watch acknowledged the presence of the Portland secretary of the Railway League, it did not identify him. The S.E. Star did not mention his presence.

ibid., January 8, 11, 1913.

S.E. Star, January 10, 1913.
64. B.W., February 8, April 9, 1913.
    P.G., February 12, April 2, 1913.

65. S.E. Star, May 7, 1912; April 22, 25, 29, 1913.
    Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, April 18, 1913;
    April 3, 1914.
    B.W., April 26, November 5, April 4, 1914.
    Mt. Gambier East District Council, Minutes, August 9, 1913.

66. P.G., August 25, September 8, 17, October 10, 29,
    November 7, 1913; January 5, 1914.
    P.O., September 8, 1913.

67. SAPD(HA), August 13, September 18, 1913.
    S.E. Star, January 27, 30, 1914.
    B.W., February 11, 1914.

68. Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, April 17, May 15,
    1914.
    S.E. Star, April 24, May 1, 26, 1914.
    B.W., May 6, 9, 20, July 8, 1914.
    Adelaide Chamber of Commerce Committee, Minutes, June 26,
    1914.

69. B.W., May 20, 1914.

70. P.G., April 1, May 20, 22, June 3, 8, 12, 22, 1914.
    P.O., April 9, June 8, 1914.
    S.E. Star, May 22, 1914.


72. ibid., March 24, 1915.
    S.E. Star, March 30, 1915.

73. Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, May 14, June 25,
    September 17, 1915.
    S.E. Star, May 18, October 22, 1915.
    Portland Borough Council, Minutes, June 9, 23, August 18,
    1915.
    P.G., July 14, August 30, September 15, October 22, 1915.
    P.O. August 26, September 13, 1915.

74. P.G., August 4, 1915.

75. S.E. Star, February 2, 1915.
There is, however, an indication that the Victorian Government may have acquiesced in the placement of the trucking yards to the west of Mt. Gambier. The decision was defended by Mr. M.E. Kerntot, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction in Victoria, on February 25, 1916. He then claimed that the western placement facilitated shunting between the Bay Road and Wehl Street crossings. On the other hand, Victoria may then have still anticipated that the Wolseley line would shortly be converted to short gauge!


The Wolseley line was not completely converted to broad gauge until June 1953. Moreover, at the time of writing (1977) new Mt. Gambier stockyards were nearing completion adjacent to the Portland line at Glenburnie east of the town.

82. ibid., February 26, March 5, 12, 1915.
83. SAPD(HA), July 13, 20, 1915.
S.E. Star, November 30, 1915.
84. ibid., February 29, 1916.
SAPD(HA), August 30, November 8, 1916; August 7, 29, 1917.
85. The Government, however, did agree to an alteration in the departure time of Adelaide-bound stock trains from Mt. Gambier. The express purpose of this move was that of countering the Heywood line.
ibid., October 9, 16, 1917.
86. S.E. Star, January 7, February 8, 29, 1916.
B.W., January 15, February 2, 9, 26, 1916.
87. B.W., September 20, November 4, 8, 1916.
Portland Borough Council, Minutes, November 8, 1916.
SAPD(HA), November 9, 1916.
P.G., November 22, 1916.


89. The opinions of the following were canvassed: Messrs. J.F. Palamountain (storekeeper), J. McB. Cameron (manager, Co-operative Stores), A.C. Peacock (storekeeper), G.T. Wright (manager, Commercial Milling Co.), R.J. Stafford (manager, Blue Lake Oatmeal Milling Co.), J.R. Telfer (manager, Co-operative Milling Co.), P.R. Sassanowsky (farmer), H.L. Kennedy (grazier), R.P. Pritchard (farmer), H. McCormick (farmer), D. Cameron (stock and station agent), R. McFarlane (manager, Dalgety and Co., Ltd.), E. Kluge (manager, Gambier Produce Co.), G. Morris (manager, S.A. Farmers' Co-operative Union), and W. Hay, jun. (manager, Wm. Charlick, Ltd.).

ibid., February 27, 1917.

90. ibid., July 6, 1917.

91. Argus, July 5, 1917.

92. Portland Borough Council, Minutes, August 1, 15, 29, September 12, 26, 1917.
Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, August 17, September 15, 1917.
P.G., September 5, 1917.
P.O., September 6, 1917.


95. ibid., January 5, February 16, March 16, 1917.
S.E. Star, January 9, 19, April 24, 27, 1917.
P.G., January 10, February 16, August 17, 1917.
P.O., January 13, February 14, April 28, May 2, 1917.

96. Others present at the August 21 ceremony included Messrs. G.B. Renfrey (Mayor of Mt. Gambier), A. Shepherdson (Mt. Gambier Town Clerk), and W.G. O'Hara (secretary, Railway League). The Victorian Government had refused to hold an official opening of the Heywood line because of the concurrence of war conditions. South Australia had refused
to act without a prior Victorian initiative.


B.W., August 4, 22, 25, 1917.

P.G., August 8, 1917.

98. Passenger traffic was undoubtedly swelled by a decision by the Portland Traders' Association to close their shops on the day. In fact, however, this was not the first special train to run on completed sections of the line. On February 21, 1917, over 200 Mt. Gambier district residents had travelled by rail from Kromelite to the Portland Agricultural Show. Later, on June 20-21, a disappointing 17 passengers had travelled by special train from Portland to the Mt. Gambier June races.

P.G., February 14, 21, June 8, 13, 22, October, 15, 17, 1917.

Mt. Gambier Municipal Council, Minutes, 12 October, 1917.

