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Sibling rivalry: the India-Australia relationship, 1858-1901

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# Introduction: India, Australia and Empire

This thesis studies the ways in which the colonial governments of India and Australia were connected between 1857 and 1901. The thesis examines the ways in which the governments communicated, the functioning of the power relationship between them, and the ways in which they cooperated with and aided one another. Numerous examples of disagreements and tension are discussed. Throughout, I examine the perceptions that underpinned the relationship between the two colonial governments, which were reflected in language, symbolism and culture. By performing an analysis of discourse, a far deeper understanding of the relationship can be achieved than by solely examining events or results. This study is the first to examine the relationship between India and Australia in this way. Considering these questions enables us to test the extent and nature of India's power in the British empire and to understand both Australia's position within the empire and the relationship between the two colonies.

As there was a vast traffic of communication and goods travelling between Britain, India and Australia, I will focus solely on interactions between governments and government departments. There are many examples of familial and financial connections between India and Australia, but they are too numerous to cover in any appropriate amount of detail. Analysis of governmental sources from India and the Australian colonies enables examination of the specific power relationship between India and the Australian colonies in a way that has not yet been done.

# **Re-Centring Empire**

The perspective of this thesis borrows from some recent works on India's role in the British empire. Historians have recently reconsidered the structures behind the British empire. Significantly, within this restructuring, some recent studies have attempted to redefine India's role in imperial administration. The work of two scholars on this subject in particular informs the perspective of this thesis. These works are Thomas R. Metcalf's *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena 1860-1920* and Robert J. Blyth's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a recent discussion of the anecdotal links between India and Australia, see P. Holroyd and J. Westrip, *Colonial Cousins, A Surprising History of Connections Between India and Australia* (Kent Town, South Australia, 2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For some recent works on the British empire, see P. Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Harlow, 2007), pp. 61-81 and J. Hart, *Empire and Colonies* (Cambridge, 2008).

Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947. These scholars both view India as a central or "nodal' point of power within the British empire.<sup>3</sup> India was a huge colony both geographically and in terms of population. Geopolitically, it was an extremely useful base from which to administer the empire. While Britain was geographically small and isolated, India was vast and centrally located. By controlling India, Britain was able to increase its influence in South-East Asia, Eastern Africa and the Middle East. It did so partly through the use of India's people and resources around the empire, and also through the administrative power given to India.

The first work to be published on this subject was Metcalf's small chapter, titled "The Empire Recentered'. <sup>4</sup> This work closely foreshadows the perspective of *Imperial Connections*, and formed the basis for its introduction. The following year, Blyth's much larger work was published. Blyth uses the same approach as Metcalf, viewing India as a power centre, but he discusses India's influence in different arenas. <sup>5</sup> He argues that India's role in colonial administration operated along three "key axes'. <sup>6</sup> The first was the supervision of activities in the Persian Gulf. The second, which developed from that connection to the Persian Gulf, was the Gulf of Oman and the affairs of Muscat. This led to the third sphere: India's significant interest in East Africa, particularly around Arabia and the Somali coast. <sup>7</sup> Blyth focuses on the role of the Foreign Department of the Government of India. Metcalf describes those within this department as bureaucrats managing British India - imagining themselves at the centre of "sub-imperial' diplomacy, in control of managing Britain's affairs, but working from India. <sup>8</sup>

Tony Ballantyne has clarified the recentring of the empire by arguing for a different conception of the British empire. He writes that the empire had previously been viewed as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The term "nodal' point of power is used by Metcalf. See T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, 2007); T. R. Metcalf, "The Empire Recentered: India in the Indian Ocean Arena', in G. Blue, M. P. Bunton and R. C. Croizier, *Colonialism and the Modern World,* (London, 2002), pp. 25-39. R. J. Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (New York, 2003). The work of Christopher Bayly is also particularly informative to the perspective of this thesis. See: C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1870-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, 2004); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, 1996) and C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (Harlow, 1989).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Metcalf, Empire Recentered'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> This is shown by Blyth. Metcalf concurs with Blyth's argument, drawing on the works of H. M. Durand, Foreign Secretary from 1885-94, as an example. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 6.

"hub and spoke' system in which London was the 'hub' and various colonies were "spokes'. Ballantyne describes the empire as a complicated web, consisting of "horizontal filaments that run among various colonies in addition to "vertical" connections between the metropole and individual colonies'. He goes on to say that India was a sub-imperial centre in its own right. Metcalf takes this approach and expands upon India's role within it. He emphasizes the sub-imperial role of India within this system, writing that "if not quite a "spider" sitting at the heart of the web, India is, I argue, more than just one of the many colonial "knots" that may be said to constitute that web'. Transnational history provides another approach, which has arguably been lacking from Australian history. Malcolm Allbrook has produced a study of empire and colonial government through studying the lives of the Prinsep family in India and Australia. His approach to the subject, though he focuses on a family rather than the governments in question, demonstrates the usefulness of viewing Australian history within the wider framework of colonial history. The same of the prinsep family in India and Australian history of colonial history.

Throughout this thesis, the terms "Indian government' and "Government of India' will be used. Britain's method for governing India comprised three levels of government – the imperial government in London, the central government in Calcutta and provincial governments known as Presidencies. The terms "Indian government' and "Government of India' refer to the central government in Calcutta – which included the Indian Military Department and Foreign Department and had control over India's external relations. The India Office and the Secretary of State for India were based in London. The Secretary of State for India was intended to represent India's interests in cabinet, but at the same time was a minister of the Crown. It is here that the line between "Indian government' and "British government' becomes somewhat blurred. <sup>14</sup> These issues and their impact on this thesis will be addressed in more detail in Chapter One.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> T. Ballantyne, "Rereading the Archive and Opening up the Nation State: Colonial Knowledge in South Asia', in A. Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham, 2003), pp. 112-3. <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 

<sup>11</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> For some examples of transnational history involving Australia, see, for example: M. Lake and H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (Carlton, 2008) and A. Curthoys and M. Lake (eds.), *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective* (Canberra, 2005). <sup>13</sup> Allbrook, M., ,,"Imperial Family": The Prinseps, Empire and Colonial Government in India and Australia' (unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2008).

On Indian governance, see: M. C. C. Seton, *The India Office* (London, 1925); S. N. Singh, *The Secretary of State for India and his Council* (Delhi, 1962); C. Jeffries, *The Colonial Office* (London, 1956) and H. L. Hall, *The Colonial Office* (London, 1937). On the Presidencies, see Blyth, *Empire of the Raj*.

In *Imperial Connections*, Metcalf places India not at the periphery of the British empire and the global economic system, but at the centre. He describes it as a power centre that emanated people, ideas, goods and institutions or, as Metcalf puts it, "everything that enables an empire to exist, to different British colonies. He goes on to illustrate his argument through thematic chapters on all these aspects of India's role in the British empire. He focuses on the period of the "new imperialism", between 1860 and 1920. In this period, the British empire expanded deeper into South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Metcalf focuses on colonies from these regions. He shows the ways in which India was involved in this expansion; as a source of labour, a means of projecting power, a central administrative base and an example of how best to govern "colonial people". Like Blyth, he also dedicates a chapter to India's role in East Africa. He aims to show how East Africa was "almost an extension of India itself". <sup>17</sup>

According to Metcalf, the change in ruler from the East India Company to the Crown in 1858 began India's transformation into the imperial centre of the Indian Ocean. He shows that India was heavily involved in projecting military power, spreading people around the world (such as indentured or "coolie' labourers) and contributing economically, by providing goods to other British colonies.

Rather than focus on creating an in-depth analysis of a single subject, Metcalf chooses several relevant themes and provides an extremely constructive, if incomplete, analysis. His chapter on Indian indentured labour (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four) presents a strong example. When discussing Indian indentured labour, which was used in several British colonies, Metcalf uses only the example of Natal in South Africa. Another colony that used Indian labour, Fiji, would fit just as well within Metcalf's periodization and geographic focus, but is not discussed in detail. <sup>19</sup> Colonies in the Caribbean, such as British Guiana would also fit, were it not for his focus on the Indian Ocean arena. Similarly, rather than present a detailed account of India's role in East Africa as Blyth does, Metcalf presents a discussion of two little understood aspects of the subject: the "fitful' push for East Africa to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Metcalf does discuss Fiji, but only very briefly. His chapter on the use of Indian indentured labour explicitly focuses on Natal. On indentured labour in Fiji, see Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 136. On Natal, see pp. 136-64.

become an "America for the Hindu' and the construction of the Uganda Railway.<sup>20</sup>

Although they take a similar approach to India's role in the British empire, the works of Metcalf and Blyth are very different in themes and structure. Blyth focuses solely on India's directing of policy in the three areas he identifies. He does not look at the Indian army operations, emigration, indentured labour or trade – though all could have been discussed. His work has a greater narrative focus than that of Metcalf, discussing and analysing his chosen spheres of influence in chronological order. The thematic approach of Metcalf, coupled with Blyth's focus on governmental communication and administration, informs this thesis.

Blyth and Metcalf are aware that there is significant work still to be done using this conception of the British empire. Blyth writes that his conceptualization of the "empire of the Raj' is a "nich seam for investigation' that may influence other scholars.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the current consensus is that there is far more work to be done in this area. <sup>22</sup> One of the strengths of these works is the manner in which they reveal a new means of investigating the British empire. Both reveal the administrative power of the Indian government, while Metcalf also shows some aspects of how the Indian people were used around the empire. Australia also had its own form of "sub-imperialism", as discussed by Roger Thompson. Australia held political influence around the Pacific islands, including Melanesia, New Guinea and Fiji between 1820 and 1920.<sup>23</sup> The larger colonies of the British empire having influence over nearby smaller ones was far from unusual.

The status of the separate Australian colonies differed throughout the period of this thesis. All except for Queensland and Western Australia were already self-governing dominions in 1858. Queensland was separated from New South Wales and given selfgovernance in 1859. This brief difference presents no problems for this thesis. However, Western Australia did not become a self-governing dominion until 1891, due to its continued

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Several reviews of Metcalf's work have suggested that more research on this subject would be beneficial. See, for example: A. Burton, "Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1902', Victorian Studies, 50, 3 (2008), pp. 477-478; C. Markovitz, "Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920', Indian Economic and Social History Review, 45, 4 (2008), pp. 585-588; D. M. Peers, "Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena 1860-1920'. The American Historical Review 113. 5 (2008), p. 1487 and E. R. Beverly, "Thomas R. Metcalf, Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1902', Social History, 33, 4 (2008), pp. 468-506.

R. C. Thompson, Australian Imperialism in the Pacific (Melbourne, 1980).

financial dependence on Britain. <sup>24</sup> The governing status of the colonies is important in framing the analysis. Differences in the results of this thesis and the work of Metcalf and Blyth stem from the differences in the way the colonies discussed in each were governed and perceived. Australia was viewed as a series of white self-governing dominions and Metcalf's colonies around Africa and South East Asia were viewed as "colonial peoples". <sup>25</sup> As a result, for the sake of consistency and simplicity Western Australia will be excluded from this study until 1891. All of the other Australian colonies will be discussed in detail. While all chapters cover several or all of the Australian colonies, each one will receive detailed (though not exclusive) attention in a chapter. Chapter One focuses on Tasmania, Chapter Two focuses on Victoria, Chapter Three focuses on New South Wales and Chapter Four focuses on South Australia and Queensland.

# Australia and Re-centring Empire

India may have had its strongest connections with the Middle East, East Africa and South East Asia, but Australia was part of the British empire and the Indian Ocean arena also. Australia does not fit into the rationale for Blyth's or Metcalf's work, as there are some fundamental differences between Australia and the colonies that they discuss. Australia arguably fits within "South-East Asia' and was definitely a part of the British empire. However, its earlier settlement means that it falls outside the period of the "new imperialism' covered by Metcalf. The term "new imperialism' refers to an aggressive period of expansion by European powers (and later the United States and Japan) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For the British, this included the new colonies in (amongst others) Africa, South-East Asia and the Middle East. Metcalf points out that even some of the initial conquests of these new colonies, were the work of Indian soldiers. By focusing on the period of "new imperialism' and the colonies developed during this period, Metcalf excludes Australia from his analysis. Australia's population was not considered a "colonial people' so much as a British people, and little respect was paid to its native inhabitants. Blyth focuses his analysis on India's relations to the East.

Australia's geographical proximity to India, coupled with the strength of analysis

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> J. S. Battye, *Western Australia: A History from its Discovery to the Inauguration of the Commonwealth*, facsimile edition (Nedlands, 1978), p. 396.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Metcalf uses the examples of the Mesopotamian Campaign in World War One and the Indian Army in Africa. *Ibid.*, p. 3, pp. 68-101.

based on the conception of India as a central power in the empire, leads us to re-examine the relationship between India and Australia. In what ways was the India-Australia relationship similar to those described by Metcalf and Blyth, and in which ways was it different? I will build upon this historiography to ask how the governments of India and the Australian colonies were connected, how these connections were approached and perceived and how deep they were. By doing so, we can test how successfully Metcalf's "nodal' approach to India's role in the empire can be applied to the India-Australia relationship.

# Previous approaches to the India-Australia relationship

The India-Australia relationship has received some previous attention from historians of Australia, if not those who focus on India or the British empire. H. J. Finnis published an extremely brief introduction to Indian-Australian relations in 1963. He discussed India's role in shipping crucial commodities, from the first fleet to the end of the 1830s. This is an example, albeit within a very brief article, of the geographic, economic and administrative importance of India to Australia. His approach is similar in some ways to the approach of Metcalf and Blyth, though he did not explicitly address such issues in the manner of these scholars. Australia's early reliance on India for goods is relatively well documented by other scholars. Geoffrey Blainey's famous work on Australia's isolation, *The Tyranny of Distance*, discusses, again briefly, how the newly formed Australian colonies depended upon India for supplies. These early trading links are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

One aspect of the early India-Australia relationship that has received some significant attention is Indian migration to Australia. For example, Marie de Lepervanche has produced a study of an Indian community at Woolgoolga in New South Wales.<sup>30</sup> A large part of her work is the anthropological analysis of the "present' (1968-1973).<sup>31</sup> She also provides a significant historical background to the settlement and Indian migration around the empire in general. While her historical overview is extremely useful, it is aimed largely at informing the anthropological analysis of the community.<sup>32</sup> Annette Potts has produced a similar, albeit far

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> H. J. Finnis, "Early Indian-Australian Relations', *Proceedings of the Australian Geographical Society*, 40, 1 (1963), pp. 39-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>G. Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance shaped Australia's History*, rev. ed. (Melbourne, 1982), pp. 57-59, 62-63.

M. M. de Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia: An Account of Race, Class and Indian Immigration to Eastern Australia* (Sydney, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-56.

smaller, study of Indians in northern New South Wales in the "federation years'. <sup>33</sup> Rather than administrative or governmental connections, these works discuss the cultural relationships between the Indian settlers and the Australian societies around them.

The personal, familial and business connections between India and Australia were vast. Recently, Joyce Westrip and Peggy Holroyd published a large work focusing solely on Australia's relationship with India. The extremely recent publication of this work shows that this area of history is alive and relevant today. Westrip and Holroyd cover centuries of Australian connections to India through oral history, storytelling and the personal reminiscences of the authors. While the authors have clearly done a large amount of research, the work is primarily a re-telling of the relationship, as opposed to an analysis. There are therefore flaws and methodological problems within the book. Documentation is infrequent and often insufficient for recovering the information discussed. The authors have family relationships with India and Australia, and tend to focus primarily on "positive' aspects of the relationship. They do not consider fully the tension that was a consistent aspect of the relationship. The title of the book is also revealing. Labelling the relationship one of cousins implies that it was one of equality, which was not the case. If the relationship must be viewed through familial relationships, an older brother (India) and younger brother (Australia) might be a more accurate description.

#### **Periodization**

This study begins with the Indian Rebellion in 1857 and ends with Australia's Federation in 1901. There is some agreement between Blyth and Metcalf on the period in which India's importance in the British empire peaked. <sup>35</sup> Both begin with the Indian Rebellion. The Indian Rebellion resulted in a major administrative shift from the rule of the British East India Company to the Raj, and direct rule by the British Crown. <sup>36</sup> Metcalf ends

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> A. Potts, "I am a British Subject, and I can go wherever the British flag Flies": Indians on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales during the Federation Years', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 83, 2 (1997), pp. 97-116. For another example, see H. Tinker, *Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth*, 1920-1950 (St. Lucia, 1976).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Westrip and Holroyd, *Colonial Cousins*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Aside from using similar (though not identical) dates for their study, both argue that India's network flourished after the Indian Rebellion, and faded after World War One. For Metcalf on periodization, see: Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 1-6, 204-221; Blyth, *Empire of the Raj*, pp. 2-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> On the importance of the Indian Rebellion, see, for example: S. Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India* (New Delhi, 2004), pp. 169-180; S. Bose, and A. Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New York, 2004), pp. 70-78; T. R. Metcalf and B. D. Metcalf, *A Concise History of* 

his discussion with 1920, showing how India's influence faded after World War One, while Blyth continues on until Partition in 1947.<sup>37</sup>

Rather than trace India and Australia's connections through to World War One or the Partition of India, it is more appropriate to end with the Federation of Australia in 1901. Federation represents an extremely significant break in Australia's administrative and political history. Colonial governments became state governments, and foreign policy (though very much dictated to Australia by London) became the domain of the Australian Federal Government. This represents the beginning of a new period for India-Australia relations - one outside the stated goals of this thesis. Between 1858 and 1901, administration and power in India and Australia were relatively stable, which provides a unified period for analysis. This period is also poorly understood in the Australian side of historiography, as identified above.

# **Analysis and Methodology**

If Metcalf's and Blyth's approach is accurate with regard to Australia, the relationship would be asymmetrical, with India acting as the ,senior partner', and the Australian colonies as subordinates. There are many ways in which this relationship can be identified in the government communications between India and Australia, which form the bulk of the primary source material for this thesis. One theme of this thesis is examination of which governments initiated discussion on which subjects. If the Indian government was the "senior partner' it should give directions to its subordinates. Equally, did the Australian colonies approach India for advice and information? Did the Australian colonies acquiesce to India's requests, or resist them? How did this impinge upon the power relationship? I will also look for changes in the way Australian colonies perceived the relationship, because they present opportunities to test the relationship. South Australia in particular had several dealings with the Indian government over a long period and on a number of issues, and learnt from their experiences. By viewing such changes, we can get a picture of how the South Australian government perceived its relationship with India. This can be compared to other Australian colonies that had less contact with India. Asking such questions forms a fundamental understanding of the power relationship between India and Australia.

*India* (New York, 2002), pp. 98-120 The importance of the Indian Rebellion will be discussed in more significant detail in Chapters 1 and 3.

Metcalf, Imperial Connections, pp. 204-221. Blyth, Empire of the Raj.

Some of the themes covered by Westrip and Holroyd are also discussed in this thesis, such as trade (including horses) and emigration. When discussing emigration, they focus on Indians who came to Australia and their experiences, similarly to Potts and de Lepervanche.<sup>38</sup> Their approach to the trade of horses illustrates the methodological differences between this work and *Colonial Cousins*. The chapter "A Gallop from the Antipodes' discusses the sale of horses by the Australian colonies to India. Westrip and Holroyd discuss the personal experiences of horse traders, through personal documents and family recollections and some oral history. <sup>39</sup> This thesis uses administrative documents sent between the Military Department of the Government of India and the Australian colonies. These documents show clearly how the trade functioned and how it was dominated by the Indian government.

Through the analysis of discourse, it is possible to develop a deeper understanding. By considering the tone and language of the communication, we can identify the attitudes held by those in government towards one another. How did the colonies address one another, and did it vary between the Government of India and the colonial governments of Australia? The Indian government controlled issues such as Indian indentured labour. This advantage would be visible in the language of communication as well.

Study has also been undertaken by the Indian Association for the Study of Australia. The IASA has held conferences in 2004, 2006 and 2010. These papers are primarily the work of Indian scholars discussing Australian film, literature and history. Most of the work in this collection of essays focuses on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century issues, including the present day relationship.<sup>40</sup>

# **Britain-India-Australia: The Imperial Hierarchy**

It is difficult to conceive of the relationship between India and Australia in this period without considering the role of Britain. London held final decision-making power in the empire, but some autonomy was allowed to its colonies. Several examples will be discussed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Potts, "I am a British Subject" and de Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Westrip and Holroyd, *Colonial Cousins*, pp. 206-230.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> S. K. Sareen and A. Sarwal, "Introduction", in S. K. Sareen and A. Sarwal, *Australia and India: Interconnections, Identity, Representation, Belonging* (New Delhi, 2006), pp. 1-11. On the conference in 2006, see: S. K. Sareen (ed.), *Australia and India: Convergences and Divergences* (New Delhi, 2010), and D. Gopal (ed.) *India-Australia Relations: Convergences and Divergences* (Delhi, 2008). Gopal's collection from this conference focuses almost entirely on present and late 20<sup>th</sup> century relations, while Sareen's focuses on cultural history.

in which the Indian government and the Australian colonies were able to make independent decisions in relation to each other. Britain's role in administration will be discussed in detail in Chapter One.

Telegraph cables fundamentally altered the systems of communication in the British empire, and affected the relationship between Britain, India and Australia. Telegraph cables spread around the British empire in the 1870s and 1880s, greatly reducing the time it took for information to spread around the empire. 41 As telegraph communication became further entrenched, London's ability to give broad direction over the empire increased greatly. The changes in the administrative structures of the empire as a result of the introduction of telegraph cables will be discussed throughout this thesis.

The point of difference provided by the introduction of telegraph cables allows an extremely valuable opportunity to test the real nature of the relationship between India and Australia, and to examine the extent to which that relationship was allowed independence from London. Prior to telegraph cables, geographic realities gave greater impetus for the Australian colonial governments to look to India first for advice or information before Britain. By comparing communication from the two separate periods, we can come to more significant conclusions on the relationship than would otherwise be possible. Following the introduction of telegrams, requesting information from London became a more realistic option. On issues such as the indentured labour system, Metcalf is able to reveal that the Indian government was given near-complete responsibility over this very significant issue.<sup>42</sup> However, in military affairs, prior to telegraph cables, India and the Australian colonies had to make more independent decisions. Britain's involvement and governance of the relationship is a theme throughout this thesis. The historiography of the shift from letters sent by steamship to telegraphic messages will be discussed in further detail in Chapter One.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> For some significant works on telegraph cables impact on global communications and the British empire see: E. Baark, Lightening Wires: The Telegraph and China's Technological Modernization, 1860-1890 (London, 1997); J. Kieve, The Electric Telegraph, A Social and Economic History (New Abbot, 1973); T. Standage, The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's Online Pioneers (London, 1998); P. M. Kennedy, "Imperial Communications and Strategy, 1870-1914, The English Historical Review, 86, 341 (1971), pp. 728-752; J. Ahvenained, The Far Eastern Telegraphs: The History of Telegraphic Communications between the Far East, Europe and America before the First World War (Helsinki, 1981) and A. Knuesel, British Diplomacy and the Telegraph in Nineteenth-Century China', Diplomacy and Statecraft, 18, 3 (2007), pp. 517-537.

42 Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 136-164.

#### **Indian Ocean Networks**

One might expect to find examination of the India-Australia relationship in the study of Indian Ocean networks. The Indian Ocean was both a barrier between India and Australia and the link that ultimately connected the two. Despite this, connections between India and Australia have not been discussed in detail in the field of Indian Ocean studies.

Sugata Bose, in his recently published *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* takes a similar approach to the work of Metcalf and Blyth. He discusses the same period, arguing that economic connections around the Indian Ocean were strongest in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He begins by discussing this flow of capital between India and the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia. He moves on to focus on the lives of the Indians who went along with this capital. He discusses the ways that those who left India perceived their homeland. His work is limited geographically, as pointed out by Lewis, because it centres around the Indian Ocean rim. <sup>44</sup> This may explain his lack of focus on Australia: his focus is on the Indian Ocean rim, whereas Indian expatriates in Australia at this time lived mostly in the Eastern colonies of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Bose's work has not been universally well received. Bose describes his work initially as discussing the history of the Indian Ocean. He writes that he wishes to reshape the conception that the Indian Ocean arena's "organic unity', which developed over centuries, as outlined by K. N. Chaudhuri and M. N. Pearson, was ruptured by European domination in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His work focuses on the ways in which networks of Indian traders continued to exist. Several chapters of his work focus solely on India and Indians. His failure to state specifically that his focus is on India could be taken as somewhat disingenuous: indeed one critic has gone as far as to describe the work as an Indian nationalist

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Geographical Review, 98, 2 (2008), pp. 306-308.

 <sup>43</sup> S. Bose, A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in an Age of Global Empire (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 72-73.
 44 M. W. Lewis, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire. By Sugata Bose",

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Bose, A Hundred Horizons. See also, K. N. Chaudhuri, Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750 (Cambridge, 1990) and A. Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (eds), India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800 (New York, 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> This theme is discussed in several reviews of this book. For example, see: M. Newitt, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire', *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 93, 311 (2008), p. 404; J. C Perry, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire', *Choice*, 44, 6 (2007), p.1036; E. Simpson, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire', *Contemporary South Asia*, 15, 4 (2006), p. 496; G. D. S. Sood, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire', *International Journal*, 63, 1 (2007), pp. 225-228 and N. Bertz, A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire, *Journal of World History*, 18, 3 (2007), pp. 377-379.

history of the Indian Ocean, arguing that its unstated focus on Indian actors in the Indian Ocean implies no other peoples played a significant role.<sup>47</sup> The book's title and subtitle do not give the impression of a sole focus on networks of Indian traders.

Whether or not it is fair to characterize this work as "nationalist', Bose would perhaps have done better to position his work as a history of India's influence in the Indian Ocean. However, for the purpose of this study, his focus on India only makes the work more relevant. Rather like Metcalf, he discusses the flow of goods and people from India throughout the Indian Ocean. Though he does not explicitly discuss India as "nodal' point of power within the British empire à *la* Metcalf (and his focus on India would have been better justified if he had) he still centres his discussion on India. Instead, he positions his work more as showing India's role in globalizing economic systems. He notes that in the hundred years after 1830, 30,000,000 Indians travelled overseas and 24,000,000 returned.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Pearson's *The Indian Ocean* has also been useful. This work is an extremely broad study of the Indian Ocean, including its structure and the beginnings of the ocean, as well as its history and people. Pearson devotes a chapter to discussion of the British impact on the Indian Ocean. <sup>49</sup> The British had major ports in Bombay (Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata) and Madras (Chennai). These ports conducted trade throughout the Indian Ocean, including with Sydney. <sup>50</sup> Pearson argues that, under British dominion, the level of trade increased dramatically around major ports during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. <sup>51</sup> He argues that there is only one major change in the history of the Indian Ocean, occurring in the 1800s when natural barriers in the Indian Ocean (such as monsoons and currents) were overcome by steam ships and British power and capital. <sup>52</sup> Bose's work can be taken to some extent as a reaction against this -he desires to show that the local networks of traders continued despite British dominance.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> G. Campbell, "A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire', *The American Historical Review*, 112, 4 (Oct, 2007), pp. 1140-1441.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Bose, A Hundred Horizons, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London, 2003), pp. 190-248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190-248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Australia and India are connected by the Indian Ocean, and were both a part of the same administrative network of the British empire. <sup>53</sup> If India was the Imperial hub that Metcalf and Blyth argue it was, logically, there would have to be similar connections between India and Australia as between India and other British colonies. Australia is most definitely a product of the British empire. Its culture and institutions remain very similar to those of Britain, to the extent that some governmental, constitutional and ceremonial ties still exist today. Yet Metcalf and scholars who have focused on connections between India and other states on the rim of the Indian Ocean have ignored Australia. Equally, historians of Australia have ignored India's role in the British empire. Rather than analysing administrative or governmental connections, work has focused largely on the cultural relationships, primarily discussing the small number of Indian settlers who came to Australia. <sup>54</sup>

As I have indicated above, references to Australia in the body of scholarship on India's imperial networks are few. Bose only briefly mentions Australia, suggesting that Western Australian ports were a part of the history of the Indian Ocean. However, he does not follow up on this claim, focusing instead on other countries, colonies and connections. Pearson also gives the example of P&O liners from Australia stopping in Sri Lanka during the 1890s. The Indian Ocean was dominated by British shipping throughout the period 1858-1901. A portion of this trade was between India and Australia. However, Pearson does not discuss this trade in significant detail. Details of early British shipping between India and Australia, including some statistical analysis, are found in the work of Broadbent, Steven and Rickard. This work is discussed further in Chapter Two.

This thesis fills a gap that exists in several areas of historiography. The current reexamination of British empire connections has yet to address Australia's relationships within

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> For discussion of the role of the British in the Indian Ocean, see Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 190-248. See also, Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*. For an earlier work that discusses the background, see Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> For example, see: de Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia*; Tinker, *Separate and Unequal* and Potts, "I am a British Subject".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Bose, A Hundred Horizons, pp. 1-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Pearson, *Indian Ocean*, pp. 190-91, 209-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> J. Broadbent, S. Rickard and M. Steven, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society: 1788-1850* (Sydney, 2003). See also earlier studies by Steven: M. Steven, *Trade, Tactics & Territory* (Melbourne, 1983) and M. Steven, *Merchant Campbell, 1769-1846* (Melbourne, 1965). Similar work has been done by Hainsworth, see: D. R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders: Simeon Lord and his Contemporaries 1788-1821* (North Melbourne, 1971).

the British empire. Metcalf and Blyth have made some significant steps forward in understanding India as a central point of power within the empire, but have not shown its relationship with Australia. This is a gap that could have been partially filled through studying Australia's role in 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian Ocean networks, yet the subject is not covered thoroughly in Indian Ocean historiography. This thesis will place Australian history within a wider global and transnational context and extend the work of historians in showing the role India played in the British empire.

#### **Sources**

The sources for this thesis are government documents originating from the Indian government and the governments of the Australia colonies. Included is archival material from the India Office Records (IOR), the National Archives of India (NAI), Australian state archives and parliamentary papers from around the Australian colonies. These sources fit comfortably within two areas: communications between India and Australia, originating from both the Indian government and Australian colonial governments and parliamentary papers and reports produced by the Australian colonial governments that relate to India. The major strength of these sources is that they reveal the types of cooperation between the Indian and Australian governments. We can identify deep connections between the governments, such as the sharing of information, in-depth discussion of major issues such as regulations along with ceremonial and symbolic acts and language, which suggest the importance of the relationship. Another issue, which is both a strength and a weakness, is that these sources only reveal the attitude of those in government. From this we can determine governmental and administrative structures and attitudes. However, it is extremely difficult to judge with any level of reliability the attitudes of the population of India and Australia. To do so would be outside the aim of this thesis, though it may be an interesting field for future study.

There are some weaknesses in the sources that need to be considered. Communications between governments, letters and telegrams, are the majority of sources used. However, these documents do not always show the reasons behind the particular decisions being taken. On some occasions, further information on the inner working of governmental decisions, such as the South Australian parliamentary paper on the negotiations between the Indian government and a representative of the South Australian government add more detail and enable closer analysis. The extremely respectful and pleasant language of communication occasionally masks disagreement between India and Australia, and should not

be taken as evidence of a wholly cooperative relationship. While the Indian government perceived itself to be the senior partner in the relationship, the governments of the Australian colonies did not always share this perception. Though the language used remained extremely pleasant, the outcomes of discussions would, in the majority of cases, favour the Indian government. Occasionally, government sources do not cover a subject through to its final results. When this is the case, sources from Australian newspapers, accessed through the National Library of Australia's (NLA) newspaper digitisation project, are used to fill in these gaps. <sup>58</sup>

# **Chapter Structure**

The chapter structure is thematic, with each chapter analysing a different aspect of the relationship. The themes are as follows: communication, trade, the military and emigration. They are deeply intertwined and cannot be fully understood in isolation. However, each theme reveals significant details about the India-Australia relationship and, when placed together, the themes provide a structure for a meaningful analysis of a complicated and poorly understood relationship. The argument of this thesis revolves around two key points. First, that the relationship between India and Australia was deeper and more wide-ranging than has previously been acknowledged. This point is established in Chapter One, and built upon in later chapters. Secondly, it is argued that the relationship was asymmetrical - with India taking the ascendency when it was in her interests to do so. This aspect of the argument fits within Metcalf's conception of India as a power centre in the British empire, as will be discussed throughout the thesis. Chapter Two shows how the trade relationship between India and Australia functioned, with India clearly the dominant power throughout the period discussed. Chapter Three discusses the military relationship, arguing that Britain maintained more control in this area where possible, though a relationship still existed. Chapter Four discusses negotiations between the Indian government and the governments of Queensland and South Australia respectively over plans to use Indian labour in Australia. It will be argued that while India maintained control of these negotiations, the Australian colonies began to assert their independence as the Federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 (and with it, the White Australia Policy) drew nearer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> For details of this project, see: http://newspapers.nla.gov.au, date accessed: 25 October 2010.

# **Chapter One: Communication and Cooperation**

This chapter discusses communication and administrative structures between the Government of India and the Australian colonial governments between 1858 and 1901. It begins by discussing the ways in which Britain, India and the Australian colonies communicated throughout this period, taking as its starting point the approaches of other scholars to communication and relationships within the British empire. This is necessary not only for understanding the communication discussed later in this chapter, but also because it provides important background to the discussion in subsequent chapters. Following this, I will discuss forms of cooperation between the Government of India and the Australian colonies. This cooperation took several forms, specifically addressed in this chapter: the sharing, requesting and gathering of information for one another, shared scientific experiments, cooperation on issues of law and order, education and the sending of aid. I will go on to discuss the symbolic aspects of the relationship, cultural exchanges and imperial exhibitions and what they reveal.

The role of Britain in this cooperation will be analysed to illustrate how the relationship between the colonial governments in question functioned. Analysing the role of Britain in this process is crucial to understanding the extent to which India was allowed control of its external relations. By focusing on cooperation in this chapter, I do not wish to give the impression that cooperation was necessarily the norm in this relationship – on several occasions in subsequent chapters disagreements and difficulties will be discussed in detail. However, in this chapter, I aim to show that a highly functional and collaborative relationship between India and the Australian colonies existed throughout the period in question.

In order to determine the nature of this relationship, I will examine the way in which the communication took place, how it was initiated, the language that was used and the nature of the issues that were discussed and acted upon. The second major goal of this chapter is to consider how Britain involved itself in the relationship between India and Australia. The changing nature of imperial communication over this period is of great significance, with the period of this thesis including the change from mail by steamship to telegraph cables.

# **Metcalf and Blyth**

Metcalf's work does not specifically study cooperation between India and other colonies. Following his introduction, Metcalf begins his work by discussing India's role in governing new colonial peoples. His objective is "to show how colonial "Indian" law, as well as "indigenous" and "English" law, could shape colonial legal systems'. He shows that when these legal and administrative systems were being considered, the example of India was used, both as a positive role model and as an instance to be avoided.<sup>2</sup> Legal systems' does not solely refer to law and criminal justice, but also systems of government and the level of power that could be given to "colonial peoples'. As discussed in the introduction, Australia's legal systems were not informed by those in India. This was because the Australian colonies were perceived as fundamentally different from the colonies of the "new imperialism". India and Australia were both examples of older British colonies, which developed from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, rather than the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Australia was not viewed so much as a "colonial people', but as a British settlement. In terms of the governmental relationship, what we see instead is the Indian and Australian governments communicating and collaborating. As such, Metcalf's methodology in *Imperial Connections* does greatly not inform the approach of this chapter.

Rather, Blyth's approach resonates more strongly with this chapter. He discusses patterns and processes of communication and administration. In particular, his discussion of the impact of telegraph cables on imperial administration is useful here. In theory, the external relations of the British empire were dictated by London. However, particularly at the beginning of this period, the impracticulaties of slow and unreliable communication made this impossible.<sup>3</sup> Blyth argues that, while the overall direction was dictated from London, it was impossible for London to have any meaningful control over details of Indian external policy. As a result, the Indian government was allowed to negotiate details of treaties and small-scale military and naval operations.<sup>4</sup> Blyth writes that even in India, the Calcutta based Governor General had experienced the impracticulaties of distance faced from London in the governing of the "western sphere'. Rather, some control was delegated to the Bombay presidency.<sup>5</sup> Again, with the introduction of the telegraph, power in India was more centralized in Calcutta.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, 2007), p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> R. J. Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (New York, 2003), p.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

Blyth focuses in his analysis on a narrative of India's role in the "empire of the Raj', an area which he argues was largely under the control of the Indian government. This was not the case with regard to Australia, while the Indian government may have been (or considered itself to be) senior to the Australian colonial governments, it was by no means so dominant that it was able to run the Australian colonies.

#### Colonial Administration: Britain - India - Australia

Before going on to examine communication, it is necessary to discuss the administrative structures that governed the British empire, and more specifically, India. In Britain, the Colonial Office and the India Office played major roles in controlling the empire. The India Office was responsible for the management of the Raj and worked directly with departments inside India. The Colonial Office was responsible for the management of the empire; in this case, most importantly, it communicated with Australia frequently. In Australia, the separate colonial governments communicated with both India and Britain primarily through their individual Colonial Secretary's Offices. 6 The Raj was controlled through the British empire's capital in India, Calcutta. The Government of India was represented in London through the India Office. Three departments of the Government of India were particularly important in communicating with the Australian colonies: the Military Department, the Foreign Department and the Public and Judicial Department. Much of the cooperation between India and Australia was on military issues and controlled by the Military Department. This includes the management of the horse trade, discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The Public and Judicial Department managed the Indian indentured labour system, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Blyth and Metcalf discuss the role of the Foreign Department, as it directed India's external policy, in concert with London. Blyth discusses the impact of the abolition of the East India Company, and the change to government by the British Crown and parliament over India. The India Office, with a Secretary of State, held considerable constitutional powers which also represented the interests of the Indian government in parliament and cabinet. The Governor General took on the title of Viceroy and headed the government in Calcutta, with subordinate Governors in Bombay and Madras.<sup>8</sup> However, the greater control exercised from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Colonial Secretary's Office was in some cases called the Chief Secretary's Office.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Blyth, *Empire of the Raj*, pp. 3-4. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*.

Whitehall over Indian affairs did not suddenly result in the Indian government being given less independence over its spheres of influence. Blyth argues that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Indian government was able to consolidate its influence in the western ,axes'. <sup>9</sup>

A description of India's governmental systems can be found in *The Cambridge History* of India. 10 Major changes were made following the Indian Rebellion, with the Governor General presiding over a cabinet system. The cabinet included members with responsibility for certain areas, similar to cabinet ministers, such as the home member and the financial member. 11 It is noteworthy that there was no equivalent to a foreign minister - the only key ministry left off the list. 12 New local legislative bodies were created to ensure that the government was able to govern properly. The Governor General was given a veto power over some actions of these councils. Despite the powers delegated to the legislative councils and the Governor General and his cabinet, much legislative power rested with London. The Duke of Argyll, also Secretary of State, wrote that "one great principle underlay the whole system. The final control and direction of affairs in India rested with the Home Government.'13 Legislative councils were allowed to make decisions, but they would not be allowed to take a direction opposite to that desired by the British government. The Government of India was tied to the India Office in London. The India Office was created by the India Act of 1858. It was funded primarily with taxes from India, and remained in place until 1947. While the executive Government of India was situated in India (and was headed by the Viceroy/Governor General), the India Office was informed of all actions and had a voice in how Indian affairs were managed. 15 We should not view the India Office and the Government of India as separate entities.

One thing missing from *The Cambridge History of India* is how the Government of India related to other colonies. This omission appears rather conspicuous today, considering

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> E. J. Rapson, "The Indian Empire 1858-1918 and the Last Phase', in H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India Volume 6: The Indian Empire 1858-1918 and the Last Phase 1919-1947* (London, 1964), pp. 226-244.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The other members of the cabinet include the legal member, the commerce and industry member and the education member. A sixth member was added in 1874 to manage the department of public works. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>13</sup> The Duke of Argull, quoted in Benson. The Indian Empire', p. 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The Duke of Argyll, quoted in Rapson, "The Indian Empire', p. 237.

<sup>14</sup> Rapson, "The Indian Empire', pp. 206-216. See also M. C. C. Seton, *The India Office* (London, 1925) and S. N. Singh, *The Secretary of State for India and his Council* (Delhi, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Happily, the India Office's role in watching India also meant storing all their communications, which is how we know as much about India under the British as we do.

what we now know about the role India played with regard to British colonies. However, the omission is hardly surprising. This work was written well before the focus on decentring empire by many of today's historians. As a result, its analysis is focused solely on Britain and India.

# From Letters to Telegraphs

Throughout this chapter and this thesis, the sources used are communications between India, Britain and the Australian colonies. If we are to properly understand these sources, and in doing so understand the relationship between India and Australia in this period, it is necessary to discuss how this communication took place. Prior to the 1870s, all communication between Britain, India and Australia was by letters conveyed by mail steamers. The change from mail steamers to telegraphic messages occurred in the middle of the period covered by this thesis. Many scholars have shown that this change had a significant impact on imperial administration. As such, it is valuable to have an understanding of the impact of telegraphic cables on the India-Australia relationship.

There has been a great deal of discussion of telegraph cables and their role in history. <sup>16</sup> It has focused on their initial development, their use in commercial transactions, social effects, effects on journalism and the way they affected imperial governance. Their significance in global communications is described by historian Tom Standage. He writes that the telegraph was a worldwide communications network that spanned continents, revolutionized business practice and "inundated its users with a deluge of information". <sup>17</sup> Standage brands the system of telegraph cables as the "Victorian Internet'. 18 The spread of information also affected knowledge within the empire, with newspapers able to receive quick updates on world events and pass such knowledge on to the general public. 19 Headrick illustrates the importance of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Some major works include: E. Baark, Lightening Wires: The Telegraph and China's Technological Modernization, 1860-1890 (London, 1997); J. Kieve, The Electric Telegraph, A Social and Economic History (New Abbot, 1973); T. Standage, The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's Online Pioneers (London, 1998); P. M. Kennedy, "Imperial Communications and Strategy, 1870-1914', The English Historical Review, 86, 341 (1971), pp. 728-752, J. Ahvenained, The Far Eastern Telegraphs: The History of Telegraphic Communications between the Far East, Europe and America before the First World War (Helsinki, 1981) and A. Knuesel, "British Diplomacy and the Telegraph in Nineteenth-Century China", Diplomacy and Statecraft 18, 3 (2007), pp. 517-537. Livingston has produced a work with specific regard to Australia, see: K. T. Livingston, The Wired Nation Continent: The Communication Revolution and Federating Australia (Oxford, 1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Standage, *Victorian Internet*, pp. vii-viii. <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Standage, Victorian Internet, pp. 145-148 and D. Conley and S. Lamble, The Daily Miracle: An Introduction to Journalism, 3rd edition (Melbourne, 2006), pp. 305-307.

telegraph in the history of international relations. He argues that Britain used this major technological advantage to efficiently manage its empire by leading the world in developing a telegraphic system of communication.<sup>20</sup>

Headrick gives the example of the call for reinforcements to Lucknow at the beginning of the Indian Rebellion in 1857. The call for reinforcements went via telegram to the Governor General in Calcutta. From there, it had to travel via steamship to Trieste, where it was telegraphed to London. It took forty days for reinforcements to arrive, by which time Lucknow had fallen.<sup>21</sup> The decision-making process that led to British army soldiers stationed in Australia being sent to India as reinforcements during the Indian Rebellion, did not involve London due to the slow communications.<sup>22</sup> The point stands, however, that the introduction of telegrams made it far more feasible for Australian colonies to contact Britain directly, reducing their need to communicate with India.<sup>23</sup> Livingston argues also that the introduction of telegraph impacted positively on the Australian colonies' desire to federalize.<sup>24</sup>

The spread of telegraph cables around the world dramatically influenced the ability of the British to manage their empire. A permanent cable was laid across the Atlantic in 1866. By 1870, Britain was in communication with the US, Africa, the Middle East and India via telegram. East and India via telegram. Telegraph wires reached the most remote Australian colonies and indeed New Zealand by the mid-1870s. A cable could not simply traverse the Indian Ocean to reach Perth from India because there had to be repeater stations every few hundred kilometres. Cables came through India across land and sea to Indonesia and then south to Darwin. From Darwin, cables ran down the east coast to reach Melbourne and Sydney. A separate cable ran south to reach Adelaide. Another went to Perth. The telegraph cables connected Australia to India, and then India to Britain. Despite the decreased need for the Australian colonies to communicate with India, all their communication with Britain still went through India (though it was not necessarily read there). A telegraph could reach London from Karachi in 50

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon*, pp. 11-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> This is discussed in considerable detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Conley and Lamble, *The Daily Miracle*, pp. 305-307.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Livingston, *The Wired Nation Continent*, pp. 127-178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Headrick. *The Invisible Weapon*, p. 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> G. Blainey, A Short History of the World (Ringwood, Victoria, 2000), p. 480.

 $<sup>^{27}</sup>$  Ibid.

minutes. Such a message would previously have taken weeks to arrive by a mail steamer.<sup>28</sup> This was a truly revolutionary change in world communication. Purely in terms of changing the speed in communication, it represents a far greater change than the internet's impact upon global communication in the past few decades. This development would clearly have had an impact upon the India-Australia relationship, because it eliminated much of the usefulness of Australia communicating with the Indian administration instead of with London.

# Tasmania's Links to India

Large samples of the documents discussed in this chapter originate from the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO). With such a large timeframe and a massive selection of documents around Australia, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a complete and definitive discussion about how communication travelled between India, Australia and Britain. However, it is useful to analyse the communication between India and Tasmania as an example. As Tasmania was a smaller colony, the communication with India on specific issues (such as criminal investigations, education, cultural events and administrative matters) was less common than in larger colonies, such as Victoria or New South Wales. Instead, on many occasions we see Tasmanian's communication with India going through Victoria.

In Tasmania the bulk of the correspondence with India came through the Colonial (later Chief) Secretary's Office (CSO). <sup>29</sup> The CSO was the central department for the administration of the colony. According to Wettenhall, the Premier's Department (PD) grew in importance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and began to work closely with the CSO. <sup>30</sup> This appears to be the case, as some documents from India were addressed to the CSO, but were dealt with by the PD. <sup>31</sup> As the Australian colonies had no official "Foreign Office' equivalent (having no need for one as colonies of Britain), the CSO communicated and cooperated with India and acted to carry out its requests. Arrangements in the rest of the Australian colonies appear to have been very similar, with their respective CSO's carrying out the same role.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 479-483.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> The Colonial Secretary's Office was changed the Chief Secretary's Office. The same abbreviation (CSO) will be used for both departments. This change took place in 1882.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> R. L. Wettenhall, A Guide to Tasmanian Government Administration (Hobart, 1968), p. 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> For example, see: Memorandum relative to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, to be held in London in the year 1886, for the consideration of the Government of Tasmania, November 24, 1884, Premier's Department (hereafter PD)1/1/10, file no. 81 in Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (hereafter TAHO).

Aside from the semi-regular communication between India and Tasmania, a considerable volume of the communication between India and Tasmania took place through imperial circulars - documents sent to multiple governments. Generic documents were written in Calcutta or London, personalized to a limited extent, and forwarded to colonies around the world. Exactly which governments received the communication is difficult to tell solely by reading a single and personalized document.<sup>32</sup> On several occasions, India asked specific questions of the Tasmanian government, or requested or offered assistance. In all of the subjects discussed by India and Tasmania, one thing is striking - they all originated with India. This is not true of all communications on all subjects between India and other Australian colonies, but this is the case with specific regard to the documents in the Tasmanian Archives - the Government of India initiated all communication between the two colonial administrations. The specifics of the India-Tasmania relationship will be examined throughout this chapter, along with examples from other Australian colonies. I will begin with a look at examples of cooperation and information sharing between India and the Australian colonies, moving on to look at symbolic aspects of the relationship, the role of art and colonial exhibitions and finishing with a look at shared scientific experiments.

Tasmania's relationship with India has been discussed briefly by Geoffrey Stilwell. Stillwell did not focus on the governmental relationship, but instead discussed Anglo-Indian immigration to Tasmania through what was known as the "Castra Scheme'. 33 Land was set aside specifically for British residents of India to take up. The paper primarily focuses on individuals who took up such opportunities. The scheme was set up by Andrew Crawford, who arrived in Tasmania following the Indian Rebellion. In 1881 there were 357 people registered as having been born in India living in Tasmania, largely a result of this scheme. 34

# **Information Sharing and Cooperation**

The sharing of information between two colonies, or two governments, is a clear sign of a genuine relationship. Metcalf argues that part of India's value as a power centre was its location – it was in close proximity to colonies in Africa, South-East Asia and the Middle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Many of the specific examples used here from the Tasmania will be discussed in further detail throughout this thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> G. T. Stilwell, "The Castra Scheme', in G. Winter (ed.), *Tasmanian Insights*, pp. 11-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> G. J. Moore, "A Brief History of the Anglo-Indians', in J. Jupp (ed.), The Australian people: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins (Sydney, 1998), pp. 542-545.

East. In terms of proximity, it was also far closer to Australia than Britain itself. Indeed, ships that went between Britain and Australia would frequently stop in India.<sup>35</sup> If an Australian colonial government required information or assistance on a particular issue, it was far more convenient to ask the Government of India than the British government. This changed with the connection of Australia to the telegraph network. From this point onwards, even requests with specific regard to India would often be sent via the Colonial Office in London, who would then forward the information to the relevant people in India.

Prior to the laying of telegraph cables, officials based in far away colonies often had to act without official consent from London.<sup>36</sup> In the following examples of information sharing, we will see how the Australian colonies began to request information from India by first communicating with the Colonial Office in London. Several administrative areas will be discussed: matters of policing, military issues, education and exhibitions.

# **Policing Cooperation**

With people frequently travelling between India and Australia, there was always a possibility of policing and criminal matters transcending colonial borders. On 15 February, 1879, the Secretary to the Government of India at Fort William, Calcutta, asked the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania for assistance in locating a Mr Moore. Moore was suspected of involvement with "a malicious attempt [that] was made to upset the mail train on the East Indian Railway in the year 1876.'<sup>37</sup> The case was a complicated story of revenge, with Moore apparently hoping that a man who had wronged him would be on the train. Moore and his accomplices worked on the train tracks, which had been expertly removed so as to derail the train. Attached to the letter were copies of the case description.<sup>38</sup> Following his suspected attempt to derail the train in question, Moore lost interest in his work and was soon dismissed. He sailed from Calcutta to Melbourne on 15 September, 1876 on the S.S. *Ellora*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> This became even more common following the development of steamships and the finishing of the Suez Canal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Knuesel makes a similar argument on communications between London and British officials in China. A. Knuesel, "British Diplomacy", pp. 517-537.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> C. Bernard, Esquire, Offic. Secy to the Govt. of India, to The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania, February 15, 1879, Chief Secretary's Office, (hereafter CSO)/10/1/70, file no. 1728, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Though not relevant to this thesis, the case details tell a story of revenge, violence and adultery, and quite worth reading.

The Government of India began their search for Moore by contacting the Victorian government. The Victorian government described the suspect, and conducted a search, which was unsuccessful. The Indian government then contacted the Tasmanian government, which offered its assistance, but added that its hopes of finding Moore were minimal without a personal description of him.<sup>39</sup> The Government of India forwarded the description of Moore provided to them by the Chief Commissioner of Police in Melbourne. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any further discussion on this subject, suggesting that the Tasmanian authorities had no luck in finding Moore. We can judge from this that there was a clear willingness on the part of the Government of India to ask the Australian colonies for assistance with policing matters. While the Tasmanian government had no further communication on the subject, clearly the Victorian police had gone to some effort on the matter, as they had obtained a description of Moore which was later forwarded to Tasmania.

In 1879 communication between Tasmania, Victoria and India took place primarily through letters. An example of the sharing of information on policing matters after telegrams became more common arose in 1896. On this occasion, the New South Wales government desired information on the anthropometric system used in India for identifying habitual criminals. They specifically requested to know the working of the "Bertillon' system, which was used in Bengal. Although the same system was used by many countries around the world at this time, it was simplest for New South Wales to request this information from India. They made this request via telegram to the Colonial Office in London, who forwarded it to the India Office. In this case, the New South Wales government were correct to think that the best information available was from Bengal. Three documents were available: the Inspector General of Police for Bengal's instructions on the application of the system, another special report of the Inspector General and the Bengal Police Report. Despite the information originating from India, New South Wales opted to request the information from the Colonial Office in London. New South Wales opted to request the information from the Colonial Office in London.

The use of the system in Bengal was specifically mentioned by the New South Wales government in their original telegram to the Colonial Office. Despite this knowledge, rather than asking for the aid of Bengal, they went directly to the Colonial Office in London, who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>*Ibid.* Inspector of Police, April 8, 1879, CSO/10/1/70, file no. 1728, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Under Secretary of the Colonial Office to the Under Secretary of State India Office, March 5, 1896, L/Public and Judicial Files (hereafter PJ)/416/96, in India Office Records (hereafter IOR).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*.

clarified the position with the India Office. A similar example of the New South Wales government initiating requests for information at this early stage from the Colonial Office rather than the Indian government came in 1897. The New South Wales government needed to identify the correct judicial oath to be given to Buddhists. Communication on this subject became quite convoluted, involving the exchange of information between the Colonial Office in Britain, the Indian government and the New South Wales government.

The New South Wales government first sent the request to the Colonial Office, who could have communicated directly with the Government of India. <sup>44</sup> In 1899 a clerk from the Judicial and Public Department described the difficulties that the New South Wales government had experienced in receiving a satisfactory response. The New South Wales government first requested information from the Government of India as to the oath used in Ceylon in 1897. This information was available through the Colonial Office and so the initial request was sent to Britain, through an agent of the New South Wales government in London. The New South Wales government was not satisfied with the response received in 1897 and requested more details of the oath in 1899. Daniel Cooper, the New South Wales agent in London, wrote that:

...it has not been found possible to procure a copy of the "Kyantsa', to obtain definite information as to the mode generally observed in the Courts of India and Ceylon in administering an oath to a Buddhist witness, and particularly desiring that the exact words of the oath may be ascertained.<sup>45</sup>

The Government of India sent to New South Wales a copy of the *Kyantsa*, a sacred text from Burma. He Colonial Office forwarded this request to the India Office, asking that they take the "necessary steps to procure the information desired from the Government of India". The New South Wales government had concluded that simply swearing an oath without the presence of the book was not a sufficient pledge to guarantee that the evidence of a witness was reliable. The matter was concluded with the Government of India sending the *Kyantsa*, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ihia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Form of Oath administered to Buddhists: Enquiry from New South Wales Govt., February 27, 1899, L/PJ/6/503 in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Daniel Cooper to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, January 25, 1899, L/JP/6/503, in IOR. Emphasis in original.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> T. Latter, *Grammar of the Burmese Language* (New Delhi, 1991) p. L. This book was first published in 1845, but was republished by Asian Education Services in 1991.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> C. P. Lucas, to the Under Secretary of State, the India Office, 27 February, 1899 L/PJ/6/503, in IOR.

copy of the Indian Oaths Act of 1873 and other information to New South Wales. New South Wales were expected to pay all costs for the information.

In both these cases, it appears that the Australian administrators would have been better served by starting their search in India. Yet the first place that the New South Wales government went for information on both occasions was the Colonial Office in London. This was despite both requests specifically referring to India as the appropriate source of the information. Clearly, the Government of New South Wales did not believe at this time that India was its primary point of contact within the empire – even on issues specifically relating to India. From this, we can see that New South Wales' perception of the India-Australia relationship was different from India's perception of the relationship in 1879. In the case of Moore fleeing India to Australia, the Indian government was prepared to go directly to the Australian colonies for information and assistance. This comparison suggests that the Indian government saw its connections to other colonies as independent from London's control. New South Wales on the other hand viewed its connection to India, at this late stage in the period, and with the ease of access provided by telegraphic communication, to be secondary to its connection to Britain. From these examples, the relationship as it existed and as it was perceived by the Indian and Australian governments was asymmetrical. New South Wales' main connection to the empire in the late 19th century was with London, whereas India's imperial connections in 1879 were far less central – contacting the Australian colonies to ask for information without first consulting London. We should consider the differences in these requests: India's request was an urgent matter of locating a suspected criminal on the run. The requests of New South Wales were less urgent administrative matters - and so more time could be spent in responding to them.

# Military matters

Administrative military matters were also discussed by the Indian government and the Australian colonial governments. Some of these were minor matters of asking for details of specific information, others related to full-scale military engagements. Military supplies were traded, as discussed in Chapter Two. All the issues discussed in this chapter relate to matters of administration handled by the Military Department of the Government of India. Matters involving large-scale military planning and conflict are discussed in Chapter Three.

To begin with a brief example, the Military Department of the Government of India wrote to the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania to ask if there had been any changes to the system for granting crown land to immigrants and settlers. They did so because Victoria had made changes to its system and the Department was interested to know if Tasmania had made similar changes. Possible changes to the granting of Crown land to immigrants affected the Indian military because such grants would quite often be made to reward people retiring from the Indian army. The CSO replied that while there had been changes to Acts in Victoria, there were no such changes in Tasmania, only one Act had been passed, which specifically regarded assisted immigration from Europe. So

In 1885 the Military Department of India requested the help of the Tasmanian government on an administrative matter. Colonel H. L. A. Tottenham of the Bengal Staff Corps was on furlough in Hobart Town and had applied to the Government of India to have a portion of his pension commuted on retirement. The letter asks that the Tasmanian government set up the examination before a Medical Board before 30 September (as this was the date Colonel Tottenham was due to retire) and submit the findings to the Military Department of India. The Colonial Secretary's office acted immediately upon receiving this letter. A communication dated 18 August was sent to the Board of Management of the General Hospital in Hobart – the same date the original communication was received. This communication also implied urgency, stating: "in order to comply as far as possible with the wishes of the Government of India, I should be glad if the Board could meet and furnish their reports in time for the mail leaving Hobart on Saturday next'. The medical examination took place quickly, and it appears that the report was sent to the Government of India on time.

The CSO handled the matter very efficiently, implying a desire to meet the requests of the Indian Military as fully as possible. That it was handled almost immediately, indeed, well before the September 30 deadline specified by the Military Department, suggests that this was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Government of India, Military Department, Fort William, October 2, 1883 to the Colonial Secretary, Hobart, CSO13/1/70, file no. 1289, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> For numerous examples of British-Indian migration to the Australian colonies, see J. Westrip and P. Holroyd, *Colonial Cousins, A Surprising History of Connections Between India and Australia* (Kent Town, South Australia, 2010), pp. 67-91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> CSO to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Fort William, Calcutta, CSO13/1/70, file no. 1289, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Government of India, Military Department to the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania, August 18, 1885, CSO/13/86, file no. 1865, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> CSO to Chairman, Board of Management, General Hospital, Hobart. 18 August, 1885, CSO13/1/86, file no. 1865, in TAHO.

an immediate priority. August 18 1858 was a Wednesday. "Saturday next' was Saturday August 21. The CSO wanted the process to take only 3 days, and wanted the report to be dispatched to India a full month prior to the requested deadline.

#### **Education and examinations**

The Indian Civil Service (ICS) was an elite and prestigious administrative body charged with governing India. It was known prior to 1858 as the covenanted civil service, as they would enter into covenants with the East India Company. Following the Indian Rebellion, civil servants would instead enter covenants with the Secretary of State. The ICS became known as the "steel frame' of the Raj. It formed the highly structured and skilful administration that was necessary in order to maintain such a massive colonial operation. It was open to all natural-born subjects of the empire, be they of European or Indian descent. Competitive examinations were held around the British empire, for those between the ages of 18 and 23, with only the strongest candidates selected. St

Australian students were able to sit examinations for the ICS through London University. Mr Russell Wells Roberts of the Hutchins School in Hobart sat this examination three times. The University of London requested that the Colonial Office dispatch the tests around the world, including Australia and Tasmania. The tests were to be taken on 11 January, but it was noted that they may arrive later in Australia. <sup>56</sup> A telegram received by the Tasmanian Premiers Office (which was also sent to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney for other students) on 13 January 1885 reveals the extent of the examination. The tests were to be taken simultaneously in all four cities. Mr Roberts passed in the "first division' the matriculation examination of the University of London, along with students from Ceylon, India, Mauritius and the West Indies. <sup>57</sup> A letter accompanying the results states that Mr Roberts was the only student in Australia to pass this examination. He was the most likely to win the Gilchrist Scholarship for Australia (as the only student selected to the ICS) though the University of London had nothing to do with this award. <sup>58</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Rapson, "The Indian Empire' p. 357.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> On the concept of the ,steel frame', see, for example, A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, "The Thin White Line: The size of the British Colonial Service in Africa', *African Affairs*, 79, 314 (1980), p. 25 and S. K. Chettur, *The Steel Frame and I: Life in the ICS* (London, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Rapson, The Indian Empire', pp. 358-359.

The University of London to the Colonial Office, December 4, 1885, in TAHO, PD1/1/8, file no. 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> University of London, 1885 Colonial Examinations – Matriculation Examination – January, PD1/1/8, file no. 77, in TAHO.

University of London to the Colonial Office, May 26, 1885, PD1/1/8, file no. 77, in TAHO.

We can draw some conclusions from these tests and the manner in which they were handled. Clearly, on some sensitive issues letters were still written, and their transfer was still as slow as the steam ships that carried them. In this case, the tests had to travel from India to Australia, though the background discussions were handled by telegram. Telegrams were not used for secret documents, as discussed by Headrick.<sup>59</sup> However, in this case it was not a matter of national security, but simply a case of preventing telegraph operators from finding out the questions on important school tests. The tests and the guidelines themselves had to go via steamship. As with all people of the British empire, an inhabitant of the Australian colonies was able to work in the ICS. It was a privileged position, difficult to get into and worthy of scholarships of £100 to £150.<sup>60</sup> The existence of the scholarship is particularly important, as it shows financial motivation being provided for students in the Australian colonies to undertake the extremely difficult ICS examination. This is an example of the prestige of India having impact within Australia, an issue which will be discussed in more detail below.

We see an asymmetrical relationship developing. The Australian colonies placed their connection with Britain above their connection to India. However, the Indian government was still requesting information and cooperation from Australia without consulting London. The Australian colonies were more inclined to contact London, and India more inclined to contact the Australian colonies directly. However, it is important to note the way in which the Australian colonies would respond to the requests for information made by the Indian government. Their responses, in the cases of Tasmania and Victoria, were extremely quick, and helpful in tone. On each occasion, the colonial government in question did whatever was asked of it by the Indian government. This leads us to examine the language of communication between India and Australia, and symbolic aspects of the relationship.

#### Language, Symbolism and Power

The analysis of language and power is a central focus throughout this thesis. The language used between the Government of India and the Australian colonies can be used to reveal how each government perceived its role within the relationship. Which colony initiated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Headrick, *Invisible Weapon*, pp. 11-27. In his chapter on telegraphic communication, Headrick discusses Britain's concerns that telegraph messages may be vulnerable to foreign powers uncovering secret information. <sup>60</sup> This was the amount offered to the recipient of the Gilchrist Scholarship. University of London to the Colonial Office, May 26, 1885, PD1/1/8, file no. 77, in TAHO.

communication on which subjects? Which colony appears to have power over the other? Asking these sorts of questions can reveal the nature of the relationship, and they can be answered through looking not just at the content of communication, but the wording and the tone. According to Metcalf, India was a power-centre of the empire, which would have been represented in its communication with other colonies, as well symbolically throughout the empire. Of course, as has already been discussed, Australia had in many ways a different relationship with India from the colonies Metcalf was discussing.

Power in an inter-governmental relationship is also likely to be reflected through symbolic language and symbolic acts. Symbolic acts can also represent the strength of a relationship, without necessarily reflecting power. These again will be discussed throughout this thesis. One major area of symbolism is military symbolism. There is considerable evidence of a military relationship also, but this will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Indian government publications were sent to various libraries around the empire. In 1899 the Victoria Library in Perth was added to this list. The library began to receive Government of India publications, such as financial statements, the mint report, the currency report and the financial and miscellaneous statistics. The communication on this subject was initiated by the library itself. J. S. Battye, a librarian with the Victoria library, wrote to the Government of India to request that the library be added to the 'List of institutions' that received Government of India publications. He began by stating that "This library is the only national library on this side of Australia, and is separated by a distance of nearly 2,000 miles from the large public libraries on the eastern side of the Continent'. 62 He went on to argue that "We are geographically the most nearly in touch with India of all the Australian colonies, and the various publications issued in India would be of very great value to the people of Western Australia'. 63 The author hints that Western Australia's proximity to India relative to other Australian colonies should count in its favour. It was unnecessary to point this out, as India's stature within the empire was essentially global, and was recognized by all of the Australian colonies. However, Western Australia's proximity to India, and the fact that it was a major port, with Indian ships coming through frequently, suggests that the author felt there was a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> J. S. Battye to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, October 18, 1899, Foreign Department Records from the National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1844-1945, 1844-1943, National Library of Australia, Microfilm Collection (hereafter NLA-NAI), reel one, no. 29.
<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*.

special relationship with India as a result. That Battye felt that this was worth mentioning in his correspondence suggests he believed it may have had some influence. This may or may not have influenced the Government of India's decision (in the documentation from India, there is no suggestion that it did), but this does suggest that there was a perceived relationship with India at this time, due to its power, prestige and position within the empire.

Battye wrote that the library was unable to offer much in return, only that any Western Australian government publications could be sent to any institution the Government of India wished.<sup>64</sup> From these comments, we can see, for this institution at least, that Government of India publications were of symbolic value and a prestigious holding. Battye argues that, as Perth is 2,000 miles away from the nearest library with these publications (in Melbourne, which was about to become Australia's temporary capital city), Perth should receive the publications. This argument implies that the people of Perth would benefit from the publications, and that all those from Australia should have some access to Indian government publications. This illustrates India's importance broadly to the empire, including the Australian colonies, in a symbolic sense. There was prestige attached to India because of its powerful status, and some small amount of this prestige could be transferred to an institution like a library through holding Indian publications.

The request went through several offices of the Government of India, and was quickly passed by all of them. By 18 March 1900, it had been cleared by the Finance Department, the director of General Statistics, the Legislative Department and the Foreign Department. 65 The only matter raised came from the Military Department, which, as appears to have been a regular concern, simply asked that no confidential military files be sent to libraries where they may be easily accessed. The Military Department ultimately allowed the Victoria Library to view a list of publications that they were allowed to receive, with confidential publications not placed on that list. 66 This caused a delay of three months. Once the Military Department agreed, the correspondence between Government of India departments was forwarded to the Victoria Perth Library and the publications were then received.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> H. Heseltine, J. E. O'Connor, A. Williams and E. G. Colvin to the Librarian, Victoria Library, Perth WA, June 22, 1900, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 29.

66 S. C. Hill to the Librarian, Victoria Library, Perth WA, June 22, 1900, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 29.

The sending of Government of India publications to Australian libraries was of more significance than just the sharing of information. It is also an example of the symbolic power of India (represented through the Government of India publications) to the Australian colonies. I will now move on to discuss similar symbolic aspects of the relationship, particularly the symbolic importance of Indian power to the Australian colonies. Benjamin Disraeli popularised the term the "jewel in the crown' to describe India's role in the British empire. <sup>67</sup> Many of the examples discussed here show India's symbolic power within Australia.

One area in which India and Australia would deal with each other was cultural events. Imperial power was regularly displayed through exhibitions. Some of these exhibitions were famous displays of imperial grandeur (such as the Crystal Palace of 1851), others were smaller affairs to mark significant dates and milestones, or simply for the sake of imperial prestige.<sup>68</sup> Hoffenberg begins his discussion of exhibitions and the "New Imperialism' with Crystal Palace. These exhibitions would take place not only in Britain but in other colonies, including India and Australia. Exhibitions were also held in Europe and North America. Hoffenberg argues that they were spectacular events "at the heart of the "New" Imperialism", aiming to showcase the power and positive nature of the British empire. 69 In 1883, the Chief Secretary of South Australia wanted to invite the King of Siam (Thailand) to the Adelaide exhibition. The Adelaide exhibition was a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the colony of South Australia. The Chief Secretary (Colonial Secretary) for South Australia W. C. F. Robinson was a personal acquaintance of the King of Siam, and wished to invite him to the celebration. Robinson initiated his request by asking the Earl of Derby if there would be any objection to him personally writing to the King of Siam to send the invitation. <sup>70</sup> This request was forwarded to several departments to see if there were any objections: the Under Secretary of State for India, the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> M. Lynch, "Benjamin Disraeli', R. Kelly and J. Cantrell (eds) *Modern British Statesman 1867-1945* (Manchester, 1997), p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> For further information on the Imperial exhibitions, see P. H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, 2001). India and Australia both contributed to this exhibition. A. Broinowski, *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia* (Melbourne, 1992), pp. 20-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Sir W. C. F. Robinson to the Ear of Derby, July 31 1883, NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 26.

Government of India, Foreign Department and the India Office. <sup>71</sup> The Secretary to the Government of India was told to forward the information to the Viceroy.

We see in this matter several themes relevant to this thesis: connectivity between separate colonies in the British empire, the centrality of India in connecting Britain to other colonies, and the ceremonial aspects of empire. This example also shows how telegraphic communication influenced communications around the empire. Exactly why was it necessary to have this forwarded to the India Office? Once the initial request was made by South Australia it was circulated around London to see if there were any objections. Outside London, the only other place to which it was sent was Viceroy in Calcutta. The implication of this is that on this matter, the Viceroy had an opportunity to voice any concerns. What could have been a simple telegram between South Australia and Siam was quickly circulated around the world. What we learn most from this is perhaps how thoroughly India was integrated into imperial communications around the empire.

There are other examples of India and Australia being involved in discussions about imperial exhibitions. In 1884, the Premier of Tasmania received a memorandum about the Colonial and Indian Exhibition to be held in London in 1886. The memorandum discussed the system for paying for the exhibition. It states that the Secretary of State for India had already guaranteed £20,000 out of the necessary £50,000. It goes on to ask that the Tasmanian government guarantee some funds for the exhibition, stating that it was hoped the funds would never be necessary, as the exhibition may be "self-supporting, and that... it will not be necessary to make any call upon the Guarantors.'72 The document attempts to persuade the Premier to guarantee money, by mentioning that the Queen would be told of the action as quickly as possible.

It would seem to have been extremely unusual to send this document only to the Premier of Tasmania. We can tell that other governments were invited to act as guarantors for the event through a preliminary list of guarantors, attached to a subsequent circular dispatch.

<sup>71</sup> Ibia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Memorandum relative to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, to be held in London in the year 1886, for the consideration of the Government of Tasmania, November 24, 1884, in TAHO, PD1/1/10, file no. 81.

Tasmania is not on the list, though notably Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand guaranteed £5,000 and South Australia and Queensland both put down £2,000.<sup>73</sup>

The Calcutta International Exhibition was well attended by the Victorian government, who used it as an opportunity for cultural exchange and to deepen relations between the two colonies. Victoria sent a large array of goods to the exhibition, with their wine being particularly well received – winning 11 gold medals. At the end of the exhibition, The Victorian contingent presented the Indian government with collections of the goods presented at the exhibition, accompanied by pictures of Melbourne, Ballarat and Richmond. The Indian government responded in kind, sending a collection of books, plants seeds and publications for Victoria.

The Victorian government believed that its performance at the exhibition had increased the number of visitors from India to the Australian colonies. Army officers, members of the ICS and other Anglo-Indians long resident in the East, were able to access a change of air and scenery, away from the heat of India, without having to transition fully to the ,chilly, damp climate of England'. It was believed that ,that this feeling will spread rapidly there can be little doubt, as every steamer from India now brings a fresh contingent of passengers. The Viceroy commented on Australia's participation, stating that ,I rejoice very much at it, that the Australian portion of this Exhibition is extensive and full of interest. The shared goodwill of the exhibitions again suggests a mutual friendship between India and the Australian colonies. These exhibitions were opportunities to present the best each colony had to offer, and to share with the rest of the British empire. There was genuine pride within the Victorian government at their successes at this imperial exhibition. There were also implications for trade that arose out of the Calcutta International Exhibition, which will be discussed in Chapter Two.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Colonial and Indian Exhibition, Preliminary List of Guarantors, in Proceedings of the First Meeting of the Royal Commission, March 30, 1885, Circular Dispatch, in PD1/1/10, file no. 81, in TAHO.

<sup>74 ,</sup>Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> The Viceroy, quoted in "Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84", Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50, pp. 32-33.

Another circular dispatch came to the Tasmanian Premier in 1891.<sup>78</sup> E. C. Buck (an administrator who plays a major role in subsequent chapters) wrote to the Premier of Tasmania to tell the colony of a project at the Provincial Museum at Lucknow to create plaster casts as representations of celebrated "decorative architecture in various celebrated buildings at Fatehpur Sikiri, a temporary capital of the Moghul Empire established by the Emperor Akbar'. The project was thought to be of interest to other colonies, and an opportunity to spread knowledge and Indian antiquities around the empire. The letter continued:

It has been suggested that while casting is in progress, copies of the moulds might be prepared for other Indian, Home and Colonial Museums at a slight additional cost. I am desired to enclose a list of casts and to enquire whether your Government would desire to be furnished with a set of them for the museums or similar institution in Tasmania.<sup>80</sup>

The word "Tasmania' is handwritten where a gap was left in the otherwise typed text. The implication is that the document was sent to multiple governments, leaving Buck to fill in the blanks before dispatching the letters.

These are examples of cultural events and items being used to spread knowledge of India. Colonial governments around the world were invited to contribute to exhibitions, which showed off imperial prestige. These events demonstrate the connections between the colonies of the British empire. On these occasions, India was central to the symbolism. The example of plaster casts being made in Lucknow of famous Indian architecture and sent to the Australian colonies, handled specifically by the Government of India, shows once more the prestige attached to India in the British empire.

#### **Financial Aid**

Another example of an imperial circular received by the Australian colonies related to aid sent to India from around the empire during a period of severe famine. Famine was a problem in India in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this case, famine began in Bombay in October 1876, when summer rains failed in half of the Madras Presidency.<sup>81</sup> The response

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Though the letter is addressed to the Colonial Secretary, it can be found in the Tasmanian Archives in the correspondence of the PD.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> E. C. Buck, Secretary to the Government of India to the Honourable the Colonial Secretary Hobart, Tasmania, September 4, 1891, PD1/1/52, file no. 458, in TAHO.

80 *Ihid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Lady Betty Balfour, *History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, 1876 to 1880: Complied from Letters and Official Papers (London, 1899), p. 189.

of the British has been attacked on several fronts, with Lord Lytton's administration in India relying on *laissez faire* solutions to the problem – essentially arguing that nothing needed to be done (indeed, food grown in India continued to be shipped to Britain). While there were also important climatic factors behind the famine, it is certainly fair to argue that British policy exacerbated the problem. While the response of the British administration in India may have been inadequate, the response of the Australian colonies was generous. The Australian colonies sent aid to the help with the problem. A letter from the India Office in London was received by the Governor of Tasmania on 14 February, 1878. The letter was a circular dispatch, though was somewhat more personalized than other circulars that are discussed in this chapter.

Viscount Cranbrook sent the Tasmanian Premier a letter to thank him for the funds sent in response to the famine in India. Cranbrook was made Secretary of State for India in March 1878. The details of the Tasmanian and overall Australian contribution are thin. The letter states that:

I have not failed to notice with the greatest satisfaction the accounts which have reached me, chiefly from unofficial sources, of the magnificence which has been displayed in so many of Her Majesty's Colonial possessions, in the contributions which have been made towards the funds for the relief of the sufferers by famine in India. 84

Again, this appears to have been a generic communication sent to all the Australian colonial governments.

The contribution made by the government and people of Victoria is easier to identify. On 29 November, 1877 the mayor of Melbourne decided to initiate a famine fund. By 21 December, the people of Victoria had donated a sum of nearly £3,000 to the fund. The contents of the fund - £19,000 - were sent to the government of Madras. Viscount Cranbrook quickly forwarded his thanks to the people of Victoria for "this splendid proof of their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> M. Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London, 2001), pp. 25-47.

<sup>83</sup> See: J. Parry, "Hardy, Gathorne Gathorne-, First Earl of Cranbrook (1814–1906)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (September 2004, online edition, January 2008),

http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33356, date accessed: 22 December 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> India Office to CSO, February 14, 1878, CSO10/1/55, file no. 1256, in TAHO.

Despatch Respecting the Indian Famine Relief Fund', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1877-1878, no. 102; Despatch Respecting the Indian Famine Relief Fund', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1877-1878, no. 96 and Despatch Relating to the Initiation of the Indian Famine Relief Fund in Melbourne', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1877-1878, no. 81.

benevolent sympathy with the sufferings of the people of India'. <sup>86</sup> The speed and generosity of the people of Victoria was indeed impressive. This suggests a genuine caring amongst the Victorian people for the suffering within India.

# **Scientific Cooperation**

Another area in which India and the Australian colonies communicated and cooperated was scientific experiments. The British were extremely inquisitive about nature, and gaining knowledge through scientific experiments was a part of their empire. Alfred Crosby's famous work *Ecological Imperialism* details the manner in which flora and fauna were transported around the world between 900 and 1900. His work is unashamedly Eurocentric. However, in this case, his focus on Europe helps us to understand the spread of plants and animals around the British empire. <sup>87</sup> Scientific pursuits were considered gentlemanly, respectable and honourable. Botany, for example, was a common pursuit in the Australian colonies and around the British empire. Sir Joseph Banks travelled on numerous voyages of discovery, including Captain James Cook's voyage to Tahiti to follow the transit of Venus. <sup>88</sup>

This interest in science extended to experiments being carried out between the governments of India and the Australian colonies. One successful experiment conducted by the Government of India was planting Australian timber in Mysore. Eucalyptus seeds were sent to Mysore in 1869 to see whether or not they would be able to grow. There is even some suggestion that eucalypts were first brought to Nandi Hills in Bangalore by Tipu Sultan in 1790, who reportedly received the seeds for 16 varieties. <sup>89</sup> Whether or not this was the case, Pallana cites occasions prior 1869 where eucalypts were sent to India in a very brief overview of the history of eucalypts in India. <sup>90</sup> They were planted in Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu in 1843. Wilson wrote that Blue Gum and Black Wattle were introduced into "montane temperate lands of South India' in 1843. They are quite likely discussing the same

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<sup>90</sup> Pallana, "Eucalyptus in India".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> May 8, 1878, Viscount Cranbrook, in "Further Despatch and Enclosure Respecting the Indian Famine Relief Fund'. Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1878, no. 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> A. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York, 2004), pp. 132-194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> L. A. Gilbert, "Banks, Sir Joseph (1743-1820)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1 (Melbourne, 1966), pp. 52-55.

R. M Pallana, "Eucalyptus in India", *Food and Agriculture Department of the United Nations, Corporate Document Repository*, http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/AC772E/ac772e06.htm#TopOfPage, date accessed: 9 March 2010. Pallana cites Shaym Sundar speaking at a conference.

plantations.<sup>91</sup> He went on to say that they grew quickly in South India in the recent past, so presumably they would have done so in the 1800s.<sup>92</sup> Regular plantations were established in 1856. Clearly the experiment with multiple varieties in Mysore was not without precedent.

Communication in this case was begun by the Government of India, who requested eucalyptus seeds from the Government of Victoria. James McCulloch, the Chief Secretary in Melbourne wrote to the Government of India Foreign Department that the *Eucalyptus globulus* could be sourced easily and cheaply from Melbourne, but other varieties, *Eucalyptus marginata* and *Eucalyptus citriodora* could only be sources from Western Australia and Queensland respectively. <sup>93</sup> The request made by the Indians was forwarded to the director of the Botanic Gardens of Melbourne, Dr Ferdinand von Mueller, who suggested that the seeds could arrive in Mysore if they were sourced from these colonies, rather than sourced by Victoria and then sent from Melbourne. <sup>94</sup>

It appears that the seeds in question were sent along with this letter, as there is a considerable break in the correspondence. There was further correspondence the following year, however, as the Government of India considered obtaining the suggested seeds from Western Australia and Queensland.

J. A. McPherson, who replaced McCulloch as Chief Secretary, wrote to the Foreign Department of India to inform them that Dr von Mueller had gathered fresh seeds of the blue gum, iron bark, stringy bark and peppermint trees. They were to be sent the following day to India. <sup>95</sup> Dr von Mueller's report was also attached, which advised the Government of India that he was unable to gather the requested amount of iron bark seed. C. Girdlestone, a junior undersecretary to the Government of India Foreign Department, was directed to convey the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> J. Wilson, "The Need for a Rational Utilisation of the Montane Temperate Forest of South India', *The Indian Forester*, 99, 12 (1973), pp. 707.

<sup>93</sup> J. McCulloch to W. S. Seton-Karr, August 14, 1869, NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* Dr von Mueller was a prolific writer and well known in his field. See, for example: G. L. McMullen, "Getting to know Dr. Mueller: Accounts of Ferdinand von Mueller in Victoria's Mid-Nineteenth-Century German Language Newspapers', *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 111, 2 (1996), pp. 325-333; A. M. Lucas "Ferdinand von Mueller's Interactions with Charles Darwin and his response to Darwinism', *Archives of Natural History*, 37, 1 (2010), pp. 102-130 and A. Brown-May, A. M. Lucas and S. Maroske, "Bringing Science to the Public: Ferdinand von Mueller and Botanical Education in Victorian Victoria', *Annals of Science*, 63, 1 (2006), pp. 25-57. A selection of Dr von Mueller's correspondence has been published. This publication contains no mention of the events discussed here. See R. W. Home, A. M. Lucas, S. Maroske, D. M. Sinkora and H. H. Voight (eds), *Regardfully Yours: Select Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller*, Vols. 1-3 (Bern, 1998).
<sup>95</sup> J. A. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Victoria to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, January 31, 1870, NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22

thanks of the Viceroy and the Governor General of India for the Victorian Government supplying what was required.<sup>96</sup>

This is where the matter appears to have rested. The seeds were sent around India in experiments to see what would grow, and where. Girdlestone later wrote to the government for the North-Western Provinces to inform them of the Australian timber seeds that had been received, and the government's intention to use them in experimental plantations. He provided some details of the plan. Experiments were made with the seeds in Mysore and Coorg. It was also hoped that Kumaon in the N-W Provinces would be favourable to their growth. The instructions of Dr von Mueller on the cultivation of Eucalyptus were sent along with the seeds. <sup>97</sup> He concluded the letter by asking for an update of the progress of the experiment after a year. <sup>98</sup>

Dr von Mueller's advice to the Mysore government on growing a Eucalyptus is enlightening as to the exact purpose of the seeds. We can tell that he wrote this advice specifically for the government in Mysore as McCulloch requested that Dr von Mueller write a memorandum for the purpose of sending it to India. 99 Aside from advice on how to ensure the seeds will grow, and the best conditions for their success, Dr von Mueller offers some advice on the best conditions to lead to growing a "extensive forest culture' and planting the seeds *en masse*. 100 This suggests that there was some consideration of the possibility of growing large amounts of eucalypts in close proximity. Given the continuing success of growing eucalypts in India this experiment was most likely very successful. This early experiment could also be viewed as an economic venture, as eucalyptus plantations ultimately became a part of Mysore's economy. "Mysore Gum' is grown there to this day. Eucalypts have gone on to become a major source of income for farmers around India, including areas outside of Mysore. 101

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> C. Girdlestone to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Victoria, Melbourne, March 10, 1870, NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> C. Girdlestone, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of North-Western Provinces, March 19, 1870, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> James McCulloch to E. C. Bayley, Secy. To Govt. of India, home Dept., With G.G. 11 September, 1969, NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Dr F. von Mueller, Direction for Growing Eucalyptus, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> K. Singh and S. Bhattacharjee, "The Economics of Eucalyptus Plantations on Degraded Lands, West Bengal', in N. C. Saxena and V. Ballabh (eds), *Farm Forestry in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1995), p. 316.

The dispatch of Victorian Eucalypts to Mysore was not the only example of such trading. In March 1871 the Governor of Bengal, at the request of South Australian Governor Sir James Fergusson, promised to supply orchids and palms to that colony. There are very few details available on the actual exchange, or whether this was a scientific experiment or simply for the beautification of Adelaide. The communication was transferred to the Foreign Department of the Government of India once the matter had been dealt with the by Governor of Bengal. <sup>102</sup>

The sharing of plant seeds between India and the Australian colonies was part of larger sharing of flora and fauna around the British empire. In this case, once again, the cooperation was friendly and productive. The Victorian government, along with its well-respected botanist Dr von Mueller, went to considerable efforts to ensure it was able to provide the correct seeds and advice for the Mysore government to plant successfully and care for Australian eucalypts. The communication on the subject was handled without any involvement from London. This is a strong example of a friendly and independent relationship existing between India and the Australian colonies.

## **Conclusion**

There were many forms in which the Australian colonial governments and the Indian government cooperated over this period. The selection of examples discussed in this chapter is broad enough to suggest that the relationship would encompass all areas of government were it necessary. The symbolism shown in some of the discussions is extremely important to understand. The imperial exhibitions aimed at showing the power of the empire were supported wholeheartedly by the Australian colonial governments. They were an opportunity to show the depth of the relationship and for cultural exchange. In the case of the Victoria Library in Perth, it was believed that having access to Indian government publications would be of benefit to the people of West Australia. The sale of Indian artefacts to the Australian colonies too shows that the prestige of the Raj was recognised in Australia ceremonially. The cooperation over police and military matters also suggests a deep relationship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Government of South Australia to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 28 March, 1871, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 24.

Elements of the relationship imply the centrality of India to the British empire, as is discussed by Metcalf and Blyth. It is important to bear in mind that this chapter is focusing on cooperation and administrative communication. There were few disputes in areas of day to day administration between the two colonies that were, after all, ultimately part of the same empire. In subsequent chapters, the focus is on specific issues that proved ultimately more testing and difficult. In areas of debate, it will be seen that the Indian government was able to hold sway in negotiations and disputes. Similarly, attitudes of superiority within the Indian government will be seen far more clearly.

Tasmania's relationship with India was managed almost entirely through the CSO on the Tasmanian end, though it occasionally involved the PD. The Tasmanian government made no attempts to initiate communication with India. At the same time, it was extremely helpful to the Government of India whenever a request was made. It is important to consider how the correspondence about India was received by the Tasmanian government. Some of the communication originated in London, some from India. In some cases, the introduction of telegraph cables added a dimension of asymmetry to the India-Australia relationship. India continued to request advice directly from the Australian colonies after the telegram became available, whereas the Australian colonies would ask the Colonial Office or the India Office in London, instead of directly requesting assistance from the Government of India in Calcutta (bearing in mind that the India Office and Government of India were very strongly linked.)<sup>103</sup>

The development of telegraphic communication limited the need for the Australian colonies to take administrative direction from India. During the period when Metcalf argues India took on its greatest importance, Australia's reliance on India for information actually shrunk. With the advent of telegraphic communication the "distance" (or more accurately, time) between Australia and London shrunk from months to minutes. London could give its far away colonies orders and information quickly. It enabled them to centralize their administration of the empire. This is also the time that, as Metcalf points out, that India's role in the empire as a power centre was at its strongest. Suddenly, the Colonial Office in London became a far more significant part of Australia's communication. It had the ability to furnish Australia's requests via telegram, rather than Australian colonial governments starting their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> The India Office and the Government of India were not quite a single entity. The India office held sway on occasions where there was conflict. However, each had to persuade the other of the strength of their policies.

searches with Calcutta. We see on several subjects of communication discussed, the Colonial Office directing the efforts of the Australian colonies to request information from India. The Indian government on the other hand continued to operate independently from London's control when contacting the Australian colonial governments. We see in this chapter, and in subsequent discussions, independent communication (i.e., directly between India and Australia, without involving London) becoming less common with the advent of the telegram. Despite this, India continued to have significant dealings with the Australian colonies, as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

It is worth remembering that the telegraph only sped up very basic communications. This enabled more control for Britain over the direction of the empire and Indian external relations. However, with regard to matters of trade and emigration, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, where transportation of goods and people were more important than simple communication, India was given greater control, as its geographic proximity to Australia was still fundamentally important.

From the events discussed in this chapter it is clear that there was a friendly and effective administrative relationship between India and the Australian colonies that encompassed several areas of cooperation and communication. We can also deduce some preliminary conclusions from this brief overview of the relationship. London involved itself in the relationship occasionally. With the advent of the telegraph, the Australian colonies had a greater tendency to communicate with London, through the Colonial Office and the India Office. The following three chapters will go deeper into specific aspects of the India-Australia relationship to come to more certain conclusions about its nature.

# **Chapter Two: The Economic Relationship**

This chapter will discuss some aspects of the economic relationship between India and Australia. It is well documented that many of Australia's goods came through India in the early years of the Australian colonies. The flow of goods between India and the Australian colonies was of course managed not just by governments but also by businessmen on both sides of the Indian Ocean. Addressing the role of these businessmen and companies to some extent is unavoidable, but given the focus of this thesis is the governmental relationship, only limited space will be allocated to them. Rather, communication between the governments concerning regulation and management of trade will be the major focus of discussion. My primary focus is not the actual commodities that went between India and the Australian colonies or details of shipping patterns, though some consideration of these approaches informs its analysis. Rather, I will look at the administrative systems behind the economic relationship. I will also look at the differing attitudes between India and the Australian colonies towards one another regarding trade. We will see that, while the Australian colonies thought that India was an equal economic partner with a real possibility for growth, India saw itself as the dominant partner and Australia as its subordinate. Much of the discussion in this chapter is on the horse trade. Throughout the period discussed in this thesis, horses were shipped to India for the Indian army. The volume and consistency of the trade is relatively well understood. This chapter will ask how the trade was managed and regulated, revealing the extent to which the Indian government was able to control the system to its own advantage.

Metcalf does not make trade a major focus of his work, and none of his chapters focuses on it specifically. He does, however, work trade into his overall argument - that from India emanated people, ideas, goods and institutions around the British empire. Examination of trade demonstrates how India and Australia related to one another, how the power relationship functioned and shows how they relied on one another for certain goods.

For the most part, previous study has concentrated on the period prior to 1858. Blainey is a good example of this. In the earliest days of the colony, Indian shippers had to send goods to Australia so that the colony was able to survive. Waiting for goods from England simply

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections, India in the Indian Ocean Arena: 1860-1920* (Berkeley, 2003), p. 1.

took too long. Indian livestock was also sent to Australia in the early days of the colony to bolster farming in Australia.<sup>2</sup> Given his focus on "distance" from Britain, this is understandable. Blainey focuses on staples such as food and other commodities necessary to the economic development of the colony, which were unable to be provided by Britain. Once the colony was nearing self-sufficiency, India's role in mitigating distance falls outside his narrative.

James Broadbent has documented Australia's reliance on India for some forms of goods.<sup>3</sup> Broadbent showed in an exhibition and an accompanying book that a huge amount of Australia's basic living goods came through India. He begins his work with a story of a ship arriving from Calcutta on 20 June 1792, arriving to the "inexpressible joy' of the colonists. It was carrying rice, clothing, livestock and seeds. 4 Calcutta merchants, eager to open up new markets for their goods, shipped necessities to New South Wales. The trade proved to be an important lifeline for the Australian colonies at the very beginning of their existence. Broadbent, Rickard and Steven, reveal important details of the relationship in the early nineteenth century. They argue that, while the social links between India and Australia have been broadly acknowledged, they are poorly understood. They write that some aspects, such as the influence of the military, have been crudely overrated and the more subtle links of kinship and business underplayed. Broadbent deals with the period just prior to that covered in this thesis, beginning with Australia's foundation in 1788 and ending in 1850.<sup>5</sup> Broadbent is primarily interested in architecture and design, but also in historical issues. His examination of antique furniture in Australia revealed that many of the surviving specimens from his period originated from India. Although he writes that ,,the bulk of furniture reaching the colony was British', several pieces were ,clearly made in India'.6

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> G. Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History*, revised edition (Melbourne, 1982), p. 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> While Broadbent prepared the exhibition alone, he worked with Suzanne Rickard and Margaret Steven on the book I am referring to here. The exhibition took place in 2003. See: J. Broadbent, S. Rickard and M. Steven, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society: 1788-1850* (Sydney, 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> David Collins, An Account of the English Settlement in New South Wales, With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc, of the Native Inhabitants of that Country (originally published 1798), edited by H. H. Fletcher, A. H. Reed and A. W. Reed, Royal Australian Historical Society, Quoted in Broadbent, et. al., India, China, Australia, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Steven has addressed the early shipping of goods between India and Australia on multiple occasions. In her exploration of imperial strategy in the late eighteenth century, she discussed the settlement of Australia in the context of the whole Pacific region, focusing on trade. She does not cover India's trade with Australia here specifically, but covers trade between the East India Company and China. In her study of the life of a merchant from Australia, Robert Campbell, she delves far more deeply into the business relationships of India and Australia. When discussing Campbell's early business motivations, she refers to India as "the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow". She discusses Calcutta as the primary port where Australian merchants could make their fortune. However, her concise summary on the topic of early trade and shipping between India, China and Australia, appears in Broadbent's collection. She argues for the importance of Calcutta, China and New South Wales as strategic locations, trading hubs and ports. Calcutta, she writes, as an administrative and trading hub, kept a watching brief on the colony, gathering news brought by ships on their way back to England.'9 She describes the initial link between India and Australia as "immediate and spontaneous.' The importance of India as a trading partner, particularly the imperial hub of Calcutta to the fledgling, isolated colony of New South Wales and the later Australian colonies, has been well established. It is less well understood, however, how this continued through the remainder of the nineteenth century.

A better-known trade between India and Australia prior to the period discussed in this thesis was Bengal Rum. Bengal "rum" actually referred to any kind of liquor coming from India to Australia - and not necessarily rum. Despite arguably being simple moonshine, Bengal rum was immensely popular, to the extent that Blainey wrote that it "at times took the form of a national currency." <sup>11</sup>

Steven put together a chart of shipping arrivals and departures from Sydney to Batavia, Ceylon, China and India from 1788 to 1845. While shipping from India to Australia prior to 1830 has received the most attention, there was actually a steady upswing of shipping to and from India over this period. Shipping appears to have peaked in 1841, when just over

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> M. Steven, *Trade, Tactics & Territory* (Melbourne, 1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> M. Steven, *Merchant Campbell*, 1769-1846 (Melbourne, 1965), p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Steven, "Eastern Trade", pp. 32-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Blainey, *Tyranny of Distance*, p. 64.

80 ships departed for India from New South Wales. 12 Steven's statistical analysis does not include the period discussed in this thesis. However, this does not affect discussion of the administrative relationship that existed between India and Australia - for the sake of this thesis, it is sufficient to note that there was consistent shipping between India and Australia over the preceding period. However, we can tell that trade continued throughout the period in question. In 1883, the Victorian government commissioned a study of Australia's relationship with India to coincide with the Calcutta International Exhibition. One aspect discussed was the trading relationship. The study found that a total of 33,920 tons of various goods were shipped from India to Australia. The following goods were shipped:

Goods	Tons
Rice	3,598
Gunnies	22,570
Jutes	758
Tea	1,518
Castor Oil	3,691
Grain	175
Linseed	308
Sugar	4
Shellac	15
Cotton	63
Myrabolans	104
Ropes	916
Sundries	200
Total	33,920 <sup>13</sup>

The study also notes that the amount of tea shipped to Australia from India had dropped, in 1883, due to an increase in tea shipped from China. <sup>14</sup> The Australian colonies, while they no longer relied on India as they did in their earliest years, continued to import many different goods from India. While there was only minimal trade from Australia to India outside of horses, Australia's natural resources were being shipped to India as early as the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Steven, "Eastern Trade', pp. 56-57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> ,Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50, pp. 14-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

1880s. Amongst these goods were gold, copper and tin, with the mint at Calcutta alone obtaining upwards of 200 tons each annually from Australia. Australian minerals were also used to make "culinary vessels' for the local Indian population. <sup>15</sup> Throughout this period, there was a consistent trade between India and Australia. It seems from the figures above that the majority of the trade was from India to Australia, with only a few goods being shipped from Australia to India. As will be seen, however, the possibility of Australia trading more goods with India was frequently discussed. The Australian colonies appeared to gain more goods from that trade than India did, though, as will be seen in discussion below, India would frequently require specific commodities from Australia.

#### The Horse Trade

Perhaps the most important commodity that Australia shipped regularly to India throughout the entirety of the period discussed in this thesis was horses. It is well established that India required high quality horses for the Indian army in the latter half of the nineteenth century and that many of these horses came from Australia. Westrip and Holroyd have a general discussion of the horse trade to India, though for the most part its sources are limited to the twentieth century due to their work's focus on oral history. They suggest, on the basis of an interview with Professor Stephen Murray-Smith before his death in 1988, that Australian settlers began sending horses to India in 1816. 16 They put the first date of a horse shipment from Western Australia at 1845. 17 They also provide a useful explanation, for those inexperienced with horses, of why horses bred in India were not up to scratch for military service. Indian horses were smaller, had poor physique and were more likely to suffer from ailments. Australia became a key supplier of horses to India during the Indian Rebellion, 1857-1858, as it was able to supply horses quickly, a subject that will be covered in considerable detail in Chapter Three. For the sake of this chapter, it is necessary to note that from 1858 onwards Australia became a major supplier of horses to India, due to its proximity and the quality of its horses.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> J. Westrip and P. Holroyd, *Colonial Cousins, A Surprising History of Connections between India and Australia* (Kent Town, South Australia, 2010), pp. 206-207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* While Holroyd and Westrip cite ,documents of the harbour master' for this date, there is no footnote to state where the information came from, or where it could be found again.

Alexander Yarwood has produced a study of the role played by Australian horses in India. His work covers several issues, such as the life of Australian horses, known as "walers', at war, their life in India, stories of shippers responsible for transporting them and some details of how they were purchased. Another work by Yarwood discusses the origins of the horse trade. Though Yarwood does not consider the implications of the mechanics of the horse trade for the India-Australia relationship, his work is an extremely useful background for such study.

Veterinary Lieutenant Colonel A. E. Queripel, Inspector General of the Civil Veterinary Department in Meerut, India, wrote to the Secretary to the Government of India on where best to source large numbers of good quality thoroughbreds and sires. While he was open to importing these horses from several places (England, "Arab' horses and Australia), he argued strongly that Australian thoroughbreds should be purchased and transported to India. He saw imported Australian horses in Madras, and was "struck by their quality, power, action and bone. The Indian government was extremely desirous of Australian horses, and we know that the trade functioned and flourished into the twentieth century, and did not end until the mechanisation of the Indian army in 1941.

# The Regulation of the Horse Trade

What was the exact nature of the horse trade, how did it function and how was it managed? These are questions that have yet to be properly addressed by historians. However, addressing these issues reveals a great deal about the centrality of India to the empire, its administrative power and in particular its relationship with the Australian colonies. The Indian government carefully managed the trade of horses to India. They did so by sending "notifications' to the colonies that shipped horses to India. A notification would inform a colony of the number of horses that would be purchased along with accompanying guidelines for the purchasing of horses. Notifications were sent to the CSOs in all the Australian colonies

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> A. T. Yarwood, *Walers: Australian Horses Abroad* (Melbourne, 1989) and A. T. Yarwood, "The "Indian Business": An Outline of the Origins of the Horse Exports from Australia to India 1834-1847, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 73, 1 (1987), pp. 41-57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Veterinary Lieutenant Colonel A. E. Queripel, L/ Military Department (hereafter MIL) 7/11268 in India Office Records (hereafter IOR).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> G. Heathcote, "Horses for India from the Northern Territory: The South Australian Government's Involvement', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 21 (1993), p. 134.

as well as the Cape of Good Hope and Teheran in Persia.<sup>22</sup> It is worth commenting at this point that Australia was not the only colony that sent horses to India. It does appear, however, that it was the major supplier of horses, given the large numbers supplied, and regular comments on their high quality.

The trade was based on a specific purchasing season and an off-season. Horses had to be sent at a particular time of year, from roughly mid-September to the end of February. As a result, the notifications would cover a two-year period, such as 1880-1881, followed by 1881-1882. According to the 1886-87 regulations, horses arriving outside of that time "...will be allowed to land, but will not be admitted to the stables or permitted to make any further use of the depôt...'. For example, in 1880-1881, the Indian Military Department advised its supplying colonies that 900 horses would be required for the Bengal army. For 1886-87, 1,000 horses were to be purchased. The regulations were accompanied with a letter asking that they be widely published. In 1881 and 1886, when regulations were sent, the Tasmanian government immediately replied that they would publish the guidelines in the *Hobart Gazette*. Second of the stables of the end of February. As a result, the Tasmanian government immediately replied that they would publish the guidelines in the *Hobart Gazette*. Second of the stables of the end of February. As a result, the end of February. As a result is the end of Feb

Horses were purchased by a remount agent, who only did so within India. <sup>26</sup> Remount agents could be found in the following cities: "Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Agra, Morar, Meerut, Bareilly, Umballa, Lahore, Mooltan, Sialkot, Rawal Pindi, Pesháwar. <sup>27</sup> The Government Remount and Landing Depôt, Garden Reach, Calcutta was the central station for the purchasing of horses. Calcutta was also the home of Fort William, where the Military Department of the Government of India was based. Remount agents were listed in the cities above, yet the regulations only discuss the depot in Calcutta.

All of these regulations reveal that the Indian Military Department was the senior party in the colonial horse trade. As a large purchaser and major power within the empire,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> ,Rules and Regulations for the Purchase of Horses by the Indian Government', 7 September, 1886, Chief Secretary's Office (hereafter CSO) 13/1/24, file no. 300, in Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (hereafter TAHO).

 $<sup>^{23}</sup>$ *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>CSO13/1/24, file no. 300, in TAHO. Though sent five years apart, these documents are stored within the same file number.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "Rules and Regulations for the Purchase of Horses by the Indian Government', 7 September, 1886, CSO13/1/24, file no. 300, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

they were able to use their economic strength to regulate the trade to their own advantage. For example, by only purchasing horses already shipped to India, they did not pay for the shipment and associated fees of horses sent to India that were not purchased. This means that there was considerable risk for horse traders who took horses to India - there was no guarantee that the horses would be purchased. This was a heavily regulated market that was dominated by the Indian Military Department.

The final regulation states that: "All charges, of every kind whatsoever, against the shipper will be recovered from him on payment being made for the remounts selected from the government by the Remount Agent'. 28 This suggests that the horse trader would have to bear all costs associated with the shipping of the horses – making it an extremely high risk venture. The regulations of 1886 reveal much about how the system worked. Regulation 3 states that "the depot shall be open for the reception of horses from 15 September to the end of the purchasing season, and only to horses arriving direct from the country in which they were bred.'29 Section 5 sets out some charges that had to be paid by shippers: "the actual cost of landing the horses and surplus forage remaining at the end of the voyage will be borne by the shipper.'30 This regulation goes on to state that the horses were to be disembarked with ,,the shipper and his assistants performing their due share of the work.' The system was very much run by the remount agents. Section 10 states that "The Remount Agent can, if he considers it necessary, refuse to receive into the depot any horse or horses without assigning any reason for such refusal.<sup>31</sup> Despite the weighting of regulations for the purchase of horses in favour of India, some clauses did help the horse traders, such as section 8, which states that "Veterinary attendance will be given by the Veterinary Surgeon free.'32

The system appears to have been aimed by the Indian government at encouraging horse traders only to send horses that they were extremely confident would be purchased.<sup>33</sup> The regulations were developed to ensure that there was enough risk in having to pay shipping and other fees without actually selling the horse to prevent horse traders from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Government of India, Military Department, Purchase of Horses notification, 1886, CSO13/1/24, in TAHO, file no. 300.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

sending below-standard horses to India. Similar regulations were sent to the Australian colonies in 1875. This was done following a major review of the horse trade in the British empire, conducted by Staff Veterinary Surgeon W. Thacker.

Thacker, also a remount agent for the Indian army, travelled around the Australian colonies early in the 1870s, to investigate the breeding of horses. He compares his findings throughout this report to a similar one made earlier in 1863, including the horse population in the colonies he visited, and the number of horses shipped to India. With this information, we can see that the India-Australia horse trade was extremely consistent and operated on an annual basis. His instructions from the Indian government were to visit Australia at the close of the previous purchasing season, with the aim of "collecting reliable information as to the present and future prospects of a supply of remounts being obtainable for the Army in India.' Given his limited time, he chose to visit only "the districts from which horses for the Indian market were principally obtained.' He selected Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales, implying that these were the major exporters of horses to India at the time.

Thacker began with Tasmania, writing that horse breeding in that colony had been relatively static between 1863 and 1873. The horse population had grown by a little over 2,000 from 1863 to 24,244. Given the increase in population, writes Thacker, this figure actually represents a decline in the horse trade relative to population and the size of the economy. Horse were shipped to India from Tasmania in 1863, compared to only 526 in 1873. Horse racing had also declined over the period, though efforts were being made to revive it. Thacker believed that the decline in horse breeding in Tasmania was due to competition from the other colonies, writing that "the most successful race horses and best sires having been purchased for other Colonies. This combination of circumstances may probably account for diminution in breeding. The horse population in Victoria had grown from 103,000 horses to 180,000 between 1863 and 1873. Thacker writes that a large

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Extract from the proceedings of the Government of India, Supply or Army Remounts from Australia, December 9, 1874, by Staff Veterinary-Surgeon W. Thacker, Remount Agent, CSO10/1/8, file no. 118, in TAHO. The report taken in 1863 is not held in TAHO. However, some information taken in 1863 is available in Thacker's later report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

proportion of the horses sent to India from Australia came from Victoria.<sup>38</sup> In New South Wales, there were approximately 328,000 horses, up from 273,000 in 1863.

Thacker goes on after his opening comments on the colonies he visited to discussing the quality of the horses in Australia. Perhaps referring to the Surveyor's reports of Goyder in 1869 (discussed below), he wrote that:

Much has been said and written on the hardiness of the Australian horses, and which has been attributed to the effect of climate and food. As evidence it is stated that long journeys have been performed by horses with no other sustenance than grass. Without in any way disparaging these assertions, I may be permitted to mention that though very long journeys have been performed in the Australian Colonies, it is not usual to demand more from a horse as a day's journey than is required from the [Cape of Good Hope] in South Africa or from the English horse in Great Britain.<sup>39</sup>

Thacker clearly doubts some of the claims made by the Australian colonies on the quality of their horses. The Australian colonies, as will be seen below in documents from South Australia, ascribed exceptional qualities to their horses, believing them to be extremely tough. They were perhaps viewed as superior to those in other parts of the British empire. As an agent of the Indian army, his objectivity in this case allowed him to see more clearly the quality of Australian horses relative to other colonies.

Despite his doubts over aspects of the hyperbole directed to the qualities of Australian horses, Thacker goes on to praise the overall condition of the Australian colonies for the breeding of horses, the size of the horse population and the quality and stamina of the horses. He wrote that in 1873, 500,000 horses in Victoria and New South Wales alone could be considered ,domesticated'. He expected also that supply would continue to grow, and quality would continue to increase. He was pleased to see a competitive and well financed racing industry in the major colonies, which he believed would encourage horse breeders to increase their standards.

He considered briefly in his report changing the manner in which purchases were made. As discussed above, purchases were only made within India. Thacker considers the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> *Ibid*.

 $<sup>^{40}</sup>$  Ibid.

possibility of having Indian government remount agents make purchases direct from the horse breeders within Australia. Thacker saw a risk in this system, as it depended on horse breeders and shippers in Australia acting independently from the Indian government when bringing horses to India. He concluded by suggesting that, should this process cease to provide an adequate number of remounts, having an agent make purchases direct from the colony "would not fail to overcome the apparent difficulty'. 41 The manner in which the purchases were made put Australian shippers at a disadvantage. The South Australian government in particular took issue with the method by which Australian horses were sold in India, as will be discussed in detail below.

Thacker's report was sent to Colonial Secretaries of the Australian colonies, New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope and Natal. It was followed by the details of the horses that were to be purchased the following year. Following this investigation, a notice was sent to the Tasmanian government, informing them of the Indian government's intent to purchase 1,000 horses in the purchasing season of 1875-1876, and predicted the purchase of 600 horses in the season in 1876-1877. 42 For the following two purchasing seasons, 600 horses were requested and similar notices were sent in following years. 43 In 1879, 620 were requested and in 1880, 965.44 The author of the notification and structure of the letter changed slightly from year to year, as did the number of required horses, presumably with the level of activity and combat undertaken by the Indian army. However, precisely the same system was followed every year: the Indian government would send notice to all the colonies that provided it with horses, stating how many it would require in the given purchasing season. The notice would request that the details be published in the leading gazette of the day. The Tasmanian government would reply to inform the Indian government that the information had been published. The horse trade functioned the same way annually over the period discussed in this thesis.

Though many of the Australian colonies were investigated by the Indian government, the horse trade came to be dominated by Victoria. The following table shows the number of horses, and the estimated value from 1879 to 1883:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> ,Notice', 20 June, 1875, Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, CSO10/1/8, file no. 118, in TAHO.

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 Jotification', Fort William, June 21, 1879. "Notification', Fort William, March 3, 1880, CSO10/1/8, no 118,

Colony	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	Value
Vic	2,066	2,461	2,388	3,503	3,678	£108,440
NSW	-	-	648	-	-	N/A
Qld	-	-	10	-	-	N/A
SA	-	-	-	-	30	N/A
Tas	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
NZ	-	-	-	-	-	N/A <sup>45</sup>

Statistics from other sources suggest that the Victorian figures are mostly accurate, though they are not wholly representative of the whole period of 1858-1901 or even the decade of the 1880s. The following table shows the number of horses sold and the price of these horses from all of the Australian colonies by decade:

Colony	1861-1870		1871-1880		1881-1890		1891-1900	
	No.	£	No.	£	No.	£	No.	£
NSW	1,081	19,689	230	3,543	2,912	45,266	11,448	169,760
Vic	7,292	141,953	24,178	449,613	33,659	772,571	30,336	543,187
Qld	48	784	70	920	267	2,770	7,619	72,719
SA	?	?	245	2,868	818	16,370	1,309	11,132
WA	2,126	43,498	1,419	18,295	999	12,613	2	20
Tas	-	-	2	40	-	-	-	-
Total	10,547	205,924	26,144	475,359	38,659	849,590	50,714	796,818 <sup>46</sup>

According to the Victorian table, 95.35% of horses shipped to India originated from Victoria. Over the period 1881-1890, Victoria dominated the India-Australia horse trade, providing 33,659 horses of a total of 38,659 shipped to India.<sup>47</sup> This represents 87.07% of the

<sup>47</sup> Yarwood, Walers, p. 198.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> "Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84", Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50, p.14. This table was made by the Victorian government. It cannot be taken as 100 per cent accurate. For example, it seems unlikely that the 648 horses sent from New South Wales were of no value. The details in the table are incomplete.

46 Adapted from A. T. Yarwood, *Walers: Australian Horses Abroad* (Melbourne, 1989), p. 198.

horse trade in this decade. 48 This discrepancy may suggest errors in Victoria's figures, though it is not so great as to prove the figures inaccurate or incomplete. Over the period from 1860-1900, Victoria dominated the trade of horses. 75.73% of the horses shipped to India from Australia originated from Victoria, resulting in 81.94% of revenue. The average price per horse for all of Australia (including Victoria) was roughly £18 s10. On the figures from just Victoria, the average price was roughly £20.49 This discrepancy suggests one of two things, and most likely both: that the quality of Victoria's horses was greater, and that Victorian horse dealers played the horse market better than their competitors.

It is worth noting at this point that the Indian government was operating with no guidance or control from London. The trade was managed by the Military Department of India, who were able to control all aspects of it. In all of these matters, the Indian government was able to control the horse trade without interference from British government departments.

Thacker's report shows that the regulations sent along with the documents always appear extremely similar to the ones discussed in detail above, sent in 1875. The wording varied on occasion, and some minor amendments were made from year to year, but the overall structure of the purchasing system did not change. Thacker's report shows that the possibility of purchasing horses from within Australia instead of having them shipped to India for purchase was considered on multiple occasions. This would undoubtedly have simplified the structure for purchasing for Australian horse traders. A depot for purchasing could have been set up within Australia, with the horses then shipped to India – something South Australia argued for in 1869.

## South Australia's efforts to re-shape the horse trade

Given India's identifiable power and centrality, how was the horse trade viewed within Australia? Primarily, it was looked upon very positively, as it was a major part of the economy. Perhaps due to the economic benefits and the benefit to the Indian army and British

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> It is not clear from these figures if all of these horses were actually purchased. This is unlikely to have been the case. These are my own calculations. They are based on a table provided in Yarwood, Walers, p. 198.

empire more generally, the Australian colonies appear to have acquiesced to all the requests that were made by the Indian government. By looking at the requests South Australia made to alter the system for shipping horses to India, we can see how South Australia perceived their own role in the trade, and how India perceived the role of the Australian colonies.

In 1869 the South Australian government attempted to change the manner in which the India-Australia horse trade functioned. This occurred six years after the South Australian government was given responsibility for the Northern Territory, with the passing of the Northern Territory Act of 1863. They did so ahead of rivals from New South Wales and Victoria (who did not seriously bid) by proposing to develop the territory through central Australia. In taking control over the Northern Territory, South Australia undertook many dealings with India, with the primary aim of developing the Northern Territory and finding ways to make its settlement economically viable. These included the horse trade, farming and mining. Another major goal was the finding of sources of labour, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The geographical location of the Northern Territory provided closer shipping routes to India for the colonies of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It may have aided Tasmania as well, though the journey would be longer for obvious geographical reasons.

While investigating the ways in which in which to develop the Northern Territory, Governor Sir James Fergusson (whose brother John Adam Fergusson is an important player in Chapter Four) wrote that:

... one great object of this Government in seeking a suitable site for a settlement on the Northern Territory having been the establishment of a port of outlet for the interior and of communication with India, the advantages offered by the happy consummation of their exertions are now apparent in the increased facility afforded for the exportation of live stock and other staple productions, but especially of horses. 51

This is an important statement for this chapter and the next, as it confirms a theme of this thesis that will continue to be discussed: the development of the Northern Territory as a means of growing closer ties to India. This statement also suggests that communication with India was important to all of the Australian colonies. This was an administrative goal as well

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> A. Powell, Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory, Centenary Edition (Melbourne, 2000), p. 76

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Supply of Horses for Indian Service', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 55.

as an economic one. The use of Port Darwin to trade both goods and information with India, along with the addition of a telegraph line coming though Darwin (as discussed in Chapter One) would greatly speed up Australia's communication with India and the rest of the empire. South Australia had a near-obsession with India when it attempted to develop the Northern Territory. From the documents discussed in this chapter (starting in 1869) to ones in a subsequent chapter addressing Indian emigration to Australia, we see that South Australia's plans for development of the Northern Territory consistently involved India.

However, as we will see, for all the discussion between South Australia and India over this period, very little action took place. We need to bear this in mind when discussing documents from this time. We are discussing a plan of action, rather than actions themselves. To begin with, that these plans never amounted to much action had a lot to do with the significant difficulties South Australia faced when trying to develop the Northern Territory. These difficulties had very little if anything to do with India or the choices of the Indian government. The development of the Northern Territory proved to be expensive, time consuming and largely fruitless for the South Australian government. Bauer has described it as "the most laborious and least successful task in her [South Australia's] history'. Of course, the South Australian government was not aware of just how difficult and thankless its task was to be. The documents discussed in the subsequent paragraphs are all imbued with a genuine confidence in what the government was doing.

Mr Robert Dalrymple Ross, South Australia's assistant commissary general, was ordered home to Britain on a promotion.<sup>53</sup> He was asked while on his way back to Britain, if he would take a set of proposals to the Indian government. He was given the task of "personally explaining the peculiar advantages which this Colony at the moment possesses, more especially to furnish a supply of horses of superior quality for the remount services in India'.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> F. H. Bauer, ,Historical Geography of White Settlement in Part of Northern Australia, Part 2: The Katherine-Darwin Region', quoted in Powell, *Far Country*, p. 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> On Ross, see: N. Hayman, 'Ross, Sir Robert Dalrymple (1827 - 1887)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 6 (Melbourne, 1976), pp. 62-63.

<sup>54 ,</sup>Supply of Horses for Indian Service', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 43.

At the time these ideas were being floated, there were survey reports being taken of the Northern Territory, to see what aspects of development were feasible and what were not. The Surveyor-General was G. W. Goyder, who reported on the economic possibilities of the Northern Territory, including a possible telegraph line through central Australia, which was later built. The idea of sending all Australian horses to Darwin over land to then be shipped to India was addressed in a separate section of his report, and provides the details of the plan considered by the South Australian government. The proposals were then discussed in a parliamentary paper, which contains the proposals that were to be taken to India by Ross, and the response sent by the Indian government back to Governor Fergusson.

The report of Goyder, and the brief that was given to Ross by the South Australian government tell us a great deal about exactly what South Australia was hoping to achieve. To summarize, their plan was to set up passages around Australia to take horses overland to Port Darwin. It was hoped that the Indian government remount agents could inspect the horses in Darwin, make their purchases, and then safely and quickly ship them to back India. The South Australian government also hoped that some greater government control might encourage horse dealers to send only the finest possible horses. Indeed, the difficulties of the overland journey may have ensured that only the strongest horses would ever make it to India. A major concern highlighted by the South Australian government was the quality of the horses being sent to India. The report states that the Australian horse trade had been overtaken by "breeders providing horses of lower quality and not properly bred."

Aside from considering what may benefit the Northern Territory and South Australia, the Indian government and the other Australian colonies were also considered. There were difficulties faced by these colonies in shipping horses to India. It was thought that taking them overland to Darwin might make the task easier. Goyder argued that this was a possibility, and the government report on the matter placed great confidence in his opinion, stating that: "I am also assured by competent authorities that, it would be easy for breeders in almost any part of Australia to send horses overland to a given point on the northern coast."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Goyder's Report was published in three separate volumes of the South Australian Parliamentary Papers for 1869-70. See South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, Nos. 155, 156 and 157. <sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Supply of Horses for Indian Service', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 43.

As discussed above, the Indian government controlled the regulations for the buying and shipping of horses for use in India. The South Australian government was proposing to make changes in the way that horses were shipped to India. While significant parts of what was being proposed were internal changes to the means of shipping horses, it was also hoped that India would be able to inspect and purchase the horses from within Australia. The report states that "to the Indian purchasers would be afforded, at a convenient point, a supply of selected horses, acclimatized by their long journey and stay in a tropical climate, and at a lower rate than has hitherto been offered them." This comment shows that the South Australian government hoped that the Indian remount services would make their selections and purchases within Australia. Without this aspect, it would surely have been unnecessary to send the proposals to the Indian government.

This was all taking place whilst survey reports of the Northern Territory were still being taken. However, based on preliminary expeditions at the time the prospect was being considered, it was thought that a track could be established to take horses overland without significant difficulty or losses. South Australia's overall goal was for horses from all over Australia to travel over land to Darwin to be shipped to India. 60 This was discussed in a report of the Surveyor-General. That Goyder was specifically requested to consider the possibilities of horses throughout his journeys between South Australia and the Northern Territory suggests that was a matter of particular interest to the South Australian government. From Goyder's report, we can deduce some substance of the guidelines he was given for this study. The report looked at two main issues: the suitability of Port Darwin for loading horses, and whether or not horses could safely make the journey overland to Darwin.<sup>61</sup> In order to determine whether or not horses could be safely taken through central Australia, Goyder simply took some with him on the journey. He did so in part to carry equipment, but also to test what kind of infrastructure would be necessary to support the mass movement of horses. He found several details that could be problematic, but in general thought that these could be overcome.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> G. W. Goyder, Surveyor General, "Remounts for Indian Army', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> *Ibid*.

He had some thoughts on overcoming difficulties in feeding the horses, writing that grasses that had impeded their progress on some occasions and had to be cut down. This was not just a hindrance, as he believed that the grass "may readily be converted into hay at the end of the wet season' and used to feed the horses. <sup>62</sup> The biggest problem was the lack of water in central Australia. He suggested that the route for stock go via Lake Hope, as it would avoid much arid country and provide water. He concluded that, "with proper precaution, and ordinary seasons, there need be no heavy losses. It is astonishing what horses will endure, when carefully managed, in the interior of Australia. <sup>63</sup> Goyder thought that the difficult conditions faced by the horses could even prepare them better for life as an Indian army remount.

On the subject of Port Darwin, however, one of the major aims of the proposed changes to the horse trade, Goyder was unequivocally confident. He believed that "the advantages of Port Darwin as a shipping place, and its situation as a port, are so evident to all who have seen the place, that further comment is unnecessary'. <sup>64</sup> This would cut the shipping time for Eastern Australia drastically. The shipping route from Darwin would be safer too for horse dealers in the Eastern States. The report states that the seas were calmer and safer than the circular route that was being taken from New South Wales and Victoria.

South Australia put in a considerable amount of effort and thought into the proposals they placed before the Indian government. Despite acknowledging that there were problems to be overcome, the confidence of the government was reflected in all the documents on this subject. They clearly thought their plans would benefit all parties involved, and had considered the position of the Indian government and the other Australian colonies. The response from India, despite all of South Australia's efforts, was extremely brief: "Mr Ross has been here. He has had several interviews with various members of Government, and has stated his case to Stud Committee. Question will receive every consideration.'65 This was the entirety of the Indian government response. The response to the work done by South Australia in this case was extremely abrupt; just two sentences, one of them not fully formed. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> The Viceroy to Sir James Fergusson, "Supply of Horses for Indian Service', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 55.

Indian government reacted as if an area of their control was being encroached upon by South Australia. We can tell from documents on the horse trade discussed above, and the eventual failures of South Australia in developing the Northern Territory, that these changes were never implemented.

The response by Ross to the negotiations was considerably more optimistic. While understanding that no guarantees had been won, he had been told the system would be trialled if a remount depot were to be established in the Northern Territory. <sup>66</sup> The Indian government had already considered the possibility of purchasing horses from within Australia, as discussed above in the reports by Thacker. South Australia's plan for bringing all horses to the Northern Territory may have made such a system easier than it would have otherwise been as it was to be centralized in the Northern Territory – a port far closer to India. Clearly, the Indian government was not interested in the South Australian proposal. The tone of the response is completely at odds with the confident and constructive approach taken in South Australia's reports. Given the discussion above on how India controlled the trade of horses through its remount depots and structure for paying related fees, this abrupt and abrasive response is likely to stem from the fact that South Australia's approach would reduce India's control of the trade.

The plan was raised again in 1875, with the South Australian government keen to impress a visiting remount official from Calcutta with their plans.<sup>67</sup> Once again, South Australia was rebuffed by the agent, despite the fact that he agreed that there were advantages in shipping from the Northern Territory or from Western Australia.<sup>68</sup> On this occasion, the opinion of this remount agent was enough to once again scuttle the South Australian government's plans. Though South Australia continued to work towards shipping horses from the Northern Territory, none were shipped to India from Darwin in the term of South Australia's administration.<sup>69</sup>

South Australia, in 1869 and perhaps again in 1875, saw itself as an equal partner to India. India did not perceive South Australia in the same way. It seems that South Australia

 <sup>66</sup> South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 67a.
 67 Heathcote, "Horses for India', p. 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1875, no. 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Heathcote, "Horses for India', p. 124.

had learned from their mistakes on this issue, as will be seen in Chapter Four when discussing their negotiations with India over Indian labour.

# South Australian produce for India

Aside from their confidence in providing the highest quality horses possible for the Indian army, the South Australian government also saw its colony as a producer of several high quality luxury products. It was hoped that these products might be of interest to the Anglo-Indian population, particularly to the ICS. Under Governor James Fergusson, it was decided to send samples of fine local goods to India, with the aim of creating a more regular trade. Fergusson directed the CSI to inform the Government of India of their intentions. On 10 November 1869, the CSO wrote to the Secretary to the Government of India, revealing the reasoning for the decision:

James Fergusson... having reason to believe that articles of staple produce in this colony, likely to be useful to the Public Service of India, would meet with favourable consideration of the government if transmitted to them, this Government have decided upon forwarding officially to you the samples of such productions as can be regularly supplied in quantity.<sup>70</sup>

The possibility of such a trade was also raised very briefly in a parliamentary paper written in August of 1869. While discussing horses, it was mentioned that South Australia could export other high quality goods, such as "meats preserved upon improved methods and of the best quality, and wines which promise to be both varied and valuable.<sup>71</sup>

Once approved by a committee to test their quality, the goods were to travel upon the brig *Jane Bell*. James Fergusson appointed three people, including two high ranking elected officials to a committee to test the goods in question; John Morphett, President of the Legislative Council, George Kingston, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and "the honorable' John Henry Barrow of Adelaide.<sup>72</sup> A letter was sent to the three men on the guidelines of their report:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> J. T. Bagot, Chief Secretary, to the Honorable the Secretary to the Government of India, For William, November 10, 1869, South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>James Fergusson to The Earl of Granville, "Supply of Horses for Indian Service', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-7, no. 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> J. T Bagot, Chief Secretary, to J. Morphett, G.S. Kingston and J. H. Barrow, November 1869 (exact day unspecified), South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 158.

You have authority to call and examine such persons as to you may seem expedient (as experts) to give evidence as to the state and condition of the samples... and I give to you, or any two of you, full power and authority to do all such acts and things as may be necessary and lawfully done for the due execution hereof. And I require you without delay to report to me the result of your examination...<sup>73</sup>

This letter shows how seriously the government was taking the matter. They are calling on the committee to deal with the matter both quickly and accurately.

The commission appointed to examine the samples reported back to the government on the quality of the produce. Their report is glowingly positive of all the produce that it mentions. They were confident in the quality of South Australian flour, writing that the "excellency of these products have been so thoroughly established' through two global awards at exhibitions in London and Paris in 1851 and 1867 respectively. They were convinced that the biscuits (made with the flour) were of such high quality that the flour must have been of superior quality as well. They moved on to comment that the tinned meats were of "excellent condition, retaining the flavour and juicy character of fresh cooked meat. They wrote that the ales and porters were excellent, but "it is only by testing the market that the brewers can ascertain the speciality of Indian taste. They however, they believed that the beers that were to be sent would be suitable for Europeans living in India. The report lists all of the goods that were being sent and their producers: some of which were left off the details of the report itself. These included oranges, lemons, butter, honey, rhubarb, soap, raisins, jams, confectionary and wines from 11 different wineries.

Of course, it is difficult to judge the accuracy of the report without having tasted the produce! However, the report is so overwhelmingly positive, without mentioning any flaws of the produce, as to be questionable in its accuracy. We gather more from this report on the opinions of these three men of the overall quality of South Australian produce than its actual quality. The South Australian government (and two members of this committee were members of the government) clearly had considerable confidence and pride in the produce.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> J. Morphett, G. S. Kingston and J. H. Barrow, "Report of the commission appointed to example Samples of Produce and Manufactured Articles intended for Shipment to India under Government Auspices', South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1869-70, no. 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> *Ibid*.

The South Australian government was clearly not trying to appeal to the domestic Indian market, but rather to the ICS. They wanted South Australia to become known as a producer and exporter of high quality luxury items. The ICS was viewed as a large market that would want fine products. We can tell from this document that India was seen as a possible market at this time. This implies that prior to 1869, South Australia was *not* exporting its luxury items to India, but that it *wanted* to do so. It suggests that trade between India and Australia was viewed as a possibility at the time, and that South Australia believed there were opportunities for advancement.

## **Stimulating Trade**

Victoria came to similar conclusions as South Australia following the Calcutta International Exhibition in 1883, discussed in Chapter One, believing that their produce, particularly with its higher profile following their successes at the exhibition, could fill a niche market within India. The goods considered for shipping were similar to those considered by South Australia – preserved meats, tinned fruits and vegetables, hops, biscuits, flour, wool, light woollen goods and leather for harness and military purposes. That Victoria believed these goods might sell well in India implies that South Australia's efforts had again come to nothing – as the perceived opening for a niche market was evidently still there.

The Calcutta International Exhibition stimulated the desire within Australia to increase its trade with India. This was felt not just in Australia, but also in India. The Viceroy, Lord Ripon, believed, following the Calcutta Exhibition, that trade between India and Australia was not as large as it could be – but that there was considerable potential for growth. He believed that communications were travelling faster and steamships were being used more frequently – which could make trade more viable. <sup>79</sup>

The optimism expressed in these statements may have resulted to some extent from the goodwill generated by the Calcutta International Exhibition. However, some action was taken to increase Australian exports to India following this event. The New South Wales

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> ,Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> *Ibid*.

commissioners responsible for that colony's contribution to the Calcutta Exhibition held a meeting in Sydney the following year to discuss ways in which more consistent trade could be established. It was believed that a steady flow of steamships between India and Australia would be profitable if Australia could find more goods to export to India. <sup>80</sup> A steamship was purchased by Melbourne merchants, independent from government influence, in the hope of increasing trade between Melbourne and ports in Madras and Calcutta. <sup>81</sup>

## **Military Supplies**

While horses were undoubtedly the main commodity sent from Australia to India over this period, there are further examples of military supplies being sent between the two colonies. Rams were sent to India under similar guidelines to horses. In 1886, India requested six Southdown or Sussex rams from the Victorian government. It was requested that the rams should be found quickly so they could arrive in Calcutta ,about November'. 82

The Indian Military Department was extremely specific as to the types of rams that they required, with certain specifications regarding breed, age, when they were required, and they had to be well covered with high quality wool. The request was extremely detailed, to the point of near absurdity. They were not to be more than two years old or have more than four teeth. The author continued: "the belly should be as straight as the back and the legs neither too long nor too short. The wool was to be close, curled, fine and clean. The letter also states that "the last batch of six rams, received from Australia, were all suffering more or less from lung diseases. The rams now to be purchased should, therefore, be specifically examined with a view to guarding against this disease. The overall implication of these instructions was simply for the rams to be young, fit and healthy. We can also tell that the Indian Military Department had made this request of Victoria previously and with some success.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> The Queenslander, Saturday 22 March, pp. 468-469.

Report of the Royal Commission for Victoria, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84', Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1883-84, no. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Government of India, Military Department, Forwarded to the Premier of Tasmania by the Premier of Victoria, June 14, 1886, September 14, 1886, PD1/1/21, file no. 231, in TAHO.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

Victoria found that they were unable to locate the desired rams, and so instead requested if such animals could be found in Tasmania. The sheep were found in Tasmania and dispatched to the Victorian government on 11 November. <sup>87</sup> Victoria purchased the rams on behalf of the Indian government, for £63 s10 and organized their transport to India. <sup>88</sup>

While this was a relatively small event, though not a one-off, it can be compared to the horse trade in some ways. The purchasing structure was extremely similar. India requested very specifically what it required from Victoria and when it was required. Victoria was unable to fulfil the request, and instead purchased the rams from Tasmania. The manner in which Victoria forwarded the request to Tasmania can be taken as an example of Tasmania's place in the imperial structure as discussed in Chapter One: Tasmania's communication with India was frequently conducted through imperial circulars and through larger colonies.

India's control of trade existed not just in horses, but in this smaller trade of rams as well. The likely explanation is that India's control of the horse trade led it to believe that such a system was successful and functional. This suggests that India viewed Australia as somewhere that they could find goods if necessary. Further examples of trade on military matters will be discussed in Chapter Three on military cooperation, on goods purchased by India for the Boer War and the Boxer Rebellion.

An example of India exporting military supplies to Australia came in 1893. The matter resulted in a dispute between India and Queensland. The Queensland government purchased tents from India. The matter also resulted in a dispute regarding the appropriate price for the goods and shipping between Queensland and India. The dispute was ultimately resolved through consultation between representatives of Queensland and India in London in August of 1894.

While the tents were sent from India, the details of the payment were discussed in London by the Agent General for Queensland and the Secretary of State for India. <sup>89</sup> The Queensland government paid Indian Stock Book prices plus ten per cent for departmental

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> J. W. Agnew to the Premier of Victoria, October 30, 1886, PD1/1/21, file no. 231, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> J. W. Agnew to the Premier of Victoria, no date given, PD1/1/21, file no. 231, in TAHO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> "Indian Tents, Supply of certain tents to the Queensland Government on Repayment', L/Mil/7/7/1898, in IOR.

expenses, freight and shipping charges. The shipping charges were four per cent of the value of the wares. The conclusion made by Henry Waterfield, the auditor in control of the case, was that the additional four per cent charged by India was unreasonable, as the tents were destined for a colonial government. The dispute ultimately took a year and half to settle, from the sale of the tents to the resolution. This is an example of the Queensland government being unwilling to accept the control of India. They were ultimately successful in their endeavour to overturn the excess charges of the Indian government. This is rare evidence of equality between India and the Australian colonies – the regulations set down by London ultimately were more important than those in India. London had the power to mediate disputes of this nature, and on this occasion overruled the Indian government.

## Conclusion

The India-Australia trading relationship of the second half of the nineteenth century appears to have differed from the one identified by Broadbent, Steven and Blainey. The trading relationship is poorly understood after the period covered by the studies of Broadbent, Rickard and Steven. Once the Australian colonies' isolation was countered somewhat by their greater self-sufficiency, there was far less reliance on the lifeline India represented. With this reliance, the interest of Australian historians also appears to have dissipated to some extent.

With the period covered by this thesis, we see a different era of India-Australia trade from the one discussed by Broadbent and Blainey. Rather than the necessity of the Australian colonies receiving support from India, we see India requesting the resources of Australia - primarily for its Military Department. Horses were the most obvious example of a crucial resource India required that Australia was able consistently to provide. The operation of the horse trade between India and Australia demonstrates very clearly the economic power of India within the British empire as well as its administrative power. India's need for horses throughout the second half of the nineteenth century was met largely by the Australian colonies. The trade of horses between Australia and India was consistent, with the minimum number of horses required by India under the remount system being approximately 600. This number fluctuated annually, but was consistently high. Representatives sent by the Indian government to Australia to assess the horse industry consistently concluded that Australian horses were of extremely high quality and up to military standards. The regulations of the

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<sup>90</sup> Henry Waterfield, Financial Secretary, Auditor's Report, 25 July 1894, L/Mil/7/7/1898, in IOR.

trade were mandated by the Indian government – who notified their suppliers (through a governmental communication) what would be required and when to supply it. Following from these notifications, horse traders from Australia would take a great financial risk to ship horses to India in the hope they would be purchased. There must have been some significant profit at stake for these traders, or the trade would not have been able to function. Still, the regulations were designed by the Indian government to favour their military department. An extremely similar, if far less consistent, structure was in place for the purchasing of rams for the Indian army.

Given India's level of control, South Australia's attempt to influence the systems of the horse trade is revealing. The response from India to South Australia's planning was extremely short and dismissive. This may have had much to do with the administrative difficulties involved with the development of the Northern Territory by the South Australian government, not to mention the sheer impossibility of transporting horses through central Australia on foot. South Australia believed that it was a viable contributor to the horse trade and imperial governance, but this was clearly not the perception of the Indian government. South Australia, as will be seen in Chapter Four, changed its approach when negotiating with India on the subject of Indian labour and clearly learnt from this experience. From the Indian government's response we can see once again that it asserted central control of the horse trade.

South Australia's optimism can again be seen in their attempt to open new areas of trade with India. In this case South Australia showed that they believed a large variety of their products would be of interest to the ICS. South Australia viewed India as an open market for their produce. The sale of tents to Queensland and subsequent disagreement reveals an example of India's authority being challenged. The costs involved were minimal, and the dispute was ultimately decided by a disinterested government official in London. We can see from the dispute that the Queensland government was not willing to accept the control of the Indian government without question. There will be further discussion of the military trade in the following chapter on military cooperation.

Another major theme of this chapter is the possibility that more trade might take place between India and Australia. It was felt within Australia for much of the period that India did not require a great amount of goods from the Australian colonies. This made the trade relationship more difficult as it was essentially asymmetrical. Traders in India would therefore be unwilling to ship goods to Australia because they would risk the ships returning empty. South Australia realised this in 1869. Victoria and New South Wales became more aware of this following the Calcutta International Exhibition and attempted to stimulate more trade with luxury goods. The asymmetrical nature of the trade relationship mirrors Metcalf's conception of India's role within the empire. While he does not discuss trade in much detail – it is not a focus of his work – he does argue that India emanated goods, ideas and projected power around the British empire. In this case, the Australian colonies were able to rely on India for goods throughout the period discussed.

The major themes of economic ties between India and Australia in this period were of Indian dominance and the Australian response. The Australian colonies were extremely submissive on the issue of the horse trade and the manner in which it functioned. This was due primarily to the economic benefits to the Australian colonies the trade provided and the proud and patriotic nature of the trade – supplying horses for the overseas campaigns of the Indian army. On other, more minor matters, the Australian colonies were less willing to accept the dominance of India. South Australia's attempt to re-shape the horse trade was quickly quashed. Queensland was able to win some small concession from India through appealing to London on a minor administrative matter. Ultimately, on matters of trade, the Indian government was in near-complete control, even without direction from London.

# **Chapter Three: Military Connections**

This chapter will discuss the ways in which India and Australia cooperated on military issues. While there was little shared military conflict (the Indian army never fought in Australia, as it did in some other British colonies, for example), there are numerous examples of India and Australia cooperating over military matters. Previous chapters have discussed administrative connections and trade between military departments. This chapter will focus on the ways in which India and Australia coordinated over military issues. Specific examples will be discussed, beginning with the Indian Rebellion in 1857. British army soldiers stationed in Australia, financed and resourced by the New South Wales government, were sent to India as reinforcements during the Indian Rebellion. Following analysis of this issue, I will move on to discuss colonial conflicts in the 1880s and 1890s. Australian volunteers fought in the Boxer Uprising along with Indian army soldiers. India and Australia were involved in planning the operations undertaken by the British in the South African War and the Boxer Uprising. The chapter will close with a discussion of the ceremonial relationship between India and Australia, focusing on India's sending of Indian army soldiers and officers to the Federation celebrations in Sydney, on New Year's Day 1901.

Aside from themes consistently discussed in this thesis such as how communication networks functioned, there are issues specific to the military that will be addressed. Military planning is an extremely sensitive area for any government. The difficulties in managing a global empire with slow communication networks are self-evident. As a result, the difference between communications before and after the introduction of telegraph cables plays an extremely important role in the argument of this chapter.

Comparative discussion of the communication networks also allows us to test the extent to which Britain maintained control over military matters. We have seen in previous analysis that India and Australia were able to make some military decisions without consultation with London, such as the trading of military supplies. This can allow us to judge the accuracy of the approach of Metcalf and others to administration in the empire with regard to military matters. In some cases, as we have seen, London maintained control over some relatively minor matters following the introduction of telegraph cables. Given these examples, one would expect the same to be the case for the sensitive area of military strategy.

Comparing the methods of communication in 1858 with those in 1901 provides a strong means of understanding the true nature of the India and Australia military relationship.

In *Imperial Connections*, Metcalf covers military matters as a major part of his argument. He discusses Britain's use of India to project power to other parts of the world. Metcalf devotes time to both the use of the Indian army in Africa and Sikh policemen in South East Asian colonies.<sup>1</sup> Blyth's strict focus on India's administrative control in East Africa and the Middle East prevents him from dealing with military engagements. The Indian army did fight in locations that he discusses, most notably in the Abyssinian campaign of 1867-8. However, Blyth does not discuss these engagements.<sup>2</sup> He does not discuss in detail the actions of the Indian government's military department or the Indian army.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Indian Army

Before going on to analyse specific incidents and conflicts, it is necessary to understand the respective states of the military in India and Australia. Control of the Indian army was given to the Crown following the Indian Rebellion in 1858. The Indian army fought in several British colonies, and India was often used to provide manpower for colonial law enforcement. Brief discussion of these conflicts will help to put the India-Australia relationship into perspective. Previous scholarship has paid little attention to the Indian army's overseas campaigns. The brief work of Metcalf is one of the most useful works on this subject, along with some other scholars, such as David Omissi.

The Indian army began with the competition between the French and the British in the initial struggle for India, but it took on a vastly different shape after the Indian Rebellion in 1858.<sup>4</sup> The Indian army comprised British officers in command of soldiers from India. The system of rank in the Indian army at this time was unique. The non-commissioned ranks were similar to those of the British army, with Indian ranks corresponding to British ranks, such as private, corporal or sergeant. However, the Indian officers were unique. They were

<sup>3</sup> R. J. Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (New York, 2003), pp. 262-270. To illustrate this point, I recommend checking his index.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, 2007); pp. 102-135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> P. Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men (London, 1974).

subordinate to all British officers, intended as the link between Indian rankers and the British officers.<sup>5</sup>

There have been several histories of the Indian army, notably those of Philip Mason, Stephen Cohen, Pradeep Barua and David Omissi.<sup>6</sup> These scholars all discuss the nature, structure and relationships within the Indian army. They also discuss the way in which the Indian army was used in colonial conflicts.

The soldiers were drawn mostly from the "martial races' of India. The classification was drawn from the Indian caste system and the self-image of some communities, such as the North-Indian Rajputs. The selective nature of the Indian army and martial races is demonstrated by the make-up of the forces that fought in World War One in 1914. At this time, over half the Indian army was recruited from a single community in the Punjab and the remainder from Nepal, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province. The means by which martial races were determined was very simplistic, with soldiers who stayed loyal to the British in the Indian Rebellion believed to hold "inherent' loyalty, and those who did not believed to be too undisciplined for military service. These loyal warriors were Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, Punjabi Muslims, Pathans and Nepali Gurkhas. Indian army regiments were usually segregated on the basis of religion, language and community. They were recruited from rural areas, often backward ones.

British racial ideology can also be seen in the debate on the Indianization of the Indian army, which also began in 1858. Indianization gave expression to British racial approaches to the Indian army. It was both a debate about how much power Indian officers should hold in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> J. Willcox, With the Indians in France (London, 1920), pp. 1-6; Omissi (ed.), Indian Voices of the Great War, pp. xxi-xxii.

For comprehensive histories of the Indian army see: D. E. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (Basingstoke, 1994); Mason, *Honour*; S. P. Cohen, *The Indian Army Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley, 1971) and P. Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949* (Westport, 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> On martial races, see for example: G. F. MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India* (London, 1933) (this work is both an explanation of the martial races theory, and an example of it); Omissi, *Sepoy and the Raj*; L. Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen: 'Gurkhas', in the Western Imagination* (Oxford, 1995) and H. Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> D. E. Omissi, "The Indian Army in the First World War, 1914-1918' in D. P. Marston, and C. S. Sundaram (eds), *A Military History of India and South Asia - From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era* (New Delhi, 2007), p. 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> T. R. Metcalf and B. D. Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (New York, 2002), pp. 102-103. 
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* 

the Indian army and the process by which they were given more power.<sup>11</sup> A classic approach is provided by Sharpe, who argues that racism and prejudice made for painfully slow progress.<sup>12</sup> To understand British conceptions of Indian soldiers, we can refer to the stereotype discussed by Jeffrey Greenhut: that the Indians were childlike, and needed strong British guidance.<sup>13</sup> The British conception of Indian heroism was that Indians were courageous, but they did not temper this with reason. Omissi pointed out that this reputation for thick-headedness had some basis in fact, because the Indian soldiers were recruited from the least literate sections of the population.<sup>14</sup>

Given the prevalence of British racial ideology surrounding the Indian army, the debate on Indianization following the Indian Rebellion and the structure of the Indian army, we can conclude that the Indian army was structurally racial. This was a debate that began with the 1857 Indian Rebellion and continued amongst the British arguably until the end of the Raj in 1947. The British were unsure of how high to promote Indian officers in the Indian army. Put very simply, some thought they could be as capable as the low-ranking British officers and should be given more power; others (who were very much the majority) argued that they should be subordinate to any British soldier. It is fair then to infer that there was a general suspicion amongst the British of the discipline of the Indian soldiers, and of their capabilities as fighters.

Mason's history fails to discuss overseas conflicts outside World War One in any great detail. He discusses the structure of the army, tracing the Indian army back through its earliest incarnations. His overwhelming narrative focus is on honour. <sup>16</sup> Cohen discusses the Indian

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> For discussion of Indianization see: Omissi, *Sepoy and the Raj*; Mason, *Honour*: A. Sharpe, "The Indianisation of the Indian Army', *History Today*, 34 (March, 1986), pp. 47-52, and Cohen, *Indian Army*. For an alternative approach to Indianization, see: Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj*.

<sup>12</sup> Sharpe, "Indianisation of the Indian Army', pp.47-52. Cohen, Mason and Omissi follow similar arguments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Sharpe, "Indianisation of the Indian Army', pp.47-52. Cohen, Mason and Omissi follow similar arguments Sharpe's is a brief article which provides an overview of their arguments. See: Omissi, *Sepoy and the Raj*; Mason, *Honour*; Cohen, *Indian Army*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Greenhut, "Sahib and Sepoy', p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Omissi, *Sepoy and the Raj*, p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See: Omissi, *Sepoy and the Raj*; Mason, *Honour*; Sharpe, "The Indianisation of the Indian Army', *History Today*, pp.47-52; Cohen, *Indian Army* and Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mason's focus on honour is, I would argue, misplaced. Honour was ultimately no more important to Indian soldiers than to British soldiers. What is worth noting, however, is that the British *thought* there was something unique about Indian concepts of *izzat* (honour). Though honour was labelled differently with the use of the word *izzat* the two conceptions of honour are very similar. I would suggest this as an excellent example of Metcalf's concept of difference. See A. E. Davis, "The Empire at War: The Indian Army in the First World War' (Unpublished honours thesis, University of Tasmania). For discussion of "difference' see T. R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Melbourne, 2005). For a discussion of military honour, see P. Robinson, *Military Honour and the Conduct of War: From Ancient Greece to Iraq* (Abigndon, 2006).

army's role in developing India, and again only discusses World War One in detail. Metcalf agrees with this assessment in *Imperial Connections*, by noting that, while there have been many studies of the Indian army, there has been no comprehensive study of the Indian army's exploits overseas. However, one point Metcalf misses is the lack of mention of the Indian army in histories of major campaigns of which the Indian army took up a major role. For example, in Moorehead's history of the Abyssinian war of 1867–68, the Indian army did most of the fighting for the British, but barely rates a mention. The British administrators and some Indian nationalists were content with the Indian army deployments overseas. The overseas deployments, along with engagement with Indians overseas, were viewed within a nationalist vision of a greater, global India. The most notable deployments were during the 1900 Boxer Uprising, in East and South Africa, and in the Middle East. 18

Many histories of the Indian army tend to skip from the Indian Rebellion directly to World War One, without examining the conflicts that occurred in between. <sup>19</sup> The conflicts are far better covered by Metcalf, albeit over a small space of his work. He does not attempt a detailed discussion of these campaigns, but does provide some background to some selected overseas assignments given to the Indian army. Prior to World War One, the Indian army supplied some occasional battalions to nearby colonies in Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, Hong Kong and Northern China. <sup>20</sup> These events were examples of overseas postings and of law enforcement, but Indian troops were not sent to a specific conflict or a campaign. The Indian army was used in a different way in some African campaigns. The 1867-68 Abyssinian campaign was performed solely by the Indian army. <sup>21</sup>

Further minor engagements are quickly canvassed by Mason, mentioning Indian army campaigns in the Third Burmese War, the Second Afghan War, the Malakand affair and expeditions to Aden, Somaliland, the Persian Gulf, Lushai Hills, Sikkim and Tibet.<sup>22</sup> This underlines the view within the British empire that the Indian army could be used to project power. However, there were limits on their use; for example, Curzon's offer to use the Indian army in the South African War in 1900 was turned down. There were some strategic reasons

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<sup>18</sup> Metcalf and Metcalf, Concise History of India, p. 131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> A. Moorehead, *The Blue Nile* (New York, 1972), pp. 260-270. To illustrate the omission of the Indian army for this work, I recommend checking the Index for ,India' and ,Indian army': pp. 330-336.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> For a history of the Indian army that that take this approach, see: Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Mason, *Honour*, pp. 374-375.

for this refusal, as the British did not wish to reduce the defences of India any further, fearing a threat from Russia.<sup>23</sup> However, perhaps more importantly, it was thought that the Indian army was not fit to fight a war against a "white' opposition.<sup>24</sup> Instead, an "Indian contingent' was sent, consisting of British soldiers based in India. This can be contrasted with the British reaction to the Boxer Uprising in 1900 in China, where the Imperial forces were comprised mostly of Indian soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

Metcalf's approach to the Indian army in Africa can help to inform our approach to the Indian army's role in the British empire. In truth, no single comprehensive study has been completed. Metcalf covers some early conflicts, including the 1885 Mahdist campaign in the Sudan, to which India contributed 3000 soldiers, (and New South Wales sent a small force, the first Australian volunteer force to fight overseas.)<sup>26</sup> He goes into considerable detail on the Indian army in Uganda in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the South African War and the Mesopotamian Campaign in World War One. His focus is on the way Indian soldiers were used in colonial conflicts. He demonstrates how the Indian army and Indian soldiers were used to expand the British empire across the world, in territories as diverse as Malaya, East Africa and Mesopotamia.

We can learn a great deal from the British conception of India's military role in the empire from these engagements. Overseas engagements for the Indian army were commonplace - to the extent that we can conclude that India had a major role in both the defence and spreading of the empire. The conflicts in which the Indian army were involved were not specific to the defence of India, though they were financed by Indian taxpayers. Not until World War One on the Western Front was the Indian army used against European nations. Nothing so concrete as an Indian army campaign will be discussed with regard to Australia – rather military aid, support and symbolic gestures will be discussed.

#### The Australian Army

While India clearly played a central role in British military policy, Australia's role was comparably very minor, at least in the period of this thesis. Australian military historians have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> D. E. Omissi, "India: Some Perceptions of Race and Empire', in D. E. Omissi and A. S. Thompson (eds), *The* Impact of the South African War (Wiltshire, 2002), p. 216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-218. <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 81.

rarely covered the period prior to Federation. Nicholls and Grey provide some of the most recent examinations of the period. Austin has discussed the period between 1840 and 1850, referring to it as a "prelude to the golden years'. 27 Prior to the 1850s Australian states had been protected by British soldiers and colonial police. Prompted partly by the discovery of gold in New South Wales and the resulting influx of people, it was decided to set up an extra military force in New South Wales.<sup>28</sup> Over the next few years, more Australian colonies set up small volunteer forces.<sup>29</sup> News of colonial wars over this period would lead to enthusiasm for volunteering.<sup>30</sup> In 1863, the Australian colonies were advised to begin funding their own defence. As a result, the final British garrison was removed in the 1870s.<sup>31</sup> The Australian Navy also plays a role in this chapter, as it was called upon to support the Indian army during the Boxer Uprising. The Victorian Navy was formed in the months leading up to the Crimean War in 1854.<sup>32</sup> It was formed partly because of fears that Russia would attack from the north. The Australian Squadron of the Royal Navy was formed in 1859, to protect the waters around Australia and New Zealand.<sup>33</sup>

From the removal of the final British garrison in 1870, the Australian colonies independently defended themselves, occasionally sent soldiers overseas and funded their own armies. This did not end with Federation, as forces were still in action in South Africa and preparations were being made for a Commonwealth of Australia military force.<sup>34</sup> Australia's first overseas military operation took place in 1885 with the sending of soldiers on an expedition to the Sudan, a conflict that included Indian soldiers as well. This conflict has received attention in a book by Inglis, several articles, and has a page on the Australian War Memorial website.<sup>35</sup> The New South Wales experience of Sudan was very limited. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> M. Austin, *The Army in Australia: 1840-1850, Prelude to the Golden Years* (Canberra, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> B. Nicholls, The Colonial Volunteers: The Defence Forces of the Australian Colonies 1836-1901 (Sydney, 1988), pp. 9-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Melbourne, 1999), pp. 20-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> B. Nicholls, Bluejackets and Boxers: Australia's Naval Expedition to the Boxer Uprising (Sydney, 1986), pp. 10-11. 33 *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> For discussion of the period between Federation and World War One, see Grey, *Military History of Australia*,

K. S. Inglis, The Rehearsal: Australians at war in the Sudan 1885 (Adelaide, 1985). M. Saunders, "Australia's First Peace Movement?: Arguments against sending contingent to Sudan in 1885, Labour History, 49, (1985), pp. 38-50. J. Waldersee, "The Sudan War: England Calls: Australia's First Overseas War', Annals Australia, 96, 7 (1985), pp. 26-29. M. Saunders, Parliament and the New South Wales Contingent to the Sudan in 1885: the dissection of a debate', Journal of the Royal Historical Society, 70, 4 (1985), pp. 227-250. M. Saunders, "The New South Wales contingent to the Sudan', Journal of the Australian War Memorial, 6 (1985), pp. 13-19. http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/sudan.asp, date accessed: 27 October 2009.

soldiers saw no action. The infantry worked on a railroad and as guards, but were not attacked. The artillery was placed too far from any enemy to be active, and simply performed drills for a month.<sup>36</sup> It was not until the 1890s that Australian soldiers were sent on more serious military operations, such as the Boxer Uprising and the South African War. These conflicts will be discussed in more detail below.

#### Australia and the Indian Rebellion

The Indian Rebellion marked a fundamental change in the administration of India, and it had profound effects on the way that the British perceived their empire. It was also a great military crisis for the British administration in India, and the response to the event drew soldiers from around the British empire. Australia's assistance to the Indian government during the Indian Rebellion has received very little attention, in both Australian and Indian history. There are few military histories of Australia that discuss the period before the formation of local military units. Jeffrey Grey's work devotes a chapter to the period prior to 1870. He is also the only scholar to make any specific mention of the troop movement in question here. He writes:

The 77<sup>th</sup> regiment served in New South Wales very briefly, during 1857-1858. Wanted for service in Hong Kong, it was diverted to India when news of the Rebellion reached Sydney. This pattern was typical of regimental experience in the Australian colonies.<sup>37</sup>

Grey goes on to state that volunteerism was widespread in the Eastern colonies in 1859.<sup>38</sup> Bill Nicholls' work The Colonial Volunteers is another that discusses the Australian defence forces prior to the South African War in significant detail. Nicholls states that the colonies took the Indian Rebellion ,in their stride' as it presented no direct threat to them.<sup>39</sup>

After their very brief comments both scholars proceed onwards a year later to discuss the Australian reaction to the Franco-Austrian war. 40 Nicholls argues that the perception in Australia at the time was that a French war with Britain might have led to French attacks on Australia. Australia. Nicholls discusses the popular reaction to the wars and the effect they had on volunteerism, which explains why he gives the Franco-Austrian War more attention than the

<sup>39</sup> Nicholls, *The Colonial Volunteers*, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/sudan.asp, date accessed: 20 October, 2009.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Grey, *Military History*, p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-25, Grey, *Military History*, p. 16. <sup>41</sup> Nicholls, *The Colonial Volunteers*, p. 21

Indian Rebellion. His argument also implies that the Australian colonies were not particularly interested in the Indian Rebellion, or did not feel threatened by it. However, the volume of newspaper articles published discussing the "Indian Mutiny' would suggest a great and sustained public interest, if not necessarily a personal threat.<sup>42</sup> Between 1857 and the end of 1859, *The Argus* published at least 226 articles containing the phrase "Indian Mutiny'.<sup>43</sup> While there may not have been much fear, there was certainly interest.

We can gather from the approaches discussed above that what has been considered important in Australian military history is the development of home-grown military forces, and not the contribution made by the British army units in Australia. This follows a nationalist approach in Australian history focusing on the Australian colonies' development towards independence and Federation. However, Australia contributed financially, logistically and militarily to the defence of India during the Indian Rebellion – which could fit within this approach to history.

Another point that we must consider is whether or not people in government or in power in the Australian colonies shared this perception at the time of the Indian Rebellion. If those in command were concerned and perceived India as being of immediate importance, this would be more telling than the perceptions of the rest of the Australian population. It is unlikely that the general population of Australia would have had as strong an understanding of British governance and defence strategy as those involved in government. It is on this subject that the communication between the governments is particularly useful. There are several revealing questions that these documents can answer, which illustrate the nature of India and Australia's relationship at this time. Who made the request for reinforcements? How was it discussed within the New South Wales government and how was the decision made to sent reinforcements? From these questions, we can see how the military relationship between the two colonies operated. I will argue here that these events have been given far less importance than they should have. When we take on the perspective of this thesis, the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> The term "Indian Mutiny' was the one used by the British at the time. I am using the term "Indian Rebellion' here due to the implications of the word "mutiny". The terminology for the Indian Rebellion is a contentious issue today. Mutiny implies it was solely a military uprising, whereas the term "First War of Independence" (used by nationalist historians and politicians in India) implies a general revolt against the British. Rebellion is a more neutral term which more accurately reflects the event itself. For more discussion, see Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, and Metcalf and Metcalf, *Concise History of Modern India*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> This research was done through the National Library of Australia newspaper digitisation project. I use the term ,at least' as the project is not yet completed and the software that translates original newspaper articles into searchable text is not completely accurate.

discussions that took place between the two governments reveal how important India was to the Australian colonies.

The first question that must be answered is who initiated the move to send soldiers from the Australian colonies to India. Viscount Canning, then Governor General, was in charge of putting down the revolt. He went on to become the first Viceroy of India. He confirmed in a letter to the Foreign Department Secret Committee that India requested aid from the Australian colonies - in the form of one Regiment of Infantry and a Company of Artillery. The Secret Committee was a part of the Indian government. Martin, in his 1834 description of Indian colonial governance systems, wrote that the Secret Committee had to be informed of any actions relating to war or negotiation. There was no mechanism for including Britain in these discussions. The Governor of New South Wales, William Denison, told London of the situation and the decision that had been taken. Denison took quick and independent action.

Canning thanked Denison and the Australian colonies for their willingness to spare the requested force for transfer to India, but also to begin discussing details. In this case, it is important to note that Canning had severe communication problems in receiving extra troops. The Indian Rebellion was an Imperial crisis – and he was therefore justified in requesting troops from around the empire. He noted that it was not possible to say how long the troops may be required, stating only that ,,it may be sufficient to say that (they) shall not be kept longer than necessary'. He was more concerned about gaining an additional Regiment of Infantry rather than Artillery.

Denison responded (although it was sent too early to be a direct reply to the previous letter) and attached the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Council of New South Wales. He stated that the New South Wales government was placing at the disposal of the Major

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Viscount Canning to the Foreign Department, Secret Committee. January 18 1858. T. R. Metcalf, "Charles John Canning, Earl Canning (1812–1862)', (September 2004; online edition, January 2008) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4554, date accessed: 17 September 2010.
<sup>45</sup> R. M. Martin, *History of the British Colonies: Possessions in Asia* (London, 1834).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Viscount Canning to William Denison, January 30, 1858, Foreign Department records from the National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1844-1945, 1844-1943, National Library of Australia Microfilm Collection, (hereafter NLA-NAI), reel one, nos. 8-12.

General in command of all of the available troops in New South Wales.<sup>47</sup> Only two companies of soldiers were considered unavailable, as they were necessary to Australia's defence. This was the only condition Denison placed upon the movement of soldiers. He goes on to offer more than was requested, stating that two regiments of Infantry could be spared from New South Wales if they were required in India.<sup>48</sup>

Denison believed that the forces could be sent from the Australian colonies with little inconvenience. The only condition placed on the movement of the soldiers was England being at peace with the European powers and America. This fits with the assessment of Nichols that the Australian colonies feared invasion from European powers, but otherwise were not concerned about their security.<sup>49</sup>

From these letters we can see how the relationship between India and Australia worked. To begin with, it is telling that the Indian government felt it was appropriate to ask the Australian colonies for support. We can tell something of how India and New South Wales saw their position within the empire in relation to each other. Metcalf's approach suggests that India was a crucial power centre for empire, and its security was therefore crucial to all those nations connected to it. India's request for military support makes it appear all the more a power centre of the British empire.

Denison was aware that he was acting without full assent from London, but felt that the situation was urgent enough to warrant this. He wrote to Henry Labouchere on 5 April 1858 to address the issue, stating that he had received by the last mail his instructions to forward the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment to China. Labouchere was Secretary of State for the Colonies until February 1858. Given the timing of this letter, it is likely that this news had not reached Denison at the time he wrote the letter.<sup>51</sup> However, he wrote that the Governor General of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the New South Wales Executive Council, February 9, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Nicholls, *The Colonial Volunteers*, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> The Indian Rebellion occurred well before Metcalf's time period begins. However, India was still important and a trading base at this time. Prior to 1858 Australia had received a large amount of its goods through India. See Chapter Two for details. See also: J. Broadbent, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society 1788-1850* (Sydney, 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> G. F. R. Barker, "Labouchere, Henry, Baron Taunton (1798–1869)", (September 2004: online edition, October 2008), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15838, date accessed: 17 September, 2010.

India had requested the assistance, specifically mentioning ,,the 77th, or a regiment of infantry, and a company of artillery'. 52 He continued:

Under these circumstances, I have thought myself justified in advising the General to alter the destination of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment from Hong Kong to Calcutta, and I have also placed the company of artillery stationed at Sydney at his disposal. I propose to appeal to the Legislature to provide the necessary number of horses for the battery, together with the harness, which, Lord Canning says, is not to be got in Calcutta... I trust that you will not think that I have exercised undue influence over General Macarthur as regards the change of destination on the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment; but I felt justified in acting as I have done by the tone of Lord Canning's letter.<sup>53</sup>

Denison explicitly states that the tone of Canning's letter left him believing that he had no choice but to send whatever reinforcements he was able to India. He felt justified by the situation to influence General Macarthur, and act without consent from London. The level of support offered by Denison, including the eagerness to do so, given the offer to pay for horsing the artillery and to offer more support than was requested, suggests that Denison, and more broadly the NSW Executive Council, believed that this was the case. The level of support from the Australian colonies appears even higher when one considers the inability of the Indian government to say when the troops might be returned.

The New South Wales Executive Council discussed the possible deployment. Along with Denison, the attorney general, the colonial treasurer and the secretary for courts and public works were present at the meeting.<sup>54</sup> The minutes of this meeting state that the council discussed three key issues: how much military support is necessary within the colony itself given that Britain was then at peace with other military powers; the composition of the force; and paying to provide horses for an artillery regiment should one be sent. Initially, though, the reason for India requiring reinforcements was laid out, primarily that the Sikhs may revolt

<sup>52 &</sup>quot;William Denison to the Right Honourable H. Labouchere, Sydney, April 5', in W. Denison, *Varieties of a Vice-Regal Life* (London, 1870), pp. 434-435.

Minutes of the meeting of the New South Wales Executive Council, February 9, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12. *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* states that upon his appointment as Governor General, Denison created a body to advise him known as the New South Wales Executive Council. However, this was not supposed to be permanent. It seems likely that the body known as "The Executive Council of New South Wales' was retained, with its members replaced by government ministers as opposed to independent advisors. See C. H. Currey, "Denison, Sir William Thomas (1804-1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, (Melbourne, 1972), pp. 46-53.

given the disorganised state of the Indian army.<sup>55</sup> This fear is better summed up by Denison in a later letter, when he wrote that a "warlike people like the Sikhs' would take advantage of the weakened British defences in India caused by the Indian Rebellion to regain their independence.<sup>56</sup> The British were particularly concerned about the Sikhs as they had only recently been able to take control of land populated by the Sikhs.

The feared uprising of the Sikhs never eventuated. The British had gained control over the Sikhs only in 1846 and faced a decade of opposition and anarchy.<sup>57</sup> The British focused their efforts on winning over the peasantry and having a strong focus on justice in their rule. This policy ultimately proved successful during the Indian Rebellion, as the Sikhs fought with the British, when parts of Northern India had rebelled.<sup>58</sup> Sikhs played a major role in British defence against the rebelling Sepoys and went on to feature heavily in the Indian army.<sup>59</sup> It is then agreed that two companies of men were necessary in the Australian colonies to ensure stability. The 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment was deemed to be available, consisting of 759 men (including 101 connected to the artillery).<sup>60</sup> Denison states in a later letter that this was the strongest of the Regiments stationed in the Australian colonies.<sup>61</sup>

The desire to equip the artillery with horses was then discussed. Denison wrote that "Major General Macarthur should deem it advisable to despatch the company of Artillery with the necessary number of horses to mount the battery.' As discussed in Chapter Two, India was unable to produce its own horses, so this is not surprising. The Executive Council believed that New South Wales should pay the cost of the horses. 100 horses were required, at a price somewhere between £3,500 and £4,000. The council stated that to approve this sum of money there would have to be a vote in the Legislative Assembly but believed that this Assembly would "gladly devise the opportunity of showing by such an contribution the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> This would suggest that the task of the troops was not to fight against rebelling Sepoys, but to maintain stability and to show the strength of the British army. Minutes of the meeting of the New South Wales Executive Council, February 9, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> William Denison to the Secret Committee, February 15, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> For an account of the Anglo-Sikh wars, see: K. Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume 2: 1839-1947* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 40-55 and pp. 66-82. For discussion of British occupation of the Punjab, see pp. 85-120. See also, K. Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume 1: 1469-1839* (Delhi, 1977) and J. R. Roseberry III, *Imperial Rule in Punjab, 1818-1881* (Riverdale, 1987)

<sup>58</sup> Singh, Sikhs: 1839-1874, pp. 98-115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Following their loyalty in during the Indian Rebellion, the Sikhs were classified as having ,innate loyalty' and as a martial race. This led to their continued recruitment to the Indian army.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> William Denison to Viscount Canning, April 10, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the New South Wales Executive Council, February 9, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

sympathy which is felt by the people of New South Wales for their fellow countrymen in India in their time of danger and necessity. 63 This statement closed the minutes.

The minutes of a meeting do not necessarily reflect accurately everything that is said at a meeting. We should remember also that these minutes were later sent to India and it is fair to expect that it was known this would be the case at the time they were written. This may help to explain the rhetorical flourishes in the closing sentence. Still, while the sincerity of this particular sentence may arguably be questionable, the final actions decided upon in this meeting are not. The members of the Executive Council were willing to pay for the expense of sending 100 horses for the artillery, along with their largest regiment or soldiers to help secure India. This is a particularly significant contribution when we consider the supposedly unflustered popular reaction within Australia.<sup>64</sup>

However, Denison's confidence in the Legislative Assembly was misplaced. The Legislative Assembly rejected his suggestion that the Artillery be sent, because of the costs involved.65 A committee of the Legislative Assembly was formed to consider the issue, essentially producing a cost-benefit analysis of the issue. It was concluded that the situation in India was not so bad as to fund horses for a battery of artillery. The latest mail from India had informed them that the Sikhs were not revolting after all. 66 We should bear in mind in this case, that Canning had stated earlier that he was more concerned with receiving a regiment of soldiers than with the battery of artillery. They were happy, however, to send the Major General in command of the troops, and would reconsider sending the Artillery were any further requests to be made by India.<sup>67</sup>

Denison was frustrated with the response of the Legislative Assembly, receiving a stiff reprimand from them to his reaction to their turning down the proposal.<sup>68</sup> Denison was ultimately more willing to finance the horses than the committee set up to make the decision. We should remember in this case that Denison was the Imperial representative in New South Wales, while the members of the Legislative Assembly were colonists. It was in the Imperial interest to finance a battery of artillery, but not in the colonies interest. The Executive Council

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> According to Nicholls. See Nicholls, *The Colonial Volunteers*, pp. 9-11. <sup>65</sup> Currey, "Denison".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings, 1858, Vol. 1, pp. 969-972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>*Ibid*, p. 968. <sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.

and the Legislative Assembly had a marginally different perception of the relationship. Denison was confident an agreement would be reached, believing the defence of India was worth funding. The Legislative Assembly disagreed with this assessment, perhaps believing it was unnecessary given the apparent lack of concern amongst the New South Wales public.

Shorty after the Executive Council meeting, Denison wrote a letter to Canning to confirm the position of the Australian colonies. This letter follows closely what was set out in the minutes of the Executive Council meeting. However, he does add that he had discussed sending the soldiers to India with the Major General in command in Australia who was equally concerned with the situation in India and had agreed to the troop movements.<sup>69</sup>

Throughout the discussion there is a strong sense that Denison was aware of the military workings of the empire. Denison was always interested in military issues and strategy. Upon receiving the minutes and letters discussed above, the Secret Branch thanked Denison:

I beg that your Excellency will for yourself accept the best thanks of the Govt of India for the hearty and patriotic exactions they have made to assist this Govt in its difficulties. My letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> Feb will have shown your Exc that the assistance is very acceptable.<sup>71</sup>

Once the details were decided, the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment was sent to Calcutta, via Hong Kong on the ship the *Megæra*. On April 10, 1858, Denison told Canning to state that "By the last mail, I received instructions from the Secretary of State to forward the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment to Hong Kong'. Denison concluded the letter by offering further support. He wrote:

One strong regiment would in all probability be quite sufficient for the five Australian Colonies, but I am afraid that neither the 13<sup>th</sup> nor the 40<sup>th</sup> are strong enough for this duty. I will, honour, put myself in communication with the Government of the different colonies and with the Major General in command, and ascertain whether the major (would be)... in a position to detach a regiment... should further assistance be required.<sup>72</sup>

The further assistance offered to India was ultimately not required. *The Hobart Courier* reported on the arrival of the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment, stating that upon arrival from Sydney, the

<sup>72</sup> William Denison to Viscount Canning, April 10, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Denison to the Secret Committee, February 15, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> For William Denison's personal correspondence, much of which shows his interest in military matters, see Denison, *Varieties of a Vice-Regal Life*. See also Currey, "Denison'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> The Secret Branch to Denison, May 28, 1858, in NLA-NAI, reel one, nos. 8-12.

Megæra and the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment were struck by the cholera that had been "raging' in Calcutta. 18 men including Colonel Strachan had died.<sup>73</sup>

The events discussed here had further impacts upon Australia's development. The Argus wrote of the contribution made by NSW, and argued for Victoria to make a similar contribution. They wrote:

What is Victoria prepared to do? Will the 40<sup>th</sup> regiment be at once despatched to the banks of the Ganges to add fresh laurels to those which that gallant corps has already so copiously won in many a well fought field? ... what is Victoria to do, in this critical state of India, towards augmenting the British forces in that country?<sup>74</sup>

In the same article *The Argus* supported Denison's call , to establish a local corps of a colonial character'. These comments add further to the argument that the Indian Rebellion and Australia's aid deserved more significance in Australian history. In these few comments alone we see some key themes of Australian history in their infancy: NSW and Victoria's rivalry and competition between colonies to do the most for imperial causes as is seen during the Boer War and the Boxer Uprising. <sup>76</sup> More importantly, we also see that these events add weight to the argument that Australia required its own permanent colonial force, not just temporary defensive militias, so that the British army would no longer be relied upon to defend Australia. This was a significant step in Australia's progress towards independence and Australian armies being used in overseas campaigns.

The negotiations between Canning, Denison, the NSW Executive Committee and the Secret Committee that led to the Australian colonies sending soldiers from Australia to India were surprisingly simple. India made the request and the Australian colonies readily accepted, and were willing to pay the expenses necessary. There was no argument or quibbling over details in any of the communication discussed. Denison's repeated offering of more troops suggests that he was well aware of India's importance to the empire, and to Australia as well. Indeed, all involved on the Australian side appeared eager to do what they saw as their patriotic duty. The ease of these negotiations can be explained party by the ownership of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> The Courier, Monday 16 August, 1858, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> The Argus, Monday 17 May, 1858, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> See for example R. H. Wilde, "The Boxer Affair and Australian Responsibility for Imperial Defence', *The* Pacific Historical Review, 26, 1 (1957), pp. 51-65.

troops: these were British army soldiers and therefore not Australia's to give. And yet, Denison was asked to provide reinforcements, rather than being told to do so.

Crucially, the British government did not tell the colonies how to act; rather Canning made the request, and Denison approved it on his own. This is the key point in these discussions. Britain was notified of the actions, but they were taken before consent could be given. They wrote to inform, rather than to ask. This can be explained by the slow communications between India, New South Wales and London. It took approximately four months for news of the Indian Rebellion to reach Australia. When it did, the fear that it may undermine British control of India was made clear to the NSW government, who immediately acted upon receiving the request and diverted the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment to Calcutta. The urgency of the situation made it unnecessary to wait for any communication with Britain.

The Australian colonies' actions during the Indian Rebellion were substantial enough to show that India and Australia were considerably more than two distant and uninterested colonies under the banner of the British empire. The regiment sent was scheduled to be sent to Hong Kong, but was diverted to serve in India instead. Despite this, Denison and the Executive Council were prepared to send more soldiers should they be required and repeatedly offered to do so. The Indian Rebellion, and the threat of the Sikhs, was much less of an issue by the time the colonies' letters would have reached India, as Sikh soldiers had begun to fight for the British.<sup>77</sup> The speedy response and the urgency behind it also show the genuine support NSW offered to India. Denison spoke of his deep concern for the situation in India, and the need to act as quickly as possible.

The conflict between the NSW Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly government shows a disparity between the levels of concern. The decision by the committee of the Legislative Assembly was taken once further information had become available.

The enthusiasm behind the quick response can be partly put down to patriotism on the part of the New South Wales government and may also be accounted for by a desire to be seen as cooperative in order to improve the standing of the colony and the individuals behind the decision. This suggests that patriotism and supporting the empire extended past the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Metcalf and Metcalf, *Concise History of India*, pp. 91-99.

connection to Britain and included India. The response showed that India mattered not just to the British or to the empire, but that India was important to Australia. We can also learn from the response the manner in which imperial communications were affected by distance. Ideally, all troop movements would be coordinated from a central location - London. Slow communications in this case mandated that a decision on soldier movements be made from Australia. As will be seen below, this was no longer the case in later colonial wars, to which both India and Australia made contributions.

#### **Colonial Wars**

I will now focus on colonial wars that took place towards the end of the period discussed by this thesis. The cooperation on these later colonial wars differed fundamentally from that over the Indian Rebellion. This provides an extremely useful comparison of the differences in communication between the beginning and the end of the period of this thesis.

The Australian colonies did not take part in many overseas military operations prior to Federation. The first Australian volunteer army to travel to an overseas conflict came from New South Wales, sent to the Sudan in 1885. The Sudan conflict has been described as a "dress rehearsal' for the South African War. The South African War has since been considered a "forgotten conflict', as it pales in comparison to World War One. It could no longer be called "forgotten' in the light of the fact that subsequent Australian scholarship on the subject has increased significantly since that description was given.

A look at the work on the Sudan conflict reveals a flaw in the writing of Australian military history; the Sudan war is written about not because of its importance to world history, or because the conflict was particularly substantial, but because it marked a national milestone. That the majority of major works were published to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event suggests that the milestone is what is important, rather than the events themselves.<sup>79</sup> The focus on the sending of Australians to war overseas in this case has disguised the subtleties of Australia's military position. As in the case of the Indian Rebellion, this has led

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> K. S. Inglis, *The Rehearsal: Australians at War in Sudan, 1885* (Adelaide, 1985); Wilde, "The Boxer Affair', pp. 51-66 and C. Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War In South Africa, 1889-1902* (Melbourne, 2002). See also C. N. Connolly, "Class, Birthplace, Loyalty: Australian Attitudes to the Boer War', *Historical Studies*, 18, 71 (1978), pp. 210-232; C. N. Connolly, "Manufacturing "Spontaneity": the Australian Offers of Troops for the Boer War', *Historical Studies*, 18, 70 (1978), pp. 106-117 and L. Field, *The Forgotten War: Australian Involvement in the South African Conflict of 1899-1902* (Melbourne, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> This is true of all published references above, with the exception of the Australian War Memorial website.

to a poor understanding of how Australia dealt with its fellow colonies. Study of this topic reveals India to have been Australia's main point of contact, and Australia and India to be significant military partners in times of crisis.

Metcalf argues that India was expected to play a large role in the defence of the empire, as it was a power hub. Australia's role, though, was very different. In 1957, Richard Wilde discussed the expectation on Australia to contribute to Britain's efforts to put down the Boxer Uprising. He argues that Australia was expected to contribute and that people were extremely happy to do so. 80 Wilde argues in fact that the people were overly worried about overseas threats, and that volunteerism was unnecessarily strong, to the extent that it concerned Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. He also argues that there was competition amongst the separate Australian colonies, as well as New Zealand to make the largest contribution to the South African contingent, rather like siblings attempting to outdo each other in attempts to impress their parents.<sup>81</sup> From these multiple examples of India and Australia taking part in imperial conflicts well before major conflicts during World War One, we can see a clear pattern emerging of colonies being willing to contribute to the empire militarily. We can also see that they were expected to do so. What, then, was the expectation of each of them to contribute to each other's defence, not just to that of Britain? How strongly felt was the expectation and desire of India and Australia to contribute to each other's defence? Was it considered a natural part of the each state's military strategy?

The South African War and the Boxer Uprising are two excellent examples of imperial military conflicts for which Britain drew upon the strength of its colonies. As was discussed above, a large portion of the imperial soldiers that were sent to defeat the Boxer Uprising came from the Indian army, and Australia sent naval support and some soldiers. In the case of the South African War, Australian colonies sent volunteer forces, and India sent a contingent of soldiers from a British background.

Britain desired all the help it could get at the outbreak of the South African War and soldiers from all around the empire were recruited to fight. Approximately 30,000 men

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Wilde, "The Boxer Affair', pp. 51-65.

<sup>81</sup> Ihid

<sup>82</sup> Nicholls, *Bluecoats and Boxers*, pp. 1-20.

volunteered from the "self-governing colonies' of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. 83 As well as manpower, other resources from around the empire were required, as will be discussed here.

The discussion between India and Australia did not involve military strategy or meetings between the soldiers - rather it was an administrative matter involving trade with Australia. As the discussion took place in September 1899, it refers to a small squad of 5,900 soldiers of the British Army in India who were sent to South Africa just before war broke out the following month. <sup>84</sup> The British underestimated the Boers and 18,534 British soldiers were eventually sent from India over the course of the war, a small percentage of the British forces overall. <sup>85</sup>

The Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon wrote to the War Office in London that due the partial failure of the monsoon, there was difficulty in supplying the Indian contingent with enough food. This food was intended not for humans as it is described as "fodder' – feed for animals, in this case, most likely horses. He asked the War Office to "arrange for 1800 tons of Australian or other hay, or oats... to be shipped to Durban direct for the use of Indian Contingent.' The War Office acted on the request. 88

To continue with this theme, similar interactions took place in 1900, when the Indian army and Australian forces were sent to fight during the Boxer Uprising. The Indian role in the Boxer Uprising is poorly understood, with histories of the uprising failing to discuss its role.<sup>89</sup> The major contingents from the Australian colonies came from Victoria and New South Wales. The bulk of the Australian colonial military was preoccupied with the South

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<sup>83</sup> D. Judd and K. Surridge, *The Boer War* (London, 2002), p. 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> D. E. Omissi and A. Thompson, "Introduction: Investigating the Impact of the War', in Omissi and Thompson, *The Impact of the South African War*, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Omissi, "India: Some Perceptions', p. 217. T. Packenham, *The Boer War* (London, 1979) pp. 496.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> The Viceroy of India to London War Office, September 8, 1899: Collection 380/10 South African Expedition 1899: supply of compressed fodder from Australia for Indian contingent, 1899, L/ Military Department (hereafter MIL) /7/15634, in India Office Records (hereafter IOR).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> London War Office to the Viceroy of India, September 15, 1899: Collection 380/10 South African Expedition 1899: supply of compressed fodder from Australia for Indian contingent, 1899, L/MIL/7/15634, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> For histories of the Boxer Uprising, see J. W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (London, 1987), C. Martin, *The Boxer Rebellion* (London, 1968).

African War, and so naval forces were sent instead. Reservists and volunteers went along with the naval contingent. The operation was geared towards coastal defence.<sup>90</sup>

Similar patterns of communication emerged during the Boxer Uprising, when Indian army soldiers fought with Australian volunteers. The cooperation between India and Australia during the Boxer Uprising is not evidence of strong military connections. Rather, as with the South African War, communications covered the shipping of goods from Australia for the use of the Indian forces. In this case, forage from Melbourne was to be shipped to Wei-hai-Wei - 4000 tons of hay, 4000 tons of oats and 400 tons of bran. As with the South African War, communication covered the shipping of forage.

The communications begin with a request from London that the Viceroy arrange for supply of Tarpaulins at Wei-hai-Wei, presumably to protect the forage required. This was sent to Curzon on the 16 July 1900. He responded that he could arrange for the tarpaulins. <sup>91</sup> The first half of the documents then discussed acquiring and shipping forage from Australia in mid-August. The ships involved, the time they will leave, and the necessary time for them to unload the forage were all determined.

There are a number of points we can make from this exchange between the Viceroy and the War Office. First of all, it suggests a continuing relationship between India and Australia – in which Australia was viewed as a means of supplying India with necessary goods – such as horses and rams, as discussed in previous examples. Curzon mentions Australia by name, suggesting that he thought of Australia as a viable option for imports of such goods.

Another issue that must be addressed is the method of communication. Curzon made this request to the War Office in London, mentioning Australia by name. The War Office proceeded to arrange for the fodder to be sent to India from Australia. According to Metcalf's conception of imperial governance structures, one may have thought that this was unnecessary – and India could have sourced the fodder directly from Australia. This is very different to the situation in 1858, when decisions had to be made without official consent from London. The South African War and the Boxer Uprising were major struggles that involved a great deal of

<sup>90</sup> http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/boxer.asp, date accessed: 17 September, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Telegram to London Office, Lord Curzon, in L/MIL/7/15634, in IOR.

logistical difficulties – soldiers came from all around the empire to aid in the conflicts. The same could be said of the Indian Rebellion, but in this case communication networks were fast enough for London to manage all the logistics of the war. We have seen in previous chapters that the trade relationship continued to exist and be managed independently by India and Australia, even following the introduction of telegraph cables. We can tell in this case also that India still viewed Australia as a viable option for receiving goods. The military relationship between India and Australia with regard to planning (as opposed to trade) was partly one of convenience.

Clearly, Curzon on this occasion thought it best to inform London of the problem rather than to go directly to the Australian colonies. It is interesting also that London placed the order rather than a department within India. This represents more than just requesting a rubber stamp from London, as was seen with Australia's aid to the Indian Rebellion, but requesting the War Office to take control of the problem. The difference can be explained partly by the British underestimation of the Boers' strength, and by quicker communication as a result of the telegraph. London was able to maintain more control over its colonial forces. In the case of the South African War, Britain was able to micro-manage the relationship between India and Australia.

This was not the Indian army being sent to South Africa, but an "Indian contingent' that was actually made up of British soldiers stationed in India. As discussed above, the British were concerned about having Indian soldiers fight Europeans, as they would in the South African War. While the organisation of these soldiers therefore had to be handled by authorities in India, the background of the soldiers, and considering they were part of the British army rather than the Indian army, places the organisation of the force more in London's hands than Calcutta's.

The information available from two of these colonial wars suggests than on such military actions, there was not a great deal of communication between India and Australia. The coordination of major military operations in colonies was taken care of from London. However, the actions in 1857-8 and the continuing trade of horses and military equipment that went on between India and Australia throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century demonstrate the continued existence of a military relationship of sorts.

Comparing the methods of discussion between 1858 and the later colonial wars in the 1890s provides a valuable means of looking at the differences in communications structures brought about by telegraph cables. Telegraph cables allowed London centrally to manage military strategies, and be aware of resources and decisions being made from all around the empire.

From these examples, the Indian and Australia colonial governments were not expected to cooperate in matters when their respective armies were fighting together in colonial wars. While they did so out of necessity at the time of the Indian Rebellion, the introduction of international telegraph cables removed this necessity. Organization and detail in military matters were too important to be left to individual colonial governments. The independent decisions made by Canning and Denison were mandated by the slowness of communication between London and Sydney and cannot be explained solely by thorough consideration of the India-Australia relationship.

### **Indian Army Troops at Australian Federation Celebrations**

To conclude this discussion, in a manner that very neatly bookends the dates of this study, I will discuss Indian army soldiers sent to Australia to take part in the celebration of the Federation of Australia. The Federation of Australia was the result of a number of years of increasing nationalism in Australia. January 1 1901 marked the moment the Australian colonies were forged into an independent nation-state. In the ten years preceding the event, a series of meetings between the various Australian colonies took place, in which a constitution was agreed upon. The parade to mark Federation was an interesting ceremonial event. Federation could have been considered a break from empire, instead, the parade was more a celebration of empire and Australia's connection to it. Indeed, Australia's connections with the empire remained intact. A document intiating the Federation was signed following a parade through the streets of Sydney. Included in this parade were representatives of some militaries of the British empire, including India. The Military Department of the Government of India set out guidelines for the soldiers of the Indian army to be sent to Australia's major

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> On Federation, see, for example: J. B. Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* (South Melbourne, 2000); J. B. Hirst, *Australia's Democracy: A Short History* (Melbourne, 2002), pp. 74-124; J. Bannon, *The Crucial Colony: South Australia's Role in Reviving Federation 1891-1897* (Canberra, 1994) and R. Russell & P. Chubb, *One Destiny! The Federation Story: How Australia Became a Nation* (Ringwood, 1998).

Federation celebration in Sydney. The celebration in question was a parade through the streets of Sydney on January 1 1901.

A collection of 34 native officers and 66 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were sent: 30 came from the Punjab, 18 from Bengal, 16 from the Imperial Service Troops, 15 each from Madras and Bombay and 6 from Hyderabad. 93 In all of these cases there were 2 NCOs to each native officer with the exception of the Imperial Service Troops, which had 10 NCOs to 6 native officers. The group of 100 officers were split between Infantry and Cavalry. In most cases this was an even split, except for the Madras and Bombay commands, which were to be split 3/5 cavalry and 2/5 infantry. 94 All soldiers were to receive free passage in 1st class and free passage for one personal servant. "Native' officers travelled free in 2<sup>nd</sup> class and noncommissioned officers were to travel in 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Such arrangements were usual for the time in the Indian army; "native' officers were outranked by all British officers, and could never rise above them. Occasionally, even in dry administrative documents, the institutionalised racism of the Indian army is clear.

It is not clear from the description given by this document whether the 100 officers were the only Indian army soldiers who were sent, or whether there were rankers sent as well. However, amongst the listings of allowances contained later in the document, there is a listing for ,followers', which may refer to the Indian rankers who were commanded by the officers in question, or to the servants of the British officers. That only officers were present is confirmed by an article in the Argus detailing the arrival of Imperial and Indian troops to Sydney. The Indians arrived at the same time as the British, but upon separate boats. The article also states that 1,000 military personnel would march, from England, Scotland, Ireland, India and from the newly founded states of Australia. 95

The Indian soldiers were not alone in the procession of the Empire's troops. A description of the parade by the *Argus* is useful in showing which other troops made the trip. The largest contingents came from the British army, Australian soldiers who had recently returned from the Boer War and representatives of the other Australian colonies. 96 The other contingent apart from India was from New Zealand. These were not military soldiers but

<sup>93</sup> Military Department to the Adjutant-General in India, November 6 1900, in NLA-NAI, reel one, no. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> *The Argus*, 24 December, 1900, p. 5. <sup>96</sup> *Ibid*.

Maori guards of the New Zealand Premier. 97 The Argus refers to the Indian soldiers as "Duffadars'. "Duffadar' was a rank for NCOs in the Indian army Cavalry, equivalent to the British army rank of Corporal, so the term here was used inaccurately. 98

The ceremony and symbolism of the event is worthy of discussion. The selection of soldiers for the Commonwealth Celebrations appears to show which nations were of most importance to Australia. The Argus wrote:

Instead of the moist, rich smell of the Himalayas, which, when once it has got into a man's blood, remains with him always, as the teller of Indian tales puts it, the Duffadars had the pungent scent of young gum leaves in their nostrils... the Maori Guards of the Premier of New Zealand cantered past the gorgeous Indian troops, wearing the easy colonial seat in the saddle and the simple khaki uniforms which has proved that for them, at least, the race barrier is down forever <sup>99</sup>

The description goes on to speak of Scottish and Australian units weary from the South African campaign, which continued across the ocean:

All stood at ease, but all were ready, and when the order was given the groups that were resting under the trees fell into their places with astonishing smoothness and rapidity, and the heterogeneous detachments of troops from many climes were welded into a miniature army... 100

This description shows the symbolism behind the military parade. The choice of soldiers represents a cross section of the most important partners for Australia in the empire: Britain (including England, Scotland and Ireland), New Zealand and India. Britain was the leader of the empire, the "mother country' and founder. New Zealand was a close neighbour founded and developed in similar ways. And India was the nearby power centre of the empire, in the parade not just for the Indian army (a romantic symbol of British power), but also because of its relationship with Australia and with the region. The Indian soldiers did not stay on long after the Sydney parade, unlike some British army soldiers, who continued the Commonwealth Celebrations tour of the capital cities, not reaching Adelaide until late February. 101

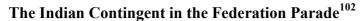
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> The Argus, 2 January, 1901, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> OED, Duffadar'. This definition is not entirely accurate, as Duffadar is a rank in the Indian army that can only be given to an Indian soldier. Any British corporal would outrank any Indian Duffadar. For a discussion of Rank in the Indian army, see Omissi (ed.) Indian Voices, pp. 1-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> *Argus*, January 2, 1901, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Adelaide Advertiser, February 26, 1901, p. 5.

There were no military soldiers from other colonies. This suggests that India had a privileged position within the empire both generally and with regard to Australia. India was the ceremonial pride of the empire, the jewel in the crown, as well as a major power centre. The Commonwealth of Australia celebrations show that India was considered as having an important relationship with Australia. It also shows that India and generals in the Indian army thought that it was worth the time of the Indian officers to visit Australia (at full pay) to take part in such a celebration.





### Conclusion

From the discussions above, we can see how the military relationship between India and Australia worked. The relationship was always there, along with trade in military supplies and horses discussed in the previous chapter. It would not be right to say that military

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an13143585-1, date accessed: 29 October, 2010.

cooperation took the form it did in other British colonies, as in Africa and South East Asia, where Indian soldiers were used to project power into colonies, as Metcalf argued. Due to Australia's isolation and relatively peaceful character, the Indian army was never required to fight in Australia as it was in other regions of the empire. But throughout this time, we see other forms of cooperation. Along with the consistent trade already discussed, there was regular contact over military matters.

We can also see the perception within Australia that India was a significant part of the empire and one with which Australia had natural connections. From the discussion of the possibility of New South Wales sending reinforcements to India in 1858, we can see people in positions of authority having genuine concern for India's position in the empire. While the New South Wales government sent British soldiers, as opposed to a local volunteer force, we can still see from this a great desire to send help. There was also, at least amongst the Executive Council, the willingness to fund a battery of artillery and to provide horses, though doing so ultimately proved unnecessary.

In the case of the India-Australia military relationship, the connections were mostly perceived, ceremonial and logistical. The events around the Indian Rebellion do suggest that there was a real military relationship and a commitment to helping each other with military issues as shown by Metcalf's examples. There was never a need, or the British never believed that there was a need, to use outside help in Australia. The fact that the use of the Indian army in such situations was commonplace, but not even considered in Australia, can be explained largely through the racial hierarchy at play in the British empire. Australia was not considered an occupied colony and the frontier war with the Aborigines considered barely more than a nuisance. There was never any need for India to project power to Australia by sending military or police reinforcements.

With the exception of the hurried sending of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment to India from Sydney, we can also see that India's contact with Australia with regard to major military issues was controlled by Britain. It can be partly explained by what Nicholls calls one of the two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> For discussion of frontier conflict with the Aborigines, see, for example: J. Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*, 1788-1838 (Canberra, 2003); H. Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, (Ringwood, 1987); H. Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Sydney, 2006); B. Attwood and S. G. Foster (eds), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra, 2003); H. Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain?: The Question of Genocide in Australia's History* (Ringwood, 2001) and R. McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory*, 1880-1939 (Carlton, 1997).

predominant concerns over British defence policy for the empire: the concern that, if left to their own devices, a colony may inadvertently involve England in a war.<sup>104</sup> The British kept a tight control over India's military actions and as a result tended to keep tight control over India's military dealings with Australia with regard to colonial military actions. In other areas, as seen in the discussion of trade, India and Australia were able to communicate with a greater degree of independence from London.

What we see between India and colonies other than Australia is India providing military support to Britain in its colonies. What we see in the India-Australia relationship is different. It is more Australia assisting India rather than India's resources being used to project power. This is not the exactly the same as the military role that Metcalf discusses. We do not see military action as much as we see cooperation. We see cooperation more akin to that of other administrative areas, in that India and Australia are helping each other, trading with each other and communicating with each other, but we still cannot get away from the fact that India does not have any military influence in Australia as it did in other colonies. It would be incorrect to call Australia part of ,,the empire of the raj', as Blyth refers to India's sphere of influence to the west. The reason for this difference is partly because of the relative stability of Australia compared to the rest of the world. The fear in Australian security was of invasion from a foreign power from the north.

Despite this, we still see India and Australia's perceptions of one another's role within the empire. India acts as a power centre and Australia behaves towards India, in regards to military matters, and the responses of the Australian colonies confirm that they also regarded India in this way. Australia is eager to help India when it makes requests, which we see in the Indian Rebellion and again towards the end of the period during the Boxer Uprising and the South African War. In terms of military cooperation, the India-Australia relationship mirrors Metcalf's conception in most ways, with the exception of direct military involvement within Australia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Nicholls, *Colonial Volunteers*, p. 1.

# **Chapter Four: Australian Attempts to Recruit Indian** 'Coolies'

This chapter discusses attempts made by the Australian colonies to recruit Indian labourers, in particular the serious efforts made by South Australia and Queensland in the 1880s. Queensland began negotiations with the Indian government in the 1860s: these fell apart, and were followed by four years of negotiations in the 1880s. South Australia discussed the possibility with the Indian government in the 1880s, and remained interested until the late 1890s. The Indian indentured labour system was well established within the British empire at this time, having started in Mauritius in the 1830s, after the abolition of slavery. The system was managed by the Indian government from Calcutta. Colonies hoping to recruit Indian labourers would have to comply with regulations mandated by Indian government legislation. In order to do so, representatives had to be dispatched to Calcutta to negotiate terms. My analysis in this chapter will focus on communication prior to the negotiation as well as the negotiations themselves. This chapter will trace the attempts to import Indian labourers to Australia from its beginnings through to the eventual backlash against Indian emigration, climaxing with Australian Federation and the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act (also known as the White Australia Act) on 1 January 1901.

Emigration is one of the key aspects of Metcalf's argument that India was a central power in the British empire. Metcalf looks at Indians travelling around the empire as both labour and as a means of projecting power. Indians were taken as labourers to Mauritius, Fiji, the Caribbean and Natal. On other occasions, they travelled as hired muscle with the Indian army on military engagements, as discussed in Chapter Three, or as police in Malava.<sup>1</sup> Metcalf covers these events in limited detail, focusing primarily on Natal to illustrate his broader argument.<sup>2</sup> With respect to the indenture system, he argues that the scheme was central to the working of the Victorian empire and shows the massive influence and importance of India within the British empire. He aims to understand the practices and perceptions that underpinned the day to day working of the indentured labour system in Natal. Blyth on the other hand does not discuss the system of indentured labour. This is primarily because the system did not function in East Africa and the Middle East, of Blyth's 'key axes'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena* (Berkeley, 2007), pp. 136-164. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 

Although my approach to the discussion will be similar to Metcalf's, there is a significant difference between the two situations in question. In Metcalf's chosen field of study the Indian indentured system of labour was fully functioning. However in Australia the system did not eventuate. Nevertheless, the perceptions that underpinned the negotiations, the power relationship that they demonstrate and the way the system would have functioned is illuminating. I will examine the power in the negotiations and how each government perceived its own position, and that of the other side. I will also examine the proposed regulations, which, while never passed into action, were brought to near completion in both cases. Analysing the communication reveals the attitudes of both governments towards each other and the indentured labour system. The functioning of the system, which would have followed the rules sent out for other colonies that had used Indian labour, shows the extent to which India was in control of Indian labour and how they could influence other colonies. The ultimate failure of the negotiations and the reasons behind that failure show much about the attitude of the Australian colonies towards India at that time and its growing perception of itself as a ,,white' nation. It represented a turning point in the way that the Australian colonies saw their relationship with India.

## **Indian Emigration to Australia**

Before discussing the historiography of the indentured labour system, I will place the negotiations in context by discussing the emigration that occurred prior to 1901. The movement of Indians to Australia is one of the aspects of the early India-Australia relationship that has received some scholarly attention. Rather than considering administrative or governmental connections, scholars have focused largely on the cultural relationships between the Indian settlers and the Australian societies around them.<sup>3</sup> There are examples of studies of small Indian communities living in Australia. None of these specifically discuss the issues targeted in this chapter, but they do provide some useful background information. Marie de Lepervanche has discussed in detail the history and culture of an Indian community in northern New South Wales at Woolgoolga. She discusses "experiments' with cheap coloured labour in the nineteenth century, with a view to uncovering how this community first

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For examples of such scholarship see: M. M. de Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia: An Account of Race, Class and Indian Immigration to Eastern Australia* (Sydney, 1984); H. Tinker, *Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth, 1920-1950* (St. Lucia, 1976) and A. Potts, ,,"I am a British Subject, and I can go wherever the British flag Flies": Indians on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales during the Federation Years', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 83, 2, pp. 97-116.

came to Australia. Some indentured labourers came in the 1830s and 1840s as cheap labour for pastoralists. An official attempt, through governmental channels, was made by Mr John Mackay in 1837. This occurred just prior to the indentured labour system being briefly banned as a result of abuses in Mauritius in 1839. New South Wales set up an Immigration Committee in 1838, which heard that 1,203 Indian labourers were in the colony, working for 111 settlers. Some employed as many as forty Indians. Records of these Indian labourers are incomplete because they were privately arranged. Free immigrants came later. Most originated from the North or North West of India. Most were Sikhs or Muslims, but Australians would call them "Hindoos'. Bilimoria and Ganguly-Scrase have discussed Indians in Victoria, but only briefly cover the period in the nineteenth century. Ultimately, the Australian scholarship discussed above only hints at the administrative structures behind the emigration, and does not thoroughly examine it.

Salim Lakha's discussion of Indian emigration to Australia divides the subject into three sections: the early nineteenth century, the later nineteenth century and 1901 onwards. From the founding of the Australian colonies until the 1860s, Lakha writes that there was only limited emigration from India. Mostly they were imported as personal labour for private citizens, but some did arrive in Australia in the 1790s on the crew of trade ships. Lakha cites numerous examples, mostly of wealthy landowners bringing Indians in to work either on the land or as servants. Late in the period there were some attempts to bring in large quantities of Indian labourers, which Lakha says "failed due to strong opposition in Australia against non-European migration'. Indeed, widespread racism and the resulting anti-immigration (for non-whites) policies are the dominant reason given by Lakha for the restrictions on Indian emigration and the failures of attempts at large-scale Indian immigration.

The period of discussion here is Lakha's second period: the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. He notes this period as beginning with 1861 and ending with Federation and the beginning of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> De Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> M. Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Melbourne, 1967), pp. 1-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> De Lepervanche, *Indians in a White Australia*, p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> S. Lakha, "Australia', in B. V. Lal, P. Reeves and R. Rai (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian Diaspora* (Honolulu, 2006), pp. 383-388.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> P. Bilimoria and R. Ganguly-Scrase, *Indians in Victoria (Australia): A Historical, Social and Demographic Profile of Indian Immigrants* (Geelong, 1988), pp. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Lakha, "Australia', p. 383.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

"White Australia' policy. Prior to 1860 only very minor migrations took place. Following this, small-scale immigration continued, but was extended to include "Ghans' and cameleers. 12 Camels were thought to be better suited to the Australian conditions than horses and bullocks. For example, three cameleers went on the notorious Burke and Wills expedition. Some wrote to their families in India to inform them of the opportunities available. The Queensland Indian Coolie Act of 1862 facilitated the immigration of Indian labour to work in northwest Queensland on cotton and sugar cane plantations. The act was "extended' in 1882 and repealed in 1886 without any migration taking place. 13 There was a considerable backlash against the prospect of Indian migration, resulting in these acts being repealed in 1886. Free immigration was still allowed and Indians continued to arrive. This was stopped in 1896 at a meeting of the colonial premiers, who called for the ending of all "non-white' migration to Australia. Indian emigration became all but impossible after 1901. 14 This is illustrated by the census figures in Australia after federation. In 1901 there were 7,637 people calling themselves Indian. By 1911 this figure fell to just under 4,000 and steadily declined until 1951, when it fell to 2,647. 15 By 1961 the number had rebounded to 4,065. 1901 saw Federation and the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act, which came to be known as the White Australia Policy. Indeed, the act was passed on the inaugural day of the Australian Parliament.

The main theme of Lahka's piece is that racism in Australia prevented Indian subjects from moving to Australia. This theme is indeed present in the work of several scholars. Annette Potts has written an article on the treatment of Indians in New South Wales during the "Federation Years'. Potts's work has a considerable focus on the reaction of the colony against the Indians, and their resulting poor treatment. De Lepervanche's work, discussed above, discusses the struggles of the Indian community at Woolgoolga against their treatment by racist elements in New South Wales. Judging by these works, opposition within the communities played a key role in limiting Indian (and other forms of non-white) immigration throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> A. C. Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy* (London, 1967), p. 146.

#### **Indentured Labour Regulations**

Before analysing negotiations between India and the Australian colonies, given the lack of discussion of this subject from historians of Australia, I will discuss the way that scholars have covered Indian emigration to other parts of the empire. Having an historical background to the negotiations is necessary to understand the course of the negotiations and the power of the Indian government within the negotiations. The system began in 1832 when Indians were sent to Mauritius. Indenture ended when the Indian Legislative Council, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, prohibited it in 1917.<sup>17</sup> Indian indentured labourers were known as "coolies". It is unclear exactly where the word originated from, but it described an Indian labourer, usually working for a European. The term appears to have first been used in India to refer to a hired labourer or burden carrier. It likely comes from a "caste' or "race' in Western India called *Koli*, who were perceived as savage and filthy. <sup>18</sup> While the term was initially used to imply an Indian labourer, it was later used to describe someone from China, particularly one forced to work in the sugar plantations. 19 Both the French and English used coolies from India. The term is presently loaded with negative and derogatory implications in South Africa and North America.<sup>20</sup>

There have been some extensive studies of the mechanics of Indian emigration known as the trade in Indian labourers. A great deal of research has also been done on the experience of Indian indentured labourers. In this case, the mechanics of the system are more relevant. However, an understanding of the life of a coolie is necessary fully to comprehend Queensland and South Australia's attempts to use Indian labour. Perhaps the most influential work on both the mechanics and experiences of the indentured labour trade is Hugh Tinker's A New System of Slavery. Tinker eloquently shows how the indentured labour system came to prominence after the end of the slave trade. His approach to the subject and his argument, that indenture was essentially a new system of slavery, has dominated discussion of the subject since his work's publication.<sup>21</sup> Clare Anderson has argued that this focus has become too allencompassing, and focused on indentured labour as a new system of cheap labour following

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> J. C. Jha, "Indentured Indian Migration (1835-1917)", *Journal of Indian History*, 48, 8 (1970), pp. 335-343.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> A. C. Burnell, W. Crooke and H. Yule, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and* Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive, (London, 1985), pp. 250-251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>20</sup> "Coolie", OED, Online Edition. <sup>21</sup> For an example of this approach in another colony, see R. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery: A Social History of* British Indian and Javanese Labourers in Suriname (Gainesville, 1998).

the slave trade. She argues that in the twenty years since the publication of Tinker's book, there has been too much work on the subject done within the context of slavery, which has prevented a deeper understanding of the subject. 22

Approximately 1.3 million Indians migrated as labourers around the Empire. 500,000 went to Mauritius, over 400,000 in the British West Indies, 150,000 to Natal and 60,000 to Fiji. 23 On top of this, 4.25 million Indians went to Burma, Malaya and Sri Lanka. 24 Brennan, McDonald and Shlomowitz were able to show where these labourers came from within India, and their economic and cultural background. <sup>25</sup> They were able to identify that people came from most of the many castes and communities across South Asia, and explained how recruitments shifted over time.<sup>26</sup> Lal was similarly able to perform a detailed statistical analysis of the background of the Indian labourers who came to Fiji. 27 Brennan writes that men who travelled to Fiji came from 263 identifiable castes. Bhana accomplishes a similar analysis of immigrants to Natal, though Brennan is critical of some aspects of his work. For example, Bhana did not separate males from females in his analysis. <sup>28</sup> For the purposes of this study, it is not necessary to go into great detail, but it is worth noting there was no "typical' Indian indentured labourer.

It is necessary to look briefly at how the system of Indian indentured labour worked in the empire, to understand exactly what the Queensland government was considering. Hugh Tinker provides an excellent discussion of how the Indian indentured labour system functioned. He covers the development of the system, the passage of the Indian labourers and life on plantations, the questioning of the system by anti-slavery societies and its eventual demise. The key narrative of his work is the use of Indian labour to replace slavery. This explains the title of his work, A New System of Slavery. 29 While his argument is compelling, his narrative is ultimately not fundamental to this study. However, a reading of the legislation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> C. Anderson, "Convicts and Coolies: Rethinking Indentured Labour in the Nineteenth Century', *Slavery and* Abolition, 30, 1 (2009), p. 93.

D. Northrup, Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1923 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 156–57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> S, Bhana, *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal 1860-1902: A Study Based on Ship's Lists* (New Delhi, 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> L. Brennan, J. McDonald and R. Shlomowitz, "The Geographic and Social Origins of Indian Indentured Labourers in Mauritius, Natal, Fiji, Guyana and Jamaica', South Asia, 21, Special Issue (1998), pp. 39-71. <sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Lal, *Girmitayas*. See also, Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 13-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Bhana also did not classify some groups in the same way as Brennan. Metcalf also points out some limitations of his study, though uses his statistics. See: Brennan et al., Indian Indentured Labourers', p. 40 and Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 136-164. <sup>29</sup> Tinker, *New System of Slavery*.

dictating standards for indentured labour without engaging with Tinker's narrative and argument would give a false impression of the life of the coolie labourer. The ordinances frequently discuss the minimum standards for life on plantations. The standards were enforced by the "Chief Protector of Emigrants' and several other "protectors' who operated below them. The heavy focus on the necessity of hiring "protectors' and enforcing minimum standards would seem to imply that the coolies were reasonably well looked after.<sup>30</sup> It could also imply that they needed protection. This was far from the case; indeed, the system was questioned throughout its existence by the British Anti-Slavery Society. 31 The bureaucratic language of the ordinance belies the conditions coolies truly faced. Tinker writes:

The watch-dogs – the protectors and the magistrates – supposedly set by the government to ensure that the harsh laws were not exceeded, were in most cases themselves involved in the system: they identified with the interests of the planters, not with those of a benevolent government, still less those of the coolies. 32

Though coolies were only held in legal bondage for a set period of years, most remained on the plantation for life. They could return to India at the end of their indenture, but would do so impoverished.<sup>33</sup>

Tinker uses compelling evidence from planters and government reports, mostly from the Caribbean and Mauritius, to show how conditions changed little from the days of slavery. Mortality rates in Trinidad for first-year planters were as high as 6.4 percent in 1867 and 1868. The rate dropped in 1871 to 1.9 percent. 34 The Immigration Agent-General drew a tragic picture of the Indian indentured labourer's life. He described hard, monotonous work in cold and wet conditions, after a year of which the worker finds that his first year's work has not paid for his rations. They would then be saddled with the debt of their rations and not be paid for their labour.<sup>35</sup> In other instances, coolies were paid only one day's wage for two days' work; a system which was found to be frequent in British Guiana. If a task was left unfinished on the first day and completed on the second, the first day's work would not be counted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> See, for example the correspondence between Buck and Palmer, which will be discussed in detail below. L/PJ (hereafter Public and Judicial)/6/1568/82, in India Office Records (hereafter IOR).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Tinker, New System of Slavery. The anti-slavery society's complaints are discussed throughout the narrative of Tinker's work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

towards salary. There was a system of appeal that the coolies could use.<sup>36</sup> These details come from the 1860s and 70s, but the system stayed in place into the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> When the details of Queensland's plan for indentured labour were being discussed, A. H. Palmer, Colonial Secretary of Queensland, wrote to the Government of India that he had consulted ordinances and correspondence from Trinidad, Jamaica, British Guiana and Mauritius when formulating the regulations for Queensland.<sup>38</sup> E. C. Buck also sent previous correspondence from Mauritius to Palmer.<sup>39</sup> Buck was a secretary with the Indian Revenue and Agricultural Department and handled the negotiations for the Indian government. These are all places where Tinker reveals abuses of the system. Presumably, this same system would have been open to the same abuses in Queensland.<sup>40</sup>

## **Indian Labour around the Empire**

Tinker's approach to indentured labour and the comparison to slavery may be the dominant narrative of the Indian indentured labour system, but it is not uncontested. Debate continues on the exact nature of the system. The extent to which it gave opportunities to poor Indians, as opposed to it being based on abduction and deception, is debated. According to Metcalf, this issue cannot be resolved on the available sources. This is not a concern for this chapter. However, looking at some individual examples of the indentured labour system can reveal how the regulations changed over time, and provides an important background understanding that underpins analysis of the negotiations between India and the Australian colonies. The system of introducing Indian indentured labour began in Mauritius in 1834. The system was then followed in 1838 in British Guiana and shortly after by other West Indian sugar colonies. In these two colonies, it was used primarily to replace slave labour. The system was extended to Natal in 1860 and to Fiji in 1879.

#### Mauritius

One of the best-understood examples of the indentured labour experience is Mauritius. Clare Anderson and Marina Carter have both done significant amounts of work on slavery

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See A. H. Palmer to E. C. Buck, October 25, 1881, L/PJ/6/1568/82, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> E.C. Buck to A. H. Palmer, February 2, 1882, L/PJ/6/1568/82, in IOR.

This cannot be proved, as the system was never adopted. It was not adopted for reasons other than the potential for abuse

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 136.

and indenture in Mauritius.<sup>42</sup> This is a useful example, as it was also the first colony to use Indian indentured labour. The system of indenture that was used in Fiji, Natal and the West Indies, which was also mooted for use in Queensland, ultimately began (and developed) in Mauritius.

Abuses of the system were uncovered in Mauritius early on, which led to regulations being drawn up to protect the labourers from unfair treatment. Act 15 of 1842 provided for the appointment of an "Emigration Agent' and a "Protector of Emigrants', replacing the original act which allowed Indians to take jobs in Mauritius. <sup>43</sup> The hiring of an Emigration Agent and a Protector of Emigrants became necessities before indentured labourers would be allowed into a colony.

In 1856, the Mauritian government treated emigrants on one ship so poorly that many of them died before they were able even to disembark. Indeed, there were high mortality rates for Indian labourers all around the world, but this was the incident that drew the attention of the Indian government.<sup>44</sup> The first step taken by the Indian government was to block all labour traffic. This forced the government of Mauritius to make changes dictated to them by India. The required regulations had to be enacted before labour traffic was allowed to resume.<sup>45</sup>

#### **The West Indies**

From Mauritius, the system spread around the British empire and British Guiana was the first to follow. Troubles in British Guiana and Trinidad led to more changes to the developing system. Some recent scholarship has focused on the cultural impact of the Indian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> On Mauritius see: C. Anderson, *Convicts in the Indian Ocean: Transportation from South Asia to Mauritius, 1815-53* (Basingstoke, 2000); C. Anderson, "The Politics of Punishment in Colonial Mauritius, 1766-1887', *Cultural and Social History,* 5, 4(2008), pp. 411-422; M. Carter, *Lakshmi's Legacy: The Testimonies of Indian Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mauritius* (Stanley, 1994); M. Carter, "The Transition from Slave to Indentured Labour in Mauritius, *Slavery & Abolition,* 14, 1 (1993), pp. 114-130; M. Carter, "Slavery and Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean', *History Compass,* 4, 5 (2006), pp. 800-813; M. Carter, "Strategies of Labour Mobilisation in Colonial India: the Recruitment of Indentured workers for Mauritius', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 3, 4 (1992), pp. 220-245 and M. Carter, "Indian Slaves in Mauritius', *Indian Historical Review,* 15, 1-2 (1988-1989), pp. 233-247. For another account of slavery in Mauritius prior to 1834, see M. Vaughn, *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius* (Durham, 2005). For a general history of the relationship between India and Mauritius, including significant discussion of Indian migration, see: S. Prasad, *India and Mauritius, Relationship of Two Centuries* (2000, Delhi).

<sup>43</sup> Bhana, Indian Emigrants to Natal, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

population in the West Indies. 46 One of the major issues in British Guiana was the ratio of men to women. This led to significant cultural problems, which were difficult for the labourers and caused something of a moral panic for the British administrators. Under the indenture system, there were fixed quotas of women who had to be sent along with men. In 1857, the ratio for British Guiana was 35 women per 100 men. In 1860, it was raised to 50 women to 100 men. However, there were protests amongst Guyanese planters when French colonies began to take Indian labour at a sex ratio of 25 women to 100 men. This resulted in the ratio for British Guiana being reduced to the same level. It was not until 1868 that 1860 levels were again mandated. 47

Although a ratio of two men to one woman caused social problems, the reduction in quota to four men to one woman created even more difficulties. Mangru discusses several social problems, exacerbated by unfair racial legislation and cultural issues. The lack of women could lead to law and order issues, as violence could result, with men fighting over women. Passions were further inflamed by infidelity. As Occasions were found of women being married to two men, and being unfaithful to both of them. Without commenting on the morality of the situation, it is easy to imagine that the situation in male-dominated plantation societies would be extremely tense.

Indian men were unwilling to marry women from lower castes or other races, because they would risk being excluded by their families. It was difficult for recruiters to find enough women to fill the quotas, which limited the number of men who could be sent. It was thought that women who would agree to go were "astray' and "anxious to avoid their homes and conceal their antecedents' and unlikely "to be received back into their families'. <sup>50</sup> Some British governors were concerned about the morality of the women in the colony, and morality more generally.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> For example, see D. Dabydeen and B. Samaroo (eds), *India in the Caribbean* (London, 1987); M. Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Slavery, and Indian Indentured Labor in the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 1998); K. O. Laurence, *A Question of Labour: Indentured Immigration into Trinidad and British Guiana* (London, 1994) and Jha, "Indentured Indian Migration', pp. 337-342.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> B. Mangru, "The Sex Ratio Disparity and its Consequences under the Indenture in British Guiana', Dabydeen and Samaroo (eds), *India in the Caribbean*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Report of Protector of Emigrants, in Mangru, "The Sex Ratio', p. 213.

Indian frustrations were exacerbated by racist legislation. The Heathen Marriage Ordinance of 1860 required Muslim and Hindu couples getting married to sign a declaration that there were no impediments to their marriage, such as previous or existing marriages and parental dissent. The licenses were expensive. This was not required for Christian marriages. Between 1860 and 1871, only twelve marriages were properly registered. In reality though, the number of marriages was far higher because they were performed in community ceremonies and remained unregistered. These marriages were not recognised by Guianese law. This suggests that there was a refusal to engage with the system within the Indian community.

Following the abuses of the system in British Guiana, Mauritius, Natal and Fiji had to follow more complicated processes, in which they had to convince the Indian government, not only of their need for imported labour, but also that they would follow the standard regulations. This is the process that South Australia and Queensland had to go through in the 1880s. Despite the abuses and resulting checks and balances, twelve territories were receiving Indian indentured labourers by 1865.

As the need for sugar grew, so too did the indentured labour system: it was no longer used just as a replacement for slave labour.<sup>53</sup> The system expanded most notably to Natal and Fiji. Some Indians also migrated to East Africa, but this migration was unusual, as it was largely voluntary in nature.<sup>54</sup> It was perhaps these major emigrations occurring just before 1880 that renewed Queensland's interest in gaining Indian labourers for its sugar industry.

#### Fiji and Natal

The examples of Fiji and Natal are important to Australian attempts to Indian labour, as the regulations proposed were frequently cited in the negotiations between South Australia, Queensland and India. They were harsher regulations than those placed on British Guiana and Mauritius. The first Fijian *Girmitiyas* (the name given to the Fiji Indians) arrived in 1879. Between 1879 and 1916, 60,000 Indian indentured labourers were introduced into Fiji to work

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Mangru, "The Sex Ratio", p. 213.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>53</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 136.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> D. Gupta, "South Asians in East Africa: Achievement and Discrimination", *South Asia*, 21, Special Issue (1998), pp. 103-136. For an interesting approach to the migration to Africa, see J. Geber, "Sources for Southern African History in the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library", *Africa Quarterly*, 36, 1 (1996), pp. 55-82.

on sugar plantations. The Fijian government had to argue with India to put their case and receive labour. The Indian government turned down Fiji in 1874, believing it was not ready. This alone shows that the Indian government was in control of the negotiations and the indentured labour system. However, five years later, led by Governor Arthur Hamilton-Gordon, Fiji was allowed to import Indian labour. Gordon had experience with Indian labour in Trinidad and Mauritius.

The Fijian ordinances set out rules very similar to those that were later proposed for use in Queensland. The salary of the immigration officers of the Indian government was to be paid by Fiji. Similarly, the cost of keeping the emigration systems in India such as recruitment of labourers, and the transportation between India and Fiji, was to be borne by the employers and the Fijian government. Girmitiyas were to work nine hours each week day and five hours each Saturday. They were not required to work Sundays and public holidays. 55 Regulations were put in place to protect workers from having their indenture extended unfairly. An employer wishing to recover lost work time due to a worker's absence would have to take the labourer to a stipendiary magistrate to have the contract extended.<sup>56</sup>

Metcalf uses the example of Natal in South Africa to discuss the indenture system, though he makes a point of stating that the colony is not unique by any means.<sup>57</sup> In looking at the operation in Natal, Metcalf finds how central the Indian administration was to the British empire. Metcalf concludes his work on Natal thus:

The interconnections of the empire provided a way of at once facilitating and, in principle, protecting emigrants, while India provided a reservoir of individuals willing to take up the opportunities they saw or hoped they would find in British colonies overseas. Had India not been part of the British Empire, recruitment of labor for colonial plantations would have been random, less organized, with the provision of fewer protections for migrants<sup>58</sup>

Metcalf's point can be seen in all colonies discussed above, not just Natal. In each case, the system of emigration agents, sub-agents, recruiters, employers and protectors was mandated by the Indian administration. India controlled the system, and thereby played a crucial role in the empire. The same can be seen even in the brief analysis provided above of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Lal, *Girmitiyas*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*. p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 138-164.

other colonies. By controlling the places where Indians were able to migrate to as workers, the Indian administration was able to ensure some basic protections. As for debate on the nature of the indentured labour system, Metcalf here simply points out that without the Indian government, it could have been far worse. India played the role of regulator.

By the time Queensland made its second application in the 1880s, the indentured labour system was well developed. However, while the system may have advanced by this time, it is important to state again Tinker's comment, that the bureaucratic language of the system, like the use of the phrase "protector of emigrants', belies the true nature of the system.<sup>59</sup>

The studies of specific Indian migrations around the empire are useful in putting the actual emigration from India to Australia in perspective, but, as we will see, the level of emigration could have been far higher. Barely a fraction of the 1.3 million Indian emigrant labourers ended up in Australia. According to the 1901 census, there were 7,637 people in Australia who considered themselves to be Indian. On three occasions, the mass importation of Indian "coolie" labourers was seriously considered but each time it was ultimately prevented. Only minor, private emigrations took place.

#### Queensland's 1862 legislation

Queensland was a possible candidate for Indian labour as it was seen as best used in tropical and semi-tropical areas. The north-west of Queensland was the ideal area. The types of industries in Queensland were also seen as appropriate for wide-scale importation. Queensland's economy was based largely on the production of sugar cane. According to Bilimoria and Ganguly-Scrase, the possibility that coolies might be recruited as cheap labour to the Australian colonies had been mooted as far back as 1779.<sup>61</sup>

The desire to have Indians in the colony was based on establishing a classic plantation system: the wealthy elite; a small technical and supervisory staff and many "coolies' to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Tinker, *New System of Slavery*, pp. 178-235. Chapter Six, "The Plantation' deals largely with this argument and with the conditions on the plantations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Palfreeman, White Australia Policy, p. 146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Bilimoria and Ganguly-Scrase, *Indians in Victoria*, p. 18.

perform the labour.<sup>62</sup> However, this was opposed by what Saunders called the "incipient urban liberal bourgeoisie who wanted a democratic white Australia'. Between 1863 and 1904, 62,565 Pacific Islanders were introduced into Queensland. The number within Queensland peaked between 1881 and 1884 at approximately 14,000.<sup>63</sup> This system was simpler for Queensland than hiring Indian labourers, because they did not have to follow the regulations set out by the Indian government.

The foreign labour question was a theme throughout Queensland's political history until 1901. It included hiring Pacific Island labourers, to work in Queensland's sugar industry. As the aim here is to look at Queensland's relationship with the Indian government, a discussion of the entirety of the political debates is unnecessary. The 1862 Indian Emigration Act was passed only three years after Queensland's separation from New South Wales. At the time, Queensland was considering how to bring in labour, and what industries to develop. One industry considered, indeed the first supported by the Queensland government, was cotton – a market dominated by the US. We should note that this was during the time of the American Civil War, when supply of cotton plummeted and its value increased significantly. Queensland's first attempt to attract Indian labour, though it did result in the passing of legislation, was extremely tentative. In 1868 *The Queenslander* described the 1862 legislation as a "dead letter' because no emigration ever took place.

While the regulations were passed, details still had to be agreed to by the Indian government. Disagreement arose over the wage of the emigration agent. The Queensland government "manoeuvred itself into a cul-de-sac' and would have embarrassed itself, were it not for the finding of a cheaper, more easily attainable source of labour – one without the baggage of the Indian government's protection of its subjects. <sup>68</sup> Pacific Island labourers were brought in to work in tropical regions, and the Indian coolie act was allowed to lapse.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> K. Saunders, "The Workers' Paradox: Indentured Labour in the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1920', in K. Saunders (ed.), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834-1920* (Manuka, 1984), p. 219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> I. N. Moles, 'The Indian Coolie Labour Issue in Queensland,' *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 5, 5 (1957), pp. 1345-1372.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1345.

<sup>66</sup> J. Darwin, After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires 1400-2000 (London, 2007), pp. 289-309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> The Queenslander, 1 February 1868, pp. 9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Moles, "Indian Coolie Labour', p. 1349.

The sugar industry in Queensland was a significant part of the colony's economy. However, unlike some sugar producing colonies, Queensland also had pastoral, mining and agricultural industries. <sup>69</sup> The sugar industry emerged in the 1860s, but suffered a collapse in the 1890s. It continued into the 1900s but took a different form. This distinguished Queensland from other colonies that took on Indian labour, as the economy was not as dependent on sugar production, and thus cheap plantation labour was not as urgently required as it would have been in Mauritius, for example.

#### Queensland's Negotiations with India in the 1880s

Following the events of the early 1860s, Queensland again began dealing with the Indian government over a renewed plan to use Indian labour in the 1880s. As with the hiring of coolies throughout the British empire, Queensland had to go through an established process and follow the rules of the Indian government, because indentured labour regulations had changed since 1862 (as a result of abuses in other colonies, discussed above) and so had to be updated. Correspondence between the Queensland government and the Indian government provides a useful overview of what Queensland had to do to get its application accepted. The Indian government corresponded with the Colonial Secretary of Queensland, A. H. Palmer, to discuss how to revive efforts to recruit coolies from British India.

Palmer initiated the discussion, writing to the Government of India explaining the reasons behind the push by the colony to obtain Indian labour. He writes that the sugar industry in Queensland was about to expand rapidly and about the fears that there was not likely to be enough labour. He was concerned that there would not be enough "coloured labour from the pacific islands' and so he wished to resume negotiations on possibility of Queensland using Indian labourers.<sup>70</sup> He notes that Queensland had been removed from the list of colonies to which coolies could legally be sent and so new legislation would have to be passed. Palmer asks how the Queensland government should proceed on the issue. Along with this letter, he attached the 1861 Masters and Servants Act of Queensland, which he hoped would be "sufficient for the protection of natives coming here".<sup>71</sup> The main point of this letter, however, appears to be to ask exactly what would have to be done to get Indian labour to Queensland. Palmer wrote: "I shall be obliged if you will favour me with your views on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

A. H. Palmer to The Secretary to the Government of India, Calcutta April 15, 1881, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

prospects of Indian emigration to Queensland, also on these regulations generally and with any suggests for their amendment'. 72

The correspondence with Palmer was taken up by Buck. He responded to Palmer on 13 September 1881. Buck covered several issues, that had been discussed by the Governor General of India, in response to Palmer's initial request for advice. The first is that the coolies only be used for agricultural labour in tropical and semi-tropical areas. The next concern is that the legislation in India that made emigration to Queensland legal in 1864 had been superseded in 1871. As Queensland did not update their rules, they were omitted from the 1871 legislation and would nevertheless have to be resubmitted. Queensland would have to hire a new agent in India and decide whether recruitment to Australia would be best targeted in the north or south of India. The Indian government was also concerned with the lack of experience of the potential employers in dealing with Indian coolies. Buck wrote that this would mean that both governments would need to consider what provisions would be necessary for accommodation and treatment of the coolies. He continued:

Without some well-considered organisation the successful establishment of a system of emigration from India to Australia might be imperilled by the failure, at the initial stage of the undertaking, to take some simple precautions in the necessity for which all would concur; and I am to mention, as probably an indispensible measure, the appointment in your colony of a Protector of Emigrants possessing Indian experience and a knowledge of Indian languages.<sup>75</sup>

Buck goes on to say that, should the salary be reasonable, the appointment could be made from within India. This statement suggests that there was concern within the Indian government that Indians in Australia might not be treated properly. This is due to Australia's lack of experience with coolie labour, but may also have been a result of Australia's history with migration from Asia. Nothing further was stated, but the implication was that the Indian coolies would require protection in order to be treated properly. This may be a reference to Australia's severe troubles with Chinese migration during the gold rushes and it is likely that Australia's struggles with foreign migration at the time were well known.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> E. C. Buck to A. H. Palmer, The Colonial Secretary, Queensland, September 13, 1881, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Buck to Palmer, September 13, 1881, in L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> See on this point, for example, A. Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California*, *1850-1901* (Sydney, 1979).

Buck asks for information regarding the state of Queensland's industries and an "essay descriptive of the colony." From these documents we can see that with regard to coolie labour, India was ultimately responsible for making the decisions. Queensland had to satisfy India's requirements before it was able to take Indian labourers. It was the duty of the Queensland government to comply with the Indian government's regulations before a large scale migration could begin.

Buck attached sections of several ordinances relating to the importation of coolies for the benefit of the Queensland government. Included among these were the rules used in British Guiana, Fiji and Mauritius.<sup>78</sup> Palmer sent a short reply to Buck, to which he attached a draft of the coolie regulations. Palmer replied that a representative of Queensland would be hired to work on a Code of Regulations to update Queensland's Coolie Act of 1862. C. P. O'Rafferty was chosen to perform the task, as he was experienced with India. The letter implies that it was common practice to send an "Emigration Agent' under the Indian Emigration Act of 1871.<sup>79</sup>

Buck replied that the selection of O'Rafferty was acceptable to the Indian government, and that the draft regulations were also acceptable, provided that the "Protector of Immigrants' position was filled.<sup>80</sup> He also pointed out that the provisions had been re-arranged according to the provisions in Fiji, but not changed significantly. At this stage, we can tell from the letter that O'Rafferty had been engaging in discussions in Calcutta and had agreed to some minor changes: such as increasing the fixed monthly wage from 12 shillings to 15.<sup>81</sup>

Buck wrote that the colonial government would have to pay for the coolies to arrive in the first place. 82 This response shows much about the nature of the indenture system once again. Even though the system was managed largely from India and all aspects of the legislation mandated by the Indian government, the colonies had to pay. Buck continued to state that the colonies could then expect to recover the cost from the employers. 83 Buck

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Buck, to Palmer, September 13, 1881, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Palmer to Buck, October 24, 1881, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Buck to Palmer, February 2, 1882, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*.

suggested that the cost of passage for each emigrant would be at least £12.<sup>84</sup> India continued at this point to press its demand for a Chief Protector of Immigrants. More details were given to Queensland: the Protector would work in Brisbane, be selected by the Indian government, and be paid for by the Queensland government.<sup>85</sup> Reference was made to South Australia's application, which was being processed at the same time. Queensland was also told that they must appoint a permanent representative to India (presumably O'Rafferty had returned to Queensland), as South Australia had been told to do. It was stated that in both cases, the agent would be selected by India, but paid for by the colony in question.<sup>86</sup> The response of the different colonies to this demand will be discussed in detail below.

What can we say about the process to this point? India was clearly in command of this process and at very little cost to itself. We can see Metcalf's conception of India's role in the British empire illustrated very clearly here: when Queensland needed labour it went to India with a request. India had rules and regulations set out for the use of the population as labour around the empire, which Queensland would have to comply with if they were to get what they wanted. India was the only party in these talks in a position to make demands. The statement that the permanent emigration agent would be selected by the Indian government then paid for by the colonial government in question illustrates this point very strongly. The Queensland government, for its part, did not seem at all bothered by this and accepted all demands. Queensland might not have been entirely happy with this situation, but this does not appear in the correspondence. Furthermore, the Indian government was happy to make changes to the draft legislation of the Queensland parliament. This is a considerable power. Of course, Queensland was not obliged to pass the legislation into law, but this power does not seem to have been considered as an issue. We can see in this case that India's relationship with Australia displays key elements identified in Metcalf's model of India's relationship with other colonies. Metcalf discusses India's influence on legislation around the empire as a major aspect of his work.<sup>87</sup> The Indian government's influence on Australian legislation was less pronounced, but this was still a notable aspect of the relationship.

#### **Draft Regulations**

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Metcalf devotes a chapter to the impact of British experiences in India on legislation for other ,colonial people', see Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, pp. 16-46.

This leads us to look at the draft regulations that were considered acceptable to the Indian government and considered by the Queensland government for Indian immigration into Queensland. This document was sent to Queensland by the Indian government, after the Indian government made some alterations, and was attached to a letter by Buck on 2 February 1882.<sup>88</sup> It is worth repeating here that, in order for Indian labour to be sent to a foreign colony, the colony in question would first have to conform to the requirements of British India.

There are several key points in the proposals, which show how the Indian indentured labour system worked around the British empire and how India was central to it. The draft legislation contains in total 89 sections in 13 parts. The first area of discussion, after the definition of terms, is the job of the Emigration Agents in India and Queensland. The agent in Queensland is given the title of "Chief Protector of Immigrants'. The Chief Protector's job was essentially to manage the entire scheme. It is important to bear in mind here - that this was how the rules were defined, not how they worked in practice in other colonies. We must bear in mind Tinker's argument when discussing these rules. The Chief Protector, if we accept Tinker's argument, was more to protect the employers rather than employees. 89 The Chief Protector's role was backed up by "several Police Magistrates', who would also act as secondary Protectors of Immigrants. 90 The main job of the "Protectors' was to enforce the administrative terms of the legislation. They had to ensure that the immigrants received proper treatment from their employers (including provision such as housing and clothing) and were required to inspect properties once every three months. They had to witness the signing of contracts and send copies to the employer and the Chief Protector. The Chief Protector's role was essentially to manage the system. For example, all employers must report to the Chief Protector on issues such as payments, living conditions and work hours. The Chief Protector could also accept or reject applications from prospective employers. 91 There is a penalty for attempting to obstruct the Chief Protector, the punishment for which is a maximum fine of £5.92

According to these draft regulations, the Indians were to be paid every three months. They could also choose to have a portion of their pay sent to a family member in India. They

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> "Revised Draft Regulations for Indian immigration Into Queensland', 2 February, 1882, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.
 <sup>89</sup> Tinker, *New System of Slavery*, pp. 177-236.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> "Revised Draft Regulations for Indian Immigration into Queensland", 2 February, 1882, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR. <sup>91</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

received a set amount of food (rationed weekly) and clothing (yearly). There were also laws regulating the hours of work, which state "no immigrant shall be forced to work more than nine hours on each of six consecutive days in every week.' Also, the times for breaks in work days are covered. <sup>93</sup> The regulations go on to say that "time work' could be replaced with "task work', provided the pay is no less. This is the provision discussed above which some employers used to avoid paying employees full pay in the Caribbean. <sup>94</sup> Similar abuses existed in Mauritius. In 1882 in Mauritius, the average wage was Rs 6.79 per month and the average deductions were Rs. 2, meaning nearly a third of all wages were withheld. This occurred in 1882, even after 50 years of supposed reforms of the system. <sup>95</sup>

Provisions were made for hospital relief and medical attendance. Each employer with more than five immigrants would have to provide a separate building for medical care and treatment. It was to be inspected by the Protector. <sup>96</sup> These provisions were mandated by the Indian government, as stated by Buck in the letter to which the provisions are attached.

These negotiations highlight one of the key elements of Metcalf's argument. The Indian government was very much in charge of the Indian indentured labour system. They were able to dictate rules to other colonies and, in this case, make changes to the draft legislation of another colony. That they were able to do so shows the extent to which they were comfortable re-writing Queensland's proposed regulations. To begin with, Buck wrote that they had been re-arranged in accordance with the regulations used in Fiji. Significant changes were also made to the manner in which the emigrants were to be selected in India. <sup>97</sup> Laws were changed regarding the percentage of males to females, the hours of daily labour and the provisions for medical treatment. While this was to be an act of the Queensland parliament, it was very much the legislation of the Indian government.

The regulations sent in early 1882 were amended by India, but were ultimately not acceptable to the Queensland government of the time. Tinker writes that the legislation was delayed for a further three years by a dispute over Queensland's desire for the Indian

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Tinker, New System of Slavery, p. 187.

<sup>95</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> *Ibid*. E. C. Buck to A. H. Palmer, February 2, 1882, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> E. C. Buck to the Colonial Secretary to the Government of Queensland, 2 February, 1882, L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

labourers to be forced home after their period of indenture. 98 There were only two points that the Queensland government was uncomfortable with. First, Queensland did not wish to pay the salary of the Chief Protector because the Chief Protector was to be chosen by India. Their second, and major concern, was changing the regulations to prevent Indian labourers from staying in Queensland at the end of their indenture.

In January 1882, Palmer resigned and Thomas McIlwraith, Premier and Treasurer, gave up his position as treasurer and took over the post of Colonial Secretary. 99 He sent a letter emphasising the government's concerns over Indians staying in Queensland. Palmer does not feature in the correspondence from this point onwards. He wrote that the regulations had neglected to prevent Indians labourers who had finished their period of indenture from working outside of tropical and semi-tropical areas. He wrote: ....you will at once see how necessary it is to guard against the indiscriminate employment of this labour by other than those for whose particular benefit it is to be introduced.' 100 Essentially, the Queensland government was trying to ensure that no Indians could become free to work within the colony as white inhabitants would. This perspective is confirmed later when this request was disputed by India. McIlwraith wrote:

In making the amendments to which your Government has taken exception, this government was influenced solely by the desire to confine these labourers to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture, as was explained in my letter, of the 21<sup>st</sup> of June last, by compelling them to return to India at the expiration of their engagements, or to renew their contracts with employers engaged in this description of agriculture, and thereby prevent them from mixing with the European population in the several towns in the colony. <sup>101</sup>

In this comment, the underlying racism, often obscured by the bureaucratic language of these administrative documents comes through very clearly. By using the phrase "indiscriminate employment', an extremely unusual statement, McIlwraith was implying that the Queensland government was concerned about Indians becoming a part of the Queensland

98 Tinker, New System of Slavery, pp. 271-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> J. X. Jobson, "Palmer, Sir Arthur Hunter (1819-1898)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 5 (Melbourne, 1974), pp. 390-392 and D. Dingan, 'McIlwraith, Sir Thomas (1835 - 1900)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5 (Melbourne, 1974), pp. 161-164. <sup>100</sup> Thomas McIlwraith, Colonial Secretary, to E. C. Buck, 6 May, 1883, L/PJ/6/12/567, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> McIlwraith to Buck, 21 June, 1882, in L/PJ/6/12/567, in IOR.

population. 102 This is made completely clear when in the second letter he writes his concerns about the Indians, mixing with the European population'. 103

These comments suggest that racism in Queensland was playing a significant role in its approach to taking in Indian labourers. Queensland wanted cheap and, as Tinker argues, ",disposable' labour, but was uneasy about actually having Indians in the colony. The Indian government was not willing to accept the amendments made by Queensland. The Queensland government was told that it would have to pay for the salary of Chief Protector, which they ultimately accepted. India only took exception to the proposed punishment for Indian labourers who failed to return to India when no longer contracted: imprisonment. After McIlwraith's defence and reiteration of Queensland's desire to block Indian immigrants staying in the colony on 21 June 1882, Buck aided the Queensland government with its regulations to achieve its desire of keeping Indian labourers out of mainstream society. Buck suggested that Queensland re-write Schedule A of the regulations to state very clearly that Indian labour could only be used for tropical agriculture and that any re-engagement of a labourer would have to be cleared by the Protector of Immigrants and a police magistrate. 104 He went on to state that Queensland could pass its own law making it illegal for any employer in Queensland to hire an Indian outside of tropical labour. He asked that no penalty be imposed on Indians for taking employment outside of tropical agriculture. 105

In 1883, whether or not to bring in Indian labour became an electoral issue as well. One candidate for North Brisbane, William Brookes likened having Indian labour in the colony to outbreaks of measles, cholera and smallpox: "If all their terrible epidemics were to come together they would not constitute so a terrible calamity to Queensland as the permanent establishment within our territory of coloured labour. According to the press report of the speech, this particularly vitriolic comment against Indian labour was met with applause. In the same speech, Brookes also raised fears that Indian labourers may be given the vote. 107

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> McIlwraith to Buck, 6 May, 1883, in L/PJ/6/69/455, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> McIlwraith to Buck, 21 June, 1882, in L/PJ/6/12/567, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Buck to McIlwraith, 15 September, 1883, in L/PJ/6/12/567, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> The Brisbane Courier (Old: 1864-1933), Saturday 18 August, 1883, p. 5. Full name is not given in the article in question. 107 *Ibid*.

As it turned out, Queensland's disputing of India's regulations caused a delay in approving them until late 1883. This dispute was significant in delaying the intake of labourers, and revealed much about the attitude towards Indian immigration within Australia, but ultimately amounted to very little. In the time it took to overcome these issues, the intake of Indian indentured labour became an electoral issue in Queensland. McIlwraith had infuriated the working class by his attempt to bring in Indian labour. McIlwraith was defeated easily in the July elections. Other aspects of the McIlwraith government's labour policy, its planned transcontinental railway and allegations of corruption in land grants also counted heavily against it in the election. 109

On 13 November, 1883, McIlwraith was replaced by Samuel Griffith. On 23 December 1883 the new Colonial Secretary in Queensland wrote to the Indian government to inform them of the replacement of McIlwraith with a change of government. The letter (the author is unnamed) stated that, although the regulations as suggested by Buck were acceptable, they had decided that ,,it is not the intention of the present government of this Colony to submit to Parliament for its approval any Regulations for the introduction of Indian immigrants'. 110 He expressed his regret that the Government of India had been put to so much trouble. There is no further information given in this letter as to why this decision had been taken. Griffith repealed the 1862 Act that was the foundation for the attempts to bring in Indians in the 1880s. This removed any chance of widespread Indian immigration to work on Queensland's sugar plantations. Griffith was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to block any further non-white immigration into Queensland. Saunders writes that by 1885, the Liberals were already committed to a white Australia immigration policy. Griffith was broadly opposed to the hiring of any "Asiatic' labour. 111 In 1885 the Pacific Island Labourers Amendment Act was passed to prohibit further introduction of Pacific Islanders into the colony after 1890. The federal Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 followed it. This prevented any Pacific Islanders from migrating to Australia after 31 December 1904, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Dignan, 'McIlwraith, Sir Thomas (1835 - 1900)'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> R. B. Joyce, 'Griffith, Sir Samuel Walker (1845 - 1920)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 9 (Melbourne, 1983), pp. 112-119. Waterson, in his very brief history of McIlwraith's time in Queensland, does not discuss the electoral defeat in detail, and fails to mention the Indian labour issue. Rather, he lists ,regional separatism' – the north-south divide – which was partly caused by the Indian labour issue. See D. Waterson, *Personality, Profit and Politics: Thomas McIlwraith in Queensland, 1866-1894* (St Lucia, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> The Honourable Colonial Secretary to the Government of Queensland to the Secretary to the Government of India, December 13, 1883, L/PJ/6/12/567, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Griffith minuted on May 2, 1888 that ,this Govt does not employ Asiatic labour'. See R. B. Joyce, *Samuel Walker Griffith* (St Lucia, 1984), p. 102.

provided for their mass deportation in 1906 and 1907. 112 As Queensland was the only state to bring in Pacific Islanders for labour, this act was aimed mainly at Queensland's Pacific Island population. 113

The final results of the attempts to bring in Indian labour show a significant issue in the relationship between India and Australia. In this case, the relationship was held back by the racial attitudes within the Australian population. Indian emigration was stopped by widespread opposition, from political leaders in Queensland and from the voters who elected them. The vision of Australia as a "white' nation, which became institutionalised just over 15 years after the door was finally shut on Indian indentured labour to Queensland, appears to have played a significant role in this decision. This represents a dramatic shift in the relationship between India and Australia. Instead of behaving submissively towards India, Queensland rejected India's control, and with it its superiority, in order to chase its goal of being a purely white colony.

While India had control over labour and greater administrative power, Queensland took the "moral' high ground with India – as that of a pure white nation. By necessity, India could not be a racially pure nation. Australia's belief that it could be in this case gave it an air of superiority. Of course, the concept of a "white Australia' was just that, a concept. The Australian colonies did have an indigenous population, but they were not shown the same level of respect as other non-white populations in the British empire. Queensland still took Pacific Island labour, but did so because they could enforce their departure far more easily than with Indian labour.

If we recall Tinker's descriptions of the indentured labour system, most coolies were usually stuck on the land of their employers. Queensland's insistence upon compulsory return passages at the end of a contract shows that even when attempting to have Indians work as labourers, they did not want a non-white population to gain a foothold in the colony. When we considered the acts passed by the Griffith government just after their election to limit further the use of other non-white labourers we can see that this was at the very least a factor in their decision to put a stop to Queensland's participation in the Indian indentured labour scheme.

Saunders, "Indentured Labour in Queensland', p. 236.Potts, "I am a British Subject', p. 99.

#### 'Coolies' for South Australia?

The development of the Northern Territory had created a great desire for "coolie' labour. In 1874, this desire was expressed by C. J. Coates in his correspondence to the South Australian government when he wrote of the need for "Chinese or some other colored labour, without one single moment's unnecessary delay, in order to possibly avert the ruin at present impending over existing companies in the Northern Territory.' His plea for coloured labour could not have included Indians because the businesses he listed as asking for labour were almost entirely gold mining industries. As discussed in Chapter Two, the South Australian government was working on ways to develop the Northern Territory since they had taken administrative control of it in 1863. The South Australian government made attempts up until the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901 to bring in outside labour. Ultimately, though, the only major immigration was Chinese, and these immigrants worked as both "coolies' and as merchants.

Langdon Parsons, the South Australian Minister for Education, was a key figure behind the push for Indian labour. Aside from his communication with Buck and Major John Fergusson, who was hired in 1882 to represent the South Australian government to the Indian government, he travelled to North Queensland to investigate the sugar system and the Queensland government's attempts to use Indian labour. He published the narrative of his trip, interspersed within an argument for bringing Indian labourers to the Northern Territory. While the lengthy title of his book does not state whether or not he is considering Indian, Chinese or other "coolie" labour, he discusses specifically the Indian indentured labour system.

Major Fergusson was the brother of Sir James Fergusson. <sup>117</sup> James and John Fergusson were close, with John living in Government House from 1870-1873, during his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> C. J. Coates, in "Correspondence RE Coolie Labour' South Australian Parliamentary Papers (1874), no. 65, p. 2.

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115 &</sup>quot;Correspondence RE Coolie Labour' South Australian Parliamentary Papers (1874), no. 65, p. 2. Presumably he did not know at the time that Indians would not have been allowed to work in gold mining industries.

116 J. L. Parsons, *The Sugar Industry in the Mackay District: Notes of a Trip Among the Sugar Plantations: the Coloured Labour Question in Queensland: and The Northern Territory as a country for the Growth of Sugar and other Tropical Products: and the Advantages of Coolie Labor for the Northern Territory* (Adelaide, 1883).

117 James and John were the sons of Sir Charles Dalrymple-Fergusson 5<sup>th</sup> baron of Kilkerran and Helen Boyle. James was the 6<sup>th</sup> baron of Kilkerran. See C. Mosely (ed.), *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage: Clan Chiefs, Scottish Feudal Barons* (Wilmington, 2003), vol 1, edition 107, p. 1412.

brother's term as governor of South Australia. <sup>118</sup> In this time he worked as a private secretary and an *aide-de-camp* in his brother's administration and played cricked for South Australia. <sup>119</sup> In 1882 he was Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General of the South Australian Military forces. <sup>120</sup> According to newspaper to a newspaper reports at the time, the selection of John as chief negotiator was wise, as he would have the benefit of the experiences of Sir James as governor of South Australia. <sup>121</sup>

Parsons uses Fiji as an example for how the system might work in the Northern Territory. He argues that if the coolies had been successful in Fiji having started as recently as 1879, "evidence that they have given satisfaction and proved remunerative there will be even more weighty than any conclusions drawn from old sugar-growing countries.' He uses Fiji because it was far more recent, and had only taken Indian labour once the system had been well established (as opposed to somewhere like Mauritius, where abuses had first been uncovered.) Parsons was worried only about the profitability of using coolies, and does not oppose using Indian labour in the Northern Territory. He also provides attempts to dissuade the public from moral concerns raised about coolies: that they may be abducted, that they are poorly looked after and that they resemble slaves. He quotes a doctor from Rockhampton, C. L. Cunningham, who worked as protector of emigrants in the West Indies for two years. Cunningham emphatically denied that coolies were abducted or that they resembled slaves, and stated that they were well looked after on ships and on land. 123

South Australia first contacted the Indian government in 1879 to begin negotiations over proposed emigration from India. Buck wrote to the Chief Secretary to the government of South Australia to suggest that Queensland and South Australia should consider uniting in their efforts to receive Indian labour. They could send the same representative to negotiate with the Government of India. 124 This idea was rejected by the South Australian government, who did not want to align themselves too closely with Queensland. Parsons stated in the draft of a dispatch to the Indian government that this was because South Australia was concerned

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> South Australian Government Department for Environment and Heritage "Old Government House Information Sheet' (Adelaide, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> South Australian Register, 5 December, 1872, p. 5. The South Australian Advertiser, 20 March 1872, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> South Australian Register, 25 November, 1881, p. 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> E. C. Buck to the Chief Secretary to the Government of South Australia, September 13, 1881, in L/PJ/6/70, in IOR

that Queensland was beginning to bring in considerable numbers of Polynesian workers which may have caused "embarrassment and delay" if the two colonies were tied together in negotiations. 125

The South Australian Government already had a bill in mind before Major Fergusson was sent to India. The Chief Secretary wrote:

Major Fergusson leaves by the S.S. *Rome* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> instant, and takes with him copies of a Bill, based upon the British Guiana Act of 1873, which this Government would have brought before Parliament during the past session, but for the repeated advices of the Indian Government that before satisfactory legislation could take place it was necessary that a representative should be deputed to confer with the authorities in India. <sup>126</sup>

The same letter continued to state that South Australia wanted to work with the Indian government, and respected its intentions:

While realizing the importance of securing for the development of the Northern Territory an abundant supply of coolie labour, this Government desires to assure the Government of India of its determination to meet in a liberal spirit the requirements of the Indian Government for the welfare of its subjects, and also to do all things necessary for their protection and comfort while under engagements in the Northern Territory. 127

South Australia shows in this letter that it had a strong understanding already of what was necessary to gain Indian labour. Their decisions were well received by the Indian government.

Major Fergusson quite quickly negotiated legislation acceptable to both parties. He noted some problems with the Queensland regulations, which he had looked at to compare with the South Australian proposals. Only "one or two' were noted as problems: the main one being that as the area was about to be settled for the first time, there would be very little opportunity for local magistrates to serve as protectors of emigrants. <sup>128</sup>

The South Australian government's selection of British Guiana was welcomed by the Indian government. Buck responded:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Langdon Parsons, "Draft Dispatch to Indian Government', in: GRG/24/6/<u>1881</u>/2601, in State Records of South Australia (hereafter SRSA).

<sup>126</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> E. C. Buck to the Chief Secretary to the Government of South Australia, September 13, 1881, L/PJ/6/70, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> J. A. Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory', South Australian Parliamentary Papers (1882), no. 42.

As it [the legislation] is closely modelled on the British Guiana Ordinance of 1873, the Government of India has no hesitation in accepting it, subject to the amendments which will be hereafter mentioned, as satisfying the requirements of section 24 of the Indian Emigration Act. 129

The changes Buck referred to were mainly small administrative issues relating to differences between South Australia's work and that of British Guiana, and changes to the immigration system since emigrants were sent to British Guiana. Changes were made in the wording of specific sections of the act, most of which did not drastically change the meaning of the sections. In most cases, the changes tweak the meaning so as to slightly favour the Indian labourers, or just to clarify the meaning of the section. For example, in section 142, Buck asks that after the words "free passage back' the words "to India' be inserted. A change to section 45 (the section which prevents child labour) adds a rule which prevents children from signing an indenture. A new section is added to ensure that where there is no fuel (such as firewood) or water easily accessible for an immigrant, the plantation owner must provide them with these resources free of charge. The section of the section which prevents children from signing an indenture. A new section is added to ensure that where there is no fuel (such as firewood) or water easily accessible for an immigrant, the plantation owner must provide them with these resources free of charge.

In August 1883, the Indian government sent the South Australian government a large collection of documents relating to indentured labour emigration. It sent Act no. VII of 1871, the Indian Emigration Act. <sup>133</sup> This was the act present at the time that all colonies must follow if they were to receive Indian labour. Along with this Act, the example of Natal was used to show the South Australian government how the system would function. Along with the necessary regulations, several documents from the recent emigration to Natal were sent to South Australia as examples. The medical allowances for Indians emigrating to Natal, including several sets of specific regulations, such as the "Proportion of medicines necessary for a ship carrying emigrants to Natal'. Others included the emigration certificates, for men, women, girls and boys and the contract that had to be signed by each Indian emigrant; a "Notices to Coolies who may emigrate to Natal' and the advertising used to promote emigration. <sup>134</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> E, C. Buck to the Chief Secretary to the Government of South Australia, 4 February, 1882, L/PJ/6/70, in IOR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> GRG/24/6/<u>1884/</u>2116, in SRSA.

<sup>134</sup> Ihid.

While in India, Major Fergusson sent reports to Parsons and the South Australian Government, which provide much useful detail on the course of the negotiations instead of just noting their final conclusion. One major concession to the South Australian government was allowed by India. Indian workers would be allowed to work on railways. Buck wrote that Major Fergusson had mentioned to the Government of India that this was a wish of the South Australian government. Fergusson expected that this "concession' would be granted. This appears to be outside the norm of Indian indentured labour. Buck mentions in his letter that this could be allowed, under strict conditions. Queensland requested Indian labour be used in different forms of agriculture, but this was denied. The infrastructure development was to be limited to railways only, and done only by workers specifically selected for the task by the Emigration Agents in India. This was a rare concession won by Fergusson. However, in the course of this discussion he found it necessary "to waive the question of the coolies being allowed to work in mines or on goldfields'. Fergusson wrote of the aversion of the Indian to the use of "coolies' outside of agriculture, due to harsh treatment in a French colony Réunion, which nearly amounted to slavery.

Fergusson was very confident of success, and regarded the indentured labour system as an excellent one. He compared two groups of coolies he witnessed while on his journeys through India: one about to depart and one recently returned. He described the returned emigrants as looking "healthy, happy and prosperous; their children fat, and very unlike the native children in India.' He wrote of his limited conversation with them, stating that he had learned that the labourers thought British Guiana was a "very good place' and they saved an average of 200 rupees each. He wrote of the emigrants about to embark that they "looked, as a rule miserable half-starved wretches, and were, I suspect the very sweepings of up-county bazaars'. As a source of information on Indian migrants themselves, this description cannot be trusted. Rather, it tells us of Fergusson's opinions of the "coolies'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Major J. A. Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory', South Australian Parliamentary Papers (1882), no. 42, p. 4. Buck, February 4, 1882.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Buck, February 4, 1882.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory', pp. 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* On Réunion, see D. Northrup, "Migration from Africa, Asia and the South Pacific', in A. Porter, (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1999), pp. 88-100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory', p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> *Ibid*.

Fergusson's fascinating report on the negotiations within India shows how the negotiations worked internally. Examples of other colonies were regularly brought up as India and the colony in question tried to come to agreeable terms. India, it seems, held the upper hand in the negotiations, though in this case, Fergusson was able skilfully to bend to India's will and receive some benefits. He comments on going through the draft bill that he took with him (referred to in the communication between Buck and South Australia). It was the opinion of Holderness and Fergusson that the regulations for the Northern Territory would have to be somewhat tentative as the conditions there would be different from those in other colonies with Indian labourers. 144

On 26 January, the Governor General called on Fergusson to discuss some further issues. The Governor General expressed some concern that the Protector of Emigrants would not be wholly qualified for the job if selected by South Australia. Fergusson wrote: "I did not think the Government of South Australia would offer any objection to the selection of the officer being made by the Indian government...'. 145 While Fergusson held this opinion, the decision to defer to the Indian government in this case still had to be confirmed by the South Australian government.

What can we gather from these negotiations? Firstly, in the case of the emigration of indentured labourers, while the Indian government controlled its labour migration and the Australian colonies controlled their intake, India held the upper hand in the negotiations. What is truly surprising though, and seemingly at odds with the history of the regulation of Indian indentured labour, is the Indian government's cautious acceptance of South Australia's request that Indian labour be allowed to work on the construction of railways. This suggests that there was some minor room for concessions to the Australian colonies. The Indian government was far more partial to the efforts of South Australia than to those of Queensland. This can most likely be explained by their overall respect for Fergusson, and the systematic and respectful way South Australia went about the negotiations. While India respected the efforts of Fergusson and South Australia, they were evidently less impressed with Queensland's lower regard for the power of the Indian government.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> *Ibid*.
<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*.

Fergusson and the South Australian government made concessions and acquiesced to India's request to select staff for South Australia. They did not press on issues they knew would anger India. They appear to have had a better sense than Queensland of where India perceived them to be in the pecking order, perhaps due to Fergusson's experience with India. India expected the Australian colonies to respect their authority and their position. When they did so, better results could be achieved.

Fergusson's approach to the negotiations was extremely impressive. We should bear in mind here Fergusson's previous experience with South Australia asSouth Australia had negotiated with the Indian government previously on the subject of horses when Fergusson's brother James was premier, as discussed in detail in Chapter Two. The Indian government was extremely dismissive. In these negotiations, Fergusson had a clearer idea of where South Australia stood with India, particularly compared to the approach of the Queensland government. While Queensland fought with the Indian government over some issues within the regulations, Fergusson and South Australia bent to India's will. On the matter of having officials selected by India that would be paid for by the Queensland and South Australian governments, their approaches were opposites.

Though the negotiations ultimately failed, due to the difficulties faced by South Australia in developing the Northern Territory, the possibility of importing Indian labour remained until 1901. There was a concern about the numbers of Chinese in the Northern Territory: they outnumbered the white settlers 4 to 1 in 1878. South Australia was also affected by the anti-Asian feeling growing in Australia and placed a poll tax on Chinese entry in 1888. The Chinese numbers began to decline. This perhaps led to one final attempt by the South Australian government to gain Indian labour. South Australia did not give up on Indian labour until late in the 1890s. At this time, the prospect was revived by the changes made to Queensland's laws relating to immigrant labour. Queensland's sugar industry, as noted above, was struggling due to public opposition to "non-white' labour. South Australia was keen to provide sugar planters with an option to move to the Northern Territory by offering a steady stream of cheap workers. There was some continued support for Indian labour. An editorial in the *Adelaide Advertiser* asserted: "to say that it were better that tropical Australia should not be developed at all than that coloured labour should be introduced is as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Powell, *Far Country*, pp. 113-116.

unreasonable as it is unpatriotic'. <sup>147</sup> The perceived threat to Australia from non-white immigration did not apply to the Northern Territory: there was very little "civilization' there to protect.

For all of South Australia's effort, only 150 Indians and Sinhalese lived in the Northern Territory in 1886.<sup>148</sup> The Australian colonies had received no special treatment from the Indian government during their attempts to hire Indian labourers. They were treated, with the exception of Major Fergusson's concession, like any other colony.

#### **Conclusion: Colonial Networks**

One thing that we see repeatedly in the negotiations between India and the two Australian colonies is the sending of the other colony's regulations and documents. This is a systematic method of providing Indian labour to desirous colonies. We see a complicated network of communications between governments. Fergusson, dispatched to India to learn about the indenture system, reported in his communication with Parsons that he had had a response to his letter to the Colonial Secretary of Singapore. He wrote that the Colonial Secretary had told him the rate paid to Singapore's coolies in the Straits' Settlement was about sixpence a day. One shilling a day was considered too high if rations were given. 149

The attempts to hire Indian labour saw the law from colonies such as British Guiana, Natal and Fiji impact upon laws and regulations in Australia. Aside from showing how the relationship between India and Australia worked, we can see that Australia was deeply entwined in the sprawling colonial networks. Australia's connection to these other colonies went through the Indian government. There was strong transnational legislative influence on the Australian colonies. While India's influence on Australian legislation was not as direct or as strong as that discussed by Metcalf with regard to other colonies, Australia was still very much a part of India's legislative networks. To give another example, the work of Martens on restrictive immigration acts demonstrates further connections between legislation in Natal and New South Wales.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Adelaide Advertiser, 27 April, 1892.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> A. Powell, Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory, Centenary Edition (Melbourne, 2000), p. 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Fergusson, "Coolie Labor for Northern Territory".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> J. Martens, "A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction: Natal and New South Wales, 1896-97', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, 3 (2006), pp. 323-344.

Despite the hard won concession made to South Australia, the Indian government was still very much in control throughout the negotiations. As they had the final say as to whether or not Indian workers could ever travel to Australia, they were always in a position to dictate terms. Their willingness to re-write draft legislation in particular shows the level of control of the situation. Queensland responded negatively to this power, and to the overall level of control India demanded over the system, and as a result, delayed their intake long enough for public opinion (and electoral politics) to put a stop to the proposed emigration once and for all. As for South Australia, their effort was always likely to fail because of the difficulties they faced. Once again, however, the considerable delays caused by logistical problems gave the time for opposition to grow, and, in the case of South Australia: the Federation of the Australian colonies.

The response of the Indian government towards the different attitudes of the two colonies in question is also telling. South Australia had previous dealings with India in the 1870s, under the governorship of James Fergusson, discussed in Chapter Two. They knew how best to approach them. Queensland had not had such useful experiences. By looking at the response of India to these two different attitudes we can see how they perceived the Australian colonies. Their negative response to the combativeness of the Queensland government, and their unusual concession to South Australia's openness and flexibility stand in stark contrast. The Australian colonies were to respect India, and their best means of gaining support was to bend to its will.

Clearly, these negotiations took place in India's domain. India held all the political power, and used it to control the situation. South Australia knew it and Queensland did not. While the fact that widespread emigration never occurred may ultimately have had more to do with opposition and racism than administrative difficulties, we can still see much of the nature of the India-Australia relationship in this discussion of the issue.

One omission from the government debates is the fairness and morality of bringing Indian labour to work under such poor conditions. Of course, the historian needs to be careful about not pushing present day morality upon the documents of the past, but in this case I believe the point is justified. It goes to the key argument here, as to why the Indian labour was never brought in great quantities to Queensland and the Northern Territory. Australia saw

itself as a "white' colony. That only very little discussion occurred about the morality of bringing in Indians as indentured labour, a system only slightly removed from slavery, highlights the racial beliefs of the Australian colonies. The major argument against it was not a moral one, opposing the conditions of indenture, but simply that many people did not want Indians to live in the colony. This desire not to have Indians in the colony also was a key part of the argument over mandatory return after a five year indenture, which delayed the passage of the legislation for three years.

Clearly, the Australian colonies regarded India as a possible source of manpower to develop their economies, as Metcalf's approach would suggest. Yet the fact that this potential manpower was so vehemently opposed within Australia suggests that Australia saw itself differently – it saw itself as a white society. In Queensland, this led to a new feeling of superiority over India in the colonial hierarchy. While still submissive in terms of actual power, the Queensland government rejected the Indian government's regulations in order to maintain their perception of themselves as an exclusively "white' colony.

# **Conclusion: A Misunderstood Relationship**

This thesis has discussed in detail several aspects of the India-Australia relationship from the Indian Rebellion to the Federation of Australia. Thomas Metcalf's work *Imperial Connections* has been used as a reference point throughout to aid conceptualization of the findings. This conclusion will summarize the findings of each chapter and complete the analysis of the relationship, compare these findings to Metcalf's work and examine possibilities for future study.

The argument presented in this thesis consists of two key points: the first being that the India-Australia relationship between 1858 and 1901 was deeper and more wide ranging than has previously been acknowledged. The description of the administrative networks in Chapter One showed that communication between India and Australia was common and largely constructive. The second point comes from the comparison of the India-Australia relationship with Metcalf's commentary on India's centrality within the empire. In the majority of cases, Metcalf's conception of India's centrality and the ways in which it operated can be viewed in the India-Australia relationship. Chapters Two, Three and Four all analysed separate areas of the relationship, illustrating the nature of specific aspects.

The administrative relationship between India and Australia identified in Chapter One consisted of strong information-sharing ties, such as requests both ways for information and cooperation over many areas, including delicate military and policing matters, symbolic ties and ceremonial affection for one another. All these examples are very strong evidence for the existence of a close relationship. They also reveal the beginnings of an asymmetrical relationship, with India more inclined to request information directly from Australia than Australia was from India. This is particularly noticeable and important following the invention of telegraph cables, as communication speeds drastically reduced between India and Australia.

Trade between India and Australia was also consistent over the period discussed. The trade regulations, in particular regarding the horse trade, show how India was in control of the relationship, and how it was the 'senior partner'. Some rivalries came out when South Australia became interested in making changes to the patterns for selling horses, with the Indian government unwilling to allow South Australia any control whatsoever over the

regulation of the horse trade. The horse trade was a major aspect of the relationship, and it was controlled completely by the Indian government. Much of the trade in question, including the horse trade, was conducted for military purposes. While there was trade throughout the period, there was also the hope on the Australian side that India may accept more goods. The problem with the trade relationship was that Australia desired more goods from India than India desired from Australia – making the voyage less appealing for independent shippers. The trade relationship, as with the administrative relationship, was asymmetrical, as India sent more goods to Australia and held more control over the regulation of trade.

The military connections between India and Australia were strong, but dictated to the colonial partners by London more so than any other matter. The cooperation between India and Australia, particularly New South Wales, over the Indian Rebellion was particularly strong, and represented an occasion in which New South Wales was able to make an independent military decision to aid India in its time of need. However, the military relationship was clearly dictated and controlled through London once telegraph cables had reached Australia. The India-Australia relationship ultimately did not extend to the coordination of colonial wars. The two colonies would aid each other with supplies, but even this was coordinated through London. Military strategy was coordinated by the two colonies in the Indian Rebellion because the urgency of the situation made it necessary.

The military relationship was also demonstrated through the consistency of the trade between military departments, particularly horses, as discussed above. This aspect was allowed to function under the control of the Indian government, without direction or interference from London. On one occasion when a dispute arose, the two colonies were treated as equals by a disinterested auditor in London. The Federation celebrations attended by soldiers of the Indian army were a ceremonial expression of the military relationship between India and Australia. Though the military cooperation relating to colonial wars was controlled by London, India and Australia were allowed to manage less sensitive aspects of their military relationship.

Finally, Chapter Four's examination of Australia's curiosity regarding Indian labour revealed India's initial seniority on the issue. When South Australia and Queensland attempted to hire large numbers of Indian labourers, they were treated the same as anyone else – but their status as 'white' colonies led to significant opposition which was not seen in

colonies such as British Guiana and Fiji – though opposition was more widespread in South Africa. The negotiations over Indian indentured labour show India treated Australia no differently to other British colonies. The failures of the negotiations resulted from internal issues within Australia – a desire to maintain a 'white' Australia, particularly during the 1885 election in Queensland. Conflict within the negotiations also stemmed from the fact that the Queensland government's perception of the India-Australia relationship differed from that of the Indian government. This could be seen in Queensland's unwillingness to have India select administrators who were to be paid by Queensland but work for the Indian government.

South Australia and India's perceptions of the India-Australia relationship were, in the 1880s if not the 1860s, far more consistent with one another. Key negotiator Major John Fergusson proximity to South Australia's previous failed dealings with India was crucial in the friendly and constructive nature of the negotiations between the two governments. In his time working with the South Australian government during his brother's administration, South Australia had experienced rebukes from India. South Australia's ultimate inability to complete its task resulted from the extreme difficulties it faced in the Northern Territory. These negotiations also showed India, and other colonies such as British Guiana and Natal in South Africa, having an influence on legislation in the Australian colonies.

Queensland's decision, largely dictated by the electorate, to block Indian labour in favour of less regulated Pacific Island labour shows a rebuke to Indian superiority over Australia. Queensland's decision was a major step on the road to the White Australia policy, and shows a 'moral' feeling of superiority due to race over India. Australia was beginning to view itself as fundamentally different to India, a feeling formalised with Federation and the introduction the White Australia policy.

While Thomas Metcalf's conception of India's external role in the British empire can be broadly applied to Australia, there are some exceptions and caveats that need to be examined in relation to this argument. Most of these result from the fact that Australia was viewed as different in some ways from the colonies covered in Metcalf's work. The Australian colonies were viewed as predominantly white self-governing Dominions, whereas the colonies discussed by Metcalf in South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, were 'colonial peoples', offered less in the way of self-government.

#### The Relationship Weakens

As a type of epilogue, it is worth quickly tracing the relationship, and our historical understanding of it, through to the present day - with a view to encouraging future study of the subject. The unravelling of India's central role within the British empire did not begin until World War One. This was largely due to the rising nationalist movement in India. There was anger towards the indentured labour system (which ended in 1920). Increasingly, 'martial' Indians were drawn towards the nationalist movement. Deeply discriminatory policies towards Indians in South Africa also served as 'a test of empire' to Indian nationalist elites – a test which the empire failed. The growing instability within India made it more difficult and more uncomfortable for the British to maintain such power within India. Ultimately, the situation in which a significant role of the governance of the empire was handled in India became untenable for the British.

Though it is outside the aims of this study, the effect which this unravelling had on the India-Australia relationship is worthy of brief comment. The relationship may have persisted for some time after Federation, despite the emigration restrictions and racism of the White Australia Policy. However, some connections remained – notably military ones. Indian and Australian soldiers fought together in World War One in France and at Gallipoli. The Australian soldiers were broadly friendly and good natured, though simultaneously ignorant and racist, simply choosing to call all the Indians they came across at Gallipoli 'Johnny' rather than learn their names.<sup>3</sup> The horse trade continued until the mechanization of the Indian army. Administrative connections changed significantly with Federation, as external affairs became the domain of the new federal government, instead of the old colonial governments. However, individual states may well have continued to deal with India on occasion. This change represents a natural break for the period of this thesis, though the disintegration of India's imperial network and its impact on the India-Australia relationship from 1901 to 1947 would be a valuable topic for future study. In this period, the relationship is again poorly understood. The White Australia Policy prevented Indians from coming to Australia. It would appear likely that with the disintegration of the network of trade, cooperation would have decreased also.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 204-205

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> D. E. Omissi, 'India: Some Perceptions of Race and Empire', in D. E. Omissi and A. S. Thompson (eds), *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For an example of this, see H. M. Alexander, *On Two Fronts - Being the Adventures of an Indian Mule Corps in France and Gallipoli* (London, 1917), p. 176.

# The Post-Colonial Relationship

The post-colonial relationship between India and Australia has received significantly more attention. A special issue of *South Asia*, based on a corresponding conference on India-Australia relations after 1947, identified and examined several connections, as well as several issues within the relationship. Meg Gurry and Marika Vicziany are perhaps the leading scholars (at least on the Australia side) in post-colonial India-Australia relations. Gurry's narrative of the relationship focuses on Australia's neglect of India over the period – essentially arguing for further engagement. Vicziany's work also focuses on the present relationship, rather than the past one.

The present day India-Australia relationship is difficult, and has been tested by policy disagreements and recent attacks in Australia on Indian students. The relationship between India and Australia is best understood from the Partition of India onwards. Anecdotally, the defining aspect of the relationship in the minds of the general population of both nations appears to be a shared appreciation of cricket. The shared love of cricket originates of course from a shared experience of British imperialism – which grew during the period discussed in this thesis. And while contests between Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne may have enthralled large portions of the Indian and Australian population, cricket matches between Australia and India have been marred on both sides of the Indian Ocean by racist taunts directed at players. Stoddart describes the focus on cricket at India-Australia cultural events

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For an overview of these works, see A. Weigold, 'Introduction: Midnight to Millennium: Australia-India Interconnections', *South Asia*, 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 1-14. The conference took place in 1999.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> M. Gurry, *India: Australia's Neglected Neighbour, 1947-1996* (Brisbane, 1996), M. Vicziany, 'Australia-India Security Dialogues: Academic Leadership in the Diplomatic Vacuum', *South Asia*, 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 159-178 and M. Vicziany (ed.), *Australia-India: The Economic Links: Past, Present and Future* (Nedlands, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> While present day disputes are not discussed in this thesis, they can make for interesting reading. For discussion see, for example: M. Ayoob, 'India's Nuclear Decision: Implications for Indian-American Relations', *South Asia*, 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 121-140; R. Broinowski, 'India, China and Australia', The Fractured Triangle', *South Asia*, 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 141-150; H. Hughes, 'India, the Land Australia Forgot', *Australian Business Monthly*, 15, 7 (1995), pp. 130-131; A. Weigold, 'Introduction', *South Asia*, 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 1-14 and For international relations perspectives on India and Australia's relationship, see for example: G. Evans and B. Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations: In the World of the 1990s* (Melbourne, 1995); Gurry, *Australia's Neglected Neighbour* and D. McDougall, *Australian Foreign Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (South Melbourne, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> On this issue, see B. Stoddart, 'Identity Spin: Imagined cultures in Australian and Indian Cricket', *South Asia* 23, Special Issue (2000), pp. 63-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> For example, see http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/10/18/1192300892467.html, date accessed: 10 November 2010. Tensions between the two teams boiled over following an incident between Harbhajhan Singh and Andrew Symonds in Sydney in 2008. See, for example: http://www.theage.com.au/news/cricket/harbhajan-

and political meetings as imagined - and an attempt to mask difficulties in the present day relationship.<sup>9</sup>

This study has provided a view of the relationship in the period most poorly understood - yet arguably when the relationship was at its strongest. As a result, it places the India-Australia relationship in a far stronger historical context. Scholars of the present day India-Australia relationship such as Gurry, Vicziany and Stoddart wonder why there has been a lack of development of a significant relationship. In light of this study, the more appropriate questions to ask are why the existing imperial relationship fell apart, and how, if at all, the breakdown of this relationship led to the troubles experienced by India and Australia today.

# **Transnational Implications**

The growth of transnational history over the past few decades has been a major historiographical trend. Aside from exposing details of India and Australia's relationship, this thesis also adds to some trends in world and transnational histories. It further shows the value of viewing the British empire from the perspective described by Ballantyne – a spider's web of connections, with some key, central colonies the most thoroughly entwined. Metcalf reveals India as one such power centre. This thesis returns Australia to this web of connections. In doing so, we can see the value of taking a transnational approach to Australian history. The connections between India and Australia reveal a new perspective on Australian history. Doubtless, studies of connections between Australia and other colonies over this same period, a period in which technology made the world 'smaller', would lead to further surprising results. Focusing solely on links to Britain prevents us from viewing Australia in other ways. We should not exclude Australian history from world history.

 $sledge-ban/2008/01/07/1199554516851.html,\ date\ accessed:\ 10\ November\ 2010.\ Indian\ players\ were\ subjected\ to\ racist\ taunts\ in\ Australia$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Stoddart, 'Identity Spin', pp. 63-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For a discussion of transnational history and its implications, see: C. A. Bayly, S. Beckert, M. Connelly, I. Hofmeyr, W. Kozol, and P. Seed, 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', *The American Historical Review*, 112, 5 (2006), pp. 1140-1165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> T. Ballantyne, 'Rereading the Archive and Opening up the Nation State: Colonial Knowledge in South Asia (and beyond)', in A. Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn, Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, 2003), pp. 102-124.

# Friendship and Rivalry

The India and Australia relationship under the British empire was close and not always complementary. The two colonies were closely connected, and in many ways, were a part of the same family. The relationship could be summarized as an elder brother and a younger brother – of the same origin and close to one another, but with differing seniority. This led to occasional conflict amidst the frequent cooperation, with India able to control the Australian colonies when it was in their interest to do so. The relationship was strong, fitting the conception of Metcalf's *Imperial Connections* and occasionally resisted by the governments of the Australian colonies. Curiously, we must conclude that the relationship was both closer than previously acknowledged, whilst at the same time more flawed and troubled.

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