99. B.W., October 30, November 9, 1917.

SAPD(HA), November 1, 1917.

P.G., November 21, 1917.

100. B.W., November 30, 1917, p. 2.

101. P.G., November 30, 1917, p. 3.


103. ibid., p. 38.

104. ibid., p. 29.

105. ibid.

106. ibid.


CONCLUSION
Robinson has asserted:

...The Australian scene from 1860 onwards can profitably be studied ... as a process in which geographical identity evolved around core areas.

It was, however, also noted:

...it is inaccurate to associate this with areas of high fertility. The governing element in their continued progress was political rather than physical and their real strength rested in their broad situational advantages rather than in their narrow site characteristics.

This thesis has supported such an interpretation. Adelaide and Melbourne were the foci of South Australia and Victoria respectively. Both were coastal cities with site characteristics favourable to the establishment of a port. Portland, Victoria, also possessed similar favourable site characteristics, but its situation was disadvantageous. Not only was its immediate hinterland too infertile to sustain a significant population, but Portland also lay perilously close to the political and administrative divide between Victoria and South Australia. Similarly, Mt. Gambier was disadvantaged because its situation was contrary to its nominal South Australian identity. Not only was the Mt. Gambier district of exception fertility for its region, but its location virtually on the divide had enabled Melbourne, through Portland, to seize the initial commercial superiority. Moreover, as Harris revealed, such was the distance of the South-East from Adelaide the main centre of South Australian commercial and political activity, that the latter remained ignorant of the former's true condition for many years. Not surprisingly, Hirst discovered that the South-East did not share the general South Australian rural pattern.
of dependence upon Adelaide. Given all these factors, plus the broadening of the South Australian and Victorian political franchise in the late 1850s, it was inevitable that the development of Mt. Gambier and Portland, Victoria, after 1860, dependent as it was on public expenditure, would come to better reflect metropolitan rather than local needs.

As this work has shown, the ongoing conflict between metropolitan and local needs was evidenced best in Government expenditure upon communications. While this tension would be blatant during the later construction and administration of the South Australian and Victorian railway networks, it had been manifest in earlier transport modes. A major, if not the main objective of Government expenditure on ports, roads, and minor railways was the maintenance or establishment of the commercial and political hegemony of the pertinent metropolis. This was particularly so in the case of the relationship between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide, as the former was a producing centre. A similar motive can be perceived in Melbourne's indifference towards Portland's regional aspirations. It would, however, be unwise to portray metropolitan animus as the sole reason for the difficulties which prevented the facile establishment of a connection between Portland, the outport, and Mt. Gambier, the producing centre. Geographical and communal problems debilitated Portland's power to register a concerted challenge to its communications difficulties. On the other hand, this does not excuse the deliberate metropolitan subversion of the railway which was opened between Mt. Gambier and Portland in 1917.
The experience undergone by Mt. Gambier and Portland was well within the parameters of Australian experience. In a contemporary study Pratt cited the case of the then proposed Portland and Mt. Gambier railway before asserting:

...in the building up of the State railways of Australia, the interests of the settlers creating the traffic the railways were to carry became a minor consideration as against those of (1) the railway revenue, (2) the individual State, and (3) the middleman trader in the State capital?

Two years later, Gordon (now Sir D.J.) revealed that he no longer feared lest the South-East be lost by South Australia. On April 28, 1914, Gordon delivered the Joseph Fisher Lecture in Commerce at the University of Adelaide. The subject of his address was problems of transportation and their relation to Australian trade and commerce. Gordon's position had altered radically since 1902:

...The neglect of geographical outlets in Australia represents a daily enormous waste. Produce is dragged hundreds of miles through mountain passes and across wide plains away from natural channels. It is not necessary to give specific examples, because this policy is familiar to Australians, who unanimously concur in condemning centralisation, but do nothing to stop this waste of effort and wealth.

The truth was, of course, that most Australians, being residents of the major cities, benefited from centralisation — at least in the short term, an important factor in electoral considerations.

The question of self-interest or parochialism is important, if not central to an understanding of the subject of this thesis. In an earlier study, Richmond concluded that the basic lack of rapport between, or retionality of country towns in south-eastern Australia was the major obstacle to their growth.
Moreover, this limitation was perceived as aided and abetted by the central Government monopoly of communications. Country towns were forced to compete among themselves for access to the public purse. This interpretation can now be seen as limited if not adequate because of its basic assumptions. It accepted, and thereby legitimised the intra-Australian political and administrative divisions. There is, however, no necessary coincidence between what is and what should be.

The Victoria and South Australia boundary was not legitimised by the mere fact of being. This thesis has indicated that the true conflict was not between the regionalism of individual country towns in the face of central authority. It actually lay between city regionalism (metropolitanism) and rural regionalism, between Adelaide and Melbourne on one hand, and Mt. Gambier and Portland on the other. The other conflicts were subordinate. The basic cleavage was revealed only when the gap between central authority and central performance yawned at the peripheries. Given the high degree of urbanisation in Australia, introduction of democratic forms of Government from the late 1850s inevitably resulted in urban aggrandisement. Although it could be argued that there was less urban/rural tension in South Australia than in Victoria because of singular factors in the former's history, the exclusion of the South-East from the general model meant that in real terms this distinction was of little applicability in Mt. Gambier's case.

As both Portland and Mt. Gambier learnt, again and again, tyranny of the majority remained tyranny no matter how many voices could be summoned for its advocacy.
CONCLUSION - FOOTNOTES


2. ibid., p. 228.


This subject is also dealt with in a more general but also searching manner by:


